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Chairman’s Comments

I was very pleased to learn on my appointment as the Commander of the Australian Defence College that I would be the Chairman of the Board of Management for the *Australian Defence Force Journal*. This is for two reasons. Firstly, the focus for the 'Journal of the Australian Profession of Arms' is raising, analysing and discussing those issues that have been a major part of my life for almost three decades as a soldier. It is the ADF publication providing a principal focus on joint issues at a time when the organisation faces great operational challenges as well as introducing levels of capability across all three Services that will significantly shape our future. Secondly, the Charter for the ADC, and its Commander, is very clear. It is to promote learning and the growth of expertise in our leaders and our managers. The *Journal* certainly has a role in achieving that goal.

Since its inception in 1976 this publication has provided a valuable forum to express and debate ideas on defence and security. Some of those debates have been lively and long may that continue. The complexity of issues that face Australia, and the need to make a positive difference to the safety of the Nation, demand nothing less.

At the time of writing, this year there will be at least two editions of the *Journal*: in Autumn and in Spring. It is the Board’s intention to increase that number but this will be dependant on the quality of articles submitted. There are many publications available to a finite readership that deal with defence and security. I have the responsibility to ensure that the *Journal* remains not only relevant to the current and future security environment, but also that it is seen as a leader in that field. In order to encourage already busy people to involve themselves in the development and exploration of ideas, the Board of Management has decided to award a cash prize of $500 to the author of the best article for each edition. This will start in Spring of this year. It will be available to Regular and Reserve personnel in all three Services as well as Australian Public Servants currently working in the Department of Defence, and articles will be judged on their relevance to the current security debate, depth of analysis and, of course, style and readability.

The first article for 2006 is all about views of the future. It is an edited transcript of the address given to this year’s Sea Power Conference by former CDF, ADML Chris Barrie. While his comments on conscription were widely reported, it is his views on the next 50 years that are particularly germane to the focus of the *Journal*. He predicts that maritime activities will become considerably more regulated; Australia will become relatively insignificant in the Asia–Pacific region due to its comparatively small population; an all-volunteer ADF will find it impossible to find sufficient young people; there could be a fracturing of ANZUS; and continuing oil dependence will adversely affect economic growth and global trading flows.

We include a section of three articles that examine Australia’s relationship with the wider region through the prism of its alliance relationships. Professor Brian Farrell’s detailed examination of the separation of Malaysia and Singapore is background to his description of the shifting balance of power within the Western alliance in Southeast Asia during the 1950s and 1960s. Professor Farrell’s narrative highlights the tortuous path taken by Australia to influence strategic decision-making in both London and Washington. In doing so, he continues a theme that he
included in his recent book concerning the fall of Singapore, entitled *The Defence and Fall of Singapore 1940–1942*. LTCOL Richard Campbell also examines Australia’s relationships with London and Washington, reminding us of the divisions at home after the end of the Second World War between those who supported re-establishing close relations with London and those who favoured taking a different approach. In the final article of this section, Major Gavin Keating discusses the factors underpinning the durability of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. He suggests that the support it continues to receive from each of its members indicates that a successful alliance does not necessarily require a single powerful leader, as some have argued, but can remain relevant by pursuing a wide range of practical activities, including not least those of a ‘networking function’.

The article by Drs McKenna, Moon, Davis and Warne provides valuable information on the complex topic of network-centric warfare. A network-centric approach to warfighting was officially launched by the Defence Minister and the Chief of the Defence Force in May 2003. In response, the Defence Science and Technology Organisation established an initiative to identify directions for longer-term NCW military capabilities, to distil key research issues that need to be addressed as well as provide an interface with Defence’s stakeholders.

John Donovan continues the examination of the Army’s capacity for homeland defence that he began in the previous edition of the *Journal*. He proposes that the Regular forces should focus on the requirements of short notice contingencies and collective security. The Reserves should be the principal homeland defence force, but continue to support the Regular Army in collective security operations as there are clear roles for Reserves in these operations. The article argues that beyond homeland defence, making Reserve units the first call ADF units for disaster assistance and relief, and other aid to the civil community tasks, would further enhance their sense of purpose and increase the Army’s links with local communities from which the Reserves in particular are recruited.

The final article, by New Zealand academic, Stephen Levine, offers perspectives on the nature of the debate about defence and security issues in New Zealand’s recent general election. In doing so, he underlines the different perspectives on these issues between Australia and New Zealand.

I am pleased to present this first edition of the *Journal* under my Chairmanship. The articles are of a high standard, and I hope you find them both interesting and stimulating. I look forward to receiving articles submitted for publication so that we can maintain—and hopefully improve—the quality of this publication. Prospective authors should refer to the Notes for Contributors that appear at inside back cover.
Letters to the Editor

Dear Editor,

Re-evaluating the Battle of Trafalgar

Dr Gilbert (ADFJ 168, 2005) uses the example of the battle of Trafalgar to suggest that there cannot be a decisive naval battle. He argues that naval battles are merely incidents in the broader strategy of the campaign and that wars are won not by individual battles but by unfaltering adherence to strategy. In other words, a naval battle by itself cannot decide the campaign or war and so may not be considered to be decisive. But is this true?

A lot depends, of course, on what you mean by a battle being ‘decisive’. The article seems to imply that only battles that single-handedly decide wars or campaigns warrant this descriptor. This would limit a decisive battle to the likes of that between the Germans and Romans in the Teutonburg Forest. Battles producing such clear-cut finality are so rare that referring to them alone as being decisive seems to be an unnecessarily restrictive use of the word.

As the article notes, most campaigns are won through the grind of battle after battle. But it is suggested that there are occasions, albeit infrequent, when the outcome of a battle makes it stand out from the others even though it may not mean the end of the campaign or war then and there. The defeat of the Spanish Armada in 1588 and of the Japanese at Midway Island in 1942, for instance, were victories of such great significance that it does not seem reasonable to describe them as being anything less than decisive. Before 1588, Spain was expanding its empire; after 1588 all momentum was lost and Spain was no longer considered invincible. Before Midway, the Japanese Empire was in the ascendancy; at Midway the initiative passed to the Allies opening the Japanese forces to defeat in detail. While Trafalgar may have been no more than an incident in the Napoleonic Wars, the actions along the English Channel in 1588 and at Midway in 1942 were watershed events that determined the eventual outcome of their respective conflicts.

Dr Gilbert stresses the importance of committing to a strategic policy in war. The significance of the defeat of the Spanish Armada and of the Japanese at Midway lies in the destruction of the centre of gravity of their strategic policy. It seems a reasonable conclusion then that any battle, whether naval or otherwise, that with one fell swoop results in the destruction of the enemies’ means to implement their strategic aims should be considered to be decisive. Such battles have occurred in the past and can be reasonably expected to occur in the future.

Dr Noel Sproles, Adelaide, SA

Dear Editor,

Re-evaluating the Battle of Trafalgar – Reply by Dr Gregory P. Gilbert

I thank Dr Sproles for his letter as it succinctly restates the traditional Western belief in ‘decisive’ naval battle. His views are commonly held by both laypersons interested in maritime affairs, and many professionals trained in Anglo-centric naval environments. It is my contention that very
few, if any, individual naval battles have been ‘decisive’ in terms of their strategic effects, and as a corollary a blind faith in decisive naval battle is not only a misrepresentation of the historical evidence but a potential source for impetuous, high risk command decisions. This does not mean that navies should avoid battle altogether, rather my aim is to emphasise the strategic military effects—prevent, stabilise, contain, deter, coerce, disrupt, defeat, and destroy—which are achieved by naval diplomatic or benign tasks.1 Defeat or destruction of an enemy’s naval forces in battle should be used in the last resort, when other avenues have been exhausted. In such circumstances, naval battle necessitates the application of an overwhelming and effective use of force.

Of course we may debate the meaning of ‘decisive’ ad nauseam, but if we accept Dr Sproles’ words that ‘decisive’ implies the destruction of the enemy’s means to implement their strategic aims, we may quickly examine the ‘decisive’ nature of other traditional ‘decisive’ naval battles.

The events surrounding the Spanish Armada in 1588 included: fighting against the English along the south coast of England; fighting against the Dutch off the Texel, which denied the Spanish access to their ports in the then Spanish Netherlands; surviving a major storm in the Northern waters; and avoiding shipwreck and massacre along the western shores of Ireland; before they were able to return safely to Spain. Despite the British tradition that they defeated the Spanish Armada in a ‘decisive’ naval battle, the historical events reveal a long series of struggles against enemies and the weather. In broader terms, the defeat of the Spanish Armada evolved as a sign-post in history, as the event characterising the decline of Spanish/Portuguese power and the rise of the Dutch/English power.

The Battle of Midway in 1942 is the other, oft cited, ‘decisive’ naval battle. It is the favourite of the US Navy (USN), and was undeniably a major victory for the United States (US) in World War II. However, once again the decisive nature of this single battle can be challenged. It is often forgotten that the Battle of the Eastern Solomons in August 1942 and the Battle of Santa Cruz Islands in October 1942, both major naval battles between aircraft carriers were fought after the Battle of Midway. The Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN) continued to oppose the USN with carrier forces during 1944, with the Battle of the Philippine Sea and the Battle of Leyte Gulf. The ability to achieve sea control in the Pacific moved from the IJN to the USN, not on the day following Midway, but rather over several years of hard fought battles of attrition. Again, the wider perspective suggests that surface battles between warships were only one of many aspects of the US strategy that led to their dominance of the Pacific in 1944 and 1945. The Pacific submarine campaign, the strength of the USN logistic system, the US shipbuilding program and industrial capacity, and the economic strength of the US had equal, if not more, ‘decisive’ strategic effect on the course of the war in the Pacific.

I welcome constructive criticism on the basic tenets of Western ideas on sea power, such as the role of ‘decisive’ naval battle. My own research on non-Western thinking on sea power (see Professional Research Note #170/2) should help identify long held Anglo-centric ideas on sea power which need to be reviewed.

NOTE
Reflections on the Future

Admiral Chris Barrie, AC, RAN (Retd)

This article is an edited version of Admiral Barrie’s keynote address to the RAN Sea Power Conference 2006 on 31 January 2006. The contents represent Admiral Barrie’s personal views, and are not necessarily those of the Department of Defence. A full paper based on this presentation will be published in the conference proceedings in late 2006.

I believe that we have reached an important cross-road in decision making about our future—and this lines up very neatly with the theme of this year’s Sea Power Conference—’Challenges Old and New’.

Today I speak to you as a recently retired naval person. And, before I get into the main thrust of what I want to say, I think a few preliminary remarks are appropriate—mainly because in the day-to-day management of our Defence Force some critical, but important matters frequently get overlooked.

For my first preliminary I want to focus on the nature of war. War is a brutal business, and a clash of arms to contest an outcome that is essentially political in nature through the use of force ought to be everybody’s business. War is not a matter simply for an all-volunteer force such as we have in Australia, but a matter involving every Australian. This is what Clausewitz wrote about many years ago when he claimed that ‘War is the continuation of politics by other means’. For Navy people our ‘nature of war’ is quite different to our Army or Air Force colleagues. We will sink or swim according to the ability of our team to get things right. For us there is very little scope for an individual to take his or her chances in battle. I think that we often forget that this is the essential nature of our business.

For my second preliminary I want to focus on what makes us unique, in the Australian context, at least. And it is a fact I believe, that the wearing of the uniform of our Armed Forces by our personnel and their acceptance of the responsibilities, accountabilities, and duties of a military life, mean that we are the only personnel authorised under the law to use force in the pursuit of our national interests—whatever they happen to be. It is this that makes Navy people special!

Another take on what makes us unique is our strategic geography. As I look at the map it seems pretty obvious that Australia is a continent surrounded by water. Over all the time I have spent looking at maps I am often reminded that I cannot find another country with a similar strategic geography. Look out to the east and the south and west: we Australians do operate in a maritime environment. Looking towards our north-west we can see that the Australian landmass lies at the bottom of an archipelago that reaches down into this part of the world from the European heartland, through Asia. These are indisputable facts of our geographic situation. Does it make us unique? You bet it does. Surely it means that our defence interests are going to be focused strongly on the maritime environment.

For my third preliminary I want to focus on operations. I hold strongly to the view that the conduct of naval and/or military operations is a ‘here and now’ thing. Because I am confident
that ordinary Australians do not possess any extraordinary qualities of bellicosity, I find it difficult to conceive that our community would support the use of our forces in the aggressive occupation or invasion of another country, nor would we seek to impose our will on other people. I think that this is the way Australians see the world. But this must never be taken to mean pacifism or to suggest that if an adversary tried to do these things to us that we would put up little resistance. Quite the contrary, I believe. The conduct of naval operations, as I have had any experience, requires us to think deeply and carefully about how well placed we would be in any ‘come-as-are’ war. In addition, whenever we begin operations we must be mindful of the reality that all operations bring with them uncertainties and risks. Thus, to contemplate the conduct of operations without having a reserve of numbers and capabilities seems to me a recipe for disaster.

For my fourth and final preliminary I want to focus on people. One of the wonderful things I have had to do over the past three years or so has been to reflect on the quality of the people that I worked with in the Navy, the other Services, industry and other echelons of government. Nearly all the people that I have met and dealt with over the years have exhibited fantastic resourcefulness, dedication, a wide range of skills, a high degree of intellectual horsepower, and boundless energy. So whenever we begin to think that certain tasks are beyond us, or too hard, I want to respond by reminding ourselves that our country was created just 105 years ago—that in that century of existence we have achieved many wonderful things by dint of good people who stood ready to meet the challenges that lay in front of them. Thus we have earned our place in the world today as a competent, well respected and generous community that has shouldered more than its fair share of the international burden.

So much for the preliminaries—I will refer back to them as I look forward in my ‘Reflections on the Future’.

What I intend to do now is to speak to no more than six of the main lessons that I learned through observation and reflection in my 41 years of naval service, and then to project forward and look at the implications of these lessons for the maritime community, and our Navy of the future.

My thinking horizon is over the next 50 years. At first, 50 years seems like a long way ahead—you may say that we cannot possibly know what the next 50 years will bring. And I agree that uncertainties, some of them real surprises, will cause us to change our plans in execution of them, and even adopt new ones. But, I would argue that an organisation that is thorough in its planning is better prepared to deal with uncertainties than one that has not bothered.

In addition, given that my own service career lasted over 41 years (out of the 105 years since the Australian federation) 50 years really is not that far ahead. Furthermore, I reckon a good case can be made in arguing that the dynamics of today’s situation demand that we begin to think this far out if we are to shape the kind of outcomes we desire, rather than becoming the simple victims of circumstances.

First I want to make a few predictions about the kind of operating environment I think will prevail in 50 years time:

- **Maritime activities will be greatly more regulated than anything we have experienced to date.** I grew up with an International Law based on as few restrictions as thought
sensible designed to restrict and limit the ability of mariners to use the high seas freely. A long and protracted series of negotiations produced the 1982 Convention on the Law of the Sea. That Convention significantly reduced the freedoms on the high seas through extended zones of various kinds, and greater regulation of activities. Today, I believe there is an even greater reason to regulate more closely the activities of seafarers as we try to deal with piracy, terrorism, direct attacks against shipping by suicide craft, armed attack parties and mines—to say nothing of the prospect of nuclear or WMD attack either inside a port facility or a ship in coastal waters, or the environmental aspects. Moreover, just for counter proliferation operations we are going to need the ability to track cargoes comprehensively from point of origin, through transition facilities, transport links and ports of arrival—case-by-case, container-by-container and vehicle-by-vehicle. So I expect that by the year 2050 we are likely to have various international procedures and processes for monitoring the use of the seas by any party, and a more sophisticated tracking and monitoring system than the International Civil Aviation Organisation operates in the airways today. There will be no such concept as the free use of the high seas.

• **Australia will have become a relatively insignificant country in the Asia–Pacific region.** Our population has reached 20 million. Comparing this to many cities in the world, such as Shanghai, our population is not large. And when we think about the size of the Australian continent and the off-shore maritime zones—one tenth of the earth’s surface—it gives me cause for concern. I recall that when General Fu Quan Yo—the Chief of the General Staff of the PLA—visited Australia a few years ago, he told me that he had been so surprised to find that on the flight from Beijing to Canberra one half of the flying time was spent over mainland Australia! Moreover, according to the most likely case developed by the Australian Bureau of Statistics we are informed that in 2050 Australia will have a population of 28 million people. You might want to think about the implications of growth in population comparisons with nearly all of our friends and neighbours in the Asia–Pacific region over the same period.

• **It will be impossible to find sufficient young people to join the all-volunteer ADF.** According to some research work done at the Centre for Economic Policy Research at the ANU, Australia’s labour force is undergoing a transformation. It shows that over the next three decades there will be a substantial decrease in the share of young people in the work force, down from around 38 per cent to about 31.5 per cent. In addition, people aged 25 to 34 will account for a decreasing proportion of the labour force, from 26 per cent in 2003 to 23.9 per cent three decades later. At the same time the proportion of people aged 55 to 64 will more than double, from 5.3 per cent to 11.2 per cent. A similar trend is also projected for the 45 to 54 age group, an increase from 7.7 per cent to 9.9 per cent. Such compositional changes will have implications for the structure and nature of employment. We will not be shielded from the flow-on effects of this downturn in available able-bodied labour.

• **Australians will feel resentful and untrusting of alliance arrangements.** Pressures on the ANZUS alliance relationship between the United States and Australia over the next 50 years could easily lead to a fracturing of the alliance. It may be taken as being moribund and worthless in the United States as Australia becomes less significant in its region, and it may be resented by a significant majority of Australians who feel it delivers very little of substance, especially if access to markets in the United States is restricted. The relationship with China may become hugely more important for economic and social reasons.
Oil dependence will be killing opportunities for economic growth, and even the sustainment of global trading flows. The inefficient use of limited oil reserves will be extremely costly; the costs of maintaining an extensive internal transport infrastructure and a coastal fringe population distribution will force the abandonment of past policies in Australia over the use of coastal and international shipping. New technology, high speed, fuel efficient shipping will be needed for our economic sustainment. Furthermore, our own flag shipping may be needed to serve international routes at very competitive freight rates that compensate for high labour costs of production in our commodity exports.

So let us begin.

Some of you here who have heard me speak before may have heard me say that the Royal Australian Navy I joined in 1961 is very different from the Navy I see today. The kind of force structure we operated then was very different to what we have today; we seemed to draw a great deal from our connections with the Royal Navy and indeed, to put not too fine a point on it, many of us regarded ourselves as a simple extension of the Royal Navy operating from a country on the other side of the world. A particular memory was the ‘can do’ attitude that prevailed in nearly every way the Navy went about its business. Going to sea was a risky business and those risks had to be accepted without question. For example, in 1963 the graduating year from the Naval College numbered 16 fine young officers. They all went off to sea for their initial Midshipman’s training year. But by the time I graduated one year later in 1964, only eight of the 1963 graduating year had survived the first year at sea. Four of them had perished in an accident in the Whitsunday Islands, and the other 4 had perished at sea in the Melbourne–Voyager collision.

I could be wrong, and I know many of you will have better memories of the various royal commissions and other inquiries that took place at the time. But my impression was of a Navy that did not take its business seriously enough. There was a prevailing attitude that losses such as these were inevitable, even during peacetime evolutions. Risks, sometimes unacceptable risks, were taken as part of our normal operating procedures. In my view we had a distinct view that ‘can do’ was more important than ‘ought to do’.

In 1967 I was privileged to proceed to the United States of America to commission the third of our DDG class ships—DDG27 or HMAS Brisbane. We commissioned Brisbane on the same day that Harold Holt disappeared at Cheviot Beach—and, of course, we struggled to make the news! My experience in the United States of pre-commissioning training at a personal level, and work up training at the ship’s level, made a very deep impression. Everything was taken seriously, even the firefighting training which I clearly remember even to this day! This left an indelible impression in my mind about the importance of a training systems approach, and where possible, realism, in training of people if they are to be properly equipped physically and mentally for work at sea.

In 1977 I was posted to be a guest student at the Australian Army Staff College at Queenscliff in Victoria. What an amazing experience my time at Queenscliff turned out to be. Nearly all my Australian colleagues were Army officers with operational experience from the Vietnam War. They were a truly amazing bunch of people. And I learned a lot in the course of that year—how to complete an appreciation Army style, but more importantly about military connections with the Australian community. Every place that we visited in Australia during that year saw us make a visit
to the local RSL club. The Army takes community relationships at the grassroots level to be very important. And finally, I learned what a very different community of people Army people are.

Now I would like to bring these vignettes more up-to-date. My next story concerns the inevitable problem of trying to balance the Navy’s budget. I had grappled with some of our financial problems down at MHQ—when life was pretty simple. We operated the Navy’s ships and accordingly we thought all effort ought to be concentrated on supporting our desire to get our ships to sea. We grappled with new measures like the ‘reduced activity period’ though we could never see how this would save a dime. But after my wonderful time at MHQ I found myself in Navy Office trying to manage the decision-making process so the Chief of Naval Staff could set priorities and allocate resources properly. But I found this to be a nearly impossible task. First, naval officers seemed hell-bent on having nothing to do with the financial processes—that was for the bean counters! Second, my bean counter colleagues in Navy Resources and Planning Branch struggled always to finalise a figure for our expenditure and how this ran up against the budget. It used to swing around wildly. I discovered great sympathy for the job they had to do because frankly our financial control systems left a great deal to be desired.

Finally, on the political front I had the privilege as CDF to serve four Ministers for Defence. Each of them approached the management of the portfolio in different ways. They each had different strengths and weaknesses. But they were invariably tremendous supporters of our sailors, soldiers and airmen. We should never forget that. In the course of a discussion with one Minister I made a casual remark about the need to promote with other politicians the Defence case on a particularly thorny issue. But I was reminded quite curtly that we should never misunderstand the role of government. He said that the government generally tries to deliver to the people what the people want. The government responds to demand from the community. And so, he said, do not waste your effort trying to persuade politicians—rather get out there and get the community to support you. Food for thought I believe.

To finish up I will now focus on four areas for work. These will be:

- The balance between our international and national role;
- Our force structure requirements and how we must do better;
- Connecting with our community; and
- Our most important resource.

**Balance between our international and national role**

Shortly after assuming his command as the Chief of Naval Operations last year, Admiral Mike Mullen called for an expanded international naval cooperation. As it has been put he is ‘after that proverbial 1,000-ship Navy.’

Calls for enhanced maritime cooperation are not new. In fact I recall our close involvement in the Western Pacific Naval Symposium through the hosting of the first meeting here in Australia in 1988. Furthermore, I recall that we had in the early 1990s a significant program of international exercises with regional navies each year that were well received and very successful. These exercises were based on a framework of bilateral arrangements that worked well.
But the key issue this more recent call raises is precisely how an enhanced cooperation might work. I do not think that anyone has any doubts about the objectives—dealing with pirates, organised crime, people smugglers and drug dealers, for example. Nor does anyone suggest that any one navy can do such a task worldwide all by itself. But the bottom line is: how would any such arrangements work?—just cooperatively?

Well I do not think that ‘cooperatively’ is going to be enough. First, I think the political leadership in like-minded countries would need an early involvement in discussions as to how the proposed cooperation would work. Second, there are bound to be the inevitable interoperability issues—values, doctrine, communications, command and control to name just a few. Third, there would be the legal aspects to consider. We have had some experience of what happens when forces come together for a common purpose, but then find that legal frustrations arise because we do not share the same views on international conventions and so on.

To finish this aspect I refer back to my prediction that by 2050 the freedom to use the high seas may disappear altogether under the mounting pressure to deal with these kinds of problems. Maybe the navies of like-minded countries can get together to begin the process of building a new system to manage all traffic on the seas, as the technology now allows?

Our Navy has always been at the forefront internationally. Over the years we have developed very good peer-to-peer relationships with colleagues throughout the Asia–Pacific region and elsewhere. Indeed, the presence here today of so many Defence and Navy chiefs, and other international guests, stands as testimony to this perspective. I am sure that we look forward to continuing our work with you.

But there has to be some balance with our national priorities as well. It is in this arena that I wonder if we have done enough. Going back to my earlier point—the Navy is the maritime force under Australian law charged with the task of the use of force in Australia’s interests. Thus it is possible to find that we often do not pay sufficient attention to working with other members of our maritime community for common purposes.

This reminds me about the coastguard debate. I reckon that it would be a great luxury to have a coastguard, and a navy. We could mirror exactly the United States in this regard. But I cannot see how we would avoid duplication of effort and additional overheads—no matter what kind of management framework and operating systems were put in place. If I am right that a coastguard does not make sense in the Australian case, our Navy—in conjunction with other civil authorities—must take on many of the tasks and roles of a coastguard, especially where the use of force may be involved.

Our force structure requirements and how we must do better

I want to turn now to talk a little about the balanced fleet. It’s a curious thing but every time I have conducted wargames on any serious maritime or military contingency I have been surprised at the panoply of forces we would like to deploy to support our strategic intent. This is the main reason I have always believed in the concept of the balanced force. Moreover to maintain a force that is not balanced invites an adversary to exploit an obvious weakness.
Now, on looking back over the years I would say that we have done a pretty good job of maintaining a sufficient and a balanced force. But as I know from operations that I was involved with a few years ago, there is not a great deal of spare capacity if a demanding, dispersed task falls our way. And of course I do not mean that we would be caught out for a very limited period of time; rather the numbers have a quality of their own when it comes to long-term tasking.

So given the size and composition of our existing fleet I would ask the following questions:

- How are we going to deal with Southern fisheries problems in the future? Surely we have got to the point where we need to think of a more robust and long-term solution to policing our southern waters? While we have in the past been able to respond to illegal fishing through ad hoc measures, the possession of large ships with very good sea keeping qualities and long endurance characteristics, and the ability to operate helicopters and boats in a variety of sea states by day and night, would help.
- Are we satisfied that we will have sufficient numbers of ships and submarines to deal with likely conventional and asymmetric tasks? I can see that many problems of policing such as in drug busting, and countering smuggling operations, that used to lie within the ambit of constabulary responses, today require the application of sophisticated capabilities that were once the preserve of the conventional warfighting force.
- And while we are on the subject of submarines, is it time to begin thinking about our future submarine requirements? I think so.

Turning now to Australian industry involvement, it seems curious to me to hear people saying that we should not try to build any significant future vessels here in Australia. Now I appreciate the arguments as to why we should go off-shore, but to me it would be a pity not to employ Australians in building the sort of naval forces we need. Moreover, in many cases the characteristics we need for high speed, long endurance, and self-sustaining capabilities demand that we take a very good look at our options to do the building ourselves. Only on the basis of significantly increased costs should we consider an overseas build, but this is an area where industry must play its part too.

And that brings me to the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO).

It has been a long held view of mine that defence acquisition would be greatly improved if we could cut down on the time it takes from ‘bright idea’ to delivered product. At present the extended processes we use to get to a decision point, at which real work on a contract can begin, increase the cost of participation in the business substantially, and do not deliver new, more advanced capabilities to our forces in a timely way. In my view we should demand that it take no more than eight years to go from bright idea to delivered capabilities. And in the case of shipbuilding I would draw on a pipeline model to deliver a new fleet ship every 18 months to two years. And then we can vary the size of the fleet by varying the paying off dates of our ships and bypass the need for substantial upgrades.

Finally on this subject I further believe that the DMO should be a separate entity from the Department. It should be an entity with which we can have a contract. Thus we would not be
funnelling expensive Service personnel into the DMO, except for supervisory tasks, and we would provide good job opportunities for some people to take up when they leave the forces.

**Connecting with our community**

When we think of connecting with our community we almost always think in terms of media coverage—TV, radio, internet and newspapers. But I have been struck since my retirement by the number of people I have met who have either once served or know someone who served in the Navy. I appreciate only too well how hard it is to get the right sort of material into the media this way. And yet, as I said earlier in this address, our real task is to promote ourselves, our activities and our needs in the Australian community.

It does seem to me that having a really smart website can do a great deal, not so much with people of my generation, but with those 18–30-year-old people we would like to see onboard. Of course the same website can be used for promotional purposes as well. But, it must be world class to reach the right group of people and capture their imagination!

Additionally it is interesting to note that during the community consultation process we conducted in support of the White Paper in 2000, it was the website that far outweighed all the other forms of communications media such as public meetings, briefings, and print articles in getting our messages about the choices across to the public.

But somehow I think that we ought to find a way to embrace those former Navy people in our community who can help to explain about the Navy and navy life to people who would like to know. While on this topic I should re-assert a point that I made when I gave a nationwide television address through the ABC, on becoming CDF: the point I made concerned bad publicity. Seriously, the only way to deal with this problem is to do our utmost to clean up our act. We have to eliminate wherever possible the sources of poor image stories—such as our misbehaviour and stories that impugn our leadership reputation.

**Our most important resource**

We are accustomed to thinking that we are short of dollars. This is our classic refrain—trying to do more with less. But we have yet to show ourselves competent managers of our money and I strongly support considerable effort being put into getting the Navy’s finances under management control. And the same must be said for all Defence, too.

But we face serious obstacles in finding the high quality people we are going to need to send down to the sea in ships, and submarines and naval aircraft way out to 2050. We are accustomed to hearing about Defence recruitment problems, especially during the Christmas slow news season. But, you know, the facts are that Australia possesses an all-volunteer force—and it is this force that has proved its quality beyond doubt in recent operations. Yet recruiting is difficult—a constant problem. It is obvious of course that this should be so. The government likes to have low unemployment, and when unemployment reaches an all time low such as we have today then we have double jeopardy!
But a second and equally important factor reaches back to community perceptions. When our young people are committed to operations about which they feel ‘good’ in themselves of the job they are committed to do, and they do it well, they will feel justifiably proud. The reverse is true too.

