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Directive Control - The Command Panacea?

By Major M.B. O'Brien, RAR

"Plans of campaign may be modified ad infinitum according to the circumstances, the genius of the commander, and the character of the troops".

Napoleon

Introduction

At 0445 hours on the 1st of September 1939 the German Wehrmacht attacked over the frontier into Poland. By the 17th of September the Polish campaign was over. In the following two years the Wehrmacht conducted campaigns in both eastern and western Europe with as much, if not greater, success. This re-built German Army had realized the dreams of the exponents of mobile warfare. One consequence of this new form of warfare is evident in the armies of today. Many nations have broadly emulated the organisations and tactics of the German Army and, while the sophistication of weapons systems has changed, the likelihood that future wars will be dominated by highly manoeuvrable forces has not.

Although many armies since 1945 have emulated the Blitzkrieg tactics of the Wehrmacht not all have applied the command and control procedures which were such an important, yet underrated, qualitative factor in the success of this German Army.

The term Auftragstaktik, loosely translated as Mission Oriented Tactics, was coined "after the event" to describe the Wehrmacht system of command control. This system has been maintained in the Bundeswehr and forms the basis for that army's current command and control system; namely Mission Oriented command and control. This type of system is also known as Directive Control. Regardless of terminology, the relevance of these systems depends on the extent to which they are the best available to allow commanders at all levels to fight with success on today's battlefield.

Recent interest in the concept of Auftragstaktik, coupled with an appreciation that the battlefield places unique demands on the commander, has generated a great deal of interest in command and control systems.

It is critical that in the enthusiasm which surrounds either new or re-born concepts that there is analysis to determine their applicability to a different army, operating under different conditions, in a different time.

The aim of this article is to analyse the concept of Directive Control and its relevance to the modern battlefield, and discuss the changes and training required to implement this system of command and control.

This article will define and then analyse Directive Control using its predecessor, Auftragstaktik as a model. It will determine the key aspects in the success of Auftragstaktik and the effect that the high-technology future battlefield will have on command and control systems. It will then compare Directive Control with the current Australian and British system and highlight its advantages and disadvantages. Finally, it will discuss the changes and training required to implement such a system.

Definition and Analysis of Directive Control

Directive Control is a command and control system in which subordinate commanders are provided with a full and clear concept of operations; the required resources; and a statement of any limitations which apply to the completion of their task. Subordinate commanders complete their task relying on their own initiative, without detailed and restrictive orders. This rather clinical definition does not indicate the extent to which Directive Control is a "hands off" philosophy for command and control. The accepted prerequisites for the system to be effective are listed below. Uniformity of Operational Thought. Uniformity of Thought is necessary to allow the subordinate to understand what the commander hopes to achieve. Although generally accepted as being needed two levels up and down, under some circumstances, particularly at the lower tactical command levels, it may be required three levels up.

Subordinate Responsibility. Subordinates should be willing to accept responsibility and to exercise initiative when completing assigned
tasks. This necessitates training which encourages independence of action while still achieving uniformity of thought.

Trust. Commanders must trust their subordinates. They must also accept that subordinates will make mistakes both during training and on operations.

Resources. Commanders should provide subordinates with adequate resources. Equally, tasks should be realistic within the resource allocation available. This implies that commanders must not only be aware of the quantity of resources available to subordinates but that they have a realistic understanding of force ratios, and the battle-worthiness of those resources, at any stage.

Historical Basis of Directive Control
Clausewitz wrote that “War is the realm of chance... in no other sphere of human activity must such a margin be left for this intruder. It increases the uncertainty of every circumstance and deranges the course of events"). The influence of both Clausewitz and Von Moltke on the development of German strategic and tactical thought led to a predictable code for the conduct of future wars. This influence was obvious in 1918 when Ludendorff described the conduct of attacks. He laid down that “all commanders must have a clear concept of the objectives to be achieved...every attack offers the opportunity for free activity and decisive action at all levels down to the individual soldier”. He also wrote that “everything depends on rapid independent action by all headquarters (and) planning should be as detailed as possible but not so detailed as to rob subordinate commanders of freedom of action. Commanders up to divisional level should follow their troops forward”

The German General Staff consisted of selected officers of the rank of Captain and above who undertook specialist staff training. “During its long existence the object of the German General Staff Corps was to select those officers with the finest brains and characters and...to train them and educate them so that they could lead the German Armed Forces in any circumstances, no matter how difficult”). Interestingly, not all officers were selected for staff training: Rommel was one officer who was not.

Selection procedures for staff training were strict. In the post-Armistice German Army of 100,000 troops only 164 officers were invited to sit the staff examinations; twenty were successful. Despite attempts to dismantle the General Staff in the post World War I era the then CGS, General Seeckt, maintained the General Staff tradition. “It was not long before the new army staff turned into much the same kind of school of uniform operational thought” (that the old staff had been).

In essence the aim of the staff system was to select, train, and locate in critical areas, the cream of the army’s officers. This, in turn, ensured that this concept of “uniformity of operational thought” was not only perpetuated within a small army but it was actively encouraged by selected staff officers among the entire officer corps. In 1922 the German General Staff included officers such as Lieutenant-Colonels Von Blomberg, Von Leeb, Von Bock and Von Rundstedt who were on Divisional staffs, and Lieutenant-Colonels Kesselring and Von Brauchitsch and Captain Guderian who were posted to training institutions and Inspectorates. The prominence of these officers as field commanders during World War II indicates that the staff system functioned largely as intended. Auftragstaktik did not always enjoy the same measure of success.

Auftragstaktik-How Successful Was It?
The concept of Auftragstaktik is widely regarded as being responsible for the Wehrmacht’s early success. Comments such as “this concept, well proved in peace and war”) are characteristic of descriptions of Auftragstaktik. An analysis of the campaigns in Poland, France and Russia indicates that it was not always subordinate action which carried the day. If Auftragstaktik was applied as most define it, subordinate commanders would understand their superior’s intention; they would be given adequate resources; and then they would have been allowed to exercise freedom of
action in completing their missions. For good reasons, that is generally not what occurred.

During all three campaigns inexperienced subordinate commanders failed to seize the initiative or take advantage of fleeting opportunities. Much of the German’s success is attributable to the presence, well forward, of senior commanders. Ludendorff’s direction encapsulates the reason for the success of the Wehrmacht; namely the combination of subordinate initiative and forward command. To cite but one example Guderian, when discussing the advance by his Panzer Group to the Swiss border, states that “The 3rd Panzer Division had settled down for a rest (without orders). The 6th Panzer Regiment (of 3rd Division) had not forced a crossing of the Brahe (river) as ordered. A young lieutenant Felix came over to where I was standing. He had taken his tunic off, his shirt sleeves were rolled up, and his arms were black with powder. Herr General he said, “I have just come from the Brahe. The enemy forces on the far bank are weak. The poles (Polish Brigade operating with the French) set fire to the bridge but I put it out with my tank. The bridge is crossable. The advance has only stopped because there’s no-one to lead it”.

Lieutenant Felix understood his commander’s intent and exercised initiative at the tactical level; adequate resources were available to complete the mission. Notably both the Divisional and Regimental commanders had failed to comply with their superior’s intentions. Their freedom of action was necessarily curtailed by Guderian who, in this case, personally organized and led a successful attack to seize the bridge.

Both Rommel and Guderian comment in their diaries regarding the performance of junior tactical commanders. Rommel notes that “its is a mistake to assume that every unit officer will make all that there is to be made out of his situation; most of them soon succumb to a certain inertia. Then it is simply reported that for some reason or another this or that cannot be done - reasons are always easy enough to think up. People of this kind must be made to feel the authority of the commander and be shaken out of their apathy”. The aura of the well disciplined and highly responsible German officer tends to disintegrate when the criticism is applied to most unit officers. To the credit of the German General Staff Officers the major battles of 1940 were anticipated and wargamed during training; this training prepared commanders, and lessened the impact of any poor quality officers.

The importance of the General Staff training becomes even more apparent when the Russian Campaign is considered. On this front in 1941 neither Hitler, nor the senior officers at the Supreme Headquarters, had any idea of the conditions under which the troops were fighting. As a consequence a number of commanders were unnecessarily relieved of their commands when their performance did not conform to the expectations of the High Command. At this time there was a lack of trust between strategic and operational commanders; and a complete breakdown in the headquarters ability to assess the resources necessary to allow subordinates to meet these unrealistic expectations. This situation was reminiscent of the lack of perception demonstrated by the High Command when, in 1940, it ordered the advance into France halted against the advice of the field commanders. The concept of Auftragstaktik was not practised at the strategic level; probably because “there were a number of the staffs who, during a war of almost six years duration, never once saw the front!”. Auftragstaktik is based on trust, but this trust did not exist at the strategic level. It did, to a measured degree, at the operational and tactical levels. When describing the Commanders of his three divisions Guderian says “I had complete trust in their competence and reliability. They knew my views and shared my belief...and could follow it even though they might receive no orders for long periods of time once the attack was launched. Despite this trust Guderian did not over-estimate their ability - he was usually well forward.

On his advance into France (as a Corps Commander) Guderian discussed a visit to his forward elements, a reconnaissance battalion. “When I reached their road of advance I witnessed an attack by the reconnaissance battalion on the frontier defences. The riflemen advanced immediately behind the reconnaissance battalion with their brave Brigade Commander, Colonel Fischer at their head, followed closely by the Divisional Commander, General Schaal. The steady way the Division moved
forward under the command of its officers was an impressive sight\textsuperscript{17}. This certainly does not indicate that the junior commanders were given much freedom of action. In his Corps, and subsequently his Panzer Group, Guderian expected leadership, even at the expense of non-interference.

At no stage did the presence of the senior commander with, or actually leading the subordinate’s unit, cause any disharmony or implied lack of trust. More often than not the presence of the higher commander inspire the troops to achieve what they had previously thought was impossible. This confirms that initiative and acceptance of responsibility are not always a match for training and experience.

In summary, the concept of \textit{Auftragstaktik}, which theoretically placed such great emphasis on subordinate initiative, also relied heavily on the practice of forward command. This combination, coupled with sound staff preparation, minimized the effects of subordinate inexperience and was critical to the Wehrmacht’s early success. As the war progressed and the pool of well trained junior officers decreased forward command became increasingly important as a means of providing support to subordinate commanders. On the other hand, J.F.C. Fuller recognized a corresponding weakness among British Commanders when he wrote “the general is not a mere prompter in the wings of the stage of war\textsuperscript{18}”. He concluded that “the greatest component of leadership is the willingness of a commander to share danger and sacrifice with his men\textsuperscript{19}”. German officers bore no such inhibitions. Forward command, even in a system designed to allow freedom of action to subordinates, will continue to be a critical component of command and control in future conflicts.

While the theory which supports Directive Control remains attractive, the concept was not quite as rigidly applied as many exponents seem to suggest. Some modification is required if the system is to be practised. The factor which makes the system so attractive today is that it was designed to cope with a highly fluid battlefield when used by well trained and highly mobile, but not necessarily highly experienced, forces. Consideration of the modern battlefield will demonstrate how flexible a command and control system must be.

**The Modern Battlefield**

**Battlefield Characteristics**

Predicting the nature of the future battlefield is a complex task. The criticism that armies frequently train for the last war indicates that there is never any certainty about the location, level, or type of future conflict. It is certain that “increased demands will be placed on command systems due to the greatly enhanced complexity, mobility and dispersion of modern armed forces\textsuperscript{20}”. Specifically, technology has increased the number of specialized troops, units, functions and pieces of equipment that make up a modern army. This, in turn, has made overall command and control both more important and more difficult. The speed and range of today’s weapons have reduced the time in which to exercise command and control to a fraction of what it was a few decades ago. In addition, the complexity of modern headquarters equipment, and the accuracy of precision guided munitions have reduced the flexibility of headquarters\textsuperscript{21}.

In addition to this range of new factors a significant number of old problems still exist to confound the commander. These include the on-going influence of the media, politics, diplomacy, a lack of resources; and the range of conflicts and geographical locations in which armies must be prepared to fight. Some of these factors require more detailed examination.

**Media**

In all but High Intensity Conflicts there will be increased scrutiny of the conduct of military operations by the media. Experience of the role of the media in Vietnam suggests that journalists in general, and television in particular will deal with the specific rather than with the general. These personnel often have little understanding for either the country or the war, and are subject to little supervision but their own. In Vietnam they focused attention on individual events to the detriment of the picture as a whole\textsuperscript{22}.

As a result of media presence commanders may not be given the latitude to accept subordinate errors. This may create an over-command situation. Even with the best intentions it may not be possible to allow subordinates to act without direct supervision or “detailed guidance”. If there remains any question regarding the power of the media to affect a commander’s
function then the reporting of the battle of Khe San should confirm it. As a result of media coverage the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff were directed by President Johnson not to let the base fall, and a model of the base was moved to the White House so that progress of the battle could be closely monitored\(^3\). Van Creveld notes that “though command of fire bases from the White House was possible, it was never attempted in practice\(^4\)”. This possibility becomes increasingly likely unless commanders are willing to stand up for their commands.

**Politics and Diplomacy**

Future conflicts are likely to be the subject of intense diplomatic activity. Commanders will be under increased pressure to conform to diplomatic initiatives. This will decrease their freedom of action and reduce the degree to which they can allow subordinates to exercise initiative. Churchill’s dismissals in the Western Desert, and his support for the doomed Greek Campaign\(^5\) are but two events which placed undue pressure on senior and, as a consequence, subordinate commanders.

**Resources**

Lead-times for equipment procurement are often longer than the warning time before a conflict. It is therefore likely that future wars will be fought on a “come as you are” basis. Resources are likely to be scarce and commanders may have pressure applied to achieve more with less.

Regardless of the duration of future campaigns commanders are likely to conduct continuous operations. This presents difficulties with equipment maintenance and major problems with personnel endurance. It will be increasingly difficult for commanders to cope with their own role, let alone have a sound appreciation of the day to day capabilities of their subordinates. Sharon was convinced in 1973 that the “commander on the spot has a far better understanding of what needs to be done than some commander or staff officer miles away from the scene of action\(^6\)” For purely physical reasons some decentralization of command functions, including the management and allocation of scarce equipment resources, may be essential.

**Level and Location of Future Conflict**

Future wars are likely to be conducted by highly mobile troops. This will force local commanders to react quickly to situations within their area of influence. Lower-Level tactical commanders will need to react without specific guidance. This situation is particularly applicable to dispersed forces operating in Low and Escalated Low-Level Conflicts. Local commanders must be willing to make decisions.

In future wars Electronic Counter-Measures will make it difficult, perhaps impossible, for senior commanders to maintain constant contact with subordinates. This situation is compounded if dispersed forces are operating in certain Australian geographical areas where communications are affected by high mineral concentrations, or if subordinates are required to rely on line-of-sight communications. Junior commanders will need to understand their superior’s intentions and be willing to act and react independently.

In essence the modern battlefield demands de-centralized command and less centralized husbanding of resources. The most appropriate command and control system for the modern battlefield will be one which capitalizes on these features.

**Command and Control Systems**

**Types of Command and Control**

Many authors have attempted to categorize command and control systems. Simpkin divides them into “free-rein” and “tight-rein” systems\(^7\). The German Army now recognizes “Mission-Oriented” and “Detailed-Order” systems\(^8\). Neither accurately defines the parameters of all current command and control systems. In concept, Directive Control epitomizes the free-rein type of command and control system. On the other hand, systems which offer little or no latitude to subordinates by detailing both tasks and the means by which they will be accomplished are classified as tight-rein or Detailed-Order systems. Tight-rein systems are favoured in armies where subordinates are inadequately trained and cannot therefore be trusted, or where training inadequacies preclude the development of uniformity of thought. Army size has not, in the past, precluded a free-rein system of command and control.

No one system is universally more favourable than another. Both have been used effectively in the past. In fact most current systems have elements which are part free and part tight-rein. For instance, it could be argued that *Auftragstaktik* was not wholly free-rein system
because of the high degree of forward command exercised in conjunction with it. Equally, many systems which provide detailed tasking of subordinates do so in order to ensure that the subordinate is clear about the superior's intention. The subordinate in such a system is often encumbered in accomplishing his task. For instance the Soviet system is widely regarded as "fully centralized". Despite this, Soviet journals insist that commanders must, and do, operate with independence. What is certain is that the wrong system can cause the defeat of well equipped and adequately trained troops.

The defeat of France in 1940 illustrates how an army of superior strength and, in many cases, superior equipment (certainly the quality of armoured vehicles) was humiliated by inadequate command and control. "The defence of France was based on fortifications and rigid doctrine. The French command wanted its troops to be trained in such a way that careful movement and planned measures for attack or defence could be based on definite, pre-arranged circumstances. They wanted a complete picture of the enemy's order of battle before deciding on any undertaking. Once the decision was taken it would be carried out according to plan, one might almost say methodically. This mania for planned control...left nothing to chance". The French had forgotten Napoleon's Maxim regarding Plans of Campaign. The slightest exercise of initiative in 1940 would have cut the German's over-extended lines of supply and may have provided valuable time for either the French to reorganize, or the British to withdraw intact. This criticism is applied equally to both French and British commanders.

The level and location of conflict also influences the choice of a command and control system. In his book, The Seven Pillars of Wisdom, T.E. Lawrence (of Arabia) describes the cutting of the telegraph, the Palestine-based Turkish Army's main link with the homeland. "The Turks hopeless lack of initiative made their army a "directed" one, so that by destroying the telegraphs we went far towards turning them into a leaderless mob". The Australian and British troops found quite the reverse in the Dardanelles. Command and control systems must satisfy local requirements.

On the other hand, the World War II German staff system was subject to the same exclusive selection that occurred in 1922. When the army mobilized fully; and when a considerable number of the leaders were killed filling their forward command role, the remainder were spread too thinly amongst the army to have the required impact.

Clearly, a system must be tailored to suit an army's requirements; it cannot be too rigidly nor too exclusively applied. It is questionable whether any one system is universally suitable if it is to be applied at all levels from strategic to tactical; in operations of differing levels of intensity; and in different geographical locations.

Selecting the Right Systems

Selection of a Command and Control system must be based on a diverse range of criteria. An ideal system will cater for all, or most, of the following factors:

a. the degree of technology which exists on the battlefield;
b. the force ratios which are likely to apply;
c. the standard of training of the army, including the extent to which the reserve or territorial forces are capable of assimilating with the regular army;
d. the capacity and willingness of commanders to exercise leadership or forward command;
e. the responsiveness of troops, or their ability to react to rapidly changing circumstances;
f. the intelligence and initiative of the commissioned and non-commissioned officer corps, including their willingness to accept responsibility;
g. the anticipated level of political and media interference; and
h. the level of intensity and location of the operations being undertaken.

It is unlikely that one system will gain universal approbation because different armies apply varying degrees of emphasis to these areas. An examination of the current Australian and British system should prove that it is not "ideal".

Commonwealth Armies Command and Control System

The system currently in place in both the British and Australian armies is one in which directives at the operational level, and orders
at the tactical level, detail both the tasks and the resources available for operations. There is still scope for subordinates to exercise initiative; indeed both armies have always relied on the resourcefulness and creativity of their troops to overcome deficiencies in resources. Both also encourage a degree of independence of action amongst subordinates. Concepts of operation and established staff procedures ensure that the commander's intentions are well known, at least to the next level of command. This system, with few exceptions, mirrors the physical aspects of Directive Control. There are many examples of initiative and decisive action among junior commanders. A study of citations demonstrates that Commonwealth troops are well able to act independently if the need arises. The sad fact is that these, when reported, are considered the exception rather than the rule.

Like Directive Control, the current system relies on initiative to take advantage of the fleeting opportunities so infrequently presented in war. It also attempts to minimize the effects of the "fog of war". What the current system lacks is a conscious effort to force responsibility downwards to the junior commander. This could be accomplished without removing the tasking inherent in our current orders system. In fact, the physical aspect of planning at the higher level is still required to determine resource allocation and constraints, or limitations, on freedom of subordinate action. The major problems which exist in this current system are that the subordinate is often tasked in an over-controlled manner, or, is not given the opportunity to demonstrate that he can be trusted to act without interference. The compounding effect of this situation is that the subordinate soon lacks faith in himself and becomes less capable of exercising his command in any but the most predictable way. The modern battlefield, already complex and unpredictable, will further compound the problems faced by commanders at all levels. The predictable commander, or one who lacks faith in his own ability, is likely to be easily dislocated and unlikely to be able to cope with the "clash of wills" which is so much a feature of warfare. Consequently, any system which produces this type of commander is, at best, partially flawed.

In addition, the system does little to cater for political or media interference. Nor does it attempt to exploit the responsiveness of troops or the initiative of junior commanders. It is questionable whether it takes account of training limitations imposed on the Army Reserve. Current resource constraints make it difficult for commanders to train effectively. The responsibility for this situation rests equally between a scarcity of some resources and the high level at which many others are currently controlled. The weaknesses inherent in this system require more detailed consideration.

**Current System Weaknesses**

The weaknesses inherent in the Australian Army's current Command and Control system are summarized below.

a. In the Australian Army's current staff system subordinates are only aware of the commander's detailed plans one level down. In addition, at least in the author's experience, commanders readily add advice about how to complete a task when tasking subordinates. This stifles originality and initiative. A subordinate who is not given the opportunity to tackle a problem is unlikely to learn from his mistakes. (Sadly, most experience is gained from previous mistakes).

b. The pace of modern exercises often precludes subordinate counselling "after the fact" about why they adopted a particular approach to a task. This includes guidance (and encouragement) when wrong, and reward when right. Too often post-exercise activities concentrate on refurbishment of equipment prior to stand-down. Post-exercise reports, when written, are not always actioned. Equally, unit and sub-unit commanders do not always recognize their responsibilities towards training subordinates. This problem also exists at Brigade level. It is a rare occurrence for unit commanders to be exercised by a higher headquarters during the conduct of unit training. Formation exercises occur too infrequently for this to be the only medium used to train unit commanders. Rommel for one, understood his responsibilities when he stated that "the commander must see that his subordinates are trained in accordance with the latest requirements".
c. The Australian Army still attempts to allow all officers to command at sub-unit level. This causes short tours of command (one-two years and makes it difficult to develop the relationships of trust and mutual respect which are necessary for Directive Control to function. Israeli experience suggests that commanders should not be rotated with this frequency. Leaders must be selected discerningly and command for longer periods.

d. The current system seldom gives officers, in Patton's words, "what they deserve when they're right and what they deserve when they're wrong". Although the mechanism exists for officers to be demoted or removed this rarely occurs. Any system which is ultimately results-oriented must accept that wastage is necessary. Not only does our current system not dismiss poor junior officers, it satisfies officer shortfalls by continuing to promote otherwise less suitable officers.

e. Training institutions usually cater for the lowest common intellectual denominator. This breeds a sense of mediocrity into an army. Training directed at producing the "Mark 1" officer is detrimental to the development of initiative. It may coincidentally encourage uniformity of thought, but it does so at the expense of originality and the development of full potential. There is no system which identifies or husbands genuine military talent. This is a vexing problem; the T34 tank could not be defeated by the poor German Mark I tanks. Neither will "Mark I" officers defeat more gifted or better developed commanders.

Advantages of Directive Control

Directive Control confers the following advantages on the commander.

a. Command functions and resource management can be decentralized thus minimizing the strain placed on headquarters.

b. Subordinate commanders would be better trained to cope with the conditions likely to be experienced on modern battlefields. Specifically, freedom of subordinate action allows tactical and operational commanders to exploit the fleeting opportunities presented in wars while minimizing the adverse effects of confusion.

c. Commanders will be collectively less predictable in the execution of tasks. The free development of individuality, which is so much a feature of Directive Control, should increase the likelihood of success while decreasing the opportunities for enemy interference.

d. Low and Escalated Low-Level Conflict will require a command and control system which encourages independent action among subordinates. Directive Control largely satisfies this condition.

