

## DEFENCE WHITE PAPER

'As the coalition death toll mounts and the Western political landscape changes, the question being asked across Afghanistan is not how the military campaign is going but rather what are the alternatives. The 70,000 foreign troops in the country, including 1100 Australians, represent the blunt instrument of international policy.' Ian McPhedran for Herald Sun, 25/9/8.

It is confusing and concerning that the current consultation has limited perspectives on which to build a defence policy for the security of Australia, for the alternatives needed to Australia's current military campaigns, and for the precise, rather than blunt, defence instruments in international policy.

Public support for the defence forces is dependent on the quality of the peace and security achieved. Increasingly, the public observe the chaos of weapons and war policy and find it and the works of international armament corporations, outrageous.

### Added Perspectives Considered:

- 1) Defence is not synonymous with armed force.  
Defence policy need not prioritize armed force, thereby promoting the rule of force, failing to develop alternatives to military force, and discouraging the recruitment of those who want to defend the security of Australia in constructive and non-violent ways.
- 2) Civil society's achievements for peace and security are not noted; military achievements are sanitized; and women's experience is not equally present in Defence issues, Security environments, National interest and the tasks and roles of the Australian Defence Force.

The June 2008, SECURITY COUNCIL RESOLUTION 1820; PROTECTION & PARTICIPATION, (within the framework of the landmark, 2000 Resolution 1325 on Women Peace and Security), urges the inclusion of women in peace processes and encourages the facilitation of women's full and equal participation.

The status of women in Iraq and Afghanistan illustrates how these wars have turned into horrendous disasters.

In Iraq, thousands of women have been kidnapped, blackmailed, beaten, tortured or killed, often for no other reason than that they are women, that they practice a minority religion, or that they are in a cross-cultural marriage. Forced out of their homes, around 2 million people are refugees, and near 3 million are internally displaced.

In Afghanistan, after 7 years of an Australian supported war, over 60% of marriages are forced, some girls are as young as age 8; half are married before they are aged 16; 80% of women suffer domestic violence; 1 in six women dies in childbirth; only 10% of women are literate, this only with the heroic but illegal efforts of the Revolutionary Association of Afghan Women; women increasingly must wear burqas and be silent; and women members of parliament are suspended if they speak out against injustice and its perpetrators.

- 3) The role of force for Australian defence could be designed to support the rule of law - human rights, UN Charter, especially Article 26, "The least diversion of human and economic resources to armaments" – and people's unmet security needs.

Yet it is tragically possible that Australia, for its next Policy, will remain guided by armament industries and military experts who can't or won't note:

- The counter-productiveness of armed force to establish conditions for peace.
- That the defenders of the nation also have human rights, and war negates them just as it negates the rights of war's victims.
- The measurable contributions to Climate Change by armaments.

Currently, Australia has belligerent alliances, and invites allies to conduct war exercises on Australia. They invade. They bomb. They diminish our sovereignty. They pollute.

These alliances fail to address human security in the region in the key dimensions of, freedom from fear and freedom from want. The levels of armaments and armed force are such that they cause fear and want.

Within Australia we have a rule of law. Households do not spend on weapons at every window or personal weapons of mass destruction. A national grouping of colonies last century saved us from state militias confronting each other across state boundaries. We found a non-belligerent way to have both national and state identity by establishing rule of law rather than rule of force.

We lack the international rule of law that would allow a regional group of nations to maintain both sovereignty and security - the alternative to ever increasing resources wasted on armaments in the region.

- 4) Climate change is not given weight as the major security threat. As well the pollutions and ecological disruptions of weapons and armed force are not recognized.

A conservative estimate is that a global 30% of environmental degradation and 10% of carbon emissions are due to military activities.

Policy analysts, Spratt and Sutton say the threats to human security from climate change are such that, the Government should declare a formal state of climate emergency so that 'business as usual' can be suspended.

#### Strategy in Defence Policy:

1. Focus priorities towards security for just resolution of conflict.
2. Disengage from the influence of powerful armament industries and belligerent nations - rather than, like Shakespeare's Macbeth, continuing to wade through blood.
3. Facilitate the full and equal participation of women in policy making to fully explore alternative opportunities in conflicts.
4. Seek alternative, non-belligerent alliances with nations having non-belligerent and human rights based constitutions. There is no bar to non-belligerence in Australia's constitution.
5. Incorporate Human Rights in Australia's rules of engagement.
6. Focus resources towards security for the Rule of Law, for the institutions for human rights, justice and sustainable peace in the Asia Pacific region – towards enablement of the securities of environment, climate, food, water, health and economy.
7. Move defence from the 'cutting edge' of war preparedness to the cutting edge of climate security.

#### In Conclusion:

Defence Policy is harmful, wasteful, misdirected and ineffective in its belligerent use of the blunt instrument of armed force. Free of belligerence, Australia's defence forces can expansively develop all the precise skills needed for international defence and security.