The enduring validity of D2000

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Australians are still at greater risk of being run over while crossing the road than they are of falling victim to a terrorist attack.

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Introduction

1.   Much has happened in the world since the publication of *D2000*: 9/11, the commencement of the War on Terror, Tampa, the Iraq War, terrorist incidents in Bali and Jakarta, the Indian Ocean Tsunami, peacekeeping operations in Bougainville and Solomon Islands, and so on. Though not an exhaustive list, incidents such as these influence our strategic environment and potentially affect the security of Australia, our region and the world. How should Defence policy makers consider the rise of these issues? Did the drafters of *D2000* consider them as contingencies? Does their recent emergence justify a complete rethink of Defence policy as pronounced in *D2000?*

2.   The aim of this paper is to determine to what extent *D2000* remains valid in light of recent events that have strategic implications for Australia. To achieve this aim the paper focuses on the strategic foundation of *D2000* rather than on the force structure and capability development initiatives it also contains. The paper outlines the strategic foundation of *D2000* and its key elements. The paper goes on to analyse what has happened in the strategic environment and what the government has done in response and then examines the views of commentators before concluding that the strategy underpinning *D2000* essentially remains valid. The required inherent flexibility of a strategic policy such as *D2000*, designed to be applicable for a decade or more, needs to be clearly understood. However, noting the increased involvement of other government agencies in the broader context of Australia's security and defence, it may be prudent to consolidate all strategy and associated policy on Australia's internal and external security in one policy document encompassing all involved agencies.

D2000: Our Future Defence Force

3.   *D2000* was published to announce and explain government policy on defence and to provide a benchmark for the development of the ADF from 2000–2010. Within it was a commitment to provide funds for certain force structure and capability development based on a military strategy derived from a consideration of the strategic environment within which it was considered that Australian defence policy should develop and the ADF would be required to operate. At the time of its publication it was generally heralded in government press releases as a significant achievement, developing prior strategies in previous iterations of white papers and also endeavouring to make the ADF sustainable and accountable in terms of capability and force development.

4.   Three years before *D2000*, in 1997, a Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) White Paper[2] outlined the national and strategic interests of Australia. In addressing security, it advised that Australia's security interests went well beyond the physical protection of Australia's territory. Recognising that Australia was not likely to face direct threat of use of armed force against its sovereign territory, it canvassed Australia's security in terms of regional instability, while also noting

the potential effect of global issues, including WMD and terrorism. The DFAT paper also considered the increasing effect of non-military threats on Australia, such as pandemics, illegal immigration, refugee flows, environmental degradation, narcotics and transnational crime.[3]

5.   *D2000* made a similar assessment of the strategic environment yet gave priority to the physical protection of Australia's territory. It proposed Australia's interests and objectives in priority order, in what became known as the 'concentric circles' approach. The highest priority was given to interests and objectives closer to Australia on the basis that a closer crisis would probably be more important to our security.[4] The priorities are ensuring the defence of Australia and its direct approaches; fostering the security of our immediate neighbourhood; promoting stability and cooperation in Southeast Asia; supporting strategic stability in the wider Asia–Pacific region; and supporting global security. Following this formulation, *D2000* outlined our military strategy as defending Australia; contributing to security of our immediate neighbourhood; supporting wider interests; and peacetime national tasks.

Changes to the strategic environment

6.   As a result of incidents such as those mentioned in the introductory paragraph, it is clearly recognised that the strategic environment has changed. September 11 2001, and the Bali bombing in 2002 were stark awakenings to the realities of macro-terrorism. They confirmed that terrorism, aside from being a global issue, was a major security problem for Australia, both against Australians and within our neighbourhood.

7.   The associated 'war against terrorism' and our membership of the coalition of the willing behind the US also raised the spectre of threats to Australian interests from terrorism and terrorist groups. Since that time further plots against Australian and other interests in the region have been discovered, as well as the Jakarta Embassy and Madrid railway bombing which remind us that these were not isolated events. The 'war against terrorism' and subsequent war in Iraq saw large numbers of ADF members deployed far from Australia for a significant period of time in support of wider regional and global interests, but these types of deployments had been envisaged in *D2000*.[5]

8.   The deployment of ADF members and Australian police to Bali to assist with the investigation of the bombing was undertaken as a contribution to the security of our neighbourhood. Subsequent deployments for Tsunami relief, and to Bougainville and Solomon Islands can be considered in a similar vein.

