

## **Submission regarding the forthcoming Defence White Paper**

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### **2008 - Defence Policy Discussion Paper**

#### **What role should our armed forces play?**

Current Australian 'Defence' policies are aggressive and imperial. They 'tool up' the 'Australian Defence Forces' for aggressive foreign intervention and neglect the defence of Australia. These are not in Australia's best strategic interest, as capital investment and force structure have seen an increase unlikely to revert if this path continues, placing pressure on Australia's overall budget, endangering Australian territory, and creating animosity with neighbouring countries.

#### **Background**

It is obvious in Chapter 2, Australian Policy in Perspective of the Public Discussion Paper, that in Australia the volunteer corps, later professional soldiers, of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century were created in order to protect British imperial interests - act against convict rebellions, insurgent miners and other worker strikes; and also protect British imperial/colonial interests throughout the world.

Throughout the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, Australia's army was part of the Imperial Defence, where Australia was 'a junior partner in Empire defence strategies managed from London'. This partnership saw the Australian army involved in wars far beyond Australia's borders where Australian soldiers (almost 60,000 in WWI & some 34,000 in WWII) gave their lives for the Empire rather than Australia.

This created in the Australian arm forces a mentality and a culture of aggression; of viewing 'Australia's interests' in line with those of Great Britain and later the US. [By the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the United States had already embarked on its own aggressive imperial drive, occupying Cuba, Philippines, Puerto Rico, Guam, and Hawaii therefore placing their arm forces in strategic places not only to safeguard their geopolitical interests but to launch further attacks].

Australian alliance to the US is very much part of the imperial culture, seeing itself aligned to the major power players, and taking the role of Deputy Sheriff in the region. Australia's army was made up of the "Royal" Australian Air Force and the "Royal" Australian Navy. Thus Australia joined forces with the US and the UK participating in the Malayan Emergency (a grassroots revolutionary uprising); the Indonesian Confrontation, Korean & Vietnam wars to name a few.

**Strategic Assessment:** Australia has seen the "Australia-United States Alliance [as] one of the central elements of our security." However, contrary to 'enhancing our defence capabilities and playing a critical role in maintaining strategic stability in the Asia Pacific region' the Alliance has meant Australia's involvement in wars of aggression, i.e. Afghanistan and Iraq; and 'defence' policies which are belligerent and disregard our neighbouring countries.

The Australia-US Alliance has also been an excuse for Australian Governments to embark in the bogus 'war on terror' which has seen the Australia aiding and abetting in the criminal occupations of Iraq and Afghanistan, where more than a million people have been murdered, many more have been maimed and/or wounded, and thousands remain in gulags either run by the US army or at the behest of the US administration.

Furthermore, the infamous and bogus 'war on terror' has undermined human rights and vilified and victimised the Muslim community around the world, fostering fear, bigotry, and fascism.

### **What kinds of armed forces should we develop?**

**Strategic Assessment:** In view of the above, Australia has placed Australian lives and resources to support an imperial drive by both Great Britain and the United States aiding and abetting in wars of aggression, causing pain, suffering and animosity and resentment around the globe.

Australia should immediately withdraw all troops from Iraq and Afghanistan, and commit via the United Nations to unconditional reparation contributions to these countries and compensation to Iraqi and Afghan victims.

**Force Structure:** Australia should build a civil force ready to assist in catastrophes, within and outside Australia with no string attached. Global warming and rapid environmental changes are having catastrophic global impacts. Australia should dedicate human and financial resources to develop contingency plans: appropriate technology, train more nurses and doctors, scientists, etc. to minimise such impacts and provide refuge and assistance to the victims.

In regards to foreign policy, Australia should follow the example of Cuba which has developed health cooperation and literacy programs which include the provision of free health services in more than 60 developing countries. East Timor is a great example of this, where 300 Cuban doctors are providing free health care in rural areas, and 850 young Timorese students have been granted scholarships to study medicine.

Australia should follow policies of cooperation and solidarity with all countries, but in particular with developing and neighbouring countries this, for certain, **would secure Australia's, the South-East Asia, and the South Pacific regions.**

In addition, Australia should assist in fostering peace in the Middle East through diplomacy and denounce the United States and Israel policies of aggression.

Further, the Australian Constitution must limit Australian 'Defence' Forces participation in any overseas war, invasion, and/or occupation. Australia must abide by international treaties, and indict Australian war criminals.

### **Can we afford such forces?**

**Strategic Assessment:** What Australia cannot afford is an imperial force pretending to be an 'Australian Defence Force'. We will continue to attract hostility and retaliation if we keep following every aggressive US adventure, outside the framework of legitimate self-defence and collective security.

Investing in the training of personnel for humanitarian and relief efforts, and to develop and provide solidarity and cooperation programs could be sustainable – in any case is a better alternative.

War, poverty, ignorance, injustice are against human rights, disempower people and foster resentment and instability. Australia must address these issues at the national and global level, and be a leader in promoting human rights.

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