On top of these perspectives, as I pointed out in the earlier part of this presentation by all measures Australia’s work force of young people is going to reduce substantially over the years ahead. Only about four years ago it was suggested that between the years 2020 and 2030 only 40,000 new entrants would join the work force. In such a climate we will not be able to attract the number of people we need, even if we attempted the usual financial incentives used in the past. For these reasons I consider that we ought to begin to think how and when we should shift to a universal national service structure to obtain young people for our armed forces and other critical institutions. There would be significant implications for training systems and our platforms and installed systems if this measure had to be adopted. We must not let this creep up on us.

Summary

It has been my great privilege to give this keynote address here today. I have not answered most of the questions that I have raised. I do anticipate that some of the other speakers will address them. If they do not, may I leave it to you to seek out their views?

Nonetheless, I do not think that there are any ‘easy’ answers to any of the problems we face. While we can be confident about our fleet and the people who serve in it today, I do worry about tomorrow’s fleet. While we have first class relationships with other navies all over the globe, once more I think we will need to attend to them.

My most pressing worry is about where our future sailors are going to come from, and how we will be able to provide sufficient personnel for all the other tasks that we will have. Will we draw from a pool of universal national service personnel or will the forecasts, projections and gloomy predictions turn out to be false? I hope so but that is not a reason to put off beginning this serious planning work now.

Finally, may I finish by offering that it is in the field of coaching, mentoring and leadership of today’s Navy that our future truly belongs. I reckon that we are in good hands at the moment.

I hope that this Conference will serve to inspire and enthuse you for the work ahead. We have got to get started, and get started now.

Admiral Barrie entered the RAN College in January 1961 and retired on 3 July 2002 after serving as Vice Chief of the Defence Force from March 1997, and then as Chief of the Defence Force from July 1998.
What do we do now?  
British Commonwealth and American Reactions to the Separation of Malaysia and Singapore

Brian P. Farrell

On the morning of 9 August 1965, Prime Ministers Lee Kuan Yew and Tunku Abdul Rahman made simultaneous public announcements in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur. Singapore was leaving the Federation of Malaysia, and would that day become a sovereign Republic. Years later Lee Kuan Yew described this as a ‘bloodless coup…a constitutional coup engineered right under the noses of the British, Australians and New Zealanders who were defending Malaysia with their armed forces.’ Prime Minister Lee rightly identified one of the most significant issues in this traumatic political separation.

Singapore was the platform from which the three Western Commonwealth countries pursued their defence policies in Southeast Asia. Both Australia and New Zealand were committed to a policy of ‘forward defence’. They saw instability in Southeast Asia and the threat that communist China would exploit it as the most direct threat to their own national security—a threat to be kept at bay by military engagement in the region. But they could only engage because they were able to reinforce larger military partners in the area. Those larger partners provided the mass and infrastructure that the relatively small Australian and New Zealand forces could operate from. The larger partners were of course the Americans and the British. The British presence was anchored in Singapore, home of their Far East Command and its well developed naval, air and army bases. The British were leading the defence of Malaysia against small scale but dangerous military intimidation unleashed two years before by Indonesia, the Confrontation. In August 1965 more British military personnel were deployed in Far East Command than in Germany, Britain’s prime North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) commitment. The military commitment to Southeast Asia was a major component of Britain’s still global defence policy—and that commitment rested on the platform in Singapore.

The BANZ powers, as they called themselves, opposed any rupture within Malaya and tried hard to prevent it. Separation was indeed thrust upon them and it provoked a serious reaction from all three—plus the United States. It is widely believed the reason Britain eventually withdrew its military forces from Southeast Asia was the serious decline in value of the pound sterling, caused by stagnation in the British economy. This was indeed the fundamental reason for the withdrawal from ‘east of Suez’ announced in 1967 and accelerated in 1968. But focus on this root cause has eclipsed the impact the separation of Singapore had on the rethinking of British defence policy, and how their Western defence partners reacted to that rethinking. The rupture of Malaysia was less than a root cause but more than an episode. It was the direct trigger for a prolonged exchange that brought into the open a fundamental clash of defence agendas. This article will explain why political change in Singapore was a seminal event in reorienting Western defence policies in Southeast Asia.

In May 1957 Headquarters Far East Land Forces (FARELF) asked the Australian Chiefs of Staff to help them review a problem. Their main base in Singapore might in the not so distant
future find the local environment uncomfortable. With Malaya set to become independent later that year, and agitation for self-government growing in Singapore, the temperature was rising. Singapore was the platform from which their combat forces defended Malaya against communist terrorists and would move north to fulfil any Southeast Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) commitment. There was no denying the logic of location; they had to stay to carry out their role effectively. But the large and complicated infrastructure they needed for supply, maintenance and administration was another matter. These base functions relied heavily on local manpower. They could well be compromised by any worsening of already turbulent labour relations in Singapore, with or without more constitutional change. Would it be possible to split functions? Could FARELF shift its main base support facilities to Australia, reducing Singapore to an advance base for forward deployed combat units?

The Australians and British examined the idea, but nothing came of it. Singapore remained the main base in Southeast Asia for all three British armed services when the project of merging Singapore into a Greater Malaysia came to fruition in 1963. This was however in spite of the concerns FARELF identified in 1957. That year the British Government made fundamental changes in its defence policy and military forces. Much greater emphasis would be placed on a nuclear deterrent, built up in part through large reductions in conventional forces, especially ground forces. Over the next four years the ending of the Emergency in Malaya, the new Malayan governments’ ambivalent attitude towards SEATO, the advance of Singapore towards turbulent self-government, and the restructuring of British armed forces all brought out the two themes bearing most directly on the British military presence in Singapore: the state of the British economy and thus Britain’s ability to maintain independent military commitments outside Europe; and the political environment in Singapore and Malaya. British officials and diplomats hinted to their Western counterparts that British thinking about defence policy might be drifting away from a status quo in which they bore the responsibility to defend Malaya and Singapore and maintained strong balanced forces on the spot. The one depended on the other. Economic constraints, competing priorities for British military power, unfriendly public opinion or unfriendly governments in Malaya or Singapore—all were cited as potential problems. But as yet this was long-term thinking about policy, not concrete steps towards it.

This thinking was challenged by the Tunku’s sudden decision in May 1961 to pursue the idea of merging Malaya and Singapore into one state. After initial uncertainty British policy makers welcomed this idea as a change very much in their interest. The ‘Grand Design’ of a Greater Malaysia emerged as the scheme that could underpin a reorientation of British policy for the whole region. The British Borneo territories would be included in this new entity, to make it more viable—and to relieve the British from the problem of deciding what to do with them. Merging Singapore into Malaysia would bring greater weight to bear on the internal threat from communist subversion, and make the Singapore economy stronger. All this would give the British bases in Singapore a more stable environment, and give the locals more incentive to want the British to stay there. Despite Brunei’s refusal to join the new entity Malaysia was hailed as the answer to British dilemmas when it took shape in September 1963. Indonesia refused to accept Malaysia and launched an undeclared war against it. It was in British interests to prevent this new friendly state, operating within the British economic orbit and staunchly rejecting communism, from being disrupted. These political stratégic considerations helped British officials who supported the maintenance of Far East Command to resist further pressures to economise, both overall, and on defence spending.
Australia and New Zealand maintained their contribution to the Far East Strategic Reserve, based in Malaysia, and by late 1964 their forces were engaged in British-led operations to protect Malaysia. Their policy of ‘forward defence’ relied above all on the United States being engaged in Southeast Asia—but also required a strong British presence and a healthy Malaysia, which their own deployment was meant to encourage. The United States tried to persuade the Sukarno Government to abandon its policy of Confrontation, but also approved the British-led effort to protect Malaysia—and strongly endorsed the policy to maintain powerful forces in Singapore, as part of the Cold War containment of communist China. This was the strategic environment in which high hopes for merger in 1963 dissolved in 1965 in separation, failure, and renewed instability.

The BANZ governments realised from January 1965 that Singapore and Malaysia were falling out badly. Lee Kuan Yew blamed the British for making matters worse by bullying the Malaysian Government to drop the idea of a less drastic ‘rearrangement’ of the constitution in February. BANZ efforts to prevent any breach frequently referred to defence. Lord Antony Head, British High Commissioner to Malaysia, urged both Prime Ministers on 1 June to step back from the brink; Head told the Tunku any move to arrest Lee ‘might bring a serious reappraisal of Britain’s attitude to Malaysia’. The following week Head warned the Tunku a breech with Singapore would ‘prejudice our ability to supply and maintain our forces in Borneo’. Such pressure only induced the Malaysian and Singaporean governments to keep BANZ representatives in the dark when they agreed to separate. But the draftsmen did directly address concerns about defence. The legislation which removed Singapore from Malaysia not only declared they would maintain a common defence against internal and external threats but also sent a clear signal to the BANZ powers that both wanted their military forces to remain. The Constitution and Malaysia (Singapore Amendment) Act provided for Singapore to assume all international rights and obligations of Malaysia that applied to it; front and centre was the Anglo–Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA), first reached in October 1957. Australia and New Zealand associated themselves with AMDA by exchange of letters in 1959. AMDA was extended to cover all territories of Malaysia in July 1963. The separation legislation now provided that Singapore would:

afford to the Government of the United Kingdom the right to continue to maintain the bases and other facilities occupied by their service authorities within Singapore and will permit the Government of the United Kingdom to make such use of these bases and facilities as that Government may consider necessary for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Singapore and Malaysia and for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in Southeast Asia.

This was the exact wording the British used in 1961 to persuade the Malayan Government to accept a formula allowing the British to use Singapore bases to meet all their commitments, including any SEATO deployment.

The British decided this covered the legal position for the time being. The Commander-in-Chief Far East Command, Air Chief Marshal Sir John Grandy, asked for and received Singapore Government confirmation that their forces remained under his operational command for Confrontation. But on 20 August the British Government told both governments a new formal defence agreement must be concluded with Singapore and ‘the British Government will now therefore proceed on the assumption the governments of Singapore and Malaysia will in
due course be making substantive proposals for that purpose.’ Apart from reflecting British irritation about having the separation sprung on them as a fait accompli, this note sent a clear signal in return: the real problem was policy, not law.10

The BANZ military presence in Singapore and Malaysia reflected national policy assumptions ranging beyond Confrontation. By August 1965 they shared four conclusions: Indonesia could not be allowed to undo Malaysia; communist China was a genuine threat to Southeast Asia and must be contained; the region was a vital Western interest in the global Cold War; the United States must lead the containment of China, but its allies needed insight and input into American decisions. But by now the British were already thinking deeply about all four conclusions and how best to satisfy them. Three problems most concerned them. First, they were the only Western power other than the United States to maintain a nuclear deterrent, make a major contribution to NATO in Europe, and still maintain balanced military forces in distant regions. This cost them nearly 8 per cent of their GNP, second only to the Americans and far more than the other NATO European allies. This was a political and economic obstacle to the ambitious domestic agenda adopted by the Labour Government led by Harold Wilson, elected in October 1964. It was also part of stubborn problems with the British balance of payments that threatened the value of the pound sterling. British military spending overseas made that balance weaker still. Second, many British officials were discouraged by the American decision to commit combat ground forces to Vietnam earlier that year. Debate in London increasingly revolved around how best to contain China without bogging down in a dangerous ground war on the Asian mainland; one growing sentiment was that it might be best to arrange the ‘neutralisation’ of the region, backed up by Western forces stationed on the periphery. Finally, British planners did not stop pondering possible alternatives to Singapore, seeking a more politically stable host for a main base. The Macmillan Government decided in 1962 to reduce the British military presence ‘east of Suez.’ That policy was reversed in 1964 by the need to defend Malaysia, but it indicated the direction of British thinking. One of the first things the Wilson Government did was launch a searching ‘defence review,’ a fundamental overhaul of British defence policy.11 The separation of Singapore immediately became a focal point of that ongoing review.

On 15 August Lord Head and several Cabinet ministers, including Secretary of State for Defence Denis Healey, flew by helicopter to a naval base near Prime Minister Wilson’s holiday home in the Scilly Isles, to brief him on the rupture of Malaysia. This deliberately melodramatic interruption to the holidays was for public consumption, but the meeting did produce three important conclusions. First, despite the fact both local governments wanted BANZ forces to stay, the British now must assume they would not be able to use the Singapore bases effectively for very much longer. The search for alternatives must now get serious. Second, the rupture of Malaysia called into question a war already seriously straining the defence budget; Confrontation itself must be re-examined. Above all, this development pushed forward the key question: could the British afford to remain a principal military power in the region? Should they try? The minutes captured the real dilemma: ‘In the longer term we must seek to reduce our own commitments in the Far East without, however, prejudicing our bona fides and our relations with Australia, New Zealand and the United States.’12

For the next year, the British Government tried to meet that challenge. A clash of diagnoses was already looming. But the separation of Singapore was the trigger that forced the BANZ
powers and the Americans to ‘take stock’ of their collective military role in Southeast Asia. The British set off a diplomatic dance involving all four governments, sometimes as a group, sometimes a *trois*, sometimes *tete a tete*, by inviting their allies to send officials to London for urgent and very secret discussions about the separation of Singapore. That meeting took place from 3 to 7 September. There were subsequent quadrilateral official or ministerial discussions in London in December, in Canberra in February 1966, in Canberra again in June, and in London in October. Connecting these gatherings were a series of running arguments within governments, and discussions between them, on British proposals made in the first London gathering and subsequent refinements from them. These rolling arguments were heavily influenced by political and military developments. Over the course of this fateful year for Western engagement in Southeast Asia, the new Republic of Singapore emerged as a possibly viable entity, Indonesia fell apart politically and Confrontation ended in the process, and the American commitment to Vietnam escalated to a major war. These events plus the British proposals compelled all four governments to think through their ‘bottom lines’ regarding the military containment of communism in Southeast Asia. The British goal was to persuade their allies to agree they could step down from being an independent military power in the region to being just another partner of a bloc carried by the broad shoulders of the Americans. They had in mind a de facto four power military bloc that would quietly coordinate policies, strategic plans and military deployments, to share the burden of containment and protect Western interests from the Indian Ocean to the Pacific. Instead, by autumn 1966 the British were openly moving towards fundamental change in their global military role without the safety net of any coordinated four power bloc ‘east of Suez,’ the Australians were settling into an American security orbit, the New Zealanders were caught between conflicting agendas, and the Americans were disgruntled by what they considered British ‘defeatism’. The four powers agreed on much in all this discussion, but could not resolve the most important problem they unearthed: the Americans and British ultimately disagreed on how ‘the West’ could prosecute containment in Southeast Asia.

The British laid their cards on the table at the quadrilateral meeting of officials in September 1965:

The result of separation was that the security of tenure in the bases had been significantly weakened. A number of influences had been released which had accelerated the situation they had expected would develop in 1970 or later. They expected pressures to grow which would limit their freedom to use the bases for their own purposes, including SEATO. In short, Singapore could no longer be regarded as the key to the presence of a significant British defence effort in the Far East.

The British did not intend to abandon the region, but now considered Confrontation pointless as well as too expensive. Malaysia would not long survive and sooner rather than later the British would be forced to leave Singapore. It might be better to try to end Confrontation on acceptable terms and make arrangements to relocate British bases and forces before events on the ground made their presence untenable, an outcome sure to undermine the whole Western position in Southeast Asia. The reactions were equally blunt. The New Zealanders argued it was pessimistic to write off Malaysia and Singapore and said there were no realistic alternatives to the bases in Singapore; facilities in Australia would be ‘far away…and extremely expensive.’ The Australians upped the ante. Before British officials
presented their paper Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies telegraphed Wilson on 3 September, responding to the draft the British circulated the day before. Menzies in effect accused the British of assuming Confrontation was now unwinnable so it would be best to run away and warned Wilson ‘all in all your proposals contained in the memorandum are very far-reaching and in some ways rather surprising. They exhibit a general attitude towards the probable development in that part of Asia which we would require to examine and, if necessary, challenge.’ When the talks adjourned for the weekend Menzies called the biggest kid in school, reporting this message to President Lyndon B. Johnson in Washington. Menzies warned the American President any such British decisions would be ‘of historic significance…for the political and military balance in Southeast Asia, and certainly for the United States in view of your own positive policies for containment of communist expansion and preservation of small free countries.’

The Australians were preaching to the converted. Samuel D. Berger, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Far Eastern Affairs, led the American delegation. He said the British were jumping the gun to assume Singapore was now untenable, argued both local governments wanted the British to remain and warned them to consider how their policy would affect the entire region. Berger was reinforced by Undersecretary of State George Ball, who arrived in London that weekend for scheduled talks on finance problems but by prior arrangement met Wilson for a ‘secret meeting without attracting attention’ to discuss the British proposals. On 8 and 9 September Ball discussed the quadripartite talks with the British Prime Minister including the relation of this problem to UK current financial difficulties.’ Ball told the British the talks were themselves ‘premature and hazardous.’ Any inclination the British were considering alternatives to Singapore would weaken the whole Western position in the region, just as the United States increased its military commitment to containment in Vietnam. Any feeler to Indonesia would only encourage Sukarno and the communists. Wilson backpedaled at full speed. He pointed out the British proposals were only contingencies aimed to provoke a timely conversation about choices, ideas based on what they saw as the unpredictable future of Lee Kuan Yew, his government and its policies. He denied the British were looking for an easy way out of Confrontation and categorically assured the Americans the British were not looking to withdraw from the region. Ball was not convinced and arranged a second meeting. The exchange between the two men indicated the British–American military partnership was approaching a moment of truth:

[Ball] made emphatically clear that the US government considered the Anglo–American relationship must be regarded as a totality in which each element of the relationship should be given weight and each related to the other. Thus it would be a great mistake if the UK government failed to understand that the American effort to relieve sterling was inextricably related to the commitment of the UK government to maintain its commitments around the world. All of the US government activities in relation to sterling or the economic problems of the UK government were necessarily related to the commitment of the two governments to engage together in a five-year review of the UK government’s defence program. The Prime Minister agreed to all of this, noting that he had expressed his earlier qualifications merely to make the record clear that the UK government would not accept an additional demand for a UK government contribution to Vietnam as a quid pro quo for US government short-term assistance for sterling. He readily admitted that all aspects of the relationship of the two governments must be considered as a totality in any long-range review of the UK defence effort.
This was the crux of the matter. Australia and New Zealand needed both American and British engagement in Southeast Asia to make forward defence viable, but needed the Americans to pin down the British. Only they could provide enough carrot or stick to sway British policy. The United States needed partners to help carry the global burden of containment, not least to persuade American public opinion they were not doing all the hard work alone. And Southeast Asia was becoming, as American troops poured into Vietnam, the hottest front in the Cold War. Berger told the British the Americans would prefer the British reduce their forces in NATO if that was the only way to maintain their strength in the Far East, a message the Americans repeated many times over the next year. As for the British, if by reducing their overseas military burden they lost American goodwill and economic support the cure might kill the patient, whatever Wilson might protest. But within the British Government the rising trend, bolstered by the troubles in Singapore, was the notion Western military power could not in the long run stabilise Southeast Asia, so the only ultimate solution was neutralisation—which meant negotiating a way off the Asian mainland. This was heavily reinforced by growing opposition to American escalation in Vietnam, especially within the governing Labour Party. Wilson clung to a razor thin majority in Parliament as it was. The bombing of North Vietnam persuaded him it was politically impossible to commit British forces to the conflict, a decision he did not change. But Australia and New Zealand both sent forces, to encourage the American commitment to the region they saw as the basis of their own security. The British dropped the idea to try to negotiate an end to Confrontation and agreed to ‘soldier on’. But they warned their allies the economic strain was critical, their concerns about Singapore were serious, and in order for the British to remain engaged in the region they must reduce their role and burden. That required two things. First, from now on British military engagement must be part of a more effective four-power division of labour and coordination of policy. Second, their allies must help them find an alternative to Singapore, so that when the British did have to leave they could do so with minimal damage to Western interests.

The issue was joined. The challenge was to find a way to keep the British in Southeast Asia in strength and the Western powers working together, despite the British decision to refrain from military commitment to Vietnam. During the last four months of 1965 developments in the region had an effect. The Singapore Government made guarded public comments about the British bases in an effort to establish Afro–Asian credentials and win much needed recognition, but assured the British their presence was vital to Singapore’s military and economic security. Lee Kuan Yew talked of their staying for as long as 20 years and never less than ten. Relations between Singapore and Malaysia soured badly rather than improving; in November and December the two nearly came to blows over the resumption of barter trade with Indonesia and the stationing of Malaysian infantry units in Singapore. Far East Command twisted uncomfortably in the middle and the British Government quietly decided they did not want British forces to referee squabbling neighbours. Meanwhile American ground troops engaged North Vietnamese regulars in combat as the war escalated. The biggest development was the political chaos that erupted in Indonesia after the failed coup on 30 September. Western intelligence and governments tried to make sense of the power struggle that ensued and its implications for Confrontation. At another quadrilateral meeting of officials in early December all agreed any demarche to Indonesia was premature; but the hope Confrontation might now ‘peter out’ fed into everyone’s calculations. In November the British Government reached tentative conclusions in their defence review, to lay down the basis of their defence policy through the year 1970. Wilson took their ideas to Washington in December and went over
them with Johnson. They agreed Healey would return the next month for another discussion, once British ideas were refined after considering American reactions. Healey would then travel to Canberra to discuss them in detail with the Australians. The New Zealanders agreed to join that meeting. Meanwhile these two smaller Western powers, who had the most to lose, were not inactive.

For Wellington, the key point was Wilson’s claim on 25 September that ‘time was not on our side,’ especially in Singapore. Prime Minister Keith Holyoake argued that the whole point of Western policy in Southeast Asia was to fight for time—time for the region to consolidate itself, free from communist subversion and aggression. That required the British to stay on the spot for as long as they possibly could. Of all four powers the Kiwis were most keen to preserve a strong British military presence in the region. The alliance with the US might now be the key to New Zealand’s military security but a strong connection to the UK, which required continued British engagement as an Asian power, remained the very foundation of New Zealand’s economy and sense of identity. Their close attention to British proposals and discussions led them to an important insight. The British meant what they said about needing to reduce their military role from principal to partner in order to remain engaged, which meant they were serious about contingency planning against the day they must leave Singapore. But London was by no means united on the basis of British policy. New Zealand officials argued the British proposals in September were a trial balloon, floated in two directions. The quadrilateral partners now understood how strong the pressure to withdraw from ‘east of Suez’ was becoming in British policymaking and politics. But British officials who wanted such a withdrawal now understood how adamantly opposed the allies were to the idea and how fiercely they would contest it. There seemed to be three ways forward: to persuade the British not to be pessimistic about Singapore, to persuade the Australians to examine as a contingency an alternative to Singapore, and to persuade the Americans to agree to closer four partner coordination of defence in the region.

The Australians saw themselves falling into the same sort of dilemma. The Americans were their principal ally; that fact was pulling them into Vietnam and remained front and centre. But forward defence rested on British engagement as well, at least in part to help influence the Americans. As the Americans moved heavily into Vietnam and the British pressed for serious study of alternatives to Singapore, Canberra saw a nightmare scenario unfolding: their two key allies were moving in different directions, undoing containment in the whole region. Some officials in the Prime Minister’s Department suggested Australia stick to a hard line, refusing even to discuss shifting the main British base from Singapore to Australia on the grounds the news would surely leak out, which would compromise the whole Commonwealth position. Malaysia might seek its own deal with Indonesia; an isolated Singapore might look for help from China, raising the spectre of an ‘Asian Cuba’ in the heart of the region. This hard line gained support for a time, but encouraging statements from Washington, patient discussions in London, and some reflection in Canberra had more effect. The Australians decided the answer was to support British appeals to the Americans to pursue quadrilateral discussions on coordinating policies. The end result would be to construct an unpublicised de facto military bloc, underpinning containment behind the camouflage of SEATO, AMDA, and local support for Western military engagement. This could reconcile the British need to reduce their burden and the Australian imperative to keep their two key allies working together. But at the same time they pressed the British to be more optimistic about Singapore, or at least accept the
need to stay as long as possible. Menzies went so far on 22 October as to urge Wilson to ‘look towards means of staying, even in adversity, so that [bases in Singapore and Malaysia] may be retained as long as possible.’ Wilson naturally contested the suggestion the British stay ‘even in adversity’ and the British pressed again for serious study about shifting their main base to Australia. Such intense discussion within and between governments meant that by the time Healey reached Canberra at the end of January 1966, after stopping over in Washington, the BANZ governments had a pretty clear idea of each other’s agenda and where the Americans stood. The result was a frank two day meeting on 1 and 2 February that finally exposed just what the Commonwealth allies now could and could not do as defence partners in Southeast Asia.

Menzies retired after 17 consecutive years in office days before Healey arrived. Harold Holt moved from the Treasury into the hot seat. He was not as emotionally anglophile as Menzies, but au fait with the issues and had his Cabinet and officials on hand—especially Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck, a champion of ‘forward defence’. Dean Eyre, Minister for Defence, led the New Zealand delegation. All three Chiefs of the Defence Staff (CDS) were present: Field Marshal Richard Hull from the UK, Air Chief Marshal Frederick Scherger for Australia and Lieutenant General L.W. Thornton from New Zealand. What ensued was one of the more important discussions in Commonwealth military history.

Healey began by reminding his allies what they already knew, the gist of the defence policy now proposed by the British Government. These decisions reflected allied pressure, especially from Washington, to no small degree. The British defence budget would be reduced from £2.4 billion in 1964 prices to £2 billion by 1970. Despite this, the British would maintain powerful balanced forces in the Far East—some 40 per cent of the total they would maintain overseas, costing 10 per cent of the defence budget. That would include the nuclear deterrent maintained in Singapore as a SEATO commitment. Cuts in programs and weapons procurement, savings in administration, and reductions in forces in Africa and the Persian Gulf, especially withdrawing from the base at Aden, would make it possible to cut 16 per cent of the defence budget but only 4 per cent of capability. The Royal Navy bore the brunt of the cuts and would receive no new aircraft carrier, but would maintain at least one ‘east of Suez’ until 1975. There were of course strings attached. Some £50 million in savings still must be found; any allied reluctance to accept British proposals might yet push the Cabinet, which had not yet made its final decision, to seek the economy in the Far East. The British would see Confrontation through to a successful outcome. But after that their continued military engagement would rest on three conditions. They would not again be able to fight on their own—which also meant in the lead role—a ‘sophisticated opponent,’ defined as an enemy with advanced weaponry. Nor would they be able to take the lead in any prolonged counterinsurgency operations. Finally, they would not base in or operate from any position where local opinion did not strongly support their presence and operations. Healey concluded by pointing out the Americans were pleased to hear the British would not leave the region after Confrontation and now planned to stay in Singapore as long as practicable under their stipulations above, and agreed alternatives to Singapore should be examined.

The Australian ministers did their homework and were not intimidated by either threats or invocations of the Americans. Their reply was robust. Australia had nearly doubled its annual defence budget since 1962 and according to their figures was now spending as much money per capita on security, broadly defined, as the British. Holt said the Australians were convinced
only American engagement could prevent communist China from subverting Southeast Asia, but not convinced the Americans had the will to remain engaged in the long term. The established British presence on the mainland was a vital stabilising factor. It would help keep the Americans committed, whereas withdrawal would discourage them and provoke trouble in the region. The Australians did not agree the local governments would want the British to leave, but what mattered most was the effect any change had on the Americans. Healey replied ‘there was no difference of view between us and our Allies on the desirability of deploying as far north as possible for as long as possible’ but suggested that in the long-term neutralising the area might be the only way to keep China at bay. As for Singapore, it might clash with Malaysia, or Lee Kuan Yew might lose the election in 1968, or a British withdrawal might turn out to be the only way to terminate Confrontation. These risks were all serious enough to compel what Healey now presented as his main objective: an Australian commitment to study the possibilities of moving Far East Command from Singapore to Australia. The British needed to know whether this was feasible economically and politically, and would be effective militarily.

Healey’s candour brought everyone to the crux of the matter. Wilson and his supporters believed British interests in general, and the need for American support in particular, required the British to try to maintain their global military role in the 1970s. But economic and political pressure at home, and their pessimistic appraisal of both American military prospects in Vietnam and political prospects in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia, persuaded them that by the 1970s Western military forces could only effectively underpin containment by redeploying from the mainland to the periphery of Southeast Asia. This amounted to writing off South Vietnam, which directly contradicted American policy, and assuming the worst in Malaysia and Singapore. Both conclusions provoked the allies. Hasluck tried to focus the discussion on fundamentals, on thinking through a grand strategy for the region. He argued neutralisation would only open the door to China; withdrawal from the mainland was more likely to force the West one day to enforce containment by nuclear weapons. Forward defence required military engagement; sheer American weight set its own logic. Dean Eyre agreed, arguing bases in Australia would be ‘beyond the fringe’; any real British disengagement from the region would push the Australians and New Zealanders to ‘change their strategy from forward defence to home defence, and to greater dependence on the United States.’

