Introduction

Australia (and New Zealand) occupy a unique geographical location. Our immediate neighbours are arguably our most important trading partners, and are potentially extremely important to Australia's security, Countries such as China, Japan, India, Malaysia, Indonesia. The United States of America (US) is also a valuable ally and trading partner, and its relationship with Australia is mature, and surely resilient.

Recently there has been brinkmanship involving China, Philippines, Vietnam, Japan, the United States (US), and around Eastern Malaysia and Kashmir.

According to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute’s (Source: Defence Budget Brief 2014 15)

- Australia has spent nearly $20 billion dollars on military deployments overseas in the past two decades.
- Since 1998, Australia has committed more than $16.5 billion on military operations and overseas deployments, with Defence absorbing $1.6 billion of the cost of operations.
- In relation to the deployment of ADF to Iran, Mr Hockey the Treasurer said on Monday 15 September 2014 "Ultimately you can't put a price on protecting human beings and that's what we're doing."


On many occasions the Australian Treasurer, Joe Hockey has expressed his extreme concern at Australia's poor budget position, and the need to reduce expenditure.

Inadequate consideration is given to the Human Costs of War.

Australian lives are 'wrecked' war after war, and Governments are too ready to commit Australian people without adequate consideration of the mental and physical affect it has on the remainder of those people's lives.

Defence Budget and Finances;

Based upon Australia's Budget position since World War 2, Australia is not able to afford the high level of military / defence force resources, giving consideration to the population and size of the country.

Australian Government Revenue is inadequate to undertake the wishes and proposals put forward by the Australian Defence Force. Australia cannot and should not provide funding to continue to purchase the amount of technology for the army, as well as the navy, as well as the air force, as well as counter terrorism, as well as the intelligence organisations that presently exist.
It is absolutely necessary to prioritise the defence budget with a view to focusing on intelligence, international relationships and peacekeeping.

The Australian Treasurer and the Government want productivity improvement investigations. The Australian people would benefit significantly by investigating a completely fresh defence / intelligence / foreign affairs structure and operational methodology.

The Reserve Bank of Australia is also warning on economic outlook.

Australia is NOT able to afford the operational costs of war, which include:

- Australian Security Assistance Force (ISAF) — Military personnel contributing to the war - Troops, Special Air Service
- ADF combat deaths and injuries;
- Australian civilian casualties;
- The continued prevalence of Improvised Explosive Devices (IEDs). *(IED attacks remain the largest cause of International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) casualties in Afghanistan. There is also a)*;
- Australian Aid to countries impacted by our involvement in the war (Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), advised that "the goal of Australia's development assistance program is to strengthen the capacity of that receiving countries institutions to govern effectively");
- Australia’s Official Development Assistance (ODA) *(Since 2001 Australia has provided about $916 million in official development assistance to Afghanistan plus a further $201.7 million is provided for in the 2012–13 Budget, representing about 4 per cent of Australia’s total official development assistance (ODA) budget).*
- Displacement of people who become refugees who the Australian Government Refugees and internally displaced resulting in
- Opportunity cost of committing resources which could have been engaged in activities which improve the countries productivity;


*Information shown above have been quoted from the War in Afghanistan because they are the latest available to me. There are other costs available for previous wars, including the War in Vietnam, for which the costs are prodigious even in 1970's dollar values).*

The total commitment to operations in Afghanistan was far more expensive, at $9.3 billion.

The total cost of sending Australian troops to the most recent Iraq war was about $2.5 billion.

The 2014 deployment to Iraq will cost Australia about $500 million a year


Prime Minister Tony Abbott's said his decision to deploy 600 military personnel and eight Super Hornets and other planes to the United Arab Emirates will cost Australia at $500 million.

Also, I understand that there is huge wastage within ADF and allied portfolios, for example:
wastage associated with defence procurement has a record of waste and 
managment over a long period and Australia cannot afford this in the future;
wastage associated the destruction of outdated munitions could be reduced 
significantly;
wastage associated with the unproductive use of senior ranks personnel who are 
employed and considerably underutilised;
purchase of inappropriate defence equipment because the ADF is endeavouring to 
cover all circumstances.
Defence makes reasoned and reasonable cost-benefit calculations for their continued 
support of a war based on the justifications for it and the likelihood it will succeed, 
along with the costs that have been suffered in casualties. Actual expectation of 
success.

Resources Better Utilised on Australian Business Skill and 
Infrastructure Development.

I contend that the people of Australia do not want a greater percentage of the Australian 
revenue spent on defence. Australia needs to improve productivity and capability through 
Education, Research and Health. These have the potential to produce greater economic 
benefit, through more effective use of resources and investment.

I contend that a great percentage of Defence expenditure, including Defence infrastructure is 
unproductive to the Australia's economy.

By spending very limited amounts on defence, Japanese investment in nation building 
infrastructure and technology since the second World War, has demonstrated how that 
country has improved productivity, and progressed commercially.

Defence procurement needs to buy Australian Made and Australian Owned when-ever 
possible. Where Australia does not produce a product required by Defence, then the 
Australian Government could consider ways that the industry and expertise required might 
be developed in Australia. It often takes a long period to develop some of these industries, 
but it also takes a long period of time to obtain the products from the overseas producer.