Directive Control caters for a wide range of talent within an army; it allows subordinates to exercise initiative commensurate with their ability and experience. Future wars will not be won by a select group of exceptional commanders; they will be won by the average, yet potentially innovative commanders who make up the bulk of an army. The system is suitable for the employment of dispersed and highly mobile forces; yet it does not underplay the importance of the team.

Disadvantages of Directive Control

The following disadvantages inherent in Directive Control are almost exclusively non-military in origin.

a. Commanders need to be free from the constraints of political and media influence to the extent that these influences do not determine the way in which they execute their tasks. While not a problem inherent in Directive Control per se, it is certainly a factor in its successful introduction.

b. The training required to institute such a system may inhibit the success achieved by a rapidly expanded commissioned and non-commissioned officer corps, and to a lesser extent, within the Reserve or Territorial Army. However, this does not preclude their participation.

The Solution

Analysis of combat proven command and control systems still does not make it possible to select one "off the shelf". Success in mobile operations over the last four decades indicates that certain characteristics are required to maximize opportunities and minimize confu-
sion. Systems must evolve according to available technology. The command and control of mobile forces requires the lowering of the command threshold to the lowest possible level. This decentralization of command appears to suit the high-technology battlefield of the future. There is no evidence to suggest that the exercise of leadership through forward command is less important than in the past; if anything it is even more important. Israeli evidence of decentralized command concludes that on occasions this “heavy emphasis...means that our capacity for misadventure is limitless". Commanders must still exercise command and control over their subordinates when the operational situation is beyond the subordinate’s capacity to deal with it.

In summary, the concept of Directive Control is well suited to the anticipated role of the Australian and other Armies. It is a flexible and adaptable system which suits the employment of dispersed and highly mobile forces operating in different geographical areas and in operations of varying levels of intensity. By taking advantage of the confusion of the modern battlefield it encourages initiative and responsiveness in troops, thus allowing the best effect to be gained from the opportunities that are presented. On the other hand, it is not a substitute for leadership; and it should not be seen as one. Despite the relevance of Directive Control, its introduction, and the training to make it effective, will require a considerable change in the mindset of commanders at all levels.

Introducing the System

Changing the Current System

Limited physical change is required to introduce Directive Control. The necessary mental adjustment may not be so simple. Simpkin, when discussing the system’s introduction into the United States and British Armies states that “a career span of peace, with intense competition for promotion, has bred the...vicious practice of delegation upwards". There is no reason to suggest that the Australian Army is free from this phenomenon. In their favour the Australian and British Armies already possess many of the features inherent in Directive Control. This compensates, to some extent, for the 180 years headstart that the system has had within the German Army.

The change that is required can be localized in a relatively small number of areas. The proof that the system is eventually working can only be provided in war. The following areas need to be addressed.

Command Relationships

Change is required to create a climate in which subordinates are continually encouraged to think for themselves. The command relationship must be developed in this way by officers who were themselves subject to more firm guidance. Subordinates must be given the opportunity to exercise initiative and to learn from their mistakes without feeling that these will be the basis of the confidential report- the emphasis, therefore, must be on teaching rather than assessment. This aspect has proven difficult to accept amongst career conscious officers. A strong personal commitment to the sustainment of the philosophy, rather than just the mechanics of Directive Control would assist all commanders to understand their responsibilities for training their subordinates. Guderian’s approach to command was that he had to persuade his superiors and the men under his command that his ideas were correct. He did this to achieve “freedom of decision from above and confident collaboration from below”. This development of trust and mutual respect will not occur overnight.

Career Management

Commanders must be selected primarily for their capacity to lead. They should be given ample time to train their subordinates and the opportunity to be trained themselves. This will require longer command postings. Not all officers are suitable for command; those that are not should be employed outside the command stream; those who prove unsuitable when in command should be removed and not re-employed in this stream. There is an over-emphasis on command “box-ticking” in the Australian Army. It is certainly no failure to be either a good instructor or staff officer.

Junior Command

The current short duration of junior command postings is a particularly difficult problem to overcome. With the limited number of command positions available for graduates it is not yet possible to guarantee each officer a two year appointment, let alone a longer one. Attempts to replace officer resignations by greater numbers of graduates further distorts
the command pyramid. In future a far lesser proportion of these officers will be able to command at sub-unit and unit level. Predictably, this will further increase the dissatisfaction among the officer corps and lead to regular repetition of the cycle. The situation has no simple solution. Simpkin’s suggestion that more senior non-commissioned officers undertake command appointments does not solve the problem. In the long-term the army would do well to analyse its officer requirements. There are too many junior commanders for the positions available. Without the independence of command it is not possible to practise freedom of action or to breed initiative or decisiveness in future leaders.

**Officer Selection**

Several writers suggest that all officer candidates should be enlisted from the ranks. Some even suggest that this is mandatory for the success of Directive Control because a “them and us” syndrome mitigates against officer/soldier relationships. A reduction in the officer training requirement, coupled with more stringent standards for trainees should improve the quality of graduate. Junior officers do not need to have been commissioned from the ranks before they can lead their soldiers. A greater number of Australian soldiers are being selected to undergo officer training and this does not appear to offer any appreciable benefit, or detriment, to their ability to command. Nor did it in the 1900s German Army when there was an uproar about commissioning “Bourgeois Officers”. The commissioning of officers from the ranks is not a mandatory requirement for the success of Directive Control. In any event, if a “them and us” syndrome does exist, it is far less virulent in the Australian Army than Simpkin suggested.

**Intelect**

Intellect is a critical factor in the selection of leaders. Candidates must demonstrate the ability to think for themselves. There are grounds for arguing that less intelligent officers will find it difficult to develop within the system. On the other hand, Guderian notes that General Staff selection was often biased too heavily on intellect and too lightly on strength of character and warmth of personality. While this balance is desirable a sound intellect is essential.

**General Staff**

The role of the German General Staff in the success of *Auftragstaktik* should not be underrated. While the Bundeswehr maintains this staff system it is difficult to imagine it working successfully with the more egalitarian character of most Australian and some British officers. There is no doubt that the better, or more appropriately experienced officers, are posted to areas of particular need within the army. However, there are advantages in a similar staff system. The General Staff is a kind of “fraternity” which provides an indirect chain of command parallel to the normal unit chain (although not all officers would consider it an advantage to have this system operating in their unit). This allows a free interchange of advice, and grooms more talented officers to enable them to develop their full potential. It could be argued that the system institutionalizes common sense. The Australian Army has no such programme. Provided the system of accelerated promotion can be made to function, without detriment, and provided some system is developed to identify and husband available talent, there should be no need for a similar General Staff system.

**Resources**

The current annual decreases in the operating costs budget for the Army make it difficult to train for Directive Control. The consequent allocation of proportionally more resources to higher level exercises causes a corresponding reduction in sub-unit and unit generated activity. As a result fewer junior commanders are given the opportunity to conduct their own training. A more realistic priority for the allocation of the operating costs budget would be to sub-unit and unit training, even to the detriment of brigade and formation exercises. While the need to exercise is well recognized there is currently a tendency to walk before we crawl.

**Summary**

In summary, these physical changes require a shift in emphasis, not a major reorganization. Decentralization of the control of training resources and a commitment to selecting, training and employing junior leaders will allow the evolution of Directive Control within the Army. The degree to which these factors are accommodated will determine the success of the system. Training for Directive
Control must be predicated on this change having occurred.

Training for Directive Control

System Adjustment

Directive Control in no way diminishes the need to train in basic and work-related skills. Nor does it require a complete change in training techniques. The German Army analysis of training needs is not dissimilar to our own. It is relevant in determining how to conduct training for Directive Control. German training concentrates on decisiveness, self-reliance, sense of responsibility and initiative. These are all aspects which are encouraged within the Australian Army. Because Directive Control is more a state of mind than a physical concept it is possible to shift training emphasis without undergoing radical change. It is important to understand that the training for Directive Control should be as decentralized as the system itself. The following areas require adjustment.

Doctrine

Both British and Australian doctrine has become more definitive over the last 30 years. The Corps pamphlet in 1950 would fit into your shirt pocket; its equivalent will fit into your briefcase. While sound doctrine remains the basis of uniformity of thought the current "volume rather than value" discourages innovation and initiative. "Success comes readily to the commander whose ideas have not been canalised into one fixed channel, but can develop freely from the conditions around him." As Rommel used to say as an instructor; "Never mind what Clausewitz thinks - What do you think?"

Unit Training

The German Army has always placed great emphasis on unit training. Officers, often one on one, would conduct what we now call "quick decision exercises" while walking the ground. It is unrealistic to expect Army Schools, with relatively large student-instructor ratios, to gain the same benefit from this training. In any event it is the conduct of this training within units which produces the uniformity of thought, trust and respect necessary for Directive Control. Continuation training must occur in units to prepare commanders for the next higher rank level. This should ensure that officers are promoted when they are ready, and not before.

Training Emphasis

Unit training must emphasize the role of the junior commander. Directive Control relies on the very lowest-level commanders exercising initiative. Both the Australian and British Armies should take greater advantage of the talent in the non-commissioned officer ranks. Emphasis on junior leader training, even to the detriment of formation and unit training, should allow this talent to surface. The Israelis believe that this training of lower level commanders is the key to success.

Schools Training

Both Army and Corps schools should maintain the responsibility for individual skills training. In tactical training, students should have an understanding of tactics at least two levels higher. In order to accomplish this instructor-student ratios need to be reduced. This may mean that training institution instructors cannot have every second term or course segment allocated for preparation. Schools training must concentrate on educating students to think. This will prepare them to operate independently when they return to their units. Current tactics training, without emphasis on "pinks" solutions is adequately structured and conducted at the right level. Additional courses are not required.

Training Directives

Formation and unit training directives must be confined to establishing priorities within the commander's training philosophy. The maximum latitude must be given to unit and sub-unit trainers to concentrate on particular-to-role activities. Current directives often leave neither scope nor time for unit training. They often dictate training priorities which are of little value to the unit directed to undertake them. (The study of the 1st Divisions Campaigns in France in 1918 are of limited historical value to a tank regiment) Directives should be achievable; and framed in the same way as operational directives; that is, state the mission but not how to accomplish it. This centralized planning should precede decentralized execution. In spite of the current emphasis on Directive Control there is at least one issued unit directive for 1989 which is in excess of 35 pages in length (less Annexes). Ironically, the directive in question devotes two pages to the importance of Directive Control!
The Training Cycle

Individual and collective training cycles should be completed at unit level before formation exercises are conducted. In a system designed to decentralize command functions it is necessary to ensure that the benefit in exercising is felt at the lower levels. Formation exercises often practise higher command functions at the expense of the lower levels; both can be exercised under the right conditions.

Technical Training

Commanders must understand how the future battlefield will affect the conduct of operations. Rommel recognized this need in 1942 when he stated that “The modern army commander must free himself from the routine methods and show a comprehensive grasp of technical matters, for he must be in a position to continually adapt his ideas of warfare to the facts and possibilities of the moment.” Technical knowledge is indispensable to the future commander; it should not be a “soft option” for curriculum cuts within Army and Corps schools.

Resource Allocation

Constraints on training resources in peacetime are as inevitable as shortages in war. Nevertheless, there must be a greater effort to decentralize their control. Commanders should be given control of the resources necessary for both training and operations. Peacetime training could then mirror, as closely as possible, anticipated operational conditions. This should make training more effective and commanders more self-reliant. The trial system of allowing commanders to locally purchase non-issue essential items is commendable.

Standing Operating Procedures

Detailed Standing Operating Procedures are critical to the development of uniformity of thought within units and formations. The emphasis placed on these within the Australian Army should be maintained.

Wargaming

The German Army used wargaming to encourage uniformity of operational thought among tactical and operational commanders. Game solutions provided additional benefits when implemented in France in 1940. (The Meuse River crossing was one such example). Wargames may be beneficial if future operational scenarios are selected. However, a lack of flexibility in game rules encourages the use of “attrition” rather than “manoeuvre” theory. This can be detrimental to development in other areas. Wargames must be modified to include factors such as surprise if they are to make a contribution to training officers to be innovative.

Reserve Training

Under the current allocation of training days and resources it is unrealistic to expect the Reserve component of the Army to successfully introduce Directive Control. Despite the advantages of relatively long-duration postings there is insufficient contact with the regular army for the development of uniformity of thought, trust or mutual respect. Integration has not altered this situation. Israeli experience with the rapid mobilization of reservists indicates that Directive Control is essential for the successful operational employment of these forces.

Summary

In summary, both unit and schools training should be intellectually and physically demanding and should emphasize decision making. Resources should be available to allow units to train for their role. Increased emphasis must be placed on learning to think. The performance of small, widely dispersed groups will rely strongly on the junior commander’s ability to react to changes in his area of influence. Leadership training should continue to concentrate on the importance of the team. The German Leadership pamphlet summarizes the training requirement. It states that “creative, precise and critical thought in all kinds of exercises prepares the military leader of whatever rank in times of peace for the exigencies of battle. This creates basic, uniform, tactical concepts which are vital pre-requisites for the necessary interaction of forces even if coordinated command from a superior quarter is temporarily absent.”

Conclusion

Evolution of the Concept

Despite improvements in communications and other aids to command and control, senior commanders have become progressively more isolated with each modern war. At the same time the battlefield has become a scene of steadily increased confusion. As a result junior commanders have become more important elements in the management of armies. It is
hardly surprising that command control systems evolved to minimize the effect of confusion and, perhaps, even to take advantage of it. 

The evolution of Auftragstaktik was a logical process. It shifted the command emphasis away from the superior headquarters in two ways: firstly by forcing the decision making process onto those in the best position to weigh the facts; and secondly by forcing the higher commander to go forward to “see for himself”. This system became successful in a complementary sense. Junior commanders were capable of shouldering responsibility, many even responded positively to the opportunity; and senior commanders were able, by their presence forward, to provide the guidance and experience needed for the subordinate to succeed. Directive Control, supplemented by the presence well forward of senior commanders, will continue to be an effective means of commanding highly mobile and widely dispersed troops. Increasingly volatile battlefields will ensure that this evolution is perpetuated.

**The High Technology Battlefield**

Highly complex modern weapons guarantee that the battlefield will remain a place of confusion. Commanders now expect that their plans are more a means of starting a battle than of predicting its course. In the past, the more mobile the forces, the less did commanders believe that their plans would survive the preparation for battle. Rommel believed that “the fate of an army should in no way be tied with the success of the plan”. Patton described it as nothing more than “the datum plane from which you build as necessity directs or opportunity offers”. The preponderance of specialist units and equipment, and the speed and range of modern weapons, merely reinforces this admission of the need for decentralization of command. Even in the conduct of Low or Escalated Low-Level Conflict it is likely that modern weapons and the dispersion of mobile forces will require greater independent action from junior commanders.

The influence of both political and media intervention may reduce subordinate freedom of action; although the pace of future conflicts may not always make it possible for these two influences to be felt at the lower tactical command levels.

**Ability to Cope**

While the Australian Army’s command and control system shares many similarities with Directive Control it lacks the critical mental approach of decentralized command. Commanders are unlikely to exercise initiative or exploit their freedom of action in war if they are not trained to do so in peace. Unlike the German Army it is not yet “the constant aim of all leaders to maintain or win freedom of action.”

As a result of Australian Government emphasis on Low-Level Operations, the increased mobility available to Australian Forces, and the expected dispersion of these forces, the Australian Army will be forced to decentralize command functions. Directive Control is particularly suited to these types of operations.

**Changes to the Current System**

There are a number of minor physical changes required to introduce the system. Command relationships must be allowed to develop in order to promote trust and mutual respect. Subordinates must be given the opportunity to demonstrate initiative, and in so doing to learn by their mistakes. In order to accomplish this there needs to be less turbulence in command positions at all levels. Not all officers will, or should be, given the opportunity to command. Selection procedures for both commissioning and command need to be strict. Unsuitable officers must be removed from command.

**Training Commanders**

Leaders must be educated to think, not just trained. A greater proportion of the responsibility for this training must fall on sub-unit, unit and formation commanders. Less restrictive training directives and hence more time for unit training, coupled with greater decentralization of training resources will provide the means of accomplishing this aim. Formal technical training, not just particular to corps, will provide commanders with a better understanding of the way in which the battlefield can affect their operations. Tactical training must continue to give subordinate commanders an understanding of the senior commanders intention. This should not be gained by too much emphasis on doctrine. Standing Operation Procedures must be well understood.

Training the Reserves remains an area of concern. A greater allocation of training time and resources will be required if they are to practice Directive Control within units and at
formation level.

The Final Word

As a result of the exponential changes in mobility and weaponry in recent wars, flexibility in command is paramount. The modern commander is unlikely to be better prepared than his predecessor. While he has many aids to assist his execution of command, he also has a far greater number of influences to consider. A combination of Directive Control and forward command (old-fashioned leadership) are still appropriate means for the exercise of command in war. Napoleon realized this in 1800; little has changed.

There are no programmable formulas for successful command, only good and bad examples. Rommel described Patton's advance in France as "the most astonishing achievement in mobile warfare". Under those circumstances perhaps Patton should have the final word. He encapsulated the contradictions of command in his 3rd Army Orders. They state: "Each in his appropriate sphere will lead in -accompanied by a sketch, it tells what to do. Not how". Directive Control could be the Command Panacea; its successful introduction will depend largely on the availability of resources and our willingness to accept Patton's advice.

NOTES

1. Transcript of Presentation. Federal Ministry of Defence, Army Staff (Fue H III 2), 17th German United States Army General Staff Meeting, Munich, Germany, p1.
8. Ibid., p225.
15. Ibid., p460.
16. Ibid., p98.
17. Ibid., p100.
19. Ibid., p11.
21. Ibid., pp2-4.
22. Van Creveld M. Op Cit, p257.
23. Ibid.
24. Ibid., p244.
34. Gerditz, Op Cit, p471.
39. Patton G.S. Letters of Instruction No 1 to Corps, Division and Separate Unit Commanders, HQ 3rd United States Army, 6 March 1944.
40. Van Creveld M. Op Cit, p197.
46. Simpkin R.E. Op Cit, p11.
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Contours of the Official View of Threats to Australian Security from Immediate and Distant Neighbours

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This article will seek to outline the current official view of the extent of threats to Australian security from immediate and distant neighbours. It will then try to evaluate the merits and shortcomings of this view in light of present and foreseeable world events as they might come to affect Australian security. The official view of threats to Australian security referred to in this discussion have primarily been drawn from the Hawke Government's present defence policy, as outlined in The Defence of Australia, 1987 (and hereafter referred to as the Defence White Paper), and the commissioned report that led to its formulation, the Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities (or what is more widely known as the Dibb Report). Other Government and Ministerial Statements, particularly those of Kim Beazley, the Minister of Defence, have also been used as a guide toward assessing the current official perception of possible threats to Australian security. It will hopefully be shown that official threat perceptions, as they have come to evolve over the past three years, have in one sense been significantly tied to older fears related to expansionary communism despite evidence to the contrary, whilst in another sense, have shifted in focus towards new areas of potential threat. It will be the final contention of this article, that these perceptions are perhaps misguided, and to some extent evidence a desire on behalf of the Government, to justify the current financial expenditure on Australia's re-equipment program.

In analysing the current official view of the extent of threats from immediate and distant neighbours, it is first useful to regard the Dibb Report's assessment of threat to Australian security, as this assessment has been officially stated as having provided the basis of current defence policy. The Dibb Report, published in 1986, held that 'Australia faced no identifiable direct military threat and there was every prospect that these favourable security circumstances would continue. Putting a worst case scenario, the Report considered that in the event of a superpower conflict, nuclear war between the United States and the Soviet Union may see American intelligence facilities at Nurrungar, Pine Gap and the North West Cape, come under attack. However in the Report's judgement, the risk of such a war was extremely remote because of the nature of the nuclear power balance that existed between the two countries. It further held that what American support facilities in Australia may come under attack in the event of such a war, were at any rate removed from major population and industrial centres, and hence, lowered the potentially disruptive impact such an attack may hold for Australian society. On the question of other nuclear threats to Australia, the Report saw no motivation for any immediate neighbour to acquire nuclear weapons, and that other countries with nuclear capabilities beyond Australia's immediate region, such as China, India and Pakistan, had little cause to threaten Australia with nuclear attack.

The assertion that there existed a lack of nuclear threat to Australian security came to be derived on the calculated assumption that there existed little intention on behalf of nuclear capable countries to attack Australia. The same calculated assumption also underpinned the Report's assessment of possible threats to Australian security from conventional forces. It noted for example that Australia's most immediate neighbour, Indonesia, had neither the motive nor the capability to threaten Australia with substantial military assault. Its principle security concerns were internal security and potential threats from its north. Were these attitudes to change it would take time for any disputes to develop into major military confrontation. Leaving aside the question of motivation, Indonesia simply did not have the military capability that would allow it to consider a sustained level of intensive joint operations against Australia. These capabilities could not be acquired quickly, even with outside assistance.
greater conventional military capability (or potential), such as China, India, Vietnam, and Japan, were similarly held to have more immediate strategic problems in their own regions which negated the possibility of their threatening Australian security. Moreover, that they lacked the long-range force capability necessary to mount an intensified and sustained attack on Australia. Only the United States and the Soviet Union were believed capable of undertaking such a high level attack. The intention of each of these countries to pursue such action was argued as highly improbable because of the alliance relationship that existed between Australia and the United States, and the countervailing power this relationship represented to the Soviet Union.

Whilst the Dibb Report contended that threats to Australian security arising out of superpower conflict were highly unlikely, and that no country had both the capability and intention to mount a high level conventional attack against Australia, it nevertheless acknowledged that political intentions can change fairly rapidly, and that even without the capability to sustain a high level attack, a neighbouring country if it so desired, could undertake low or intermediate levels of military action against Australian interests. To counter the possibility of such actions, the Report recommended that "...a layered strategy of defence within Australia's area of direct military interest" should be instigated to "...ensure that an enemy would have substantial difficulty in crossing the sea and air gap" that existed between Australia and its northern neighbours. To realise this end, it argued that Australian defence policy should be primarily aimed at providing an appropriate defence structure capable of meeting low and intermediate threats to Australian security interests as might occur from more immediate sources. Paradoxically, because the Report regarded superpower conflict as highly improbable, it advocated that Australia should maintain but not extend its present commitments under the ANZUS alliance, particularly where such commitments involved Australia in overseas military operations as part of United States contingency plans for global war.

In line with this delineated concept of threats to Australian security, the Report recognised the need to support friendly governments in Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, as both countries were important to Australian security because of their geographical proximity. Northern countries beyond these two, because of their distance from Australia, were judged by the Report to lie in an area that should not involve Australian military interests so closely. These countries, together with those of the South West Pacific, were held to be important to Australian security interests but only insofar as Australia might be able to exert influence through diplomatic, economic aid and co-operative military measures so as to maintain a relatively benign strategic environment free from unwelcome external pressures.

From all appearances, it seemed that Government defence policy, as it came to be articulated in the 1987 Defence White Paper, accepted many of the recommendations and findings of the Dibb Report as a basis for future defence planning. Long held notions which had previously regarded Australia's interests being best served by a defence policy reliant on 'strong and powerful' allies and strategies of 'forward' defence, were seen as having given way to a new policy era of self-reliant 'continental' defence based on the assumption that 'no main threat' to Australian security existed in the foreseeable future. Based on the Dibb Report's findings, the White Paper acknowledged that although 'no main threat' to Australian security existed "...an opponent might see advantages in a campaign of sustained low-level military pressure against Australia" as a means to "force political concessions over some disputed issue". It further stated that the Australian Defence Forces should be structured so as to "...be capable of operating effectively throughout Australia's area of direct military interest", whilst at the same time "...maintaining the option for responding to wider security commitments in support of neighbours". In line with this new direction, the Defence White Paper defined a fairly generous area of 'direct military interest' stretching from the Indonesian and Papua New Guinea chain of islands in the north, to the Antarctic in the south; and from the Cocos Islands in the west, to New Zealand in the east. The logic in defining this area as being of direct military importance to Australia was a fundamental feature of the Dibb Report's policy recommendations, which had advocated...
a new ‘continental’ defence posture primarily aimed at securing Australia’s continental and island territories, its immediate economic maritime zones, and its sea and air approaches. By implication, such a posture could have well been expected to have automatically required that Australia’s military interest in countries beyond this area would be of far less significance than had previously been the case in earlier defence policies.

