

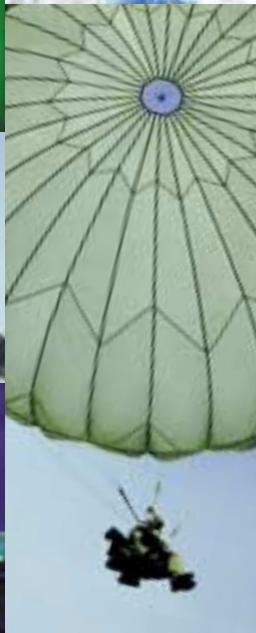


A U S T R A L I A N

DEFENCE

Force

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NO.147

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2001

Australian Defence Force Journal

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All contributions and correspondence should be addressed to:

The Editor
Australian Defence Force Journal
R8-LG-001
Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600
(02) 6265 1193
Fax (02) 6265 6972

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Editor

Irene M. Coombes

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This issue of the *Australian Defence Force Journal* is a companion to the July/August 2000 edition No.143. Both Journals feature articles pertaining to the Australian Government's Defence White Paper.

Eminent commentators on Defence and Security matters from Australia and overseas were invited to comment on the Defence Discussion Paper – *Defence Review 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*.

Their views as published in *Journal No.143* contributed to the public debate and were part of the Government Community Consultation Process.

Authors who contributed to the Discussion Paper edition of the Journal were invited to comment on the published White Paper – *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*.

The articles contained in this edition are those comments.

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*The National Security Committee of Cabinet that oversaw the development of the White Paper Defence 2000
– Our Future Defence Force.*

Minister's Message

Defence 2000 represents the most comprehensive reappraisal of Australian defence capability for decades. It provides major increases in defence funding over a ten-year period, and it complements the Government's view of the strategic circumstances in which Australia is now placed in our region and beyond. It lays down the most specific long-term funding commitment given by any Australian Government in over 25 years.

Importantly, *Defence 2000* re-affirms the defence of Australia as the primary focus of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). Yet this focus also recognises the important changes that have occurred within South-East Asia and the South Pacific. Its aim is to provide Australia with a set of capabilities that will be flexible enough to provide governments with a range of military options across a spectrum of credible situations and give the ADF the capability to play a positive role in promoting and supporting stability and cooperation in the region.

The *White Paper* sets new standards in the clarity with which the fundamentals of our strategic policy are explained. It sets new standards in the detailed program we have laid down for the development of our defence forces. It sets new standards by providing specific and unambiguous long-term funding guidance for Defence. It also sets new standards in the way in which the people of Australia have been drawn into the policy process.

The Prime Minister is right when he says that the Government has every reason to be proud of this White Paper. It is one of its major achievements and a lasting testament to the quality of leadership of the then Minister for Defence, John Moore.

The Government accords the highest priority to the successful implementation of the *White Paper*, and in particular, to achieving the goals of the Defence Capability Plan. Implementation of the policy directions outlined in *Defence 2000* has already commenced with the signing of the AEW&C contract, the release of the tender for Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters, a start to the upgrade of the M113, and a review of ADF remuneration arrangements. Further development will occur throughout this year.

To implement the *White Paper* we will need to focus in particular on people management, accountability and continuous improvement in the way we do business. In my view *Defence 2000* establishes a contract between the Government and Defence. The Government has placed its confidence in Defence and expects clear responsibility and accountability for the resources with which Defence has been entrusted. We have to demonstrate to Government and through the Government to the Australian community at large that we have a capacity to effectively and efficiently deliver.

Australia's national security shall be assured in the coming decades as long as the principles and funding arrangements outlined in the *White Paper* are adhered to. I have no doubt that we can meet the objectives set out in *Defence 2000*.



The Honourable
Peter Reith, MP
Minister for Defence



The White Paper – Our Strategy



The Defence *White Paper* provides us with outstanding opportunities and significant responsibilities. It explains our Government's decisions about Australia's strategic policy over the next decade; it outlines our Government's plan for the development of our armed forces and it matches those undertakings with a funding commitment.

Defence is developing an overall corporate strategy for implementing the *White Paper*. The Secretary and I have agreed that there are five clear corporate strategic themes from the *White Paper* that will guide this strategy:

- Ensure that the ADF remains a first class military force able to fight and win.
- Work with others to keep our region secure and support global stability.
- Value people as the key to capability.
- Take a strategic approach to our industry base as a vital component of capability.
- Manage resources wisely.

