

STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY (1953)

Editor's Introduction

When the 1953 *Strategic Basis* was endorsed by the Defence Committee, Australia had signed the ANZUS treaty, and the Korean War was drawing to a close. Communist insurgencies were active in Malaya and French Indochina, but Dien Bien Phu had not yet fallen. Due to the increased strength of the West, and communist successes in limited wars, the risk of global war was seen as less than three years earlier (paras 16, 17, 20). Moreover, global war 'may well be decided in the first few weeks, when the atomic onslaught is expected to take place' (para 11). However, the West was faced with a prolonged challenge in the form of cold war tensions and the possibility of limited war (para 70). Communist cold war efforts were expected to increase in Asia – especially South East Asia – and the Middle East (paras 9, 20, 23).

With NATO having responsibility for the defence of Europe, Australia's focus was on the Middle East and South East Asia (paras 22, 24). The former was more important for the Western strategy in a global war, and 'excessive' troop reductions there were rejected as they would make communist advances short of global war more likely (paras 13, 28, 40). However, 'it is the Australian Government's view that the aim of the Allies should be to ensure the retention of Malaya' against an expected Chinese offensive in global war, because of its importance in the defence of Australia, and Australia's ability to contribute forces to other theatres (paras 41, 50, 70). Nevertheless, in the event of global war, Australia would contribute 'the maximum possible' to theatres other than South East Asia, and the document endorses the fundamentals of Commonwealth defence policy and strategy (para 55, Appendix). South East Asia was also seen to be more vulnerable than the Middle East to communist advances through limited war, which could result in the successive loss of countries on the mainland (paras 35, 39). 'South East Asia should be given priority of Allied effort' during cold war and, although preparations for both cold and global war were necessary, the former took priority (paras 20, 51). Australia did not see itself capable of making meaningful contributions beyond the forces already committed at that time, and looked to its allies to provide a strategic reserve for countering cold and limited war dangers in South East Asia (paras 54, 64). In general, the document warns that '[t]he maintenance of unnecessarily large armed forces during the cold war, would have a disastrous effect on the economy of the Allies' (para 15).

The overall force structure of all three Services was confirmed, but mobilisation schedules of global war forces were to be reviewed in light of the lesser immediacy of that threat (para 67). Should Malaya be lost, Australian forces would need to occupy the Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, North and north-west Australia and the Cocos Islands (para 69). The document demanded that '[s]ufficient forces must at all times be maintained to ensure the security of Australia' but, at the same time, it was 'considered that the communists could not operate from air and naval bases throughout Indonesia, before Australian forces were fully mobilised' (paras 62, 69).

A STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY

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This paper was endorsed by the Defence Committee on 8 January 1953

DEFENCE COMMITTEE'S REPORT ON "A STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY"

PART I — INTRODUCTION

Current Australian Defence Policy and General Strategy

1. In its conclusions of 21st June, 1950, the Council of Defence "approved the following Defence Committee recommendations upon which planning is to be based:-

a. *Defence Policy*

- (i) To join with the other Commonwealth countries, the United States and the countries of Western Europe in organising essential deterrent forces, in building up effective defences and in working out the necessary plans, preferably on a regional basis, in accordance with Article 52 of the United Nations Charter.
- (ii) To resist the spread of communism by all means short of war.

b. *War Aims*

- (iii) To ensure the abandonment by Russia of further military and ideological aggression.
- (iv) To create conditions conducive to world peace.

c. *Military Measures to Implement Allied Strategy.*

- (v) To deliver the strategic air offensive from the outbreak of war.
- (vi) To hold the air bases and sea area essential for our air offensive. These are –

The United Kingdom.
The Middle East.
Japan.

- (vii) It would also be desirable to hold as bases for our air offensive –

Sea areas for possible carrier offensives.
Pakistan.

(Note:-In this connection the Defence Committee observed “at present, it is not possible to plan on using Pakistan bases, at least from the outset, as there is no defence arrangement with that country”.)

- (viii) To defend the main support areas which are:-

United States of America and Canada;
Australia and New Zealand;
South Africa and certain other parts of the African continent;
The Argentine and certain other parts of South America;

Should it be possible subsequently to make appropriate arrangements with India and Pakistan, under which the Indian Sub-Continent could be included as a support area, this would be most advantageous.

- (ix) To ensure the internal security and local defence of support areas of less importance, as necessary.
- (x) To hold those areas necessary to give defence in depth to Allied air bases and support areas.
- (xi) To retain firm control of the essential sea and air communications, and of land areas necessary to ensure this control.”

