

STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY (1962)

Editor's Introduction

The 1962 Strategic Basis was written at a time when Australia significantly increased its military capabilities with the purchase of guided missile destroyers being announced in 1961 and that of submarines and F-111 bombers in 1963. It saw global war as unlikely, although the risk of miscalculation would increase after China's expected nuclear capability in 1966 (para 5). North Vietnam 'actively directs the communist insurgent effort in Laos and South Vietnam', which might demand SEATO intervention because communist victories could lead to the fall of Thailand and Cambodia, in which case 'the position of Malaya and Singapore would be precarious' (paras 13, 14, 26). An intervention in South East Asia might lead to a limited war that could require a commitment of more than Australia's regular forces (para 54).

In addition, Australia could 'conceivably become involved in conflict' with Indonesia over Dutch New Guinea, and there were tensions over its claims on territorial waters beyond the twelve mile limit (paras 24, 25, 55). While Indonesia had 'built up a formidable inventory' of modern Soviet weapons, their effective use in the short term would require 'foreign volunteers', and Indonesia was unlikely to pose 'a major threat to Australia' as long as there were Australian and allied forces in South East Asia (paras 23, 27). Depending on its future development, Indonesia might become 'a direct threat' or 'a useful barrier to communist expansion', as 'definite signs in the South Pacific of increased Communist interest' were noted (paras 8, 22).

Australia continued of necessity to rely on collective defence, and the term 'forward defence' was introduced to describe its strategy in South East Asia (paras 2, 3, 33). British influence was on the wane, and while SEATO was 'of the most immediate and practical significance', it suffered from political and organisational weaknesses and had failed to prevent communist successes in Laos (paras 35, 36, 44). Hence, the West's military strength in the region depended on the US, and ANZUS was 'potentially' Australia's 'most valuable Treaty' (paras 34, 40).

Priority was given to Australia's role in limited war in South East Asia, with forces available immediately given first priority, followed by those available within three to four months, then those available within six months (paras 57, 63, 64). Because Australian forces could only to a limited extent rely on logistics support from allies, the 'objective should continue to be the progressive development of self-supporting forces' which would also have 'greater capability in situations that might arise where Australia might be called upon to defend herself for a limited time independently of allies'—the document's only reference to independent operations (para 62). The respective roles of the Services were defined for the first time, and included tasks related to operations in South East Asia as well as in the defence of Australia (para 61). Nuclear weapons would 'vastly increase' Australia's military strength, but given the strategic situation and the ANZUS treaty, 'there is no immediate requirement for an independent Australian nuclear capability' (paras 67, 68).

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STRATEGIC BASIS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE POLICY

APPRECIATION BY THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

AUSTRALIA'S AREA OF STRATEGIC INTEREST

The basic aim of Australia's defence policy is to ensure the security of the Australian mainland and its island territories.

2. This aim can be best achieved by a forward defence strategy which involves the containment of enemy forces as far from our immediate environs as possible. The adoption of this forward defence strategy extends our strategic interests to South East Asia as the centre and closest part of the Allied defence line extending from Pakistan to Japan, and as the area most immediately threatened. While South East Asia is held, defence in depth is provided for Australia.

3. Although the security of other more distant areas (e.g. Europe, Middle East, Africa) has a significant bearing on our strategic interests, it is more the direct concern of our major allies. Australia's defence policy should be directed primarily to our area of immediate strategic interest.

THE LIKELIHOOD OF WAR

4. With a large nuclear stockpile, long range strategic air striking forces, the development of inter-continental missiles and the introduction of missile-firing submarines, the USSR is now capable of making massive nuclear attacks against the United States and Europe. Moreover, advances in offensive capacity have far exceeded those made in defensive systems, and while a degree of defence against aircraft has been achieved, an effective defence against missile attack is not yet available. As a consequence, massive nuclear attack and retaliation thereto would result in widespread devastation in the USSR, the United States, Europe and possibly China.

5. In the present condition of nuclear stalemate, global war as a deliberate act of national policy is unlikely. There is a significant and continuing danger of global war through miscalculation or misadventure, particularly during a period of acute East-West, tension, or as an extension of a limited war, especially one involving nuclear weapons. This risk will become substantially greater after 1966 when Communist China is expected to have achieved a limited nuclear capacity.

