

CA SPEECH TO RUSI (ACT BRANCH)
10 DECEMBER 2008

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to be able to address you this evening. The links between the Royal United Services Institute and the Australian Army are deep and long-standing. This is a highly respected forum for the discussion of Defence issues. I look forward to continuing this dialogue throughout my terms as Chief of the Australian Army.

The end of the year provides a timely opportunity to evaluate where we have come from and what the future holds. Tonight I will give you an update on the recent changes to the organization of the Army, which I initiated upon taking command in July, and offer some thoughts on where we are heading into the future.

This is an exciting time to be the Chief of the Australian Army. We are engaged in a very high tempo of operations across a large span of the globe. We are also growing at the direction of the Government, towards a permanent strength of around 31,000. We are undergoing a significant upgrade of our platforms and inventory. These are very positive developments.

But they also constitute challenges, which must be managed very carefully.

As Chief of the Army, I need to constantly manage the balance between our current operations and the maintenance of our axis of advance into the future-if you like managing the balance between the present fight and the future fight. This involves generating highly capable, tailored forces for our operational commitments, while keeping an eye on the horizon. Developing a strategic approach and plans to maintain Army's long-term capability and health is central to my responsibilities as Chief of Army. I believe that such future planning will be defined by the convergence of three challenges:

- **Our first challenge is to continue to excel on operations.**

The Army has been on operations in many areas of the world without respite, conducting a variety of tasks since 1999. The planning, execution, and support to these operations have resulted in the Army becoming a more operationally focused, and vastly more experienced, organization. This is good. But we cannot become complacent - we need to seek every way we can to improve.

- **Our second challenge is to continue to ensure that our Army remains capable, responsive and relevant now and into the future.** Our continued implementation of the Hardened Networked Army and Enhanced Land Force initiatives and philosophy will ensure that we have the capacity to undertake a broad range of operations in a wide variety of environments.
- **Our third challenge is to ensure that Army's structure, organization and processes are best suited to get the most from our existing capabilities and resources, and that we can develop capabilities as they are required.** Our command and control of Army must be adaptive to the changes that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) has undergone in the last few years. Our conduct of force generation and preparation needs greater alignment with the new joint command and control paradigm. Intimately related to this, is the need to ensure that we are able to more effectively employ and manage Army's complex fleet of equipment.

By now most of you should have heard of the changes I introduced in the *Adaptive Army* initiative. These reforms

represent the most significant structural change to the Army since the Hassett reforms of the 1970's.

The *Adaptive Army* is designed to support us in meeting all three of those converging challenges. It will also rectify some issues that were overdue for attention. For years there was a consensus that we had too many headquarters. The *Adaptive Army* addressing this by reducing the three functional commands through the creation of the new Forces Command in place of the previous two organizations - Training Command and Land Command.

Indeed, the problem went deeper than too many headquarters - our internal organization no longer reflected the joint nature of ADF operations, especially the formation of Joint Operations Command (JOC).

Analysis of our operations over the past decade also revealed the strengths and weaknesses of our structures and processes for generating and preparing personnel and organizations for operations. I concluded that we needed a more systematic approach to adaptation within the force generation and preparation of Army force elements.

The result was the *Adaptive Army* initiative, which I announced in August. The principal aims of this significant reform are:

- Improve Army's alignment with, and capacity to inform the ADF's strategic and operational joint planning.
- Better execute force generation and preparation in a manner that balances operational commitments and contingency planning.
- Increase effectiveness and efficiency of training within Army
- Improve the linkage between resource inputs and collective training outputs within Army's force generation and preparation continuum.
- Improve the quality and timeliness of information flows throughout Army in order to enhance Army's adaptation mechanisms at all levels.

The restructuring will be a phased activity and will be executed concurrently with our preparation for operational commitments and contingencies. Army Headquarters will be restructured, into two divisions, commencing 1 February 2009. One will focus on

Army's current activities, while the other will focus on Army's force development and strategic planning.

