Submission regarding the Defence White Paper 2015

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Executive Summary

This submission addresses the key question:

_Australia’s relationship with other countries and international organisations in our region and beyond_

As such, it involves substantial overlap between the portfolios of Defence and Foreign Affairs.

The primary goal of the Institute for Global Peace and Sustainable Governance and the World Citizens Association is to promote democratic global governance as the path to sustainable peace and prosperity for our global village. As part of this program, we support initiatives for integration and common security, both within our region and in the world beyond.

The primary objective of Australia's defence policy must be to maintain and enhance peace and security both in our region and worldwide. Consequently, another major objective must be to build and maintain stronger mechanisms of collective security, in conjunction with our allies and international organizations such as the United Nations and NATO.

In connection with the White Paper, there are three initiatives which we would like to recommend. More detailed discussions are below, or attached. The three recommendations are

1) **Relationship with the Pacific Islands Forum.**

We recommend that the White Paper should endorse the establishment of a **Pacific Islands Security Force**, including a Pacific Islands Regiment and Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol, in conjunction with other members of the Pacific Islands Forum;

2) **Establishment of a Reconstruction and Reconciliation Commission**
We recommend that the White Paper should propose that Australia should set up a commission or unit to provide advice and assistance in the post-conflict phase of a military intervention, and lobby for global security organizations such as the UN and NATO to do the same;

3) Relationship with NATO.

We recommend that the White Paper should include some paragraphs reviewing the concept of a ‘global NATO’, and recommending that Australia should lobby for the evolution of NATO into a **World Security Community of Democratic Nations**.

**Relationship with the Pacific Islands Forum.(PIF)**

The security of the South Pacific region has been identified as Australia’s second-highest strategic priority. In recent years, Australia has acted as ‘deputy sheriff’ to the US, with responsibility for the South Pacific. We have sent peacekeeping missions or military forces to Cambodia, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. The public has been reasonably happy with these interventions, by and large. The Solomon Islands mission (RAMSI) was a model of how things should be done, in that Australia waited for invitations from both the Solomon Islands government and the Pacific Islands Forum before intervening, and the mission included representatives from many of the PIF nations as well as Australia and New Zealand.

We have to be very careful in our relationships with other members of the Forum, however, in order not to appear paternalistic or overbearing, and reawaken memories of the bad old days of colonialism. Already, many members of the Forum would like to exclude us from their councils. They do not want us as members of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, or the Melanesian Spearhead Group. Apparently, Fiji would even like to see us excluded from the PIF itself.

Australia must therefore make every effort to act in partnership with its fellow members of the Forum, on an equal footing. We in the IGPSG and WCAA would like to see closer integration in the region, and the eventual formation of a **Pacific Islands Community**, following the European example, in order to assure peace and prosperity for the region. Here we explore only one aspect of that idea.

Our recommendation is that modest **security forces** for the South Pacific region be set up in partnership with other members of the Pacific Islands Forum. The principle should be that the Pacific islands take collective responsibility for maintain peace and security in their own region. Their responsibilities would include

- Monitoring and patrolling the exclusive economic zones of the PIF members, and preventing illegal fishing
• Monitoring and preventing illegal logging activities in the PIF member states
• Contributing to international peacekeeping missions undertaken by the UN
• Maintaining peace and security within the region, including Intervention to restore peace and order in one of the Island nations, if authorized to do so by the Forum assembly itself.

The first responsibility could be undertaken by a Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol. The means exist already in the shape of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program. Using patrol boats, aircraft and retired frigates from the Australian navy, and satellite reconnaissance data supplied by Australia, we understand that the PIF already maintains a fairly sophisticated surveillance of the fishing zones from headquarters located in Honiara. Fishing is obviously a major economic resource of the island nations, and the industry needs effective protection against illegal fishing by foreign vessels.

We recommend that the operations of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program be placed under the control of the PIF, if this is not already the case.

Satellite and aerial reconnaissance could also be used to detect illegal logging activities in the PIF member states. Again, this is a very serious problem for the PIF states. There were claims several years ago that the forests of the Solomon Islands would be exhausted in five years, at the current rate of illegal logging.

Linda McCann of the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies at the ADF wrote a paper on the future of Australia’s Pacific Patrol Boat Program in 2013 (McCann 2013). The paper goes into much more detail than we are capable of doing here. It advocates very similar proposals to ours, namely

• The paper advocates the creation of a regional coordination centre to strengthen the regional security arrangements and maximize the overall effectiveness of the program for the region. This proposal accords with conclusions of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade (senate Committee, 2010), and in fact, it appears that it has already been implemented.
• The paper discusses the option of gifting the new patrol boats directly to the PIF Forum Fisheries Agency. We recommend that this should be done. The agency could well be renamed as above, as the Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol.