6. The USSR is unlikely deliberately to precipitate a limited war involving Bloc forces with those of the West. Communist China, while perhaps less cautious in the threat or use of force, is unlikely to launch independently a limited war, at least until she acquires an independent nuclear capability, which might allow her to attack under the threat of using nuclear weapons. There remains, however, a continuing risk of limited war in areas of tension throughout the world, particularly in East Asia and South East Asia.

7. The communist leaders are unlikely to press extreme policies which in their calculations would lead to global war. In pursuing the expansionist aims of international communism, the communist leaders will continue to rely principally on cold war tactics. The communist powers can be expected to foment an increasing measure of subversion or insurgency in politically unstable countries whose governments are aligned with the West and to extend subversive activities in neutralist countries. Pursuit of cold war aims by both the communists and the Western Powers carries within itself an inherent risk of limited war. Should these tactics either fail or involve undue delay in their achievement, the communists may then resort to overt aggression. They would be more likely to resort to limited war if they assessed that the West would refrain from using nuclear weapons.

THE THREAT TO AUSTRALIA'S STRATEGIC INTERESTS

8. Although there is no direct military threat to our interests in the South Pacific and Antarctica, there are definite signs in the South Pacific of increased communist interest. The South Pacific will inevitably be influenced by the forces which have brought changes to other parts of the world and will be affected by our own and the Dutch policies of self-determination, the active pursuit of which is likely to modify substantially both the present freedom of action of the West in New Guinea as a whole and the relatively static political conditions which have characterised the area in the past. In the changing situation we must expect that powers hostile to us are likely to exploit every opportunity for advantage.

9. Although the USSR is capable of developing and mounting a direct military threat against South East Asia, her activities are directed predominantly towards other areas. Her main contribution to the threat which concerns us is her military, economic and scientific assistance to Communist China, North Vietnam and, to a lesser extent, Indonesia. Her assistance to Indonesia might increase in the long term.

10. The main sources of the current and prospective threats to Australia's strategic interests are the military power of the Sino-Soviet Bloc, the growing political and economic power of Communist China, and the growing communist pressures on and within countries throughout South East Asia, including Indonesia.

Growth of Communist War Potential

11. With Russian economic and technical assistance, Communist China is developing her economy, including a considerable industrial capacity. Because of various difficulties which include serious agricultural failures, she has been forced for the time being to curtail severely her rate of industrial development. Nevertheless Communist China's industrial war potential remains formidable.

12. Chinese military strength is far superior to that of all non-communist indigenous forces in South East Asia and Australasia, and will probably include by 1966 a limited independent nuclear capability. As yet, ability to deploy this strength into South East Asia is severely limited; however, improvements in communications, particularly if Laos should fall under communist control, and development of her air and sea power will enable China to overcome much of this limitation. Chinese influence is exerted directly and also through indigenous communist movements and Chinese minorities in South East Asia.

13. The communist regime in North Vietnam has consolidated its position by the establishment of a large and well trained standing army. It actively directs the communist insurgent effort in Laos and South Vietnam, and provides weapons, training and military technicians; it also controls an extensive subversive network active throughout both countries. Despite some significant weaknesses, the armed forces of North Vietnam backed by Communist China pose a serious threat to Thailand, South Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia which even collectively could not withstand attack without external economic and military support.

Communist Pressure on South East Asia

14. In Laos, the situation created by the growing political and insurgent strength of the communist Pathet Lao, augmented by North Vietnamese, USSR and Chinese technical and military assistance, endangers the entire South East Asian mainland. A settlement which left the communists in substantial political and military control of Laos would dangerously expose Thailand to communist pressure, would confirm Cambodia's tendency to seek accommodation with Communist China, and would then isolate South Vietnam.

15. South Vietnam, although ruled by a strongly anti-communist government, is gravely threatened by large-scale communist insurgency. It is unlikely that the government can continue to contain and defeat the insurgents, without considerable economic and military assistance. The United States has been providing such assistance which is to be expanded considerably under the programme recently approved by the President. The future stability of the country and its continued anti-communist alignment will depend on its economic development, the strengthening of its armed forces, and the establishment of a wider basis of popular support for the government.