The Basis of the Present Defence Policy

2. The present Australian Defence Policy and General Strategy was determined on the situation that pertained in 1949/50. At that time, Russia was considered to be capable of overrunning Europe and the Middle East before effective defensive measures could be taken by the Allies. It was apparent, therefore, that our preparations for war would have to be speeded up. Action in this regard was based on the forecast that, to meet a global war, such preparations should be completed by the end of 1953. Further, the rate of development of the potentially great military power of communist China with Soviet assistance, was not then foreseen.

The Object of this Report

3. To review the present basic objectives of Australian Defence Policy and General Strategy and from this review to deduce a Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy.

Definitions

4. In this review the following definitions are used:-
- a. *Cold war* – Existing conditions, wherein overt Chinese communist aggression is limited to Korea but tension is maintained elsewhere.
 - b. *Limited war* – Further Chinese communist aggression in South East Asia without overt Soviet participation.
 - c. *Global or Hot war* – Total war with the U.S.S.R. and communist China.
 - d. *Regional Terminology* – Definitions of the Middle East, Far East and South East Asia are as follows:-
 - (i) Middle East –
Egypt, Turkey, Iraq, Persia, Syria, Lebanon, Jordan, Israel, Saudi-Arabia, the Trucial Sheikdoms, Kuwait, Bahrain, Muscat, the Aden Protectorate and the Yemen.
 - (ii) Far East –
China, Hong Kong, Formosa, Japan and Korea. The smaller Pacific Islands (e.g., Micronesia) should not be considered to be in the area covered by the term. Sinkiang and Tibet should not be considered parts of China in this context.
 - (iii) South East Asia –
Burma, Siam, Malaya, the Crown Colonies of Singapore (including Christmas and Cocos Islands), British North Borneo and Sarawak, the Sultanate of Brunei, Indo-China (now the independent States of Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia), the Philippines, Portuguese Timor, the Republic of Indonesia and Dutch New Guinea.

PART II — DEVELOPMENTS IN THE GENERAL WORLD SITUATION SINCE 1950

The Communist Aim

5. A Moscow controlled communist dominated world is the ultimate Soviet aim.

Communist Strategy

6. By maintaining large armed forces, Russia has threatened the rest of the world with global war, thus forcing the Allies into expensive re-armament programmes. By this means, the Communists aim to disrupt Western economy and, in the ensuing depression, to win a bloodless victory. The establishment and subsequent development of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) has caused Soviet Russia to direct its main cold war effort towards the Far East and South East Asia, the Chinese communist regime being its principal collaborator. At the same time, Russia is maintaining pressure in Western Europe and the Middle East, and developing the war potential of her satellites. In addition she is fostering subversive activities throughout the world.

Europe.

7. In order to counter the threat of Soviet aggression in Europe, NATO was established. The subsequent development of Supreme Headquarters Allied Powers Europe and the European Defence Community, as well as the progress in defensive measures to date, have resulted in Russia being confronted with a very real obstacle to further territorial expansion in Western Europe, without recourse to global war. NATO, however, is the only existing effective organisation for co-ordinating the efforts of the non-communist nations.

Middle East

8. The setting up of a Middle East Defence Organisation (MEDO) which was first mooted in late 1950, will be a further keystone in Allied defensive measures in the cold war. It is important that unnecessary delay in the setting up of MEDO should be avoided, in order that Allied measures in the cold war in Europe can be extended to embrace the Middle East. The added security in the Middle East, that might be expected from the setting up of MEDO should also assist in furthering Allied influence throughout North Africa.

Far East and South East Asia

9. In the Far East and South East Asia, Communism has achieved marked success in China, Korea, Indo-China and Malaya. It is to be expected, therefore, in view of the opposition to further communist expansion in Europe, that Russia will intensify her cold war activities in the Far East and South East Asia, in order to force the Allies to maintain large forces in those areas, and to bring new territories under communist control.

10. There is no Defence Organisation to meet the threat in this area other than Anzam and Anzus. The United States however, has entered into treaties or arrangements with Japan, the Chinese Nationalists and the Philippines and in the event of further communist aggression in the area, the United States would expect assistance from those countries.

The Atomic Weapon

11. The recent explosion of an atomic weapon in the Monte Bello Islands by the United Kingdom, coupled with the freely publicised fact that the United States has now exploded 28 atomic weapons, emphasises the growing capabilities of the Allies and the size of their atomic stockpile. The ultimate result of the next world war may well be decided in the first few weeks, when the atomic onslaught is expected to take place. It is considered therefore, that Russia will not precipitate a global war, until, at least, such time as she considers she holds an adequate stockpile of atomic weapons.