Confident he had a bargain with the Americans, Healey stuck to his brief. The British agreed to maintain a smaller but still potent Far East Command as long as the Americans fought on in Vietnam; in return the Americans agreed the British could search for an alternative base. The argument resumed the next day. Holt sketched out a bargain. Provided the British confirmed their plans to maintain Far East Command into the 1970s, and to stay in Singapore as long as they could—especially while war continued in Vietnam—the BANZ powers could study the practicalities of shifting the British base to Australia and make a concerted effort to press the Americans to accept quiet four power defence coordination. The Australians linked these two issues, a fall back position prepared before Healey arrived. The idea was to entangle the Americans and British together in any military decision that affected containment in Southeast Asia; if British forces did move, the four powers would adjust policies accordingly and coherently. Healey said the British envisaged shifting to Australia, if necessary, an air force of some seven squadrons, ground forces amounting to division strength, and naval forces nearly as strong as the current Far East Fleet. By the mid 70s there might be no aircraft carrier, but Polaris nuclear missile submarines might be deployed. The strategic reserves in the UK would
be able to send another brigade within a week, to draw on stockpiles moved to Australia. This would reduce Far East Command by nearly half, but it was swollen for Confrontation as it stood. This force level should still enable the British to maintain all current commitments, including any SEATO deployment, in partnership with their allies.

This brought the discussion to its climax. Healey made two points: on his way home he would tell both Lee and the Tunku the British wanted to remain in place, but would only stay if they could make unfettered use of the bases; they would not stay merely to prop up the Singapore economy. And he needed to bring home some concrete information about what facilities Australia could provide for British forces should they eventually move there. Holt replied candidly. The Australians had held back because of their ‘extreme reluctance to say or do anything which might be interpreted as being lukewarm about the importance of staying in the Singapore base.’ But they were willing to provide practical information and examine the problem, provided this unfolded within quadripartite discussions about defence coordination. Deputy Prime Minister John McEwen finally cut to the chase. If the British were already determined to leave Singapore before they really had to ‘he wished to do nothing whatsoever to help them in this matter. This would predicate a new situation in which Australia would turn to the United States for help.’

That retort reflected the pressure all sides were working under. Only close allies could have such candid discussions, but the tension indicated how high the stakes loomed to all three. The group now stepped back from friction to seek consensus. The Australians agreed the three CDS would explore, without commitment, the practicalities of relocating British forces. Healey would make the strongest statement in public about British intentions to remain in Singapore that he could persuade his colleagues to accept. Most important, all three governments would press for ongoing quadripartite official and ministerial discussions, to consider ‘the prospects of working together militarily in the 1970s.’ This last point appeared to be the issue on which BANZ military cooperation in the region would stand or fall. The Americans were the key factor. If they agreed to accept British reductions and redeployment from 1970 and take the lead in a de facto four power military bloc, the British could stay. On those terms, the Australians and New Zealanders could consider British relocation. The consequences of British withdrawal from Singapore could be offset by the larger fact of British–American harmony. Provided the BANZ powers understood American plans and intentions and could safely assume American forces would join any future deployment, forward defence might remain viable.

On 22 February the British Government published its White Paper on defence, promising to maintain Britain’s global military role, including strong military forces ‘east of Suez’. The policy provoked resignations by the Minister for the Navy and the First Sea Lord, protesting the scrapping of future aircraft carriers, and a national debate about British defence policy that crossed party lines. The visible waning of Confrontation, as Suharto established control, relieved some pressure. So did the Singapore Government’s increasing public pragmatism about Western military engagement in the region, as well as some waning in tension with Malaysia. But the British debate now came to revolve around the issues of Europe and Vietnam. At home, an awkward alliance attacked the ‘east of Suez’ policy. Anti-American opposition to war in Vietnam was reinforced by critics arguing ‘east of Suez’ was an expensive pretention Britain could no longer afford; it should try again to enter the European Economic Community (EEC), to accept its decline as a world power and adjust accordingly. These arguments were not new,
but the White Paper and escalation in Vietnam pushed them forward. The Americans built up their forces and stepped up operations. In response, the Australian Government decided on 2 March to increase its military deployment there, using conscripted soldiers. The Australian contribution to Vietnam now exceeded their contribution to Far East Command and would continue to rise. This all made it harder for Wilson to carry on his balancing act: to keep strong forces in the region to help contain China, but not commit any to support his leading ally in its major campaign to do just that. The British Government could not be too candid about the need for American economic support and the price it must pay to retain it; full disclosure would only further weaken the pound. Once Confrontation ended, Wilson and Healey knew it would be harder to justify staying in the region yet not embracing American strategy. The only way forward seemed to be the idea to relocate forces to Australia from 1970.

The discussions with Healey and subsequent examination of base facilities in Australia indicated how much the Commonwealth military relationship had changed. Holt used the same description Australian and New Zealand governments used in the 1920s, arguing a British military presence in Singapore was ‘the vital northern flank,’ a lynchpin of forward defence. An Australian prime minister of that earlier era, Stanley Bruce, when asked in public how Singapore could be defended, said ‘I am not sure how but I am reliably informed it can be’—one of international history’s most notorious examples of taking your patron’s word for it. The Holt Government, on the other hand, accepted American assurances about deploying in Vietnam without any real pressure—but subjected Healey and British intentions to fierce cross-examination, to underline their determination to hold the British in Singapore as long as they could. The political/strategic reality was that for Australia and New Zealand moving British forces to Australia would be no more than a barely tolerable last resort, perhaps better only than seeing them withdraw completely. As the Australians continued to examine the idea, with the British and among themselves, their reflections made even that conclusion seem doubtful.

The same day Healey’s discussions in Canberra reached their climax, 2 February, Hull, Scherger and Thornton broke off to discuss base facilities in Australia. Once again the Australians were prepared and Scherger left Hull under no illusions. The Navy might be able to expand current plans to build facilities on the west coast, the Air Force could with some effort provide facilities, especially in the north, but the Army had none to spare. It was in fact straining to keep up with its own rapid expansion. Hull spelt out his own bottom line: any facilities on the well developed east coast would be ‘on the wrong side of Australia’. British forces would need to operate from the west coast and/or the north, to meet commitments from the Indian Ocean to Hong Kong. Their ground forces would be split between contributing to a relocated Commonwealth Strategic Reserve and amphibious Royal Marine forces that should be based with their naval support. Thornton and Scherger replied that any decisions as to where to base what forces depended on first working out ‘the compatibility of strategic objectives’. That plus the physical problem of building facilities turned out to be insoluble obstacles.

Over the next three months the Australians examined the whole problem. Their Chiefs of Staff (COS) concluded the key problem would be ground forces, but all three forces posed daunting challenges. British forces would quite possibly bring nuclear weapons to Australia. That forced the government to study such issues as control and vulnerability. The Air Force could with effort share facilities with an RAF reasonably compatible in equipment and techniques, but
it would take ten years to prepare the necessary infrastructure. The Navy could share west coast facilities but they would also take ten years to build from scratch. But the Army would eat up all available space, which left three awkward choices. British ground forces could be dispersed the length and breadth of Australia in improvised accommodation; or the British could rotate units frequently and send them out without families, to trim the infrastructure required; or someone could provide the large amounts of money, labour and materiel needed to build the necessary facilities from scratch. Either way, the Marine commandos and British Army units could not collocate, which would hamper any ground operations. More troubling still was the question of what British forces would do, especially ground forces. If the British moved in the numbers Healey stipulated, they would outnumber Australian forces in Australia. Australia had no interest in housing British forces deployed to operate in Africa and the western Indian Ocean. The prospect of British ground forces sitting in garrison in Australia as an ostensible SEATO commitment while Australian conscript soldiers fought in Vietnam was a political nightmare. The total cost of providing facilities would exceed $500 million, more than the annual Australian defence budget—and the British expected their allies to foot most of the cost. Finally, it was obvious any such massive project to relocate British forces would become public knowledge early enough to compromise the Commonwealth position in Malaysia and Singapore.

The Australians passed on these concerns to the British. British plans continued into June to refer to relocation to Australia in the 1970s, but it became increasingly obvious this was a non-starter. In July the government directed the COS to examine the defence ramifications of any renewed British effort to enter the EEC. Confrontation formally ended in August in victory when Indonesia officially called it off. But that same month Healey directed the COS to launch a contingency study on how to reduce the defence budget by 1970 by another £150 million. He suggested they examine four scenarios: reduce works and programs; cut weapons procurement and research; reduce the NATO commitment; or reduce forces ‘east of Suez’ to little more than a garrison in Hong Kong and ‘a small naval presence’. The COS decided that if any such policy change was made it should be done by reducing commitments, probably ‘east of Suez’.

The other basis on which the British might yet be persuaded to remain in Singapore for some years to come was the hope the Americans could be persuaded to concert policies as a foursome, if only quietly. The challenge here was probably also insoluble. Most senior American officials remained convinced any public indication a ‘white man’s club’ made the real decisions about containment, using SEATO as camouflage, would backfire politically in the region. The fact the quadripartite exchanges amounted to just that made them reluctant to push them any further. British views added to that reluctance. The British did not think China would do more than continue to support subversion everywhere and war in Vietnam. They remained convinced the longer Western forces stayed on the mainland the more likely they were either to wear out their political welcome there, or bog down in a military commitment that would become politically untenable at home. The first reflected their reaction to Singapore, the second to Vietnam. But American officials readily saw through the British hope they could retain American support even after they reduced their role in Southeast Asia.

The most thoughtful suggestion to come from the smaller allies regarding how to stop this divergence came from Hasluck. Two weeks after the Healey talks he urged his department
to reconsider the whole question of quadripartite cooperation. Hasluck forensically picked apart the loose thinking revolving around the issue. Australia wanted a real voice in Western policy in the region but wanted to prevent ‘the danger that one ally, alongside whom we were fighting, might have different views from those of the other great ally, alongside whom we were also fighting’. The only way to do that would be to stop pressing for quadripartite ‘arrangements’. That suggested concrete policy steps and public commitments sure to expose, not heal, British–American divergence. Australia should instead promote quadripartite ‘discussions’. Provided they kept the Americans and British talking in a group of four, the Australians could persuade them to focus on what brought them together: the fundamental goal to contain China and the need to share that burden. Plans and forces might be at least reconciled if shared grand strategy kept all four together. It might be possible to entice British and American policies to coexist.

This insightful suggestion came too little too late. Dean Rusk, the American Secretary of State, met Wilson in London on 10 June. They discussed what to do in Southeast Asia now that Confrontation seemed about to end. The problem was clear: to find a viable role for Far East Command if it could not deploy in Vietnam. Rusk made his pitch: perhaps the British could send support and helicopter units to help Thailand cope with its small scale subversion problem in the northeast; surely the British could draw a distinction between Vietnam and Thailand. But strong American air forces were attacking Vietnam from Thailand, so the British could not. Wilson replied that the ‘unnatural alliance’ attacking his ‘east of Suez’ policy on both pacific and European grounds was supported by ‘sophisticated economists’ who argued the policy was unaffordable. If he did anything more than not denounce the American campaign in Vietnam the political backlash would cripple ‘east of Suez’. Given that Wilson was re-elected with a stronger majority in March, Rusk was not impressed. But nothing mattered more to Wilson than the mood of the country and he read it better than Rusk, so he would not give. Rusk moved on. Perhaps it was now time to start thinking about how to ‘wind up SEATO’, once Vietnam was secured.

Rusk moved on to Canberra at the end of the month for scheduled SEATO discussions. The bloc of four used them to cover a private huddle, the next round of ministerial talks. British Foreign Secretary Michael Stewart replied to Hasluck’s effort to concert grand strategy and fundamental objectives by suggesting the four powers organise another meeting of officials later that year. The purpose would be to study the political and strategic situation in Southeast Asia country by country; each delegation would present a report on a given country for the others to discuss. Rusk readily agreed to exchange views and papers ‘in a discreet way’. The optimists hoped this might reveal common ground on which to foster quadripartite military cooperation. Everyone realised it might also indicate once and for all that this could no longer be done. The talks convened in great secrecy in London in October, under the cover name London Study Group. It was apt. The British–American clash of policy was fundamental. Shared interest in containment would keep them talking and possibly working together in Southeast Asia. But disagreement on how to prosecute containment on the mainland set a limit that ruled out any real four power military harmonisation short of full scale war against China. The papers and discussions only underlined the dilemma. New Zealand’s paper on Thailand was based almost entirely on information provided by the Americans. The American paper on Vietnam insisted South Vietnam could be salvaged. The British papers on Malaysia and Singapore argued that notwithstanding Lee Kuan Yew’s growing support for the Western
military presence in general, the unstable politics of the region added too much to the already serious financial strain of maintaining Far East Command. The search for changes beginning from 1970 must continue. An Australian paper on how to rally support for the Western military and political presence in the region was all but drowned out.39

In September 1965 the British cited the separation of Singapore to trigger a discussion they hoped would allow them to reorient their defence policy in Southeast Asia yet avoid two consequences: a backlash from their key Western allies and further political and economic strain at home. The solution was always clear: to persuade the Americans to sign off on changes in British policy. The London Study Group ended that campaign. There was no open break. The British Government did not condemn the war in Vietnam, Far East Command remained in Singapore, Australian and New Zealand forces carried on there and in Vietnam. But, crucially, neither was there any meeting of minds. The four powers did not agree on how to adjust containment as a result of the separation of Singapore and what it represented: further turbulent change in politics on the ground. The issue went beyond the prospects of Singapore itself. The British knew the Singapore Government was unlikely to ask them to leave, and by 1966 their concerns about it losing power were not much more than expressions for the record.40 The issue was whether or not ‘white faces’ could still prop up the dominoes in Southeast Asia. Economic problems would sooner or later have provoked a British withdrawal from the region. But the combination of American military escalation in Vietnam plus the political failure of Malaysia persuaded the British, by 1966, that the game would not, by the 1970s, be worth the candle. The London Study Group made it clear the four powers could no longer paper over the key dispute. The British agreed Western military forces must remain in the area to deter naked Chinese aggression, but insisted deploying them on the mainland to counter communist subversion must ultimately backfire; the Americans flatly disagreed.41

So what did the long four power discussion accomplish? There is a real possibility the British would have tried to abandon Confrontation and Singapore in early 1966, had their allies not objected so strongly. Those objections gave Wilson and Healey the political muscle to insist their defence policy retain the global role and ‘east of Suez’ presence as long as possible. This bought time for Singapore to figure out how to survive. On the other hand, while the waning of Confrontation brought immediate relief, it also forced the four powers to consider whether they could still prosecute containment without open divergence. The British idea was to relocate to Australia. Initial Australian reluctance to consider this was not decisive; the idea was never strategically, politically or economically viable. The Australian idea was to keep the Americans and British talking together, to agree at least on a main objective and grand strategy. They fell short but it was not their fault. The problem was fundamental. The British did not agree military containment on the mainland would work politically, in Southeast Asia or at home, short of responding to a full-scale Chinese invasion. So they would not engage in Vietnam or Thailand. That meant they could not go to Australia. So once they decided the environment in Singapore was no longer stable, Wilson and Healey found it hard to argue Far East Command was still both necessary and practicable. The decline of the pound and the pull to Europe were already soaring up the agenda when the London Study Group met.

In the end the discussions triggered by the separation of Singapore did five things. First, they bought time for Singapore and Malaysia to survive Confrontation. Second, they forced Australia and New Zealand to choose between the American and British approach to containment in
Southeast Asia. They chose the American, notwithstanding the fact their forces remained engaged with Far East Command. Third, they persuaded the Americans not to make sacrifices to maintain strong British forces in Southeast Asia. Vietnam ruined the relationship between Wilson and Johnson and the Americans settled for taking what they could get from the British. Fourth, they ruled out any relocation of British forces around the region. It was Singapore or bust. Finally, they gave the other three Western powers time to brace themselves against the day the British decided it must be bust after all. 1968 is usually seen as the year the Western military alliance in Southeast Asia collapsed. The separation of Singapore provoked a dialogue that effectively ended it in 1966.

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NOTES

Abbreviations:

ANZ  Archives New Zealand
AWM  Australian War Memorial
CRO  Commonwealth Relations Office (UK)
DEA  Department of External Affairs (Australia and New Zealand)
FADC  Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (Australia)
FO  Foreign Office (UK)
HC  High Commission
JIC  Joint Intelligence Committee
JPC  Joint Planning Committee
NA  National Archives UK
NAA  National Archives Australia
NAC  National Archives Canada
NARA  National Archives and Records Administration, USA


4. AWM121, 31/B/1, GSO1 minute, Establishment in Australia of UK Main Base for Southeast Asia, 13 May, JPC report 23/1957, Australia as a Possible Main Base for UK Far East Land Forces, 3 June, BGS Brief for CGS, Australia as a Possible Main Base for UK Land Forces, 5 June 1957.


7. When it seemed Confrontation might escalate seriously in September 1964 the Australian reaction was swift and telling. Menzies passed this message to American Secretary of State Dean Rusk: ‘It would be a calamity if some British action was decided upon in which Australia were involved but in which the United States had not been consulted in advance, or where there was a possibility that there might be a public difference of opinion between Great Britain and the United States’: NAA, A1209/1964/6647 Part 1, DEA to Australian Embassy Washington, 2194, 11 September 1964; see also A1838, 3024/12 Part 1, Australian High Commission London to DEA, 812, 26 February 1962; TS696/17/1 Part 4, COS Minutes, Strategic Importance of Malaysia to Australia, 26 July 1963; A1209/1964/6647, Part 4, McEwen to Wilson, 19 January 1965; NARA, RG59, POL7UK, 7/1/64, Box 2777, State Dept. to American Embassy Ottawa, 3 July 1964; ANZ, AAFD-811-W3738, 222/3/1 Part 1, DC Report 1/64, 11 December, Cabinet decision CM(64)49, 17 December 1964; ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, DEA to New Zealand HC London, 21 June, New Zealand HC London to DEA, 30 June 1965.

8. NA, CAB148/21, OPD(65)97, 14 June 1965; NAA, A1838/3024/2/1/1 Part 1, Australian HC Singapore to DEA, Saving 2, 15 March 1965; A1209/1965/6328, Lee Kuan Yew to Menzies, 20 April, Australian HC Singapore Office to DEA, 529, 17 May, Griffith to Bunting, 17 May, Menzies to Lee Kuan Yew, 18 May 1965; A1209/1965/6571, British HC Kuala Lumpur to CRO, 960, 1 June, CRO to British HC Kuala Lumpur, 1594–95, 3 June, Griffith to Bunting, 9 June 1965; ANZ, AAFD-811-W3738, 235/1/2 Part 2, JIC Intelligence Review 24/65, 9 June 1965.

9. NAA, A1209/1965/6571, British HC Kuala Lumpur to CRO, 1340, 8 August, contains Lord Head's notification to London, confirming that 'local' governments surprised their 'external' counterparts despite long months of tension; see also Wilson to Tunku Abdul Rahman, Lee Kuan Yew to Menzies, Hasluck to Critchley, 9 August, Australian HC Singapore to DEA, 17 August 1965.


12. NA, CAB130/239, Misc.76/1st Meeting, Minutes of Meeting at Culdrose RN Air Station, 15 August 1965; NARA, RG59, POL16Singapore, 1/1/65, American Embassy London to State Dept, 16 August 1965, reported ‘On balance [British government] seriously troubled, feeling its way cautiously and seeking understanding.’

13. British preparations for the London meeting can be studied in: NA, CAB130/239, Misc75/3, Working Party on Singapore Memorandum, 16 August 1965; CAB158/59, JIC(65)57(Final), 16 August, JIC(65)44(Final), 19 August 1965; DEFE4/188, COS minutes, 17 and 26 August. British officials and diplomats repeatedly hinted what would be placed on the table at that meeting: NARA, RG59, POL16Singapore, 1/1/65, American Embassy London to State Dept, 10 August 1965; NAA, A1209/1965/6595 Part 1, Australian HC London to DEA, 7037, 14 August, Brief for Prime Minister on Proposed Quadripartite Talks in London, 26 August, Menzies to Wilson, 26 and 30 August 1965; A1209/1965/6571, Australian HC London to DEA, 7214, 19 August, 7230, 20 August 1965; ANZ, ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/2/10 Part 1, New Zealand HC London to DEA, 13 August, New Zealand HC Kuala Lumpur to DEA, 20 August 1965; LONB106/5A Part 1, DEA to New Zealand HC London, 2 September 1965.

14. The basis of the British presentation to the London meeting was settled in NA, CAB148/22, OPD(65)123, 25 August 1965. Well before the rupture of Malaysia the British were not subtle about their need for tighter American support. In 26 April 1965 Wilson tried to sell Johnson ‘the desirability of a greater degree of four power planning in relation to the defence of Asia and the Far East generally’: ANZ, ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, Wilson to Holyoke, 26 April 1965. Weeks later he told Rusk ‘he would like to see some four-power arrangement for East of Suez affairs outside of SEATO, etc. Such an arrangement could coordinate, for example, air striking power’: NARA, RG59, DEF1UK, 1/1/65, Box 1691, Memorandum of Conversation, Rusk and Wilson, 14 May 1965.

15. NA, CAB148/22, OPD(65)123, 25 August 1965; ANZ, ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, CRO memorandum, QT(65)1, 2 September 1965.

16. NAA, A1209/1965/6595 Part 1, Australian HC London to DEA, 7578-79, 2 September, Menzies to Wilson, 3 September 1965; NARA, RG59, DEF6UK, 1/1/64, Box 1691, Menzies to Johnson, 6 September 1965; ANZ, ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, New Zealand HC London to DEA, 2 September 1965.

17. Ball referred to a standing British promise about consultation. From the start of its defence review the Wilson Government repeatedly promised they would spring no surprises on the Americans. Ball joined Robert McNamara, the American Defence Secretary, to extract it from Chancellor of the Exchequer James Callaghan, identified as a leader in the campaign to reduce defence spending, at a meeting in Washington in June, Callaghan assuring ‘there would be no suddenly announced British decisions in the defence field’: NARA, RG59, DEF1UK, 1/1/65, Box 1691, Memorandum of Conversation, McNamara, Ball, and Callaghan, 30 June 1965. Two weeks later McGeorge Bundy, Special Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, warned Rusk ‘the coming British economic crisis is a major matter, and so far they are dealing with us department by department and without real candour’: POL7UK, 1/6/65, Box 2778, Bundy to Rusk, 18 July 1965; DEF6UK, 1/1/64, Box 1691, State Dept. to American Embassy London, 23 August, American Embassy London to State Dept, 7 September 1965; NAA, A1209/1965/6595 Part 1, DEA to Washington, 2558, 2565, 6 September 1965.

18. NA, CAB148/22, OPD(65)131, 20 September 1965; DEFE4/189, COS minutes, 14 September 1965; NAA, A1209/1965/6595 Part 1, Australian HC London to DEA, 7673-74, 3 September, 7756, 7 September, Summary of Main Points in Verbal Report to FADC following Quadripartite Meetings in London, 8 September, copy of telegram from President Johnson to Wilson, 13 September 1965; NARA, RG59, DEF6UK, 1/1/64, Box 1691, American Embassy London to State Dept, 9 September
19. NARA, RG59, POL15-1 Sing, 1/1/66, Box 2652, American Ambassador Kuala Lumpur to State Dept, 17 August, 17 September, American Consul Singapore to State Dept, 16 August, 3 September, 15 October 1965; POL23-8 Sing, 1/1/65, Box 2652, American Consul Singapore to State Dept, 30 August 1965; NAA, A1209/1965/6571, British Deputy HC Singapore to British HC Kuala Lumpur, 215, 10 August, British HC Kuala Lumpur to CRO, 1601, 20 September, British HC Singapore to CRO, 566, 22 October; ANZ, AAFD-811-W3738, 235/1/2 Part 3, JIC Intelligence Review 39/65, 7 September 1965; ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/2/10 Part 1, New Zealand HC Singapore to DEA, 4, 7, and 13 September, DEA to New Zealand HC London, 6 September 1965.


21. NA, CAB158/60, JIC(65)89(Final), 16 December 1965; DEFE4/190, COS minutes, 19 October 1965; DEFE4/192, COS minutes, 7 December 1965; DEF5/164, COS219/65, 30 December 1965; NARA, RG59, POLIndon-UK, 1/1/64, Box 2326, American Embassy Jakarta to State Dept, 20 October 1965; DEF6/UK, 1/1/64, Box 1691, American Embassy London to State Dept, 18 November, 1–2 December 1965; ANZ, AAFD-811-W3738, 22/23/1 Part 1, Notes on Defence Ctee meeting with C-in-C Far East Command, 2 November 1965; AAFD-811-W3738, 235/1/2 Part 3, JIC Intelligence Review 52/65, 30 November 1965; ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, New Zealand HC London to DEA, 8 November, 1 and 3 December, DEA to New Zealand HC London, 12 and 30 November 1965.


25. NAA, A1209/1965/6124, Australian HC London to DEA, 10627, 24 November 1965; A1209/1965/6595 Part 1, Australian HC London to DEA, 7866, 10 September, Downer to Menzies, 20 September, Australian Embassy Washington to DEA, 3392, 29 September, Memoranda, British Presence in Southeast Asia, 5, 6 and 14 October, Griffith to Bunting, 11 October, noted ‘a tacit admission in Healey’s conversation that Australia and America could frustrate the British policy intentions to get out of Singapore,’ Bailey to Bunting, 13 October, Bunting to Menzies, 15 and 19 October, Menzies to Wilson, 22 October, Australian HC London to DEA, 9416, 22 October 1965; A1209/1965/6595 Part 2, Bunting to Menzies, 23 November, Jockel to Bailey, 23 November, Lawrence to Menzies,


31. AWM121, 31/B/1, Record of Discussions between Australian COS and representatives of Britain and New Zealand on Base Facilities in Australia, 2 February 1966. See also NA, DEFE4/195, COS minutes 25 January and 7 February 1966.


37. *NA*, PREM13/2083, Record of conversation between Wilson and Rusk, 10 June 1966. Johnson’s reaction to Wilson’s refusal about Thailand was quick and cold. Wilson could visit Washington in late July as suggested but ‘should not come unless what he says here in public and in private reinforces the President’s position on Vietnam and if this is impossible for him, he must find an excuse for the visit not to take place’: *NARA*, RG59, POL7UK, 7/1/64, State Dept. to American Embassy London, 2 July 1966. Wilson did in fact meet Johnson, but his report of that meeting to Holt and Holyoake glossed over any divergence and stressed his promise to see out Confrontation. The implied omission provoked the New Zealander, days after the formal rapprochement between Indonesia and Malaysia, to seek reassurance on ‘one small aspect,’ to wit ‘that you will continue to share the view that our mutual security interest in the area goes well beyond the ending of Confrontation and that forces and base facilities should, if possible, be maintained there for a long time to come’: *ANZ*, AHBS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 2, Wilson to Holyoake, 3 August, Holyoake to Wilson, 15 August 1966.


40. NA, CAB158/60, JIC(65)71(Final), 7 January 1966; CAB158/62, JIC(66)30(Final), 1 April 1966; AWM121, 211/C/3, ANZAM JIC report 1/1966(revised), The Threat to Malaysia, Singapore and Brunei up to the End of March 1967, 30 August 1966; NAA, A1209/1965/6595 Part 7, Australian HC London to DEA, 4944, 23 May, Australian HC Singapore to DEA, 1005, 15 August 1966. New Zealand officials noted pragmatism in Lee Kuan Yew’s attitude towards the bases as early as 1960: ANZ, EA1-W2668, 120/2/5 Part 2, Brief for Prime Minister’s Visit to Malaya and Singapore April 1960. They also singled out at the time the root problem predating but so starkly exposed by the rupture of Malaysia: ‘The Americans regard Vietnam as the critical area and consider that the fate of the countries of Southeast Asia depends on the outcome of the struggle there. They recognize it as important to sustain Malaysia, and regard this as primarily a Commonwealth responsibility, but consider the threat there to be a relatively minor one compared with the threat faced in Vietnam’: ABHS-7148-W4628, LONB106/5A Part 1, DEA to New Zealand HC London, 30 April 1965.

41. NA, DEFE4/207, COS/2008/6/10/66, 6 October, COS minutes, 11 October, 1 November, DP Note 31/66, 28 October 1966.
Australia’s Second World War Strategic Alliances

Lieutenant Colonel Richard Campbell

If the power of Great Britain were shattered on the sea, the only course for the five millions of white men in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States.

Sir Winston Churchill, March 1914

Introduction

In 1939 Australians still saw themselves as British. Australian interests were essentially British interests. Consequently, Australia continued to support the UK’s Imperial defence ‘policy’ and expected to be protected in the event of any threat to its national sovereignty.¹ This relationship was believed to be so automatic and unconditional that it required no written defence agreement. Ironically, Britain’s inability to concurrently engage in a major conflict and to protect its former colonies had been revealed as early as 1850. Then it had refused increased military support in response to the overstated fears expressed by the Australian colonies of greater Russian imperialism during the Crimean War.² Almost a century later, considerably weakened by its experience in the First World War, Britain was once more to refuse military support to Australia.

Similarly, prior to World War II, Australia’s relationship with the United States was founded on the national perception that we were an integral part of the British Empire. As a result most foreign policy initiatives were pursued through the UK. Direct exchanges with the US were irregular and occasionally problematic. Prewar tensions within the relationship were based on three key issues. Prime Minister Hughes had clashed with President Wilson over the terms of the Treaty of Versailles; Australia blamed the US for the Great Depression, and the Trade Division Act of 1936 amounted to a virtual declaration of trade war on both the US and Japan.³ The Second World War was to fundamentally change Australia’s relationships with both the UK and the US. It provided a catalyst for a reappraisal of Australia’s place in the world and the requirement for the support of a powerful ally. Ironically, alignment with the US acted, in the long term, to reinforce the same problems of sovereignty previously experienced in Australia’s relationship with Great Britain.

The aim of this article is to compare Australia’s military–political relationships with the UK and the US during the Second World War. Having done so, the impact of these relationships on Australia will be assessed. The article will first define the military–political level as it applied to Australia’s relationships with the UK and US in the Second World War and will then compare the conduct of these vital relationships before assessing their immediate and longer-term impact on Australia.

