Response to Defence Issues Paper

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is a very critical time in the history of our nation and world in terms of global relations, peace and security, and Australia has a critical and strategic role in this.

This submission focuses on three key areas and questions in the Issues Paper:

1. Questions addressing peace, stability and security issues
2. The United States Alliance and International Engagement
3. Defence: ‘in’ and ‘of’ the community

This submission outlines the way a nonviolent approach can play a crucial role as part of a plan to address national, regional and global peace and security. In addition, this submission raises questions about the nature of the Australian-United States Alliance, and calls for its review and supports open dialogue between the Government and the Australian Community in relation to national defence spending and strategic direction.

Four major recommendations are made in the submission in relation to these issues.

RECOMMENDATION 1: The establishment of a Non-Violent Peaceforce Advisory Unit within the Department of
RECOMMENDATION 2: Conduct a Review of the ANZUS Treaty
RECOMMENDATION 3: Conduct an inquiry into the Australia’s involvement in the War in Iraq
RECOMMENDATION 4: Ensure it is Parliament and not the Executive of Government that make decisions to participate in any way in war.

Three further general recommendations are made in the submission.

29 October 2014
SUBMISSION

Introduction
We are a group of concerned citizens in Alice Springs, who are interested in building peace at a local, national and international level. We appreciate the opportunity to provide input into the Government’s process for developing its Defence White Paper. Our submission focuses on three key areas and questions in the Issues Paper:

We are particularly concerned about the global situation where “more than 1.5 billion people live in nations that face repeated violence. At least 75 percent of those victims are not soldiers, but civilians” (Hoglund, 2013). We believe new ways need to be implemented which address the root causes of violence and provide practical tools for communities and families situated in conflict zones, to enable them to work for more peaceful solutions at their local level. New ways are emerging for dealing with violent conflicts in the world, through the use of Nonviolent Peaceforce workers. (Hoglund, 2013). Examination of these provides an opportunity for the Australian Defence Force to explore other opportunities for supporting peace and security in our region and other parts of the world.

Response to Questions in the Defence Issues Paper

A number of questions address peace, stability and security issues – in particular issues around regional stability. This first section of the submission responds to the following four questions.

P2 Qn 4: How can we enhance international engagement on defence and security issues?
P9 Qn 3: What can Australia do to contribute to strengthening peace and stability in our region?
P9 Qn 4: Where and how should we contemplate using the ADF in support of global and regional security?
P16 Qn 3: To what extent should the Government look to the ADF to promote regional stability through peace time cooperation?

In response to the above four questions; we offer the following comments, followed by a recommendation in relation to the development of a Peaceforce Unit and trained peaceforce personnel. We believe these will directly address ‘international engagement on defence and security issues’ and use the ADF to contribute to strengthening peace and stability in our region – which we believe is a more cost effective and strategic use of some of the ADF’s significant resources.

Background to Peacekeeping Work
Firstly, we wish to outline some of the principles which underpin a Non-Violent strategic approach, developed by Mahatma Gandhi one of the greatest peace-builders of all time.

1. All of life is one.
2. We each have a piece of the truth and the untruth.
3. Human beings are more than the evil they sometimes commit.
4. The means must be consistent with the ends.
5. We are called to celebrate both our differences and our fundamental unity with others
6. We reaffirm our unity with others when we transform "us" versus "them" thinking and doing.
7. Our oneness calls us to want, and to work for, the well-being of all.
8. The non-violent journey is a process of becoming increasingly free from fear.

*Mahatma Gandhi, cited in "Engage" by Pace e Bene (p70-71).*

Secondly, we wish to provide some background information on a range of peacekeeping interventions as well as the specific work of the NonViolent Peaceforce, including some practical examples of the role they play. The first international peacekeeping interventions by the United Nations were also unarmed ‘observer missions’, using military officers but without weapons. Some of the most successful peacekeeping of recent years has been carried out by unarmed civilians deployed by the European Union (EU) and by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Civil society organisations such as Witness for Peace and Peace Brigades International have been engaged in UCP since the early 1980s and there are now dozens of international civil society organisations doing this work in conflict zones around the world.” (Non-violent Peaceforce, 2014)
**Current Australian Defence Force roles in peacekeeping missions**