The Strategic Air Offensive

12. Coupled with the stockpile of atomic bombs, the Allied policy of establishing strategic air bases throughout the world, has provided a further deterrent to Russian aggressive intentions. The Allies thus are capable of delivering an air offensive against the whole of Russia and China. The air defence problem facing the Russians is, therefore, of great magnitude. The existence of these air bases, together with the concurrent expansion of the United States Strategic Air Command, cannot but have a sobering effect on any intended Russian aggression which would be likely to cause global war.

Spread of Nationalism

13. The spread of nationalism throughout Africa, the Middle East and South East Asia presents the Allies with a serious problem. In certain cases, nationalism is being used as a cover for communist activities, resulting in internal disorder and disruption of civil services, e.g., Morocco, Tunisia, Burma and Indonesia. Action, therefore, should be taken by the Allies to ensure that true nationalism is assisted and directed to ensure that the countries concerned remain within the Western orbit.

Rise of Communist China

14. The rapid rise of Communist China, involving the consolidation of communism therein and its development into a potentially powerful military power, was not catered for when the present Defence Policy and General Strategy was determined. As a result of Soviet technical and economic assistance, however, Communist China is now capable of pursuing an aggressive policy for the furtherance of communism in the Far East and South East Asia.

The Economic Factor

15. As indicated by the Prime Minister in respect of Australia, the fundamental basis of defence preparations of the size at present being undertaken by the democracies is a sound National economy. The financial, economic and manpower resources that can be allotted to the defence sector of the economy have to be in balance with the essential needs of other sectors. The maintenance of unnecessarily large armed forces during the cold war, would have a disastrous effect on the economy of the Allies. Excessive expenditure on defence preparations to meet a threat which may never materialise would further the communist aim and may even result in a bloodless victory for Russia. However, Allied forces must be maintained at a level sufficient to meet the needs of defence and to act as a deterrent to further communist aggression.

Likelihood and Form of a Future Global War

16. The most favourable time for Russia to have precipitated a global war would have been during the period immediately prior to 1950, when Allied defence capabilities were at a low ebb, in relation to the following:-

- a. the Allied atomic stockpile must have been comparatively small;
- b. the post-war rundown in air forces was such that the Allies had few modern aircraft of any type;
- c. the Allied capacity to deliver a strategic air offensive was so limited that Europe and the Middle East could have been overrun with comparatively little damage to Russia as a whole.

17. It is considered that Russia does not desire a global war if her aims can be achieved by other means. It cannot be denied that her cold war tactics have achieved considerable results. However, should circumstances, such as some ill-considered or precipitate action, cause a global war, it would probably begin with a full-scale attack by Russia directed against Western Europe and the Middle East and sea communications, including heavy air attacks on the United Kingdom, and any air attacks she was able to make on the United States.

18. She might refrain from using the atomic bomb in the hope that world opinion would deprive the Allies of their most effective weapon. But whether or not Russia used the atomic bomb, the Allies would undoubtedly launch an all-out atomic attack against her, and probably against her satellites. The outcome of this two-way atomic offensive cannot be foreseen; however, both sides, would suffer devastation and, even if the Russian regime were to collapse, as it is hoped, conventional operations would still have to be undertaken by the Allies.

Conclusions

- 19.** The ultimate alternatives confronting the Allies are:-
- a. a negotiated settlement with communism which ensures peace;
 - b. a prolonged period of defence preparedness and cold war activity as a deterrent to aggression and the spread of communism;
 - c. an ultimate conflict if a settlement is not reached.
- 20.** It is concluded that:-
- a. the likelihood of global war is now more remote than it was considered to be at the time the present Defence Policy was determined for two main reasons, namely, the strength of the Allies has considerably increased and Russia has achieved much by her cold war tactics;
 - b. the need to prepare for a possible global war remains;
 - c. whilst the immediate threat of global war has receded the cold war has been intensified, as exemplified by communist activities in Korea, Indo China and Malaya;
 - d. Defence preparations should be on a blended basis of deterrents to aggression and the spread of communism by building up strength, by participating in cold war activities and by preparing for global war. Priority should be given to cold war commitments;
 - e. probably there will be a longer period available in which to prepare for a possible global war, nevertheless forces must be readily available to contain communism in either cold or limited war;
 - f. Russia and communist China will intensify their cold war efforts in the Far East and South East Asia;
 - g. defence measures must be in balance with national economy.

PART III — THE GLOBAL STRATEGIC PROBLEM

GENERAL

21. The security of sea communications is vital to the Allies.
22. The three land areas, which are vital to the Allies are Europe, the Middle East and South East Asia (including the Far East). The defence of Europe has been accepted as a responsibility of the NATO powers.
23. It is considered that, whilst the immediate threat of global war has receded, preparations must be made to meet increased communist pressure in the cold war. The areas in which their activities are likely to be intensified are the Middle East and South East Asia.
24. The relative strategic importance to Australia of the Middle East and South East Asia is examined hereunder.