However, it is on this latter point that current defence policy appears to have diverged from recommendations outlined in the Dibb Report, and on which any true determination of the official view of the extent of threats to Australian security can be argued. Central to this determination is the fact that, to a much greater extent than the Dibb Report, the government’s Defence White Paper continued to place a significant emphasis on the time-honoured need for Australia to support the United States’ ability to maintain a strategic balance in the region so as to counter possible Soviet incursions. This need was clearly stated within the confines of the 1987 Defence White Paper where it noted that:

Australia is part of the Western community of nations. Australia therefore supports the ability of the United States (US) and its allies to maintain an effective strategic balance with the Soviet Union. A redistribution of power in favour of the Soviet Union in the central balance, or an extension of power in our region at the expense of the US and its allies would be a matter of fundamental concern to Australia, and would be contrary to our national interests.

Australian support for the maintenance of a superpower balance in Asia/Pacific region appears to have been the primary reason underpinning the Paper’s declaration that Australia held a ‘broader strategic interest’ in developments occurring outside its area of direct military concern, which it defined as area which included all of South-East Asia and Indo-china, as well as the wider reaches of the eastern Indian and south-eastern Pacific Oceans.

Some evidence of this predilection towards the threat of Soviet influence into regions lying beyond Australia’s newly stated area of direct military concern, can be seen in the list of potential threats posited by the White Paper’s less optimistic pronouncements on possible problems that may emerge to challenge Australia’s future strategic interests. Whilst it is not clearly stated how these problems might specifically transmute into a direct threat to Australian security, the general assertion is that regional problems occurring within Australia’s so-called area of ‘broad strategic interest’ can increase the prospect of ‘unfriendly or contending’ external powers exerting influence in the region, and that this may prove threatening to Australian security. By ‘unfriendly or contending’ external powers the assumption is made that because Australia is aligned with the Western community of nations, it is the Soviet Union that defence-policy makers are primarily referring to.

There is much to support this assumption if one regards the potential threat producing problem’s outlined in the Defence White Paper. For example, the Paper noted how in the South-West Pacific region a potential threat to Australian security may possibly come to exist via continuing tensions between island states in the region and the United States over access fees for American commercial fishing fleets. It noted that such tensions had led to Kiribati and Vanuatu concluding alternative fishing agreements with the Soviet Union. Whilst not judged to be directly threatening to Australian security, it was nevertheless held to be of some concern in that the Soviet Union had been able to increase its presence in the region at the expense of the United States. Insofar as this development had impinged on Australian security interests, it is inferred within the White Paper to have represented an alteration in the strategic balance of the region, and that if similar agreements were to be concluded with other island states, may constitute an increasing threat to Australian security.

Other areas of concern were also noted in the Paper, and similarly appear to hinge on the advancement of Soviet influence in South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific via regional discontent. For example, regional tensions brought about by French activities in the Pacific, such as their continued testing of nuclear weapons on Mururoa atoll and resistance to withdraw from New Caledonia, were held ‘...to be even more damaging to western interests which may present opportunities for
exploitation by external powers. In referring to problems in South-East Asia that may pose a potential threat to Australian defence interests, the White Paper acknowledged the possibility of civil war in the Philippines between the army and NPA (New Peoples Army) led forces, and that this could have serious consequences for regional security because of the threat this posed to the continued presence of United States military facilities (Subic Bay and Clarke Air Field bases) in that country. An American military withdrawal from the Philippines was inferred in the Paper, to be of particular concern because of the Soviet military presence (Cam Ranh Bay) in Vietnam across the South China Sea. It was also noted that Cambodian border and refugee problems could provoke an escalation of conflict between Vietnam and Thailand. Such problems were regarded with alarm as conflict between the two countries may ultimately involve Thailand’s ASEAN (Association of South-East Asian Nations) partners, with possible consequences for regional peace. Of perhaps lesser importance, the prospect of armed conflict between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia over border problems associated with OPM (Organisasi Papua Merdeka) actions, was also noted as a possible issue of future strategic concern.

Based on these potential regional problems outlined in the 1987 Defence White Paper, it could reasonably be argued that official threat perceptions were to a significant extent, driven by the responsibility of expanded Soviet influence into regional areas of political and economic instability. In many ways these fears still hold considerable influence over current defence policy as the Government for example, still regards the on-going expansion of Soviet activity into South-East Asia and the South-West Pacific with considerable apprehension. In seeking to maintain a relatively benign environment free from external influences the Government has undertaken a range of commitments to strengthen regional co-operation and security. These commitments have ranged from increased economic aid to impoverished South-West Pacific Islands, to agreement with Thailand and Malaysia to conduct joint military exercises. In the Pacific, recent developments have prompted more strident government measures in the form of military and diplomatic responses over French actions at Mururoa atoll and New Caledonia, the coup in Fiji, political troubles in Vanuatu and Bougainville, and Libyan promotion of anti-western ideals among radical indigenous islanders. In South-East Asia, the most notable development to attract official attention, has been the on-going escalation of economic and political problems in the Philippines which has increased the prospect of an earlier than expected withdrawal of American bases. These developments, in an area defined as being of ‘broad strategic interest’ to Australian security interests, appear to be a primary motive force behind threat perceptions held by Australian defence policy-makers who seem intensely concerned about the future balance of regional power, with the underlying wildcard residing in the prospect of increased Soviet involvement in the region as a consequence of local political and economic instability.

Having said this however, these perceptions have to some extent become muddled under the changing atmosphere of superpower relations. Some of the fear of Soviet expansion into the Asia-Pacific region, heightened by Gorbachev’s 1986 speech at Vladivostok in which he stated the Soviet Union’s intention to develop stronger bi-lateral relations with countries in the region, has been significantly tempered by the more recent thawing of relations between the two superpowers. In recognition of this new era of superpower detente, the then Minister of Defence, Kim Beazley, indicated a shift in government threat perceptions when he stated that in the not too distant future, ‘the old East-West issues ... will just be off the map as though they never existed’. This official down-grading in the assessment of Soviet threat in the region is a significant turn in official defence thinking, given, as we have evidenced above, the pre-eminent place the Soviets were accorded as a possible (ableit an indirect) threat to Australian security. Moreover it must be considered to pose some measures of a dilemma for defence-policy makers seeking to justify the high expenditure associated with Australia’s largest peacetime re-equipment program. Whether real or imagined, new threats seem to be replacing the old as Beazley for example, has since noted that the ‘nations of Asia are growing stronger and richer’, and were develop-
ing ‘...high-technology maritime forces’ to a point where ‘...their force projection capabilities are expanding’. In particular, Beazley identified India, China and Japan, as growing military powers who will before long, seek to expand their influence in the region. Such developments, he believed, could, by the turn of the century, ‘...pose a serious threat ...to Australia’.

This appears to be the current state of play insofar it relates to the official view of the extent of threats to Australian security. Clearly it seems to be a view which has evolved in a remarkably short space of time, from one which originally held Australia to be under no threat from any country in the foreseeable future (The Dibb Report), to one which recognised the strategic value of Australia’s continuing contribution to the central balance of regional power (The Defence White Paper), to one which currently sees threats emerging from all quarters in the not too distant future. One might well ask if world and regional events have moved so quickly as to justify such a change in official threat assessments, or indeed whether threat assessments are being determined to suit the force structure most desired by the present government. If we might digress momentarily to address this latter point first, it could well be contended that despite rhetorical statements that Australia had entered a new era of defence strategy based on developing a self-reliant ability to deal with threats emerging within Australia’s area of ‘direct military interest’, it was never a seriously held option for defence planning. That instead, the Defence White Paper’s stated intent of seeking to maintain regional stability via support of western interests to counter the potential threat of advancing Soviet influence in the region, was merely a guise put forward by defence policy-makers attempting to justify expensive restructuring of the Australian Defence Force so as to enable Australia to play a more dominant role in the region. Clearly there is some evidence to support this line of argument. For example, under the present defence program, Australia is fast acquiring a defence force that is far more capable of military attacking neighbours beyond the originally stated area of ‘direct strategic concern’. Moreover the government has shown a strong willingness to deploy troops to regional trouble spots which appear to have little to do with supporting its defence alliance commitments, nor with the countering covert Soviet influence. Indeed a former Indonesian diplomat, Hasnan Habib, has been reported as saying ‘Australia had given neighbours the impression of being a potential military aggressor by developing a “hawkish” military force’. If he is correct, this raises the distinct possibility that defence policy is not demand driven by perceived threats to Australian security, but perhaps by some unstated Government desire to see Australia project itself more forcefully into the region as a strong middle power.

It is worth bearing in mind as we return to assess the possible validity of officially stated threats that have been identified during the course of this article. Starting with what we have argued to be the cornerstone of officially perceived threats, outside of the unlikely event of global nuclear war between the two superpowers, there seems to be little basis for believing the Soviet Union has any intention of threatening Australian security in the foreseeable future. Several factors would seem to support this assertion, not least that of the countervailing power Australia holds against the Soviet Union through its current military alliance relationship with the United States. Firstly, given the Soviet Union’s history of occupying contiguous countries capable of providing a buffer between it and the west, Australia must rate fairly low on any Soviet list of future acquisitions. Secondly, the 1980s has seen a remarkable shift in Soviet foreign policy where diplomatic rather than military offensives are being more widely used as a means to advance Soviet interests. This has seen the Soviet Union more recently setting the pace of disarmament negotiations, which has had the net effect of winning some measure of the ‘hearts and minds’ of those states previously suspicious of the Soviet Union’s motives. Thirdly, there would seem to be little strategic advantage in the Soviet Union seeking to occupy any country (not least Australia), or base any further military facilities in the region (save those already facing US facilities in the region), as the southern hemisphere is largely a backwater in the stakes for superpower supremacy. Thirdly, although it has been argued that the increasing Soviet presence in the region automatically means an
increasing influence, and hence power, it must be remembered that the recent rise in Soviet activity in the region has primarily been of a commercial nature, and as such, cannot truly be regarded as constituting any legitimate threat to Australian security, save perhaps the threat of increased economic competition. And finally, the prospect of Soviet incursions into the region as a result of local political and economic instability, seems to miss the point that most countries that ultimately turn to communism, more often do so as a consequence of internal discontent derived from over-exploitation by the industrial west, rather than through any response to Soviet influence.

The validity of more recent threats put forward by the Government also seem groundless. For example, India’s acquisition of a single nuclear powered submarine, together with its recent propensity to undertake the role of regional policeman in the Indian Ocean, are no doubt two of the primary reasons behind its recent elevation on the ladder of Australian threat assessments. However, these developments alone, do not overly suggest that it seeks to threaten Australian security interests now or in the future. In fact, Australia, after a certain amount of serious lobbying by Prime Minister Hawke, has recently won a consultative deal to plan a $2 billion naval base in India. This factor alone must cast some doubt on how strongly Beazley holds to his contention that India may become a threatening power in Australia’s region by the turn of the century. Even if India’s military intentions were to unexpectedly change, the volatility of its domestic ethnic situation and its recent inability to contain the activities of Tamil guerrillas in Sri Lanka, must raise serious questions about its ability to threaten Australia.

Beazley has also argued that China is a country Australia may soon have to contend with in the region. Again there seems little reason to suggest that it might seek to attack Australian interests. China is perhaps the most politically unpredictable of any country in the region. But as the Dibb Report noted, it has its own strategic problems with the Soviet Union on its northern flank and Vietnam on its southern flank - two countries with whom it has not enjoyed the best of relations with in the recent past. Moreover China’s military expenditure has considerably declined in real terms over the past ten years having moved from 12% of Gross Domestic Product in 1978 to less than 5% in recent times. Its major regional concern appears to lie on wresting possession of the Spratly Islands from Vietnam, an endeavour it has so far failed to achieve despite several dismal attempts, and which itself must also cast considerable doubt on its foreseeable ability to undertake any significant action against Australian interests in the region.

Japan is another country which has recently come to loom large in the Government’s eyes as a potential threat to Australian interests in the region. As a country with the world’s third largest defence expenditure, and large industrial and population base on which to develop its armed forces, its potential to threaten any country in the region is formidable. However there appears to be no indication of any intention by Japanese policy-makers to launch themselves into any form of military action in the region. Its alliance relationship with the United States, its economic power to at times induce desired changes in the policies of other states, and its integrated dependence on world markets, all seem strong enough reasons likely to deter Japan from seeking a higher military profile in the region.

Closer to home, Beazley started to talk in terms of potential threat arising in five years rather than ten because of the rising national aspirations and military power of countries such as Malaysia, Thailand, and Indonesia. Again one need only refer to each of these country’s more immediate strategic environment, or the fragile nature of their domestic social and political situation, to realise that any hostile action undertaken by them against Australia, would expose them to internal civil war, or possible attack from more immediate neighbours. It must be assumed this state of affairs is not to be lost on each country’s defence ministers, and would no doubt temper any notion to threaten Australia, no matter what level of force-projecting military capability each country may hold or eventually acquire.

Even if the assumption that no country had both the capability and intention to attack Australia is incorrect, a potentially hostile neighbour would have to weigh the commitment of the United States in providing military assistance to Australia, or how to negotiate
and maintain logistical support to forces attacking Australia across a substantial air and sea gap, or if a bridgehead were established on the Australian mainland, how to cross the vastness of the Australian sub-continent so as to capture the main centres of power. The possibility of blockade as a means of forcing capitulation would also fail as Australia is largely self sufficient in the basic necessities of life. Outside of Indonesia attempting such a course of action, any assault on Australia from the broader Asia-Pacific region, would require a potential enemy securing Indonesian territory. Given that Indonesia has a 500,000 strong army, and a government strongly endowed with an independent nationalistic outlook, it could be reasonably assumed that an attempted occupation of Indonesian territory by outside armed forces would be strongly resisted. Of course this situation is to Australia's advantage, and will continue to be so long as Australia maintains its presently good relations with Indonesia.

Thus we come full circle in our discussion and evaluation of the official view of the extent of threats to Australian security from immediate and distant neighbours. Having addressed the Government commissioned Dibb Report it was found to advocate a more self-reliant 'continental' form of strategic defence, and that this orientation was based on an assumption that 'no threat' existed to Australian security in the forseeable future. The policy off-spring of this major review of Australian defences, articulated in the Defence White Paper, accepted many of the Dibb Report's recommendations for changes in Australia's defence structure and strategies, but remained significantly tied to older perceptions of threat in its recognition of possible threats to Australian security interests emerging from Soviet expansion into the region via local political and economic upheavals. Subsequent developments on a global dimension, such as the current state of superpower detente, and more immediately, in the form of local economic and political crisis, together with the rising military capability of regional neighbours, have to some extent changed the officially stated threat perceptions that had previously been outlined in the 1987 Defence White Paper. Because of the extent and rapidity of change, some doubt must be accorded to the current validity of officially stated threat assessments, as some evidence seems to exist which suggests they are based on the need to maintain political and public support (or apathy) for an expensive defence re-equipment program at a time when Australia is popularly held to least afford it. On the basis of our own evaluation of the officially stated threats to Australian security, we have argued that no country has both the capability and intention to threaten Australian security in the forseeable future. In assessing this to be Australia's current strategic position in the world, we are in effect, accepting the Dibb Report to be a more rational asessment of possible threats to Australian security, rather than current strains of official defence thinking which sees potential threats emerging from all quarters in the near future.

NOTES

4. 'This judgement is not affected by the fact that some Australian ports are sometimes visited by United States Navy ships', Dibb. Op. Cit., p.31.
5. The Review cites as evidence of this, '...the fact that all significant states in South-East Asia and South-West Pacific adhere to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty'. Ibid., p. 31.
6. Ibid., p. 31.
7. Ibid., p. 33.
8. Ibid., p. 33.
9. Ibid., p. 33.
10. Ibid., p. 5.
11. Ibid., p. 4.
12. Ibid., p.4-5.
13. See footnote (3); '...the Government's White Paper essentially endorsed the Review, while paying lip-service to some of the more vocal criticisms', an independent view taken by Mathew Grubb, 'How Valid was the Criticism of Paul Dibb's Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities' Working Paper No. The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1988, p. 20.
15. Ibid., p. 31.
16. Ibid., p. 2.
19. By contending this strategic concept to hold 'time-honoured' status, we refer the reader to the 1956 'Strategic Basis Study' which envisaged that a single level threat of international communism required Australian allied support for the United States and United Kingdom.
21. Ibid., p. 2.
22. Ibid., pp. 6, 12, 13 (S.E. Asia), 17 (S.W. Pacific).
23. Ibid., p. 17.
27. Beazley has stated for example, that '...Australia will accept its responsibilities by sharing the burden of confronting the Soviets in the South Pacific 'cited in Richard Bolt, The New Militarism: What is It?, (publishing details unknown), p. 25.
28. Although overseas aid is falling, it has risen for nations in the South-West. Most notably to island states having political problems, such as Fiji whose military aid Australia (under the Defence Cooperation Program) has risen by $2 million since the 1987 coups. See: D.A.K. Urquhart, 'Australia's Defence Cooperation Program'. Defence Force Journal, No. 68, Feb. 1988, p. 48.
34. Take for example the deployment of F/A 18s on rotation to Malaysia's Butterworth Air base, which can strike a large number of South-East Asian targets from there. In addition, in flight refuelling aircraft will also be available for Australian based F/A 18s, which will increase their effective range and payload well beyond Australia's area of 'direct strategic interest'. See: Beazley (1987). Op. Cit., pp. 16, 49.
37. This of course is the primary point made by Bolt: Op. Cit., passim.
38. The influence of 'glasnost' and 'perestroika' in Soviet foreign policy have been most evident in West Germany's down-grading of the value of the NATO alliance. The same influence on Asia-Pacific countries, becomes relevant in the next foot note.
39. Whilst recognising surveillance may be one role Soviet fishing fleets might play, this writer holds that Soviet fishing right agreements with South-West Pacific states to be of greater economic and diplomatic value to Soviet interests, and should be seen as such. In South-East Asia, a trade agreement between the Soviet Union has also opened local ship repair facilities to Soviet fishing vessels, and further evidences the commercial nature of expanding Soviet influence in the region: Pacific Defence Reporter, July 1989, p. 35; Against the argument of Soviet military expansion in the region, one need only note that personnel (together with associated military hardware) at Can Rahn Bay in Vietnam, has decreased from an estimated 7,000 in 1985 to 2,500 in 1988. Source: Francis Heisbourg (dir.), The Military Balance (1985-6: 1988-9), p. 24 (1985-6), p. 45 (1988-9).
41. I acknowledge that this decrease in military spending as a proportion of GDP, must be weighted against a 9% increase in economic growth, and that it may not alter China's military capability as resources are generally recognised as being more concentrated into high-tech naval and air forces, but it does suggest some evidence against any growing militaristic intentions on behalf of Chinese defence policy-makers. Moreover, what high-tech armaments are being built, are so, at an extraordinarily slow rate. Source: Heisbourg, Op. Cit., p. 147.
42. Further undermining any threat to regional security from this dispute is the fact that Vietnam and China have recently agreed to talks to solve the dispute over the islands. Source: Pacific Defence Reporter, July 1988, p. 39.
44. Ibid., p. 19.

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Australian Defence Force Structure Review

The Minister for Defence, Senator Robert Ray, announced in May that he had agreed to an internal Defence Review of the ADF's force structure.

This review is a natural consequence of the recently revised financial and strategic planning guidance and is a normal, ongoing activity conducted within Defence, the Minister noted. Government guidance on force structure development has been provided in the White Paper, *The Defence of Australia 1987*, and further strategic planning for the 1990s had been endorsed by Cabinet in November last year.

The Minister said it was proposed to examine the relative priorities for present and planned ADF capabilities in light of the Government's endorsed strategic guidance. The impact of Government financial allocations and other pressures, including manpower and operating costs, will be addressed by the Review. It will also examine the balance between the regular and reserve forces.

The Minister emphasised that the structure of the Defence Force is under constant review in light of policy initiatives and the availability of resources. The purpose of the proposed review is to evaluate progress and to see what adjustments might be required in the years ahead.
Reflections on Australia's Defence --- Reviewing the White Paper 1987

By Fu Chengli, Institute of Beijing.

Australia's policy of self-reliance in defence was formally put forward in 1976. Since then a lot of setbacks and debates had developed in the process of implementing the policy. It was revitalized by The Defence of Australia 1987 (in short: the White Paper) which was produced on the basis of the famous Dibb Report submitted in the previous year and shapes the defence posture of Australia into the 21st century.

The White Paper re-examines the international strategic situations facing Australia and the possible forms of military pressure against Australia, formulates a new defence strategy, sets forth a plan for armed forces development, lays down the principles for defence budgeting and provides the measures for beefing-up the defence in the Northern Australia, enhancing the reserve forces, improving the living standard of the servicemen and readjusting the structure for defence science, technology and industry. It is undoubted that with the carrying out of the policies and plans given in the White Paper, Australia's self-reliance in defence will gather new momentum, the Australian Defence Force (ADF) will become stronger.

Perhaps it's because of the sensitivity of an outsider, after reading the White Paper, I feel that there is still something needed to be clarified or reassessed or complemented. Since Australia is a friendly country to China, I regard it as my obligation to write down what I have in my mind. I believe what I write hereunder is in the interest of Australia's national security and for the well-being of the Australian people.

Defence Self-Reliance --- Why So Much Reliance on USA?

In the past two centuries, Australia's defence was either connected closely with UK or USA of both of them. UK's withdrawal from the areas to the east of Suez Canal and USA's Guam doctrine made Australia consider the necessity of defending itself by its own force. Australia is a sovereign state as well as a developed country. It must be able to defend itself by its own force, and ought to have all kinds of necessary capabilities to defeat any enemy who dares to infringe its sovereignty.

This idea has been solidly expressed in the White Paper:

Australia has a right to expect that their nation is able to defend itself. That is at the core of nationhood, and has long been an Australian aspiration. The exercise of authority over our continent and offshore territories, our territorial sea and resource zones, and airspace, and the ability to protect our maritime and air approaches, is fundamental to our sovereignty and security.

Australia has signed a security treaty (i.e. the ANZUS treaty) with the United States. It is reasonable for the Australian people to hope that the treaty should not politically and technologically be a drag on Australia's move to obtain the capacity to defend itself in all scales of conventional war, a pair of spiritual shackles to the development of Australia's defence potential, and a weak linkage, in the context of military resupply, could be exploited by the potential enemy in time of emergency.

It is in this regard the White Paper gives people on ambiguous or contradictory concept. While pledging that "this government's policy of defence self-reliance gives priority to the ability to defence ourselves with our own resources", "the concept of self-reliance can now become a reality", and the ADF will be able to "secure our continent against any possible aggressor", the White Paper put too much premium on the military support from the United States.

In relating the "escalated low-level conflict", the White Paper warns the "attacker" that he would "need to assess the risks of international repercussions and, most significantly, the reaction of Australia's ANZUS allies". Moreover, the White Paper regards the attacker's potential "to trigger the direct involvement of our ANZUS allies in the conflict" as a factor "to have significance for our planning".

In the paragraphs dealing with "more sub-
substantial conflict”, the White Paper emphasizes the “allied support” in defeating “the enemy forces lodged on the main land” and cutting of “their lines of communication and support”7. As to higher level conflict, the White Paper almost spells out directly that without the ally’s support, Australia simply could not fight the war.