The strategic level of war

At the strategic level of war national resources, including military force, are coordinated and directed in order to achieve precise political objectives. It is at this level that the link between
military power and political will is most clearly defined. The Second World War, with its
global span, total mobilisation and complex system of formal coalitions 'lifted strategy out of
the purely military sphere into the field of politics and international relations'. The dynamic
nature of the Australia–UK and Australia–US strategic relationships during the war bears
testimony to this. These relationships were dominated by a handful of political and military
leaders who were to prove influential in framing Australian strategic policy and defining our
place in the postwar world.

Responding to a threatened Australia

In August 1939 Australia went to war solely on the basis of Britain’s declaration of war with
Germany. Prime Minister Menzies announced that, as a result of Germany’s invasion of Poland,
‘Australia is at war’. This action says much about Menzies deference to Britain and about
the inequality of the partners in the Anglo–Australian relationship. By mid 1940 Australia’s
defence force had expanded rapidly, but remained relatively poorly equipped and trained,
and generally lacked combat experience. Nevertheless, Australia was able to provide an Army
Corps and significant naval assets to participate in the Middle East campaign, as well as RAAF
personnel for the Empire Air Training Scheme.

These troops were provided under a command arrangement that did not recognise Australian
national command. The latitude with which Australian support was provided to the UK is best
demonstrated by the terms under which six RAAF squadrons were provided to support the
RAF in ‘a theatre of importance, as the British Government may decide’. The relationship was
clearly out of balance at this stage and was to become more so when Australia agreed to the
appointment of two British officers to command the RAN and RAAF. These officers ensured
that Imperial objectives remained the focus of Australian military effort.

Conversely, America maintained a policy of neutrality and isolationism and refused to be drawn
into the conflict. The Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor brought America into the war and added
urgency to Australia’s strategic initiatives. It was not until Australia was actually threatened,
by the speed and ferocity of the Japanese advance, that the system of Imperial defence was
revealed as both ineffective and incapable of supporting the simultaneous defence of both
Britain and her Commonwealth allies.

The failure of the Imperial Defence System

The Imperial defence ‘system’ in the Pacific was based on the strength of the Royal Navy and
the impregnability of Singapore. The sinking of HMS *Prince of Wales* and HMS *Repulse*, and
the surrender of Singapore, exposed the deficiencies of Imperial defence when not properly
resourced. In the months leading up to the Japanese entry into the war, Prime Minister
Curtin had frequently asked the UK to provide appropriate defence resources to support
Australia. These requests principally focused on the allocation of a British fleet to the Pacific,
the provision of modern fighter aircraft and the return of the Australian Corps from the Middle
East. Neither of the first two requests was ever adequately addressed, while Churchill delayed
the withdrawal of the 9th Division AIF by almost 18 months.
Curtin repeatedly called for a more even-handed approach to the conduct of the war and a greater allocation of resources to the Pacific theatre. Churchill viewed these requests as disproportionate to the threat to Australia. His response was heavily influenced by the withdrawal of Australian troops from Tobruk in 1941, allegations of cowardice during the fall of Singapore and his personal enmity towards Australia’s External Affairs Minister H.V. Evatt and High Commissioner S.M. Bruce. Additionally, Curtin’s position undermined Churchill’s ‘defeat Hitler first’ policy and had the potential to divert US attention from the European theatre. As a consequence of the deteriorating relationship with the UK, the obvious failure of the system of Imperial defence and the threat posed by the rapid Japanese advance, the Australian Prime Minister spoke openly of Australia’s realignment with the US. On 27 December 1941 Curtin stated that ‘Australia looks to America, free from any pangs as to our traditional ties or kinship with the United Kingdom ….’ This emotional appeal explicitly signalled that Australia would now seek protection through alignment with the US and not the UK. The once sacred order of Imperial defence had, as far as Australia was concerned, finally run its course.

Re-alignment with the United States

In comparison with the deteriorating military–political relationship with the UK, Australia’s relationship with the US was, initially at least, remarkably positive. At the national political level the public commitment by President Roosevelt to the defence of Australia did much to calm fears of Japanese invasion. In recognition of its inability to support the Pacific theatre, the UK immediately agreed to a transfer of strategic responsibility for Australia’s defence to the US. While these overtures reassured Curtin, they did not amount to rejection of the ‘defeat Hitler first’ policy—which remained Roosevelt’s first priority. The scene was then set for the March 1942 arrival of General Douglas MacArthur from the Philippines, to be feted as the nation’s saviour.

On MacArthur’s arrival he was appointed by Roosevelt as Supreme Commander South West Pacific Area (SWPA)—an appointment rapidly affirmed by the Australian Government. MacArthur’s new appointment entailed both direction of all military activities in the SWPA, as well as management of the US–Australia relationship on a day-to-day basis. His immediate condemnation of the ‘defeat Hitler first’ strategy endeared him to the Australian Prime Minister, who agreed to the establishment of the Prime Minister’s War Conference. This strategic decision-making body comprised Curtin, MacArthur and Defence Department Secretary Sir Frederick Shedden. It enabled MacArthur to effectively usurp the Australian Chiefs of Staff as the Prime Minister’s principal strategic advisers.

MacArthur’s influence over Curtin proved so pervasive that he was able to convince the Prime Minister to amend the policy on the use of the militia outside Australian territory. Blamey was now the only Australian general with regular access to the Prime Minister, but even he felt threatened by MacArthur’s unprecedented level of influence. Certainly the subsequent dismissal of two Australian generals by MacArthur had the effect of focusing Blamey’s attention on retaining his position as Commander Allied Land Forces. Any opportunity to assume a more independent role in the conduct of strategic affairs, which had seemed possible after the split from the UK had, through Curtin’s embrace of MacArthur, been lost.
As the Japanese threat declined, tensions began to appear in the Australia–US relationship. By December 1942 Curtin’s rapport with Roosevelt was deteriorating over the appointment of a new American Minister in Canberra. Concurrently MacArthur’s lack of regard for Australian officers was becoming more apparent as he refused the appointment of Australian staff to his headquarters. The UK War Cabinet was by now alarmed at what they perceived as the pursuit of US imperialist interests in the Pacific and Asia at their expense. In Australia, talk of being abandoned by Britain was being replaced by alarm at the perceived US ‘invasion’. Ironically these same concerns have been mirrored in almost every US alliance with a dependent ally since World War II. By 1944, with the Japanese threat ebbing fast, and Curtin re-elected, the government focused its attention on Australia’s place in the postwar world. One consequence of these deliberations was to be yet another reappraisal of Australia’s strategic interests and alliances.

Preparing for the postwar world

Tensions in the Australia–US relationship after January 1944 reflected both a desire to return to the comfort offered by the traditional strategic alliance, and different national strategic objectives associated with the postwar world. Both nations were attempting to achieve a position of advantage before the return to peace. American attempts to retain Pacific bases, strategic airfields and oil reserves were regarded as blatantly imperialist, as were Australian attempts to establish a sub-empire. Prior to meetings of the Allied leaders, frustrated by the lack of consultation by either the US or the UK, Australia entered into an agreement with New Zealand over Pacific sovereignty issues. The agreement was to prove ultimately unsuccessful, but not before it had further weakened Curtin’s relationship with Roosevelt.

The Prime Minister’s relationship with MacArthur had also deteriorated. The General was unimpressed by Australian attempts to reduce both the size of its military and its level of logistic support to his forces. Churchill expressed similar sentiments, although he had also begun the process of demobilisation and continued to make no substantial commitment to the Pacific theatre. In an attempt to ensure a prominent place at the peace talks, Curtin, encouraged by Evatt, insisted on Australian participation in what proved to be costly offensive operations with little strategic importance in Bougainville, Ambon and Borneo. The rapid cessation of hostilities did little to improve Australia’s relationship with either power. Australian insistence on independent command in the proposed British Commonwealth Occupation Force caused a bitter dispute between Australia and the recently elected UK Labour Government. Simultaneously, American insistence on generous surrender terms with Japan and the rejection of demands for wide-ranging war trials angered the Chifley Government. While Australia had emerged victorious from the only war to have ever directly threatened its sovereignty, it now faced an uncertain strategic future, closely aligned with the US but yearning for reconciliation with the UK.

The impact of the relationships on Australia

The postwar period

Australia’s strategic position in the immediate postwar period was not significantly different to 1939; it remained the subordinate in an unequal partnership. Australia had turned to the
US in 1941 for support and had formed an effective and close alliance, particularly during the critical period of 1942–43. The relationship had continued to the war’s end, although with increasing levels of frustration on both sides. In the immediate postwar period the focus of US military–political activity was on countering the spread of communism in Europe. The restoration of Japan remained a major American strategic objective—but was considered secondary to its European objectives. In Australia the feeling of cultural and physical isolation returned—and resulted in Chifley and Evatt’s retention of the White Australia policy and abandonment of attempts to stand as an independent middle power. Rather, long-term security continued to be seen as dependent on alignment with a powerful ally. Relations with the UK were returning to normal, partly because of Churchill’s defeat in the 1945 elections. This coincided with increasing ambivalence towards American power on the part of both Chifley and Evatt. The latter had attempted, unsuccessfully, to block the Great Powers’ right of veto in the newly formed United Nations—a move which would have considerably empowered countries like Australia.

The development of the atom bomb altered the dynamics of strategic power; Australia’s response was to use its uranium deposits and vast areas for testing, to increase its leverage on Britain and to consolidate its alliance with her. Britain’s new Labour government, encouraged by Evatt and Roosevelt, appeared less inclined to maintain the former Empire and began the process of granting independence to some of its remaining colonies. Ironically this was to commence a process of withdrawal from Empire that would ultimately encourage Australia to realign itself once more with the US for protection.

Australia’s seesawing military–political relationships were mirrored by divisions in the Australian populace and by social change in the early postwar period. Anglo–Australians, who made up the bulk of the population, were eager to see a return to closer relations with the UK as the mother country. Other segments of the population saw the end of hostilities as an opportunity for Australia to act more independently for the first time. Despite a postwar realignment with the UK, Australia moved culturally closer to the US, a process that has subsequently proved unstoppable. Economically, Curtin’s attempts to develop an industrial base were hampered by MacArthur’s insistence that priority go to feeding his troops. While the longevity of societal effects vary, it is certain that the wartime relationships framed postwar policies and continue to affect Australian strategic affairs.

**Longer term effects**

Australia’s renewed realignment with the US began, at the military level, prior to the Korean War. In 1949, faced with a perceived communist threat in Asia, the US began to widen its postwar European containment policies to include greater involvement in Asia and the Pacific. The signing of the 1948 UKUSA Signals Intelligence Agreement and subsequently the signing of the ANZUS Treaty signified that Australia had found a mechanism of guaranteeing its long-term security through alignment with the US. The move away from the UK was eased by Britain’s adoption of its ‘east of Suez’ policy, limiting its area of strategic interest and formally acknowledging that they were no longer capable of defending their former colonies. The strategy of Imperial defence was now officially dead. To this day Australia continues to regard its alliance with the US as fundamental to its security. Ongoing attempts to develop
truly independent strategies and military capabilities are now viewed as complementary to this relationship, rather than as a substitute for it. Thus, while Australia maintains extensive military and political contact with the UK, its focus is now firmly on the region—including the dominant nation in the Pacific-rim community—the United States.

Conclusion

Australia’s Second World War strategic relationships with the UK and the US were shaped by the Japanese threat to our national sovereignty. The UK’s failure to assist Australia during the dark days of 1942 revealed the fundamentally flawed nature of the policy of Imperial defence and encouraged Australia to turn to the US for security. In shifting its focus from one Great Power to another, Australia was to learn that loss of sovereignty and independence is the bottom line in dependent strategic relationships. As a consequence Australia began a qualified return to the UK’s strategic sphere from late 1943 onwards. The election defeat of Winston Churchill in 1945 and the refocusing of America’s attention on countering communism in Europe aided this transition. The UK’s subsequent adoption of the ‘east of Suez’ policy encouraged Australia’s return to the US as its principal strategic partner.

The importance of Australia’s wartime relationship with the US, and to a lesser extent, with the UK, continues to influence the conduct of Australian military–political relationships. Contemporary Australian strategic policy continues to show traces of this history and is likely to continue to do so well into the 21st century.

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Lieutenant Colonel Campbell assumed command of 4 RAR (Commando) in December 2003. He has seen operational service in Papua New Guinea, Bougainville, East Timor and the Middle East.
NOTES

10. D.M. Horner, *Crisis of Command – Australian Generalship and the Japanese Threat, 1941–43*, 1978, p. 67. Air Chief Marshal Burnet (RAF) was appointed to command the RAAF. Admiral Royle (RN) was appointed to command the RAN.
15. The relationship at the tactical level was poor virtually from the outset—as demonstrated by the controversial ‘Battle of Brisbane’ in 1942. Nevertheless at the strategic level the relationship remained, initially at least, very close.
21. MacArthur’s stance reflected his belief in ‘personal destiny’, his self-interest and his desire to remain the focus of the US public’s attention.

27. Signal, MacArthur to Marshall, 15 June 1942, Washington DC, RG 165, OPD Exec 10, item 7D, MacArthur believed that many Australian officers ‘lived off, but not up to, the name of ANZAC’.


29. Similar sentiments are reflected in the US relationship with Saudi Arabia, South Korea and Haiti and are, in many ways, symptomatic of this type of essentially unequal alliance.


38. C. Bell, *Dependent Ally — A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*, 1988, p. 43. Curtin regarded Churchill’s interpretation of empire as meaning possession, while he regarded it as the basis of fraternity.


41. C. Bell, *Dependent Ally — A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*, 1988, pp. 41–43.


44. *Australian Strategic Policy*, 1997, p. 28.


*Documents on Australian Foreign Policy 1937–49*, Vol. II.


Grey, Lieutenant Commander I., Interview with author, Williamtown, 7 July 1999.


The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity

Major Gavin Keating

Over the years many pundits have predicted the demise of the FPDA, as they perceived it as becoming less relevant to the security situation at the time. Not only have they been proven wrong but the FPDA has been transformed. For thirty years the FPDA has progressively evolved to form a key element of relations between the five members…¹

In his seminal work, *Nations in Alliance*, George Liska wrote, ‘it has always been difficult to say much that is peculiar to alliances on the plane of general analysis’.² Despite the fact that ‘alliance’ is said to be ‘one of the dozen or so key terms of International Relations’³ the concept has no widely accepted definition and many of its key aspects remain unexplained.⁴ Alliances have been described as being vulnerable to failure and dissolution and their endurance better ‘measured in years rather than decades or centuries’.⁵ Yet, despite the fact that they ‘can have profound effects on the security of individual states’, one aspect of alliances that has not received focused attention is what causes them to collapse or endure.⁶ This article will explore the issue of alliance longevity by examining the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA), formed between Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom in 1971. At the time of its inception the FPDA was not ‘expected to endure for more than about five years’⁷ but it has in fact proven to be remarkably resilient. A number of theoretical explanations for this performance will be considered, including the importance of threat perception, alliance institutionalisation, the balance between alliance costs and benefits and the management of internal political strains.

Whether the FPDA can be strictly considered an alliance depends on how the term is defined. Stephen Walt has described an alliance as:

> a formal or informal relationship for security cooperation between two or more states. Although the precise arrangements embodied in different alliances vary enormously, the defining feature of any alliance is a commitment for mutual military support against some external actor(s) in some specified set of circumstances.⁸

The FPDA is based on the Five Power Ministerial Meeting Communiqué of April 1971 and the subsequent series of bilateral military arrangements between its Southeast Asian members, Malaysia and Singapore, and each of the remaining participants.⁹ The communiqué declared that in the event of any armed external attack against Malaysia or Singapore, or the threat of such an attack, the member nations ‘would immediately consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately in relation to such attack or threat.’¹⁰ Whilst such an undertaking provides no guarantees of support in times of crisis, it should be remembered that neither do the provisions of the more celebrated ANZUS alliance.¹¹ Like ANZUS, the FPDA has sponsored a variety of mutual military activities during peacetime which have, in many ways, become more important than declarations concerning future contingencies. This article will consider the FPDA to be a form of defensive alliance, despite it being described by some as an alliance of the loosest possible type.¹²
Threat perceptions

The existence of common external threat perceptions is recognised as one of the primary drivers behind the formation and continuation of alliances. This has been true for the FPDA, but not in the conventional sense of a reaction to a clearly defined challenge. The organisation was formed at a time of significant strategic uncertainty in Southeast Asia. The escalating war in Vietnam fanned regional fears of a major indigenous communist threat, whilst Indonesia’s Konfrontasi against Malaysia, between 1963 and 1965, helped to ‘engender an enduring fear’ of Indonesia as a source of instability. These circumstances had two important implications. The first was that the FPDA developed less as a result of one specific threat and more on ‘the understanding that one never knew where the next problem was going to come from.’ Secondly, the FPDA was not ‘overtly identified with the system of Cold War alliances that centred on the American security role’. The end of the Cold War did not present the nations of the FPDA with the sort of crisis of cohesion it has been argued that the members of NATO are now facing, given the demise of the Soviet Union. Further, the way in which the FPDA evolved in the face of general uncertainty helped it to transition into what has been described as an ‘order-oriented’ alliance, rather than one intended primarily for collective defence. This has been aided by the fact that the FPDA has not been tested by any actual crisis—as one long-term observer noted, ‘the peace has kept the alliance as much as the alliance, in its unobtrusive way, has contributed to peace.’ The alliance’s reaction to its perceived threats has thus allowed it to be flexible in meeting the concerns of its members. An example of this was the recent agreement at the June 2004 FPDA Ministers’ Meeting to endorse proposals for cooperating against non-conventional security threats, such as maritime terrorism.

Institutionalisation

The degree to which an alliance becomes institutionalised, that is how its ‘members create an organisation that formalises and regularises channels for consultation and cooperation’, is also believed to be important for alliance durability. ‘The greater the level of institutionalisation within an alliance, the more likely it is to endure.’ Whilst the FPDA has routinely been described as ‘primarily a loose consultative arrangement’ it has developed a reasonable level of institutionalisation. The original 1971 communiqué established a Joint Consultative Council (JCC), to facilitate regular dialogue on defence arrangements at the senior official level, an Integrated Air Defence System (IADS), to coordinate the protection of Malaysian and Singaporean airspace, and an Air Defence Council (ADC), to oversee the functioning of the IADS. Over the life of the FPDA, the IADS has proven to be the most important organisational component because its staff structure and ongoing operational focus have given it practical relevance. However, the JCC met only infrequently during its first ten years and this was probably one of the reasons why many predicted the FPDA’s demise during the 1980s. For example, disappointment with one FPDA exercise in 1981 led the then Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister to describe the FPDA as ‘outdated’ and to suggest that it should be replaced by a new collective arrangement. Similarly, a Malaysian Deputy Defence Minister reportedly said that ‘prior to 1988 the FPDA was “dead wood”’. These views began to be reversed by the 1988 decision to hold defence chief meetings every two years and defence ministerial meetings every three years. In 1994 the JCC and ADC were also combined into the FPDA Consultative Committee. These initiatives served to strengthen the organisation by enhancing
its decision-making structures and providing higher level guidance for its development.\textsuperscript{28} The renaming of IADS as the Integrated Area Defence System in 2001 also reflected the widening scope of one of the FPDA’s most important institutions, as it moved away from a focus solely on air operations.\textsuperscript{29}

Connected to these developments has been the increasing sophistication of the exercises being conducted under the FPDA’s auspices, designed in the beginning to improve the capabilities of the Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces. During the first decade of the FPDA’s operation the training regime was limited to relatively simple air defence exercises. In 1981 an annual maritime component was added (Exercise \textit{Starfish}) and over the course of the decade simple land exercises were also added. The air and maritime exercises have become increasingly large and more technically complex and in 1997 Exercise \textit{Flying Fish} combined both for the first time.\textsuperscript{30} Recent developments have included planning for more advanced land activities and the development of exercises to rehearse joint operations in multi-threat scenarios. The latest such FPDA training activity, conducted in September 2004, involved 31 ships, 60 aircraft, two submarines and a variety of other supporting elements.\textsuperscript{31} Common operating procedures have been developed as a result of the exercise regime and the planning required to support it led to an Activities Coordinating Committee being added to the FPDA’s formal organisational machinery.\textsuperscript{32} The importance of such developments to the alliance was summarised by one senior Singaporean officer:

\begin{quote}
As FPDA exercises grow in sophistication and size, so will the interoperability of the member armed forces… Since good interoperability is essential to an effective FPDA, the increasing interoperability of the FPDA Armed Forces means increasing confidence in the FPDA as an effective system.\textsuperscript{33}
\end{quote}

Thus, the evolution of the organisation’s exercise regime has served both to further institutionalise the alliance and improve its credibility.

**Balancing costs and benefits**

According to Liska, alliances are vulnerable to disintegration when members ‘can no longer compensate or redistribute unequal gains and liabilities’.\textsuperscript{34} One of the most important reasons why the FPDA has prospered is simply because it has offered its members more benefits than costs. As Bergin has noted:

\begin{quote}
The looseness of the FPDA has in many ways been central to its survival in that its non-obligatory nature has made membership less of a burden, keeping domestic objections to a minimum and allowing it to keep a low profile. It does not demand of its members a commitment that is seen as excessive.\textsuperscript{35}
\end{quote}

One potential liability is the possibility of the alliance drawing its extra-regional members into a Southeast Asian conflict, under circumstances not envisaged during the original negotiations. Alliance theory describes this dilemma as ‘entrapment’.\textsuperscript{36} For example, the Philippines has outstanding territorial claims against parts of East Malaysia whilst Malaysia also has claims in the Spratly Islands dispute, that could conceivably lead to conflict with China. At various times
Australia has indicated that it does not consider such possibilities to be relevant to the FPDA and prefers to see diplomatic resolutions, and New Zealand has similarly avoided taking sides over the Spratly problem. Although these responses serve to limit expectations of possible future support this has not proven terminal for the alliance. A greater potential problem has been Indonesia’s reaction to the FPDA, which has been mixed. One former Indonesian foreign minister described it as ‘insurance against a possible reversion of Indonesia to its old ways’ and advocated its abandonment in favour of an agreement between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Other Indonesians have been less negative; critically, the Indonesian Government has generally sought to accommodate the FPDA—in turn Jakarta’s sensibilities have been noted. This has minimised the potential for tension between the FPDA’s members and a vital regional nation, and hence lessened the diplomatic cost of alliance participation. As a result the FPDA has avoided triggering the development of a counteralliance, something regarded as a standard alliance risk by at least one theorist.

Whilst minimising alliance liabilities, the FPDA also offers a range of benefits for each of its members. Singapore, the FPDA’s most enthusiastic supporter, has traditionally highlighted the political and psychological deterrence offered by the alliance. It reasons that any potential aggressor would not be able to calculate the extent to which the extra-regional members would respond to any attack against either itself or Malaysia. It has even been suggested that Australia’s ANZUS links could potentially provide US support for the FPDA in the event of a crisis. Malaysia has focused more on the training benefits offered by operating with more advanced forces familiar with Western military technology and doctrine, although these have also aided Singapore. As the military capabilities of both Southeast Asian members have grown Australia and New Zealand have also both found that the FPDA’s exercises provide them with considerable training benefits. These have become increasingly important for New Zealand since its suspension from ANZUS. The greatest benefit of the alliance has been its role as a ‘networking mechanism’. The FPDA has enhanced Australia’s and New Zealand’s engagement in Southeast Asia by strengthening their bilateral ties with Malaysia and Singapore and serving as a visible sign of their commitment to regional security. One Malaysian academic sees the FPDA as ‘re-enforcing the economic and political linkages’ between each of the member states. Whilst Britain has been the alliance’s least active member, the FPDA has provided a focus for it to maintain military connections with the region. The maintenance of such ties with a permanent member of the UN Security Council could be an advantage in any future crisis. In a general sense, the involvement of extra-regional powers in the FPDA, particularly the United Kingdom, has also been seen as diversifying the engagement of external powers with Southeast Asia, ‘which would otherwise be confined rather undesirably only to the United States’. Overall, the FPDA has provided the framework that has enabled such networking to take place, even in circumstances where national sensitivities might otherwise make such links problematic.

Management of strains within FPDA

The longevity of alliances is also believed to be dependent on whether they are able to accommodate the tensions that may exist between their member nations, as well as the internal political tensions within the individual states. Understanding alliance cohesion relies not only on studying the external threats to the alliance but also the internal threats. One of the
biggest problems for the FPDA has been the historically high level of mistrust between Malaysia and Singapore. It was not until 1992 that both countries were willing to operate together as part of FPDA exercises and even then there were restrictions on the types of equipment employed. Malaysia’s withdrawal from the main FPDA exercise in 1998 was widely seen as a reaction to deteriorating relations with Singapore, which also caused Malaysia to revoke agreements for Singaporean military aircraft to use its airspace (these were reinstated in 2001). At the time the subsequent cancellation of the exercise was considered to potentially threaten the FPDA’s existence, but Malaysia resumed its participation in training activities the following year. Despite such problems the FPDA has actually facilitated a substantial improvement in the bilateral relations between both nations, by providing a forum for dialogue and confidence building. In fact the alliance was intended from the beginning to ‘keep open channels of communication’ even when political relations were strained. Thus, not only has the FPDA weathered the tensions between Malaysia and Singapore but has also aided relations between them. Australia and Malaysia have also had significant disagreements. According to one memoir the suggestion that the FPDA might not be quarantined from the general tensions that developed between the two nations in late 1993 helped defuse the crisis. Given the benefits offered by the FPDA it is logical to believe that the member nations have had a strong interest in limiting the scope of their bilateral disputes.

The history of the FPDA’s land exercises demonstrates how internal domestic pressures have been accommodated by the alliance. The first, hosted by Kuala Lumpur in 1971, involved 27,000 troops and brought to public attention the presence of Singaporean troops on Malaysian soil, a matter of great national sensitivity. It is also possible that large numbers of extra-regional troops may have been a concern, given their colonial associations. As one commentator wrote in 1972, ‘Foreign white forces can also be a political liability in domestic terms.’ Later land exercises were therefore hosted by Australia and New Zealand, until 1987. The early history of the alliance was marked by a desire to avoid publicity and ‘it would have been difficult for the FPDA to sustain its low-key approach with regular land exercises on the [Malayan] Peninsular’. This helps explain why FPDA land exercises continue to be relatively small and unobtrusive—air and maritime activities do not present the same liability. The FPDA has also weathered opposition by elements of the Malaysian elite, whose preference for non-alignment and neutrality was expressed by Malaysia’s support for ASEAN’s charter of the Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality. Whilst the alliance has accommodated what could be considered two irreconcilable positions (membership of a military alliance and a national policy of neutrality) it has done so at the expense of its military capabilities. For example, Singapore’s proposals to strengthen the FPDA’s command structure in 1991 were not followed up because of Malaysian opposition, based partly on the need to protect Malaysia’s non-aligned status. Like the issue of land exercises this is a good illustration of alliance cohesion proving incompatible with alliance efficacy.

Other explanations

There are a number of other factors that help to explain the FPDA’s survival. Walt has suggested that hegemonic leadership is an ‘obvious source of alliance durability’. For FPDA the opposite has been true. Its original rationale was to help develop the military capabilities of its then weakest members, and Malaysia and Singapore have largely driven the alliance’s subsequent
The principles of consensus building, equity and gradualism were an important part of this process and reflect what many consider to be the ‘Asian’ way. Thus, the alliance has survived because it has been responsive to the needs of all of its members, not just the most powerful.

A second factor that has enhanced the FPDA’s longevity has been its resistance to expansion. At various times it has been suggested that the FPDA could grow to include Brunei or Thailand or even transform into a new wider regional arrangement. Whilst Brunei is a logical candidate for an expanded FPDA, given its Commonwealth ties, even its inclusion poses potential complications. For example, the IADS does not cover East Malaysia and its extension would increase the amount of Malaysia airspace available to the Singaporeans. Indonesia’s reaction would also be important. More radical expansion would undoubtedly disturb the ‘alliance equilibrium’ the FPDA has developed. As Malaysia’s Deputy Prime Minister said recently, the inclusion of new members ‘would mean a major departure from the concept of the FPDA… and we are not ready for that.’

The last factor supporting the FPDA’s continuation has been the failure of Southeast Asia to produce anything better. Although great hopes have been pinned on organisations such as the ASEAN Regional Forum the fact is their contribution to regional security has been disappointing. For all its faults the FPDA remains ‘unique as the only multilateral regional security arrangement with an operational dimension’. It has been described as providing ‘ballast for stability in the region’ and has enhanced the regional security architecture. Until a more effective alternative is developed it is unlikely that it will be abandoned.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, despite the significant changes in Southeast Asia’s strategic environment over the course of the FPDA’s existence, the alliance has shown remarkable longevity. The main factors that have sustained the FPDA include its focus on a general sense of uncertainty, rather than a specific threat; a level of institutionalisation that has supported practical activities; the provision of more benefits to its member nations than costs; and its ability to mitigate internal alliance pressures. In addition, the FPDA has adopted a style of operation acceptable to its regional membership, has avoided becoming overextended and has experienced no competition from any alternative organisation. The theoretical explanations for alliance durability examined during this study have generally proven applicable to the FPDA. However, in the case of threat perception and hegemonic leadership they were seen to be modified or incorrect. It would thus seem that general theories of alliance behaviour must be carefully tested against the unique circumstances of each alliance they seek to explain. In some ways, particularly given its ‘order-orientation’ and ‘networking function’, the FPDA could be said to be an alliance ahead of its time. Its longevity also suggests that FPDA should be seen more as a possible model for the future and less as a relic of the past.

