



**Uniting Church in Australia**  
SYNOD OF VICTORIA AND TASMANIA

Justice and International Mission Unit  
130 Little Collins Street  
Melbourne Victoria 3000  
Telephone: (03) 9251 5271  
Facsimile: (03) 9251 5241  
jim@victas.uca.org.au

September 2008

Defence White Paper Team  
Defence Establishment Fairbairn  
F4-G-015  
26-28 Fairbairn Avenue  
Canberra, ACT, 2600

## **Submission by the Justice and International Mission Unit to the Defence White Paper**

The Justice and International Mission Unit, Synod of Victoria and Tasmania, Uniting Church in Australia is pleased to have this opportunity to make a submission to the Defence White Paper. Given the restrictions on the size of submissions that will be accepted, the Unit will address two issues:

- Achieving real security, both regionally and globally; and
- The role of Defence in upholding basic human rights.

### **Achieving Security**

The Unit fully agrees with the discussion paper that “Australia cannot be secure in an insecure region or in an unstable global security environment where the rule of law is not maintained.”<sup>1</sup> The question is therefore what combination of policies and actions can Australia take to build a secure region and a stable global security environment where the rule of law is maintained.

The discussion paper correctly identifies the variety of threats and context in which regional instability and an unstable global security environment is likely to result. Specifically it notes that:

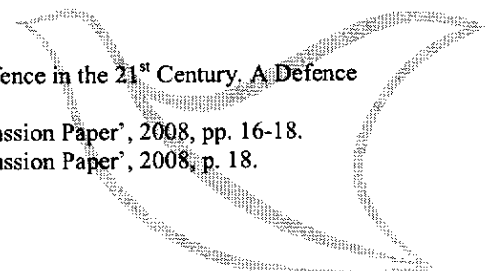
- Population movements to large cities and coastal areas can contribute to the emergence of virulent diseases and the spread of existing diseases such as cholera, HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria;<sup>2</sup>
- The gap between developing countries and developed states could see tensions between the ‘haves’ and ‘have nots’, which in turn many increase people smuggling to developed countries;<sup>3</sup>

---

<sup>1</sup> Australian Government Department of Defence, ‘Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper’, 2008, p. 32.

<sup>2</sup> ‘Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper’, 2008, pp. 16-18.

<sup>3</sup> ‘Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper’, 2008, p. 18.



- That some developing countries are becoming less able to meet the needs of their citizens, resulting in internal tensions, and occasionally intra-state conflict, that can spill beyond the borders of an individual country; and<sup>4</sup>
- The impacts of climate change reducing access to food and resources resulting in new tensions.<sup>5</sup>

The Unit would argue that a strategy where large financial resources are ploughed into the ADF in the hope of building a military force capable of defeating all the security challenges that might emerge is a flawed strategy and, as recognised in the discussion paper, will not lead to Australia being secure. Increased military spending is likely to encourage other countries in our region to likewise increase their military spending where they are able to do so, diverting further resources to a regional military build up and away from more productive purposes.

We note that Australia's military budget has increased by 56% in the last seven years. According to Jane's Industry Quarterly, Australia is now 13<sup>th</sup> in the world in terms of military spending, and is ahead of Canada which will spend US\$16.19 billion on its military in 2008.

By comparison, Australia is still well short of living up to its promise of providing 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) in foreign aid, with Official Development Assistance (ODA) in 2007 being only 0.3% GNI. We welcome the fact that the current Government has promised to increase ODA to 0.5% of GNI by 2015. Australia will provide an estimated \$3.7 billion in ODA in 2008-09, increasing Australia's ratio of ODA to GNI from 0.30% in 2007-08 to 0.32% in 2008-09.<sup>6</sup>

It is to be noted that the promised 0.7% GNI in ODA relates only to development assistance relating to addressing poverty and was internationally agreed before the impacts of climate change were known. Under the *UN Framework Convention on Climate Change* and the *Kyoto Protocol*, Australia accepted the obligation to provide financial assistance to developing countries for adaptation to the impacts of climate change. Such funding should be additional to the 0.7% GNI promise of ODA to address measures to overcome poverty. The Garnaut draft report quotes the World Bank estimate that the incremental annual costs of adaptation to projected climate change to be in the range of US\$10 billion to US\$40 billion per year, a third of which is associated with public finance.<sup>7</sup> We note the estimate of Make Poverty History, of which we are a member, that Australia's fair share of adaptation funding for developing countries would be US\$1.5 billion (\$1.7 billion) on an annual basis by 2015 in addition to Australia providing its promised 0.7% Gross National Income (GNI) for development aid to address poverty.<sup>8</sup>

---

<sup>4</sup> 'Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper', 2008, p. 19.

<sup>5</sup> 'Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper', 2008, p. 20.

<sup>6</sup> The Hon Stephen Smith MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, '2008-09 International Development Assistance Budget', Media Release, 13 May 2008.

<sup>7</sup> Garnaut Climate Change Review, *op. cit.*, p.317

<sup>8</sup> Make Poverty History (2008), *See the Bigger Picture. Act on Climate Change*, pp. 12-13

Thus, the Justice and International Mission Unit believes that Australia should provide its fair share of ODA and adaptation funding to developing countries as a priority over further increases in military spending. It believes such funding is more likely to provide a secure environment for Australia in its region and globally, in addition to the direct additional benefits such spending will have for people in developing countries, over spending for military purposes.

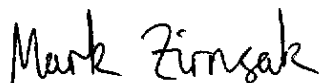
The Unit is deeply concerned that the cost effectiveness of providing functions through the ADF is assessed against providing such functions through non-military means within the White Paper. For example, an assessment should be made as to the cost effectiveness of equipping and skilling the ADF to provide disaster relief and humanitarian assistance against civilian alternatives to provide the same functions.

The Unit is particularly concerned about the cost involved in ensuring that the ADF is capable of participating in high intensity warfighting with allies such as the US.<sup>9</sup> The cost of maintaining such a capability is very high and the Unit believes that the money would be better spent on Australia meeting its obligations with regard to ODA and assisting others in dealing with climate change as more effective measures to promote regional and global stability. This is particularly the case with regards to many defence procurement contracts running over budget and taking much longer than anticipated, in addition to recent cancellations such as the \$1.1 billion loss on the Kaman Seasprite helicopters project.

#### **Upholding Human Rights**

The Unit believes that Australia has a world leading training program for ADF personnel in compliance with International Humanitarian Law (IHL), incorporating training in IHL into field exercises to cement compliance with IHL far more effectively than through classroom learning. The Unit believes that the White Paper should make reference to the ADF sharing its expertise in IHL with other countries, as part of its role in building respect for the rule of law globally.

The White Paper should also commit the ADF to be active in seeking an upholding of IHL and international human rights standards in all the operations it is involved with. Australia's 'moral force' in the global environment is undermined if Australia does not seek to forcefully address human rights abuses committed by forces of allies working in cooperation with the ADF.



Dr Mark Zirnsak  
Director  
Justice and International Mission Unit  
Phone: (03) 9251 5265

---

<sup>9</sup> 'Key Questions for Defence in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. A Defence Policy Discussion Paper', 2008, p. 32.