16. Thailand has so far held to her pro-Western alignment despite her apprehensions over the West's failure to prevent communist military successes in Laos. Communist pressures on Thailand to modify her pro-Western alignment have increased, and there is some dissidence, particularly in the north-east. If allowed to continue these could possibly create in Thailand a move towards neutralism.

17. In Burma, which is already neutral, the communists have continued to exploit the political instability and ethnic differences with a view to developing an increasingly pro-Chinese outlook.

Position in Malaya and Singapore

18. The Malayan Government remains firmly anti-communist, but despite adherence to the Commonwealth, it has taken care to avoid alignment with the political and military policies of the West in South East Asia beyond the defence of Malaya itself. On most cold war issues, however, there is a close correspondence of views between Malaya and the Western powers. Friendship with the West is to some extent affected by Malaya's membership of the Afro-Asian group and by the anti-colonial and anti-imperialist convictions of the opposition and the rank and file of the governing Alliance Party. These pressures have occasioned open rejection by the Government of co-operation with SEATO in the provision of bases for SEATO purposes and some criticism of the United Kingdom-Malayan Defence Agreement.

19. In Singapore the position of the moderate left-wing non-communist PAP Government has been significantly weakened during the last year. Recognizing that Singapore is unable to support herself economically as an independent State the Government has continued to rely in the short term on the United Kingdom, and in particular on the British Military base structure, to maintain a degree of economic stability. For a long-term solution, however, it has looked to merger with the Federation of Malaya and, with the growth in the strength of its extreme left-wing Opposition, it has pursued this aim urgently in recent months. The Federation Government, for its part, has seen little positive attraction in such a proposal but subject to the inclusion also of the Borneo Territories (so as to maintain an overall non-Chinese majority of population), it has recognized that such a merger is preferable to the only apparent alternative of seeing an independent Singapore pass into an early association with Communist China. The 'blue print' recently agreed between the Singapore and Federation Governments and the agreements reached by the latter with Britain on 22nd November, 1961, have already carried the project a substantial distance. Apart, however, from its immediate problems of obtaining confirmation of the merger terms in the National Assembly and at the proposed referendum, the Singapore Government will continue to face a critical situation during the year or more required to prepare the Borneo territories for integration and so to bring the merger to full fruition.

20. Achievement of the Malaysian federation would increase the likelihood of progress and stability in the component territories as a whole and could provide a strong non-communist barrier in an area of great strategic importance to Australia. The London agreement of 22nd November, 1961, extends the Malayan Defence Agreement, in the event of the creation of the Malaysian Federation, to all its territories subject to a specific proviso giving Britain the right to continue to maintain its bases in Singapore and to use them as it considers necessary for the purpose of assisting in the defence of Malaysia, for Commonwealth defence and for the preservation of peace in South East Asia. This Agreement would meet Australian requirements, provided that suitable arrangements can be made for Australian association with it on acceptable terms. It must be accepted, however, that internal pressures will develop in due course against the new agreement, and that the use of the bases could in practice be severely restricted. It would be unwise, therefore, to place unqualified and indefinite reliance on its exact terms.

Indonesia

21. Indonesia continues to have serious economic problems and some measure of internal unrest in areas of the Republic. Soviet military assistance, which is already being provided in substantial measure, must strengthen the position of the Indonesian communist party which is, after those of Russia and China, the largest communist party in the world. The anti-communist attitude of the Indonesian army, together with United States economic aid and advice, offsets communist influence to some degree. However, Indonesia is likely to continue to move towards an essentially authoritarian socialist society with communists participating actively with non-communists in all branches of the government. Unless the anti-communist influence of the army can prevail Indonesian neutrality is likely, therefore, to continue on balance to favour communist interests as opposed to those of the West.

22. The future political alignment of Indonesia is of vital importance to Australia's security. Depending on this alignment, Indonesia could face Australia with a range of situations from being a direct threat to our security to a situation in which, under certain forms of government, she could form a useful barrier to communist expansion southwards.