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NOTES

1. Allan Crowe, *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*, Commonwealth of Australia (on behalf of the members of the FPDA), Canberra, 2001, p. 3.


16. ibid., p. 194.


32. Rolfe, Anachronistic Past or Positive Future, p. 9.


52. For the issue of domestic politics see Bennett, 'Testing Alternative Models of Alliance Duration’, pp. 849–850.


66. See Holsti, Hopman and Sullivan, *Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances*, p. 16.


78. See Holsti, Hopman and Sullivan, Unity and Disintegration in International Alliances, p. 226.
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Science and Technology for Australian Network-Centric Warfare: Function, Form and Fit

Tim McKenna, Terry Moon, Richard Davis and Leoni Warne

Introduction

A network-centric approach to warfighting was officially launched by the Defence Minister and the Chief of the Defence Force in May 2003 (Hill 2003). The Australian concept for this new approach to warfighting is best summed up by the following quote (DFW 2004):

On the surface, Network Centric Warfare (NCW) is a simple concept that involves the linkage of engagement systems to sensors through networks and the sharing of information between force elements. Consequently, much of the discussion and early development of the concept revolved around connecting information systems and creating software applications that allow people to use the available data. However, NCW is also based on the idea that information is only useful if it allows people to act more effectively: this makes the human dimension fundamental to NCW.

In response, the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) has established a Science and Technology (S&T) initiative to help capture and focus the NCW work it is undertaking, identify directions for longer-term military capabilities, distil key research issues that need to be addressed through long-range research (LRR) and provide a good interface with Defence’s NCW stakeholders. This article provides some background to the development of Australian NCW, discusses its S&T underpinnings, and introduces the DSTO NCW S&T Initiative.

International context for NCW

The term ‘network-centric’ as applied to warfare was probably borrowed from network-centric computing which arose through advances in information technology that allowed computers to interact with each other while using different operating systems. The end of the Cold War, coupled with advances in computer technology, spurred the reassessment of military strategy in the US and other Western countries. NCW thus emerged as a high-tech approach to addressing what was perceived to be a new global security environment.

NCW was originally championed by Cebrowski (1998) with David Alberts and John Garstka providing much of the intellectual framework underpinning it. Although their seminal work Network Centric Warfare gives a carefully worded and detailed definition of NCW (Alberts, Garstka & Steins 1999), the following four tenets probably provide a simpler and clearer picture of the US perspective of NCW (CCRP 2005):

1. A robustly networked force improves information sharing.
2. Information sharing and collaboration enhance the quality of information and shared situational awareness.
4. These, in turn, dramatically increase mission effectiveness.

To these can be added Alberts (2002) view that NCW thus involves both:

- The provision of vastly increased access to information at all echelons.
- A redefinition of the relationships among participants in a mission and between commanders and subordinates.

Similar concepts of networked warfare have been developing elsewhere. Of particular note are the network-based defence (NetDefence) concept of Sweden (Lundqvist 2000) and the network-enabled capability (NEC) concept developed in the UK (Borgu 2003; dstl 2004; MoD 2005). More recently the People’s Republic of China has announced its intention to adopt NCW-related technologies (Wellfare 2005). The US, however, was the progenitor of NCW and remains the powerhouse of technological developments that support its implementation.

The technological focus of the US is highlighted by their drive to establish a robust and global high-capacity network that would enable US forces to undertake NCW. A global approach dominated by technology may, however, be less suited to Australia’s capability requirements and levels of Defence funding. The question then arises as to how applicable are these US tenets to Australian NCW or do we need a different approach? The work to date indicates that Australia is already taking a different path in establishing five premises that include, not only the technological aspects of networks, shared situational awareness and self-synchronisation, but the human dimensions of professional mastery and command philosophy (DFW 2004).

Having noted the different network-centric concepts being pursued internationally, perhaps the following description provides the best overview: **NCW is an approach to warfighting where the network supplies the right information at the right time in the right form to the right person.**

To these ‘four rights’ can be added ‘and is put to the right use’ (Fewell & Hazen 2003). Adding ‘right use’ is particularly important as NCW is about producing effective military outcomes.

**Good ideas or latest fad?**

Like any new concept NCW has its advocates and critics. Enthusiastic advocacy from some has almost reached the fervour of a high-pressure sales campaign while critics can be equally passionate. Comments on NCW range from referring to it as the ‘new fashion in modern warfare’ (Borgu 2003) to ‘our worldwide, blue-water Navy always has been a networked environment’ (Barnett 1999). Alberts, Garstka & Stein (1999) acknowledge that there are ‘exaggerated claims, unfounded criticisms and just plain misinformation’ about NCW and go into detail identifying then discussing some of the myths of NCW. These myths include:

- NCW is all about the network.
- NCW applies only to large-scale conflict.
- The commercial world has shown us the way.
- NCW will not survive first contact with the fog and friction of war.
- NCW is an attempt to automate war that can only fail.
Kaufman (2004) has argued that NCW is a technology-led response to the situation the Western nations find themselves in following the end of the Cold War. He then questions whether future conflicts will be against a comparatively equipped conventional enemy or subversive groups practising terrorism. When challenging whether investing in an NCW approach is an appropriate response to emerging national security concerns, Kaufman notes the importance of developing new technology for warfare and that, historically, this became organised at a national level to both spur and focus technology developments—a process he calls 'command technology'.

While the debate as to the value of NCW continues, the military operations in Iraq that led to the removal of Saddam Hussein have demonstrated that NCW concepts can assist in the conduct of rapid and decisive military operations (Moores 2002). Use of unmanned aerial vehicles (UAVs) in Afghanistan for surveillance, reconnaissance, targeting and weapons delivery, has also demonstrated some aspects of NCW, in particular the value of sensor-to-shooter links. That said, the application of NCW concepts to operations in complex terrain, particularly involving counter-insurgency, is still a developing field (Bowley & Gaertner 2005).

Advances in technology continue and, while there is still much to debate about NCW, it is probably now reasonable to say that:

- The underpinning concepts of NCW are sufficiently well developed and tested for its implementation in military operations.¹
- Recent conflicts have demonstrated that an NCW approach can lead to swift and decisive military operations conducted as planned with minimal casualties and within constraints placed on collateral damage.
- There are historical examples that illustrate how new technology can dramatically change the nature of warfare.

For the Australian Defence Force (ADF), an underlying belief has emerged that improved integration and connectivity can lead to an enhancement of military effectiveness. What is probably not clear is how best Defence could, and to what extent it should, embrace concepts and technological solutions developed elsewhere. In identifying what advances in NCW-related technologies are most suited to Australia’s Defence requirements (within current and projected funding for Defence), the issue of the degree to which technologies developed for the civil sector can be readily incorporated into new and existing military capabilities must also be addressed.⁴

**ICT and modern warfare**

The profound effect of advances in information and communications technologies (ICT) on warfare can be traced back to the American Civil War, considered by historians as the first modern war. From an ICT perspective this was the first time there had been widespread use of the telegraph, photography and aerial observation (Aeragon 2005).

The world’s first telegraph message was sent from Washington D.C. to Baltimore, Maryland in 1844. By the time the Civil War began, telegraph lines had been established over most of the
Eastern United States. Because of the war, the Western Union Telegraph Company completed construction of a telegraph line through the Rocky Mountains connecting the West Coast to the network in October of 1861. When the Civil War began, the telegraph was used to report battle information and became the most important form of military communication. In particular it was used for the rapid reporting of intelligence information but also became a prime target for military counter-operations.

Technological advances continued apace with the newly developed ‘wireless’ communications which were used for the first time during a war to report on the naval battle between Russia and Japan in 1905. Following the first transatlantic radio telephone conversation in 1915, radio quickly became an essential component of military operations as it offered a mobile communications capability. Along with the telephone that replaced the telegraph for fixed (wire) communications, two-way radios became an integral part of most, if not all, military operations.

Devices and machines for numerical calculation date back thousands of years to the abacus (Abacus 2005). The modern computing age was, however, heralded by the advent of electronic devices which enabled the development of electronic computers. In the Second World War (WWII) a valve computer known as ‘Colossus’ was developed and used by Britain to decode the Germans’ coded messages (Tedeschi 2005). Towards the end of WWII the US developed ENIAC, a large digital electronic computer, to compute ballistics tables—a task that required many tedious calculations. Because ENIAC was programmable, it could also perform many other tasks (Information Age 2005).

A more recent, and local example of the impact of advances in ICT on military operations is the introduction of a Theatre Broadcast System (TBS) into the ADF. Based on commercial satellite transmission systems, and developed by DSTO, TBS was first demonstrated to the Australian Army in 1999. Services offered by this new capability include file transfer, a video/audio channel for teleconferencing and data streaming access. TBS has since been subject to an evolutionary (spiral) development process and has been deployed on operations in East Timor, Solomon Islands, Middle East and in Banda Aceh for the humanitarian relief operations following the tsunami (DSTO 2005).

Inventions such as the telegraph, telephone, radio, and computer set the stage for the Internet and with it an unprecedented integration of ICT capabilities. The Internet is not only a worldwide broadcasting capability, but a mechanism for information dissemination, and a medium for collaboration and interaction between individuals and their computers without regard for geographic location (Internet Society 2005).

**Australian NCW Concept**

**Premises**
The development of an Australian NCW concept was based on the following premises (DFW 2004):

- Professional mastery (and appropriate training) is essential to the effective implementation of NCW.
• Mission command will remain an effective command philosophy into the future.

• Information and intelligence will be shared if a network is built connecting engagement, sensor and command & control systems.

• Robust networks will facilitate effective collaboration and shared situational awareness.

• Shared situational awareness will enable self-synchronisation. This helps warfighters to adapt to changing circumstances and apply Multidimensional Manoeuvre (MDM) effectively.

In a nutshell, the Australian concept of NCW focuses on supporting a manoeuvre type of approach to military operations. In addition, there is a strong link to an Effects Based approach, which focuses on the outcomes to be achieved. At a strategic level, the Effects Based approach to planning is termed Net Assessment. Additional to the acquisition and application of suitable technologies, the human dimension is highlighted as key to achieving effective NCW and it is here that a significant difference between the Australian and US approaches to developing NCW is evident. Lambert and Scholz (2005) discuss this difference noting that the first two premises of Australian NCW have no equivalent representation in the US concept. They further note that Australia sees NCW more as a means to improve joint warfighting rather than a mechanism for unifying forces.

The network

The network dimension, introduced by the third and fourth premises of Australian NCW, is described as having four aspects (DFW 2004):

• **Connect** units, platforms and facilities through networking, appropriate doctrine, training and organisational processes and structure.

• **Collect** relevant information using these networked assets and distribute it via the network.

• **Use** the information, and the intelligence derived from it, to effectively achieve military objectives.

• **Protect** the network established from external interference or technical failure.

Again the human dimension is explicitly included through mention of doctrine, training and organisational aspects.

These ‘connect’; ‘collect’; ‘use’; ‘protect’ (CCUP) aspects are also consistent with the OODA-cycle concept introduced by John R. Boyd of the USAF in 1985 (see Polk 2000) and similar concepts for organisational adaptive loops put forward by Limerick & Cunnington (1993) and Haeckel (1999). Connecting sensors to shooters with a feedback mechanism for their control and adaptation is another instance of this concept. The CCUP model thus provides a means for monitoring and managing the development and implementation of Australian NCW but does it also provide a means for addressing science and technology issues?
What is more important — technology or the people using it?

New information and communications technologies such as personal computers, satellite communications, video teleconferencing, digital communications systems and the Global Positioning System are already available and influencing approaches to warfare (Alberts 2002). The Australian Future Warfighting Concept further discusses the impact of technology in modern warfighting noting that ‘…technological developments, such as offensive information warfare capabilities, space-based sensors and communications, weapons of mass effect, and long-range weapons such as ballistic and cruise missiles have the potential to reach targets that were previously difficult to strike’ (Australian DoD 2002). Any such discussions of new technologies for warfighting should note, however, that to effectively harness technology advances, corresponding organisational and doctrinal changes are needed (DFW 2004). Attempts to introduce new technology often meet with failure when the interactions between technology and people are not adequately addressed.

While Houston (2005) has been careful to note the importance of the human dimension for Australian NCW, Bryans (2005) has also cautioned against ‘simplifying things too much’ and downplaying the role technology plays. Perhaps this interplay between technology and people is adequately summed up by the US Chief of Naval Research who defined NCW as: ‘Military operations that exploit state-of-the-art information and networking technology to integrate widely dispersed human decision makers, situational and targeting sensors, and forces and weapons into a highly adaptive, comprehensive system to achieve unprecedented mission effectiveness’ (ONR 2005). Put more simply, we could say a balanced view of NCW is: ‘Defence people applying advances in information technologies to improve operations’: where Australia’s NCW approach involves improving operations by:

- collecting better information from sensors and intelligence sources;
- using that information for more effective command and target engagement;
- building networks to better connect the ADF and protect its information; but also
- adjusting culture, organisation, procedures, training and information system design so that Defence people can use these advances.

Striking a balance between technology and people by providing suitable organisational structures and processes, doctrine and training will remain as much a challenge for the implementation of an NCW-capable force as developing and integrating new technologies.

Role of science and technology

In addressing the role of science and technology, it may be useful to consider the following as salient features of Australian NCW:

- **Network Concepts.** NCW treats military platforms, facilities, combat equipment and other materiel as a network of nodes and links where information is the key ‘currency of exchange’.
• **Primacy of Information.** For NCW, information is seen not only as important, but key to efficiently undertaking swift, decisive and effective military operations. In NCW-type operations combat units have access to information from other sources rather than relying on their own organic assets. Thus information in NCW operations is 'universally' available.

• **Exploitation of Technology.** NCW exploits the capability and capacity of modern technology (particularly ICT) to gather, store, process, and distribute information. This supports sharing of information to facilitate greater understanding of a military situation and thus the undertaking of swift, decisive military operations.

• **Human and Socio-cultural Aspects.** Underlying most NCW discussions are some important assumptions about how humans will behave and organisational elements will be structured and function in this new environment. For instance, information sharing will not occur without collaborative and cooperative behaviour on the part of the humans involved, however efficient the technical connectivity may be. Therefore cognitive load, information presentation, information overload, information verification, cooperative behaviours, trust, education, training, organisation, doctrine, and the human–machine interface need to be optimised in an NCW environment. Science has as much a role to play in understanding the human response to these new technologies as it does in developing the new technologies themselves.

Australia has a moderate-sized economy but its S&T infrastructure and pool of expertise are probably not sufficient to enable continual and sustained groundbreaking research and development (R&D) in the wide range of technologies of interest for NCW. Although Australia has traditionally aimed to be a ‘fast follower’ in applying R&D rather than a major progenitor of new R&D (Batterham 2003), maintaining an edge, even in niche areas of NCW technology, will be challenging. Despite this, there are likely to be areas of technology of specific relevance to Australian Defence requirements, and these should be identified. In addition to identifying the underpinning sciences and technologies central to the implementation of NCW, it would be useful to decide the degree to which they are already receiving adequate investment for their further development (in either the civil or military industry sectors), then establish priorities for further research in the key areas of S&T that would best support realisation of Australian NCW. Understanding the differences between the Australian concept of NCW and those of other countries such as the US, UK and Sweden may also help with identifying Australian Defence S&T priorities for NCW-related research.

**The NCW S&T Initiative**

Development of NCW concepts has now reached sufficient maturity for Defence to formulate an NCW Roadmap to guide the implementation of an NCW approach, and establish the NCW Program Office (NCWPO) to monitor the development of capabilities for an NCW-capable force. In response, DSTO has raised an NCW S&T Initiative (NSI) to coordinate and focus its S&T activities. This aims to:

- Improve the delivery of DSTO S&T support to key NCW stakeholders in Defence.
- Provide S&T support to the further development of NCW concepts.
• Position the DSTO to support the implementation of the NCW Roadmap.

• Identify major S&T issues for further research so that DSTO can shape its supporting R&D program.

‘Enabling Future Warfighting – Network Centric Warfare’ (DFW 2004) and the ‘ADF NCW Roadmap’ (introduced and discussed by Houston 2005) provide a starting point for exploring what S&T is needed. Using these, a systems engineering approach can be taken by extracting the capabilities sought, activities envisaged and effects desired to derive the ‘Function and Form’ sought for Australian NCW. Following this, an alignment or ‘Fit’ of proposed S&T support (and any underpinning research) to the derived Function and Form can be explored; Figure 4 illustrates this process. As shown, the DSTO Client program for NCW should provide S&T support to: further development of NCW concepts, implementation of the NCW Roadmap and the work undertaken by the NCWPPO. In addition, DSTO’s long-range research (LRR) program for NCW must be suitably tuned to provide a strong S&T base for the further development and implementation of NCW.

While the top-down approach outlined uses systems engineering (SE) principles, the NSI will also borrow heavily from operational research (OR) methods and those of the human and social sciences (HSS) in its quest to understand the wide range of S&T issues surrounding the development of Australian NCW. The approach also builds on existing work, including that done by DSTO Tiger Teams under the guidance of the NCW Steering Group (see DSTO NCW Tiger Team reports 2003 & 2005 and the NSI website 2005). One of the jobs of the NSI is to identify potential S&T inhibitors and enablers of NCW. A clear knowledge of the S&T stumbling blocks faced in implementing NCW and the potential benefits of new advances in technology should then assist in better defining further S&T work and research to underpin it.

Figure 4: A systems engineering approach to the NCW S&T Initiative.
For aligning DSTO’s S&T work it is useful to apply one of the technology-oriented NCW frameworks, which views an NCW force as being made up of four ‘grids’ (Stein 1998):

- A **Sensor** grid that collects intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) information.
- The **Command & Control (C2)** grid that uses the information collected for assessment, collation with other information, planning and decision-making.
- The **Engagement** grid which uses the decisions made to direct military action.
- An **Information** grid that connects the other three grids together by providing the network infrastructure and networking.\(^{10}\)

This description is also consistent with the CCUP model introduced earlier where the Sensor grid provides the **collect** function, the Information grid a **connect** function and the C2 and Engagement grids the **use** function, while the **protect** function applies to all grids.\(^ {11}\) The grids are not only a means for describing in simple terms the infrastructure that makes up an NCW force but they are also useful for sorting the diverse S&T aspects of NCW spanning weapons, sensors, platforms, information technology, communications, electronic warfare, command & control, systems and organisational and doctrinal aspects as well as the human factors.

**Early assessments**

From an initial understanding of the concept and premises on which Australian NCW is based, coupled with an understanding of the likely scale and nature of an Australian NCW force, it is suggested that:

1. The purpose of Australian NCW is to enable a manoeuvre approach to warfare and, at a strategic level, Net Assessment.
2. Australian NCW has more of a focus on the Human Dimension than its US counterpart with particular emphasis on Professional Mastery.\(^ {12}\)
3. The concept of sharing information involves more than providing a Common Operating Picture. It includes the ability to ‘tailor’ a shared situational awareness for local operations and augment it with local knowledge. It also requires appropriate cooperative human behaviours based on sound education and training.
4. Australian networks are likely to comprise fewer nodes (perhaps by a factor of 10 or more) than US networks.
5. Infrastructure and available bandwidth may thus be a problem for offshore operations.
6. For Australian NCW a whole-of-nation approach is envisaged where civil telecommunications, national assets and information from other government agencies would be made available. This Civil Military Cooperation (CIMIC) introduces a further layer of complexity in the human aspects of effective collaboration and cooperation across different organisations.
7. In addition to a whole-of-nation approach, the ability to operate effectively in coalition operations is an important determinant for developing suitable capabilities and approaches to NCW.

While a structured approach, as broadly outlined above, will be followed to identify those sciences and technologies key to implementing NCW, a reality check will be provided through the views of S&T experts. The NSI has just started and it would be unwise to start prioritising S&T areas where further work is needed. The following have, however, already been suggested as potential candidates for further work:

- Sensing & Collection
  - Fusion of Information.
  - Adaptive sensing.

- Using: C2 and Engagement
  - Net-ready weapons.
  - Combat ID.

- Connecting & Protecting
  - Bandwidth limitations (and access to spectrum issues).
  - Network topologies.
  - Information Assurance and Security (multi-level security).

- Human Issues
  - Required skill sets, training and education for NCW.
  - Optimising Joint, Coalition and CIMIC cooperation.
  - Information sharing behaviours.
  - Information trust and relationship trust in NCW operations.

- Cross-cutting issues
  - Automation.
  - Methods for evaluation of military outcomes for NCW.

The future battlefield will also demand that personnel cooperate to a far greater extent than ever before, hence social and psychological factors must be addressed when new technology is adopted. For that reason, a better understanding of the psychological underpinnings of interpersonal and inter-group cooperation in military contexts is also needed. This will have significant implications for workforce planning, recruitment and training in the ADF (see Warne et al. 2004).

Conclusion

Some may consider Network Centric Warfare (NCW) the latest Defence fad but recent experience suggests that NCW is improving operational success and, applied intelligently, will continue to have that impact. As a result Australia has developed its own version of NCW and is pressing on with implementation.

Put simply, Australia’s NCW approach is: *Defence people applying advances in information technologies to improve operations*. Specifically our NCW approach involves improving operations by:
collecting better information from sensors and intelligence sources;
• using that information for more effective command and target engagement;
• building networks to better connect the ADF and protect its information; and
• adjusting culture, organisation, procedures, training and information system design so that Defence people can use these advances.

Defence science and technology will continue to provide support to the ADF as Defence moves forward with its implementation of NCW. DSTO’s NCW S&T Initiative is the latest step in not only improving S&T support to Defence’s current NCW actions, but positioning DSTO’s research program to continue to do so in the future.

Research into continuing improvements to information technologies will be crucial to further ADF implementation of NCW, with particular emphasis on collection, fusion, processing, dissemination and presentation of vast amounts of information. As well, for Defence to use these technologies to maximum effect, research will continue to be needed into the way in which people interact with information and share it with each other to achieve the better understanding needed to improve operations. Striking the best balance between technology and people is then essential in an ongoing quest to maintain a military technological edge while improving the ADF’s high level of professional mastery.

In all these aspects, Australia’s Defence Science and Technology can, and will, play an important role.

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Dr Terry Moon has over 30 years experience in research including 20 years in Defence Science. During his time at DSTO he has worked in a number of fields spanning electronic warfare technology, operations research, surveillance technology, systems analysis, capability engineering and network-centric warfare studies. He has also worked on a number of major Australian Defence projects and studies including field trials of the Nulka decoy, the Wide Area Surveillance Study, the project definition phase of Project AIR 87 and the risk mitigation phase of Project JP 129.

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information management, HQ analysis & design and support to projects such as JP2030/JCSS. For the last five years, the focus has shifted to examine whole force capabilities, with an emphasis on Joint Experimentation, Networked Warfare, Systems Engineering/Architectures and Modeling & Simulation.

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NOTES

1. Here ‘synchronisation’ may be viewed as the coordination and orchestration of military actions so that they occur at the desired time and place.

2. It may be argued that an increase in the influence of the UN since its establishment in 1945, along with the emergence of an international media, has further complicated national security. A useful by-product of an NCW approach that is seldom discussed is the ability to be able to provide accurate information as to the nature of the targets attacked and hence the legitimacy of military actions undertaken.

3. Included in testing are modelling and simulation, experimentation and military exercises.

4. The argument revolves around whether to simply incorporate off-the-shelf (OTS) systems designed for civil applications, to continue to design bespoke systems for specific military applications or to explore some mixture of these two approaches. Cost, timescales for acquisition and entry into service, technical risk, and the military utility provided, should all be taken into account. The issue of matching COTS systems to purpose-designed military platforms, weapons and equipment should also be addressed.

5. This brought an almost immediate end to the Pony Express messenger service that had been in operation for less than two years!

6. At the time of writing the NCW Concept was under review with the prospect of the issue of a revised version of ADDP-D.3.1.

7. Net assessment is a concept for planning at the strategic level. It aims to assess effects at a national level through a process that analyses the total situation considering friendly forces and neutral elements, the adversary, their perception of us and the environment.

8. At the time of writing a new NCW Roadmap was under development.

9. Constraints to this Function and Form would include: the Defence Capability Plan, existing military systems, societal and political factors, emerging NCW concepts and doctrine, and NCW as practised by our allies.

10. This concept also fits in well with the Sense-Declare-Act (S-D-A) human cognitive behaviour model that crops up in many forms from an Action-Learning Cycle to an OODA (observe-orient-decide-act) loop as it is referred to in military circles. The sensor-to-shooter chain with feedback may also be thought of in terms of an S-D-A cycle. The important aspects are the adaptive and cyclic nature of the process.

11. The CCUP model can be thought of as a protected OODA loop.

12. Professional Mastery is said to be as much about mentoring and experience as training and education.
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A Principal Role for the Army Reserves: A Capability for Australian Homeland Defence

John Donovan

Introduction

The previous part of this article, which appeared in *ADFJ* No. 169, reviewed the historical, strategic and administrative background to the current posture of the Army for homeland defence. This part of the article proposes changes to that posture, to improve capability, by making greater use of Reserve forces. A first step in this direction was taken on 18 May 2003, when the Minister for Defence announced that a Reserve Response Force would be raised in each Army Reserve brigade, to provide 'short notice response to domestic security incidents including terrorist incidents as well as quick response to other civil emergencies'. Further expansion of this initiative is desirable.

Possible tasks for the Reserves in Homeland Defence

The Dibb Review made a number of observations about the role of the Reserves. In essence, Dibb saw the defence of vital assets as an achievable initial task for the Reserves after callout. He also saw them having a key role in maintaining the expansion base of the Army for conventional operations at higher levels of conflict, including being used as a significant (but not the sole) repository of some skills not required in lower levels of conflict.

It has been argued that the Reserves would not be able to maintain an appropriate level of skill to operate more complex equipment. However, a previous Chief of the Air Staff has proposed that Reserve pilots could operate some aircraft, while the United States maintains armoured and mechanised formations in its Army National Guard and the United States Marine Corps Reserve. Provision of a suitable level of Regular support would be necessary (which would also maintain such skills among Regular personnel). As well as supporting the use of Reserve pilots by the Air Force, Air Marshal Evans described Army thinking on the capability of Reserves as ‘similar to the dubious conclusions...by the RAAF, that modern aircraft and air warfare are too complex for part-time personnel.’

To a large degree, however, the point could be moot, if the Israeli author Martin van Creveld’s assessment of the likely future style of war (which is supported by experience since the 1991 Gulf War) is accepted. The need could be less for heavy armour and artillery units, and more for combined arms units to provide infantry, reconnaissance, field engineer, construction and communications, with limited heavy support elements.

A review in the later 1980s looked at the functions to be performed by the Army. The Wrigley report considered that ‘sovereignty defence’ forces that would draw on community support might be appropriate for Australia. These forces would include ‘a core of military professionals
who provide the military planning and management expertise, direct the training, and carry out most...peacetime constabulary tasks'.

Wrigley described two fundamental roles for the ADF; first what he called a ‘constabulary’ role:

To provide flexible rapid reaction forces able to protect and promote Australian interests in the region, assist regional civil authorities on request, meet alliance obligations, support peacekeeping and other initiatives …

And second, a national [homeland] defence role:

Within priorities and criteria laid down by government and in concert with the civilian agencies of government, prepare the national military defence machinery to provide effective insurance against the uncertainties of the future.

The ‘division of labour’ proposed by Wrigley, with full-time forces focusing on rapid reaction tasks, alliance obligations (collective security) and peacekeeping, and the Reserves on insurance against the uncertainties of the future, remains broadly valid. However, recent strategic guidance places emphasis on ‘fully developed’ forces. This has been interpreted to give a different rationale for the Reserves, focusing them on supporting the Regular forces when they respond to short notice ‘constabulary’ tasks, but apparently overlooking or minimising the need (particularly after the events of September 2001 and October 2002) for homeland defence forces. The level of development of homeland defence forces, even in the ‘fully developed’ form required by strategic guidance, could be different to that required for overseas ‘constabulary’ tasks.

The voluntary spirit in Australia

Whether sufficient personnel can be recruited voluntarily is an issue that must be considered. However, there is a long history and tradition of voluntary service to the community and the nation in Australia. This has not only been for national defence, but is also shown in the strong community spirit behind such organisations as volunteer fire and emergency services.

This spirit of voluntarism has been particularly marked during times of war. More than 16,000 colonial volunteers served in the Boer War. During World War I, over 415,000 Australians enlisted in the First AIF and about 330,000 served overseas. During World War II, around 40,000 personnel enlisted voluntarily in the Royal Australian Navy, and over 210,000 in the Royal Australian Air Force. As well, by the end of 1941, when the militia was called out against the threat of Japanese invasion, around 190,000 personnel had already enlisted voluntarily in the Second AIF, for service in a war against a tyranny that was remote from Australia. Many members of the militia had also enlisted voluntarily, but only for restricted service. During the war, over 200,000 militia members transferred to the AIF.

The voluntary spirit remains alive in the Australian community. A submission to the Charities Definition Inquiry by the Australasian Fire Authorities Council, on behalf of government managed fire and emergency service agencies, advised that there were more than 240,000 fire
and emergency service volunteers in Australia, most receiving no remuneration for their services. Together, they contributed more than 21,000,000 hours of voluntary service annually.\textsuperscript{16}

This voluntary spirit can still be called on for national defence, if governments provide clear and visible encouragement. For example, in the early 1980s, the Army Reserve was increased from a strength of about 24,000 to almost 32,000 in two years, when the government responded to the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan (which did not involve a direct threat to Australia).\textsuperscript{17} A call to prepare for homeland defence should be at least as successful. There is clearly great willingness in Australia to serve the community, as long as the need is clear. Yet, the strength of the Army Reserve is now less than 20,000. What has gone wrong?