We acknowledge that the Australian Defence Force has troops engaged in overseas operations in non-combat roles. One example is Operation Mazurka, where troops play a role in assisting the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai, Egypt overseeing long-standing peace agreements in the region, by monitoring the border between Egypt and Israel, preparing daily operational briefings and supporting the Headquarters, as highlighted in the Defence Issues Paper, p.45 (Australian Government, 2014). In addition, there are troops stationed as part of Operation PALATE II in the United Nations Assistance Mission to Afghanistan (UNAMA). This is a political mission (established 2002) to promote reconciliation and rapprochement, and manage humanitarian relief, recovery, and reconstruction in Afghanistan. Two Australian Army Officers serve as military advisers within the UNAMA Military Adviser Unit. Their duties include maintaining contact and liaison with all military forces throughout Afghanistan on behalf of UNAMA. (Australian Government, 2014, p.45).

The above roles are important roles for the ADF to play (and continue to play) and have the potential to provide benefits and reduce and avoid violence in those regions. However, Non-Violent Peaceforce workers take on a different role, to the current ADF ‘peacekeeping’ roles outlined above. Peaceforce Workers are trained to actively provide non-violent approaches to current and potential internal, regional and global conflicts.

Nonviolent Peaceforce personnel are also different from UN Peacekeepers, as “UN peacekeepers are not trained in nonviolence and frequently act as an armed force to restrain civil disorder or violence at the request of the UN Security Council. They are not trained to resolve underlying tensions or conflicts. By contrast, Nonviolent Peaceforce is preventive, not reactive in nature, and is comprised of civilians trained in nonviolent techniques. Its mission is to prevent warfare and violence before they occur by enabling conflicting groups to enter into a discussion where all parties are heard and real solutions can be found.” (Nonviolent Peaceforce, 2014).

**Non-Violent Peaceforce**

Non-Violent Peaceforce, is a non-profit NGO in Special Consultative Status with the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. The Nonviolent Peaceforce has been operating in conflict zones since 2013.¹ As an unarmed, paid civilian peacekeeping force, Nonviolent Peaceforce fosters dialogue among parties in conflict and provides a protective presence for threatened civilians.

**How the Nonviolent Peaceforce works**

“NP applies proven nonviolent strategies to protect human rights, deter violence, and create space for local peacemakers to carry out their work. Among these strategies are:

- Protective presence- Maintaining a peacekeeping presence in conflict areas
- Interpositioning- Unarmed civilians placing themselves between warring parties
- International monitoring- Visibly documenting and reporting activities in conflict zones
- Accompaniment- Round-the-clock accompaniment of peacemakers who are under specific threat of violence or assassination”

“NP peacekeepers also connect vulnerable communities and local peacemakers to national and international resources, provide safe places for conflicting groups to meet, and facilitate dialogue, resolving conflicts at the lowest levels to prevent an escalation into violence.”

With their headquarters in Brussels, NP peacekeeping teams are presently deployed in the Philippines, in South Sudan, in Myanmar and the South Caucasus. The NP peacekeepers include veterans of conflict zones, experienced peacekeepers, and those new to the field with the right combination of experience, skills, aptitude and attitude.

The Non-Violent Peaceforce organisation aims to:

- To protect civilians- especially those made vulnerable because of the conflict - and reduce Violence
- To create a space for fostering lasting peace.
- To develop and promote the theory and practice of unarmed civilian peacekeeping so that it may be adopted as a policy option by decision makers and public institutions.

¹ [http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/](http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/)
• To build the pool of professionals able to join peace teams through regional activities, training, and maintaining a roster of trained, available people.

Some of the ways the Nonviolent Peaceforce have been used in recent years include the following:
• South Sudan: They have brought rival chieftains to the bargaining table, resolving territorial disputes between cattle-grazing groups and crop-farmers.
• The Congo: Peacekeepers have helped set up patrols, cell phone networks and worked with armed United Nations units to eliminate the rape of women in the Congo.
• Sri Lanka: Rival religious factions have been brought under control – largely due to intervention and negotiation with NP Peacekeepers. They have also nearly eliminated the abduction of young boys, to serve as soldiers.
• Guatemala: For journalists and other threatened individuals, they have served as unarmed “bodyguards” by accompanying them in high risk situations.

