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# *Defence 2000 and the US National Defense Strategy*

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*Victory smiles upon those who anticipate the changes in the character of war, not upon those who wait to adapt themselves after the changes occur.*

Giulio Douhet<sup>1</sup>

## **Introduction**

1. In 2002, the White House published *The National Security Strategy of the United States*. In this document, the United States' so-called strategy of 'pre-emption' was introduced. In recent years, the controversy surrounding 'pre-emption' has overshadowed other important developments in US strategy. As a result, in March 2005, the historic first release of the United States' *National Defense Strategy (NDS)* went virtually unnoticed.

2. As the world enters the fourth year of the 'war against terrorism,' US allies would be well served to examine the implications of the *NDS*. In doing so, they must ask if the new strategy indicates a change to the US's position on their declaratory policy. If so, what are the areas of divergence and what might they mean for future relations?

3. In an attempt to answer these questions, this paper will analyse the strategic assumptions, assessments and intentions declared in *D2000/DU2003* that are likely to impact on the United States Government's position on Australian defence policy. To accomplish this aim, the paper compares and contrasts the declaratory policies of Australia and the US along the lines of the strategic environment, defence strategies and the resulting force structure decisions. The results from this analysis will shed light on the US Government's position on Australian defence policy. To begin the process, it is important to determine how both nations define the strategic environment.

## **Strategic environment**

### **Australia**

4. Australia's strategic environment includes those trends that affect Australia's security at the global, regional and immediate neighbourhood levels. *D2000* describes a global context with two key trends shaping the strategic environment: increased globalisation and the primacy of the United States. *D2000* also mentions the evolution of a more active and effective United Nations, as a significant and positive trend in the global context.<sup>2</sup>

5. In the Asia–Pacific region, the forces for peace and stability are described as strong.<sup>3</sup> The most important factor influencing the region is the relationship between China, Japan, Russia, India and the United States. In the immediate neighbourhood, an area described as a 'troubled region', *D2000* identifies potential problems in Southeast Asia and significant challenges to nations in the South Pacific.

6. *Defence Update 2003 (DU2003)* highlights changes in the strategic environment after *D2000* was published and asserts that the emergence of terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass

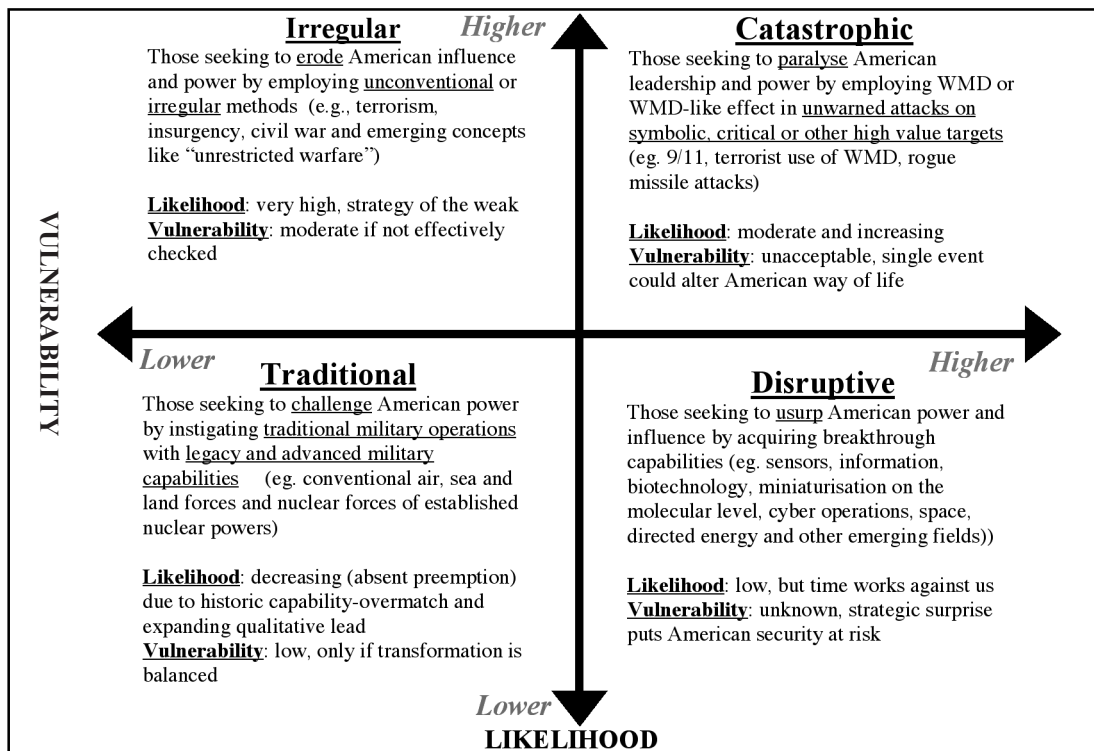
destruction (WMD) create an environment of ‘strategic uncertainty’. Despite increasingly stable relations between major powers and increased US strategic dominance, certainty and predictability in Australia’s strategic environment were decreased in the post-9/11 world.<sup>4</sup>