THE MIDDLE EAST

25. The Middle East constitutes the land bridge between Europe, Asia and Africa and is a most important link in the Commonwealth system of sea and air communications. Further, its oil supplies are of very great importance, it contains a number of air bases from which the Allies are capable of delivering the strategic air offensive against Russia, and its possession by the Allies denies Russia access to the Mediterranean and the Persian Gulf. The Middle East is the centre of the Moslem world in which there would be serious repercussions if it came under Russian influence.
26. The retention of the Middle East within the Western orbit is a cold war requirement. In the event of global war, all possible measures must be taken to defend it.

The Danger in the Cold War

27. Russian policy is fundamentally opportunist. The Soviet will always exploit weakness, especially that inherent in the lack of unified policy. The very nature of the group of Middle East States, with their mutual distrusts and jealousies, makes it very difficult for them to agree on any policy affecting their collective interests. Individually, the Arab States are politically unstable, owing to their low standard of living. A common religion is all that holds them together. Successful economic development and improvement in the standard of living in the Middle East States would materially assist in preventing the spread of communist influence therein.

28. The upsurge of nationalism in Iran, Iraq, Egypt and Tunisia has not only embarrassed the Allies, but has created a situation ripe for communist exploitation. Should the field be left open to Russia, it is clear that it will be only a matter of time before communist influence dominates the area. Therefore, an excessive reduction of forces in the Middle East should not be countenanced, as this would result in the rapid spread of communist influence and reduce our prospects of holding the area in the event of global war.

The Threat in Global War

29. Russia is capable of mounting an offensive against the Middle East, either through Turkey or Persia (or both simultaneously), immediately on the outbreak of war. The speed and depth of advance would depend on the effectiveness of Turkey's defence and on logistic considerations. Once having gained control of Persia, Russia would have access to the Indian Ocean through the Persian Gulf, in which case the submarine threat to our sea communications would be increased.

Conclusions

30. Allied measures in the Middle East should:-

a. *in the cold war* –

- (1) provide for the establishment of a Middle East Defence Organisation;
- (2) provide economic assistance to the Middle East States;
- (3) ensure the retention of adequate forces in the area.

b. *in global war* –

- (1) ensure the retention of at least the oil-fields along the Persian Gulf;
- (2) maintain sea and air communications;
- (3) ensure the holding of an area East of the Suez Canal, thus securing Egypt.

FAR EAST AND SOUTH EAST ASIA

31. The Korean war forms part of the communist cold war strategy which is designed to wreck the morale and economy of the democratic nations without directly affecting Soviet Russia.

32. In South East Asia, the Chinese communist regime, as the principal collaborator of the leaders of world communism, is pursuing aggressive policies, designed to eliminate Western influence therein and to bring the whole area under communist control.

33. Communist domination of South East Asia would result in the loss of strategic materials of great importance to the whole non-communist world and would increase China's prestige immensely, particularly in the Indian sub-continent. It would tend to outflank the United States Island Chain (Japan, Formosa and Philippines) and to tie up Allied Forces both there and in Australia. Subsequent liberation, after Allied victory in other theatres, would be difficult and might prove impossible.

34. Communist acquisition of the rice surplus areas – Burma, Indo-China and Thailand – would enable the communists to apply effective economic pressure against the non-communist Asian countries in which rice is the principal food and which depend for their already low standard of living, on importation from the rice surplus areas. In these circumstances the Western Powers would be forced to assume the burden of supplying foodstuffs to the rice deficit areas, or acquiesce in their reaching an accommodating agreement with the communists.

35. Indo-China is the key to the defence of South East Asia. It is considered, therefore, that it will be the first Chinese communist objective. The loss of this area would greatly simplify continued communist expansion in South East Asia which would probably lead to the collapse of Burma and Thailand, and to a dangerous weakening of internal security in Malaya, Indonesia and the Philippines.

36. Current deployment of Chinese communist ground forces in South China is such that the enemy is capable of overrunning the present defence forces in Hong Kong, Indo-China and Burma simultaneously. Therefore, although little can be done with regard to Burma, it is apparent that to secure Hong Kong and Indo-China, adequate reinforcements must be provided before any such aggression occurs. Such reinforcement would have to be by national and indigenous forces, as the motive in employing forces from Allied nations would probably be open to misinterpretation throughout the world, particularly in Asia, and would probably involve violent Chinese reactions.

37. While Indo-China is held, defence in depth is provided for the Australia-New Zealand main support area. Therefore all possible action should be taken by the Allies to bolster the French in their defence of Indo-China, both in cold or limited war.