23. The rapidly increasing military strength of Indonesia is of great potential strategic significance to Australia. Over the past three years Indonesia has built up a formidable inventory of modern land, air and naval weapons, mainly from communist sources. Some time must elapse before Indonesia can gain the experience required to use the new weapons with full effectiveness. However, in the interim, these weapons could be used effectively by foreign volunteers.

24. Tension over the Indonesian claim to Netherlands New Guinea is increasing. Indonesia's growing military capability will undoubtedly give her greater confidence in pursuing her claim by more aggressive means. It is unlikely, however, that Indonesia will, in the next year or so, attempt to solve the issue by overt military assault. It is more probable that her activities will be directed to increased armed infiltrations coupled with intensified efforts to develop political and physical resistance to the Dutch within the territory and intensified diplomatic pressure upon the West. Indonesia's activities in the area will increase the risk of incidents which could lead to hostilities.

25. Irrespective of the growth of communism in Indonesia, there is a growing potentiality for friction between Australia and Indonesia, arising from Indonesia's claim to territorial waters and the air space above them, considerably beyond even the twelve mile limit. This would prejudice our right of passage through the area. Such sources of potential friction will remain whatever favourable changes in political control may occur and may be exacerbated by political (as well as other) disputes in respect of West and East New Guinea and the Borneo territories.

Assessment of the Threat

26. The immediate threat to Australia's strategic interests and security stems from the mainland of South East Asia. Should Laos and South Vietnam become communist, neutralist Cambodia would soon fall to communist influence, and Thailand, facing pressure from surrounding States may not be able to maintain a pro-Western alignment and could fall to communism. If these States were lost to communism, the position of Malaya and Singapore would be precarious, as they could face an ever increasing external threat from the north and their large Chinese populations would see their future as one associated with the policies of Communist China. These developments would destroy the forward defence posture upon which our present defence policy is based.

27. Indonesia alone, despite the increase of her military power, is however unlikely to constitute a major threat to Australia while we and our allies retain a forward military posture in South East Asia. The overall military power available to our major partners and its location on bases strategically well placed in relation to Indonesia would be more than adequate to neutralise an Indonesian threat.

28. Although Indonesia may not pose a major threat to Australia, and even if she remains outside the Communist orbit, it could be expected that she would continue her leftest policies and her policies of non-involvement and anti-colonialism. It must be assumed, therefore, that Indonesia is more likely to obstruct, rather than co-operate in, the execution of Australian defence policies in a collective defence action in South East Asia.

29. If faced with a communist South East Asia, including Malaya and Singapore, Indonesia would have great difficulty in remaining outside the communist sphere of influence. Nevertheless, strong internal and external influences would be brought to bear to keep Indonesia outside the communist sphere, and the desire and capability of Indonesia to remain non-communist will have very significant effects on Australia's security. If these influences were to fail, Australia would be faced directly with the full threat of the linking of a communist Asia and a communist Indonesia.

30. The communist powers in Asia are limited as yet in their capability to deploy their full military strength into South East Asia and are faced with a nuclear deterrent. Moreover, believing in any case in the inevitability of the success of international communism they will probably try to achieve their objectives by action short of overt aggression. They will see in their successes in Laos the pattern of future victory and will continue to exploit subversion and insurgency. These methods by their very nature carry a considerable risk of limited war, which is heightened by the possibility of allied intervention to check communist insurgency.

31. The risk of limited war would increase if the communists were to assess that the West would refrain from using nuclear weapons. The deterrent value of the United States nuclear capability is retained only so long as it remains a matter for conjecture by the communist powers whether the United States would use nuclear weapons. If the communists were to assess that the United States would refrain from using such weapons in South East Asia, the risk of the communists deliberately embarking upon policies which would lead to limited war would be greater.

32. The most likely places within Australia's sphere of strategic interest where a limited war could break out are Laos, South Vietnam and conceivably Netherlands New Guinea.

RELIANCE ON COLLECTIVE DEFENCE ARRANGEMENTS

33. Australia cannot defend herself unaided against the military power of the communist nations. Our reliance on collective defence is based on the two-fold recognition that the size of our continent, the sparseness of our population and the resources available for active defence generally are insufficient to protect even our immediate strategic interests against communist aggression, and that our assistance in the defence of the countries in our area of primary strategic interest contributes directly to our own security. A major objective of Australian defence policy and planning must be the development of the means to contribute adequate forces in support of collective defence arrangements.