**United States**

7. The *NDS* begins by asserting that ‘America is a nation at war’, a statement that marks the attitude and direction of the entire document.<sup>5</sup> In a world characterised by uncertainty, two major trends mark the United States’ view of the security environment: maturing/emerging challenges and changing relationships.

8. The *NDS* lists maturing and emerging challenges according to their likelihood of occurrence and the level of US vulnerability. Figure 1 shows the four challenges that the United States faces.

9. The second trend defining the US strategic environment is changing relationships. These relationships are categorised along the lines of critical international partnerships, key states, problem states and non-state actors. International partnerships, as defined in the *NDS*, are adapting and broadening in response to challenges. Key states are those that face decisions about their roles in global and regional politics, economics and security.<sup>6</sup> Problem states are identified as hostile to US principles and potentially seeking WMDs or harbouring terrorists. Significant non-state actors are defined as a ‘collection of terrorists, insurgents, paramilitaries and criminals that seek to undermine legitimate governance.’<sup>7</sup>



**Figure 1: Maturing and Emerging Challenges Facing the United States<sup>8</sup>**

### Strategic environment congruence

10. The similar views of the strategic environment are not surprising for such close allies. Both nations see an environment that is highly uncertain, increasingly globalised, marred by the threat of terrorism and WMDs and dominated by US primacy. Some US ‘problem states’ would certainly be found in Australia’s so-called ‘troubled region’, while the US would call China, Russia and India ‘key states’. Finally, both documents highlight the importance of the Australia–US relationship (Australia is, by definition, a key ‘international partner’).

11. While there is significant agreement on the strategic environment, fundamental differences exist. First, the ‘nation at war’ statement establishes that the viewpoints are not simply extensions of one another and it marks a difference in tone that carries through the *NDS*. Second, the *NDS* does not mention the United Nations, a fact that suggests how, and with whom, the US will accomplish its strategy. Finally, each document has a different scope. Owen Harries describes this as the difference between ‘a great power, which has global and comprehensive interests and a smaller more modest state, whose interests and power are more circumspect and limited’.<sup>9</sup>

## DEFENCE STRATEGY

### Australia

12. Australia’s strategic objectives will be accomplished through a combination of relationships and defence tasks. *D2000* identifies Australia’s strategic objectives as:

- prevent/defeat an attack on Australia;
- foster security in the immediate neighbourhood;
- promote stability and cooperation in Southeast Asia;
- support strategic stability in the wider Asia–Pacific region; and
- support global security.

The accomplishment of these objectives is facilitated by strategic relationships spanning from the US alliance to relationships in the wider Asia–Pacific region, Southeast Asia, nearest neighbours and beyond the Asia–Pacific region.

13. The key elements of Australia’s strategy are found in the specific tasks that support the strategic objectives. Defending Australia is to be accomplished through a combination of self-reliance within an alliance framework, a maritime strategy emphasising defence in depth and proactive operations that promise to attack hostile forces as far from Australia’s shore as possible.<sup>10</sup> Australia intends to contribute to security of the immediate neighbourhood by resisting aggression and operating through lower-level operations. Supporting wider interests by contributing to international coalitions is also an important task in Australia’s strategy.

14. *DU2003* does not define a change in strategy from *D2000*. Rather, it suggests that ADF forces can expect an increased role in the security of the immediate neighbourhood and in support of wider interests. Emphasis is on coalitions, partnerships and international cooperation in fighting the terrorist and WMD threats.

## United States

15. Like *D2000*, the *NDS* defines US strategy by establishing strategic objectives and then emphasising relationships and tasks necessary for accomplishing the objectives. The strategic objectives of the United States are:

- secure the US from direct attack;
- secure strategic access and retain global freedom of movement;
- strengthen alliances and partnerships; and
- establish favourable security conditions.