38. It will be seen that the effect on the security of Australia of a communist dominated and controlled South East Asia is such that existing and potential communist threats in the area must be countered.

39. Limited war, as an extension of the present Communist cold war policy, could result in at least the whole of the mainland of South East Asia being lost to the Allies, unless timely and effective measures are taken to strengthen this area. South East Asia is therefore more vulnerable to communist aggression than the Middle East.

40. The cold or limited war requirements of the Far East or South East Asia, however, should be balanced against the requirements of other theatres. Accordingly, since the security of Europe is of primary importance and as the Middle East will be of greater importance than Asia in global war, an excessive reduction of forces in Europe and the Middle East should not be countenanced in cold or limited war, in order to further Allied aims in the Far East or South East Asia. Apart from weakening the Allied strategic position for global war, such a reduction in the Middle East, as stated previously, would assist in the spread of communism therein. Nevertheless, the maintenance of internal security and national independence in South East Asia is of extreme importance to the Allies.

41. In the event of global war, it is considered that communist China will launch an offensive against South East Asia with the object of securing this area and at the same time diverting much needed Allies forces from the more important theatres of Europe and the Middle East.

42. In view of the foregoing and the fact that the Allied policy of containment applies equally to this theatre, there is a need for a co-ordinated, agreed Allied military policy.

Conclusions

43. South East Asia in the cold war is of greater importance than the Middle East.

44. Allied military measures in the Far East and South East Asia should:-

a. *in cold or limited war –*

- (i) be based on a co-ordinated, agreed military policy for the region;
- (ii) ensure that communism is held in Korea;
- (iii) allow for the adequate reinforcement of Hong Kong and Indo-China by national or indigenous forces before any Chinese communist aggression occurs therein;
- (iv) ensure that all possible action is taken to bolster the French in Indo-China;
- (v) in the event of Chinese communist aggression against Hong Kong or Indo-China, allow for the reinforcement of the area/s affected by ground forces with naval and air support (provided action as in (iii) above has been taken) possibly in conjunction with a blockade and air bombardment of China;
- (vi) in the event of the fall of Indo-China, ensure that Malaya is held, thus retaining a foothold on the mainland of South East Asia;

- b. *in global war* –
 - (i) allow for the withdrawal of all forces from Korea and their redeployment in vital theatres;
 - (ii) ensure the defence of Malaya and the retention of a foothold on the mainland of South East Asia, if the overall military situation permits;
 - (iii) maintain sea communications.

ANZAM REGION

45. The importance in global war of the ANZAM Region to Allied strategy lies in the fact that it contains the main support area of Australia and New Zealand. Provided the whole Region is retained under Allied control, the threat to the mainland of Australia from direct communist attack is almost negligible.

The Danger in the Cold and Limited War

- 46.** From the point of view of the Anzam nations, the main dangers to be guarded against are-
- a. the loss of Indo-China to communism and the collapse of Thailand and Burma;
 - b. a deterioration in the situation in Malaya;
 - c. a successful communist exploitation of the unstable situation in Indonesia.

The Threat in Global War

47. The immediate threat to the Anzam Region would be to the sea communications. In the initial stages, the probable form and scale of attack would be confined to minelaying and to attacks by submarines. It is anticipated that communist China would launch an offensive against South East Asia. Subversive activities would also have to be countered.

48. Should Malaya fall, a steady infiltration of communists throughout the islands of Indonesia could follow. In this eventuality, Australia would be confronted in due course by hostile land and air forces within 500 miles of the Northern Territory and have a common frontier with the communists in New Guinea. This would mean that practically the whole of Australia would be within range of enemy bombers, thereby necessitating a large air defence commitment. Even if the whole of New Guinea were denied to the enemy, the mainland of Australia North and West of the general line Rockhampton-Adelaide-Albany would be within range of enemy bombers.

Conclusions

- 49.** The aim of the Allies should be –
- a. in cold or limited war –
 - (i) the elimination of communism in South East Asia;
 - (ii) if Indo-China were lost, to ensure that adequate forces are available for the defence of Malaya;
 - b. in global war –

to ensure the security of sea communications and the retention of Malaya.

Comparison of Strategic Values

- 50.** A comparison of the relative strategic value, in global war, of the Middle East, South East Asia and the Anzam Region is shown hereunder:-
- a. The Middle East is important, owing to:-
 - (i) the need of the strategic airfields as bases for atomic attacks on Russia;
 - (ii) the need of the Middle East oil;
 - (iii) the need for maintaining Egypt as a base for offensive operations;
 - (iv) the importance of the Middle East sea and air communications, the loss of which would critically affect the ability of the Allies to operate in the Middle East;
 - b. South East Asia and the Anzam Region are important as -
 - (i) the Anzam Region contains the Australia-New Zealand main support area;
 - (ii) the loss of the area to the Chinese communists would increase Chinese prestige and war potential. It would tend to outflank the United States island chain (Japan, Formosa and Philippines) and to tie up Allied Forces both there and in Australia.