ANZUS

34. The existence of the broader SEATO organisation which is specifically concerned with the security of the more threatened areas has, for the time being, reduced the need for planning under ANZUS. Nevertheless, ANZUS is potentially the most valuable Treaty to which Australia is a partner since it provides the best available assurance of United States assistance in the event of a threat of actual attack on our territory.

SEATO

35. This alliance is, for the present, of the most immediate and practical significance in protecting our strategic interests. It has contributed to restraining the communist powers in South East Asia from resorting to overt aggression to attain their objectives, and its existence has so far encouraged the Asian members to continue anti-communist policies. Moreover, SEATO is the agency through which the United States, whose assistance is fundamental to our security, has accepted a general obligation to play her part in the defence of South East Asia against communist aggression.

36. Experience since the formation of SEATO has demonstrated that the organisation is limited in the following important respects:-

- a. difficulty has been experienced in reaching unanimous decisions on major issues in an organisation in which each of the eight participating nations is, in effect, able to exercise a veto.
- b. while general strategic concepts for the defence of South East Asia have been formulated and agreed in principle by the Member Nations, there have been considerable difficulties in developing effective plans in support of these concepts.

- c. in the outlook on insurgency situations, particularly, there is a conflict between the policies of the member nations and an inability to take collective action has been demonstrated. Thus, whilst SEATO has contributed to restraining overt communist aggression, it has failed to prevent the large-scale communist insurgent successes in Laos. This has led to reduced confidence in the organisation and has not deterred insurgent activities in South Vietnam.
- d. the safeguarding of classified information in a forum which includes Asian nations not well developed politically or militarily has presented difficulty and has had adverse effects on the development of planning.

ANZAM

37. The main practical value of the ANZAM arrangement now derives from the Strategic Reserve in Malaya/Singapore, which was formed under the ANZAM concept and provides the means for the forward deployment of Australian units in the South East Asian area as part of the Commonwealth force. The activities of the ANZAM organisation are now largely directed to the support of SEATO planning.

Australian Support for Treaty Arrangements

38. While ANZUS provides the best assurance of United States assistance in the event of a threat of actual attack on our territory, SEATO is the only collective agency available at present for the defence of the strategically important area of mainland South East Asia. Units of our forces are now stationed forward in South East Asia as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve under ANZAM arrangements. Deployment of the Strategic Reserve as a whole is dependent upon agreement between the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, but National elements of the Reserve can be moved separately on notification to the other two Governments. The Australian naval and air force elements of the Reserve could be deployed and supported independently. The deployment plan for the Australian battalion group is based on the assumption of joint UK/Australian/New Zealand action in respect of the Commonwealth Brigade Group, although we could, if necessary, and at the cost of some delay, move and support the Australian battalion independently.

39. The importance of these regional arrangements to our security demands our full support of the agreed military policies evolved therein, including an adequate national contribution to back those policies.

ALLIED MILITARY RESOURCES IN SOUTH EAST ASIA

40. The West's military strength in the region rests primarily on the availability of formidable United States military power in South East Asia and the Western Pacific.

41. There are limited Commonwealth sea and air units and land forces based in Malaya and Singapore. There are substantial indigenous land forces in South Vietnam and Thailand but these States lack commensurate naval and air power; further, the land forces of South Vietnam are almost completely committed to countering insurgency in their country.

42. The present military strength of SEATO nations, including their nuclear capability, would be adequate to defend non-communist South East Asia from any scale of attack, but only provided that a prompt political decision would enable nuclear weapons to be used with timeliness and effect. The conventional military strength immediately available in South East Asia to the SEATO member nations would be insufficient to meet more than a limited scale of communist attack, and even then prompt re-inforcement of that conventional military strength would be essential.

43. The weakness of the allied military position in South East Asia would therefore lie in the degree of dependence placed on nuclear capacity rather than on conventional forces. Fear of extending limited conflict into global war by the use of nuclear weapons is one of the factors which would tend to inhibit the use of the full military power of SEATO. The insufficiency of non-indigenous conventional forces is aggravated by the doubtful military capacity of the Thai army and the heavy internal security commitments in Laos and South Vietnam.

