
Sent: Wednesday, 1 October 2008 21:18
To: White Paper
Subject: WWW Submission: 1. Strategy/International [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

Name: James Martin

Submission: Defence White Paper Community Consultation Submissions

A methodology for Defence planning was presented in Chapter 2 of the Kinnaird Review. The fact that Mortimer felt compelled to make his recommendation 1.1 would indicate that an approach of looking at Australia's capability needs through scenarios is not completely followed.

I recognise that a public document, like a white paper, would need to be more circumspect in how it discusses specific countries, such as China and Indonesia. Nevertheless, Defence planning needs to be based on reality rather than abstractions.

Essentially, for Australian Defence planning there are only three contingencies that need serious attention:

- Contingencies in the South Pacific, Papua New Guinea and East Timor.
- A conflict with Indonesia
- A conflict with China

Government needs to decide which of these are important, as they all have quite different capability demands, and a force that can deal with all of them is expensive.

South Pacific contingencies are likely to be low intensity. The capability focus is on infantry, an appropriate level of tactical mobility and the strategic lift assets to deploy them. It would appear that an army of 4-6 regular battalions and a special forces unit would have sufficient capability for most scenarios (short of a complete collapse of order in PNG or East Timor). The ELF expansion would appear redundant, and ADAS and C-17 would provide more lift than is needed.

Indonesia has been the unspoken yardstick for "defence of Australia" contingencies since Konfontasi, yet its power projection capabilities are modest. Curiously, Australian planning has centred around a strategy called "defence in depth". Yet this strategy envisages independent layers of air, naval and land forces attempting to interdict raids. Yet, the geographic dispersion of possible raids and the adversary initiative ensures that each layer is both ineffective and inefficient. A better approach would be to ensure that the ADF has sufficient strike capability to disable the Indonesia's force projection capabilities at their bases. The capability focus is thus on strike assets (particularly air) with sufficient protective capabilities to secure the most important operating bases, the offshore territories and possibly provide reassurance to East Timor if that is threatened concurrently.

China presents quite a different issue. The conflict with China would undoubtedly arise over Taiwan or the South China Sea and Australia would only become involved should the United States also be involved. In this context, it is the assets the US brings to bear that will decide the outcome, and Australia's contribution will be at the margins. Maritime and air capabilities, particularly advanced ones, would be most significant in this contingency - but from the US perspective, any contribution that amounts to a sharing of risks would be of value.

The same sort of calculation applies to Australian contributions to Coalition operations in the Middle East or Central Asia, or United Nations peacekeeping. Land forces would be most valued, not simply infantry but forces with the C3I and logistic enablers. But ultimately, Australia's contribution will not resolve the conflict. Our contribution will reflect diplomatic and political considerations rather than military.

A notable feature of this analysis is that submarines do not feature. Undoubtedly a conventional submarine is a potent asset in the right circumstances. It is

unnecessary for defeating the Indonesian Navy which would also be vulnerable to air attack. I have heard it argued that the US would value them in any conflict with China, but I am suspicious of this argument. If the US thought this to be true they would have retained conventional submarines in their own inventory.

Another omission is the Reserves. The Reserves can still provide a useful repository of ex-Regular personnel and other highly skilled individuals. The notion of the Reserve providing formed brigades or battalions appears to have passed. Likewise, it is unclear that using the Reserves for rotation companies to the Solomon Islands or East Timor is a cost-effective alternative to Regular forces. A smaller reserve may be the best approach for the future.

The United States is a useful ally to have, providing the implicit threat of the most potent military force on the planet and nuclear retaliation. In addition, it provides more mundane contributions such as access to intelligence and technology. It is not clear what ought to be considered an appropriate contribution to the alliance. The Guam doctrine provides a starting point; we should first ensure that we look after our unique security interests.

From a force development perspective, it would appear prudent to give greatest weight to developing forces for the contingencies where Australia might need to take the bulk of the responsibilities. Capability needs for more distant contingencies might be reflected by investing in interoperability (C3, logistic, doctrinal) and - to some degree - force protection.

Homeland and border security can be an important ADF role, but it should be examined from a whole of government perspective (with resources moved between agencies as necessary). Patrol boats and counter terrorist assault forces could be the responsibilities of domestic law enforcement agencies. They should remain with the ADF only to the extent that they make a meaningful contribution to ADF capability for conflict.

Spending on Defence comes at a cost. A dollar spent on Defence could have been spent on other social priorities, used to increase the surplus, or returned to the community and the broader economy. Government has a choice as to how expansive it wishes its Defence priorities to be, and with that is a funding burden for the community. The challenge for Defence is to demonstrate to that it is has an efficient approach to meeting those priorities.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

I agree to my submission being quoted in the Community Consultation Report