Concurrently, we are re-rolling of Headquarters 1st Division in Brisbane to focus on the force preparation of Army force elements for current operations and contingencies. To support the Commander 1st Division in this role, a new higher level training assessment organization will be established. Called the Land Combat Readiness Centre, we are already busy working on its establishment. This organisation will employ robust training standards that are to be articulated across Army. The mounting, assessment and certification of force elements will also be standardised within this new organization to free up our Brigade Commanders to focus on training their own headquarters for operational missions. I also expect this centralization will lead to further efficiencies in how we employ our resources.

The First Division will also have as one of its core tasks the provision of technical land advice for joint operational planning; primarily interfacing with Headquarters Joint Operations Command (JOC). An important element of this will be to ensure that there is a more rapid feedback of operational lessons into the Army for our force generation and preparation activities. To

this end, we formally established this planning link between the Division and Headquarters Joint Operations Division last week.

Forces Command will stand up in July 2009 and focus on the force generation of individuals and collective organizations. The unification of our collective and individual training within a single command is designed to bring our systems for collective training up to the same high standards as those for individual training.

These changes aim to make Army more agile and responsive. However, changes to wire diagrams only have effects if the culture and mind-set of the people involved is adaptive. That constitutes my greatest challenge over the remainder of my time as Chief of the Army. I am committed to inculcating an adaptive mind-set within Army at all levels. I want to instil within Army and attitude that the status quo is never, ever good enough and is continually seeking to adapt and improve its performance-at all levels, on operations and in the force generation and preparation realms-while at the same time integrating important lessons from the past.

These changes will posture us better to win the current fight and will also support our development of the future force. Nothing

I have outlined here relies on the outcomes of Defence White Paper. These changes are distinctly aimed at improving Army's joint interoperability, and responsiveness to whole of government solutions to strategic issues. As such they are complementary to the White Paper and its reviews.

Likewise, *Adaptive Army* will support our ongoing modernization. Over the next few years, Army will introduce a range of capabilities that will improve our firepower, mobility, survivability and our capacity to collect and analyse information. Platforms such as the Armed Reconnaissance Helicopter (ARH), upgraded Armoured Personnel Carriers, the Bushmaster, new troop-lift helicopters, unmanned aerial vehicles, and new communications systems will challenge our training and maintenance systems. We will also need to integrate these platforms into combined arms teams which are able to base themselves on, and launch from, the new Canberra Class amphibious assault ships.

This added combat weight and situational awareness has been rapidly introduced to support the current fight. Today we are fighting an irregular insurgent enemy with access to lethal weaponry. We are operating 'amongst the people'- in the elegant phrase of the British General, Sir Rupert Smith. This

means we are using conventional combat power to support reconstruction and stabilisation efforts among civilian populations.

We are performing well in this environment. As well as our equipment, we have upgraded our capacity for adaptation and thinking about the enemy and the mission. We have developed a capstone concept-*Adaptive Campaigning*, which is the product of what our Army has learned in the past decade. It builds on the hard earned experience of our forebears from theatres as diverse as Vietnam, Korea, New Guinea, Malaya, Borneo and Africa. It is designed to ensure that our operations deliver the correct balance of effects-land combat, population support, protection, public information and indigenous capacity building, regardless of the scenario.

Likewise, our developing doctrine for counter-insurgency operations is now at a mature stage. Combined with the training and equipping of our soldiers, the intellectual foundation for contemporary operations that this doctrine provides will help to ensure that our soldiers remain among the best prepared troops in the world.

However, as I said earlier, we must continue to develop the future force, while conducting this current fight. We cannot assume that the only future adversary will be an irregular or insurgent. Neither the Army, nor the ADF generally, can afford to make long-term force structure decisions on that basis.

In any event it has become a tried and true conviction of the Australian Army that higher level combined arms war fighting provides a crucible for the growth of highly developed leadership skills as well as individual and institutional adaptation mechanisms. No other form of training hones these essential components of land force manoeuvre to such high levels. Conventional war fighting skills provide the essential foundation for all other types of operations we may undertake.