44. The military resources of the United Kingdom in South East Asia and the Far East, which hitherto have been of considerable importance, may not be maintained at their present level in the long term. Some reductions in ground forces have recently been made, although to date these have not involved a significant reduction in the level of military effectiveness of U.K. forces in the area. In regard to possible U.K. force contributions to SEATO limited war plans, which include a commando brigade for the amphibious assault phase, the U.K. military authorities have indicated that their ground force contribution would be confined to the present U.K. element of the Commonwealth Brigade Group (i.e. one battalion group). Also, it has been stated that reinforcement of ground forces from the United Kingdom would be unlikely unless a direct attack against a Commonwealth territory in the area were involved. Further possible reduction of territorial interests is likely to lead to a gradual lessening of United Kingdom interest in the area and a consequent weakening of United Kingdom military resources available to meet the communist threat.

45. The Commonwealth base structure in Malaya is an integral part of Australia's defence preparedness in that it makes possible our forward defence posture in South East Asia as at present conceived. The loss of this base structure in the absence of other arrangements would drastically limit the capacity of our Army and Air Force to make a timely and effective initial contribution to operations in South East Asia. Under the Malayan Defence Agreement the use of these bases is subject to consultation with the Federation Government which could deny the forces deployed there the right to operate from the area in support of regional defence obligations, especially in SEATO anti-insurgency operations. This attitude is unlikely to change unless Malaya is threatened by overt communist aggression.

46. So long as unrestricted use of the military bases in Singapore is retained the Commonwealth forces will be able to offset in some measure any restrictions which might be imposed on the use of bases in Malaya in an emergency.

MILITARY SITUATIONS AUSTRALIA MAY FACE

On the Mainland of South East Asia

47. SEATO has a plan to meet communist insurgency in Laos and is developing plans for limited war in South East Asia. Australia has nominated units of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve for the plan to counter insurgency in Laos and has nominated these and additional forces for limited war plans.

Insurgency

48. The SEATO Plan to counter communist insurgency in Laos was drawn up in advance of the present situation, but any SEATO intervention would have to be initiated under this plan. The need to intervene against communist insurgency could arise also in South Vietnam and perhaps later in other South East Asian countries.

49. To provide an effective counter to communist insurgency, SEATO forces must either be stationed in the country requiring assistance, or must be capable of prompt deployment there. The degree of aid and equipment given by the communists to the Pathet Lao emphasises that, quite apart from the risk of provoking overt communist reaction, SEATO forces committed to an insurgency situation would require the same scale of equipment and backing as if they were facing overt aggression.

Limited War

50. Overt aggression by Communist China and North Vietnam could involve conflict embracing the whole area of South East Asia. Such aggression could develop as a result of our reaction to insurgency or be initiated by deliberate communist attack. The primary communist objective is the domination of the South East Asian mainland.

51. It is estimated that the difficulties inherent in the terrain, together with the inadequate communications and airfield system in the area, would limit the initial communist deployment to fifteen divisions of ground forces and 450 operational aircraft.

In addition, some submarine effort could be expected aimed at preventing the deployment of external forces into the area.

52. Notwithstanding the limitations of terrain and access routes, the communists would still have a significant initial advantage in conventional military strength and geographical position.

53. It is doubtful whether we could hold such a communist attack without resorting to the use of nuclear weapons at the outset in order to destroy the communist air force and airfield complex, and to slow the advance of their ground forces. (This is currently being studied in the Military Planning Office of SEATO).

54. The present situation in South East Asia is so serious that Australia, with her SEATO partners, could be called at short notice to contribute forces to assist in stabilising the situation. Communist reaction to such SEATO intervention could lead rapidly to limited war in which an appropriate initial Australian contribution could be

made from within our available regular forces. This situation, however, could deteriorate to such an extent that Australia could well be involved in a war to which even the contribution of all her regular forces at their present levels would not be commensurate with her vital interest in preventing a communist victory in South East Asia.

In Australia's Northern Approaches

55. Australia could conceivably become involved in conflict arising from Indonesian aggression against Netherlands New Guinea. Such involvement might be in the form of either direct participation in any United Nations or allied action if it eventuates or be limited to measures to ensure the security of Eastern New Guinea.