Australia needs to establish, or retain the expertise and technology within Australia for long 
term strategic reasons, rather than import them.
Australia’s Strategic Policy Approach And International relationships

Suggestions:

More focus on political and social solutions, and less on responding to wars, particularly in distant parts of the world.

The issue of counter-terrorism, and planned specific commitment by any countries of the world to a joint effort to disrupt and dismantle terrorist and criminal networks such as IS, ISIS, al-Qaida, Lashkar-e-Taiba, Jaish-e-Mohammad, and the Haqqanis goes well beyond what any capable country has been publicly willing to commit to in the past. The protection of this Country should be the focus, and solutions enacted through diplomatic methods rather than military ones.

The greatest need for Australia is associated with intelligence gathering, counter terrorism, and defence of our own nation. It is absolutely necessary to prioritise the defence budget with a view to focusing on intelligence, international relationships and peacekeeping.

Consideration be given to an analysis of the ADF, other security agencies and other intelligence gathering agencies. Why does Defence need to be separate from Intelligence Agencies?. There is overlap and duplication of resources, and one could argue their priorities relate more to their individual needs than that if there was one central agency. Even the Australian Federal Police have duplicate functions.

Have the three Defence Agencies, Army, Navy and Airforce, be simply for military response and surveillance?

International relationships;

A Quote on 27th February 2003, by George W. Bush,

A liberated Iraq will be an inspiration to other Arab nations, and bring peace and security to the Middle East:

Australia is apparently unable to affect productive improvement in the Middle East, and Australia's policy relating to that area of the world is very unclear. Australia has committed forces to wars based upon requests from the US. It is at the opposite end of the world to Australia and there are many more highly capable nations, with more military capacity than Australia. The root of the problems largely related to Israeli politics and occupation of the adjacent settlements. It seems apparent to most that Australia should decline involvement in these wars.

Australia needs to more clearly prioritise it's military participation in wars, (including peace keeping actions, counter terrorism offensives). Clearer and more achievable use of a leaner military capacity, more focused on key objectives that ADF must first establish, Government approve, and Defence then stick to.

This may be achieved in many ways, such as:

- Defence policy to ensure a focus on defence of this country and temper the costly military offensives that Australia is not resourced to participate in, in the manner it has previously - deliver upon a sharper focus.
- greater reliance upon alliances which share the use of resources and technology so that each ally is not duplicating their purchases.
Australia presenting an independent perspective, not one specifically aligned to that of another country. Australia as a nation needs to be respected as one which seeks to resolve disputes wherever possible through diplomatic efforts and co-operative arrangements. Its own sovereignty clearly delineated.

Australia is unable to provide for defence expenditure to accommodate the military actions taken over the past decade. Its response must be tempered by logical and limited expansion to meet key objectives prioritising to get the best fit of security.

There is still considerable work to be done at the regional level. ASEAN is founded on the principles of absolute respect for sovereignties, strict non interference and non criticism of the members as a basis for decision making. Let’s focus here.

Thank you

Parker
2015 Defence White Paper

I believe that inadequate consideration is given to the Human Costs of War and believe that when developing this White Paper it is important that the human cost is explained and dimensioned, along with the other more obvious strategic issues.

The lives of Australian Defence Personnel (and other participants, for example nurses), and their families are often ruined after participation in wars which the Australian Government commit to on behalf of this country. Inadequate consideration of the mental, physical and financial affect of war service has on families and the subsequent intergeneration affect is a determinant in establishing this countries involvement.

I understand that the Defence White Papers are the Government’s guidance about Australia’s long-term defence capability.

To some the consideration of human impacts is not a strategic issue, but to most outside Defence it is an essential consideration. Please consider that to deliver an affordable Australian Defence Force structure and military strategy the Government and the ADF need to factor in the impact on a portion of Australian society which is often overlooked --- the families, the sons and daughters of those fighting for Australia. 

When considering a fully-costed Force Structure Review and assessment of Defence's future capability needs, surely force structure would want to consider humanity of the families. History has shown that the military has had trouble including family health matters.

The loss of mental and physical health during a period in the Defence force

I refer you to the Vietnam Veterans Family Study - An Intergenerational Study, tabled by the Minister for Veterans Affairs on Tuesday 28 October 2014.

The report provides detailed information.

An extract from that report states:

'... results indicate that even seemingly short-term deployments can have long-term consequences for military families. Sons and daughters whose fathers spent eight to 12 months in Vietnam were still significantly more likely to suffer anxiety and sleep disturbances than those whose fathers served for less than eight months. In addition, those same sons and daughters were less likely to have ever been married or ever had a cohabiting relationship than those whose fathers spent less time in Vietnam. These results are consistent with those of other studies.

Apart from the cost to the Australian Defence Force, the Australian Government and the Australian people, the cost to the defence force member and their family is very high.'
There are both tangible and intangible costs to the sons and daughters of war service men and women, including but a few:

- Stress, anxiety and depression physical disablement caused as a direct result of their parent's active service;
- Family financial loss;
- The affect of war service of the family's future and well being;
- opportunities lost;
- productivity lost.

There is also the cost associated with the innocent victims of war who are impacted "accidentally" in their own country.

How may these issues be dealt with in the White Paper?

"Peace is always the goal, but often not used as the option first exhausted".

Thank you

G.T.P.