**Economic Benefit of engaging Peacemakers**

With an annual budget of $7 million, the Nonviolent Peaceforce operates on a shoestring—considering its global reach. Its head office is in Belgium, with the U.S. office in Minneapolis. “It’s a cost effective way to reduce violence. It is much cheaper than sending in soldiers to keep the peace,” (Mel Duncan, a peace activist, in Hoglund, 2013).

The cost of maintaining an armed force is incredibly expensive with figures cited by Dr Mark Thomson, a senior analyst from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, revealing the cost of sending a soldier to a country like the UAE will be about $670,000 a year. While the total budget of $7 million per year (as per 2012 Annual Report) maintains staff in 6 offices around the world, and in 2012 alone, 50 new staff members joined its ranks. (Anecdotal information available suggests that the difference in costs between training a person in nonviolence compared to a person in SAS, for example, is about three orders of magnitude, i.e. thousands compared to millions of dollars. An investment in non-violent approaches, of even 0.5% of the expected increase in the Defence Budget could see $18m per year available for this purpose (see figures in endnote ii). It is worth imagining what difference such an investment could make in Australia and overseas, without impacting on the overall defence budget.

**The cost of war is considerable.**

According to the Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW, 2014) there are many causes and costs of war (and armed conflict), of which there are about thirty going on in the world each year

• “Wars and armed conflicts around the world kill hundreds to thousands of people each year.
• Wars turn families into refugees, forcing people to leave their homes, countries and regions. To leave cultures, traditional medicines and foods.
• Wars turn adults and children into soldiers and/or victims, creating an intergenerational spiral towards further conflict into the future.
• Wars destroy environments, lives and economies. And they happen all the time.”

In addition, the long term impacts of war are seen in physical and mental health conditions, the displacement of populations, damage to the environment such as the impact on water supplies and sanitation; and the major disruption to the lives of communities and its people. In addition displaced people (generally women and children) “are at high risk of suffering violence, illness and malnutrition”. Currently around 26 million people are displaced persons within their own national borders “with war one of the major causes of the displacement” (MAPW 2014). Disturbingly, “an estimated 80% of displaced people are women and children, often drawn from the poorest sections of society”, live with conditions in refugee camps often unsafe, with food shortages and a lack of shelter and healthcare.” Refugee camps can also be chosen as a target by warring groups. (MAPW, 2014)

MAPW (2014) also highlights that the impact of war “is almost always most severe on the civilian population, particularly women and children,” with civilians making up 90% of those harmed and killed in recent wars, with military personnel making up 10% of casualties. These figures are incredibly disturbing, and are cause for us to reflect as a nation, and agree to embark on a new way to reduce the carnage of war.
Effectiveness of the Nonviolent Peaceforce (adapted from Hoglund, 2014)
The Non-Violent Peaceforce has been effective for many reasons – even when few in number and in the face of gun-wielding combatants
- Typically, half of the trained Peacekeepers are from the country where the conflict is, which is an asset because of their local connections and to overcome language barriers.
- Women Peacekeepers are often the most effective in the field
- The organization often works with the United Nations to increase patrols locally, and advocate at the international level to negotiate a settlement.
- “The power of presence” is the main focus of the peacekeepers. If they are highly visible, they are effective in resolving conflict
- “Nonviolent Peaceforce workers put pressure on the decision makers who are higher on the chain of command” (as “generally, the perpetrators of the violence in [such situations]... are not acting alone, but are following orders from tribal chiefs or higher authorities within the faction”. “Often, “those at the top are worried about their international image,” Because of this, those higher on the chain of command can be persuaded to halt violence.” (Duncan quoted in Hoglund, 2013)
- “International Criminal Courts” have become more prominent globally, even in remote, violence-torn areas. The impact of international courts of law, such as war criminal actions in conflicts such as those in Serbia and Bosnia, are carrying more weight internationally.
- Peacekeepers can and will serve as witnesses for international courts—which also gives the activists additional leverage.
- Peacekeepers are trained to follow a strict security protocol. “They are not there to stop a bullet...that only works once,” (“In nearly a decade of work in conflict zones, Peacekeepers have only sustained two injuries” (Duncan quoted in Hoglund, 2013).