9.   ADF engagement in peacetime national tasks[6] has been demonstrated by its involvement in the Tampa incident, Operation *Relex* and the ADF counter-terrorism role. In these matters the ADF is not considered to have primacy but fulfils a vital, though supporting, role.[7]

Government response

10.   Terrorism is not new, but 9/11 and other incidents highlighted the new priority to be given to it. Terrorism was considered a possibility in the 1997 DFAT White Paper and in *D2000* which specifically referred to non-military threats such as organised crime and terrorism posing ongoing problems to Australia. In *D2000* the government proposed that the ADF would have a role to play but that it should not detract the ADF from its core function of defending Australia from armed attack. It recognised that civilian responses may be more cost effective and appropriate.[8]

11.   Similarly, engagement outside our region, such as the deployments to Iraq, and other peace missions in the Middle East and African continent were considered in *D2000* as contributions to international coalitions to meet crises beyond our immediate neighbourhood. *D2000* envisaged that

we would usually only commit forces outside our neighbourhood as part of a coalition, and probably one led by the US.[9]

12.   The changed strategic environment has been recognised in government policy issued since *D2000.* A new DFAT White Paper in 2003[10] recognised the interdependence of our security with the economic and political freedom of others and the challenges of globalisation, especially in regards to terrorism and transnational crime. Yet despite these newer challenges, the DFAT paper reinforced that traditional security concerns remain.

13.   The DFAT White Paper refocused priority on cooperation with Asian neighbours and other partners in relation to intelligence, finance and movement of terrorist groups. It also recognised the importance of similar cooperation outside the region through the UN and other multinational frameworks in regard to proliferation of WMD[11] and transnational criminal challenges to security (such as people smuggling, drugs and arms which often finance terrorist groups). It promoted development of innovative and practical solutions involving relationships with other government departments, especially those involved in law enforcement.

14.   *Defence Update 2003* (*DU2003*) recognised that the security environment had changed since *D2000* with new and more immediate threats from terrorism and WMD, and concerns about developments in the immediate region. It reviewed defence posture concluding that principles in *D2000* remained sound, despite there being less likelihood to be involved in conflict in direct defence of Australia. *DU2003* reaffirmed that the response to changes in the strategic and security environment was not the sole responsibility of the ADF and required responses from a number of agencies.

15.   Subsequent to *DU2003* the government released a White Paper on Terrorism[12] and Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Policy 2004.[13] These provided the key strategic objectives of counter-terrorism policy: high quality intelligence; strategies and arrangements to protect people, infrastructure and interests; the means to minimise the impact of terrorist incidents; and a need for vigilance on all fronts, from the States, private sector and individuals. They also highlighted the need for effective cooperation between agencies of all government jurisdictions, cataloguing requirements for increased regional engagement, new laws, better intelligence systems, increased capacity of law enforcement agencies, better public information about threats at home and abroad, and tighter border and transport security. While clearly recognising that primary responsibility for counter-terrorism remained with the States and territory governments, the Commonwealth increased its capabilities, including within the ADF and cemented a coordination structure in the government committee framework.

16.   The Howard Government election policy[14] also recognised the interdependency of the defence of Australia and security. It noted that our isolation is no guarantee against terrorists and those who wish to harm us and determined that our contributions to regional and international coalitions remain important, providing us with flexibility while remaining combat ready. The policy reinforced that the priority tasks identified in *D2000* remain, while recognising the realities of threats posed by global terrorism with *DU2003* being appropriate adjustment for the new threats in the strategic environment—regional instability, WMD and global terrorism. It confirmed new thinking about national security generally but determined not to make wholesale changes to ADF core business. The ADF would however continue to be called upon to meet global challenges. These challenges will mean that it will need to continue to integrate its capability with the rest of the national security establishment, and improve its ability to cooperate with US and other potential partners. The government therefore promised to develop a whole-of-nation security program, not an ADF focused national security program.