The maintenance of the vitality of our alliance relationship with the United States is obviously important as an insurance against higher levels of conflict. It provides us with confidence that assistance would be forthcoming in the event of substantial military attack on Australia or its direct interests8.

It is evident that the “defence self-reliance” pursued by the White Paper is to acquire the capability merely enough to counter “low-level conflict”. As to coping with “escalated low-level conflict” and conflicts higher than this level, Australia would rely heavily on United States.

Yes, it is reasonable to expect that when Australia got tangled in an escalated low-level or more substantial conflict the United States support should come forth since United States is a close ally of Australia. But still Australia should not expect much of United States because there is no great uncertainty and grey areas in its rendering military support. The remarks made by Dr. Ross Babbage, the present Deputy Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University, at a conference on Australia’s defence issues 13 years ago are still worth pondering:

It is not possible to conceive of circumstances where the opponent state is also allied to the United States and hence Australia’s great and powerful ally is forced to mediate in a manner not in Australia’s interests? In other circumstances, might not the United States wish to assist, but be unable to provide effective support because of pressing commitments elsewhere, possibly conflicts in Europe, the Middle East, or North East Asia. Further, it must not be overlooked that in a future conflict United States interests may not automatically coincide with those of Australia. It may be in United States interests to refrain from major involvement, to mediate or perhaps in some circumstances even to support Australia’s opponent. It is also conceivable that in some circumstances there may be an impasse between the legislative and executive branches of the US Government which could serve to delay or even prevent the provision of assistance to a hard-pressed Australia9.

In his speech to the bicentennial conference sponsored by the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University in December 1988, Mr. Kim C. Beazley, the Defence Minister of Australian Government, pointed out that:

In Australia’s case there is an additional factor which is unique. But simply, in our region Australia may confront challenges or threats to its interest that are unrelated to Western Alliance concerns.

His statement undoubtedly adds weight to Australia’s effort to gaining self-reliance in defence, and buttresses the idea that Australia should prepare itself to counter any threat which the Western allies may be reluctant to offer assistance to Australia.

It is understandable to argue that Australia’s defence self-reliance can only be achieved within the framework of the ANZUS Treaty since the treaty provides Australia with the possibility to understand the latest development in military science and art, opportunities for the ADF to get more training through joint exercises, and the approach to modern military technologies as well as vital military intelligence. But this, in every sense, does not mean that with the ANZUS treaty, Australia should keep its defence force at a level merely able to fight a low-level conflict, and should look to USA for assistance while facing with conflicts of other levels.

Moreover, the ANZUS Treaty itself has never guaranteed that USA should give Australia effective assistance in any circumstances. The treaty only stipulates the Parties of the treaty will consult together when the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of them is threatened in the Pacific, and does not entail binding obligations to any of the Parties to render the others assistance which depends on consultation and mutual consent10. Hence, the Australian people should not cherish an unrealistic idea of on the ANZUS treaty, and must not be vague on the
matter of attaining sufficient defence self-reliance.

Now it seems that the post-war peace will last for more decades, but the danger of world war could not be ruled out. The Third World War could be delayed but might not be avoided. The United State's growing trend to ask its allies to defend themselves with their own resources indicates that the American Empire's ability has been falling short of its global ambition and will be unlikely to recover to the level as it was in the first two and a half decades after WWII. The developing multipolarity of future world will see a further decline of United State's ability in giving due help to its allies or friends in case of contingency. This situation dictates that Australia should not rely on USA for security, and should make unswerving efforts to achieve sufficient defence self-reliance.

Probably, in their drive to realize self-reliance in defence, the first important thing the Australian people have to do is to do away with the dependent mentality which entrusted Australia's security to the major military ally. This type of mentality has passed down for generations and cast deep in the mind of the people. It is this mentality that makes the Australian people be content with the present security situation and defence posture, and be reluctant to make necessary sacrifices for improving the defence capacity, thus causing a tortuous course in the struggle for defence self-reliance in the past decades. Only when this mentality has been overcome, can Australia's defence self-reliance go smoothly and bear more and more substantial fruit in the years ahead.

**Potential Threat --- Would Indonesia Be The Would-be Enemy?**

In making a defence plan, as a rule, the would-be enemy should be made clear first. If there are several such enemies, the main one should be picked out. Only when the would-be enemy—no matter it is a large one or a small one, a likely one in the near term or a potential one in the long term—has been identified, can the priority of the national defence construction be put in position, the structure and disposition of the armed forces can be correctly organized, the equipment acquisition and development be properly directed, the training of the armed forces be clearly oriented, and the plans to win the enemy in case of war be well prepared.

The *White Paper* has not clearly identified any country as Australia's would-be enemy, yet one can see whom the *White Paper* implies to be.

Let's quote a few lines of the *White Paper*:

This Government believes that Australia must be able to provide its own defence in circumstances, presently quite unlikely but still credible as a future possibility, of a threat posed to Australia by a nation operating within our own region.

The capacity required to mount and sustain low-level military pressure against our nation already exists in the region of primary strategic interest to Australia. Within Australia's region of primary strategic interest the capability also exists to mount more conventional but still limited military operations against Australia.

Going through these lines, one could not help but associate the would-be enemy to Australia with Indonesia.

Nevertheless, would Indonesia appear to be a threat to Australia?

It's known to all that Indonesia is, in general, a friendly neighbour to Australia. Although there were some brushes in regional affairs and some wrangles in mutual relationship (e.g. press issues) between the two countries, Indonesia has never done anything that was harmful to Australia's territorial and sovereignty integrity. And in recent years the relationship between the two nations is showing a momentum to getting better and better. The bilateral cooperations, especially those in the defence area, are seeing growth with each passing year. As stated in the *Year Book Australia 1986*, there is a "working relationship between the ADF and the Indonesia Armed Forces and the Defence organisation". In fiscal year 1984-85, Australia extended Indonesia a military assistance totalled A$9.9553m, second only to that given to Papua New Guinea (PNG). The continental shelf problem, which was the only problem might evoke dispute between Australia and Indonesia had been solved by the accord to establish a joint exploration zone in Timor Sea.

Indonesia's relationship with PNG, the close friend of Australia, is normal. Though there
had been minor incidents on the joint border of the two countries several years ago, Indonesia has never intended to occupy even one inch of PNG's territory. And the two countries had signed a mutual respect, friendship and cooperation treaty in October 1986.

So far as to Indonesia's military force, it is the strongest among those of the countries contiguous to Australia, but as pointed out in the *White Paper*, "this capability has been designed primarily to ensure internal security and to protect its very large and geographically diversified island chain", and has been heavily involving in domestic affairs ranging from government administrative duties, economic management, to internal order maintenance (e.g. countering insurgencies, controlling ethnic/religious conflicts, and so on). Since mid-1960, especially since 1969 when the first five year development plan was put into effect, Indonesia's social order has been basically stable, economic development has scored a steady and better growing rate—around 8% per annum. So we may say that in the foreseeable future, there might not exist such kind of conflict of interest between Indonesia and Australia that could cause Indonesia to resort to armed force. As to the Indonesia's imposing low-level military pressure against Australia on purpose to "demonstrate Australia's vulnerability and thereby force political concessions over some disputed issues", it would be unlikely to occur. In this regard, one may ask: Indonesia dare not use military force against Australia when a tension existed between the two countries during the mid-1960s, why will it evolve an idea to attack Australia when the relationship become ever so good?

Even if there was a conflict of interest in the future, Indonesia would not afford to attack Australia but seek for a peaceful solution because it knows very well that attacking Australia would be no more than throwing an egg against a rock since crossing such a vast expanse to mount an attack on Australia is an extremely hard and probably fruitless action.

It also knows very well Australia is a country with Western powers' support and a regional power with a well-armed defence force. Before having got the political and material support from a major power (such a power seems to exist neither now nor in the foreseeable future), it would not dare to mount an attack on Australia.

Indonesia knows as well that Australia has the capabilities to retaliate against the attacker's homeland by destroying its political, economic, military and population targets or disrupting its internal and external communication lines, and giving both economic and military support to its domestic dissident organisations to undermine its internal order. Indonesia would not be so injudicious to take this risk to rival with Australia.

Besides, Indonesia could not give no consideration for the repercussions from the countries to its north if it deliberated an attack on Australia. Those countries are members of the Five Power Defence Arrangement. Were Australia attacked, they would naturally extend support to Australia in an appropriate way which may trap Indonesia into the dilemma of meeting enemies in all directions.

In short, there is no grounds for Indonesia to mount an attack upon Australia. If it did so, it would reap nothing but alone force Australia to make political concession on some issue. Hence, from a long-term point of view, Indonesia will not be an adversary which harbours the evil design to infringe Australia but rather a neighbour with which Australia should develop a normal and healthy relations.

As pointed out by the *White Paper*, "Indonesia forms a protective barrier to Australia's North approaches". That means Indonesia is of strategic importance to Australia's security. Therefore, while remoulding itself to be a true member of the Asian-Pacific Area—frankly speaking, though Australia is an Asian-Pacific country geographically but its over-strong tendency to keep the identity of an out-and-out Western country has hindered it from developing an equal and closer relationship with countries in the area—for the purpose of ushering in the "Asian-Pacific era", Australia has every reason to promote mutual understanding and mutual accommodation with Indonesia thereby to construct an eternally stable strategic relationship with that country. This type of relationship will benefit Australia not only in peacetime through economic cooperation, but also in wartime (especially in world war) through depriving the possibility of Indonesia being used as the forward base or springboard by a major power who attempted
to invade Australia. In the connexion of strategic interest, Australia needs a friendly Indonesia, not a hostile neighbour. After all, friend, the more the better; enemy, even one is more than enough.

Undoubtedly, Australia is one of the safest countries in the world characterized by being insulated from other countries by vast sea and air gaps, being remote from the rivalry centre of the two superpowers, and neighboured by countries happen to have neither the ability nor the intention to attack Australia. But Australia is a close ally of USA, and, in many ways, a pillar of the Western World in the southern hemisphere. In case of a large scale war (maybe a world war), Australia would be a target of attack.

So it would be unwise for Australia to focus its eyes on neighbouring countries for potential threat but to consider the defence of Australia in the connection of long-term global security. In my point of view, in the foreseeable future Australia may face no threat, even the low-level one, from the northern archipelagos. Maybe in the future Australia would have to counter the threat from one of the superpowers (Soviet Union?) or a coming-up major power (might be Japan or India) in the event of world war.

As to the frequently occurring incidents like illegal fishing, smuggling, illegal immigration and so on, they should not be regarded as important matters that demands the involvement of the ADF. The police force, reinforced by some naval reservists if necessary, would be enough to deal with them.

Defence Development---Should the Priority Be Given to the North?

The White Paper has left me a very deep impression that the defending of the Northern Australia has never been emphasized so much. In the North new naval and air force bases, OTHR (Over the Horizon Radar) stations, and new infrastructures will be built, ground force up to a brigade be stationed, and a special command post (NORCOM) be established (had been set up in July 1988). And from the Preface of the White Paper one can see that defending the North will be the priority of Australia's national defence build-up for the next 10-20 years.

Generally speaking the international environ-
ment and domestic needs decide where the priority of defence development should be placed on.

Regarding the international environment the White Paper has given a very concise account of it:

Australia's bilateral relations with its major allies and with neighbouring countries are basically sound, notwithstanding the political fluctuations which inevitably occur from time to time. No neighbouring countries harbours aggressive designs on Australia, and no country has embarked on the developments of the extensive capabilities to project maritime power which would be necessary to sustain intensive military operations against us.

Any decision to embark upon hostilities as a deliberate act of state policy is a major one for any government to make. There would need to be some matter of sufficient weight in dispute. Tensions would need to develop to the point where one side decides to use force. Australia does not have that kind of dispute with any nation.

The above conclusions of the White Paper are tangible. It is predicted by most international situation analysts that in the coming decades the great majority of countries in the world will devote their attention to maintain the stability of international environment and develop their national economy. This is a growing trend in which ASEAN countries take the lead. Therefore we can say, in the foreseeable future, none of the island countries to the north of Australia would like to create dispute with Australia, neither would they allow any power from other regions to attack Australia through them or by virtue of bases on their territories. The so-called "threat from the North", or "the threat of low-level conflict" would be unlikely to arise.

Besides, everyone can see that after WWII the international security situation in the region north of Australia, like that in the whole world, is changing for the better. This tending may continue into the coming decades. The tensions like Vietnam War, Kanfrontasi between Indonesia and Malaysia, and the annexation of Timor by Indonesia would be unlikely to take place again. The border disputes between Indonesia and PNG, if broke, would not develop to be serious conflicts. The
struggle for national independence or economic development in island countries of South Pacific might not lead these countries to change their pro-West colour. The viability of the US military bases in Philippines after 1991 is still an “unknown quantity”, but even if those bases had to be moved to Guam, Palau, Saipan or elsewhere, the strategic balance in this area would not tilt to the side against Australia, since Soviet Union has promised to remove its base from Cam Ranh Bay accordingly and has been retracting its military activities from most part of the Pacific.

All the above factors pronounce that the general strategic situation in the region north and northeast of Australia is developing in the direction favourable to, at least not detrimental to, the security of Australia. Therefore, it may be concluded that the international environment in the foreseeable future might not rationalize Australia’s giving the priority to the defence of the North over the next 10-20 years.

To be sure, Northern Australia is the treasured territory rich in land and sea resources. The North cannot be let lying without defence. But since it is in the direction of less strategic significance and geographically formidable to any potential enemy, and since there seems to be no incursions from countries to the North in the coming decades, there will be no necessity to boost the defence there in haste.

Certainly, if the security of Australia is predicted to be facing a growing threat from the north, or the Australian Government determines to finance an all-round enhancement of its defence with a huge budget, it will be reasonable to greatly strengthen the defence in the North. But in a time internationally dialogue has been seen an increasing role in solving international conflicts, and peace and development have become the paramount task to countries in this region, domestically Australia has been griping by growing economic difficulties, and little resources could be devoted to defence development. Australia should carefully blueprint its defence build-up, and spend the limited votes at where it badly needs strengthened.

Giving the priority to the defence of the North is only one side of a coin. The other side is neglecting the defence in the other strategic directions. The White Paper perceives that the northern archipelagic chain “is the most likely route through which any major assault could be launched against Australia”. This conclusion may be too arbitrary and misleading. It gives people a false impression that so long as the defence in the North is strong, the security of Australia is assured; the defence in the other directions may be slackened or put aside (at least for 10 to 20 years). In fact, the White Paper devotes little to the other directions.

This is a very dangerous false impression which might leave a wide “vulnerable window” on Australia’s defence.

Virtually, in the future, if a deliberate war was imposed on Australia, it might most probably be a large one (the so called “more substantial conflict” or high-level conflict) unleashed by a major power (Soviet Union? India? Japan?). And that major power, attempting to achieve surprise and shock, would attack directly upon the South-West, South-East, or South of Australia where political, economic and population centres, and USA military bases locate. There would not be a “must” for it to pass through the layer-upon-layer barriers of the archipelagic chain, where many countries are partners of Australia in defence, to attack Australia’s Northern Territory which is of little strategic significance and with extremely harsh natural conditions. So it is obvious that neither the defence of the North should be granted priority, nor should it be done at the cost neglecting the defence in the other directions.

National defence building-up is a systematic project which requires an comprehensive consideration and overall program. The stress should always be given to the strategically important direction. Managing it in the way as a Chinese saying goes “treating the head when the head aches, treating the foot when the foot hurts” will not do. It is necessary to, with a scientific method, study and predict the overall conditions of a country (including political, economic, cultural, scientific and technologic, geographical and population conditions) and the international environment whereby to determine the strategic stress for defence development. Once the strategic stress is defined, it should not be altered at will. The international situation may change, but the strategic stress which dictating the survival of the country should not necessarily alter unless the change is tremendous and fundamental. Nevertheless,
tremendous change seldom occurs and usually could be predicted, hence, in-time strategic shift could be undertaken.

In view of the internal conditions of the Northern Territory and the international situation in the north archipelagos, it would be better for Australia to outlay more funds to develop the economy of the Territory than to beef-up the defence there. By the time the economy of the Northern Territory has grown up, it will be much easier to enhance the defence there whenever the security situation dictates.

**Armed Forces Development --- How to Make a Better ADF?**

Australia’s Defence Force, comparing with those of the territorially big countries, is the smallest one. It has merely 70 thousand officers and men, 12 major surface combatants, 6 submarines, some 100 combat aircraft, a few more than 100 tanks and less than 800 armoured vehicles. Even by the end of this century when the force development plan set by the *White Paper* has been realized, the Australia’s defence force will remain to be a comparatively small one. Nevertheless, the missions assigned to this small armed forces are exceptionally heavy:

--to defend the security of Australia’s territorial land, sea and air;
--to maintain the stability and security of the region;
--to operate in areas further afield on the calls of Australia’s allies and friends; and
--to contribute to peacekeeping operations.

The action areas of this small armed forces (excluding the last two missions) are considerably large:

--Area of direct military interest “stretches over 7000 kilometres from the Cocos Islands to New Zealand and the islands of the South-West Pacific, and over 5000 kilometres from the archipelago and island chain in the North to the Southern Ocean”, “constituting about 10 per cent of the earth’s surface”.

--Area of strategic interests “extends beyond the area of direct military interest to include South-East Asia, Indonesia, the Eastern Indian Ocean and the South-West Pacific”.

It is not exaggerated in the least to say that the heaviness of missions Australia’s armed forces undertakes and the vastness of action areas Australia’s armed forces will be committed to may be comparable to those of France and UK.

Can a so small armed force be competent at so heavy missions? In peacetime, it may be competent because Australia, lucky enough, locates in such a region which is far from the critical areas of superpowers confrontation, is geographically one of the safest countries in world. But whether it is equally competent in of crisis deserves our doubt.

Yes, the *White Paper* has presented a program for improving the competence of the Australian armed forces. But in the program too much is put on capital equipment purchasing and disposition readjustment while the rapid responsibility of the ADF and the mobilizability of the defence system have been understated. In point of view, the following four points may be worthy of consideration in making a program boosting the competence of the ADF.

**Firstly, there should be a short-term, a medium-term and a long-term plans for armed forces development.**

The *White Paper* has set a plan to strengthen the operational capacity of the three wings of ADF by establishing multi-layered detection system, expanding the Royal Australia Navy to be a two-ocean navy, enhancing the long range detection and strike capabilities of the Air Force, reorganizing the Army’s Operational Deployment Force, and improving the Army’s capabilities to meet the potential military challenges in the North. But it is too rough a plan—which lasting for a time span as long as 10-20 years—that it is easy to draw but hard to carry out. To plan in rough terms means there is no concrete requirements, and in turn means the plan may be treated perfunctorily, or may be delayed, or ignored. As a result, the plan may get nowhere or fail to realize within the time frame.

On the contrary, if there are a short-term, a medium-term and a long-term plans which contain concrete objectives and steps for each period, it will be easy to make yearly budgeting and implementing plans whereby the whole force development program will be easy to check, to make up the mistakes if any, and to get practical result. Even though the whole program came to a premature end due to major natural or man-made calamities, it
would not mean that all the previous efforts are wasted and nothing has been accomplished.

Secondly, the Operational Deployment Force should be expanded to be a combined Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) in order to cope with the crisis may arise in the areas of direct military interest and strategic interest.

There are two factors that necessitate the establishment of a strong RDF. One is the defence of Australia, the other is the Australia’s determination to play its role as a regional major power.

The far-reaching dilemma which clinches Australia’s defence is a vast country with a small population and a moderate economic power. It is definitely impossible for Australia to maintain a large standing army. How can Australia get out of this dilemma? So far as I see it, one of the best ways out is to build a strong RDF which is featured by the capability of rushing to any direction almost in no time to counter all types of incursions.

The South-East Asian and South-West Pacific regions are facing with the political and economic penetration of Soviet Union, Japan, India, and Libya. Moreover most of the South-West Pacific countries are newly independent countries which are challenged by the issue how to maintain their national identity politically, economically and militarily in domestic affairs and international contact. All these factors make those countries rather liable to turmoil, which is very unfavourable to the stability and development of the region. Since Australia is determined to play its role as a regional power and fulfil its obligation to help preserve the stability and security of the countries in the regions, and since it is impossible for Australia to sustain a large army capable of sending troops to operate overseas while defending the homeland, Australia should build a strong RDF which is featured by the capability being projected across vast air-sea gap to perform duties (including rescue operation) when it is called.

Certainly this RDF should not be purely an Army unit as it is now, but a unit formed by components from the three services of the ADF. And this RDF should not only be able to rush to the crises site as soon as it is commissioned crossing a distance of several hundred or several thousand kilometres, but also has the capacity to fight and win land battles (including mountain operations, desert operations, jungle operations, rice-field operations, built-up area operations, etc.), sea battles (amphibious operations and island operations included), special operations battles (rescue operations included), and air defence battles, and to sustain its fighting for several weeks or a couple of months with an effective logistic support.

Thirdly, there must be strong reserve forces and an effective mobilization system to meet the need of future war.

We can say that the present structure of reserve forces and system for mobilization are both the products of the old defence policies. However, the old defence policies, which entrusted Australia’s defence to major military allies and sent troops to fight alongside with the allied forces in other continents rather than in Australia/local region, has been substituted by a new defence policy—self-reliance defence. Therefore it is imperative to have a “new way of thinking” in reserve force development and mobilization system, i.e. making new regulations for reinforcing the reserve forces and improving the mobilization system. It’s a pity that the White Paper does not develop a “new way of thinking” in these respects, and has only touched them lightly.

To any country, especially those with small labour force, it is unnecessary and difficult to maintain a large standing defence force in peacetime. In order to meet the surge need of qualified manpower to augment the defence force in wartime, a sufficiently strong reserve force and a perfect emergent mobilization system must be established in peacetime. In my point of view neither the “core force” concept nor the “expansion base” concept can satisfy the wartime need, because both of them haven’t taken into consideration of the following three new features of modern war:

1) Modern armed forces needs to be replenished with manpower of sound technical and tactical foundations.

2) Modern war emphasizes surprise thereby the warning time tends to be shorter than ever before.

3) Modern war incurs fast loss to manpower and materiels.

These features demand:

1) All manpower of the right age should be organized into reserve units to receive military
training, and the armed forces should have enough officers and seasoned soldiers to meet the need of fast expansion in time of emergency.

2) A perfect mobilization system should be instituted to call up the reserves and send them at short notice to augment the standing army, and to make the whole nation able to render effective support to the forefront in time of war. In this regard, Israeli and Swedish system for reserves and mobilization may have something for reference.

Finally, the priority of ADF building should be given to quality improvement rather than quantity increment.

Now there is a trend in the world that the majority of countries, no matter developed or developing and big or small, are making tremendous efforts to modernize their armed forces while controlling the size of those forces. To a country like Australia which has a small population yet practices volunteer military service, and a moderately developed economy yet lives a high-standard life, it's inadvisable to build a strong ADF in the context of number of soldiers and weapons and equipment. Besides, the prevailing detente in the world tends to disfavour large budget for ADF development. Under such circumstances, the best way to strengthen the ADF is to build it technically (as against numerically). That is to say, to give the priority of ADF building to heightening the technical level of its soldiers and equipment by adopting a scientific training system, and introducing some (not many) state-of-the-art weapon systems while striving to improve the performance and prolong the service life of weapons in-being with new techniques.

Defence Science and Technology—Why Not Aim at Higher-Degree Self-Reliance?

As we all know, a new technological revolution is prevailing throughout the world. Aiming at occupying the commanding height in military technology thereby to hold the initiative for military competition in the coming century, the two superpowers are competing fiercely in the field of military technology. West Europe and Japan have taken part in the competition. India is itching to have a try. It is clear that, in this respect, those countries with weak determination and less effective measures will make little progress, will find themselves at the passive position in future international struggle, and will render their security vulnerable.

