

**Australian and United States
Joint Working Group
on the US Global Force Posture Review**

Australia United States Ministerial Consultations, 8 November 2010

Communique (excerpt)

Australia welcomed the US Global Force Posture Review and recognised its importance in positioning the United States for future security challenges, including in the Asia-Pacific. Australia and the United States resolved to work collaboratively on their force postures in the Asia-Pacific and continue to work with regional partners to maintain a stable and secure region.

Press conference (excerpt)

Defence Minister Smith: In terms of Alliance cooperation and defence matters we spoke about the United States Force Posture Review, which has not yet been concluded.

We will continue to be in consultation with the United States in the course of that Force Posture Review and in due course see what implications, if any, arise for Australia. Both the Foreign Minister and I have made it very clear over the last couple of days that of course we welcome very much the ongoing operational arrangement that we have with the United States, whether that is through our joint facilities or whether that is through visits and access to facilities. As for any future enhancement of that we will make that judgment once the Force Posture Review has itself been delivered but we will continue to be in very close contact in that respect.

Having said that we welcome very much the United States enhanced engagement in the Asia Pacific region and we see the Force Posture Review as adding to that enhanced engagement.

Secretary of Defense Gates: To this end we discussed efforts to enhance our presence and posture in the Pacific and how we can work together to do this more effectively as the United States Department of Defense begins discussions with allies on our global posture review. Today we agreed to create a bi-lateral Force Posture Working Group to begin developing options for enhanced joint defence cooperation on Australian soil. We are also working hand in hand to enhance cooperation between our two nations in emerging domains such as space and cyber space.

With respect to Force Posture. First of all we have, as a result of this meeting, established this Force Posture Working Group that will address the very issues you've asked about and to look at the array of enhanced joint activities we might be able to undertake.

Beyond that, I would say speculation is way premature because I have not even made decisions within the Department of Defense on what I'm going to recommend to our own National Security Council and the President, that we do in Asia. Except to say, that the one thing I believe we all agree on, is we are looking at an enhanced presence for the United States in Asia and not some kind of cutback.

We, as Secretary Clinton said, we are a Pacific power, we have re-engaged in a major way and now we are looking at the next steps and that.

Shangri-La Dialogue, Singapore, 4 June 2011

Defence Minister Stephen Smith: Australia and the United States have resolved to work collaboratively on the United States Global Force Posture Review.

In November last year, Secretary Gates and I agreed that a bilateral Australia-United States Force Posture Review Working Group would develop options to align Australian and United States force postures in ways that are of benefit to both our countries' national security.

Australia and the United States will work together to, for example:

- develop options for increased US access to Australian training, exercise and test ranges;
- consider the prepositioning of US equipment in Australia; and
- develop options for greater use by the United States of Australian facilities and ports.

Secretary of Defence Gates: For example, this past November, the U.S. and Australia established a force posture working group tasked with expanding opportunities for our two militaries to train and operate together – to include alliance arrangements that would allow for more combined defense activities and shared use of facilities.

Together, we are evaluating a range of options, including:

- Increasing our combined naval presence and capabilities to respond more readily to humanitarian disasters;
- Improving Indian Ocean facilities – a region of growing international importance; and
- Expanding training exercises for amphibious and land operations, activities that could involve other partners in the region.