The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade has suggested that at present, the Reserve could only maintain a strength of around 16,500 personnel.\textsuperscript{18} This estimate was made, however, after a period of over 25 years during which the Regular Army’s treatment of the Reserves has been described as showing ‘callous indifference’ with ‘little regard to the sensibilities of the citizen soldier.’\textsuperscript{19} By way of contrast, the emergency services of New South Wales, Victoria and Western Australia together have more than 17,000 volunteers.\textsuperscript{20}

What stands out from the examples of voluntary service cited above is that each responds to a clear need. The wartime enlistments were to meet identifiable threats. Members of the volunteer fire and emergency services also have a clear role, to protect their fellow Australian citizens from the threat of natural disaster, and to assist them to recover from its consequences. Both groups provide a function analogous to what was formerly called ‘defence of hearths and homes’.

However, while current strategic guidance gives the first priority for the ADF as the \textit{military} defence of Australia (emphases added), much of the recent public focus has been on activities that have little obvious direct connection with that role, such as deployments to East Timor, Rwanda, and Somalia, and intercepting asylum seeker boats. In addition, the Army does not seem to emphasise homeland defence as a role. This has the effect of down playing any community belief that preparations should be made in peacetime for homeland defence.

There has rarely been a clearly defined role for the Reserves, and in recent years, they have been used only as individual fillers for Regular units, not being deployed with their own units. Even the deployment of a Reserve company to East Timor in 2002 was as a sub-unit of a Regular unit, not as an identifiable Reserve element. As Palazzo states, ‘[t]he Army did not employ any Reserve units in East Timor, despite their presence on the order of battle’.\textsuperscript{21}

However, simply to use Reserve units as sources of personnel risks repeating the error made in 1941, when three units (the 39th, 49th and 53rd Battalions) were raised for service in Port Moresby. As David Horner notes:

\begin{quote}
The way in which these units were formed demonstrates the lack of appreciation of the value of regimental pride. They were formed…by obtaining batches of men from a number of units.\textsuperscript{22}
\end{quote}

Horner quotes Gavin Long (the Official Historian) as suggesting that the Cabinet was responsible for the organisational deficiencies of the militia battalions during the early campaigns in New
Guinea.\textsuperscript{23} However, it seems unlikely that Cabinet, which was often reluctant to intervene in substantive military matters, would have prescribed how to raise units. It is more likely that the failure was in the Army system. Events surrounding the Pentropic reorganisation of 1960, implementation of the Millar Review of 1974 and the use of Reserves in East Timor suggest that the lesson has not been learned.\textsuperscript{24}

Air Marshal Evans considers that the ‘best conditions in the world will not be persuasive in retaining people if they dislike their work’.\textsuperscript{25} By denying Reserves a clear role, and treating them insensitively, the Army has almost guaranteed that their numbers will decline. However, it seems highly likely that Reserve numbers could exceed the Joint Parliamentary Committee’s estimate, if Reserves are given a clear role and active encouragement by both the government and the Army.

\textbf{The way ahead}

While the collective security role preoccupies the Army in peacetime, its leaders should not forget the requirement to prepare for the ADF’s principal strategic responsibility, the defence of Australia.

In Project Army 2003, the Army reviewed roles, tasks, force structure and preparedness, mobilisation and expansion requirements and combat force development planning for the Army. Possible generic tasks for Reserves considered under that project were:

- Hold personnel or force elements at very high levels of readiness to meet Defence Aid to the Civil Community tasks;
- Hold personnel or force elements at high levels of readiness to provide round out to Ready Deployment Force (RDF) and Enabling Component Regular units;
- Hold personnel at high levels of readiness to provide reinforcement to RDF units;
- Hold sub-units and units at longer readiness levels to provide forces to rotate with force elements of the RDF; and
- Develop and maintain mobilisation plans to meet Defence of Australia scenarios and tasks.\textsuperscript{26}

If these proposed tasks in Project Army 2003 become the priorities for the Reserves, it will be important that they be implemented with good faith, including in relation to collective security responsibilities. In developing the concept of different readiness levels for individuals, sub-units and units, the Reserves should not be seen just as a personnel source for the Regular Army. Reserve units must also have discrete roles, to give them a sense of purpose in meeting a clear national need. In particular, Reserve units must be able to deploy as identifiable sub-units or units, after reasonable post-call out training, to maintain their esprit de corps.

However, only the last possible task in the Project Army 2003 list focuses on the defence of Australia. It therefore seems likely that, under that Project, the emphasis for Reserves will continue to be supporting the Regular Army in meeting collective security responsibilities,
with little priority for homeland defence. The requirement in strategic guidance to defend Australia remains. If the Regular force is to concentrate on collective security tasks, this role should be allocated to the Reserves.

To a degree, the Project Army 2003 proposals seemed to recognise that it is not practicable (or necessary) for Reserves to match the training and readiness levels of Regulars, by scaling the readiness of Reserve individuals, sub-units and units. Indeed, if Reserves could match the training and readiness levels of Regulars, there would be no need to maintain a Regular Army, with its very high ongoing personnel costs. The Reserves should be structured for a range of achievable readiness levels, generally lower than for the Regular forces, but sufficient to meet specific roles and tasks.

There is also evidence from the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) and Parliament that attempting to match Regular training standards is having an adverse impact on Reserve recruiting and retention. It seems strange, therefore, that the Army persisted with the system of seven weeks Common Induction Training as the only means of entry to the Reserves, in the face of clear evidence that it damages recruiting. Like their Regular counterparts, Reserves have families. In addition, they also have jobs (or may be students who must put time and effort into their studies).

If other options for initial training are not available, the bulk of established workers in the community will be excluded from Reserve service, to the detriment of national defence and the ADF’s links with the wider community it exists to serve. A range of initial entry schemes, from short periods (two to four weeks), through the current Common Induction Training scheme, perhaps to something like the former Ready Reserve scheme, where soldiers received not just initial recruit training, but also initial employment training and spent time in Regular units, before moving to part-time service widens the pool of potential recruits. Follow-on training should also be set at reasonable levels, related to readiness needs for particular tasks.

Reserves at the highest readiness level would normally have civilian skills that are largely exclusive to the Reserves, such as medical and dental specialisations, which can be immediately applied in a military environment. As well, individuals who could provide additional training time or former Regular personnel might be available as individual reinforcements to support the Regular Army on collective security tasks, so contributing to the security of our immediate neighbourhood, and providing support for Australia’s wider interests and objectives beyond it.

Personnel at the next level of readiness should provide the ability to deploy in sub-units for reinforcement or rotation at medium notice. Each sub-unit could be drawn from a single longer notice unit, using its best-trained and most ready personnel. They should normally deploy together, under their unit title. Such sub-units were used routinely to fill out under-strength Regular units for exercises in the 1970s. While these groups would generally support the Regular Army in collective security contingencies, they could contribute to more demanding homeland defence tasks, given their higher readiness level.

The third readiness level would provide full units for rotation at longer notice, or for basic homeland defence tasks. These would be the ‘parent’ units that provided the individuals and sub-units discussed above. Finally, there could be cadre units for expansion in the event of a major or extended conflict. These would be comprised largely of officers and non-commissioned
officers, and have the task of generating additional brigades on longer notice, as envisaged in
the report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: From
Phantom to Force – Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army.

The Australian National Audit Office noted that conflict with work, family and study commitments plays an important part in Reserves’ decisions to separate. Job satisfaction and career prospects appear to be primary motivators for remaining with the Reserves. Job satisfaction seems most likely to be achieved if there are clearly defined roles and tasks for the unit (as well as the individual) and if there is realistic and challenging training linked to those roles and tasks. In addition, people must be able to derive some enjoyment and satisfaction from Reserve service—they are giving up their free time for it.

Strategic guidance has consistently given priority to the defence of Australia, but the events that occur most frequently relate to collective security, often well away from the Australian mainland. This produces a dichotomy between the Army that Australia needs under strategic guidance, and the Army that it must have to meet current demands. The Regular Army is not large enough to meet both tasks, and the tendency seems to be to neglect homeland defence.

A role as the principal homeland defence force would give a sense of purpose to Reserve units that now seems to be lacking. It would also meet a requirement in strategic guidance that seems to be neglected under the pressure of day-to-day events. The role of principal homeland defence force (a role likely to be highly valued by the community) should help to attract and retain substantial numbers of committed personnel, as it does so effectively for the volunteer fire and emergency services. It is noteworthy that largely unpaid volunteer fire and emergency services can attract many more volunteers than paid Reserve units can. Perhaps having a role that is valued by the community they are drawn from, and being seen by that community carrying out that role, assists them?

Beyond homeland defence and collective security tasks, making Reserve units the first call ADF units for disaster assistance and relief, and other aid to the civil community tasks, would further enhance their sense of purpose (and increase the Army’s links with the local communities from which the Reserves in particular, but also Regulars, are recruited). Symbiotic peacetime roles for the Reserves, alongside the volunteer fire and emergency services, should have benefits for Reserve recruiting. In 1972, Baynes proposed that the United Kingdom should develop a Home Security Force with four component parts:

1. Civil Defence
2. Auxiliary Fire Service
3. Disaster Relief Organisation
4. Military Branch

Australia already has organisations to cover the first three functions, but lacks the fourth. The Reserves could fill that role.

The task of assisting the civil community falls within strategic guidance, which includes ‘ad hoc support to wider community needs.’ It is one of the possible generic tasks for Reserves.
considered in Project Army 2003 (although making the Reserves principally responsible for this task might not have been under consideration). Giving the Reserves the primary responsibility for assisting the civil community would allow the Regular Army to focus on high readiness, short notice, collective security roles.

Under these changes, capabilities that are primarily for homeland defence would be maintained principally in the Reserves, unless there are compelling reasons that they are not suitable for part-time soldiers (aviation is an obvious case unless the part-time members have already had extensive full-time service, as discussed by Air Marshal Evans[23]). A review of deployments in the last decade would suggest that most artillery needed for future warfare could be maintained in the Reserves, while there may be a case for additional infantry, special forces and engineers in the Regular Army. They could be raised within current staffing levels, using the personnel now in capabilities that would move to the Reserves.

Conclusion

This article proposes that the Regular forces should focus on the requirements of short notice contingencies and collective security, and the Reserves should be the principal homeland defence force, but continue to support the Regular Army in collective security operations. There are clear roles for Reserves in these operations. Indeed, some specialists whose skills cannot be readily maintained in the Regular Army may be required for an initial deployment (specialist doctors are an example). There is also a valid role for Reserves in providing rotation forces.

However, Reserves should focus on homeland defence, providing forces to defend against a range of lower level threats, ranging from minor incursions and raids, through the enhanced threat of terrorist attack by individuals or small sub-national or non-state groups, to any attempt at a limited lodgement on Australian territory. The emphasis in forces for homeland defence should be on infantry, light reconnaissance, field engineer and communications roles.

There could also be a range of cadre units for expansion in the event of major or extended conflict. These would be comprised largely of officers and non-commissioned officers, and would have the task of generating additional brigades on longer notice, as envisaged in the August 2000 report of the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: From Phantom to Force – Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army.

Beyond homeland defence, making Reserve units the first call ADF units for disaster assistance and relief, and other aid to the civil community tasks, would further enhance their sense of purpose (and increase the Army’s links with the local communities from which the Reserves in particular, but also the Regulars are recruited).

John Donovan worked in the Department of Defence for over 32 years, principally in the fields of intelligence, force development and resource management. He also served for several years in the Australian Army Reserve, rising through the ranks from Private to Lieutenant.
NOTES

1. Media Release MIN 64/03 of 18 May 2003.


3. ibid., p. 87.


5. ibid., p. 147.


7. ibid., p. 499.

8. ibid., p. 318.


10. ibid., p. 109.


13. ibid., p. 218.


16. AFAC Submission dated June 2001, p. 3.


23. ibid.


29. This discussion is inspired by an article ‘Making Sense of the Territorial Army’ in the *Journal of the Royal United Services Institute for Defence Studies*, October 1992, by Lieutenant Colonel C.J.R. Day.


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Defence, Politics and the 2005 New Zealand General Election

Professor Stephen Levine

Introduction

The New Zealand Government formed as a result of the 2005 general election began its new term of office in a time-honoured fashion which, like much of parliamentary politics, owes a great deal to British tradition. On 8 November, a day after the Members of Parliament had either sworn or affirmed their allegiance to the Queen, the Governor-General delivered the ‘speech from the throne’ setting forth the new government’s program for what it hopes to be the next three years.

The Governor-General’s speech, delivered in the Legislative Council Chamber in Parliament—a room that had once accommodated the country’s upper house (which was abolished in 1951)—had, of course, been prepared for her by the government of Prime Minister Helen Clark. The post-election manoeuvring had led to an unusual coalition arrangement, with the Labour Party (50 seats) and its erstwhile coalition partner the Progressives (1 seat) negotiating support agreements with three parties—New Zealand First, United Future, and the Greens—giving each of them policy concessions and the first two of these parties a ministerial position apiece outside of Cabinet.

None of these coalition agreements—not the one between Labour and the Progressives, nor the three between them and their support parties—had much to say about New Zealand defence policy. The arrangements with New Zealand First included (under ‘issues which are important to New Zealand First and which the government has agreed to address’) ‘keeping defence salaries under review’—hardly a difficult commitment to honour. The Greens asserted the party’s commitment ‘to the development of New Zealand’s capacity in international peacemaking’, a matter on which ‘the government agree[d] to maintain a dialogue’.1

As for the ‘speech from the throne’, outlining a program that in one way or another represents the combined aspirations of the participating parties, the principal references to ‘security’ had to do with New Zealanders’ economic wellbeing and the need to reduce crime. Security in the military sense (generously defined) was allotted three sentences:

‘New Zealand’s sense of national identity is also underpinned by our position as an independent and principled player on the world stage. My government will continue to ensure that New Zealand contributes positively to the resolution of the many challenges our world faces. Resourcing for our diplomatic, aid, and defence infrastructure’—this is the only use of the word ‘defence’ in the entire speech—‘is being significantly increased to that end’.

There are different ways of interpreting such reticence. Certainly a plausible reading of this indifference to defence questions is that the country—its people, its leadership, and its news media—feels secure. New Zealand has not always felt that way; its history has its share of real
and imagined threats. But the lack of attention given to defence or security matters in the policy packages negotiated by the five parties concerned, and then subsequently in the government’s formal statement of its program, does suggest that, overseas terror outrages notwithstanding, New Zealand feels as free from impending or imminent danger as it is possible to be.

A second view of the silence over defence, of course, would be to suggest that there is little to be said because there is little that can be done. While it may be true that New Zealand has little in the way of additional resources to allocate towards defence, there is little evidence to suggest that an attitude of resignation, or even despair, has in some way developed to permeate the country’s outlook towards its future.

A third response would be that the government is offering nothing new because its previous term in office saw it already introduce measures to strengthen New Zealand’s defence forces. There was thus no need to announce new initiatives, as those already underway reflect a judicious assessment of the country’s options.

A fourth and final view would acknowledge that, whatever the country’s security circumstances may be, there is little political advantage to be gained by dwelling on defence issues. The electorate gave its verdict on the Labour Party, and its competition, with the 17 September election revolving around a range of issues—taxation, health policy, education, immigration, race relations, the leadership qualities of the Prime Minister and her adversaries—and with defence issues having little if any influence on the outcome.

Security policy and the 2005 New Zealand election campaign

Yet it would be too much to say that the 2005 election campaign had nothing to say about the country’s security position. Indeed, as the excerpt from the ‘speech from the throne’ suggests, New Zealand’s political culture now mingles questions of national identity with the country’s foreign and defence policy perspectives. In 2005, as at other times, the Labour Party was able to demonstrate that pride in an independent foreign policy and a non-nuclear (and hence non-alliance) position can be easily mobilised for at least short-term political gain.

Indeed, the 2005 election campaign began with the then Foreign Minister Phil Goff using the final parliamentary sitting to embarrass the National Party, claiming that its leader, Don Brash, and its foreign affairs spokesperson, Lockwood Smith, had met with American policy-makers in Washington, seeking help from the United States to influence New Zealand opinion. This follows earlier claims that Brash had assured the Americans that the country’s nuclear-free policy would be ‘gone by lunchtime’, an assertion that Brash did not recall making but that he did not altogether deny. The election campaign thus began with Labour engaged in nuclear politics, wrapping itself in New Zealand’s now iconic policy, seeking to make the election appear to be a choice between a party committed to the nuclear-free policy and a party prepared to subordinate itself to the United States. National’s unnecessarily convoluted policy—that the nuclear-free legislation would not be changed without a referendum, and that the party had no plans to hold one—was a less robust expression of loyalty to anti-nuclear values than New Zealanders might have preferred. Furthermore Brash’s equivocations over the Iraq war—he had no plans to send New Zealand forces there, but it appears that he might have done
precisely that had he been prime minister and received a request (as he would have done) at the outset—did little to extricate the opposition National Party from the foreign policy hole it had dug for itself.

Labour’s attempt to change the agenda for the 2005 election did not last long—other issues came to the fore—but the party’s leadership did show an ability to exploit an advantage over National so long as questions of foreign and defence policy could be made to revolve around the nuclear-free status and relations with the United States. At the same time, however, there were other defence issues being raised in the election campaign, on party websites, offering choices to electors whether or not they were interested in learning about them.

A survey carried out in the final week of the election campaign, asking voters to name ‘the most important problem facing New Zealand’, found almost no one mentioning anything to do with the country’s foreign or defence policy. Similarly, a question asking electors to name ‘any issue important to you personally when it comes to voting’ found little evidence that voters were thinking of security issues when deciding how to cast their ballot.2

Even so, New Zealand’s parties did articulate defence and foreign policy choices that, together, provide useful insights into the country’s thinking about its position in the region and the wider world. Australian analysts and voters alike will realise already the vast difference in perspective between the two countries, an impression likely to grow when the policy proposals offered to the electorate by New Zealand’s parties in 2005 are considered.

**Political choices and defence policy at the 2005 election**

The general election was contested principally by eight political parties, each represented in Parliament both before and after the 17 September ballot.

*From the Left—the Maori Party, the Greens and the Progressives*

One party, the Maori Party, for whom defence and foreign relations was not a priority, was competing in its first general election. Its leader had resigned from the Labour Party during the previous parliamentary term, formed a new political party, and was re-elected in a by-election. Although not focused on defence or international affairs, the Maori Party did offer a perspective with some foreign policy implications. For instance, it stated that its ‘policy approach’ would be based on ‘Maori models not just Western ones’. Its economic policy—‘caring for our world’—sought ‘to establish trade relationships with other first nation peoples’; urged ‘acceptance of the United Nations’ draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples’; and expressed support for the idea ‘of a global treaty for indigenous peoples’. With its focus on Maori values and the upholding of New Zealand’s Treaty of Waitangi, there was little in the party’s outlook to suggest that defence preparedness or alliance relationships would be given much attention or emphasis.3

A second party, the Greens, was vehemently opposed to any New Zealand participation in the war in Iraq and, earlier, in Afghanistan. The party also adheres to extreme positions towards Israel and is less than supportive of measures intended to cope with the threat of
international terrorism. Defence is simply not a priority for the Greens. The party’s values include a commitment to ‘non-violence’, fair trade (rather than free trade), and a greater emphasis on human rights. The latter position saw the Greens seeking to ban New Zealand sporting contacts with Robert Mugabe’s Zimbabwe, because of flagrant human rights violations by the regime. The Greens’ co-leader Rod Donald (who died suddenly in November, just prior to the reconvening of Parliament) also staged a very well-publicised protest on behalf of Tibet on the steps of Parliament during a May 2005 visit to New Zealand by the National People’s Congress Chairman Wu Bangguo, China’s second-ranked politician.

A third party, the Progressives, is actually part of the government, very much a junior partner in a coalition with the Labour Party. The Progressives did promote alternative perspectives towards Iraq, with other policies focusing on support for the United Nations. The Progressives’ ‘International Affairs’ policy emphasised ‘non-military threats’ to New Zealand’s security. The party urged an increase in New Zealand’s overseas aid and, in general, gave priority to ‘international action to reduce the causes of conflict and poverty’. In the Progressives’ view, the ‘most constructive approach to addressing the root cause of tension and conflict around the world’ was through ‘the creation of a community of nations based on economic and social cooperation between all peoples and the maintenance of a globally sustainable environment’.

**United Future**

United Future, a support party for the government (both before and after the election), is more centrist than the preceding three—this review of the parties is moving from left to right across the political spectrum—and, consequently, is more defence-oriented. The party is also supportive of ethnic diversity and immigration—an issue with the potential to affect the country’s foreign policy and its international relationships.

United Future’s foreign affairs, defence and trade policy for the 2005 election emphasised the importance of trade for New Zealand’s ‘economic wellbeing’. The party stated that it ‘recognises that the defence of the nation is a fundamental responsibility for any government’ and that ‘central to [its] vision is an independent nation with appropriate defence forces’. The party called for ‘closer defence cooperation’ with Australia ‘in a revitalisation of the ANZAC tradition’, which included ‘exploring the possibility of a combined maritime surveillance capability, joint air strike forces, special forces team, or an ANZAC battalion’. An improved defence relationship with the United States was also part of the United Future policy.

Perhaps its most unusual defence proposals were financial. United Future stated that it would ‘ensure that the government meets the full cost of measures arising from the international war on terrorism’, rather than seeking new tax revenues from New Zealand-based exporters and importers. Its other innovative suggestion was for ‘a multi-party accord on ten-year defence and capital equipment funding’ to ‘allow for more efficient purchasing’.

**New Zealand First**

The more populist New Zealand First party, led by the mercurial Winston Peters, had succeeded in developing immigration as a key issue with voters. Indeed, Peters had also linked the issue of immigration to terrorism, to Muslims, and to questions of security for New Zealand and
its people. These were controversial connections and Peters’ remarks, though provocative, were often ambiguous. The general message was clear, however: lax immigration policies had national security implications and, as a result, New Zealand’s security could not be taken for granted.

The tenor of these remarks can be appreciated from a 2 August 2005 media release from Winston Peters: ‘It appears that the Prime Minister’s obsession in promoting so-called diversity has provided an avenue for Islamic extremists to permeate New Zealand’s mainly moderate Muslim community. ... New Zealand is being increasingly infiltrated with anti-western rhetoric ... While other parties may not take New Zealand’s national security seriously, New Zealand First is not willing to jeopardise the nation’s safety’.7 In a remarkable speech that Peters himself entitled ‘The End of Tolerance’, given on 28 July, Peters said, of other parties, ‘They say – ah yes – but New Zealand has always been a nation of immigrants. They miss a crucial point. New Zealand has never been a nation of Islamic immigrants’. He added: ‘the apologists for radical Islam, and they exist in this country, are prepared to overlook its virulent anti-Semitism. Do we want that sort of prejudice in New Zealand? Let us be clear – radical Islam is not a “live and let live” religion. We cannot take our tradition of toleration for granted when we are importing fanatics for whom that tradition is alien.’8

The party’s ‘defence and veterans’ affairs’ policy stated that ‘successive governments have allowed our defence forces to be run down’. New Zealand First described itself as ‘committed to building and maintaining a professional and effective Defence Force appropriate to our size that is self-sufficient, and capable of operating with maximum efficiency and effectiveness’. The party recognised ‘the new threats posed by international terrorism and rogue nations’. While promising to ‘maintain New Zealand’s commitment to its Nuclear Free Policy’, New Zealand First supported existing defence agreements, particularly with Australia—‘the Closer Defence Relationship’—and stated that it would ‘seek to strengthen relationships with the United States, Britain, France and all South Pacific Island nations’ in order to improve ‘military training’ opportunities. The party also promised to ‘expand the size of the New Zealand Special Air Service and have them work more closely with British, Australian and US Defence Forces’.9

From the Right—ACT and National

The right-wing ACT party—essentially a small-state, low-tax party—was probably the party with the clearest alternative defence and security outlook at the 2005 election. Its views on these matters received little coverage and it is doubtful that greater attention to its policies in this area would have gained it more votes. However, ACT was resolute, even principled, in continuing to call for New Zealand to have an air force (i.e., an air force with fighter planes). ACT’s leader, Rodney Hide, for instance, stated in August 2005 that ‘the number one duty of any government is to protect New Zealanders. That requires a well-resourced and balanced military capacity that includes a small combat air wing. It also requires collective security with our traditional allies, Australia and the USA.’10

ACT was thus unequivocally pro-ANZUS, the only genuinely pro-alliance party at the election. ACT was also the only party to clearly call for a change in New Zealand’s anti-nuclear policy, urging the country to allow visits by US warships. But the party was not predictably far-right in all things, being vigorously anti-Peters, committing itself to tolerance and support for ethnic diversity.11
The National Party’s sensitivity to the electorate was reflected in its rapid and unceremonious dumping of its defence spokesperson, Simon Power, when he promised in a speech to support America, wherever it might go. But that idea—of following another country, any other country, blindly—has passed, probably never to return. The closest New Zealand seems to come to that notion—without it being put quite so clearly—is in a sentiment, remarkably naïve and based on a profound ignorance of the political character of the United Nations, which might lead some to say, in effect, ‘Wherever the UN goes, we will go’. But this outlook, which sees the UN as the ultimate arbiter of international law, morality and good sense, is not one to be applied to any particular country.

The National Party’s policy at the election—that it would not change the anti-nuclear policy without a referendum and that it did not have any plans to hold one—reflected its sensitivity to the electoral consequences of modifying the anti-nuclear policy. Nevertheless its unenthusiastic, or reluctant, support for that policy’s retention makes the party suspect for some, at best unreliable; thus it remains vulnerable to attack from Labour on this issue whenever the opportunity can be made to present itself.

National’s specific foreign and defence policy commitments were few and largely insubstantial. The party promised that it would ‘make more effective our work to prevent the spread of nuclear weapons’, although no hints let alone details were provided as to how this would be done. The party characterised New Zealand’s combat forces as ‘inadequately prepared and inadequately resourced’. National stated that it would ‘rebuild credible combat capability’ but, as a qualifying phrase, that this would be done ‘consistent with our size and wealth’. Although not offering to change the country’s legislative ban on ship visits from nuclear-powered or nuclear-armed naval vessels or restore its ANZUS alliance relationship, National did suggest that in ‘any crisis ... it is clear that New Zealand will be acting together with like-minded countries’. As a further sign of the direction that the party would like to take the country, National promised a comprehensive review of ‘the structure of our armed forces and intelligence capability’ as a result of the change in ‘the world’s security environment’ arising out of the September 11th attacks. National also promised a review of ‘pay and conditions’ of defence personnel ‘ahead of any major equipment decisions’ in order to give service personnel ‘the recognition they deserve’ and deal with ‘the serious attrition rate in our forces’.12

The Labour Party—the view from the Beehive

As for Labour, its defence and foreign policies at the election were essentially a defence of its record over the last six years (1999–2005) in government. Labour had maintained New Zealand’s ‘independent’ stance, resolutely separate from any alliance with the United States. As for Australia, this was a relationship to be managed on a case-by-case basis. Clearly Prime Ministers Clark and Howard come from different political backgrounds. How much real separation there is between New Zealand and its traditional alliance partners, however, may be disputed. In August 2005, in mid-campaign, the United States allowed New Zealand to join a combined military exercise off Singapore, a move seen as signalling an apparent thaw in the defence relationship. In this respect the Labour Party’s position is somewhat finely balanced: too distant a relationship from the US, while pleasing some of its constituency, can be seen as weakening New Zealand militarily and economically, jeopardising prospects for a free trade agreement (for instance); too close a relationship, on the other hand, deprives the party of a
political asset that it has had, as refusing to follow the American lead appeals to nationalist sentiment and marginalises domestic political criticism.

Nevertheless New Zealand has continued to commit troops to Afghanistan, where there have been deployments of special forces (SAS) as well as troops involved in reconstruction work. Similarly, despite a very vocal refusal to support the US, Britain and Australia in the war in Iraq, New Zealand has made a small contribution through participation in a naval patrol and, for a time, through a deployment in Iraq (subsequently discontinued as a result of deteriorating security) intended to assist with reconstruction.

Some of the real issues facing the government—retention of Service personnel; modernisation of equipment—are less dramatic; levels of defence spending are an expression of policy, but are less potent as a political issue than relations with the US and the nuclear issue. The politically independent research staff of New Zealand’s Parliamentary Library produced a report in March 2005 describing the country’s defence expenditure as ‘low by international standards, both in absolute terms and as a proportion of the national economy’. Nevertheless it would be difficult to say that there is much of a constituency in the country for an increase in defence spending, given competing and compelling sectors such as health and education.

Labour’s policy program, as expected of a party that had been in power already for two successive terms—six years—was largely self-congratulatory. Rather than promising to ‘seek’ particular outcomes, it celebrated having already brought them about. Thus the party claims that it had ‘effectively brought an end to the neglect and ad hoc spending experienced by our Defence Forces throughout the 1990s’—i.e., before Labour had come to power. Now ‘approvals’ for various equipment acquisitions were helping to ‘move New Zealand towards the goal of having a modernised, well-equipped, and sustainable Defence Force’. There were no new election campaign initiatives. More broadly, Labour saw its international affairs priorities as ‘promoting sustainable world economic growth and trade opportunities’; and advancing policies to protect the environment, promote human rights and democracy, encourage disarmament and ‘conflict prevention’—policies ‘based on traditional New Zealand values’.