What will Australia do to meet this challenge? To resign itself to the subsidiary position and wait for military technique transfer from the major military allies as in the past or to adopt active measures to develop high technology for the purpose of gradually achieving self-reliance in military science and technology? Of course the later path should be taken. It is all the more since “self-reliance” has been set as the orientation of defence development.

But, it's a pity that the White Paper shows little initiative to this end.

The White Paper stresses that “self-reliance does not mean self-sufficiency”32, “Australia will continue to rely, nevertheless, on substantial overseas supply of equipment”33. It even considers United States as the “large-scale stockpiling”34 for the ADF in wartime.

While dealing with the development of Australia's defence science and technology, though the White Paper mentions that “defence self-reliance demands increased indigenous capability in areas where we previously depend on our allies”35, it places this “increased indigenous capability” under the prerequisite that “while we procure major defence systems off the shelf from foreign suppliers, there are also some important Australian defence requirements not readily met by systems available overseas. In these cases there is a need for indigenous Australian development”36. As to the norms it sets for the development of the defence science, technology and industrial departments are only to acquire the “ability to select, adapt, repair, maintain and develop defence equipment”37, giving “to select” the championship, “to develop” the last. In fact, it's nothing new to Australia's defence scientific and technological organisations and defence industries. They have been doing this for years. Now since Australia is on its drive to realise defence self-reliance, the norms for defence scientific, technological and industrial developments should be new and higher, should not remain at the past levels.

It is true that “self-reliance does not mean self-sufficiency”. In modern society, the flourishing international trade, the trend of economic coalition, and the state-of-the-art communication tools and information transmission
means have made the “self-sufficiency” a ridiculous and unattainable concept. A most obvious example is that the most developed United States imported a lot of Japanese made cars and electronic appliances. But to an independent country, it must be self-sufficient to some extent, or it will fail to gain a foothold in the severe international competition. This applies to the military sphere. Japan relies on the umbrella of United States for its security, but its capability of defence production is much better than that of Australia. Israel has developed its defence production capability to the level being formidable to Arabic nations although it is the country who gets the largest share of USA’s foreign military assistance every year. Even South Korea is trying to build an independent defence force by procuring and self-making weapon systems to fill the gap might arise in case USA withdraws from the Korean Peninsula\(^\text{18}\). Though Australia is not confronted with definite threats as the above mentioned countries, it should not treat the matter lightly as it is an important actor in preserving the peace of this region, and would be an inevitable target of attack in future world war.

It is also true that there are many military arrangements between Australia and other Western countries (e.g. USA, UK, Canada and so on) which benefit Australia by providing accesses to up-to-date military technologies and munition stockpiles. But since there is a great uncertainty and grey area in this matter as mentioned in Part I of this article, Australia should not take for granted that (with these arrangements) it can be relieved from building an comparatively independent defence science, technological and industrial system or many downgrade the self-reliance in this field to a level as it is.

Not long ago, Australia asked Washington to transfer the computers’ programming code used in modern weapon systems bought from USA so that Australia can modify, maintain and repair those weapon systems, but the USA refused to do so simply for keeping its edge in computer software\(^\text{19}\). This is not a negligible trifle but a sobering agent which reminds people that alliance can not replace self-reliance. As every country has its own interests, it is not practical to expect other countries (even though allied or treaty bound) be always in need. Only self-reliance is reliable. The higher the level of self-reliance in defence science, technology and industry is, the more the military supplies can be secured. Consequently the stronger the national defence will be achieved.

In this regard, history has given people many lessons. In the Fourth Middle-East War (1973), one important factor which caused the Arabic side to lose was, as we all know, the interruption of munition supply from the Soviet Union who worked in collaboration with USA to avoid the head-on collision between themselves. In the Iraq-Iran War (1980-1988), neither side could win the war was, in a sense, contributed to the fact that both of them relied very much their military supplies on world arms market or foreign suppliers.

So it is understandable to everybody that while striving for defence self-reliance, Australia should make great effort to achieve self-reliance in defence science and technology. From a long-term point of view, to realize defence self-reliance by buying weapons and equipment from abroad is impossible and unaffordable. On the contrary, developing one’s own defence science and technology can not only meet the need of the military sector, but also save a lot of hard currency, and upgrade the scientific and technological level of the country as a whole, thus promoting the development of national economy.

The defence self-reliance also highlights the contradiction between the vast area of military interest and the small population. How to solve this contradiction? There is no choice but to strengthen the armed forces with modern science and technology.

Modern military science and technology is usually referred to as “combat power multiplier” as it can not only grant a weapon system with great power (i.e. long-range, high hitting probability, great killing power and high mobility), but also has a great potential of saving labour. To a country like Australia which lacks in labour resources, the priority of developing defence science and technology can never be overstated.

On top of the above points, to develop defence science and technology is dictated by future war. In future war, whether it is a low-level, middle-level or high-level one, between the two rivaling sides the side the more high-
tech weapons and equipment will have more initiative in operation and will thus enjoy more probability to win the war. If the future enemy is a high-tech one, the way for Australia to win will be no other than “paying somebody back in his own coin”, i.e. to defeat the enemy armed with high technology by high-tech weaponry. As most military analysts predict, a high-tech war would be a fierce and rapid advancing one. If you ran out of munitions on half way, you would sustain heavy loss or lose the war since there would be not enough time for you to call for resupply from an ally afar. This grim law of future war also requires Australia to develop a solid scientific, technological and industrial defence base.

All in all, if Australia really wanted to build credible self-reliance defence, it should spend more in developing defence science and technology rather than in hasty hardware purchasing. It would be reasonable to suggest that the plan to purchase 8 new frigates, 6 submarines and 75 F/A-18 be cut by half so that a lot of money may be transferred to funding the research and development of more sophisticated future-needed military hardwares.

Conclusion

Since the publication of the White Paper, two years and more have elapsed. But the debate about the White Paper and how to carrying out the policy of self-reliance in defence has not faded away with time. This is because that the following contradictions have not be solved properly or thoroughly:

1) The traditional security concept vs. the idea of defence self-reliance;
2) The detente prevailing the world vs. the determination to beef up the defence force for long-term national and regional security;
3) The adherence to the ANZUS treaty vs. the intention to achieve self-reliance in defence;
4) The perceived threats vs. the absence of definite potential enemy;
5) The protection of the security of the area of strategic interest vs. the respect for the national dignity of countries in the South-West Pacific;
6) The limitation of defence resources vs. the ambition to station troops in/to provide military aids to islands countries in South-West Pacific area for the security of this area;
7) The enhancement of the defence in the North vs. the effort to better the relationship with the close neighbours in that direction;
8) The priority of defence development vs. the security of the central areas of national politics and economy;
9) The increasing economic difficulties vs. the maintaining of defence expenditure level;
10) The heavy missions assigned to the ADF vs. the small size of the ADF;
11) The manpower required for defending a vast country vs. the small labour resources;
12) The acquisition of more hardwares vs. the development/ introduction of military technology;
13) The cutting down of personnel costs vs. the reduction of separation rate;
14) The maintaining of the percentage of all major categories in the defence expenditure vs. the purchasing more and more major equipment;
15) The development of economy vs. the war mobilization capabilities;
16) The development of military science and technology vs. the development of economy;
17) The improvement of social welfare vs. the attainment of defence self-reliance.

All these contradictions indicate that defence self-reliance is a complicated system woven with fibres of international and internal politics, economy, military affairs, culture, diplomacy, trade etc., hence could not be achieved in one move. To draw a long term well balanced defence self-reliance development program, which thoroughly analyses these contradictions and provides the scientific methodology and approaches to solve these contradictions, is imperative to Australia. The White Paper 1987 has begun but not finished the work to solve these contradictions. Anyway its an excellent beginning.

The course to achieve defence self-reliance is a process of gradual accumulation of defence resources, which may last for several decades, and need not only wisdom and endurance, but also the spirit of self-sacrifice and of hard work. I deeply believe that the intelligent and industrious Australian people will properly solve those contradictions and finally attain their goal of defending Australia with their own resources.

Some people worry a lot about
Australia’s efforts to build self-reliant defence would provoke some country to adopt “counter-measures”, thus undermining Australia’s relationship with that country and the strategic balance of the region. In my point of view, this sort of worry is, in a sense, unnecessary.

National defence is exclusive in nature. It’s natural that the national defence construction of a country will draw the attention of other nations especially the neighbouring nations. So long as Australia does not pursue regional hegemony as well as offensive capacity, no ambient countries would find any pretext from Australia’s efforts to build self-reliance defence for its so called “counter measures”. In other words, the defensive course that Australia takes will eventually convince every country that any doubt and counter-measures are both necessary.

Notes
1. The Defence of Australia 1987, Paragraph 1.5
2. Ibid., Paragraph 1.1
3. Ibid., P. X
4. Ibid., P. IX
5. Ibid., Paragraph 3.10
6. Ibid., Paragraph 3.12
7. Ibid., Paragraph 3.16
8. Ibid., Paragraph 3.19
10. See Ross Babbage: Rethinking Australia’s Defence, University of Queensland Press, p. 8-9
11. The Defence of Australia 1987, paragraph 3.2
12. Ibid., Paragraph 3.8
13. Ibid., Paragraph 3.9
15. Ibid., pp. 67-68
16. The Defence of Australia 1987, Paragraph 2.36
18. The Defence of Australia 1987, Paragraph 3.5
19. Ibid., Paragraph 2.36
20. It is pointed out in Paragraph 2.58 of The Defence of Australia 1987 that “no neighbouring countries harbours aggressive designs on Australia”.
21. It is said in p. IX of The Defence of Australia 1987 that: “Development of the defence force to include all those capabilities is planned for the next ten to twenty years”.
22. The Defence of Australia 1987, Paragraph 2.58
23. Ibid., Paragraph 3.39
25. See Leszek Buszynski: ASEAN: Security Issues of the 1990s, Working Paper No. 165, the Strategic & Defence Studies Centre at the Research School of Pacific Studies of the Australian National University, pp. 11.
26. The Defence of Australia 1987, Paragraph 2.35
27. Ibid., Paragraph 1.43-1.47
28. Ibid., Paragraph 1.11
29. Ibid.
30. Refer to Note 20
32. The Defence of Australia 1987, p. X
33. Ibid., Paragraph 5.26
34. Ibid., Paragraph 5.25
35. Ibid., Paragraph 5.50
36. Ibid., Paragraph 5.25
37. Ibid., Paragraph 5.50
38. See South Korea Prepares to Fill the Arms Gap, Jane’s Defence Weekly, 18 February 1989.

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Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden (1893 - 1971)

By Major Warren Perry, RL

Sir Frederick Geoffrey Shedden, a distinguished Australian civil servant of his time, lived from 1893 to 1971. His official life covered the period from 1910 to 1958. This period began towards the close of the first decade after the South African War of 1899-1902, it included the two world wars of 1914-18 and 1939-45, and it closed in effect three years after the Korean War of 1950-53.

The object of this article is a limited one. It is a contribution to the scant and fragmentary biographical literature which exists at present in published form on the official life of Sir Frederick Shedden. It is addressed to readers who wish to know more that is at present readily available about how he rose from a junior clerk in 1910 to permanent head of the Department of Defence in 1937 - almost on the eve of the outbreak of the War of 1939-45.

An obvious and urgent need in the published biographical literature on Shedden still remains nevertheless. It is a need for a more comprehensive supply of factual information. Facts alone can form a proper basis for a better understanding of the man, his methods and his achievements.

But before proceeding to the main task of portraying something of the boyhood and earlier official life of Sir Frederick Shedden, during his Lehrjahre and Wanderjahre, it should be pointed out that he was a man who avoided the glare and glitter of the centre of the stage where he sometimes had a rightful place. Consequently, he has since his death been much neglected by administrative historians. Few could nowadays describe him graphically and vividly in a few sentences - an art in which the late Major - General Sir Julius Bruche, sometime Chief of the Australian General Staff, excelled. So it follows that few to-day can explain on the basis of their own experience and observations and at some length, the nature and scope of some of his achievements.

Lord Salter, who began his career as a civil servant in the Admiralty, London, said in his Memoirs of a Public Servant that: "the civil servant, whose professional character and habits are increasingly important to the ordinary citizen, as the range of bureaucracy extends, work in a cloistered secrecy and rarely writes about himself or what he does". This observation was certainly applicable also to the C.P.S. of Shedden's time and especially to Shedden himself.

Indeed so strenuously did Shedden strive to avoid publicity for himself that members of the staff of the central administration of the Department of Defence, expect those in immediate contact with him, would often have probably not recognised him, if they had seen him walking about in the grounds of Victoria Barracks, Melbourne. In this respect he was a marked contrast to his two immediate predecessors, Mr Thomas Trumble (1872-1954) and Mr Malcolm Lindsay Shepherd (1873 - 1960), who, in their earlier times when the tempo of official life was of course slower, were familiar figures to the civil staff of all grades within Victoria Barracks, Melbourne.

Frederick Geoffrey Shedden was born, during the last decade of the long reign of Queen Victoria, on 8 August 1893 at Kyneton, a country town about 52 miles north west of the City of Melbourne in the Colony of Victoria. He was not born into a rich and distinguished family with wide and considerable social connections. His parents were George Shedden (c.1858-1934), a Wheelwright, and his wife (Sarah) Elizabeth Shedden nee Gray (c. 1860 - 1920). George Shedden was born in Tasmania and his parents were Scottish immigrants. Sarah Elizabeth Shedden was born in Surrey, England and her parents were presumably English. There were three surviving children of this marriage namely (George) Ernest Shedden (1884 - 1927), Evelyn (Mabel) Shedden (1889 -1971), and Frederick (Geoffrey) Shedden (1893-1971) who is the subject of his article.

Little is known of this Shedden family during the years it spent in Kyneton which was then the centre of an agricultural and mining district. The Shedden family became active...
members of the Independent Church at Kyneton. Frederick Geoffrey Shedden's school days began and ended at Kyneton and it is presumed that they began at the local state school. His secondary education was obtained at the Kyneton Grammar School.

Concurrently, with his attendance at these day schools, Frederick Shedden attended the Sunday School of the Independent Church, Kyneton. There, in July 1907, he was awarded a Second (equal) Prize in the 2nd Class for Boys. It was a copy of Fenimore Cooper's *The Last of the Mohicans* in the Everyman's Series. It was found among his books after his death.  

The Kyneton Grammar School was conducted by an Englishman, John William McCormick (c. 1863 - 1914), from 1890, when he founded it, until 1912, when he closed it because of the opening of a state high school at Kyneton.

Frederick Shedden passed the Junior Public Examination in the Fourth Term of the Kyneton Grammar School in 1909. He passed in eight subjects and this attainment marked the close of his school days at the age of 16 years. But he did not leave the school unnoticed but rather with something akin to a "ruffle of drums" if not a "roll of drums". At the Speech Day on Friday afternoon 17 December 1909, after it had been announced that Harry Levick was the Dux of the school in that year, it was then declared that Frederick Shedden was the Dux of the School's Junior Public Class. Then at the annual distribution of Prizes on this occasion Frederick Shedden was the recipient of two of the Special Prizes awarded.

In January 1910 Shedden's "above average" ability was again shown in the results he gained in an examination conducted by the Commonwealth Public Service for appointment to its Clerical Division. In the list of successful Shedden gained 4th place among the top 40 successful candidates. These 40 candidates were entitled to immediate appointment to existing vacancies. Shedden did not have long to wait. He became a Commonwealth Public Servant on 14 March 1910 and he was posted to a junior clerkship - Clerk Class 5 - in the central administration of the Department of Defence which, since Federation in 1901, had been located at Victoria Barracks, St Kilda Road, Melbourne.

Whether Shedden had any preference for employment in the Department of Defence or whether he was indifferent as to which department of state he was allotted is not now known.

When he joined the Department of Defence in March 1910 its Minister was Mr Joseph Cook and its permanent head was Commander S.A. Pethebridge. At this time the Department had no Assistance Secretaries on its establishment. The second-in-charge of the department was the Chief Clerk who was then Mr Thomas Trumble. Below him were the different classes of clerks.

The service heads of the Department of Defence at the time Shedden joined it in March 1910 were Captain (late Vice-Admiral Sir) W.R. Creswell who was the Director of the Australian Naval Forces, and Major General Sir John Charles Hoad, who was the Chief of the Australian General Staff - a staff which was then in an early stage of its development. Military Aviation was at this time a responsibility of the Australian Army.

The official business of the Department of Defence was the thread that linked these various levels of the staff together for the attainment of common ends. This co-operation between these different levels has been picturesquely and humorously described in another place by a former permanent head in the British Civil Service, Sir Algernon West (1832 - 1921), who said in his *Contemporary Portraits*: "When I was a junior clerk in the Admiralty my duties were confined to index-writing and copying letters, and I never saw anybody of so exalted a rank as an Under Secretary, though the Chief Clerk used sometimes to tell me that the First Lord was waiting for the document I was copying to take to the Cabinet, and warning me that H.M. the Queen was very particular about the writing on a non-commissioned officer's warrant". (Pp 37 - 38).

Department training schemes of a formal and systematic character for the civil clerical staff were not in operation in the Department of Defence during Shedden's earlier service in it. So during his "apprenticeship" in the C.P.S. Shedden was expected to "pick things up" as he "went along". It was a system which usually turned out routine workers without foresight, intellectual curiosity, initiative or the normal courage to make decisions other than those of the most rudimentary character. The inade-
quacy of this experience soon presented itself to Shedden who also saw the need to provide himself with a better and higher education in order to escape from the deadening effects of routine work in the C.P.S.

But in this situation, in which junior clerks were “conditioned” to routine work its precedents without any formal instruction within the Department on the exact nature and scope of their duties and how they were expected to discharge them, only an unusual junior clerk with foresight, tenacity and an inflexible determination could lift himself out of the ruts of the Clerical Division of the C.P.S. to higher levels. Shedden’s subsequent performance proved that he had been one of these “unusual junior clerks”. So any thoughts that he might have acquired as a junior clerk on say the organisation and functions of the Department of Defence as a whole and how its top level administrative machinery operated, would have been products of his own mental labours.

To learn something about the history of his own department of state is always an advantage to the newly joined junior clerk with a Marschallsstab in Tornister, and even to more senior administrative officers. Such study supplements practical experience. No civil servant can have either universal knowledge of or practical experience in Public Administration. Even to-day there are no published histories of Australia’s Commonwealth departments of state comparable with those excellent histories of departments of state in British Civil Service which were published first in The Whitehall Series and more recently in The New Whitehall Series. This deficiency in Australia’s published literature on Public Administration is itself bad enough. But what is worse is that few, if any, senior members of the C.P.S. in Shedden’s time seem to have appreciated the need for such publications. Publications of the kind help to lift the administrative civil servant in Australia out of that class with a “tradesmans approach” to his duties to that higher intellectual level where the problems of today are scientifically related to the experience of yesterday by processes of reasoning in order to be able to cope more effectively with current and future administrative work.

Shedden’s first major step in his plan to escape from the ruts of routine clerical work in the C.P.S. - work which produced not officers but N.C.Os - was to prepare himself for the Senior Public Examination. This examination was conducted by the University of Melbourne and it entitled successful candidates to enter the University of Melbourne to pursue degree courses of study. More will be said of this venture later. It is an inspiring study in courage, perserverence and tenacity combined with the training of an unusual natural ability.

In the course of training himself for promotion Shedden would have noticed a difference in the composition of the staff of a service department of state from that of say the Post Office which employed only civil servants. But the Department of Defence employed two classes of officers namely civil officers and military officers. In very broad terms it was sometimes said that the civil staff performed administrative duties and the military staff performed staff duties.

So a distinctive feature which differentiates a service department of state from a non service department of state is that its combined civil and military staff is organised into a Naval Staff under a Chief of the Naval Staff, an Army Staff, and an Air Force Staff under the Chief of the Air Staff.

Generally speaking the Civil staff is concerned with administrative work and the military staff is concerned with staff work. These two different concepts of work are peculiar to a service department of state and so they are worth looking at here more closely. This can best be done by drawing on the vast administrative experience of Sir Oswyn Murray (1873-1936). At the time of his death he was the permanent head of the Admiralty, London and a contemporary of Shedden.

In a lecture at the London School of Economics, entitled “The Administration of a Fighting Service,” Sir Oswyn Murray referred to “the exploration of different parts of the great field of administration in which the civil servant is privileged to labour” and he pointed out “the variety and extent of that field”. He also touched on the subject of staff work by saying: “staff work requires hard thinking in terms a contingent future rather than the actual present”. He added “It is an axiom of all writers on Organisation that it (i.e. staff work) should, as far as possible, be kept separate from the daily work of administration”. But as Sir Oswyn Murray proceeded
with his lecture he qualified his remarks on *staff work* by pointing out that “as the whole purpose of the Admiralty is preparation for the contingency of war, it is not possible to draw a really hard and fast line between staff work and administration”.

The military staff is drawn from officers, seconded for relatively short periods of duty, from the Navy, the Army and the Air Force. On the other hand, the civil staff were usually permanent civil servants and their periods of duty, especially at the higher levels in the Department of Defence, were usually much longer. In the case of Sir Frederick Shedden himself, his whole career from recruitment to retirement was spent in the Department of Defence.

It could be said that the terms *civil staff* and *military staff* may be unified in the term *public servants*. Henry Spenser Wilkinson (1853 - 1937), the foundation Chichele Professor of Military History - today designated the Chichele Professorship of the History of War - in the University of Oxford pointed out that “the army is a branch of the public service, administered and governed under the authority of the Cabinet in precisely the same way as the post office”\(^4\). The success of the combined efforts of these two branches of the Department of Defence’s staff depend on their goodwill as well as their active and well co-ordinated cooperation at all levels and at all times. But in practice this goodwill and co-operation sometimes fall short of the ideal. Service departments of state, as do the naval, army and air forces they administer, meet their supreme and severest tests for efficiency and effectiveness in war. Sir Frederick Shedden, during this service in Australia’s Department of Defence, witnessed three of these tests in two of which he was in supreme control immediately under the Minister of Defence.

When the War of 1914 - 18 began it soon became evident that the civil side of the Department of Defence had not kept pace with the military side of the Department in the matter of preparations for war. One instance was an urgent need to expand the civil staff and especially its problem-solving administrative staff as well as its routine clerical staff. Labour-saving office machinery of the kinds common today did not then exist and it was the era when women took over typing duties from men. But in expanding the staff in these ways the selectors were obliged to recruit outside the C.P.S. and they tended in their haste, initially, to pay a stiffer regard to numbers than to suitability for the work to be done. This approach to the solution of the Department’s ever increasing daily workload with it hitherto unfamiliar complexities tended to create concurrently other problems. One particular area of this civil administration which caused the Minister anxiety quite early in the course of the war was in the area of Finance and especially in the matter of Pay.

On 16 February 1915 Senator Pearce announced that the Federal Cabinet had appointed Mr. R.M.M. Anderson, a former Treasurer and Town Clerk of the City of Sydney, to be the Finance and Business Adviser to the Minister. Senator Pearce mentioned too that the Department of Defence would have to spend £11,000,000 by 30 June 1915 in purchases for the nation’s armed forces and that Mr Anderson’s services were needed by the Minister to ensure that this money was spent to the best advantage in maintaining and expanding these forces. Mr Anderson was also required to investigate and to report on the Finance and Business branches of the Department of Defence. In concluding this Report to the Minister, Mr. Anderson stressed that transcending all other considerations was the need to organise the Department of Defence “into a correlated and co-ordinated whole” instead of as he had found it “a series of fragments working in disunion” and “all the time drifting apart”. After the submission of this Report, dated 5 April 1915, Senator Pearce re-organised without delay the Paymaster’s Branch and placed it under the control and supervision of the Department’s Chief Accountant, Lieutenant-Colonel T.J. Thomas.