There are two main challenges we must address in the future if we are to succeed in implementing the *White Paper*. First, as people are the core of our capability, we must address our recruiting shortfalls and high loss rates. A very powerful sentiment in the paper demonstrates this point, and I quote "Our armed forces are not simply a service provided by Government. They are part of our national identity. The ADF reflects the kind of country we are, the role we seek to play in the world and the way we see ourselves". Secondly, whilst the Government has funded a significant range of new capabilities we still face major challenges in balancing our budget. We must pursue further efficiencies within a whole-of-capability construct.

To achieve this we must reach two strategic goals over the next decade in order to build a balanced and effective defence force. In the short term, the goal is to realise a balance between our resources and outputs and to develop sound business processes. This will build a solid foundation on which we will layer the new capabilities directed in the *White Paper*. Then, over the longer term, we will achieve a defence capability balance. We must implement the Government's policy, introduce the capabilities detailed in the Defence Capability Plan and have an ADF where our force structure and preparedness are in balance.

The Government has given us policy direction with a funding commitment indicating their confidence in our ability to implement its policy and make our contribution to ensuring our national security. We have the responsibility of balancing today's needs with those of the future and ensuring that our successors do not inherit a hollow force incapable of conducting the operations directed by Government. We can do this by building on our many strengths, addressing the challenges we face, and acting as a united Defence team.

Admiral C.A. Barrie
Chief of the Defence Force

Our Strategic Journey

Defence has never been so well positioned to move forward. The Government has provided the necessary funds and long-term guidance to enable the *White Paper's* objectives to be reached.

Defence has already gone through a challenging period of reform and reorganisation in concert with a continuing high operational tempo. We have also made very important gains in the past year as part of our organisational renewal program. Our focus on that agenda will continue – involving as it does the critical role that each of us has to play in setting the standard for our people leadership and for the results each of us is responsible and accountable for.

Defence's senior leadership group must demonstrate a "unity of purpose" and resolve about the fundamentals of the *White Paper*. We need to forge strong links between the document, the Renewal Agenda already underway and our responsibility to the Australian public to deliver a solid return for their tax dollars. Our implementation of the *White Paper* must be clearer and more transparent than ever before to people inside and outside Defence who have an interest in this matter.

The metaphor of "Our Strategic Journey" will communicate the way ahead for Defence. This will assist people to remember key messages better, understand the rationale for change and most importantly of all, see where their contribution fits in to the big picture.

Defence has had a long and proud history that encompasses a century of achievement, a history that I believe Australians identify with and care passionately about. Despite some ups and downs as an organisation, our operational performance has remained right up there with the best in the world. Now, the *White Paper* and the Organisational Renewal program will help us to build a bridge between the past and our future.

It is an important part of our leadership role to shape a vision that gives meaning to the work of others. We as senior leaders must pave the way, through the initiatives that we will bring together in the Defence Plan, and track our progress via the Defence Matters Scorecard - all the while remembering that it is the Australian people, through the elected Government of the day, whom we serve.



Allan Hawke
Secretary
Department of Defence



Vice Admiral Shackleton at Seamanship School HMAS Cerberus.

Photograph: LSPH Peter Lewis

The White Paper's Impact on Navy

The *White Paper* outlines the plan for the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and presents the Government's defence policy for the next decade and beyond. It makes clear the Government's intention to maintain the ADF as a first-class military force able to fight and win.

Overall, the *White Paper* presents a good outcome for the Navy and enables us to confidently plan our future.

Defence 2000 states the priority task for the ADF is the defence of Australia. This is shaped by three principles:

- a. Self reliance;
- b. A maritime strategy; and
- c. Proactive operations.

The Government has acknowledged the need to improve recruiting and retention with the provision of 2 per cent per year growth in personnel costs. The Government recognises that members of the ADF have unique needs. A range of ADF initiatives are being developed to address issues that affect us all, including importantly job satisfaction, remuneration and Reservists.

As many of you would be aware we are currently well below our requirement for uniformed people in the Navy.