16. The four tasks that support these objectives are:

- assuring allies;
- dissuading potential adversaries;
- deterring aggression; and
- defeating adversaries.

Assuring allies and friends means fulfilling alliance and defence commitments while helping protect common interests.<sup>11</sup> Dissuading potential adversaries is reliant upon development of key US military advantages. Deterring aggression and countering coercion are tasks that require the US to prevent attacks (e.g. destroying terrorist networks) and protect against attack (e.g. by fielding missile defences).

17. The task of defeating adversaries is presented as an attack plan against terrorism and suggests a broad range of military options to protect the homeland, counter ideological support for terrorism and attack terrorist networks. The emphasis placed on fighting terrorism includes identification and exploitation of terrorist vulnerabilities, plans to deny terrorist what they need to operate and incorporation of the elements of national power necessary for future security.

## Defence strategy congruence

18. On the whole, the defence strategies of Australia and the US are complementary. While defence of the homeland is a new phrase in US's strategic vocabulary, Australians have long understood the complexity and difficulties that accompany this task. Additionally, both nations acknowledge the absolute necessity of strategic relationships in order to accomplish their objectives. Of note, the *NDS* includes specific plans to increase cooperation, training and exercises with its partners.

19. While *D2000* and the *NDS* outline complementary strategies, the US's treatment of the fight against terrorism differs from Australia's approach. The *NDS* outlines a three-part plan to fight terrorism, while *DU2003* simply discusses Australia's contribution to the fight. This distinction impacts the force structure/capability outcomes for each nation.

## FORCE STRUCTURE

### Australia

20. The Defence Capability Plan (DCP), as published in *D2000*, delineates the force structure requirements necessary to transform the force-in-being to a force capable of accomplishing the

nation's defence strategy. Land forces, under the DCP, are to be improved by increasing the ready frontline forces, enhancing force sustainment and rotation, improving the concept of 'combat weight' and providing for advances in deployment, support and C3I.<sup>12</sup> Termed the 'hardened networked Army',<sup>13</sup> the resultant changes promise much needed modernisation for a long neglected force.

21. The DCP also made clear the government's commitment to 'maintaining Australia's air and naval capabilities on a qualitative par to make them competitive with the best in the Asia-Pacific'.<sup>14</sup> Defence information capabilities will be improved along with C2 systems, logistics management systems and SIGINT. Reorganisation into a single Theatre HQ and two deployable Joint Headquarters promise to provide enhanced interoperability within coalition operations.

22. In response to the emergent terrorist and WMD threats, *DU2003* announced changes to the DCP including increasing the size of the Special Operations Command, enhancing counter-terrorism capabilities (tactical assault group), acquiring additional troop lift helicopters and accelerating the development of the Incident Response Regiment.

### United States

23. A recurring theme of the *NDS* is 'continuous transformation'. Transformation is affecting both the US's force structure planning and its global defence posture. The *NDS* lists the key force structure capabilities that US forces need to accomplish the strategic objectives as:

- strengthening intelligence;
- protecting of critical bases of operation;
- operating from the commons – space, international waters and airspace, cyberspace;
- projecting and sustaining forces in distant anti-access environments;
- denying enemies sanctuary;
- conducting network-centric operations;
- improving proficiency against irregular challenges; and
- increasing capabilities of partners – international and domestic.<sup>15</sup>

One example of capability transformation is the US Army's restructuring to 'units of action'.<sup>16</sup>

24. Transformation is also affecting the global defence posture of US forces. The *NDS* highlights five interrelated areas of change in its global posture: defence relationships, defence activities, forward facilities, legal arrangements and global sourcing and surge. Of these, one of the more compelling is the change to forward facilities. The US plans to use a series of main operating bases, forward operating sites and cooperative security locations to strengthen its capability for prompt global action.<sup>17</sup>

### Implications for US Government's position

25. Despite minor differences in the view of the strategic environment and the scope of the resulting strategies, the most likely impacts on the US's view of Australia's defence policy are found in the transformation of its force structure and global posture.