With the War in mind, Senator Pearce informed the Senate on 9 July 1915 that: “This is the first occasion upon which Australia has been faced with such an immense responsibility as that which now confronts her. Consequently the Minister has no precedents to guide him … unless he has time to consider questions as they arise, the best cannot be done, and mistakes will assuredly be made”\(^2\). Then on 8 December 1915, i.e. less than a fortnight before the A.I.F. was evacuated from the Gallipoli peninsula, Senator Pearce
announced that Mr R.M.M. Anderson had been appointed DQMG at Headquarters, A.I.F., Egypt with the rank of colonel. His urgent task was to create an organisation there to direct and control the Finance and Business administration involved in expanding the A.I.F. overseas and in maintaining it in the field as an effective striking force. 

Another crisis occurred in 1916 in N.S.W. known as the “Howell-Price” case. It concerned the fraudulent drawing of pay for a unit by an Adjutant. The offender, Howell-Price, was sentenced at the District Court, Sydney on 26 March 1917 on two charges to four years penal servitude on each charge and they were to be served concurrently.

In the meantime life had not been uneventful for Shedden. He was on 19 December 1916 admitted to the Incorporated Institute of Accountants of Victoria with the status of a Licentiate. Later, this Institute was incorporated into the Commonwealth Institute of Accountants to which his membership was transferred. This qualification was an important one for Shedden to gain at this particular time. It gave him a better standing in his Department.

A week before the closing of the Howell-Price case in the District Court, Sydney a less conspicuous event occurred in Melbourne. It was Shedden’s appointment to the Australian Army Pay Corps of the A.I.F. with the rank of lieutenant to date 19 March 1917. Three days later, on 22 March 1917, he sailed from Melbourne in the R.M.S. Mongolia for the United Kingdom. At this date he was 23 years of age and this journey was his first one beyond the shores of Australia. Shedden’s going to war at this time and in the manner of his going had the features of a special mission rather than ordinary military duty. The later Sir Peter Heydon, the biographer of Senator Sir G.F. Pearce, said, in his Quiet Decision, that “Shedden was sent overseas in the first A.I.F. for experience of its administration abroad”. (P. 123.) Nine months later Shedden returned to Australia. He disembarked at Port Melbourne on Monday 10 December 1917. His appointment in the A.I.F. was terminated officially on Monday 24 December 1917.

Shedden resumed duty in the Department of Defence, Melbourne in a civil capacity. The War of 1914 - 18 continued its devastating course for almost another 12 months and on a scale unknown in earlier wars.

The Armistice of the 11 November 1918 terminated hostilities in the War of 1914 - 18 between the Allied Powers and the Central Powers which at that date consisted of Germany alone. A Peace Conference followed and it was formally opened in Paris on 18 January 1919. Its draft treaty was formally presented on Wednesday afternoon 7 May 1919, in the Trianon Palace at Versailles to the German delegation led by the German Foreign Minister Count Brockdorff-Rantzau. The Treaty of Versailles 1919 was formally signed at Versailles in the Galeries des Glaces at the Chateau de Versailles on Saturday 28 June 1919 by the Australian Representatives and others. The Treaty was ratified on the 10 January 1920. Its provisions came into force on that date. They provided for the creation of a League of Nations which later was established in Geneva. In later years Shedden was to play humble parts in some of the deliberations of this institution. The U.S.A. rejected the terms of this Treaty of Versailles and so it did not participate in either its provisions or its execution.

For the next decade Shedden applied himself assiduously to his duties at Home where he attracted attention of Ministers and senior officers of his Department as he moved steadily up the ladder of promotion.

In 1925 he resumed his academic studies in the University of Melbourne, as a part-time student, in the newly created Faculty of Commerce. This faculty had been created officially in 1924 and it began operations in 1925. Its Dean was the distinguished Economist, Professor D.B. Copland, who had come to the University of Tasmania in Hobart. This course was a big undertaking for Shedden because his departmental duties became more onerous each year in this inter-war period of 1919 - 39. But in pursuing this course he showed great determination and unyielding tenacity.

In mid 1927 Mr Thomas Trumble relinquished the post of Secretary of the Department of Defence and he was succeeded by Mr M.L. Shepherd who was an officer with wide high level experience including that of the first permanent head of the Prime Minister’s Department in 1911. Just as Anthony Trollope, better known to-day as a novelist, had begun his career as a junior clerk in the G.P.O., London,
so Malcolm Lindsay Shepherd had begun his own career in the G.P.O., Sydney, before Federation, as junior clerk.

When Mr Shepherd reported for duty at the Department of Defence, Melbourne on 29 August 1927 he took over from Mr M.M. Maguire who had been the Acting Secretary since Mr Trumble’s departure for London on 7 June 1927. The Minister for Defence at his time was Major-General Sir William Glasgow.

In the following year Shedden’s professional fortunes soared. He attended the one calendar course for 1928 at the Imperial Defence College at 9 Buckingham Gate, London. The other Australian student on this same course was Lieutenant-Colonel J.D. Lavarack who in 1935 became Chief of the Australian General Staff.

The Imperial Defence College was a new post-war institution for the training of civil, naval, military and air force officers of the British Empire of the rank of colonel or its equivalent. It was said that “The object was to direct the minds of the students into wider fields than those of the operations of fleets, armies or air forces and to train them to think in terms of the national strength in all its forms.” The first Commandant of the College, Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond, was well suited for the post because of his personality, his wide professional experience, and his reputation as an authoritative writer on naval subjects. Later he became the Vere Harmsworth Professor of Naval and Imperial History in the University of Cambridge. Elsewhere I have said: “It is not surprising that Shedden was deeply impressed at the Imperial Defence College by Admiral Richmond, and his influence probably remained with Shedden for the rest of his life.”

After leaving the Imperial Defence College in December 1928, Shedden stayed on in London until early September 1929 to gain further training and experience. It is probable that he first attended the London School of Economics and Political Science to undertake some research work in Financial Administration. He had the good fortune to have as his Tutor Dr. Hugh Dalton who had already gained fame as the author of the long and widely known best seller, *Principles of Public Finance*. Later again, in the War of 1939-45, as British Minister of Economic Warfare, Dalton gained additional fame by place on his Ministry “the stamp of his buoyancy, originality and courage.”

Mr R.G. Casey, then located at the British Foreign Office, as a Liaison Officer in London for the Australian Prime Minister, Mr. S.M. Bruce, wrote in one of his “My dear P.M.” letters dated 14 March 1929:

I have met Shedden (Civil Servant from the Commonwealth Department of Defence) who has been on the Imperial Defence College course and he is now doing a course at the London School of Economics. He seems a very good type and should be a welcome addition to our Civil Service on his return. He would, I think, be a useful man either in the Treasury Department or the Prime Minister’s Department.

Shedden was also “accredited” in London in 1929 to the following authorities: the Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee of the House of Commons; the Clerk of the House of Commons; the British Treasury; the Audit and Exchequer Department of the Comptroller and Auditor-General; and the War Office in Whitehall. He was also permitted to use the Library of the Royal Institute of Public Administration, London. However, no evidence has been discovered to show that he was ever connected with the Regional Group of this Institute in Melbourne.

It is not probable that hitherto any other Administrative officer of the C.P.S. had enjoyed in London, in the matter of training and practical experience, such a “feast” as Shedden had enjoyed there in 1928 and 1929.

In September 1929, in the month before the “Wall Street Crash”, Shedden sailed for home in the R.M.S. *Otranto*. A fellow passenger was the new Chief of Australia’s Naval Staff, Rear Admiral (later Admiral Sir) William Munro Kerr, R.N. (1876-1959). They disembarked at Prince’s Pier at Port Melbourne on 21 October 1929 and they were to meet again soon in the Defence Committee of the Department of Defence.

When Shedden reported for duty at the Department of Defence Mr M.M. Maguire was the Acting Secretary and the Secretary Mr M.L. Shepherd, was absent in Canberra on duty. The next day, 22 October 1929, the Scullin Government was sworn in and so it replaced the Bruce-Page Government.
Shedden took up duty on this occasion in a new and more senior appointment namely that of Secretary of the Defence Committee. This committee was a higher level one within the Department of Defence and it was first created by ministerial direction on 15 May 1926.44

The first Minister for Defence in the Scullin Ministry was Mr. A.E. “Texas” Green who held the portfolio from 22 October 1929 to 4 February 1931. Mr. J.J. Daly succeeded him but he held the portfolio for only one month. Then, on 3 March 1931, Mr. J.B. Chifley succeeded Mr. Daly and he held the Defence portfolio until the fall of the Scullin Ministry on 6 January 1932. Mr. Chifley and the staff of the Department got on together very amicably. In his *Ben Chifley* the later Professor L.F. Crisp pointed out that:

Chifley found himself with a departmental head, M.L. Shepher, who had been private secretary to several Prime Ministers, head of the Prime Minister’s Department for a decade from its inception, and Acting Deputy High Commissioner in London. Shepherd was a man of great experience and resource, with a strong mind of his own...But the two men came to appreciate each other.45

Chifley also noticed Shedden in the course of moving about the Department and getting to know the staff generally. He was favourably impressed with Shedden’s performance as Secretary of the Defence Committee. So when Chifley relinquished his portfolio in January 1932 he handed onto his successor “a favourable assessment of F.G. (later Sir Frederick) Shedden”.46

Although Shedden did not get a place either in the Australian delegation to the Imperial Conference in London in 1930, or to the special Economic Imperial Conference in Ottawa in 1932, he was not overlooked by the Australian Government. For a period during the two years of 1932 - 33 he was attached to the British Cabinet Office in Whitehall Gardens and to the Committee of Imperial Defence also at the same address.47 Each of these bodies was responsible direct to the British Cabinet and each had a full-time Secretary. But each of these appointments of Secretary was filled at this time for reasons found in history by one and the same person namely Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey.

Shedden’s attachment at this time to the British Cabinet Office, and to the Committee of Imperial Defence, gave him an insight into the affairs of defence at its highest level in the British Empire. Moreover, this attachment gave Shedden a clearer understanding than he could have had previously, of the functions and the processes of operating the administrative machinery of government at this level.

But during this attachment to the staffs of Colonel Hankey Shedden was called upon to perform two other additional but special tasks in London for the Australian Government. Space forbids, however, anything but the briefest reference to them. One was attendance with the Australian delegation at the International Disarmament Conference at Geneva in 1932. The other was attendance with the Australian delegation at a World Monetary and Economic Conference in London in 1933.

The International Disarmament Conference at Geneva opened on 2 February 1932 and it adjourned on 23 July 1932. It seems that Shedden first joined the Australian delegation to this Conference at the time when Mr J.G. Latham, then Australia’s Minister for External Affairs, took over its leadership from Major-General Sir Granvill Ryrie, who then returned to his duties in London as Australian High Commissioner there. The work of the Australian delegation during this five months at this Conference was written up by Mr J.G. Latham, dated 25 July 1932, and submitted to the Australian Prime Minister, Mr J.A. Lyons. In this report the future Sir John Latham and Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia48 reported in brief but eulogistic terms of Shedden’s work at the Conference by saying: “I take this opportunity of expressing my appreciation of the painstaking and most efficient work of Mr F.G. Shedden”.49

The World Monetary and Economic Conference held its first meeting in London on Monday afternoon 12 June 1933 and its proceedings were conducted under the chairmanship of the British Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay Macdonald. The conference was formally opened by King George V. Then Mr Ramsay Macdonald, as president of the conference, delivered the opening Presidential Address.

The Australian delegation was lead by a former Prime Minister of Australia, Mr S.M.
Bruce, who was himself a man with a distinguished record. He had studied at Trinity Hall, Cambridge; he was called to the Bar at Middle Temple in 1907; he served with the Royal Fusiliers in the War of 1914 - 18 and was awarded an M.C. Later he entered Federal politics in Australia. His five advisers at this Conference were: Professor D.B. Copland, Dean of the Faculty of Commerce in the University of Melbourne; Mr F.L. McDougall, an Economic Adviser in London to the Australian Government; Professor L.G. Melville, Economic Adviser to the Commonwealth Bank of Australia and formerly Professor of Economics in the University of Adelaide; Mr H.J. Sheehan who since May 1932 had been the Secretary of the Australian Department of the Treasury; and Mr F.G. Shedden who was the Secretary of the Defence Committee in the Department of Defence, Melbourne.

Shedden was indeed fortunate to have been selected to join this distinguished group of advisers and to participate in their work for he was still relatively junior. So the conference itself and his part in its proceedings provided him with a rare opportunity to develop himself professionally. It was not a conference of officials but of governments, in fact of governments from all parts of the world. The Times, London, in a leader on the Conference said: "The Economic Conference was opened yesterday on a high and hopeful note which the world will expect to be justified by its achievements". Unfortunately achievements fell short of expectations. The British Prime Minister, Mr Ramsay MacDonald, reviewed the work of the Conference in a B.B.C. broadcast on Thursday evening 27 July 1933 in which he said it had been decided to adjourn the Conference. It did not in fact ever resume its proceedings again.

The Australian Minister of State in London, Mr S.M. Bruce, in his report on the Conference, dated 16 September 1933, to the Australian Prime Minister, Mr J.A. Lyons, said:

All the Advisers rendered the most valuable service and the work which they individually and collectively undertook cannot be too highly praised. Mr Shedden acted, in addition as Delegation Secretary, in which capacity his work was distinguished by zeal, and efficiency of an unusually high order. For Shedden personally this conference had many advantages but not all of them would have been obvious to the casual observer. It widened and deepened his administrative and organising experience; it strengthened his ability to co-operate with others in the course of executing official business on a large scale; and his roles in the delegation had attracted again the attention of selectors for higher appointments in the C.P.S.

But while Shedden was distinguishing himself in all his official duties on wider stages in London and in Geneva in 1932 and 1933 an event on a smaller stage at home occurred which was of considerable interest and importance to him personally. The Chancellor of the University of Melbourne, Sir John MacFarland, conferred on him, at a Graduation Ceremony at the University on Saturday 9 April 1932, the degree of Bachelor of Commerce in absentia. On this day Shedden was in his 39th year. The cost to him of attaining this academic distinction, measured in terms of leisurely pursuits alone sacrificed, was high and this cost stamped itself on his personality.

This is not the place to make a detailed analysis of Shedden's academic career as an undergraduate. But it should be stressed that his progress, within a period of seven years from 1925 to 1932, from a freshman to a graduate was not one marked by bare passes and occasional "supps". His progress was on the contrary one that he himself would have been justified in contemplating in retrospect, even if he had been a full-time student, with considerable pride. At his first annual examinations in 1925 he passed in Economics I and in Economic Geography. In 1926 he completed two more subjects namely Banking, Currency and Exchange for which he was awarded 1st Class Honours and Commercial and Industrial Organisation for which he was awarded 3rd Class Honours. In 1927 he completed three more subjects namely Economic History for which he was awarded 1st Class Honours, Economics II for which he was awarded 1st Class Honours, and he divided the Melbourne Chamber of Commerce Exhibition in Public Administration and Finance.

In 1934 the State of Victoria, wherein the Commonwealth Department of Defence was then located, marked its centenary with appro-
appropriate celebrations. These celebrations expressed themselves in many different forms. Official guests attended these celebrations from within the Commonwealth of Australia, from the British Isles, from other parts of the British Empire, and from friendly foreign countries.

These celebrations provided opportunities for holding local talks on Imperial Defence. One such conference was a two day one which was held in Wellington in New Zealand. It was attended by delegations from Australia and New Zealand and the Committee of Imperial Defence, London was represented by its Secretary, Colonel Sir Maurice Hankey who had been visiting Australia at that time on other business. The Australian delegation was led by Senator Sir George Pearce who at this time was in the unaccustomed role of Minister for External Affairs. His Advisers were both from the Department of Defence namely Mr A.E. Leighton, Controller-General of Munitions and Chairman of the Munitions Supply Board; and Mr F.G. Shedden who was also the Secretary of this Australian delegation which had no military members. The New Zealand Government was host government and its own delegation consisted of the Rt Hon. G.W. Forbes (Prime Minister); the Hon. J.G. Cobbe (Minister for Defence); Rear-Admiral F. Burgess-Watson, R.N. (Flag Officer Commanding the N.Z. Division of the Royal Navy); and Major General Sir William Sinclair-Burgess, who was the Chief of the New Zealand General Staff.

The Conference opened on Thursday 23 November 1934 and the N.Z. Prime Minister presided. After its close the following day, the New Zealand Prime Minister announced to the press that “He was not in a position to make any statement as to the nature of the Conference deliberations”. The security arrangement for this Conference were unusually tight as far as the press were concerned. Later, in a press interview on the 29 November 1934 as he was about to sail from New Zealand for Australia, Senator Pearce said “The Conference has been pleasant and instructive” and it will “lead to closer co-operation between New Zealand and Australia in the future”.

It has already been said that Senator Pearce attended this Conference in the capacity of Minister for External Affairs. Immediately before taking this portfolio he had been for the last time in his parliamentary career the Minister for Defence from 6 January 1932 to 12 October 1934. Of this period Sir George Pearce’s biographer said of him:

When he became Defence Minister again in 1932, Shedden was Secretary of the Defence Committee and although absent on duty at the Disarmament Conference and in London in 1932 - 33, his reports influenced the background to the government’s policy declared by Pearce in his famous speech of 25 September 1933. Pearce in his last eighteen months as Minister for Defence, saw much of Shedden, especially in relation to the expansion which began in 1934 - 5, encouraged the development of the higher defence machinery, looked to him greatly for general advice and in 1934 took him to New Zealand for a conference.

In 1936 three changes occurred in the ranks of the Department’s senior administrative staff. Colonel T.J. Thomas, whose service in the Department obliged him to be at times a civil servant and at other times a soldier relinquished the position of Finance Secretary of the Department of Defence and retired from the C.P.S. on 25 July 1936.

Later in that year, on 13 November, 1936, Mr M.M. Maguire, the senior Assistant Secretary and sometimes Acting Secretary of the Department, retired from the C.P.S. after long and meritorious service in the Department of Defence, Melbourne. Sir John Jensen said “Mr Maguire was concerned with the procurement and handling of military stores and munitions throughout his official life”. Another testimony came from Mr A.E. Leighton who said of Mr Maguire that “the source of his influence was a beautiful nature which made him an able negotiator and left no enemies”.

But somebody’s loss is often balanced by another’s gain. In this instance Mr Maguire’s retirement cleared the way for Shedden’s promotion on 5 November 1936 to the newly created position of First Assistant Secretary. In this position he was also in effect the Deputy Secretary of the Department.

In 1937 Shedden was again in London on duty. He attended the Coronation Ceremony in Westminster Abbey on Wednesday 12 May 1937 to witness the crowning of King George VI by the Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most
Reverend Dr Cosmo Gordon Lang.

Then, as a member of the Australian delegation, Shedden attended the Imperial Conference on 1937. The Australian delegation was led by the Prime Minister, Mr J.A. Lyons, and its Secretary was Mr Frank Strahan (1886-1976) who was the permanent head of the Prime Minister's Department, Canberra. The Conference was opened on Friday 14 May 1937 at St James’s Palace. This was the first Imperial Conference that Shedden had attended and he attended as an Adviser to the Minister for Defence, Sir Archdale Parkhill. Shedden’s presence at this Conference was to be for him another form of education, a new experience, an inspiration, and a spectacle. During the next two years he was to be in need of this additional intangible equipment to meet the administrative and organisational demands that were to be made on his intellectual resources, his imagination and his ingenuity.

The items on the Agenda for this conference of 1937 included matters concerned with Civil Aviation, Constitutional Law, Defence Foreign Affairs, and Shipping. According to Professor A.P. Newton, this Conference “was mainly concerned with Imperial defence and strategy and the ways in which each member (nation) of the Commonwealth could best co-operated for the security of the whole in the rapidly deteriorating situation of international politics”. The Imperial Conference of 1937 closed on Tuesday 15 June 1937 and it was destined to be the last Imperial Conference in London before the outbreak of the War of 1939 - 45.

Towards the end of 1937 two higher-level changes occurred in the Department of Defence. After long, varied and meritorious service in the C.P.S., Mr M.L. Shepherd relinquished the position of Secretary of the Department of Defence and retired on 16 November 1937. He was entertained at a Farewell Dinner in Canberra on Wednesday evening 10 November 1937 at the Hotel Canberra by a large number of senior public servants. Sir Harry Sheehan, the Secretary of the Department of the Treasury presided. One permanent head, Mr Herbert Charles Brown, who had been at school with Malcolm Lindsay Shepherd delivered a witty and an interesting speech in which he said “Shep disliked publicity and shunned cheap popularity” and he was “always at his best when shouldering responsibility and accepting the blame for the mistakes and misdeeds of others”.

Mr Frederick Geoffrey Shedden became the new Secretary of the Department of Defence as from 17 November 1937 at a commencing salary of £1,400 p.a. He was 44 years of age and his entire service of 27 years in the C.P.S. had been spent in the Department of Defence, Melbourne. The Chief of the Australian Air Staff at that time, Air Marshal Sir Richard Williams, said later of Shedden that: “He had been well groomed by Shepherd in the art of keeping Chiefs of Staff and others away from the Minister” and that “he was not lacking in his appreciation of the Minister’s increased independence on the secretary by this action”.

Nevertheless, Shedden took up his new duties with confidence and with the knowledge that a service department of state undergoes its supreme tests for efficiency and effectiveness only in time of war. He was able to look back too through the corridors of time and to recall the department’s performance during the War of 1914 - 18. Although he resolved to make his performance better next time, he could not, as permanent head of the department, foresee with certainty that he had less than two years to make his contribution to the nation’s preparations for war.

ABBREVIATIONS
CID Committee of Imperial Defence, London
CPD Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates
CPP Commonwealth Parliamentary Papers
CPS Commonwealth Public Service of Australia
DQMG Deputy Quatermaster - General.

NOTES
1. Sir Robert Menzies in The Measure of the Years, said: “I used the words “Civil Service” and not the more statutory phrase “Public Service”, not only because I have always been in the habit of doing so, but because public service, I believe, extends far beyond employment under the Crown”, p 149.
2. In saying this one should not overlook the Civil volumes of the Official History of Australia in the War of 1939 - 45, Sir Paul Hasluck’s Diplomatic Witness, (1980), and Colonel J.P. Buckley’s useful paper “Sir Frederick Shedden” published in Defence Force Journal, Canberra, 1985, No. 50, pp 21 - 49.
3. After Sir Frederick Shedden’s death his books were sold in the Secondhand Department, then managed by Mr John Holroyd, of Robertson and Mullens Ltd, 107 Elizabeth Street, Melbourne.


10. A useful paper on Admiral Creswell is that of Robert Hyslop namely "The Royal Australian Naval College's Debt to Admiral Creswell" published in the Canberra Historical Journal, September 1986, pp 7 - 12. No published biography of Admiral Creswell exists. An authoritative one in manuscript form has existed for some years.

11. No biography has been published on the official life of General Hoad. The only research paper of substance published on his official life is that of Warren Perry, "The Military Life of Major-General Sir John Charles Hoad", The Victorian Historical Magazine, Melbourne, August 1959, pp 141 - 204.

12. The importance of history in training was for long recognised in the British Army where instruction in the history of a recruit's regiment formed part of his recruit training. A civil servant's "regiment" is his department of state. For potentialities in the study of History see Warren Perry, "The Nature and Significance of Military History: How to make its study more useful in Military Training", Published in Defence Force Journal, Canberra, No. 42, September - October 1963, pp 21 - 38.

13. After Sir Frederick Shedden's death a copy of Sir Thomas L. Heath's The Treasurer, published in "The Whitehall Series" in 1927 was found among his own books. Shedden followed the practice, not of saying his object was to pursue a degree course in Law. He then abandoned his university studies. When he resumed them a decade later his goal had changed from a degree in Law to a degree in Commerce.