Conclusions

51. In cold or limited war, the threat to South East Asia is greater than that to the Middle East. Therefore during this period, South East Asia should be given priority of Allied effort.

52. In global war although the retention of the Middle East is of more importance to the Allies than South East Asia, the retention of Malaya is of great importance.

PART IV — AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC PROBLEM

Cold War

53. Australia must have forces readily available in the cold war to meet obligations under the United Nations Charter, or commitments undertaken as a member of the Commonwealth, or as a result of the Anzus Pact. At present Australia has units of the three Services committed in Korea and maintained from Japan. In addition, R.A.A.F. units stationed in Malaya and Malta are assisting the United Kingdom in her cold war commitments. In existing circumstances, all Army and Air Force units available for cold war tasks are committed.

54. In view of the anticipated prolonged period of cold war and its probable increase in tempo, the only manner under present circumstances in which Australia could further assist in cold war operations would be by additional regular forces. In view of our limited manpower resources it is considered that we could not make more than a token contribution.

Global War

55. In a global war, Australia's basic strategy should be:-

- a. to defend Australia. The physical security presents a comparatively small problem at the present time;
- b. to make a major contribution to the defence of the Anzam Region. It is planned that Australia will accept a large share of the defence of the Anzam Region, from which United Kingdom maritime forces are planned to be withdrawn in war;
- c. to make the maximum possible contribution to the vital theatres in accordance with global strategy. As Australia's security will ultimately depend on the outcome of the fight against communism in the major theatres, it is there that the maximum contribution in global war must be made.

(Note: Under Cabinet decision, deployment of Australian forces in war is subject to Government decision in the light of the strategic situation at the time).

56. The Naval and Air Forces responsible for the maritime defence of our sea communications must be operational from the outbreak of war. The Army and Air Force contributions to overseas theatres in the event of global war must be available for operations with the minimum of delay.

Civil Defence

57. The probable form and scale of attack against Australia, so long as Indo-China and/or Malaya are held and sea communications are kept open, would be confined to minelaying and to attacks by submarines.

58. It is envisaged that the main Russian atomic effort would be directed mainly against Western Europe, possibly in conjunction with a limited atomic attack on the United States. The Russian atomic stockpile is believed to be too small to enable atomic attacks to be launched against other areas. However, defence arrangements must include precautions against the unlikely introduction of an atomic bomb into our harbours by clandestine methods.

59. It is considered that, provided reasonable precautions are taken against the entry of a "Trojan" vessel and in view of Australia's economic position, the need or justification does not exist for the diversion to Civil Defence preparations of resources urgently required for immediate defence purposes of a high priority.

60. Notwithstanding the remote possibility of atomic attack, it is considered that the civil defence organisation should be limited to a planning one only in order to keep abreast of the development and techniques of civil defence.

Manpower and Technological Aspect

61. In the event of global war, communist controlled countries will possess manpower greatly in excess of that available to the Allies. Therefore, in the cold war, the Allies must maintain:-

- a. their greater industrial capacity and technical ability;
- b. their lead in the production of atomic weapons;
- c. their superiority in the effectiveness of weapons and ensure adequate supplies;
- d. their numerically smaller fighting forces at a more highly skilled and trained standard.

To achieve this, the necessary resources for scientific research and development, and adequate productive capacity must be provided, commensurate with the Services' requirements.

62. Conclusions:

- a. Sufficient forces must at all times be maintained to ensure the security of Australia.
- b. Australia must have forces readily available in the cold war to meet obligations under the United Nations Charter, or commitments undertaken as a member of the Commonwealth, or as a result of the Anzus Pact. In existing circumstances, all Army and Air Force units available for cold war tasks are committed. In view of our limited manpower resources it is considered that any additional contribution could not be more than a token one.

- c. Australia should prepare for a possible global war, including a major contribution to the defence of the Anzam Region and to make the maximum possible contribution to the vital theatres, in accordance with global strategy and as decided by the Government.
- d. The Civil Defence Organisation should be limited to a planning one only in order to keep abreast of the developments and techniques of civil defence.
- e. Australia should continue to play a part in Scientific Research and Development and should provide adequate productive capacity commensurate with the Services' requirements.