**Defence and the New Zealand political culture**

There is no question that the wider social, political and cultural environment has had an influence over New Zealand’s foreign and defence policies in recent years. Attitudes towards the United States are a major element in this. Recently, for instance, I attended a talk at which the speaker stated that he had voted for President George W. Bush. In fact, the speaker indicated that he had voted for Bush not once but twice—in 2000 and again in 2004. This statement—almost a confession, defiant, not apologetically delivered—was greeted by the New Zealand audience with a sharp intake of breath, a genuine sense of shock. Here was an apparently reasonable, rational person who, on close inspection, turned out to be a serial Bush voter!

For that matter, I have also witnessed a presentation by a National Party spokesperson to a university class. The tension in the room was palpable. Any expressions by the speaker of camaraderie towards the United States (and there were a few) had a chilling effect on the atmosphere. At the end of his address, the Member of Parliament received questions that were
strongly antagonistic towards the United States, among other things comparing President Bush to President Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

A related theme in New Zealand culture sees defence and the military as, generally speaking, virtually worthless. Negative assessments of the value of defence are linked, culturally speaking, to negative assessments of the value of being associated, for security purposes, with the United States. Security preparations are seen as unnecessary, more a problem than a solution. War itself is considered invariably futile and meaningless; this affects reactions towards the ANZAC relationship, although here matters may become somewhat more complicated. A recent growth in interest in commemorations of Anzac Day, in New Zealand, is in no way connected with any desire for any contemporary close relationship with Australia (to say nothing of Great Britain). Rather there is a nostalgia, a sentimentality, and a sense of tragedy—appropriately enough, given the scale of the slaughter and the dreadful sacrifices made by New Zealand servicemen (and indeed all forces, Allied and enemy) at Gallipoli and elsewhere (as at the Western Front). The very awareness of the appalling events commemorated through Anzac Day contributes still further, however, to a sense of the futility, stupidity and pointlessness of military activity and New Zealand’s participation in it.

It was against such a background, here briefly put, that the New Zealand election campaign unfolded. Peter Dunne, the leader of one small party (United Future) and at the time also chairperson of Parliament’s Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade committee, told a university class that ‘at this election foreign policy will be an issue’. He also noted that that was not usually the case.

He was, in at least a limited way, correct, even if, ultimately, as noted, few voters cited defence or foreign policy topics as crucial to their vote. Labour began its campaign by claiming that the National Party was in some way being funded from Washington. The formal campaign had been preceded by outgoing US Ambassador Charles Swindell’s July 4th speech calling for New Zealand and the United States to talk with one another about matters that divided them, a clear reference (though he managed to avoid using the word) to nuclear issues and New Zealand’s anti-nuclear policy. This was an invitation—a request for dialogue—that was not taken up. Following the election, with the arrival of a new US Ambassador, a comparable suggestion that the US–New Zealand relationship could benefit from a review was not embraced by the Prime Minister, Helen Clark, although her new Foreign Minister, Winston Peters, was less dismissive.

Of course, despite differences in outlook and approach, each New Zealand political party sees New Zealand as an independent country, making its own way in the world. New Zealand is independent of the US and of the West, and was destined to stay that way whichever party won the election. Likewise, all New Zealand parties support the country’s sense of a special attachment to the South Pacific—again, a ‘policy’ having perhaps as much to do with ‘identity’ as with national interests.

**Conclusion**

It is interesting that, at a time when New Zealand’s once robust interest in defence issues has faded, and in a period when the country (and its people) is ever more distinguishing itself from its traditional allies and partners—Great Britain, the United States, and Australia—there has
grown up something of a new culture, oriented towards remembrance. This gaze back towards the past was especially pronounced during 2004 when the ‘Unknown Warrior’ was returned from Europe to be interred at his final resting place in Wellington, but the phenomenon neither began nor ended with that occasion. Publications on various aspects of New Zealand’s military involvements continue apace, histories both official and unofficial, with and without government sponsorship. By contrast with the ambivalence displayed towards contemporary involvements and activities, these various expressions of interest and pride in the country’s past record—its sacrifices, heroism and endurance—come with prime ministerial blessing. In December 2005 new plans were unveiled for a war memorial in London to the New Zealand forces, a substantial plan described by the Prime Minister as ‘stunning’.16

There is a political, moral and intellectual logic to these in some ways complex responses, as events and episodes from the country’s past military engagements continue to exert a capacity to evoke profound emotional associations in many people. From afar New Zealand may appear to have an odd view of history—a record of peaks being conquered, whether by Edmund Hillary, the All Blacks or Peter Jackson—but the truth is that this is a country still facing historic choices, divided over its destination but intent on discovering one worth travelling to.

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NOTES

1. The various agreements establishing the coalition government can be found at the government’s website at: <www.beehive.govt.nz>.


7. See <http://www.nzfirst.org.nz/content/display_item.php?t=0&i=2043>.

8. The speech can be read at: <http://www.nzfirst.org.nz/content/display_item.php?t=1&i=2040>.


15. See <http://www.labour.org.nz/policy/foreign_affairs_and_defense/policy_2002/index.html>. Labour’s foreign and defence policies did not appear to have been updated by August 2005, with the election campaign more or less under way, and not surprisingly they were in no way part of the main policy promises promoted by the party and the Prime Minister during the campaign or in party advertising.

From the Service Study Centres

In order to keep readers abreast of a wider set of discussions on defence and security related issues we are including reprints of articles from Australian Warfare Studies Centres.

The Strategic Importance of Australian Ports

Reprinted from the Sea Power Centre’s newsletter, Semaphore, Issue 16, October 2005

Australia is fundamentally a maritime nation and its economy is absolutely dependent on shipping. Of its international trade, 99.9% by weight and 73.5% by value is carried by ship. Australia’s ports are vital to this trade and their managers are constantly seeking to improve productivity and reduce overheads in the search for improved profitability.

Specific Australian ports are also crucial to Australia’s defence. The geography of mainland Australia, and the proximity of our northern approaches to potential operations, necessitates core naval infrastructure and major fleet support bases be located in the south, close to Australia’s industrial centres, augmented by operating bases in the north from which operations are mounted by locally based or forward deployed elements.

Consequently the RAN’s major ships are located at Fleet Base East at Garden Island, Sydney and Fleet Base West at Garden Island, Rockingham, WA, which is also home to the submarine force. Smaller patrol, hydrographic and amphibious vessels are based in Darwin and Cairns. These locations are all close to important offshore training areas, and have dedicated naval fuel installations (NFI) that provide strategic fuel stockholdings to meet the varying operational demands of locally based and visiting warships. Major naval ship and submarine construction, refit and repair tasks are conducted at commercial facilities located in the industrial centres of Brisbane, Newcastle, Sydney, Melbourne, Adelaide and Fremantle.

The relative importance of individual ports to the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will be determined by the location, nature and duration of each contingency, plus the nature and tempo of normal peacetime operations including activities supporting border protection in Australia’s north. The RAN’s strategic planning assumes continued access to those commercial ports that contain naval bases, and seeks to ensure access to other northern commercial port facilities needed to support forward-deployed assets. Most importantly, this includes Darwin, Cairns and Townsville which are key bases for maritime operations in Australia’s northern approaches, plus Gladstone, close to Shoalwater Bay Training Area, Weipa and Gove in the Gulf of Carpentaria, and Broome, Dampier and Port Hedland on the north west coast.
The Department has already invested in Townsville and Darwin to meet specific Army amphibious load/offload requirements for the RAN’s current major amphibious ships, which require stern door Roll-on Roll-off (RoRo) loading facilities, plus associated berth space and vehicle marshalling areas. In Townsville, these requirements are met under a Deed of Licence with the Port Authority for access to its RoRo facility, which involved Defence funded construction of an extension to the associated Berth 10. In Darwin, Defence has funded refurbishment of the RoRo facility at Fort Hill Wharf under a Deed of Licence with the Port Corporation that also addresses access and berthing rights in the city wharf precinct. The requirement for Defence investment in port infrastructure in Cairns and Dampier is under active consideration.

Port infrastructure investment necessarily requires a long-term view, with trade projections and berth capacity uppermost in the minds of port and government planners. Planning lead times are typically in the 20 to 50 year scale. While investment in new infrastructure generally increases productivity and reduces ship turnaround times, the cost of these investments must be recovered. In addition, new infrastructure initially tends to have relatively low usage rates, but as trade increases so too does port congestion. Port authorities are inevitably faced with striking a balance between the costs of infrastructure expansion and those of port congestion. Ultimately, ports aim to ensure their berths lie idle for as little time as possible. This means that spare berth capacity for naval use will diminish over time, particularly if redundant wharf areas are not replaced.

Under Section 70C of the Defence Act 1903, RAN ships are exempt from payment of berthage fees in Australian ports, although they do pay for received services such as water, power, and telephones. Therefore while local communities benefit economically from RAN ship visits, port authorities themselves receive no direct revenue. This partly determines a commercial reality that naval ships do not enjoy the same priority for berthing as commercial shipping. Even so, Australian ports have generally been outstanding in their efforts to accommodate visiting warships around their busy commercial shipping schedules.

In looking to the future, the key question is whether existing arrangements will be sufficient to provide RAN and other ADF elements with the port access necessary to carry out assigned national security tasks. Arguably a port system that is unable to respond to the support and surge demands of Defence during contingencies will quickly become a bottleneck and impede operations.

Present liaison links between the Navy and the chief executives of key ports certainly seem capable of dealing with future contingencies where the Department may require priority access to a port for a specific task attracting high national priority. This liaison has occurred successfully in the past to accommodate various regional contingencies, under the principle that commercial shipping may be held off a berth while a higher priority Defence task is undertaken. In most contingent situations, Defence will need access to general cargo and RoRo berths, plus refuelling and intermodal links.

Short term but high naval demands are also placed on ports during major exercises such as the recent Kakadu off Darwin and Talisman Sabre 05 off the Queensland coast. In the latter case, the Department established liaison cells in key ports to assist with the significant additional RAN and US Navy requests for alongside berth space, often at short notice.
Access to dedicated naval F76 diesel fuel supplies remains a key issue. Although some uncertainties exist over naval fuel offload arrangements in Darwin beyond 2010, fuel storage capacity at that port’s NFI remains adequate for the foreseeable future. Limitations on commercial fuel storage capacity and re-supply in Townsville, particularly during major Defence exercises, suggests the need to consider establishing a dedicated Navy fuel storage facility in that port, noting that access to the nearby NFI storage in Cairns may not be possible for larger ships due to channel limitations in that port.

Present and future Defence needs for access to Australian ports are best facilitated through an ongoing liaison and dialogue process. Prominent in this is the Australian Maritime Defence Council (AMDC), established in 1982 in recognition of the need to develop and maintain sound working relationships between the Department and key maritime industry players. Chaired by the Deputy Chief of Navy, the biannual AMDC meetings provide a valuable forum in which senior Defence and industry stakeholders can exchange information and keep each other informed of trends and key matters of national maritime interest.

The commercialisation and privatisation of Australian ports has seen a steady shift from Defence dealing with State governments as the owners and operators of ports, to dealing with port operators singularly and collectively. How Defence communicates and interacts with ports has a significant influence on its capability. To address this, Defence has established a close relationship with the Australian Association of Ports and Marine Authorities (AAPMA) which represents the majority of ports. This relationship is further supported by the documented 'Guiding Principles for Defence Access to National Ports' which provide a clear and agreed understanding between the Department and the ports of their shared obligations for Defence access to, and use of, Australian ports.

A new factor in this strategic relationship has been Australia’s enactment of the Maritime Transport and Offshore Facilities Security Act 2003 (MTOFSA). This legislation provides a framework for the deterrence and detection of acts that pose a threat to maritime transport and associated facilities, and applies to approximately 70 ports, 300 port facilities and 70 Australian ships involved in international and interstate trade, plus various offshore facilities. The MTOFSA does not apply to military vessels, ports, or parts of ports under the exclusive control of the ADF. However the RAN has agreed to work closely with all ports to ensure the force protection measures adopted by its ships dovetail with the MTOFSA security levels and measures that ports are necessarily obliged to implement, and thus avoid compromise of port security arrangements.4

The new focus on port security around Australia has also drawn attention to apparent inconsistencies between the ambitions of development planners who seek to place high return residential accommodation at the waters’ edge in working ports, versus port authorities who seek to protect the security of their waterfront from urban encroachment. RAN policy is to obtain a minimum of 50 metres and ideally at least 100 metres of clear space around any ship alongside a commercial berth. US Navy requirements for ships visiting Australian ports are comparable. As a consequence, the RAN has decided that its ships will no longer berth at the innermost berths in Port Adelaide, where new townhouses are now located close to the wharf edge—a situation which could well be replicated in other ports under similar circumstances.
In summary, despite the current modest levels of commercial port infrastructure investment by Defence under Deeds of Licence in key ports, and the good working relationship that the Department enjoys with ports and the maritime industry, these arrangements need constant attention to ensure they continue to meet the operational support needs of visiting RAN and foreign warships. With anticipated trade growth in ports like Townsville and Darwin increasingly constraining berth availability, there is likely to be added pressure on Defence to invest in port infrastructure to meet its specific needs. Unless directed by their governments under community service obligation provisions, ports will not invest in facilities from which they gain no revenue.

These issues are uppermost in present deliberations over future Defence refurbishment and retention of the Iron Ore Wharf in Darwin, and the adequacy of various port facilities—notably in Darwin, Townsville and Gladstone—to accommodate future RAN amphibious ships and their load/offload requirements. Meanwhile, the RAN’s access to key Australian commercial ports will remain vital to conduct of operations and exercises in Australia’s northern region, and will continue to be determined largely by the quality and effectiveness of its relations with individual ports and their representative national body.

1. HMA Ships Kanimbla, Manoora and Tobruk.
2. The planned redevelopment of HMAS Cairns from 2007–10 seeks to incorporate use of the Sugar Wharf to overcome berth shortfalls.
3. The Minister for Defence has announced that Dampier is the preferred operating port for Armidale Class Patrol Boats conducting patrols in the North West Shelf area.
4. RAN force protection policies and the regulations under the MTOFSA are not directly linked.
5. Current planning is to replace Kanimbla, Manoora and Tobruk with two larger amphibious ships and a sea lift capability from 2010.
Uninhabited Combat Air Vehicles: Challenges for the Future

Reprinted from the Air Power Development Centre’s bulletin, Pathfinder, Issue 36, November 2005

Currently there are a number of programs being pursued by a host of countries to demonstrate the technical feasibility of an Uninhabited Combat Air Vehicle (UCAV) to effectively prosecute lethal strike missions with an acceptable level of autonomy, within the existing and possible future battlespace. Even though they apply force, these systems are being envisioned more as force enablers to the core force providers at least for the next two decades and are then expected to evolve into the broader range of combat missions, dependent on the maturation of emerging technologies.

Although the UCAVs operationally fielded to date are only the first-generation, their advent into the combat arena has initiated a subtle transformation in the conduct of operations not only in the air environment but also of the entire military force. However, this transformation is neither fully apparent nor is it clearly charted in terms of the end state, mainly because there is a great deal of uncertainty regarding the delineation of the roles and missions that can be performed by these systems. The current thinking indicates that UCAVs would be allocated missions that are categorised as ‘the dull, the dirty and the dangerous’.

Unmanned airborne systems have been traditionally used as Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance (ISR) assets; their performance envelope being constantly improved with breakthroughs in sensor technology. Even though they still have some serious limitations to overcome, it is now acknowledged that these systems have primacy in the ISR role over manned and space-based assets. Sensor technology is very advanced, but it still has not developed sufficiently to facilitate the autonomous conduct of complex battlespace management functions, and therefore manned systems still have the core role to play. Since manned systems are very costly and need self-protection measures to assure their safety, affordability and expendability become the two main factors that support further development in sensors to increase effectiveness of unmanned systems. However, there are lingering doubts and problems regarding the employment of these vehicles in a completely autonomous manner.

Based on the success of a few time-sensitive strikes, a definitive role that has emerged for the UCAVs is that of Suppression of Enemy Air Defences (SEAD), although these are not time-sensitive targets in the normal sense unless they are mobile defences. The improvements in surface-to-air missiles in the recent past have made the SEAD role almost suicidal for manned aircraft and UCAVs are seen as the panacea for this situation. However, it has also to be borne in mind that attrition of the UCAV could be considered acceptable only when the alternative is the loss of a manned aircraft, since they are expensive assets to be considered totally expendable. This situation argues for the development of a more sophisticated SEAD strategy that should incorporate low-cost decoys to make the location of air defences simpler, followed by the use of stand-off weapons, manned aircraft and/or UCAVs for the strike. The bottom line is that even in this most-dangerous role, the UCAV still cannot operate autonomously with the desired effectiveness.
It is not difficult to imagine this strike role of the UCAV being enlarged to Counter Air missions, once again in a combined strike package that will have the benefit of a manned platform to make the complex decisions and intuitive changes needed to successfully lead and complete complicated multi-aircraft missions. Once again the challenge is for technology to answer the need to have adequate decision-making capability built into the UCAV to permit it to operate with the desired level of autonomy. Development of decision-making artificial intelligence has been ongoing for a number of years, but it has still not reached sufficient maturity, and there is no indication of the time needed to field it operationally. However, this is the key to autonomous performance of UCAVs.

There is a great deal of speculative debate regarding the use of UCAVs in the air superiority role necessitating their employment in air combat missions. This will have to remain in the realm of futuristic thought at least for the next few decades since it requires a number of elements that artificial intelligence currently does not possess and is unlikely to develop cohesively anytime soon.

Yet another factor that inhibits the autonomous employment of UCAVs, even in strike missions, is the reluctance of the political and military leadership to leave the final ‘kill’ decision to artificial intelligence. To let a machine make the decision to kill a human is an inherent anathema to human authority. The prospect of even a single such strike going awry would almost completely negate the granting of such autonomy for the foreseeable future. Therefore, command and control of UCAVs will always rest with a manned element within the mission package. If this is the case, then the question begs to be asked as to whether or not more emphasis should be placed on further development of decision-making artificial intelligence or whether the emphasis should be on developing the wherewithal for seamless interoperability between manned and unmanned systems.

UCAVs are a reality and there is no doubt that their mission envelopes will continuously be pushed outwards. It is also a reality that, although a great amount of research and development is currently being undertaken in this field, the fidelity required for independent decision-making using artificial intelligence will not be available in the near future. There is also no certainty regarding the timeframe within which the necessary fidelity would be developed. This uncertainty provides the only certainty that can be deduced from this analysis: that a manned system will continue to form the nucleus in command and control of the battlespace as well as in hard combat situations wherein instinctive and intuitive decision-making will be the winning factor.
The Ascendancy of Electronic Warfare

Reprinted from the Air Power Development Centre’s bulletin, *Pathfinder*, Issue 38, December 2005

The modern battlespace has become technologically complex and the electromagnetic spectrum is being increasingly exploited to improve warfighting capabilities. As a corollary, passive and active protection from Electronic Warfare (EW) have also assumed priority in research and development, especially in the context of air warfare. In fact EW protection has become a key issue in all activities associated with force projection and the operational performance and survivability of combat platforms are largely defined by their Electronic Warfare Self Protection (EWSP) capabilities.

Adequate EWSP capabilities are now considered a mandatory requirement for all ships and aircraft deployed to combat zones. In addition, the land forces also acknowledge the need for robust and effective EW as an essential part of a networked force. EW is becoming an essential requirement, not only to enable the deployment of combat forces, but also in the development of new operational capability. While EW self protection remains a critical platform centric role, EW is emerging as a force-level capability that can achieve mission goals in its own right.

This shift in emphasis is clearly demonstrated by the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) project that has inextricably factored in organic EW capability as a benchmark for the aircraft’s combat survivability and evaluation of its performance spectrum. The EW system for the JSF is being developed by BAE Systems and includes advanced affordable low observable apertures and advanced countermeasure systems. The system was recently flight tested and is reported to be ahead of schedule, once again an indication of the importance being laid in having the EW suite integrated and operational within the overall development program of the aircraft.

Another development in the concept of operations of air forces has been the gradual but firm acceptance of the critical and equal importance of Electronic Attack (EA) to be used in conjunction with more traditional Electronic Support (ES) measures that form the basis of the self-protection suites of military aircraft. Electronic Attack is the active part of EW that involves jamming radio frequencies, electro-optical sensors and seeker heads with dedicated jammers and Directed Infra-Red Counter Measures (DIRCM). However, successful EA measures require a very high level of technological competence as well as highly developed techniques and tactics in operations. This makes EA an expensive capability and prone to being calculated on a cost versus capability equation. EA is also not a common capability because such technology may not be available or affordable to all defence forces and even when available, the complexity of operations and maintenance can reduce performance to unsafe and inadequate levels.

The increased necessity to possess good EW capabilities to ensure the survival of costly assets has initiated the convergence of different technology developments. The greatly enhanced lethality of the modern battlespace has led to a quantum jump in the vulnerability of unprotected platforms, leading to the emergence of Uninhabited Aerial Vehicles (UAV) as the preferred airborne surveillance platforms. Currently UAVs are also being evaluated for use as EW platforms to provide greater flexibility in their utilisation than manned platforms. Low complexity UAVs are cheaper to operate but cannot provide good EW support, and the
more complex systems that can provide adequate EW capability are likely to be as resource intensive to operate as manned platforms.

Consequently, use of expendable tactical UAVs in ES operations is a concept that is being actively pursued. The concept proposes the use of multiple UAVs in swarms to accurately locate hostile emissions for neutralisation in a time-sensitive manner. While this might seem far-fetched at the moment, the future battlefield will not only witness such concepts in action, but it is more than likely that the strike mission will also be carried out by Uninhabited Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAV) with kinetic or EA weapon systems. The use of multiple UAVs ameliorates the current anomaly prevalent in single-platform systems that do not provide sufficient accuracy in the location of emitters. The use of multiple networked UAVs will be capable of providing better accuracies of emitter location.

The first step in integrating UAVs into EW missions is to network a manned aircraft with multiple tactical UAVs that can collectively provide accurate location indicators and have the capability to switch roles on command. Essentially this would work as a more advanced version of the hunter–killer operations that were practiced a decade ago. There is much work still to be done in this field and inherent problems still to be addressed. For example, the command and control of mini-UAV formations in a fast changing battlespace by itself will be complicated in the extreme. Additionally, the collation of data from so many different sources to provide one comprehensive picture will also be a challenge. However, the outcome will be enhanced situational awareness leading to the capability to locate and engage targets accurately and rapidly.

A broad EW capability, that includes both EA and ES, provides deployed forces the intelligence edge that is crucial to successful planning and conduct of even the simplest operation. The need, therefore, is to have ‘force level’ deployable EW capabilities that bring together the disparate single-service capabilities that in combination will provide the necessary quantum of EW assets and capabilities. This process will have to be ongoing and will involve considerable effort, especially in streamlining joint training and development of operational doctrine.

Irrespective of its expense and the need for a very high indigenous technology base to ensure its effectiveness, the emerging security environment makes it imperative for the ADF to possess adequate strategic and tactical EW capability to ensure success in the battlefield. It is not difficult to imagine that future operations will be won or lost by the control of the electromagnetic spectrum.
**Professional Research Notes**

To enhance the Journal’s intention to inform and promote discussion on important issues of national and international defence and security matters, we devote this section to publicising current research on defence and related topics being undertaken around Australia. Each individual research note has four parts, as follows:

1. **ADFJ Index Number** comprising the relevant ADFJ Issue Number and the number assigned to each research note;
2. The title or brief description of the research;
3. Brief research notes; and
4. Contact details.

By the inclusion of researchers’ contact details, we hope to provide a forum for dialogue and debate. We encourage all those who wish to publicise their research to forward details to the Editor at <publications@defence.adc.edu.au>.

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**Australian Defence Force Academy Research Committee**

The inaugural meeting of the ADFA Research Committee was held on 1 December 2005. The membership of the committee comprises equal representations from UNSW@ADFA and the Australian Defence Force. The role of the committee is to foster links that ensures greater collaboration between researchers at UNSW@ADFA and Defence related research. The committee is also able to review and approve recommendations made by UNSW@ADFA Faculty Research Grants Committee for funding under the Defence-Related Research Funding Scheme. Funding is available in amounts not exceeding $20,000 per project, up to a total of $100,000 per annum provided by UNSW@ADFA. At its first meeting seven projects were approved for funding under the scheme.

The new Defence Related Research Funding Scheme (DRR) was established to support full-time academic staff to pursue Defence-related research for well-defined projects having an identifiable set of outcomes.

Applications for funding under the DRR scheme were assessed by the Faculty Research Grants Committee (FRGC) and endorsed at the inaugural ADFA Research Committee. The following seven projects totalling $100,000 were approved for funding to commence in 2006:

Dr V. Ougrinovski and Professor I. Petersen ‘Research in Robust Nonlinear Control Applications to Missile Guidance and Control’ $20,000. Dr. Valerie Ougrinovski can be contacted via e-mail: <v.ougrinovski@adfa.edu.au>.

Dr L. Wallace and Dr C. Woodward ‘Electrochemical Remediation Studies of Nitrotriazolone, a New Insensitive Explosive’ $14,845. Dr Lynne Wallace can be contacted via e-mail: <l.wallace@adfa.edu.au>. 


A/Prof M. Frater and Dr M. Ryan ‘Characterisation of underwater acoustic communications channels in extremely shallow water’ $16,500. A/Prof Michael Frater can be contacted via e-mail: <m.frater@adfa.edu.au>.

A/Prof L. Godara ‘Efficient Processing of Towed Array Signals’ $15,000. A/Prof Lal Godara can be contacted via e-mail: <l.godara@adfa.edu.au>.

A/Prof S. Markowski and Professor P. Hall ‘Real Weapons of Mass Destruction: Proliferation of Small Arms and Light Weaponry in Developing Asia-Pacific Countries’ $15,895. A/Prof Stefan Markowski can be contacted via e-mail: <s.markowski@adfa.edu.au>.

Dr R. Gnanendran ‘Risk assessment of unsealed airfield pavements due to aircraft turning’ $8,880. Dr Rajah Gnanendran can be contacted via e-mail: <r.gnanendran@adfa.edu.au>.

Ms S. Burdekin and Dr H. Abbass ‘Psychology, influence and selection in dynamic social networks’ $8,880. Ms Sue Burdekin can be contacted via e-mail: <s.burdekin@adfa.edu.au>.

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Foundations of Non-Western Thinking on Sea Power: alternative views on modern Maritime Strategies for Australia, the Region and the World

Dr Gregory P. Gilbert has commenced a major research project for the Sea Power Centre – Australia (SPC-A) to examine fundamental understandings of sea power in non-Western cultural traditions from ancient times to the present day.

Australian concepts of sea power have tended to be Anglo-centric, and the RAN has had difficulty recording and applying alternative non-Western maritime traditions. By examining the broadest aspects of maritime strategy, it is hoped that the assumptions underlying modern perceptions of sea power will be highlighted.

Dr Gilbert’s initial focus is on ancient Egyptian sea power, as it is not only the earliest non-Western maritime tradition, but also one where the evidence reveals both similarities and differences in approach when compared with modern maritime operations. Subsequent phases of the project are currently envisaged to include studies of various Persian Gulf, Indian Subcontinent and East Asian sea power strategies.

The research project will support successive reviews of RAN doctrine and will ultimately develop original and complex concepts that may influence how the RAN operates in the future.

Dr Gilbert is a Research Officer in the SPC-A. A former naval design engineer, he is also a specialist in the archaeology and anthropology of warfare. Contributions to or inquiries about this research project can be sent to Dr Gilbert via e-mail: <gregory.gilbert1@defence.gov.au>.
Australian National Internships Program

The Australian National Internships Program (ANIP) was established at the Australian National University in 1993, and currently involves about 90 students per year. The Program is open to Australian and overseas students from a variety of disciplines and universities; some are graduands but the majority are undergraduates. The core of an ANIP internship is a placement for eleven weeks, either with a Member of Parliament, a parliamentary committee, a government department, a peak industry body, or a major community organisation.

The Sea Power Centre – Australia (SPC-A) is currently hosting an ANIP intern, Mr Jonathan Herington. Mr Herington’s research report— provisionally titled *Biological Threats to Australia’s National Security: Implications for Navy’s Tasks and Capabilities*—will focus on the challenges presented to the RAN by disease outbreaks and biological weapons within our region. Currently, there is little open-source literature on the ability of defence forces, particularly navies, to respond to disease and biological weapons threats. This report will detail the current disease-based threats to Australia’s security, the potential approaches to combating such threats, and the potential implications for the RAN’s future tasks and capabilities.

Mr Herington will review the literature to assess the most likely natural and unnatural biological threats. He also plans to conduct interviews with key stakeholders to evaluate potential responses to these threats.

The Institutional supervisor for the intern is the Director of SPC-A, Captain Richard McMillan, CSC, RAN, and the academic supervisor is SPC-A’s Deputy Director Research, Mr Andrew Forbes.

Contributions to or inquiries about this research project should be directed to Mr Andrew Forbes, via telephone: (02) 6127 6507 or e-mail: <andrew.forbes1@defence.gov.au>.
Book Reviews

OPERATION ORDERS:
The Experiences of an Infantry Officer

Pat Beale, DSO, MC
Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2003
ISBN 1 876439 51 3

Reviewed by John Donovan

In 1944, while observing a part of France that had been fought over for centuries (and was about to experience conflict again), George Patton said that he could 'smell the sweat of the [Roman] legions'. As General Peter Cosgrove states in the Foreword, Pat Beale’s excellent book evokes the odours of more recent events.