17.   It is important to recognise and appreciate the challenges of terrorism. It can be fought on two fronts. Firstly against non-state actors, and secondly against those nation states that support those actors targeting other nations' security. A two-pronged response is required but the military approach is not necessarily the most efficient and effective way to deal with the problem. Where individual states are harbouring or supporting terrorists and threatening a nation's security, military intervention may be justified. But in relation to individual non-state actors, criminal investigation and eventual prosecution to cut off the activities on which terrorism preys (the associated criminal activity) may be appropriate. Terrorism in all its forms is first and foremost a crime and therefore should primarily be fought on the basis of criminal sanctions. The rise of transnational terrorism requires concerted diplomatic efforts to ensure unequivocal universal jurisdiction for such crimes.

Analysis of validity of *D2000*

18.   Alan Dupont argues that the *D2000* strategy is flawed because the emphasis on our geographic security ignores globalisation and gives insufficient weight to transnational threats.[15] He dismisses the concentric circles theory as 'narrow and one dimensional' and as a type of 'Maginot line' doctrine. He uses examples of recent ADF deployments to support his argument against *D2000* and also argues a shift in the nature of warfare from conventional to 'criminalisation of war'. Dupont uses Senator Hill's comments of 18 June 2002[16]—'different strategic landscape', 'never made sense to conceptualise our security issues as … concentric circles', 'the ADF is increasingly likely to deploy beyond Australia' and 'will need to cope with non-traditional challenges to security' as supporting his view. Max Walsh and Fred Brenchley of *The Bulletin* agree with Dupont.[17]

19.   But Senator Hill's comments and his views expressed in *DU2003*, whilst recognising the changed strategic environment and the difficulties of a strict interpretation of the 'concentric circles' model, do not suggest that *D2000* is invalid, rather that lesser priorities were becoming predominant.

20.   Des Moore argues for the continuing validity of *D2000* in stating that *DU2003* confirms the strategic tasks identified in *D2000*, rebalancing but not invalidating the priorities, and taking a realistic approach.[18] Paul Dibb also argues for the continuing validity of the strategy in *D2000*, while acknowledging the increasing importance given to security of the neighbourhood and international community.[19] In other words, Dibb is rebalancing, not invalidating the priorities of *D2000*. He maintains that the majority of our vital national interests remain in our region so there must be logic to the 'concentric circles; theory. Dibb draws support from Hill's statement that Defence of Australia and regional requirements should drive force structure, seeing current deployments of troops not as new concepts of operation outside the *D2000* structure but as examples of making contributions to global security as envisaged in *D2000*.

21.   In my view, those who argue that *D2000* is invalid fail to recognise the inherent and necessary flexibility required in a Defence policy designed to last at least a decade and which strives to design capability for a primary purpose whilst having an ability to be used for secondary purposes. While the threat of terrorism and deployment of ADF members to more distant theatres of operation is the current trend, regional issues requiring our engagement closer to home, and within the clear scope of *D2000* such as Taiwan, North Korea or instability of one of our nearer neighbours, could arise with very little warning. If the ADF structures primarily for the secondary purposes for which we are now deployed, we would be unlikely to be able to appropriately address these threats that may surface closer to home.

22.   A policy document designed to be applicable for at least 10 years cannot be static. It must be flexible because the underlying strategic environment is dynamic. The strategic environment could change very quickly and the ADF must be ready and able to respond quite differently in terms of capability and force than what it is currently engaged in.

23.   Dupont's comments concerning transnational threats are valid in the scheme of national security strategy, but not on narrower military strategy. His comments on the 'criminalisation of war' fail to appreciate the inability of the ADF to deal with issues more appropriately dealt with under the rubric of criminal law. His assumption that a military response is the best response to terrorism is therefore flawed.

24   Recent events have shown that the ADF needs to be able to operate in the region for peacekeeping, peace making and humanitarian missions, as well as globally. That the ADF has been able to meet these requirements is testament to the policy and plans from *D2000*.

25.   Dibb challenges Dupont and others to come up with a better alternative within the fiscal and demographic reality of the ADF. It is unlikely that the ADF will be able to increase its numbers or its budget significantly, so it must structure optimally for a range of contingencies. Structuring for the worst case scenario, as seems to be suggested by Dupont and others is not achievable in terms of manning numbers nor financially viable and would skew military strategy towards less probable contingencies.