I want to ensure that as part of the development of the future force, we maintain a focus on higher formation war fighting skills. We have recently endorsed some trial structures for experimentation over the next few years. Not only does this allow us to identify the best force structures for likely future operations, it also provides us with the opportunity to draw forward what I'll call 'leap-ahead' technologies and processes where they can be identified.

I think a key objective of our experimentation must be to identify the echelon at which the Australian Army conducts manoeuvre in its broadest sense. Until recently, all of our doctrine and training used to flow from the employment of what we saw as our key echelon – The Division. While we need excellent sections, combat teams and battle groups for whatever mission we undertake, a professional 21st century Army must be bound together in higher level force structures.

We are an organisation that plans for the worst, and must be capable of responding to some fairly dire contingencies. For example, the Defence of Australia is likely to require far more than the several battle groups that we currently have deployed. We must train for, and be capable of executing, operations at a higher level to ensure the professionalism and long term viability of our Army.

Finally, let me say a few words about our soldiers. I must stress that this does not represent the priority I place on our people. Quite the contrary - it is actually a case of leaving the best until last. Our soldiers and their families are our number one priority - that is not a throwaway line or marketing slogan. I mean it and so do every one of my senior leaders.

Our high operational tempo continues to exact a sacrifice from our soldiers and their families. This has been falling disproportionately on certain elements of the force because of the nature of our operations. In Afghanistan we are rotating special-forces, combat engineers and some infantry regularly. I am reminded of Monty's quote to the effect "that there are never enough engineers." If it was right in his day it is even more so in this era of contested nation building when only military engineers, supported by other arms, can operate with any consistency in most areas.

Make no mistake - our soldiers thrive on operations and back up for deployments with enthusiasm. But high personnel tempo does affect the families. And it can deprive individuals of important career training and progression unless managed effectively.

Our conditions of service have been improved significantly in recent years. I think that is starting to show up in our robust recruiting and retention results. However, pure financial remuneration is not the only consideration for our soldiers and officers. At my exercise in October I posed the question to my senior leaders "Where do we go in this area next?" We need to be as agile and adaptive in the personnel area as we are in

operations and procurement. Generous salaries and subsidised housing loans have their place, but they are a blunt instrument in terms of retaining people. I believe that we have not really thought outside the square on imaginative approaches to the intangible benefits that younger people are now looking for in their work. We need to be more innovative to stay competitive with demographic change shrinking the available number of people for military service.

Likewise, we are going to have to explore more innovative ways to deliver career courses and training to people to smooth out the disruption and separation caused by high operational tempo. In an era of distance education for lawyers and doctors do our people really have to live in for every course or qualification? I am going to drive my personnel people hard to work this out.

None of the changes I have outlined can succeed unless the Army attracts and retains sufficient numbers of high quality people, to train in the requisite skills. We then need to be agile and adaptable to retain them in a tight job market by ensuring that we employ them in a manner that gives them meaning and fuels a desire to keep serving with us.

Even leaving aside the pragmatic benefits of looking after our soldiers, I take our moral responsibility to our people and their families very seriously. We are fortunate that deeply embedded in the ethos of the Australian soldier is a code of mateship that demands that we look after one another. That spirit is alive and well in our Army today - believe me.

As the year draws to a close the outlook for the global economy remains uncertain. It is prudent for every major area of Government outlays to expect a difficult period ahead. It is not appropriate for me to second guess the Government's intentions for the Defence White Paper or the reviews accompanying it. Regardless of the austerity of the financial climate, we are already identified economies within Army, without sacrificing capability.

In closing, I would like wish you and your families all the best for Christmas and the New Year. I would ask you, in turn to spare a thought for our soldiers, sailors and airmen who are deployed on operations-and their families here at home.

I would be pleased to answer your questions.