The book is a worthwhile addition to the body of work sponsored by the Army History Unit, and one can only endorse General Cosgrove’s recommendation of it to all young Army officers, and to Australians from the broader community. However, that recommendation should be widened. It should also be read by more senior personnel, as it contains lessons from the past that have application now, and into the future.

It is perhaps hard for recent members to have a ‘feel’ for the Army as it was before Vietnam and National Service, when one of the three Regular infantry battalions was stationed in Malaysia, and soldiers there would routinely deploy on and return from operations, without the fuss that seems to attend such activities now.

It might be even harder for young officers to contemplate a period when lieutenants could spend seven years in command of platoons. This, however, was the Army in which Pat Beale served his apprenticeship as an officer. Discussing the officers of his era, Beale comments that the selection boards that chose them had, intentionally or not, ‘perpetuated their own kind’, and the Army then acculturated them in its own ways. However, although few of his fellow subalterns had tertiary qualifications, they had a strong professional ethos, and most were widely read in military history and aspects of strategy (particularly revolutionary warfare).

As he makes clear, in those days junior officers were given a lot of responsibility (and independence), but their level of experience meant that, like Beale, they ‘knew [their] craft well’. Beale was also helped by enlightened commanding officers such as Jock McCormick, who encouraged him to challenge and question doctrine, and taught him the virtues of simplicity. Hopefully, such guidance is still given, but an article in the Australian Defence Force Journal (‘Tactical Understanding in the Australian Army Officer Corps’, Lieutenant Colonel Luke Carroll, ADFJ No. 158) concluded: ‘the status of tactical training in the officer corps is low’. Perhaps a useful lesson that might come from this book is the need for a thorough grounding in the basics before promotion, as the opportunity may not come later.
The book is written in an easy style, covering Pat Beale’s experiences in Malaysia, PNG and Vietnam between 1963 and 1970, with brief mention of time spent with the (then) Citizen Military Forces (CMF). He covers his part in events in an engagingly modest manner. For example, he expresses embarrassment about the notoriety that has attached to Operation Achilles, describing it as ‘a minor engagement that would hardly have registered in the war diary of a World War One or Two battalion’. Perhaps so, but he was awarded a Military Cross. (One has to read through the Foreword or the publishers ‘blurb’ on the dust wrapper to find out what Pat Beale’s decorations were awarded for. The only reference to such matters in the text of the book is a description of a mess party with his CMF battalion, after being recalled from annual camp to an investiture, purpose undescribed.)

Pat Beale also writes modestly but effectively of his part in Mike Force operations in Vietnam, for which he was awarded the Distinguished Service Order. His descriptions give a feel for the confusion and stress of battle, while Beale’s discussions on the foundations of courage, and the impact of fear, thirst and exhaustion (whether caused by carrying excessive loads—how big are the current issue packs—or by not enough rest) on an individual’s performance in battle are clear and readily understandable. As he points out, sleep deprivation in particular reduces performance, to the extent that he slept through an attack that penetrated the unit’s perimeter, and the subsequent counterattack. Beale writes with sadness, but no apparent rancour, of the later misuse and destruction of Mike Force, after its successes in its limited role.

He discusses eloquently soldiers’ motives for enlistment, and more importantly, why they fight. He notes the importance of a close-knit ‘family’ group, which he sees (in accordance with the traditions of the 1st and 2nd AIF) as based on the battalion, not the less tangible regiment (the passage of time since establishment of infantry regiments in the Army does not seem to have changed this focus). He criticises severely attempts to squash the individuality out of recruits as archaic and ‘not an appropriate basis for discipline … on the modern battlefield’. The poor publicity that has attended some events in the Army in recent years suggests that this is a point worthy of note.

His comments on some (probably American) more senior officers, though indirect, are pointed. When success was near in disrupting enemy logistics, ‘inevitably such potential must be frustrated’, while the receipt of a long coded message of no critical relevance during a battle deprived Beale of much-needed sleep for no useful purpose. The leaders responsible had apparently not reached the conclusion later reached by Pat Beale, that a leader must focus on three factors: achieving the task, holding the team together, and looking after the needs of the individual members of the team, with ‘the task’ as always the primary concern.

Beale is particularly critical of the love of complexity that develops in armies during peace, but that must be discarded ‘as soon as the shots begin to fly’. He sees greater merit during peace ‘in refining issues to their first principles and purest simplicity and then driving them home so that they cannot be forgotten under any circumstance’. He is also critical of the [mis]use of the Army’s reserve soldiers.

Although his references to his service with the CMF/Army Reserve are brief, Pat Beale clearly enjoyed his time with the part-time soldiers. He deprecates the move away from a battalion to regimental organisation for the Reserves, with the subsequent loss of some unit ethos.
He believes that the Army is ably served by its Reserves, but that the system of using them as ‘fillers’ in Regular units, and not in their own units under their own command, exploits and manipulates their enthusiasm. In particular, he believes that a volunteer CMF battalion could easily have been raised for service in Vietnam, and that, if done, this could have demonstrated a positive commitment to the Reserves.

Overall this is an excellent book, both for its insights into the human side of war, and its lessons for the future. It deserves to stand alongside other good books written by Australian soldiers about the experience of men in battle, including *Maverick Soldier* (John Essex-Clark), *Not as a Duty Only* (Henry ‘Jo’ Gullett, MC), *The Saga of a Sig* (Ken Clift, DCM), *Half To Remember* (G.H. Fearnside) and *Breaking the Road for the Rest* (Donovan Joynt, VC). Highly recommended.

**THE RIGHT MAN FOR THE RIGHT JOB: Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige as a Military Commander**

Gavin Keating
Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2006
ISBN 0 19555 3322

Reviewed by John Donovan

While the Official Histories generally treated Lieutenant General Sir Stanley Savige’s performance during World War II favourably, other observers, notably Lieutenant Generals Herring, Berryman and Robertson and Major General Vasey, were more critical, as were books on Herring, Robertson and Vasey. Gavin Keating’s book gives some balance to these conflicting views. His excellent work reinforces Savige’s claim to have been a successful general and widens our understanding of the internal politics of the Australian Army during World War II. It should be read in conjunction with Stuart Braga’s biography of ‘Tubby’ Allen, *Kokoda Commander*, another title in the Army History series, in which many of the same characters and issues recur. The book complements W.B. Russell’s uncritical 1959 biography, *There Goes a Man*.

There are parallels between Savige and Allen. Both came from humble backgrounds, Savige the son of a rural meat worker, Allen of a railway worker. Both left school early, Savige at the age of 12 to work as a blacksmith’s striker, Allen at 14, to become a messenger boy for the Postmaster-General’s Department. Savige later completed a teacher-training course, but worked in drapery before entering business after World War I; Allen became an accountant. Each clashed with Berryman, Robertson and Herring, although the result was not detrimental in Savige’s case. The health of each started to fail around the end of World War II, and both died relatively young.

Keating covers Savige’s early life and experience in World War I briefly (Savige was among the last off Gallipoli, and at different times adjutant of the 24th Battalion, acting brigade major of the 6th Brigade, and a member of Dunsterforce). Keating notes the strong influence on Savige’s development of the then Brigadier General Gellibrand, the subject of another of the Army History series, *The Paladin*, by Peter Sadler. Savige seems to have developed his antagonism
towards permanent officers between the wars, but paradoxically one of the sources of his antagonism was Gellibrand, a former British regular officer, who later commented on the Squires report of 1939 that they 'will give us a Regular Army, and at the same time make it impossible to have an Army'.

The rivalry between Australia’s Regular and citizen soldiers is critical to understanding both the history of the Australian Army and Savige’s career. The issue is unlikely ever to be resolved to the satisfaction of both groups, probably because the situation is not as ‘black and white’ as either claims. However, Keating argues convincingly that the militia officers between the wars had little opportunity, with time constraints and understrength units, to develop a full understanding of modern war.

Whether most of the Regular officers had better opportunities in the small permanent force is moot. Indeed, some of the interwar criticisms of Regular officers do seem to have been justified. In his biography of General Sir Francis Hassett, for example, Essex-Clark comments that with ‘the exception of “Red Robbie”, none of the military staff or instructors [at Duntroon during Hassett’s time as a cadet] was to prove outstanding in later years’. However, Savige was wise enough to accept the support of Regular staff officers as he moved to higher command levels. Indeed, he did not have such support for the battle for which he was most criticised, Bardia.

Keating’s book highlights a dark obverse to this rivalry—the extent to which the Staff Corps became ‘a compact and defensive group within the army as a whole’ as a result. This might have made them more critical of those not part of the group. However, as Keating also shows, the rivalry was never exclusively between Regulars and citizen soldiers. There was tension also between citizen soldiers, most notably between Herring on the one side and Savige and Allen on the other. Herring, citizen soldier and pillar of the Melbourne legal establishment, was both a strong critic of Savige and Allen’s ultimate nemesis.

This rivalry sometimes had a detrimental effect on operations, as before Bardia, when Berryman excluded Savige from a major pre-attack conference, even though his brigade was to have a complex role in the operation. As Keating shows, the end result of Savige’s exclusion from the conference, and what can most charitably be described as a litany of mixed messages after it, was the abortive attack on Post 11, which cost heavy casualties for no benefit. Neither Savige nor Berryman comes out well from this incident. Clashes with Robertson also ensued, as 19th Brigade was brought into the battle. In that case, Savige seems to have been more at fault. Overall, Keating indicates that there was fault enough for all at Bardia, but that this might be expected in the AIF’s first battle of the war.

Afterwards, however, like the Staff Corps, Savige became compact and defensive, and probably with reason. Keating acknowledges that on at least one occasion Vasey seems to have played a vital role in ensuring priority for Robertson over Savige, and also to have worked actively for his removal. Keating acknowledges that Staff Corps members were ‘not particularly impartial critics’. Vasey, for one, admitted to a hope that he might replace Savige.

Savige’s involvement in Greece and Syria was limited. In Greece, Savige displayed great personal courage, as did others of his rank. He received better staff support there, while in Syria he commanded only a small force, albeit an important time. His action in forcing continuation of
an advance by tired troops ensured rapid success, probably for fewer casualties, and shows that he had the strength to push an issue if needed. In Syria Savige again clashed with Berryman, who, unaware of specific orders to Savige, interfered with units on the battlefield.

Keating makes a reasonable case that Savige, and others, were not suited physically or temperamentally for the kind of war waged in the Middle East. He shows, however, that Savige’s skill at fostering a sense of ‘team’ was highly developed, as was his rapport with the ordinary soldiers, another characteristic he shared with Allen. He was always conscious that orders from senior headquarters would ‘ultimately be carried out “by common soldiers at the point of a bayonet”’. One photo of the senior officers of the 6th Division during the First Libyan campaign is symbolic. Of the six officers shown, Mackay, Robertson, Berryman and Vasey wear officers’ pattern uniforms, Savige and Allen wear soldiers’ pattern.

Savige returned to Australia at the end of 1941, taking command of the 3rd Division, thus rescuing his military career from probable obscurity. His robust approach to training focused the division on preparing for war, and led to the removal of a large number of officers. Important support at this time was provided by Lieutenant Colonel John Wilton, Savige’s GSO1, who developed a high regard for Savige. Later, as a corps commander in Bougainville, Savige was again supported by highly effective Regular staff officers, including Brigadier Ragnar Garrett as BGS.

The important point that Keating makes about Savige’s relationship with Wilton is that the latter was always highly regarded, so that any criticism of Savige’s conduct of the Salamaua campaign either should also apply to Wilton, his trusted GSO1, or can be dismissed as personal. Keating also suggests that someone (probably Herring) did not want Savige in New Guinea. Certainly, once he arrived in New Guinea, Savige found his relations with Herring, commanding New Guinea Force (NGF), trying.

Keating examines the controversy between Savige and NGF over Salamaua, and concludes that much of the fault lay with NGF. Herring did not establish a clear command chain with the US forces operating in the area, and his guidance to Savige on wider issues, particularly the need for Salamaua not to fall too soon, was at best ambiguous. Keating concludes that Savige played a critical part in controlling a competent and relentless campaign ‘that did much credit to those in command’. Herring’s reputation is diminished by his failure to understand, or indeed even apparently to enquire into, the tactical and logistic problems of the campaign, a fault he also displayed during the Kokoda campaign.

Berryman was sent forward to investigate the battle’s conduct towards the end of the campaign. Until Berryman’s arrival there had been few visits to the front by senior officers of NGF, as in the Kokoda campaign. Berryman found that Savige had ‘done well and we had misjudged him’. This was surely one of the strongest endorsements that Savige could have hoped for. Berryman (not usually a supporter of either Savige or Allen) also considered that Allen’s operations on the Kokoda Trail were effective. However, Savige’s prediction in June 1943 that he would be relieved when it became simple to capture Salamaua came true (yet another parallel with Allen, relieved by Vasey just as the Japanese defences before Kokoda broke).

Keating discusses the choice of Savige over Vasey for promotion to Lieutenant General. Putting aside the issue of Vasey’s health, it is hard to avoid the conclusion that he would not
have been ‘the right man for the right job’. Herring once famously stated that he preferred ‘Vasey tired to Allen fresh’. Vasey (tired) launched a number of attacks at Gona and Sanananda that gained little or nothing, but left many casualties. It is hard to see Vasey in command on Bougainville restraining activist brigade commanders like Hammer and Potts, as Savidge did. Blamey seems to have made the correct choice. Ironically, however, Savidge ended the war doing one of the things that he had criticised Headquarters 6th Division for at Bardia—giving detailed instructions to subordinate commanders as to how they should operate!

Savidge’s final contribution to the Regular/citizen soldier rivalry in Australia came in a statement to the press in 1946, where he commented, *inter alia*, that a large number of Duntroon graduates by ‘their general attitude and actions … clearly lived in a world apart’. His World War I and interwar mentor, the Sandhurst graduate Gellibrand, also had an intense dislike for the concept of a select Regular Army officers’ school, because he believed the officers produced stood aloof from the nation. In 1995, a Parliamentary committee described the Australian Defence Force Academy as a ‘military nunnery’, suggesting that the attitude deprecated by Savidge and Gellibrand existed, and has been passed on to the newer Academy.

Keating accepts that Savidge’s forte was as a leader of men, a critical talent during the Salamaua campaign. His weakest point was his limited grasp of the technical nature of modern warfare, for which he relied on good staff support. Keating lauds Savidge’s ‘ability as a trainer of raw troops’, evident throughout his command of the 3rd Division. His greatest strength, however, remained his understanding of and concern for the soldiers. One of his greatest weaknesses, in contrast, was his reluctance to act against ineffective subordinates, especially if he had appointed them. His empathy for the troops was again shown at the end of his service, when, asked to be Coordinator of Demobilisation and Dispersal, he sought to ‘serve the men who fought … [but] … Salary of no interest’.

Throughout his book, Keating makes the case that militia commanders depended on their Regular staff officers for advice on the technical aspects of modern war. He regards this as a weakness in the Australian military system, occurring by default not design. It might have been a weakness, yet all commanders rely on the support of their staff, and it was arguably the explicit intent of the Australian system, up until the end of World War II, that citizen commanders should receive the support of Regular staff officers.

That system worked effectively, as demonstrated by Savidge’s career during World War II. Whether it could have been successful in the circumstances following the war is unlikely, but not relevant to the earlier period. Keating suggests that studies of the Australian Army in World War II focus too much on commanders and not enough on their staff officers. A good first step to rectify this deficiency would be a study on Berryman, whose presence at controversial moments through much of the war seems ubiquitous.

There is a degree of irony in a couple of the quotes in the book, deliberate in one case, but perhaps unintended in another. Given the pervasiveness of the ‘Bataan Gang’ in his court, MacArthur’s warning to Curtin about Blamey surrounding himself with favourites must be a classic case of the ‘pot calling the kettle black’. Also, Vasey’s quoted comment, comparing a senior professional British officer to the ‘amateur soldiers we have in the senior grades’, loses some of its force when we now know that Brooke, as Chief of the Imperial General Staff, spent hours poring ‘over the
Army List in search of suitable divisional commanders’. He is said to have wanted to be ‘merciless with divisional and corps commanders whom he thought not up to their job, but he did not think he could find better men to replace them’. Neither system produced perfect results.

Keating quotes, but does not fully support, the comment by A.N. Kemsley, formerly Director of Organisation at Army Headquarters, that Savige was ‘a good brigadier—doubtful as a major general—far over-promoted as a lieutenant general’. This has echoes of Gavin Long’s description of Allen as ‘a fine colonel, a better brigadier than divisional commander and not a suitable corps commander’. Both descriptions reverse the order of C.E.W. Bean’s description of Monash as a leader who ‘would command a division better than a brigade and a corps better than a division’, cited on page 588 of Bean’s Volume II. Given that Monash often seemed somewhat cold and detached from the troops, it seems probable that Savige (and Allen) might have preferred their descriptions.

Whatever Savige’s limitations as a military commander, Keating demonstrates that he was The Right Man for the Right Job, and that in 1959 Russell chose a good title for his biography, There Goes a Man.

**REDCOAT:**
The British Soldier in the Age of Horse and Musket

Richard Holmes
ISBN 0 00 653152 0

Reviewed by Dr Noel Sproles

Redcoat provides a ‘behind the scenes’ look at the British Army from the period between the Seven Years War to the war in the Crimea. This is the period when British infantry regiments wore their distinctive red coats, hence the title for the book. It is not a story of battles won and lost although there is plenty of reference to them. Instead it is more a description of how the British Army was raised, trained, and maintained in this period. Early in the book, it is clear that the author is unhappy about the less-than-favourable popular view of the British Army as portrayed in the movies and TV. He sets out to show how this army managed to ‘… fight its way across four continents and secure the greatest empire the world has ever seen’.

The author has divided his work into seven parts with several chapters in each part. In this manner the subjects of weapons, organisation, the officers and soldiers, the major fighting arms, families and camp followers, and deployment overseas are discussed in detail. There will be something of interest for everyone in this broad sweep. It contains little gems such as a description of the brevet rank system where a major general on the Army List may only be a major on his Regimental List. Or how the position of brigadier was an appointment not a rank and a short term appointment at that. As a result promotion was from lieutenant colonel directly to major general and then mainly on a seniority basis. The story of ‘Brown Bess’, the main infantry weapon for much of this period is covered well as is the development and use of the rifle by light infantry. Organisational issues such as the infantry being under the control of the army Commander-in-Chief but artillery and engineers being under the control of the Master
General of the Ordnance seem strange to us today. There is no shrinking from an examination of the consequences of hand-to-hand fighting with the terrible wounds caused to man and beast by heavy calibre muskets, slashing sabres, bayonet-ringed infantry squares, and ricocheting cannon balls. Similarly, there is no hesitation in discussing discipline and punishment—the effect of the latter often being as grim as the damage done by the enemy! As well, the discussion is not just limited to the redcoats, or ‘lobsters’ as the navy described them. There is plenty of coverage given to the cavalry, artillery, and engineers despite their uniforms generally being blue in colour. Anecdotes, usually from contemporary diaries or accounts, are used to illustrate the chapters and to reinforce points made. These anecdotes add a real flavour to the book by making the experiences personal and allowing the reader to put a human face on events.

My favourite anecdote is that of the infantry lieutenant colonel riding in front of his regiment and dismounting to encourage them as they marched forward to meet the French in the Peninsular campaign. Amidst the shot and shell, he corrected their dressing and called out the step as they received the French fire. A cannon ball passed under his horse’s belly making the animal rear. The colonel, a true eccentric, accused his horse of cowardice and immediately awarded it three days stoppage of corn!

There is no doubt that the author dispels the myth of the British Army of the period as being an incompetent army of thugs and shows it instead as a force that fought hard, died bravely, and achieved its aims much of the time. Redcoat would provide an excellent reference for researchers as well as providing an engrossing read for those with a more general interest in the military. It is one of those books that you can happily read from cover to cover and even back-track to savour again interesting facts or revealing anecdotes. It provides a background to many of the traditions and organisations still seen in our Army today. It also supports the thesis that there are no new problems in warfighting apart from that of adapting new technology to these problems. A very minor criticism is that little mention is made of the army’s activities outside of Europe, North America, and India and none at all of it in Australia, which is disappointing.

The book is supplemented by good quality illustrations, both in colour and in black-and-white, some contemporary photographs, maps, detailed references for each chapter and an extensive bibliography. I have no hesitation in recommending Redcoat as an addition to anyone’s collection of military books.

**WAR AND HUMAN NATURE**

S.P. Rosen
Princeton University Press, Princeton, 2005
ISBN 0 691 11600 8

Reviewed by Lieutenant Colonel David Schmidtchen

Metaphors are at the core of all exploratory and critical thought. Stephen Peter Rosen’s recent book titled *War and Human Nature* has its roots in a biological metaphor of human decision-making. He tries to show, ‘how work done in the neurosciences over the last 25 years can help us
to better understand how people make decisions, and, in particular, how they make decisions about war and peace’. He goes on to add that he hopes his book will be the spark for serious discussion ‘of the biological dimensions of human international politics’.

Rosen approaches the biology of human behaviour with enthusiasm. Clearly, for a political scientist, he has spent considerable time mastering the complexity of modern neuroscience and its implications. He does not subscribe to biological determinism but the foundation of his argument draws on an area of psychology—evolutionary psychology—which has been criticised for having deterministic tendencies. Rosen works hard throughout the book to dampen any enthusiasm the reader might have for biological determinism. For example, the introduction abounds with warnings about the environmental influences on decision-making and the dangers of putting too much faith in biological explanations of human behaviour.

However, Rosen’s conclusions tend to focus on the solutions that biology might offer. For instance, he concludes by focusing on how a better understanding of biology in social settings might allow us to predict decision-making behaviour. For example, could we look for ‘genetic markers of certain cognitive characteristics’ in Manuel Noriega’s DNA? He suggests that governments could look to gather ‘biological intelligence’ to better understand the physical and mental state of political leaders. Presumably, if we were serious about this we would test our own leaders as well as others. Rosen applies the proper cautions to these suggestions, accepting that even if we did understand how biology contributes to decision-making the complexity of predicting behaviour remains overwhelming.

War and Human Nature is a valuable contribution to the discussion on the role of the individual in complex decision-making. But using the metaphor of evolutionary psychology to describe human behaviour potentially limits thinking and distorts the questions we might usefully pose about the subject. This becomes obvious in War and Human Nature where a mass of information from neuroscience does little to push our understanding of human decision-making in international relations any further forward. Indeed, Rosen concedes that, ‘Some readers will judge that no further effort in the field is warranted.’

Rosen’s claims for his work are suitably modest. He simply seeks to challenge political scientists to consider developing models of how people behave rather than the more unrealistic models of how we might like people to behave. His examination of the biological influences on decision-making in international politics should be the stimulus for developing a more complete metaphor—one that is more suited to the subject, but also one that opens the scope for debate about the role of individuals in making decisions about war and peace. Relying solely on the biological metaphor of evolutionary psychology seems to close more doors than it might usefully open. Additionally, it has the potential to bring with it much of the acrimony, divisiveness and misinformation that has plagued biological determinism.

War and Human Nature leaves the reader asking, so what? While researchers are making considerable ground in linking maps of neural processes to observed behaviour, they are a long way from making predictive statements about individual decision-making in complex environments like international politics. The discussion Stephen Rosen wants to generate should take as its starting point the challenge of finding a more complete metaphor for understanding the role of individuals in deciding about war and peace. We need a metaphor of human decision-making that incorporates biology but also culture, competition, cooperation, emotion, calculation, power and progress.
Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia’s Asian Wars

David Horner
Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005
ISBN 0 19 555282 2

Reviewed by Tom Lewis

Although Strategic Command is usefully subtitled ‘General Sir John Wilton and Australia’s Asian Wars’, it is the subject’s charge of Australian forces in Vietnam that will probably attract most readers to this impressive book. This is the story of a sterling Australian Army officer, a finely detailed, comprehensive study which adds considerably to the history of the country’s military efforts. Yet David Horner’s new book is more than this, for by its commencement in 1910 it is also a story of attitudes both towards and within the military, a tale of a soldier’s challenges, successes and adventures, and a series of snapshots of an Australia long since vanished. I found Strategic Command surprisingly readable: its hefty length at 452 pages should not put off doubtful readers, because once you’re ten pages into this work the subject—John Wilton—has become a real person and an interesting one too.

Growing up in Hobart, John Wilton and his brother lived in a house that this reviewer walked past every weekday on the way to school. Such attention to detail, and the use of landmarks and brand names and the names of notable people of the times all are part of this author’s ability to entrance the reader. Similar detail is used in the descriptions of Wilton’s entry into, and education at, Duntroon Royal Military College in the 1920s. The bastardisation that Wilton and his contemporaries underwent is shocking but fascinating in its description and one is left pondering if such ordeals made for the tough Australian officers who endured so much later in WWII. Wilton was a success at Duntroon, but with the Great Depression gripping the country he made a wise decision to transfer to the British Army. This gave him postings and valuable experience in his chosen specialisation (artillery) in India, Burma and China, which he would not have otherwise gained. While David Horner devotes good space to Wilton’s experiences here, we are only too aware that WWII is looming on the horizon, and after Wilton’s return to the Australian Army we are plunged into campaigning in Syria, Papua New Guinea, and several other theatres. The detail of command of several units, and the intricacies and intrigues of staff postings are all explored, and Horner exposes much detail of the qualities—or lack thereof—of various other soldiers, as well as documenting Wilton’s successes and failures. There were plenty of the former, and indeed one contemporary said postwar that ‘No adjectives are too good for Wilton’. In higher commands he appears as a well-rounded officer, capable of understanding the intricacies of combining air assets, logistics, morale, troop movements and more into the demands of contriving successful WWII operations.

Wilton received the Distinguished Service Order as testimony to his abilities in 1943, after which he was sent to the United States, where he received much valuable experience, especially as he moved, in his own words, from working in a theatre where two Divisions were deployed to dealing with 150. He visited Europe to see the tactics and techniques being used by the advancing armies after D-Day, and then served as a planning staff officer in the final stages of the Pacific War. All in all, Wilton’s WWII experiences equipped him admirably for future Army operations.
Horner details his subject’s experiences in the Korean War and through the intervening years up until Vietnam. As Chief of the General Staff Wilton was in the thick of controversial actions such as the decision to introduce National Service, and of course the deployments to the growing conflict in Southeast Asia. Throughout all of the description a conscientious and capable soldier emerges. Wilton then became Chairman of the Chief of Staffs Committee, leaving his Service and becoming a member of the Defence bureaucracy, overseeing not only the Vietnam involvement, but also the re-organisation of Defence’s joint Service arrangements, and the introduction of Army aviation. Elevated to General in 1968, Wilton was the first so-promoted officer to this rank since Sir Thomas Blamey in 1941. Horner details Wilton’s retirement in 1970, but also his considerable activities following this, including an appointment as Consul-General in New York. John Wilton died in 1981 from a combination of pneumonia caught in the Korean War, exacerbated by smoking, which he had begun in Duntroon.

Two collections of photographs illustrate this work, and show Wilton as a quintessential Army officer, moustached, trim and upright in the manner of Montgomery. But the words used here to tell the story of this man’s life best show what he was: one of Australia’s most professional and capable soldiers, but also somewhat unrecognised. Strategic Command has remedied this lack, and brought into a much deserved light of recognition an archetypical model worthy of emulation by all Australian military officers, and indeed one of the most dedicated of Australia’s citizens of the 20th century.

This review originally appeared in the Canberra Times.
News and Events

Department of Veterans’ Affairs 2005 Veteran Community Story Writing and Art Competition – Australian Defence Force Journal prize winner

The *Australian Defence Force Journal* sponsors the ‘True Wartime Story’ category of the Department of Veterans’ Affairs annual Veteran Community Story Writing and Art Competition (SWAC).

The winner of the 2005 Australian Defence Force Journal Prize was Mrs Evelyn Wright. Her entry entitled ‘Wartime Nightmare’ relates one particular night as a 15-year-old girl living with her 80-year-old grandmother during wartime England.

The competition is open to Australian and Allied veterans as well as veterans’ spouses and widows. Mrs Wright was in the British Land Army and her husband served in the British Army.


Ms Ana Constantinou, Department of Veterans’ Affairs Manager of Commemoration and Client Support presenting Mrs Wright with the Australian Defence Force Journal Prize on the day of the Prize Presentation Ceremony on 24 November 2005.
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Department of Defence
Canberra ACT 2600 Australia

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Within its pages the Journal seeks to encourage discussion and debate across a range of Defence related topics and issues through stimulating and engaging articles for those with an interest in defence and security matters. The Journal has a diverse readership. The ADFJ does not directly seek to promote and/or comment on current policies, but rather discuss the options for the future.

The ADFJ is a refereed publication. Subject to the availability of submissions, it is intended to publish up to four editions a year. The format of the Journal can accommodate short and long articles. As a general rule, however, articles over 5,000 words will not normally be accepted.

Contributors are solely responsible for matters of fact and argument. They should take care to ensure that their work is balanced and supported by referenced argument. The Journal has a preference for articles that are accessible. Graphics, tables and diagrams should be kept to a minimum and will only be included if they directly support the argument made in the text. Contributors should arrange their submissions to include a clear introduction and conclusion. Sub-headings are acceptable but should only be used to increase efficiency of argument and to assist the reader.

Although the ADFJ does not have a stipulated referencing system, contributors should conform to a consistent format that enables readers to check the veracity of their work. The use of op. cit. and loc. cit. should be eschewed in favour of an abbreviated title of the work being cited. Endnotes and a bibliography, as well as a brief biographical note, are required when submitting articles.

The production team welcomes discussion with potential contributors and from its readership alike on developing themes for future editions.