EMPLOYMENT OF AUSTRALIAN FORCES

Forces Available

63. The only forces available to meet Australian cold or limited war commitments are the Regular Forces of the three Services. In the event of a global war, the Navy and Air Force will have their Reserve and Citizen Force components available to augment their Regular Forces for overseas service. The Army, on the other hand, has no means of augmenting its Army Field Force for overseas service other than from volunteers.

Requirements to meet Further Cold or Limited War Tasks

64. As further Chinese communist aggression can be opposed effectively only by forces on the ground supported by tactical air forces, with naval support as appropriate, the Allies should endeavour to build up a strategic reserve for this purpose. In view of our limited manpower resources it is considered that we could not make more than a token contribution to such a reserve.

Requirements for Home Defence

65. The detailed requirement of forces for the Home Defence of Australia in the event of global war, will be affected mainly by the success or otherwise of communist efforts to expand during the cold or limited war period.

66. Under existing conditions, the requirement at the outset of a global war would be –

- a. forces for the defence of sea communications;
- b. Naval and Air Forces for the maritime defence of the Australian areas of the Anzam Region;
- c. forces of the three Services for the air and seaward defences of important ports and vital areas and for internal security.

Requirements in a global war

67. Whilst the immediate threat of global war has receded, the cold war has been intensified. Defence preparations for a global war should therefore be reviewed. Although the present targets of all three Services remain the same, as regards their nature, composition and planned availability, the rates of peacetime build-up for mobilisation should be capable of being spread over a longer period.

Requirements for Defence of Anzam Region

68. Whilst Indo-China is held, there will be no direct threat to the Anzam Region, except to sea communications in global war. Similarly, whilst Malaya is held, there will be no additional threat to the remainder of the Region. Should Malaya be lost, and the communists successfully infiltrate throughout Indonesia, the threat to sea communications would be increased, and a direct air threat to the mainland of Australia would exist.

69. Requirements for the defence of the Anzam Region under the foregoing conditions would be as shown hereunder:-

a. *Indo-China held by the Allies.*

The requirement for the maintenance of internal security in Malaya and of sea communications in a global war will continue.

b. *Loss of Indo-China to Communism.*

In this case, the requirement would be –

- (i) ground forces for the defence of Malaya against external aggression;
- (ii) naval and air support for the forces in (i) above, together with air defence forces for Malaya and the Singapore base;
- (iii) forces for the maintenance of internal security;
- (iv) naval and air forces for maintenance of sea communications.

c. *Loss of Malaya.*

Even should Malaya be lost, it is considered that the communists could not operate from air and naval bases throughout Indonesia, before Australian forces were fully mobilised. In this eventuality, the requirement would be:-

- (i) Ground forces for the occupation of the Island Chain (Admiralty Islands, New Guinea, the coastal waters of North and North-West Australia and the Cocos Islands);
- (ii) Naval and air forces for the defence of sea communications and for offensive operations;

- (iii) Army and air forces for the defence of vulnerable areas in Australia and its territories;
- (iv) Forces for the seaward defence of the main ports.

PART V — MAIN CONCLUSIONS

70. It is concluded that:-

Introductory

The ultimate alternatives confronting the Allies are:-

- a. a negotiated settlement with communism which ensures peace;
- b. a prolonged period of defence preparedness and cold war activity as a deterrent to aggression and the spread of communism;
- c. an ultimate conflict if a settlement is not reached (paragraph 19).

a. Cold War

- (i) there will be a prolonged period of intensified cold war activity (paragraphs 19, 20, 23 and 54);
- (ii) our policy must be designed to assist in winning the cold war and to prepare for a possible global war (paragraphs 19 and 20);
- (iii) further communist aggression must be countered wherever it occurs. For this purpose, the Allies should endeavour to build-up a strategic reserve. Australia's contribution in present circumstances could only be a token one (paragraph 64);
- (iv) in the cold war, South East Asia is more vulnerable to communist aggression than the Middle East but adequate forces must be retained in the latter area (paragraphs 39, 40, 43 and 51);
- (v) all possible action must be taken by the Allies to hold Indo-China and to ensure stable democratic government (paragraphs 37, 44(a)(iii), (iv) and (v));
- (vi) if Indo-China were lost, adequate forces must be made available for the defence of Malaya (paragraphs 44(a)(vi) and 49(a)(ii));
- (vii) every endeavour should be made to obtain an agreed Allied Global Strategy and a co-ordinated, agreed Allied military policy for the Far East and South East Asia (paragraphs 42 and 44(a)(i)).