The third and fourth responsibilities could be undertaken by a Pacific Islands Regiment, again using equipment, training and facilities largely supplied by Australia and New Zealand. Such a regiment could undertake peacekeeping missions for the UN, earning income and providing employment for some of the island people. It would also be capable of spearheading any intervention to restore law and order in case of a breakdown of order in one of the island states, at the behest of the PIF.
council. It would thus act as guardian of their own peace and security, and would carry authority and legitimacy as embodying the collective response of all the PIF members.

In fact a Royal Pacific Islands Regiment already exists, set up in Papua New Guinea during World War II to help fight the Japanese, and incorporated into the PNG Defence Force after independence in 1971. It has already taken part in missions to Vanuatu, Bougainville and the RAMSI mission in Solomon Islands. This regiment could perhaps be recommissioned as part of a defence force for the whole Pacific Islands Forum; or else a new force would need to be raised. This would require further consideration by the experts.

All of this may have to await a resolution of the situation in Fiji, where the military have taken over government. New elections have recently taken place, but it remains to be seen whether true democracy is restored, or only a “guided democracy”. Fiji is the headquarters of the PIF, and possesses one of its few organized military forces. In any case, the ideal of collective security should remain a collective regional goal for the longer-term.

We thus recommend that the White Paper should endorse the establishment of a Pacific Islands Security Force, including a Pacific Islands Regiment and Pacific Islands Maritime Patrol, in conjunction with other members of the Pacific Islands Forum

Establishment of a Reconstruction and Reconciliation Commission

Australia has a long history of involvement in conflicts overseas, as a consequence of its alliances with its major allies Britain and the US, or else in a peacekeeping role under the aegis of the United Nations. The outcome of recent interventions by the Western powers, however, has been very poor.

In Libya, the West intervened to topple the regime of Muammar Al-Gaddafi, in an action authorized by the Security Council under the doctrine of 'Responsibility to Protect'. The intention was no doubt to promote democracy in the country, but the outcome has been a state of chaos where militias are battling for power, and the government has recently been forced to flee Tripoli for Tobruk.

In Iraq, the West acted to topple Saddam Hussein on the pretext of weapons of mass destruction, again with the hope of establishing democratic government there. Under the regime of Nuri al-Maliki, however, the Shiites have been favoured over the Sunni segment of the population, leading to sectarian violence and now outright warfare.

In Afghanistan, the West acted to topple the Taliban government, because of their refusal to give up Al Qaeda after 9/11. A decade later, Western troops are pulling out, and it seems highly likely that the Taliban will flood back in and take over the government once again.
In total over these three conflicts, literally trillions of dollars and thousands of lives have been expended, for little or no gain, or even a negative outcome.

What lessons are we to draw from this? The first obvious lesson is that one should be very, very cautious about overthrowing an established government. As Thomas Hobbes argued, the first duty of government is to maintain peace and security; and this is so important that even a bad government is better than no government. Democracy must grow from within, it cannot be imposed from outside.

The second lesson is that much more attention, and many more resources, should have been given to the post-conflict phase in each intervention. Lessons should be learned from successful examples of reconstruction after conflict, such as the American occupation of Japan after World War II, or the policies of the Mandela government after the downfall of the apartheid regime in South Africa.

The United Nations has proudly advertised its record in peacekeeping operations around the globe, but a disturbing number of these conflicts remain unresolved even many years later. Australians are still involved in peacekeeping operations in Cyprus, for instance, nearly sixty years after the civil war there. Again, more attention and more resources need to be applied in reconciling the parties to the conflict, and bringing about a lasting settlement.

Australia has seemingly been more successful in peacekeeping interventions in our own region, in Cambodia, East Timor and the Solomon Islands. But no doubt the outcomes could have been improved there also. In Cambodia, the regime of Hun Sen has maintained power for over twenty years, brooking no opposition. East Timor and the Solomon Islands have both suffered considerable instability post-conflict. More could probably have been done to assure peace and stability after the fighting was over.

We therefore suggest that the White Paper should recommend that not only Australia, but also the UN and NATO, should establish mechanisms and institutions to oversee the post-conflict phase after a military intervention. The nomenclature is not so important: perhaps a Reconstruction and Reconciliation Commission might be appropriate. The objectives should be to advise and assist a country post-conflict in:

- Reconstructing effective government in the country
- Re-establishing effective security and police forces in the country
- Settling the issues that led to the original conflict on an equitable basis, and reconciling the parties to the conflict, following the example perhaps of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission set up by Nelson Mandela in South Africa
- Making sure that equal rights and opportunities are afforded to all different ethnic and religious groups in the community
• Helping to establish the mechanisms of democracy, such as effective political parties, a free parliament, and a free press, as far as is humanly possible

Such a Commission should include members of the ADF, the Australian Federal Police, and DFAT.