26. The US transformation of its force structure was initiated after the 2001 Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR). The ‘war against terrorism’ accelerated the process, particularly for the US Army, to a point where the 2005 QDR will make significant and ‘lasting changes to how America will be able to fight in future conflicts’.<sup>18</sup> The message to allies is that the Cold War military structures are ill equipped to deal with the new security challenges. Add to this the *NDS* stated goal of ‘spurring the military transformation of key allies’ and it becomes clear that the US will expect its closest partners to make substantive and appropriate changes in order to meet common security challenges.<sup>19</sup>

27. Australia’s intention to upgrade its military to a more modern, capable and interoperable force fits US expectations of its allies.<sup>20</sup> Equally important, considering the current strategic environment, is the *DU2003* decision to upgrade special operations, counter-terrorism and incident response forces. Australia’s plans to increase the expeditionary capability of its land forces match well with changes taking place in the US Army.

28. The main concern raised by the force structure comparison is Australia’s commitment to fulfilling the promise of the DCP. By some accounts, the DCP has been ‘stretched beyond credibility by undisciplined capability choices, cost overruns and schedule delays’.<sup>21</sup> In this sense, Australia risks becoming irrelevant to the US and if ‘allies make themselves irrelevant to America’s security interests, they risk being “set free” to look after their own security’.<sup>22</sup>

29. The transformation of the US’s global military posture marks a departure from Cold War constructs ‘to better meet the new strategic circumstances’.<sup>23</sup> Of significance for Australia are the global posture decisions expected from the 2005 QDR. These decisions will be based on the US’s need to ‘move swiftly into and through strategic pivot points and remote locations’.<sup>24</sup> The new global posture is described as a ‘network of facilities...in four critical regions’.<sup>25</sup> With the US focusing on the ‘arc of instability’, the opportunity to acquire ‘bases and base access on the region’s periphery from which to project force rapidly may be of even greater importance than it is today’.<sup>26</sup>

30. In Asia, the US plans to have ‘additional naval and air capabilities forward in the region’ along with an ‘array of smaller cooperative security locations for contingency access’.<sup>27</sup> While the Australian Government has stated that ‘the United States has not proposed establishing a permanent base in Australia’,<sup>28</sup> the agreement to develop a Joint Combined Training Centre leaves the door open for future basing options pending QDR decisions. As one US official put it, key Asian and Pacific allies are ‘working with us to rationalise the US troop footprint in their countries to keep the alliances sustainable and capable well into the 21st Century’.<sup>29</sup>

## Conclusions

31. The aim of this paper was to analyse the strategic assumptions, assessments and intentions declared in *D2000/DU2003* that are likely to impact on the United States Government’s position on Australian defence policy.

32. An analysis of *D2000/DU2003* and the *NDS* along the lines of the strategic environment, defence strategies and the force structure decisions provided the following outcomes:

- Strategic Environment – The characterisations of the strategic environment are strikingly similar, but they are not the same. Most notably, the US describes itself as a ‘nation at war,’ and this fact is reflected in its strategy.
- Defence Strategy – The defence strategies of both nations are best described as complementary, but they differ fundamentally in how they address the threat of terrorism.

- Force Structure—Australia’s efforts in defence modernisation and interoperability meet US expectations while the force structure and global posture of the US military are rapidly changing and not fully developed.

33. From this analysis, two issues were identified that have potential to affect the US’s view of Australia’s defence policy. The first is Australia’s commitment to providing capable and relevant armed forces to the fight against terrorism, ultimately a measure of DCP management. The second is Australia’s willingness to support US proposals in its changing global posture, including the possibility of new basing options beyond those currently under consideration.

34. The US strategy has changed and ‘under this new strategic approach will be higher US expectations of what Australia is prepared to contribute to security, in the nearer region and further afield’.<sup>30</sup>

