

SUBMISSION for DEFENCE WHITE PAPER
by
THE NAVY LEAGUE of AUSTRALIA

The League believes that the armed forces primary role is war fighting.

This does not preclude the other roles listed in Chapter 1 of the Defence Policy Discussion Paper. (stabilising fragile states, combating terrorism outside Australia, assisting the security capacity of regional countries, supporting Australians caught in conflict overseas, humanitarian missions, securing borders and resources and support for emergency services)

Whenever possible these other roles should be treated as the responsibility of other, non-war fighting civil organisations, such as police, customs, emergency services and law enforcement agencies. Defence resources devoted to these roles should not erode the ADF's capacity to provide for the basic defence of the nation.

Though the ADF can and should be able to assist in these secondary roles, any consideration of the size and shape of the ADF must be based on ensuring that it is capable of carrying out its primary role.

It is the League's view that the better the ADF is trained and equipped for its primary role the better it will be able to assist when called upon for one of its other roles.

Any analysis of Australia's defence task must take into account its geography and history.

The fundamental fact of geography is that Australia is an island nation. It is an island which nowadays has extensive ocean and seabed interests stretching well away from the shoreline.

Australia is a trading nation exporting very large quantities of commodities and importing important volumes, particularly of manufactures. The greater proportion of this trade moves by sea. Because of the location of our island nation almost all this trade has to be transported over considerable distances. We have long and vital sea lines of communication.

Throughout our history Australia has always depended for its defence on our own, or friendly, control of the seas around us. From 1788 Australia has depended for its ultimate defence on the power, primarily maritime power, of Britain and the United States. Our maritime defence in World War I depended on the Royal Navy with assistance from Australia. In World War II we again depended to a large extent on sea control by the Royal Navy assisted by our own naval and air forces until 1942 when the United States Navy assumed the role in American and our interests.

Times have changed. As the Discussion Paper outlines, Britain and other European powers have withdrawn from South East Asia. The United States has withdrawn from the Philippines. We are today more exposed, though not threatened, than we were in the past. We have moved, noting the Guam Doctrine, to a rather more self reliant defence posture.

The rise of China and India and the resurgence of Russia may bring hope and prosperity to their peoples and to their trading partners but there are many areas of tension, actual or potential, in the North-West Pacific and in South Asia. A number of the nations of South and East Asia are actively increasing their maritime capabilities.

The longer term future would seem to pose many uncertainties. The possibility of major conflict cannot be absolutely ruled out. To look forward 30 years with clarity is almost impossible. It is instructive to think back to 1978 and to consider how many of the conflicts and crisis that have occurred since then could have reasonably been forecast at that time.

We can hope that the UN and other organisations, and developments such as globalisation and the spread of democracy, may prevent war breaking out between major powers, but there are many centres of international strain. Australia cannot be certain of a benign future.

It can be argued that the more it is clear that Australia can defend itself, the more our voice will be listened to in international forums and the more valuable we will be seen to be by allies and friendly nations.

The Navy League considers that given the matters outlined above Australia should now move to a higher level of defence capability,

particularly in the maritime field.

Regarding the RAN the League says:

- * The decades old policy of replacement of capabilities by the same number of destroyers or frigates or submarines should be abandoned .

The number of vessels of a particular class or type should be based upon the needs of the time, not what was done before.

- * The Navy should be strengthened. As a start the fourth air warfare destroyer should be ordered.
- * Our present submarine force must be fully manned and operational. If special pay arrangements are required to achieve this they should be introduced.
- * The recruiting/retention problems of Navy should be addressed as a matter of urgency. No possible solution should be ignored.

To limit the number of moves required of Navy families, consideration must be given to the optimum siting of Navy establishments

- * The announcement by Government that a new class of submarine will be built is welcomed. The new class should be at least 8 boats

The League believes that all propulsion options should be considered for this new class.

- * It should be noted that the League does not consider submarines can do everything. Submarines are an important part of any navy. But there are many necessary things they cannot do.

Submarines cannot transport troops and equipment, or sustain a force when it is ashore; submarines cannot carry out the anti-smuggling, anti-terrorist work that RAN ships are undertaking in the Persian Gulf; submarines cannot assist with disaster relief of the kind provided in Aceh or with civilian evacuation, as was prepared for Fiji.

Submarines, no matter how good they are, can never be more than a

part (albeit an important part) of a balanced navy.

- * long range precision missiles should be obtained for the RAN
- * the patrol boat force should be developed to enable control of all our EEZ and sea approaches, including the Southern Ocean

Regarding the RAAF:

- * Renewed emphasis must be placed on upgrading its anti-ship and anti-submarine capabilities.
- * Long range UAVs are required to conduct maritime surveillance
- * A proportion of the projected purchase of the F35 Joint Strike Fighter should be the STOVL version.

