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Submission: Executive Summary

- The reality of the international political system is anarchical.
- The conclusion of the Cold War precipitated worldwide and in our region, an era of ethnic conflicts and unresolved territorial claims, wherein there is no easily defined or recognised enemy.
- The Australian government's primary obligation is to provide national security to Australians, from armed attack.
- A Defence Force, which thinks only in defensive terms, is doomed.
- Australia's vital and strategic interests include; South East Asia, the South West Pacific, protection of our seas lanes in these regions and into the Indian Ocean, the North West Shelf and our mainland.
- Australia must be able to operate independently in areas of foreign and military policy that becomes a determinant in being 'middle' and having 'power'.
- Australia's continued adherence to the flawed regional collective security concept is more likely to endanger our security than promote it.
- China is a potential threat to the Asia Pacific region.
- North Korean, Kim Jong-il's health and any political or military vacuum his condition generates, may destabilise the Korean Peninsular, the Chinese border areas and Japan. Such destabilisations may create unanticipated consequences for Australia.
- India is a potential threat to the stability of the Indian Ocean region.
- A Pakistan/India conflict is a possibility.
- The future role of the U.S. as the uni-power and/or 'balancing wheel' within our region is unclear.
- Australia needs allies, but coalitions can't be whipped up where no 'like-mindedness' exists.
- To plan Australia's defence policy based on any contribution and reliability of New Zealand as a defence ally is irresponsible.
- To surrender our technology superiority on the pretext of appearing peaceful, or to appease a potential hostile enemy, is the essence of national suicide.
- A strategically planned and well-maintained rail infrastructure into Northern Australia will deliver a key element of 'sustainability' to the Defence Force.
- Defence research and manufacture is a key element of self-reliance and independence in foreign policy. Government must re-invigorate defence manufacturing industries.
- The Reserves ought to be flexible, well trained and empowered to operate overseas.
- Civilian Rifle Shooting programs should be re-activated.
- Canberra's primary role is to ensure the nation has a viable, flexible, mobile, decisive and sustainable defence force. The Force must be able to project power into the Pacific and Indian Ocean, irrespective of others to protect Australia's vital interests.

#### 1. Introduction

This submission supports Australia maintaining a strong, flexible and sustainable defence force. It presupposes that the Force is about fighting and defending our nation state and Australia's vital strategic interests.

The last 'Defence Discussion Paper' (2000) led with the question (p.viii, pp. 4-5), 'is war a thing of the past?' It drew two false conclusions. Namely that;

- 'some people argue that the long-term trends in international affairs are making wars less likely, especially major wars between countries,' and secondly that,
- the international systems work in many ways to reduce the risk of problems

degenerating into wars...'

On 11 September 2001, that "Utopian" view of the mythical world order collapsed. The reality is that in 2008 and beyond, Australia needs a flexible defence force that can mount sustainable and protracted operations beyond the mainland.

## 2.Regional security

Despite the hype surrounding the success and desirability of placing Australia's defensive faith in regional security, the historical and regional facts don't support this optimistic claim. While Australia ought to continue to seek military alliances with the region, it must possess the military capacity to act alone.

## 3.Technological Edge

To surrender Australia's technology superiority so as to appear peaceful or to appease others is the essence of national suicide.

## 4.New Zealand's defence model

New Zealand 'utopian' version of 'no defence' is not an option for Australia. To plan any Australian defence policy based on the contribution and reliability of New Zealand as an ally is irresponsible.

## 5.Projection of Power

A Defence Force which thinks only in defensive terms is doomed. Mao Tse Tung, in 'The Strategic Defensive' (1936) wrote, 'only a complete fool or a madman would cherish passive defence as a talisman...there are such people in this world who do such things'.

Consequently, Australia must be capable of projecting power beyond the mainland. Australia must possess viable/flexible Logistics Over The Shore (LOTS) capabilities. The concept of 'forward defence' must play a role in active strategic thinking, for it presupposes the ability and the will to project power.

## 6.Railways

Logistical support determines how long any Force remains operational. Rail should be integral to Australia's defence strategy with improved infrastructures to Darwin with connecting corridors East-West from that North-South line into a major port in Queensland and to the Pilbara (WA). (Such a concept 'Project Iron Boomerang' (PIB) exists)

Australia needs multi-fueled strategic reserves of locomotives plus adequate rolling stock to ensure continued logistics re-supplies from the Southern States into the Northern Territory.

## 7.Defence Manufacture

Australian manufacturing of defence hardware has declined, because of political decisions, including National Competition Policy, free trade and loss of secondary industries. Defence research and manufacture is a key element of self-reliance and independence in foreign policy. Government must re-invigorate defence manufacturing industries.

## 8.Army Reserves

The Reserves must be flexible, well trained and empowered to operate overseas.

## 9.Civilian Rifle Shooting Programs

The lessons of (1899-1902) Boer War saw the introduction of Civilian Rifle Shooting programs incorporated into the 'Defence Act'. The Howard Government abolished the program. If the Government is going to, or is forced by circumstances to recruit and send Australians into dangerous situations it has obligations under Occupational Health and Safety requirements to encourage competency in firearm and shooting skills, before a crisis erupts. The programs should be re-constituted under the 'Defence Act'.

I agree to my submission being published on the Defence website

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