14. The Army staff in Shedden's time was a triumvirate. It consisted of three separate staffs - that of the Branch of the General Staff, under the chief of the General Staff, the Branch of the Adjutant-General under the Adjutant-General, and the Branch of the Quartermaster-General. In practice these three staffs were unified in a subtle way. The C.G.S. was responsible for co-ordinating the work of these three staffs and he usually held a higher rank than the A.G. and the Q.M.G.


25. Frederick Geoffrey Shedden first entered the University of Melbourne as a matriculated student in 1915 when his object was to pursue a degree course in Law. He took two subjects only as a part-time student but he failed in both at the annual examinations in 1915. He then abandoned his university studies. When he resumed them a decade later his goal had changed from a degree in Law to a degree in Commerce.

26. Thomas Trumble sailed from Melbourne on 7 June 1927 in R.M.S. "Naldera" for London to assume duty as Official Secretary at the Australian High Commission there. See The Argus, 8 June 1927 p 18.

27. Malcolm Lindsay Shepherd disembarked in Melbourne on 29 August 1927 from the R.M.S. "Orama" from London to assume duty as Secretary of the Defence Committee, Melbourne vice Thomas Trumble. See The Argus, 29 August 1927, p 19(a).


36. Ibid, p 64.


Royal Australian Airforce Reserve to be Restructured

The Active Reserve element of the Royal Australian Air Force is being restructured to make greater use of reserve personnel.

The Chief of the Air Staff, Air Marshal Ray Funnell, said the Active Reserve’s role was to provide a surge capability in likely contingencies.

He said the organisation of the nine Reserve Squadrons would remain unchanged but each would be assigned specific roles and tasks and be under the command of the Air Commander Australia.

“Some Reserve members will need retraining as we align manpower needs with tasks but I expect the changes will be minimal”, Air Marshal Funnell said.

“Elements of the Reserve will be integrated with the Permanent Air Force for contingency operations; and peacetime activities will be directed to maintaining skills appropriate to surge needs”.

Air Marshal Funnell said a scheme was being implemented to offer selected Reserve aircrew an opportunity to maintain flying proficiency. The scheme is designed to provide back-up, if needed, to some operational flying activities.

“Developing this scheme depends on resources but we need the framework in place should the need for expansion arise”, he said.

Air Marshal Funnell said he viewed the Reserve as “a key element of the RAAF’s operational force” and a necessity with increasing resource constraints.

The RAAF has Reserve squadrons at all mainland capital cities as well as Newcastle and Townsville. Canberra’s No 28 Squadron also includes a detachment at Wagga.

The restructuring of the Active Reserve follows a two-year review. Other elements of the Reserve, including the inactive General Reserve, are now being reviewed.
By Lieutenant M. L. Bailey, RAN

Recent articles in the *Defence Force Journal* and other publications have discussed the use and control of airpower in Australia. Most of these have presented an array of false arguments coupled with outdated and obsolete doctrines in the cause of championing essentially parochial interests. Any objective discussion must first define why each service deserves its existence. To do this, one must first examine each service and its unique war winning function, if it has one.

**Armies as War Winners**

The Australian Regular Army (ARA) has the clearest war winning role - indeed the seminal one - for it is the only service that is capable of seizing and holding enemy territory. Armies can win wars without any but the most rudimentary naval support and in the teeth of total enemy aerial superiority. The North Vietnamese Army did exactly this in 1975 and the aerial supremacy of the South Vietnamese was totally irrelevant. Airpower in Vietnam was a failure. The USA used seven million tons of ammunition in World War Two and fifteen million tons in Vietnam between 1964 and 1972. Air Power absorbed about a third of the wars costs and delivered half of the munitions, but lost 3689 fixed and 4857 rotary winged aircraft valued at over $US 10 billion.

The high technology firepower provided by air power was not cheap and caused enormous collateral damage. It could never replace the infantryman - although that was exactly what the USAF attempted to do. Airpower failed in all respects in Vietnam:

While it could affect the relatively few larger battles of the war, it could not basically influence the strategic balance...
The air war against the DRV (Domestic Republic of Vietnam) was a failure from the inception...Nor could the United States manage to stop the logistical flow coming down the Ho Chi Minh trail.

Eventually USAF morale began to collapse in the face of loss ratios that an army might consider to be quite low.

In November (1972) some (tactical aircraft) began diverting their missions. When the B-52’s were sent to bomb Hanoi during Christmas 1972...tactical aircraft failed to show up to attack anti-aircraft defences, and fifteen B-52’s were shot down. At least one B-52 commander was tried for refusing to fly, but others threatened to follow him. Accordingly to one official study, there was a “near mutiny” among some B-52 crews.

The command of airpower in Vietnam was a mass of confusion as the USAF attempted to gain control of everything that flew. In addition to sparking great interservice rivalries, this USAF policy was compounded by the USAF’s division of itself into three separate commands. The result was wasteful duplication, bitter jurisdictional disputes and a command structure that rarely functioned properly.

**Naval Forces As War Winners**

With regard to the outcome of the Vietnam War, the role of the North Vietnamese naval forces was also negligible. Naval forces do, however have an unique war winning role. Unlike armies, they are not able to win a war alone, but Navies have an unique ability to prevent a maritime power from losing one. This was demonstrated most clearly by the Royal Navy between the Fall of France and Operation Barbarossa, when the RN alone kept the British Empire in the war, albeit at appalling cost to itself. The RN even enabled some limited counterattacks on the Axis periphery such as in North Africa. In addition Naval strength combined with embarked Army forces can win a war. This was proven in the Napoleonic wars, in the Pacific during the latter part of WWII and in the Falklands campaign of 1982. During the Falklands campaign the RAF played a very minor support role. The Fleet Air Arm and surface ships decimated the Argentine Airforce despite some losses of their own, and then the Marine and Army ground forces went on to overcome the Argentine Land forces and win the war. The
critical Argentine fault was that they totally failed in Joint Operations - and by this failure they ensured that the totality of their effort was greatly less than the sum of its parts. The RN lost about one twentieth of its combat power in destroying about three fifths of the Argentine Airforces combat power, and that is a crushing victory in anyones terms.

The Argentine policy is the route to failure and waste and yet this parochial policy is apparent in articles discussing the role and function of the RAAF. Articles such as Wing Commander Cavanagh’s insist that the total independence of the services must be maintained at all costs. This attitude is based on the fear that the airforces support role will lead to its rapid loss of independence. This fear is well founded, but is irrelevant when compared to the national interest.

Medium Power Airforces

The question must be asked: what war winning functions do airforces have that is unique to them? The answer, for a medium power lacking the strategic nuclear role, is that they have no unique war winning functions at all, only support functions.

Independent airforces were established for a variety of reasons. One of the major ones was the perceived ability of bombers to destroy the enemy’s industrial means of winning a war before the army and navy could even get fully into action. This conventional strategic bombing role failed in World War Two (WWII), Korea and Vietnam. The USAAF did achieve a modicum of success against Japan with the B-29 fire raids of March 1945 but these attacks relied upon special circumstances to achieve a result that equated to the use of weapons of mass destruction - and they still failed to win the war alone, as Douhet prophesised they should. The Pacific war was won by the total annihilation of Japanese maritime power. In other words, Japanese maritime power proved too weak to provide Japan with the same war sustaining flow of supplies that the RN was able to provide the UK in 1940-41. The destruction of Japanese maritime power was accomplished nearly exclusively by the USN and its integrated land force, the USMC. With Japanese maritime power destroyed, even the existence of a huge Japanese Army became irrelevant. All they could do was starve, surrender, or wait for the axe to fall. With a medium power such as Australia, the airforce has no role or function other than that of supporting the two war winning services. It cannot be argued that the RAAF or any other non-nuclear medium power airforce has an independent strategic function. Their function is purely that of support. Once this point is comprehended all the superfluous and mystical arguments about the unity of air power, indivisibility of airpower and environmental specialisation fall away can be seen for the obsolete dross they are. Air staffs have always attempted to justify their existence, but any attempt to do so has swiftly resulted in the lack of such justification emerging. Therefore refuge has always been sought in jargon and dogma.

‘The Air Ministry are primarily concerned with the maintenance of the object which is invariably the prosecution of the offensive, the only means by which the ultimate victory is possible’, wrote the Air Staff obscurely in 1936. ‘All naval strategy is primarily defensively designed towards the maintenance of the Fleet-in-being, where as we aim to strike directly at the source of all enemy airpower to accomplish the object by achieving the offensive aim’. If adherence to the principles of war produced jargon and concepts which confused the mind and encouraged the writing of such strategic gibberish as this, it might perhaps be best to do without it.

Things change little, for the RAAF has come to the realisation that it has no justification for its existence. Yet again, refuge is being taken in ‘strategic gibberish’ in an attempt to bury this fact.

Historical Roots

It should be noted that all of the functions of airpower were developed by the users in WWII and that the Australian Army was the first to make use of airpower fully integrated with all of the other forms of military power. Arguably, this was Australia’s major contribution to the art of war - that of proving in battle the concepts that have led to what is now termed joint warfare. The very first fully integrated major attack involving infantry, artillery, tanks and aircraft was conducted at Hamel on 4 July 1918, by a combined Australian Division under General Monash. Even
A cursory study of this attack proves that Monash and his staff had a sound knowledge of and ability to use airpower in all its battlefield roles. At Hamel aircraft were employed for local aerial superiority, tactical reconnaissance, close air support and deception. Their use was totally integrated to provide the maximum possible support to those who actually won the battle, the combined infantry - tank teams. This battle became the model for the bite-and-hold tactics that broke the trench deadlock on the Western Front and eventually destroyed the German Army's ability to continue fighting. The aircraft employed at Hamel were operated by the Army, and it was study of this action and the Amiens Offensive of August 1918 that led the Germans to develop the concept of 'Blitzkrieg' warfare.

This example is not by any means unique but the successful use of airpower by the British Army and by the RN during WWI was lost during the 1920s when the RAF took over everything that flew. Australia simply copied what the British did with no thought for our own military needs, a classic case of mindlessly following the different needs of a superpower.

The case of the RN is most instructive. The RN led the world in the development and employment of airpower for maritime operations but with the transfer of the RNAS to the RAF this ceased to be true. On 1 April 1918 the RNAS was a powerful force but by April 1924 the number of RAF aircraft devoted to maritime operations had shrunk to a mere 78, while the RN had three aircraft carriers in service and three building for a total of 208 hangar spaces on these ships alone.

The RN lost its lead in the application of maritime airpower and was never able to regain it. This was to cost them very dearly in WWII, but even after the last minute re-establishment of the FAA in May 1939 the RAF insisted that it was able to fulfill the maritime function. The patent absurdity of this was demonstrated later with the RAF's refusal to release strategic bombers for maritime work. The RAF in WWII was fiercely parochial and accepted only grudgingly the validity of any need for close co-operation with the Army or Navy. Nowhere was there a more graphic illustration of the strategic and maritime failure of airforces than the British collapse in Malaya in 1941-42.

Malaya and Singapore - The Role of Airpower in the Defeat

In August 1940 the War Cabinet gave the RAF the main responsibility for defending Malaya and Singapore. The RAF was asked to send modern aircraft to re-equip the squadrons in the area, it failed to do so. No modern aircraft were sent as the bomber campaign against Germany had first call in response to the dream of ending the war by strategic bombing alone. No modern fighters were sent even though very large numbers of them were available in the UK.

The greatest loser was the Army, caught deployed forward to protect RAF airfields containing no useful aircraft and frequently evacuated by the RAAF and RAF (sometimes in panic) at an early date. Caught in this manner the Army could never regain its balance and was progressively smashed by the Japanese.

The second greatest loser was the RN, forced against its will to hurry capital ships to the region as a deterrent. These were caught and sunk by the torpedo bombers of the Imperial Japanese Navy. The FAA's 453 Squadron failed to provide the aircover that had been promised, something the RN has never forgotten. Indeed the first fighter arrived at the scene just in time to see the death throes of the Prince of Wales. However, even the outdated Buffaloes with which they were equipped would have been able to break up the attacking formations of unescorted G3M and G4M1 bombers.

Sicily 1943 - The Failures of Airpower

It has been stated that operational and organisation unity coupled with environmental independence are necessary for military effectiveness. In the case of airforces this is the recipe for failure. Some historical examples serve to illuminate this.

There can be no doubt that the Desert Air Force (DAF) which supported the 8th Army in North Africa was a superb support tool. The DAF provided excellent close air support and air superiority support. They kept the enemy aircraft from harassing the war winners and also maintained their separate identity. However Coningham regarded himself as part of the 8th Army team and co-ordinated his headquarters very closely with the Army. His
was a good example of joint operations and he functioned under army operational control to provide superb tactical air support that greatly eased the 8th Army's path to victory in the desert campaigns.

The air forces assigned to the invasion of Sicily had almost total organisational and operational independence. They were unified under one airforce commander, Tedder, and fulfilled all of Cavanagh's requirements for most effective use, that is:

As the air is a separate and independent dimension, airpower also needed a unity of co-ordination, organisation and command, along environmental lines, for its most effective use.16

The Allied Commander in Chief was General Alexander but he gave little policy guidance to Tedder and so he was able to function purely as an airman. He set the priorities and allocated not only the assets but the missions to be fulfilled. Air power in the Sicily campaign approached perfection in Cavanagh's terms. It was a dismal failure. The airforce gave very little effective support to the army or navy and despite overwhelming aerial superiority and much greater resources totally failed to provide a fraction of the support that the DAF had given the 8th Army. Even during the brilliantly executed German evacuation the airforce failed. The Germans evacuated Sicily in broad daylight in the teeth of total Allied aerial supremacy. They evacuated 54723 men, 57 tanks, 163 guns, 18665 tons of supplies, 9789 soft skinned vehicles for the loss of one life, despite 2514 sorties against them. This was only 25% of the sorties flown by Tedder's Airforce, the rest were wasted on his strategic targets.

So ineffective was allied aerial interdiction of Messina that; 'with justifiable sarcasm, Admiral Ruge stated that by 'taking Anglo-Saxon habits into account' the Germans were able to make excellent use of these predictable respites'. Some of these predictable respites were that airstrikes were almost never made during the lunch hour, dawn and in the afternoon.20

Allied ground units suffered more casualties from their own aircraft than from axis aircraft, and often even their most desperate appeals for help fell on deaf ears. When the Hermann Goering and Livorno Divisions launched their counterattack at Gela on 11 July 1943, the US 1st Divisions frantic appeals for air support went unheeded, although the Axis forces had good air support from their airforces despite allied aerial superiority. Allied air support was utterly inadequate.21

Fortunately for that division the warships offshore were able to and willing when it came to support. Their naval gunfire support and the desperate bravery of the US infantry managed to hold the counter-attack, but the infantry took thousands of unnecessary casualties due to the failure of the airforce.

...the air chiefs elected to place their priority of effort on interdiction instead of close air support of the assault forces. The large number of sorties are a misleading statistic of what amounted to a serious breakdown of close air support. ...The Panzers on the Gela plain were sitting ducks had air support appeared to assist the hard-pressed ground forces. ...The system for requesting prompt air support was virtually useless and left the airmen with the final decision whether or not a request mission was flown. The requests for the 'Big Red One' (1st Division) were anything but frivolous and went unanswered.22

German resupply was made more difficult by Tedder's intensive 'strategic' target of opportunity sweeps, but overall the allied airforces had very little impact on the ground fighting in Sicily, except in that they devastated most of the major towns and caused heavy civilian losses.

The Sicilian campaign gave air power proponents a chance to show what they could do given maximum independence; to show what they could do alone to win the campaign. They failed, and 60,000 effective enemy troops held up their 450,000 opponents for 32 days and then escaped without loss.

The Problem of Pace

One major problem with air forces is that of pace. Due to the high speed of aircraft their operators tend to think in terms of hours. Aircraft impose a very short ranged time frame upon their operators, but campaigns, let alone wars, are not won in hours or minutes, they are won in months or even years. The Army and Navy operate on a realistic strategic timescale, even though individual battles may
take days for the Army or just minutes for the Navy. Another factor is staying power. As Operation Corporate proved, airstrikes are very violent and have great shattering power but they are over very swiftly and enemy morale is not greatly affected, especially if he can shoot back, however inefficiently. The defenders of Port Stanley airfield did not have their fighting power sapped and morale broken by airstrikes, but by a continual 24 hour drizzle of naval gunfire to which they could not even respond. Airforces lack any ability to keep an enemy force under continual harassing fire for days on end without respite.

**The Problem of Narrow Specialisation**

The specialised forte of airpower is the high-tech delivery of a very large amount of ordnance upon a target in a very short time. The problem with this in Australia is one of attitude and application, for the narrow military specialists of the RAAF have become obsessed with the problems of their function. This has led them to believe that no-one else could ever possibly comprehend the ability of the weaponry at their disposal. If this were not so tragic it would be highly amusing, for the tail now wags the dog. This problem would not arise if the military expertise of these narrow specialists could be broadened. The only way to do this is simply to abandon the idea of maintaining an independent service with no inherent war winning function.

This would make a lot of sense for Australia. At the moment what Australia is doing is modelling “its defence forces on nations with vastly different resource bases and national objectives.” This is true, for the RAAF is modelled on the RAF and influenced heavily by the USAF. Does Australia need this service? Should we continue our “traditional approach of half copying the forces of large allies?”

**The RAAF and Joint Warfare**

It should be pointed out at this juncture that the existence of the RAAF as an independent service is essentially an irrelevant topic in any case. In any war the RAAF will be tasked along the same lines that Coningham's DAF was tasked in WWII. In terms of RAAF assets these will be assigned by the CDF to support the war winning services in accordance with the national objective. He will not be assigning them permanently for one task but responsively and as they are needed. By Joint Force doctrine, they will be assigned holistically, where they can most benefit the national aim and not in accordance with false doctrine and parochial interests. This unity of application of airpower inherent in the rationale behind Joint Force doctrine has already removed any basis for the independent existence of the RAAF, but has brought forth the predictable howls of anguish from the followers of the old, false doctrines of airpower. This is particularly true of those who seek a strategic role for the RAAF. The concept that the RAAF exists to “attack an enemy’s war fighting capacity; that is, to inflict moral or material damage directly on his homeland,” is incorrect. This concept implies that the RAAF will seek to conduct a strategic bombing campaign and succeed where the superpowers have failed. This concept is that of Mitchell and Douhet, and was proven to be wrong in WWII, Korea and Vietnam. Indeed, twentieth century airforces seem to have a penchant for flattening cities and slaughtering vast numbers of civilians. This should not be Australia's aim.

The idea that the RAAF is capable of any great strategic impact by use of conventional weapons is simple self-delusion. A strategic strike force of around twenty aircraft is incapable of great deeds, but only tactically, and there is little chance of CDF - the 'big picture' foremost in his mind - allowing these assets to be wasted by permitting the RAAF to pursue the chimera of an independent strategic bombing campaign.

Any insistence on conducting Strategic Strike and Air superiority simultaneously will have the same effect that it had when it was tried in Sicily in 1943. Assets will be wasted, the war winning services will be denied the air support that is the sole reason for the RAAF's existence, and only the national enemy will benefit. Such a misuse of airpower by using it in a collection of roles instead of holistically would have grave implications for the conduct for any battle. It must never be forgotten that a war is won by winning land and sea battles, not by attempting to use airpower in some single war winning strategic strike to obliterate the enemy's means of conducting the war. This is already a thrice proven failure.
However, penny packeting is something to be avoided, particularly with assets as scarce and flexible as aircraft. That is why we have a CDF. He is the one who maintains the big picture at the national level and allocates assets to the Maritime or Land Commanders. Unlike Sicily where Tedder independently set all the wrong priorities and prolonged the cost and length of what should have been a quick victorious campaign, the CDF in a future conflict should not be a narrow technical specialist and should have the big picture at heart. With good advice he should be able to avoid this type of wasteful muddle. He will be able to assign assets to the really important war winning tasks, be these land or maritime. The ADF is about the national interest, not about parochial interests.

The Issue of Base Vulnerability

Air force bases are among the most vulnerable and easily targeted high value assets in Australia. They are huge, with enormous perimeters, easy access and they are always close to good road, rail, sea or air transport facilities. None of our airbases are hardened and in war it would take most of the ARA to secure them -something one suspects the ARA will be rather too busy to do.

A great deal of false argument was raised over the issue of carrier vulnerability in the days when Australia possessed a balanced fleet, but the issue of base vulnerability has been met with deafening silence. These huge, easily accessible and defenceless targets can be targeted decades in advance as they are immobile. Hundreds of millions of dollars worth of aircraft sit in the open - and raising the question of vulnerability with members of the SAS has brought the author much laughter and the assurance that a few platoons of special force soliders would destroy nearly all of the aircraft, ammunition, fuel, workshops and other vital ground installations within days of the decision to begin operations.

If one is serious about war fighting, then surely we should copy what Singapore has done at Tengah. The airbase there is fully combat hardened along Israeli lines, with hardened underground hangers and taxiways, fortified munitions dumps and fully prepared defences against air and land attack.

It makes no sense to have FA-18s in quantity if they can be easily destroyed by a small number of special forces troops. It makes even less sense if these assets, and others, are not to be controlled by the people they were purchased to support, the Navy and Army.

Aircraft embarked on ships are much more difficult to destroy as their platforms are mobile and always operate on the defence in depth principle. This contrasts strongly with the pathetic vulnerability of fixed airbases.

The Cost Effectiveness of Disbanding the RAAF

Bearing all of this in mind the only real questions revolve around the cost effectiveness of terminating the RAAF, and the ability of the other two services to absorb the RAAF's assets. This presents no insoluble problems and should actually save money if the Navy and Army can eradicate the waste of manpower inherent in the current RAAF system.

That the RAAF is inefficient in its use of manpower is not an issue, at least in any other than RAAF circles. Table 1 is a very crude measure that compares a variety of medium and small powers with a simple manpower per combat aircraft ratio. Nothing else should be read into this table other than the broader comparison, for each airforce mentioned obviously has differing aircraft types, different services contracted out to civilian organisations and a host of other variables not taken into account. This is a crude measure used to gain a simple ratio as a means of pointing out that the RAAF has a comparatively high number of personnel per aircraft.

The source is easily verifiable as it is the Strategic Balance section of the 1989 Annual Reference Edition of Pacific Defence Reporter.

From this table one can see that the RAAF has a comparatively high ratio. Even when the 27 FA-18 aircraft not in service when the base information was published are included, the RAAF's ratio is still high at 202:1.

If one could use this crude measure to postulate that the RAAF was as efficient as the Dutch Airforce, it would have a manpower strength of about 8850, or 29% of its current strength! The Dutch airforce operates aircraft that are as maintenance intensive as RAAF aircraft and 28% of its personnel are short term conscripts useful for little but unskilled
Table 1: Comparison of Medium Power Air Force Manpower per Combat Aircraft Ratio
(Source Pacific Defence Reporter Annual 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Air Force Personnel</th>
<th>Combat Aircraft</th>
<th>Personnel Combat Aircraft</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>South Africa</td>
<td>13000 (2400 Conscript)</td>
<td>324</td>
<td>40:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>25000 (10000 Conscript)</td>
<td>441</td>
<td>56:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>37000 (When mobilised)</td>
<td>577</td>
<td>64:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>18100 (5000 Conscript)</td>
<td>277</td>
<td>79:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand*</td>
<td>4200</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>98:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Argentina</td>
<td>15000 (5000 Conscript)</td>
<td>137</td>
<td>109:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nigeria</td>
<td>9500</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>113:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Turkey</td>
<td>57400 (36800 Conscript)</td>
<td>409</td>
<td>140:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sweden</td>
<td>65000 (When mobilised)</td>
<td>446</td>
<td>145:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spain</td>
<td>32500</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>155:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>95000 (34300 Conscript)</td>
<td>580</td>
<td>163:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Switzerland</td>
<td>45000 (When mobilised)</td>
<td>272</td>
<td>165:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom</td>
<td>93500</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>169:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brazil</td>
<td>50700</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>235:1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>22600</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>265:1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Small power, included for comparison.