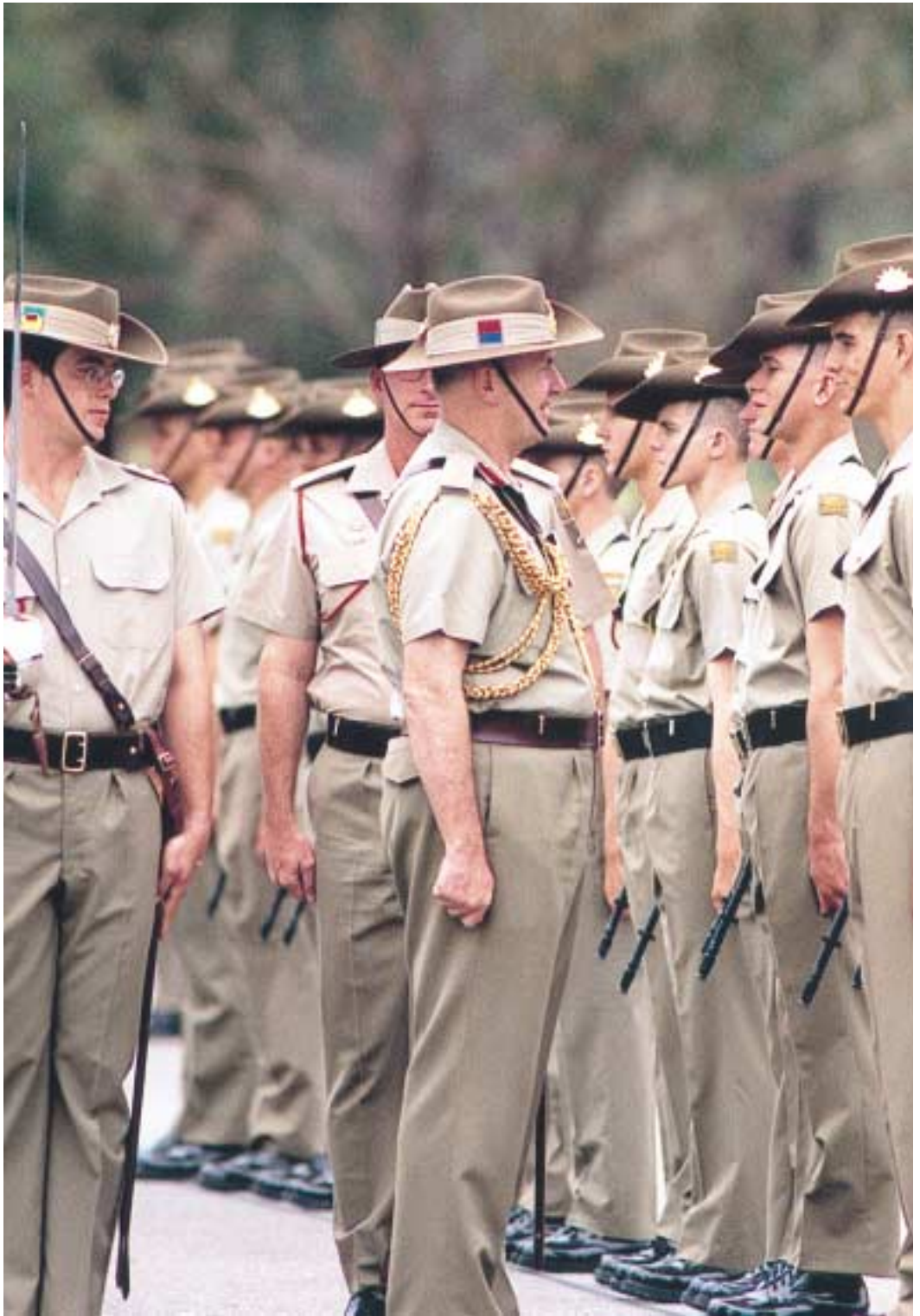
The *White Paper* initiatives will add impetus to Navy's ongoing program to build our numbers back up to 14,000.

Defence 2000 lays the foundation for the fleet of the next decade and beyond.

Improvements to the Fleet will include upgrades of the ANZAC and COLLINS classes as well as the replacement of the FREMANTLE Class Patrol Boats. The upgrades and additions to our Fleet over the next 15 years will ensure our maritime capabilities remain of a world class standard. Enhancements are also provided for Army, Air Force and Defence Information capabilities, which will improve our ability to conduct joint operations in a maritime environment.

I am happy with the outcomes of *Defence 2000* both from an ADF and Navy perspective. It reflects the contributions made by many Navy personnel. The Government's recognition of the importance of the ADF and commitment to increased funding for both people and equipment means that we can plan our future with optimism.