b. Global War

- (i) the probability of global war has receded but our policy must be designed to prepare for a possible global war (paragraphs 20(a) and (b), and 62(c));
- (ii) even if global war begins with an intensive two way atomic offensive, the outcome of which cannot be foreseen, conventional operations will still have to be undertaken by the Allies (paragraphs 17 and 18);
- (iii) in the event of global war, action must be taken to ensure the security of sea communications and the Middle East (paragraphs 21, 26, 30(b), 44(b)(iii) and 55(e));
- (iv) in the event of global war, Australia's security will ultimately depend on the outcome of the fight against communism in the major theatres, and it is appreciated that it is there that every effort must be made to make the maximum contribution. In view of the effects on the defence of Australia of the fall of Malaya, and the influence this would have on Australia's capacity to deploy forces in the Middle East, it is the Australian Government's view that the aim of the Allies should be to ensure the retention of Malaya (paragraphs 48, 49(b), 55(e) and 69(c));

(Note: Under Cabinet decision, deployment of Australia forces in war is subject to Government decision in the light of the strategic situation at the time).

- (v) The planned rate of build-up of Australian forces and their preparedness for global war should be reviewed in the light of the above conclusions (paragraph 67).

c. General

- (i) the Civil Defence Organisation should be limited to a planning one only in order to keep abreast of developments and techniques of civil defence (paragraphs 60 and 62(a));
- (ii) Australia should continue to play a part in Scientific Research and Development and should provide adequate productive capacity commensurate with the Services' requirements (paragraph 61 and 62(e));
- (iii) defence measures must be in balance with the national economy (paragraphs 15 and 20(g)).

RECOMMENDATION

71. It is recommended that “The Basic Objectives of British Commonwealth Defence Policy and General Strategy” outlined in paragraph 1 be re-affirmed as the basis of Australian Defence Policy with the adaptations shown in the Appendix hereto.

THE BASIC OBJECTIVES OF BRITISH COMMONWEALTH DEFENCE POLICY AND GENERAL STRATEGY

as adapted for

THE STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY

(Note: Adaptations are shown in red)

[Editor's note: Due to the nature of this reproduction, adaptations are shown in italics]

a. **Defence Policy**

- (i) To join with the other Commonwealth countries, the United States and the countries of Western Europe in organising essential deterrent forces, in building up effective defences and in working out the necessary plans, preferably on a regional basis, in accordance with Article 52 of the United Nations Charter.
- (ii) To resist *counter* the spread of communism by-all-means-short-of-war *and resist further aggression*.

b. **War Aims**

- (iii) To assist in winning the cold war.
- (iv) To prepare for a possible global war.
- (v) To ensure the abandonment by Russia of further military and ideological aggression.
- (vi) To create conditions conducive to world peace.

c. **Military Measures to Implement Allied Strategy in Global War**

- (vii) To deliver the strategic air offensive from the outbreak of war.
- (viii) To hold the air bases and sea areas essential for our air offensive. These are –

The United Kingdom,
The Middle East,
Japan.

- (ix) It would also be desirable to hold as bases for our air offensive –

Sea areas for possible carrier offensives.

Pakistan .

(Note: In this connection the Defence Committee observed “at present, it is not possible to plan on using Pakistan bases, at least from the outset, as there is no defence arrangement with that country.”)

- (x) To defend the main support areas which are:-

United States of America and Canada,
Australia and New Zealand,
South Africa and certain other parts of the African
continent,
The Argentine and certain other parts of South America.

Should it be possible subsequently to make appropriate arrangements with India and Pakistan, under which the Indian Sub-Continent could be included as a support area, this would be most advantageous.

(Note: In the event of global war, Australia’s security will ultimately depend on the outcome of the fight against communism in the major theatres, and it is appreciated that it is there that every effort must be made to make the maximum contribution. In view of the effects on the defence of Australia of the fall of Malaya, and the influence this would have on Australia’s capacity to deploy forces in the Middle East, it is the Australian Government’s view that the aim of the Allies should be to ensure the retention of Malaya.

Under Cabinet decision, deployment of Australian forces in war is subject to Government decision in the light of the strategic situation at the time.)

- (xi) To ensure the internal security and local defence of support areas of less importance, as necessary.
- (xii) To hold those areas necessary to give defence in depth to Allied air bases and support areas.
- (xiii) To retain firm control of the essential sea and air communications, and of land areas necessary to ensure this control.

d. Australian Military Measures to Implement Allied Strategy in a Global War

To meet the requirements of Allied Strategy in (c) above, plans for the use of the Australian Forces should be based on the following roles and probable strategic employment, which will govern the organisation and strength of the Forces, and their equipment needs:-

(xiv) The defence of Australia (local).

(xv) The provision of Australia's share in the defence of the Anzam Region (regional).

(xvi) An appropriate contribution to the vital theatres overseas (global).