From this type of comparison there is no doubt that the RAAF is inefficient in its use of very expensive regular personnel. If it could reduce its manpower ratio to an average of Table 1, (that is 133 per aircraft, or roughly on par with Turkey) a reduction of about 7700 personnel would be theoretically possible.

It should be borne in mind that both the RAN and ARA have rationalised their manpower requirements, an evolution the RAAF has not attempted. It is interesting to note that when the RAN lost its air arm, it also lost around two thousand personnel. It will be interesting to see if the RAAF loses any personnel after losing its rotary winged component. Ideally, these personnel should either be transferred to the Army (along with a slice of the budget) or cut.

Absorbing the RAAF into the other two services should not be an insurmountable problem and should save a lot of money.

Certainly this would prove no problem to the RAN. Before Australia repeated in 1982 the catastrophic British decision of 1 April 1918 the FAA operated and supported seven different aircraft types from one base. Because of the space constraints that apply to embarked operations, Naval Squadron structures have evolved to be significantly more manpower efficient than Air force structures. For example, RAAF airframe and engine trades are both combined in the Naval Air Technical Airframe category.

Both services have or can develop the expertise to properly employ organic airpower. The RAN had this ability and the assets up until 1982, and remains the subject matter experts when it comes to maritime operations. To suggest that the RAN does not possess the expertise to properly utilise organic aerial assets is ludicrous and the same holds true of the ARA. They are the subject matter experts on land operations and have a huge pool of expertise when it comes to close air support (CAIRS) and the delivery of ordinance onto targets. The only area where the ARA might have some difficulty in establishing expertise is in aerial superiority. However the remaining RAAF expertise in this area will provide a working basis on which to gain such expertise, as has been the case with the Battlefield
Support Helicopter.

The whole problem evolves around the rationale behind maintaining an independent service with no function other than that of supporting the war winning services. Surely if this is affordable by a medium power then the independent support service should be giving logistic rather than combat support. An independent logistic support service would at least made a lot more sense than maintaining a combat service with no strategic function. In fact this is the best use that could be made of the majority of RAAF personnel, that is to provide logistic support for the air arms of the two fighting services.

There would be great benefits in converting the small operational portion of the RAAF into two organic arms of the RAN and ARA. Career progression for officers would be enhanced for those who mature beyond the simple desire to do nothing but fly aircraft. They would have both an 'air' career path to follow and a regular career path within each service. Using the RAN as an example, those ex-A4 pilots who remained in the service after their flying days were over have proven that pilots have a lengthy and fruitful general Naval career after having a long and fruitful career in aviation. The same has proven true of all ex-FAA officers who stayed on. In addition, as promotion beyond Commander in the RAN is judged solely on merit and not by specialisation, there is no reason why such officers cannot reach flag rank. This guarantees that organic airpower retains a prime place in each service, as it does now by the same process in the USN.

Airpower is a pivotal support in modern warfare, but is must be closely integrated into operations by the subject matter experts of those operations. To suggest that the RAN and ARA lack the natural inclination or will to operate in the air defies the fact that they have done so for decades and that they actually invented the whole gamut of air tasks in the first place. Air could not take a back seat with either the RAN or ARA, after all, it never has in the past and is vital to the success of both land and maritime operations. To suggest that the organic air component of either force would be relegated in importance is tantamount to suggesting that both services lack any vestige of professionalism.

Conclusion

The central argument of this article is that the RAAF and most other medium power air forces are unnecessary in strategic terms and wasteful in manpower terms. It has been proven that they lack both the strategic rationale and unique war winning function that can alone justify their existence. This means that they are support services only, and with this point established one can see the dilemma that any air force is placed in when Joint Force concepts are initiated. Such concepts, when implemented, tend to knock away the false, old theories on which independent air forces were established in the first place. Once these long invalidated theories are seen to be false under the harsh spotlight of the Joint Warfare philosophy, where lies the philosophical rationale behind the continued existence of the independent, non-nuclear medium power airforce? The only real question which remain relates to cost effectiveness and military effectiveness. However, while other nations seem to have attained a good ratio of manpower to combat aircraft, Australia most certainly has not. (Table 1 refers). This is very wasteful of manpower and money, because the RAAF is not providing the bang-for-bucks that others are attaining. If this can be improved and if the RAAF can be fully integrated in its land and maritime support functions then - and only then - will it be worth keeping, for it will be fulfilling the aerial support component of the national task. In this situation, the war winning services will attain the level of needed organic support that they require. This is effectively the same result as disbanding the RAAF and re-creating the AFC and FAA. If, however, the RAAF is unwilling or unable to adapt to their support role, and unwilling or unable to attain a reasonable ratio of manpower to combat aircraft, then the RAAF should be disbanded. This should simply be regarded as evolution in action.

NOTES

2. Ibid, p. 198
3. Ibid, p. 190
4. Ibid, p. 190
5. Ibid, p. 365
6. Ibid, p. 144
Lieutenant Bailey is currently serving at HMAS CRESWELL. He joined the RAN in 1979 and has served in HMAS Ships MELBOURNE, TOBRUK, and YARRA, as well as Navy Office. He holds a BA in Military History from the Defence Force Academy and a Diploma of Applied Science from the Royal Australian Naval College.

**Australian Soldiers in Malaysian Exercise**

Members of the Australian Army rifle company at Butterworth Air Base took part in a joint exercise with Malaysian Army personnel in June. Called Haringaroo, the exercise was held in Kedah State, within 100 kilometres of Butterworth, from June 10 to 22. Exercise Haringaroo was part of a well-established series of bilateral exercises that usually occur three times a year. The previous exercise was conducted in May of this year. The Malaysian Army-controlled exercise provided the Australians with practice in the planning, preparation and conduct of offensive and defensive operations in conventional war.
Book Reviews

TONKIN GULF YACHT CLUB-US CARRIER OPERATIONS OFF VIETNAM.
By Rene Francillon

Reviewed by Vic Jeffery, Department of Defence

This most important reference work covers United States carrier operations in the Tonkin Gulf from the early 1960s until the end of the Vietnam War.

Written by one of the USA's foremost authorities on aviation, Rene Francillon, this book is supported with 172 photographs, 11 tables and 3 maps.

There are some excellent photos including several bridge strike shots and another of an F-4B crewman ejecting from a flammed-out, anti-aircraft damaged aircraft over the ocean.

Divided into three sections, this 214 page book is crammed with information relating to 21 aircraft carriers and 14 aircraft types in 24 different configurations.

The operations and deployments of Task Force 77 are discussed in the first part of the book; the second section is devoted to the role of the USS Coral Sea - which made the longest war cruise and spent more days on line than any other “Yacht Club” carrier.

The last half of the book offers extensive appendices that list ships and squadron deployments, aircraft operations, and aerial engagements including missions, victories and losses.

Published by the Conway Maritime Press of London, this book is distributed in Australia by Princeton Books, Cnr Mills and Herald Street, Cheltenham, Victoria.

Like all good books, it is not cheap at $75 rrp.

However, it is a most valuable companion to any student of the naval air war in Vietnam. Recommended reading.


Reviewed by Michael Fogarty, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Dr Hudson is Editor of Historical Documents, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. A former journalist, he was Associate Professor of History, University of New South Wales, before taking up his current appointment in 1976. Arguably, he is this country's foremost historian of diplomacy. This book continues the excellent tradition of intellectual enquiry and sustained scholarship he has established in earlier works too numerous to mention here. The author received a bicentennial award for his highly acclaimed biography of Lord Casey. This latest book continues with the themes developed in earlier studies, namely, our reluctant search for independence and the evolutionary march of our own foreign policy.

In 1956 the Anglo-French Suez Canal company which controlled the revenue from the Suez Canal, was nationalised by President Nasser of Egypt. While Britain and France prepared to protect their interests in this vital shipping link, Israel seized this opportunity to launch her own attack against Egypt on 29 October.

An ultimatum was sent by Britain and France ordering Egypt and Israel to cease fire and withdraw their troops, and demanding the right to occupy Port Said. Egypt rejected this and sank blockships in the canal. On 5 November after an aerial bombardment British and French paratroopers landed on Port Said followed by a seaborne landing the next day.

World opinion soon forced Britain, France and Israel to agree to a ceasefire and a United Nations Emergency Force was sent in to supervise the truce and restore order. On 7 March the Suez Canal was re-opened, but Britain's influence in the Middle-East was greatly diminished.

Dr Hudson explains why the Suez affair still deserves our attention, as a classic foreign policy study - particularly when remembering that the five countries supporting intervention included Australia and New Zealand. Why did we get involved in this controversial decision? Our Prime Minister of the time assumed the role of an 'honest broker'. Australia was also a member of the UN Security Council. Menzies
was sent to appease Nasser who was unmoved - Nasser held on to the canal and to power. Eden was not so fortunate. The author reminds us that "...Australia was deceived at every level". However, British-Australian relations survived relatively intact no doubt due to the close personal relations between the respective political figures. Elsewhere, Anglo-American relations for a time were severely strained and Anglo-French ties more so by the outcome. Clearly, the author tells us that the events did not serve our interests either.

Casey and the Department of External Affairs exercised caution yet Menzies' traditional views, despite his idealism, proved short-sighted as the title "Blind Loyalty" suggests. Hindsight is always a good friend yet he was not there when needed in 1956. Another Commonwealth partner Canada chose not to back what then appeared to be a disastrous course of action. The author unwittingly gets it very right when the last two words of the introduction assume the imperative, namely, "...be Australian".

The author correctly addresses our real insecurities of the time - our psychological dependency on the greater powers. The book properly analyses these processes as unnecessary baggage carried over the late nineteenth century. While the treatment is certainly the audit of a major foreign policy decision, the author wisely avoids calling in the fraud squad.

Moreover, the methodological approach is sound. Here the author introduces standard research patterns to show his command of the detail. For example, he examines press reporting on the event. He tables voting results among the states at the United Nations. He also comments on political soundings of the issue through a survey of various gallup polls. It appears a majority of Australians supported our involvement and position. From this he draws well-stated conclusions. Dr Hudson reminds us that there was not yet a national press and foreign affairs did not receive the heavy and daily attention we now take for granted.

This book is short yet comprehensive. The material is arranged in eight chapters allowing for a manageable development of the themes. The level of decision-making in Canberra is assessed and some hawks and doves are identified although the author does not perch them together in a coconut shy.

Young departmental officers in the form of Sir Nicholas Parkinson and Dr Alan Renouf had their role to play in the policy process showing the leadership which came to be recognised later. Although Menzies did not follow Casey's advice on this occasion we also have to recognise the particular mind-set of the period when imperial ties were more evident than today. Again, Menzies was paramount in cabinet and the author explores the tensions between Menzies and Casey in their political relationship. Sir Arthur Tange recognised the looming disaster and continually urged restraint. Indeed he emerges from the episode as a very impressive figure and his presence as Secretary reminds us that his account of the events would add to the literature also.

In many ways, Menzies shared some affinity with the Sphinx - perhaps the true story rests with them. The poor Sphinx has witnessed much perfidy in the sands over 5,000 years and this riddle added to the legend. Was Menzies an agent or dupe in his mediating role? The author asks whether Menzies knew more than he let on.

What was the legacy of Suez? As a military operation, "Musketeer" was compromised in that the political will was surrendered so close to the final military objective. To be sure, this arboresque had chronic effects in the region and other world capitals. Pressure from the United States forced a backdown. "Nothing had been gained by the invaders: the canal remained in Egyptian hands, Nasser was not dislodged...much had been lost". It was left to the United Nations peacekeeping force to restore some sense of order. The invasion force returned to their depots casting long shadows in the desert - shadows which loomed over cabinet rooms in Europe to eclipse some of the protagonists in this affair.

Eden was a political casualty of Suez - resigning early in the new year. Harold Wilson was reported to have said that Mr Eden had a very expensive education: Eton and Suez. The last of the Anglo-French forces withdrew from Egyptian territory by 22 December 1956. The Suez Canal was finally cleared for shipping on 8 April 1957. The effects reached Fleet Street too - including the newspaper The Observer.
Polite talk acknowledges that *The Observer* represents an alternative to conservative thinking. Elsewhere it was recorded that this paper felt that its position on Suez was their finest hour, despite an almost catastrophic loss of circulation which took a decade to recover. While “Blind Loyalty” is a serious political critique in some ways it owes allegiance to the traditions of the French detective novel. There is a credible plot, many suspicious characters, clues to behaviour, deceit, betrayal, vanity and some very unconvincing alibis among the perpetrators - and mystery for sure. All the better as it is non-fiction too. Furthermore this book is an intelligent offering which will rank among the accepted texts.

It was not a happy experience being an Australian in Egypt during those difficult times. There were many diplomatic repercussions and Colonel Nasser’s Government severed relations with Australia and Sir Roden Cutler and his staff were expelled and our diplomats were not to return until 1960.

Dr Hudson is alive to the sentimental and nostalgic yearnings in our political psyche and how they are manifest in greater dependency relationships. The author modestly suggests that the nature of our society (in its relationship with its founding state) awaits an adequate historian. While his sincerity is apparent a disclaimer is not necessary as his book addresses this point most competently as “Blind Loyalty” analyses the politics of dependency and its psychological and political costs. The questions posed provide their very answer. He makes his point and quite well too.

Dr Hudson properly avoids censorious judgements and takes an objective, rational view of the issues. He describes the milieu, the attitudes of the era, and gives explanations as to why the politicians acted as they did - allowing their actions to be judged for what they were. Truly, they were creatures of their time as the last chapter suggests. Also, he does not pass judgement upon the policies of the British Government during those troubled years. For him, it is enough to recognise the peculiar political and civic cultures at the time which prevailed - in both countries.

In all, “Blind Loyalty” is a most welcome and sensible contribution to Australia’s thin shelf of diplomatic history. The book is well-reasoned, literate and enjoyable. While it will find traditional acceptance in its given market, the book both invites and deserves a wider readership. Seventy-five years after Anzac we are now beginning to take some responsibility for our history. As we lurch towards the next millenium now might be a good time to remember the lessons learnt at Suez which we should also not forget. This fine book shows us how.

**A COAST TOO LONG-DEFENDING AUSTRALIA BEYOND THE 1990s**

By Ross Babbage, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney 1990, Price $18.95

Reviewed by LTCOL R.E. Bradford

The problem of defending Australia and her territories has and will probably always be a difficult one to solve. Many things make it particularly difficult ranging from our geographical position and layout to our relatively small population base. Add to that our long term reliance on alliances, the rapidly changing political position in Europe, the lack of a readily definable (at least believable) threat, our worsening economic situation and the political situation in the Asian and Pacific Region and you have a recipe for continuing defence uncertainties. The continued technological development and capital development of our Armed Forces in recent years adds a further avenue of doubt in the eyes of our near neighbours. Yet there must be an achievable, feasible solution, and in this book, Babbage develops a theme which adds considerably to discussion on the defence of Australia.

An increasing number of political and defence commentators of late have begun to question the continued high expenditure by Australia on capital equipment. Such questions of doubt are based on the political liberalisation in Eastern Europe, and the subsequent easing of east west tensions. They feel that this reduction in militarisation effects our allies and will subsequently flow on to our region. Babbage covers most comprehensively the types of threats from global nuclear war through to the more likely low level threats of political harassment of Australian diplomats abroad. Apart from the global warfare threat, he rightly points out that few of these scenarios rely upon the political condition of Europe.
and while the basis of conflict may not presently exist, the ingredients of future conflict abound in our region. We must therefore cater for these potential future conflicts, in our defence deliberations, concentrating on the most likely low level contingencies.

Babbage contends that in respect to preparing for these contingencies, a great deal more needs to be done. He feels that there are serious failings in our present strategies and that our force structure has not been sufficiently developed to suit the needs of these possible future conflicts. Our force structure he feels, remains more suited to our historical conventional of assisting allies rather than one of coping with the high priority low level contingencies. Few strategic proposals he suggests even show any promise in this area. Babbage further contends that Australia must develop an independent defence strategy because our circumstances differ greatly from that of other powers. His logic is attractive and is worthy of further consideration.

Given these failings and the present economic climate, how best can Australia defend itself? Babbage feels that we must develop more politically offensive options and be prepared to declare a clearly defined political stance. At the operational level he wants us to develop and refine operational strategy, especially assessing our strengths and weaknesses and developing plans accordingly. Special attention must be paid in the diplomatic area concentrating on the non military measures of trade, aid, financial and social fields which if developed sensibly as part of an overall package would be much more potent than military means. Babbage thus wants a truly national approach to defence as opposed to our current operational approach. Such changes would have implications on our force structure which would need careful development especially in the areas of special forces and electronic warfare.

Babbage also considers in great deal how best Australia can manage the various offshore contingencies of significance to our defensive position. The ASEAN grouping and Papua New Guinea are covered as is the developing region of the South West Pacific. However he covers in more detail the difficult problem of defence and utilisation in a defensive capacity our external territories of Christmas and Cocos Islands. Unlike many commentators, he ignores the defensive problems of the Islands, and concentrates instead on the positive aspects of the strategic significance of the island groups in any possible future conflicts. In this way he appears to open up other avenues of defensive postures that are worthy of further consideration.

I thoroughly enjoyed reading A Coast Too Long. The reader does not need to agree with its content as with many philosophies it lacks the concrete detail (especially financial) required for such theories to be put into practice. It does contribute however in a most logical manner to the ongoing debate in Australia our defence. Babbage provides a deal of ammunition (no pun intended) for those commentators who wish to see a more independent, almost non aligned approach by Australia in regional affairs. He backs up his discussion with excellent well situated maps and detailed tabular information, both of which enhance the overall impression one gains about the work. Recommended to all these wishing to contribute to the defence debate, and those merely wanting to become more informed on its content.

PILOTS AND REBELS by Dr Philip Towle, Pergamon Brassey, London, 1989 Price: $105

Reviewed by Wing Commander, Ian MacFarling, RAAF

The use of aircraft in wars against rebels or insurgents has always been the subject of heated argument. Many people, including some in the country employing the aircraft, have been highly critical of the use of sophisticated weapons against an opposition that is axiomatically poorer, less equipped, and perhaps fighting for a cause worthy of widespread support. Air power in this case seems an overreaction with connotations of bullying. The army supported by aircraft against this weak opposition is often highly critical of the air support provided; there is never enough - it is always late - the airmen are uncooperative; if only the land forces had full control they would use it properly and everything would be alright...The airmen are usually pained by all these slights on their abilities, courage and professionalism. "Everyone knows that air power is sophisticated and works best against
modern, urbanised societies that have a complex infrastructure. Using air power against rebels is a waste of many highly technical features of the aircraft. It is a scandalous misemployment of the latest technology. We don’t need such high-tech equipment to counter a bunch of rag-tag insurgents...but, by the nine gods of Lars Porsena, we do not want a less capable piece of kit to fly’..."

In such a climate of unnecessary acrimony what is required is a balanced review of the application of air power in unconventional war that gives a rigorous analysis of its successes and failures. Consequently, when the opportunity arose for the reviewer to read Pilots and Rebels: The Use of Aircraft in Unconventional Warfare 1918-1988 by Dr Phillip Towle he grabbed it. Prospect however far exceeded possession.

Why the disappointment? There are many interwoven reasons. The book is woolly. It has most of the information, but the author describes events rather than analyses them. In Greece, Helldiver aircraft were effective when other types had not been. What were the differences that had meant success or failure? Were there more Helldivers available so that constant pressure could be applied to the enemy, or was the aircraft a better delivery platform and why? Trainer aircraft and early jet fighters are criticised as being inadequate or inappropriate in many situations, yet there is no discussion on whether later jet trainers had any value in counter-insurgency (COIN) operations. This would have been valuable, because the A-37 Dragonfly - a modified jet trainer - was a success in South Vietnam. Also an analysis of what airborne forward air controllers (FACs) did in South Vietnam and what aircraft they preferred to control would have illuminated the discussion and could have helped show what types of aircraft were most suited to COIN work.

Other events are missed or glossed over. The Dutch adventures in Indonesia after World War Two are missed out completely, and the British action in Java in 1945-46 is covered in a sentence. The fact that the RAF flew more than 19000 sorties for more than 36000 flying hours in Java using P47 Thunderbolts, Mosquitos and Dakotas, and that they lost five aircraft in the operation, suggests that this was not a minor operation.

The construction of the book is irritating and its chapter titles are misleading. Several chapters end with a conclusion which includes data that do not appear in the main text. Simple people like the reviewer hurry back into the text thinking they have missed something. The last chapter (Chapter 4) takes up 37% of the book and is entitled “Helicopters and Insurgents”. This is misleading because much of the discussion centres on fixed wing aircraft and action in North Vietnam. I would have liked more analysis of helicopter activities in South Vietnam, including the use of the huge parachute-suspended bomb dropped from C130 Hercules aircraft to create instant helipads in primary jungle. C130 operations to resupply An Loc during the Easter 1972 invasion and the use of the same parachute bomb in the anti-personnel role to break the An Loc siege could have been examined as well.

The Neptune maritime patrol aircraft is mentioned in passing as a means of patrolling the wire fence on the Algerian-Tunisian border during the French attempts to subdue the Algerian uprising in the 1950s. This type of flexibility in using a large aircraft could have been discussed further with additional examples to try and analyse these strengths and weaknesses.

The US Army used the same aircraft to drop and monitor listening devices on the insurgent routes into South Vietnam. (The listening devices looked like bamboo stakes). The Dutch used the P2V7 Neptune in the airborne intercept role, tracking Indonesian Dakota aircraft with the Neptune’s radar, and shooting one down with four fixed 20mm cannon as it tried to drop paratroops into West New Guinea in 1962. The Indonesians were forced to use faster C130B aircraft on subsequent missions which disrupted their plans for using C130 elsewhere. RAF Shackletons were also used in COIN operations and the whole subject would have made a useful chapter in the book.

The author is also let down by his editors. There are misspellings, the Americal Division which perpetrated the My Lai massacre is described several times as the American Division. People, who are doubtless splendid men, appear by name without us being told who they are. Who was Bigeard? The reader should not have to go to another book to find the information. There is a list of aircraft at the
back of the book, with performance information given for each type, but many types mentioned in the book do not appear in the list. The maps have no scales and leave out places named in the text and, amazingly, Pakistan slips into a map of the North-West Frontier of 1919.

In summary, the book is a disappointment mainly because it has potential but does not live up to it. This is sad because the topic is worthy of rigorous study. Clausewitz wrote in a note during 1816 that on questions of war it is essential to have a balance between analysis and observation and between theory and experience. Dr Towle is undoubtedly an accomplished academic with a gift for observation and theory, but his study would have been better if it had had an experienced military input. The book sells for $105 and there are few copies in Australia. It would benefit the publisher and the author's reputation if they recalled the book and published a revised edition. I hope they do because it is a subject which all military organisations need to understand and an acknowledged reference work on the topic would be invaluable.

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**50th Anniversary of Cape Spada Action Presentation By Navy To The Australian War Memorial**

The Navy presented a uniform of its most famous hero, Vice Admiral Sir John Collins, to the Australian War Memorial in Canberra in July 1990. The presentation marked the 50th anniversary of the sinking of the Italian cruiser, *Bartolomeo Colleoni*, the RAN's most successful engagement of World War II.

The uniform presented has the rank insignia of a Captain - the same rank as Sir John wore when he led the attack by HMAS *Sydney* off Cape Spada, Crete, 50 years ago.

The presentation of the uniform - on loan to the memorial for its Naval gallery for 18 months from the RAN College - was made by the new Deputy Chief of Naval Staff, Rear Admiral Ian McDougall, to the Acting Director of the Memorial, Mr Brendon Kelson.
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