Vice Admiral D. Shackleton
Chief of Navy



Lieutenant General Cosgrove inspects recruits on their march-out parade at ARTC.

Photograph: PTE Simone Heyer-Irwin

Blue Print for Future Army

Defence 2000 – *Our Future Defence Force* is a crucial document for the future development of Army. In setting out Australia’s future security framework, it provides Army with a long-term plan that clearly defines the direction we need to take and commits the money needed to make this happen.

First and foremost it is good for all soldiers because it recognises the important role played by the men and women of Defence and commits to a review of personnel management procedures, in particular those related to recruiting and retention, to ensure that we have first class personnel.

At the same time the paper acknowledges the importance of our Reserves to support and sustain our ready forces and confirms an intent to amend Legislation regarding the employment of Reserves.

Secondly, the paper directs that we are to structure for conventional warfighting to satisfy our primary strategic task of defending Australia. This means that we can easily adapt to other less demanding tasks.

The paper also provides clear direction on measures to improve Army’s reach, agility and

hitting power as well as our ability to sustain extended operations. These are vital requirements for Army.

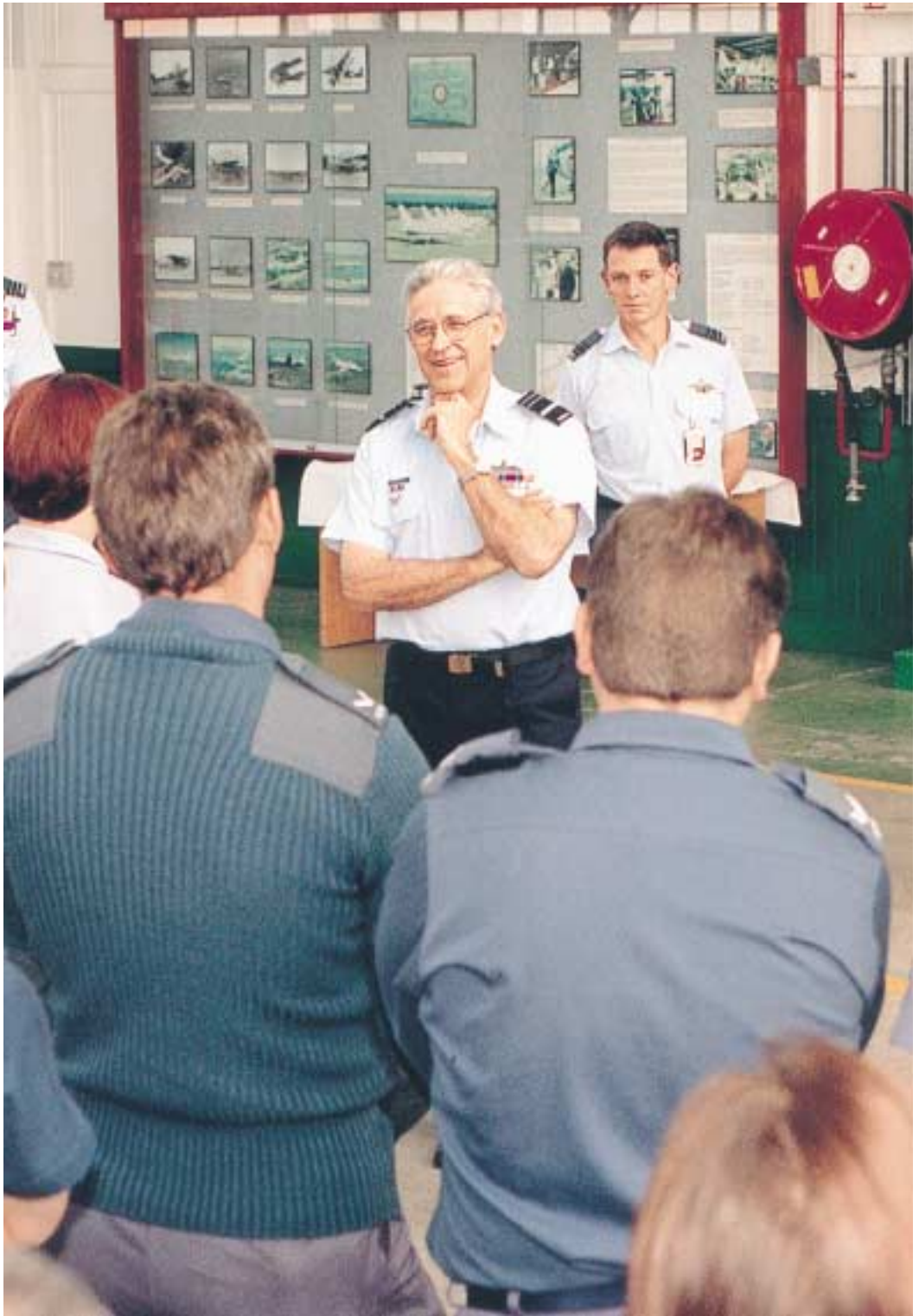
The Army will be structured and resourced to ensure that we will be able to sustain a brigade on operations for extended periods, and at the same time maintain at least a battalion group available for deployment elsewhere. We also now have clearly outlined enhancements for our logistics support forces, deployable medical facilities and transport fleet to provide this sustainment. It also contains significant improvements to Army’s firepower, mobility and protection.