As part of the process, the ADF could set up an advisory panel to provide expert advice on these matters, including for instance experts in constitutional law, and representatives from bodies such as the Centre for Peace and Conflict Studies at the University of Sydney or the Conflict Resolution Network.

A first task for the Commission could be to analyse, in conjunction with its PIF partners, the aftermath of the Australian/New Zealand interventions in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands. It could report on the successes and failures of the post-conflict reconstruction and reconciliation phases of these interventions, and recommend measures for improvement in the future.

We also recommend that Australia should advocate the setting up of similar institutions within both NATO and the UN.

Relationship with NATO.

Australia has a proud record of promoting collective security in the global arena. Australians have been prominent in the foundation and operations of the United Nations, and we have always been a strong supporter of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. Here we suggest that Australia should support proposals for a ‘global NATO’, to develop a global security organization based on the democracies. We see this as the next logical step in evolving a more effective structure of democratic global governance.

NATO forms the spearhead of the Western alliance. The organization lost its original purpose when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, and has been slowly developing a new purpose as the security and peacekeeping arm of its members. It has overseen operations in Bosnia, Libya, and Afghanistan. It has thus become a security organization with global reach and responsibilities. There have been several suggestions that it should correspondingly invite new members, not just from the North Atlantic area, but from democracies around the globe.

Australia is currently an official Partner of NATO, and provided the largest contingent of troops in Afghanistan of any country not a full member of the alliance. It has also taken an important part in recent discussions at the NATO Summit in Newport, Wales.
Our recommendation is that Australia should officially endorse the concept of a ‘global NATO’ alliance, and lobby for its reform, to become a **World Security Community of Democratic Nations**. This is a very similar concept to the ‘**Concert of Democracies**’ advocated by a number of influential commentators in the United States.

A detailed discussion of this idea, including references, is given in the attached document, and will not be repeated here. In summary, the main recommendations are that Australia should advocate the reform of NATO:

- To open membership of NATO to stable democracies around the globe
- To introduce a qualified majority voting system into the councils of NATO
- To set up a Court to adjudicate any intractable disputes between NATO members on the basis of international law

We argue that such an outcome would be a win-win result from virtually every point of view. Here we merely summarize a few of the principal arguments.

1. **NATO needs reform in any case.** The consensus decision-making process within NATO became extremely cumbersome with its expansion to 28 members. Military men within the organization complain bitterly about the process, and Australian military men recoil at the suggestion Australia might join. General James Jones, formerly Supreme Allied Commander Europe, wrote: “Sooner or later, NATO will have to address whether you want 350 committees all acting on the rule of consensus. What’s the logic of one or two countries being able to block action by the remaining 24 members? Why not have a system where they can just opt out?” A very senior group of former chiefs of staff in Germany, the US, Britain, France and the Netherlands wrote a detailed report, recommending that NATO should adopt a qualified majority voting scheme like that used in Europe. We support this idea, which by itself would transform NATO from a mere alliance to a community after the European pattern.

2. **The new Community would provide a powerful new global security organization.** NATO has already taken on a global role, as outlined above. It provides a virtually unchallengeable guarantee of security for its members. Working strictly in tandem with the UN, it could also provide a powerful right arm for the Security Council in maintain peace and security in the wider world.

3. **Such ideas chime in with proposals from both sides of politics in the United States.** The Republican leader John McCain called for a ‘**League of Democracies**’ during his Presidential campaign in 2007 while several prominent figures on the Democratic side have called for a ‘**Concert of**
Democracies’  Thus a proposal of this sort has a very good chance of being implemented very soon.

4. Australia would benefit in several ways. We rely primarily on our close alliance with the United States for our own security. A closer relationship with the other members of NATO could only enhance our security further. Australia already participates in yearly meetings of the ‘Strategic Policy Planning Dialogue’ (SPPD) along with a group of eight other major democracies from around the world. But the proposed changes would give us a regular seat at the top table of the Western community in discussing global security problems.

These changes would require a new Treaty between the members of the alliance. Australia wields considerable influence as a middle-ranking Western power. Our support of a ‘global NATO’ would be of great importance in taking the next step towards a stronger system of global security and democratic world governance, and thus advancing world peace.

We therefore recommend that the White Paper should include some paragraphs reviewing the concept of a ‘global NATO’ and the possibility of NATO evolving into a World Security Community of Democratic Nations. An indication should be given that if a new Treaty to that effect was drawn up, Australia would be among the first to consider applying to join as a full member of the new organization.

Further discussion and references concerning this idea could be sent on request, but we do not have space to present them here.

References