26.   *D2000* recognised that the ADF was but one agency in the cadre of government agencies involved in the security of Australia, but that its role was to protect Australia and the Australian community from armed attack.[20] It noted that although there were continuing changes in structure in the international system which may reduce the potential for the use of force in international affairs, the risk was still considered high in the Asia Pacific, and in the rest of the world, especially with the continuing threat of proliferation of WMD. This required a capable defence force, trained and equipped to meet the demands of conventional wars.[21]

27.   *D2000* noted a trend that Military Operations Other Than War (MOOW) would become more common[22] and this has come to fruition. It predicted that the ADF would continue to undertake such operations within the region and beyond, and therefore preparation for such operations should take a more prominent place in defence planning than in the past.[23]

28.   *D2000* also considered non-military threats, i.e. Cyber attack, organised crime, terrorism, illegal immigration, drug trade, illegal fishing, piracy and quarantine infringement as posing ongoing problems to Australia. Therefore the government proposed that the ADF would have a role to play in these matters, but closely integrated with other agencies. New defence capabilities had potential to make significant contributions in these areas, but these could be costly. Non-military security threat related functions should not detract the ADF from its core function of defending Australia from armed attack. Civilian responses may be more cost effective and appropriate.[24]

Conclusion

29.   The strategic environment at the time of *D2000*, and at the present time, is not static. *D2000* was intended to be future focused and forward looking. Predictions concerning future events of strategic importance cannot be made with absolute certainty. *D2000* does not lack validity just because events took place that were not clearly predicted as highly likely. It is imperative that long-term government policy based on a changeable strategic environment does not just complement the strategy at the time, but accommodates any permanent or temporary fluctuation in the underlying

strategic environment. *D2000* has this flexibility. The dynamic nature of the policy must be clearly understood and communicated.

30.   The central premise and rationale for existence of the ADF must always be defence of Australia. But defending and maintaining Australia's security in today's strategic environment clearly involves more than just an ADF structured for conventional military operations. The change in the strategic environment does not require a major rethink of Defence but it does necessitate consolidation of government policy on national security. The underlying strategy as it relates to security of Australia is reflected in other government policy papers published since *D2000* and these must now be consolidated to clearly encapsulate the whole-of-government approach and reflect the specific roles of all government agencies, including Defence, in the security of Australia.

Endnotes

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3. ibid., pp, 1–2 and pp. 36–40.

4. Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2000 p. 30.

5. ibid., p. 52.

6. ibid., p. 52.

7. ibid., pp. 52, 53.

8. ibid., p. 13.

9. ibid., p. 52.

10. Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing the National Interest: Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2003.

11. ibid., p. xii.

12. WP on Terrorism reference.

13. Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Protecting Australia Against Terrorism: Australia's National Counter-Terrorism Policy and Arrangements,* Commonwealth of Australia, 2004.

14. The Howard Government Election Policy 2004: Defence – A Force for the New Century.

15. A. Dupont, 'Transformation or Stagnation? Rethinking Australia's Defence', Presentation to Royal United Services Institute of Australia, ACT, 25 February 2003 at <www.defence.gov.au/rusi/state/act%20lectures%20dupont.htm>, last viewed 27 April 2005.

16. Senator The Hon R. Hill, 'Beyond the White Paper: Strategic Directions for Defence – address to Defence and Strategic Studies Course, *Yolla*, June 2002.

17. F. Brenchley, M. Walsh, 'The defence Matrix' *The Bulletin* at <http://bulletin.ninemsn.com.au/bulletin/EdDesk.nsf/All/9D4635FD7B3EE8C4ACA256D>, last viewed 27 April 2005.

18. D. Moore, 'Defence Update grapples with the new developments in defending Australia' Online opinion, <www.onlineopinion.com.au/print.asp?article+1496>, last viewed 26 April 2005.

19. P. Dibb, 'Does Australia need a new Defence Policy?', Blake Dawson Waldron Public Policy Lecture at National Museum of Australia 22 July 2003; P. Dibb, 'There are limits to our defence capabilities' *The Australian,* 3 March 2005.

20. note 4, p. VIII.

21. ibid., pp. 9–10.

22. ibid., p. 10.

23. ibid.

24. ibid., p. 13.

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