Army must now work hard to implement the guidance provided by the paper.

The Defence *White Paper* responds to the feedback provided by Army to the Government during the public consultation process. I want to thank all Army personnel for their active role in this process, which led to the delivery of this comprehensive *White Paper*.

We have the blue print for the future Army – it’s up to us to make it happen.

Lieutenant General P. Cosgrove
Chief of Army



Air Marshal McCormack talking with RAAF personnel on a recent base visit.

Photograph: CPL Greg Walls

Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force and the RAAF

The *White Paper* does not signal a major change in strategic direction or intent. Rather, it is aimed at fixing the deficiencies in some of our existing capabilities, taking advantage of new technology, and achieving a flexible and balanced force able to deploy effectively on short notice.

These measures are outlined in the Defence Capability Plan, a new and comprehensive approach to capability planning and an unprecedented commitment to a high standard ADF well into this century. The plan has been developed on through-life costing estimates for the different types of capability the Government believes the ADF should have, and is supported by the clearest long-term funding commitment for 25 years.

Emphasis will be on a flexible, professional, well-trained, well-equipped force that is available for operations at short notice, and one that can be sustained on deployment over extended periods.

The two major areas of interest for the RAAF are in the capability areas of personnel and the key platform decisions in the Defence Capability Plan.

First, as a result of extensive community and Defence personnel consultation, the *White Paper* recognises the uniqueness of the profession of arms and acknowledges that the ADF needs the right people with appropriate skills and experience. Provision is made for funding to ensure we can meet these requirements.

The *White Paper* acknowledges the hardships and difficulties faced by members of the ADF and identifies a number of main areas of concern as well as initiatives to address these.

The next most important capability aspect of the *White Paper* for the RAAF are the key

platform decisions in the Defence Capability Plan. A number of platforms, systems and support equipment will be replaced or upgraded over the coming 10 to 15 years.

A series of new capabilities and ongoing upgrades and enhancements to existing capabilities have also been outlined, including:

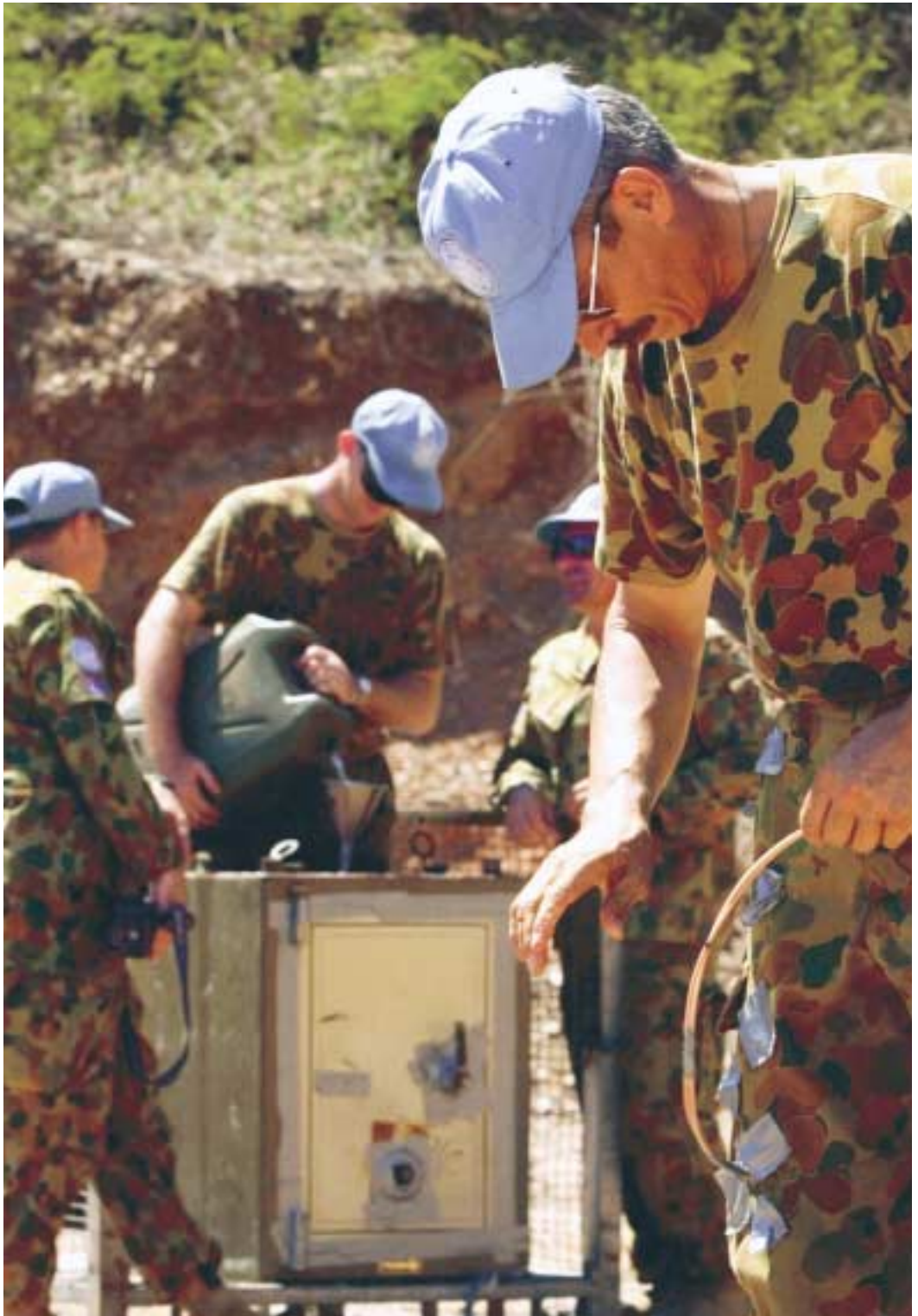
- improved survivability and precision stand-off weapons for the F-111's;
- ongoing upgrades to mission systems, acquisition of advanced air-to-air missiles and structural upgrades for the F/A-18's;
- ongoing upgrades to the Air Defence Ground Environment and Command and Control, and in particular, the introduction of the force-multiplying AEW&C;
- enhancements and upgrades for an airlift capability, including a major enhancement to air-to-air refuelling;
- ongoing upgrades to the operational capability of the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft; and
- remediation of the Combat Support deficiencies, including equipment purchases and additional personnel.

All of the above will be major contributors to the capability of the RAAF and will allow the Air Force to provide aerospace capability that is consistent with the Governments defence requirements.

The *White Paper* has recognised the importance of maintaining a modern and capable Air Force staffed by professionals.

There are a number of initiatives that will obviously require a great deal of work over the short to medium terms but Air Force has the full support and commitment from the Government to achieve the required results.

Air Marshal Errol McCormack
Chief of Air Force



Peacekeeping troops in East Timor.

Photograph: CPL Jason Weeding

After the White Paper: Eight Key Challenges that Lie Ahead

By Dr Ross Babbage, Director, Centre for International Strategic Analysis

The 2000 White Paper is the best Australian Defence White Paper yet. It represents a well-reasoned, evolutionary development from its predecessors and it transmits loud and clear many of the key messages to Australian Defence personnel, to the Australian public and to the international community.

The White Paper emphasises that the Australian Government is serious about the country's defence and is determined that the Australian Defence Force (ADF) continues to be the best small defence force in the Asia-Pacific region, fully capable of fighting and winning. To this end, the Government commits itself to significantly higher defence spending over the coming decade, it emphasises clear defence policy priorities, it articulates a sensible and highly flexible operational strategy and it argues for a logical set of capability and acquisition priorities. It is a very impressive document.