Another peacemaker group doing similar work is Peace Brigades International (PBI)², who protect human rights defenders who are threatened with violence. Currently PBI protects human rights defenders in: Colombia; Guatemala; Kenya; Mexico; Nepal and Honduras.

In light of international precedents for peaceforce teams and workers, we recommend the following:

RECOMMENDATION 1: The establishment of a Non-Violent Peaceforce Advisory Unit within the Department of Defence
Specifically, establish and fund:
  1a. An independent advisory unit within the current defence [and foreign affairs] department(s) to focus on providing the current government with non-violent options for responses to threats to global & Australian security and stability.
    ▪ The unit would be an independent advisory unit funded by divesting a small percentage of the future growth money¹ budgeted in the Defence Budget and assessed against the outcomes achieved.
    ▪ Provide advice to government of non-violent and other alternatives to current combative responses to situations of conflict
    ▪ Provide another avenue for informed discussion and debate on Australian & global security issues
    ▪ Train up Non-Violent Peaceforce Workers to act as third party mediators in localised conflict – see point 1b. below.
    ▪ Actively encourage discussion, research and use of non-violent action and processes within the military, government and wider community, to inform existing and potential conflicts that may impact on the stability and security of Australians.
    ▪ The unit could play a role in recommending strategic action and thinking for consideration by Cabinet, parliament, Australian military and other departments
    ▪ Provide high quality research that provides useful information for all defence related decision making – e.g. cost benefit predictions or analysis of outcomes of both military and non-violent interventions in conflict situations (looking at human cost, social cost, economic cost – including opportunity costs; as well

as the issue of who benefits out of war and decisions to go to war – e.g. arms manufacturers – with all decisions tempered with the broader issue of justice).

- Actively encourage education and understanding and research regarding how non-violence could be more actively used to promote our national, regional and global security goals.

As an example of the latter, Non-Violent Peaceforce workers could work with the Muslim and other marginalised communities in Australia to reduce home grown threats – i.e. working to support some of the work already going on where Imams around Australia have been working tirelessly to educate their respective communities. In addition, as part of any approach such as this, we need to consider the impact of current anti-terrorism campaigns that may have the reverse effect of frightening people into choosing violence in response rather than working for peace. A Non-Violent Peaceforce Advisory Unit could provide objective analysis and advice on the impact or potential impact of Australian involvement in military action – both in terms of the impact on the area(s) in conflict and the impact back in Australia.

In addition, it might be that an official Government nonviolent response, if developed, could provide potential terrorists and other disgruntled people groups with a valid alternative to further their cause. This could then divert potential terrorist threats before they are conceived by such potential terrorists. At the moment, ‘Terrorists’ may see violence as the only alternative. However, if the Government can model that there is another way, and that this other way is proven to be successful in its own right, and over and against violent methods – it is quite conceivable that a minority group would look at a nonviolent response as a legitimate alternative option rather than violence.

1b. Non-Violent Peaceforce to act as third party mediators in localised conflict.
The role of the Specifically Trained Non-Violent Peaceforce Workers would be to:
- Act as third party (unarmed) mediators in localized conflict (important to this is being visible at a location to enable communication
- Protect civilians (not to chose sides in the conflict)

Some of the methods of unarmed civilian peacekeeping include:
Proactive engagement:
Protective accompaniment:
Relationship-building:
Rumour control:
Early Warning Early Response:
Interpositioning:
Monitoring:
Capacity building:
Details regarding these methods is available here:
http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/sites/nonviolentpeaceforce.org/files/attachments/NP%202012%20AR_FINAL.pdf

The United States Alliance and International Engagement
This next section responds to the following questions:
- 16a How important is the United States to Australia’s current security environment?
- 16b How important are traditional alliances and partners to our security, both now and in the longer term?
- 16c To what extent should the Government look to the ADF to promote regional stability through peace time cooperation?
- 16d How important is it to build defence relationships beyond the Indo-Asia-Pacific region?
- 16e Should Defence focus less on preparing for war-like operations and focus more on humanitarian assistance and disaster relief operations at home and overseas?
- 16f What can the ADF do to shape Australia’s strategic environment in times of peace?