Such an acquisition would greatly enhance the operational flexibility of the RAAF.

The inclusion in the JSF purchase of a number of the STOVL version - at present being built for the RAF, the RN and the United States Marine Corps - would provide the ADF with much needed options. These options would include the ability to operate from small airfields or from the large amphibious ships being built for Navy.

Regarding the Army

- * the League supports the present plans to increase the size of the force

Merchant Marine

- * The League believes that there is a major national defence interest in building up a strong merchant marine, not only to support the ADF, with ships available to be taken over for many defence tasks, but also to ensure that Australian owned ships are available to ensure that essential supplies reach our cities in time of tension or conflict.

Attached for information: Navy League of Australia Statement of Policy

STATEMENT of POLICY

Navy League of Australia

For the maintenance of the Maritime wellbeing of the nation.

The strategic background to Australia's security has changed in recent decades and in some respects become more uncertain. The League believes it is essential that Australia develops the capability to defend itself, paying particular attention to maritime defence. Australia is, of geographical necessity, a maritime nation whose prosperity strength and safety depend to a great extent on the security of the surrounding ocean and island areas, and on seaborne trade.

The Navy League:

- Believes Australia can be defended against attack by other than a super or major maritime power and that the prime requirement of our defence is an evident ability to control the sea and air space around us and to contribute to defending essential lines of sea and air communication to our allies.
- Supports the ANZUS Treaty and the future reintegration of New Zealand as a full partner.
- Urges close relationships with the nearer ASEAN countries, PNG and South Pacific Island States.
- Advocates the acquisition of the most modern armaments, surveillance systems and sensors to ensure that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) maintains some technological advantages over forces in our general area.
- Believes there must be a significant deterrent element in the ADF capable of powerful retaliation at considerable distances from Australia.
- Believes the ADF must have the capability to protect essential shipping at considerable distances from Australia, as well as in coastal waters.
- Supports the concept of a strong modern Air Force and a highly mobile well-equipped Army, capable of island and jungle warfare as well as the defence of Northern Australia and its role in combatting terrorism.
- Advocates that a proportion of the projected new fighters for the ADF be of the Short Take Off and Vertical Landing (STOVL) version to enable operation from suitable ships and minor airfields to support overseas deployments.
- Endorses the control of Coastal Surveillance by the defence force and the development of the capability for patrol and surveillance in severe sea states of the ocean areas all around the Australian coast and island territories, including the Southern Ocean.
- Advocates measures to foster a build-up of Australian-owned shipping to support the ADF and to ensure the carriage of essential cargoes in war.

As to the RAN, the League:

- Supports the concept of a Navy capable of effective action off both East and West coasts simultaneously and advocates a gradual build up of the Fleet and its afloat support ships to ensure that, in conjunction with the RAAF, this can be achieved against any force which could be deployed in our general area.

- Believes that the level of both the offensive and defensive capability of the RAN should be increased, and welcomes the decision to build at least 3 Air Warfare Destroyers (AWDs).
- Noting the increase in maritime power now taking place in our general area, advocates increasing the order for AWDs to at least 4 vessels.
- Advocates the acquisition of long-range precision missiles and long-range precision gunfire to increase the RAN's present limited power projection, support and deterrent capabilities.
- Welcomes the building of two large landing ships (LHDs) and supports the development of amphibious forces to enable assistance to be provided by sea as well as by air to island states in our area, to allies, and to our offshore territories.
- Advocates the early acquisition of integrated air power in the fleet to ensure that ADF deployments can be fully defended and supported by sea.
- Supports the acquisition of unmanned surface and sub-surface vessels and aircraft.
- Advocates that all warships be equipped with some form of defence against missiles.
- Advocates the future build-up of submarine strength to at least 8 vessels.
- Advocates a timely submarine replacement programme and that all forms of propulsion be examined with a view to selecting the most advantageous operationally.
- Supports continuing development of a balanced fleet including a mine-countermeasures force, a hydrographic/oceanographic element, a patrol boat force capable of operating in severe sea states, and adequate afloat support vessels.
- Supports the development of Australia's defence industry, including strong research and design organisations capable of constructing and maintaining all needed types of warships and support vessels.
- Advocates the retention in a Reserve Fleet of Naval vessels of potential value in defence emergency.
- Supports the maintenance of a strong Naval Reserve to help crew vessels and aircraft and for specialised tasks in time of defence emergency.
- Supports the maintenance of a strong Australian Navy Cadets organisation.

The League:

- Calls for a bipartisan political approach to national defence with a commitment to a steady long-term build-up in our national defence capability including the required industrial infrastructure.
- While recognising budgetary constraints, believes that, given leadership by successive governments, Australia can defend itself in the longer term within acceptable financial, economic and manpower parameters.