**Endnotes**

1. Giulio Douhet, 1984 reprint, *The Command of the Air*, Coward–McCann Inc, New York, p. 30.
2. Department of Defence 2000, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, DPS, Canberra, p. 17.
3. Department of Defence 2000, *ibid.*, p. 18.
4. Department of Defence 2003, *Australia's National Security: Defence Update 2003*, DPS, Canberra, pp. 9–17.
5. US Department of Defense 2005, *The National Defense Strategy of the United States of America*, Government Printing Office, Washington D.C., p. 1.
6. US Department of Defense 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 4.
7. *ibid.*, p. 4.
8. Arthur Cebrowski, (Dept of Defense Director of Force Transformation) 2004, Brief to the US Army Command and General Staff College, *Transforming Defense*, viewed 13 April 2005, <<http://www.oft.osd.mil/library/library.cfm?libcol=2>>.
9. Owen Harries, 2004, Transcript, *Australia's Alliance with America: Indispensable Ally to the Indispensable Nation*, viewed 18 April 2005, <<http://www.cis.org.au/Events/foreignpolicyforums/AustraliaUSalliance080904.htm>>.
10. Department of Defence 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 47–8.
11. US Department of Defense 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 7.
12. Department of Defence 2000, *op. cit.*, pp. 82–3. Important equipment and technology enhancements are to be realised by two squadrons of the armed reconnaissance helicopter, one squadron of additional trooplift helicopters, a new anti-tank weapon, 20 LAV 120mm mortar variants, and a tactical UAV. Logistics and sustainment improvements are provided by enhance transport and petroleum supply units, tactical truck replacements, deployable medical equipment and intelligence, communications and C2 systems improvements.
13. P.J. Leahy, 2004, transcript of speech to Defence Watch Seminar, Canberra, viewed 21 April 2005, <<http://www.defence-aerospace.com>>.
14. Hugh White, 2005, 'THE 2005 WHITE PAPER', *SDSC Newsletter*, viewed 27 April 2005, <[http://rspas.anu.edu.au/sdsc/newsletter/January\\_2005.pdf](http://rspas.anu.edu.au/sdsc/newsletter/January_2005.pdf)>.
15. US Department of Defense 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 16.
16. One type of 'Unit of Action,' the Stryker Brigade Combat Team brings a new capability to the US Army: a middleweight force that can be sent to a trouble spot anywhere in the world in as little as 96 hours. At the heart of the concept is the premise that a lightly armoured, highly mobile force, using the latest digital battlefield information systems, can operate at an accelerated tempo for a wide range of missions in varied terrain. For more information see: <[http://www.microvision.com/mvis\\_review/09-26-2003/](http://www.microvision.com/mvis_review/09-26-2003/)>.
17. US Department of Defense 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 19. Main Operating Bases will be permanently staffed bases, but a significantly reduced number than what exists today. Forward Operating Sites are scalable, 'warm' facilities, intended for rotational use by operating forces. Cooperative Security Locations are essentially unmanned, contingency bases for forward logistics, strategic access and deployed training purposes.
18. David Isby, 2005, '2005 Defense Review', *Washington Times*, 24 March 2005.
19. *ibid.*, p. 15.
20. Hugh White, 2003, speech transcript, *Beyond the War on Terror*, Address to the National Press Club 1 Oct 2003, viewed 22 April 2005, <<http://www.aspi.org.au/pdf/NPC.HW.2003.pdf>>.
21. Hugh White, 2005, 'THE 2005 WHITE PAPER', *SDSC Newsletter*, viewed 28 April 2005, <[http://rspas.anu.edu.au/sdsc/newsletter/January\\_2005.pdf](http://rspas.anu.edu.au/sdsc/newsletter/January_2005.pdf)>.
22. Robyn Lim, 2004, transcript, *Australia's Alliance with America: Indispensable Ally to the Indispensable Nation*, viewed 18 April 2005, <<http://www.cis.org.au/Events/foreignpolicyforums/AustraliaUSalliance080904.htm>>.
23. US Department of Defense 2005, *op. cit.*, p. 18.

24. *ibid.*, p. 19.
25. *loc. cit.*
26. C. Richard Nelson, 2005, *Working Group Report on Global Futures and Implications for U.S. Basing*, The Atlantic Council of the United States, January 2005, p. 13. The arc of instability stretches from parts of South and Southeast Asia through Central Asia, the Middle East, North and sub-Saharan Africa and into the Caribbean and parts of South America.
27. Douglas Feith, (Under Secretary of Defense for Policy), 2004, Statement before House Armed Services Committee, viewed 22 April 2005, <[http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/speech/june\\_23\\_04.html](http://www.defenselink.mil/policy/speech/june_23_04.html)>.
28. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2004, *Key Outcomes from AUSMIN 2004*, viewed 29 April 2005, <[http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/ausmin04\\_outcomes.html](http://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/us/ausmin/ausmin04_outcomes.html)>.
29. Douglas J. Feith, 2003, Speech transcript presented to the Center for Strategic and International Studies, Washington D.C., *The DISAM Journal*, Winter 2003–4, p. 34.
30. Peter Jennings, 2004, 'Marching in step with U.S. strategy', article appearing in *On Line Opinion*, 27 August 2004, viewed 29 April 2005, <<http://www.onlineopinion.com.au/view.asp?article=2492>>.

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