We welcome the opportunity to review the merits and appropriateness of the Australia-USA alliance. We believe that Australia needs to consider taking a more independent stance within their alliance with the United States of
America. For example, Australians need to consider the unintended consequences when Australian stability and security is threatened by our unquestioned support of drone strikes using data gathered by the joint Australian United States Facility at Pine Gap and other intelligence gathering operations. There has been significant public comment on this issue, highlighted by Des Ball (2014), Richard Tanter (2013); as well as the former Liberal Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser (2013).

Tanter (2013) argues that the work of the Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap, just outside Alice Springs, which was brought to the front line in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the new US space surveillance radar planned for North West Cape, have cemented Australia’s role in US missile defence and space operations. (Tanter 2013) Tanter, however, urges a reconsideration of this arrangement. 3 Tanter also expresses concern about the new joint facilities that have emerged, and the expansion of capacity and operations Pine Gap, in recent years

As Alice Springs residents we are also very concerned about the role the Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap plays in terms of its involvement in directing U.S. drone strikes which have killed thousands of militants and civilians (particularly innocent children) over the last five years (Ball, 2014). The involvement in drone strikes is a significant shift from the monitoring function Pine Gap played in relation to the arms control agreement between the U.S. and Russia two to three decades ago.

One question is whether it would be more appropriate for the Pine Gap Facility to be placed under international control with the United Nations to ensure a more global outlook, with benefits for all countries.  

On a broader level, we believe that the alliance between Australia and the USA must be regularly opened up to more public scrutiny and the Australian population must be provided with clear and transparent information in order to contribute to the debate in an informed way. It appears to us that the Australia-U.S. Alliance is less about being in a stronger position to defend our own countries – but more about offensive actions towards other countries (often outside of Australia’s geographic region). If Australia was involved in dispute with another US partner such as Japan or China it is unclear whether the USA would support us or not.

We believe that it would be advantageous for there to be a review of the merits of the current ANZUS treaty. Such a review should consider whether Australia should take a stronger more independent view that fits more with our own political, economic and stability options within Australia, our region & globally. This may be strategically safer for us than the current situation where it appears that Australia continues to align itself with the United States’ position, as a matter of course.

We also note the call from the Independent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN), who have expressed concern regarding “developments that appear to jeopardise Australia’s friendship and cooperation with nations in our region. In particular, we are concerned about the basing of foreign troops on Australian sovereign territory.” In particular IPAN is “opposed to the stationing of US marines in Darwin; the presence of the Pine Gap surveillance facility; the use of West Australian naval facilities by US warships and the possibility of US military aircraft and warships being stationed at Stirling in WA or the Cocos Islands”. (IPAN, 2014).

IPAN is very concerned that “the presence of US forces on Australian soil to be a handicap to Australia’s international relationships” – and not in fact a benefit. IPAN believe the (increasing) “integration of the two countries’ defence forces and foreign policies has reached a point where our independence is at risk. We are witnessing expanding US military presence in the Asia Pacific region, with the apparent aim of ‘containing’ China. We fear a consequent rise in regional tensions and an expensive arms race.”They are concerned that these developments are “not in Australia’s best interests”, and have the potential to sour current positive relations with Australia’s neighbours and believe it could ultimately see Australia entangled in future wars “on behalf of a foreign power.” (IPAN 2014)

The call for an Inquiry into the Iraq War has been led by The Iraq War Inquiry Group (2013) 4, who have called for “an inquiry into decisions that led Australia to invading Iraq, and a review of the war powers of

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4 http://iraqwarinquiry.org.au/
the government with a view to improving the process by which this [Australian] democracy goes to war” (p.11). They also argue that “The Iraq war was in violation of Australia’s international obligations under the ANZUS Treaty” (2013, p.18).

One unintended consequence of the war in Iraq may be that the negative residue of the war may have influenced wider support for current extremists. Sometimes bombing people into submission has the opposite reaction of hardening their resolve against the bombers.