56. In the longer term, should the West's forward defence strategy fail to contain communism in South East Asia and if Indonesia should become communist, Australia would be faced with a threat to her national survival. This would require the maximum mobilization of Australia's resources.

AUSTRALIAN DEFENCE FORCES

Roles of the Forces

57. The present assessment of the strategic situation requires that our defence planning and preparations should continue to be directed primarily to the fulfilment of our role in limited war in South East Asia. The forces developed for this role would also enable us to meet cold war and anti-insurgency requirements, and to meet any requests that might arise for contributions to a United Nations force.

Cold War and Insurgency

58. In cold war, Australia should maintain forces as a backing to diplomacy and in support of obligations under regional arrangements. These forces should be able to deploy forward rapidly if they are to be effective in deterring aggression. These requirements can best be met by readily available and highly mobile forces. It is desirable that elements of these forces should be deployed close to or in the threatened areas. Additional mobile forces must be available for rapid reinforcement of forward areas in anti-insurgency operations or if insurgency develops into a wider conflict.

Limited War

59. Australian forces should be capable of making an effective contribution in concert with our allies to limited war situations on the mainland of South East Asia and to contribute to the direct defence of Australia. Our force contributions to SEATO operations should initially be readily available regular forces with a high degree of mobility, which can be deployed within the timings known to be necessary.

60. The Australian units based on Singapore or deployed in the Malayan area as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, which fulfil a valuable cold war role, are strategically well-placed as an initial and ready contribution to insurgency operations and limited war in the area. Whilst South East Asia is held and so long as the freedom of action of these forces is not seriously impaired, it is most desirable that these forces remain based in Singapore/Malaya.

Individual Roles of Australian Forces

61. The individual roles of the Australian Armed Forces are as follows:-

Navy: To provide an effective and sustained Naval contribution to the allied forces maintaining command of the seas in our areas of strategic interests; to contribute to and to defend Australian military shipping en route to the areas of operations in South East Asia; to protect, within the Australian station, shipping carrying essential imports or exports, and to co-operate with sister services in general operations of war including the defence of the Australian mainland and Australian island territories.

Army: To provide a regular combat force capable of making a prompt, effective and sustained contribution to South East Asian defence in concert with our allies; to provide regular logistic forces for their support and for the support of the RAAF; to maintain a volunteer citizen force for the provision of follow-up forces to build up Army strength in the overseas theatre and as a basis for any further expansion which may be required, including home defence.

Air Force: To provide an effective, immediate and sustained air offensive contribution in support of allied operations and for the air defence of Australia, her territories and overseas bases; to co-operate with allies and sister Services in the defence of sea communications within the range of shore based aircraft; to provide a strategic air lift, and to provide offensive and air transport support for the Army in the field.

62. Experience in the development of SEATO plans has demonstrated that Australia cannot expect to obtain logistic facilities from her allies except to a very limited extent. On the contrary, it has been made abundantly clear that Australia herself would have to move and maintain the forces she commits to collective defence operations, including the provision of strategic sea and air transport for their timely deployment, build-up and support. These considerations require that our objective should continue to be the progressive development of self-supporting forces. Such forces would constitute a more effective and acceptable contribution to allied operations, and would also have a greater capability in situations that might arise where Australia might be called upon to defend herself for a limited time independently of allies.

Priorities for Defence Preparations

63. The early stages of possible conflicts in which Australia may be involved will be of critical importance. Accordingly, our resources should first be applied to the development of mobile regular forces equipped with modern weapons, then to the development of those forces which can become operational within a short period.

64. The following principles should govern the provision of forces:-

- a. First priority should be given to regular forces readily available for operations together with the necessary logistic support and the necessary reserves to bring units to full war establishment (including first reinforcements).

- b. Second priority should be given to forces which can be made available in the first three or four months of war.
- c. Third priority should be given to forces which can be made available in the first six months of war.

