
Sent: Tuesday, 30 September 2008 10:25
To: White Paper
Subject: WWW Submission: 13. Miscellaneous [SEC=UNCLASSIFIED]

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Submission: White Paper: issues

The following defence issues are of concern to me and I ask that they be considered in the general review of defence issues relevant to the Defence White Paper Community Consultation. They do not necessarily relate to specific issues raised by the authors of the draft, which by their very nature are partisan and selective.

First, the continued indoctrination of youth through school cadets

The business of cadets training—wearing of uniforms, parading, observing military rank, weapons training etc.—promotes conforming behaviour and social stratification in schools, and feeds into the general culture facilitating recruitment for the armed forces.

The inculcation of conformist values, including the normalisation of behaviour that challenges respect for the value of life and the taking of life, is antagonistic to the development of independent thought. That pupils can readily accept the lure of a system that suggests social approval for aggressive and destructive behaviour should be of concern to educators and school counsellors. The motivation of those promoting such a system should be subject to greater scrutiny.

School cadets without the wearing of uniforms, parading, observing military rank, weapons training etc. would be something different to the current system favouring conforming behaviour, and would probably attract a different "class" of candidates, for example, those who are interested in bush survival skills, interest in and care of the environment, respect for life, and especially alternative means of conflict resolution (e.g. peace studies).

Most important here is the focus in learning needed on the so-called Nuremberg principle of individual responsibility—that individuals can be held responsible for their actions in wartime—genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity—enunciated at the trial of Nazi war criminals at the end of the Second World War and now codified in the statute of the International Criminal Court.

In this respect, the value of the refusal to obey orders that will lead to war crimes, that is, conscientious objection, should be a key value confirmed in any oath of allegiance by members of the defence forces.

Second, the ways in which armed forces are deployed: they should be deployed for defensive rather than offensive operations, but primarily for: peacekeeping (as in UN-approved operations); and disaster coordination and delivery of aid.

Third, weapons used by Australian Defence Forces, Australia's opposition to use of weapons of mass destruction to be reaffirmed. Weapons used should temporarily incapacitate rather than kill. The Australian Government should declare that weapons of mass destruction not be used against opposing forces or against civilian populations, in line with the United Nations Charter and international agreements; and weapons-making materials, for example uranium, should be scheduled as items banned from export where they may, on the balance of probabilities, be utilised for the manufacture of weapons of mass destruction

Fourth, and as a corollary to the third point, the massive expenditure on armaments cannot be justified in a world community that is struggling to address major problems of overpopulation, poverty, environmental degradation, species loss, water shortage, and energy crisis. Australia has significant social issues that cannot be adequately addressed while defence expenditure is permitted to continue at current levels.

Fifth, the activities of defence lobbyists and the interests they represent be registered in a National Register of Defence Lobbyists that will be available for public scrutiny, free of charge.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

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