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Name: Phillip Skelton

Submission: This submission amplifies the points that I briefly made at the 2 September 2008 community consultation meeting in Perth. I am President of the Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia however these views are mine and do not necessarily reflect the collective views of the RUSI of WA.

Whole of Nation Setting

The core business of the Federal Government is ensuring the long term development (continuous improvement) of the Australian way of life.

This includes protection, consolidation and expansion of our freedoms, values, social cohesion, economy, security, territorial integrity, social and physical infrastructure, and more.

To operationalise this core business the Federal Government must have in place (and continually improve) a raft of policies ranging across foreign affairs, population and immigration, health, education, communications, infrastructure, law and order, resources and industry, environment, security, defence, and more; plus a legal framework for orderly conduct of business and industry, prevention of corruption, freedom of speech and assembly, countering international crime, and more. Development of those policies occurs in the context of the now globalised world where issues of energy security, food security, water security and environmental security anywhere in the world have an impact on Australia.

The above core business is set in place through a governance structure starting with our federal constitution and flowing down through traditional practices and a variety of agencies reporting generally to a Minister and some directly to Parliament or the Governor General.

Flowing from the above will be roles for the various agencies such as fisheries, customs, immigration, police, defence, and the ADF.

Within that framework each agency will have core roles plus tasks in support of other agencies.

There is a need for an over-arching whole-of-government narrative for Australia, a part of which should be setting for each agency its core roles and its supporting tasks. Thus the core roles of the ADF should be set in that wider context.

In the absence of such an over-arching narrative my view is that the role of the ADF is defence of Australia and its interests by use of force.

"Use of force" is intended to embrace both deterrence (through a clear capacity to defend Australia and its interests) and war fighting.

Budget

The defence budget should be framed around what capabilities the government requires the ADF to have in order to meet the core roles of the ADF.

The additional cost of maintaining and when necessary implementing supporting tasks for other agencies have to appear somewhere in the overall Federal Budget and the question is where? An argument can be mounted that those funds should appear in the budgets of the supported agencies.

Radio Australia presents an analogy. Some years ago budget constraints on the ABC led it to propose axing Radio Australia as its provision was not ABC core business. As an instrument of foreign policy provision of Radio Australia was core business of the

Department of Foreign Affairs. The Department of Foreign Affairs, it was argued, could fund Radio Australia and could contract with the ABC, as broadcasting experts, to implement it.

Whether such physical separation of budget provision for non-core services should become the norm is not the province of the Defence White Paper. However the Federal budget should clearly identify the separate dollar quanta for ADF core and supporting roles so that the supported agencies argue for inclusion of appropriate amounts as well as giving the government and the people clarity and transparency of defence funding.

Intellectual Capability

The ADF does not operate in splendid isolation. Its core business of deterrence and war fighting depend on interaction with industry, civilian logistics organisations, understanding of other cultures and languages, and more. Increasingly its supporting tasks involve participation with other types of organisation in reconstruction, nation building, constabulary, aid in natural disasters, and more.

To the already impressive in-house training provided by the defence colleges and exchanges with the defence colleges of other nations, should be added secondments or sabbaticals that can be used to give selected serving members exposure in think tanks (here and overseas), defence related industries, logistics organisations and so on.

Disconnect with post-service life

The ADF recruits, trains and provides through-career development of its people. Inherent in military employment is exposure to extreme danger, with death or serious injury a real possibility in training and especially in war. In war there is the added psychological stress of being called on to kill other people.

However the ADF is not responsible for people once they have completed their ADF service. That responsibility is taken up by the Department of Veterans Affairs. The staff of that department carry out their duties with a high degree of professionalism and understanding of the special circumstances involved in a military career that have post-career effects. However they are constrained by the law under which they operate.

The patently inadequate response of government to post-career needs caused by ADF service should be addressed in the White Paper by recommending actions that would assist those widowed by war service or training, as well as prevent, for example, the style of legal obstruction to fair treatment of victims of the Voyager disaster.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

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