65. Planning and preparations for the provision of war material should be in accordance with the following principles:-

- a. Provision in peace of war material should, as far as possible, be on a basis which ensures that the three Services could sustain operations for approximately the same length of time.
- b. Priority for the provision of war material should be in accord with the priority for forces.
- c. The goal should be to provide war material for six months operations in respect of items available from local sources, and for 12 months operations in respect of items obtained from overseas.
- d. Requirements in accordance with the foregoing should be calculated on the basis of:-
 - (i) the time when particular forces become available;
 - (ii) rates of use at the operational activity forecast.
- e. The actual stocks to be held will depend on a variety of factors, including availability of supplies from local and overseas sources, distribution requirements and the different characteristics of the three Services.

Compatibility

66. The forces should have as far as possible the necessary organisation and techniques to operate effectively together and with major allies. Equipment used by Australian forces should be standard or compatible as far as possible with that used by United States forces.

The Need for a Nuclear Capability

67. The acquisition of a nuclear capability by Australian forces would vastly increase our defensive and offensive strength and would also enhance the value of our contribution in operations under collective arrangements. Moreover, in the future some weapon systems will be dependent on nuclear warheads for their effectiveness.

68. In the current assessment of the likely threat to Australia, it is considered that there would be no threat of nuclear attack except in global war, and that even in this context, which itself is regarded as unlikely, Australia would not be an early or primary target for nuclear attack. Having regard to the present strategic situation and the security provided by our Treaty arrangements (particularly ANZUS), in which our most powerful ally has a nuclear capability, there is no immediate requirement for an independent Australian nuclear capability. Moreover, the priorities of effort determined by our limited resources call for a concentration on improving the strength and effectiveness of our forces in the conventional field. Australian forces, however, should have, as far as possible, a potential capability to operate with nuclear weapons and in the face of nuclear opposition.

DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

69. The limited size of the Australian forces renders uneconomical the development and manufacture in Australia of major items of military equipment. Defence research and development is therefore necessarily limited and for this reason should not duplicate that of our allies. A major portion of Australia's defence research and development effort has been devoted to joint activities in partnership with the United Kingdom. Concentration on work which is complementary to that of our allies and for which Australia may have special facilities is sound and should continue but expenditure should not be devoted to research and development projects at the expense of providing the modern weapons necessary for effective armed forces. Problems particular to the operation of the Australian forces should as far as possible receive priority in research and development.

CIVIL DEFENCE

70. The Civil Defence Programme should be determined in the light of the assessed threat. It has been assessed that global war is unlikely as a deliberate act of policy but is possible as an extension of limited war, or as a result of miscalculation. During the early stages of global war, Australia and her Island Territories would have no significance to the communist bloc and would therefore be unlikely to be subjected to nuclear attack. In the later stages these areas might acquire some minor strategic importance by giving support to allies. The likelihood of nuclear attack under these conditions would depend on the value attached by the enemy to our strategic importance; in present circumstances this is assessed to be slight.

71. The Soviet bloc is unlikely deliberately to precipitate a limited war, but there remains a continuing risk of limited conflict in areas of tension throughout the world. In the early stages of limited war, a military attack on Australia and her Territories would be unlikely. If limited war should continue, support bases in Australia and her territories which are within range of enemy aircraft may be subjected to attack.

72. In view of the assessed threat, any substantial diversion of resources to Civil Defence is not warranted.

DEFINITIONS

* GLOBAL WAR	Unrestricted conflict between the U.S.S.R. and her allies on the one side and the United States and her allies on the other.
LIMITED WAR	Any international armed conflict short of global war.
COLD WAR	Continuing world-wide struggle between Communism and the Free World waged by all means short of international armed conflict.
COMMUNIST INSURGENCY	Armed action against the established government of a country by organised bands or groups under conditions which do not permit such action to be identified as overt and direct external aggression but subject to such degree of foreign control, direction or support as to amount to indirect external aggression.
FAR EAST	East Asia and South East Asia.
EAST ASIA	China (Singkiang and Tibet should not be considered parts of China in this context); Formosa; Hong Kong; Macao; Japan; Korea; Ryukyu Archipelago.
SOUTH EAST ASIA	Burma; Thailand; Malaya; Singapore; North Vietnam; South Vietnam; Laos; Cambodia; Philippines; Indonesia; Borneo.

* *In the United States, the term 'General War' is used.*