Regarding the war in Iraq, we are particularly concerned that the decision to go to war there in 2003 demonstrated that the Australian Government can decide to go to war, without cabinet approval. This removes vital checks and balances and removes transparency.

RECOMMENDATION 2: Conduct a Review of the ANZUS Treaty.

RECOMMENDATION 3: Conduct an inquiry into the Australia’s involvement in the War in Iraq (a form of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (as per South Africa post Apartheid), including the decision making process that led to Australia’s involvement. We could encourage both the government and the public to do more analysis of the costs and effectiveness (or otherwise) of war – and in particular a focus on unintended consequences, both in Iraq and in Australia.

RECOMMENDATION 4: Ensure it is Parliament and not the Executive of Government that make decisions to participate in any way in war. This would bring us into line with USA and UK.

Defence: ‘in’ and ‘of’ the community
This next section responds to the following two questions:
• p 26 Qn 1: Is the priority allocated to Defence adequately explained to the Australian community?
• p 26 Qn2: How can the Australian community contribute to the development of defence policy?

We do not believe that the priority allocated to Defence is adequately explained to the Australian community. We affirm the assertion in the Defence Issues paper that the ‘Government more clearly consult reasons behind decisions with the Australian people’ (Australian Government, 2014, p.26). As part of this greater transparency, we believe that it should be the Australian Parliament approve going to war as in the USA and UK, as noted in Further Recommendations below.

The budget allocation of defence spending is one matter, and it is probably not something that the ordinary Australian is aware of. However an issue that is not highlighted in the Defence Issues is the actual cost of war, in terms of death, disability, post traumatic stress, and loss of earning capacity of returned soldiers. We believe that the human, social and economic costs of war all need to be transparently communicated to the Australian public, so that they can make an informed contribution to the development of defence policy. The Australian public needs to be given a very clear overview of where the current $29.3 billion dollars is being spent – including a cost-benefit analysis of Australia’s defence spending – including provision of information on such things as

• ‘How many lives have been lost as a result of Australian involvement in military operations?’ (including a breakdown of civilians; and the elderly; women, men and children).
• ‘What is the estimate of lives saved as a result of Australia’s military involvement?’
• What is the opportunity cost of defence spending – in terms of reduced funding available for overseas aid; or health, housing and education in Australia?’.

Tanter (2013 ) discusses concerns about the expansion of U.S. military arrangements in Australia (mentioned above), but he describes the most disturbing nature of this is a “lack of public discussion and detailed analysis of the implications of these new military arrangements for security—in the Australian national interest and the broader human interest.”
Further Recommendations – General

- **RECOMMENDATION 5:** Rename the defence department to more correctly name their current roles and functions, given that the Australian Defence Force has rarely been called upon to directly ‘defend’ Australia, but tends to engage in ‘offensive’ action towards other countries.

- **RECOMMENDATION 6:** We should take responsibility for refugees and other people displaced as a result of our interventions.

- **RECOMMENDATION 7:** All future military training needs to include a component focusing on developing the knowledge and skills to use non-violent approaches more effectively. This would include providing training for the Australian government and other governments with knowledge and skills to assist them in the non-violent or less violent management or resolution of local, regional and global conflicts, including training at the ADF academy.

The following people have contributed to this paper, and consent to publication of this submission by Defence:

Chris Hawke, Chris Warren, Jonathan Pilbrow, Rosalie Schultz
(Members of the Alice Springs Community)

References


Impendent and Peaceful Australia Network (IPAN) Website http://ipan-nsw.org/


Medical Association for the Prevention of War (MAPW) 2014 (Website) https://www.mapw.org.au/

Nonviolent Peaceforce (2014), Website http://www.nonviolentpeaceforce.org/


The Iraq War Inquiry Group (2013), Why did we go to War in Iraq? A Call for an Australian Inquiry.

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2. In the Defence Issues Paper, mention is made of the defence budget rising to 2%, from the current 1.8% of GDP by the year 2023-24, which would see a rise from $29.3 billion to at least $32.55 billion by then, at the current dollar value – an increase of $3.25 billion over 9 budgets. This is a conservative estimate, as it does not allow for inflation, so the final figure is likely to be much larger. This represents an average increase of just more than $360 million per year in the defence budget.