But now for the hard part. The Defence Organisation faces the daunting challenge of converting the *White Paper's* good intentions into reality. In striving to do this, there appear to be eight key challenges ahead.

1. *Achieving the Budgetary Goals*

First, Defence needs urgently to contain its billowing personnel and operational costs if the new capabilities listed in the *White Paper* are to be affordable. This already looks to be extremely difficult. There are many indications that the forward estimates of personnel and operating costs in the *White Paper* are grossly over-optimistic. The most obvious references are on page 120 of the paper, where it is stated that although *per capita* personnel costs have risen by an average of 4.9 *per cent* per annum over the last decade, the assumption for the coming decade is only 2 *per cent*. Similarly, although the paper acknowledges that operating costs have risen markedly in recent years, the projections for the future assume no further real growth, aside from that related directly to newly introduced

capabilities. Anecdotal evidence suggests that further underestimates of personnel and operating costs are hidden within the budgets of individual projects.

These apparent budgeting weaknesses are serious and could prove fatal for many of the *White Paper's* objectives. If Defence's personnel and operating costs are not contained rapidly, the Government will be faced with a very unpalatable choice. It will need either to further boost defence spending well above the levels currently planned, or it will have no choice but to delay many of the high-profile new equipments that are so badly needed for force modernisation.

2. *Making Sure That We Have Enough of the Right Things*

The Timor and Bougainville operations have clearly had a strong impact on the Government's investment priorities, with the number of high-readiness battalions raised from four to six and the readiness of numerous supporting assets adjusted as well. Whilst these developments seem warranted, they are very expensive initiatives.

The paper has difficulty weighing its investment in these capabilities that are most relevant to more immediate contingencies, against those more high-technology capabilities which are mainly needed for more serious longer-term contingencies. For instance, airborne early warning and control aircraft will be critical to Australia's combat success in a wide range of future contingencies, but the *White Paper* only finds the funds to buy four - barely an operational capability. Protection of the budget for high capability surveillance systems, and next-generation air and maritime combat capabilities, will be critical if the ADF is to retain its cutting edge.

3. *Sustaining the Processes of Reform*

The new initiatives in the *White Paper* have tended to overshadow the importance of sustaining the pace of efficiencies springing from the Defence Reform Program. If the full benefits of the *White Paper* are to be won, management will need to ensure that the pace of the on-going internal reform program is sustained.

4. *Retaining Quality Personnel*

Retaining the right mix of quality personnel is a key issue for the coming decade; even more important than meeting recruitment targets for new personnel. Despite the sensible personnel initiatives contained in the *White Paper*, Defence faces a serious challenge in remaining an attractive and competitive employer. Too many people leave Defence because they are frustrated by bureaucratic processes, micro-management and underpayment for their level of skill.

Part of the solution may be for Defence to be more imaginative in accessing, on a part-time basis, the vast Australian civil skills base. New and more flexible ways of harnessing this resource for a wider range of Defence functions need to be explored.

5. *Developing Defences Against Unconventional Threats*

Defence is well aware that numerous countries and some terrorist groups, including some in Australia's region, are investing in unconventional means of attack. Cyber, chemical, biological, nuclear, radiological and other types of unconventional attacks now need to be considered more seriously than in the recent past.

Whilst these issues receive passing reference in the *White Paper*, they deserve more considered attention and proactive planning. Some investments to counter these threats now deserve high priority.

6. *Simplifying Command and Control*

Given the limited scale of Australia's Defence organisation and the nature of its likely future operational demands, it would seem appropriate to revisit the Defence Force's command and control structure. Simply put, there would seem to be a strong case to fold and rationalise the three environmental commands (Maritime, Land and Air) into a reinforced Australian Theatre Command. This would strengthen the unity of command and save highly valuable personnel and other resources.

7. *Strengthen "Whole of Nation" Approach*

The Defence Capability Plan that is detailed in Chapter 8 of the *White Paper* places a heavy emphasis on Defence acquiring most of the capabilities it requires on a full-time basis. This traditional approach is, perhaps, understandable, given Australia's long history of "forward defence" operations. However, in our current strategic circumstances, this conservatism fails to give sufficient attention to the potential for making greater contingent use of the vast capabilities held within the civil community. Many other advanced defence forces do

much better in this field than Australia and it would seem timely to develop it into a much stronger force multiplier.

8. *The Future for Defence: Selling the Vision to the Community*

Defence is on the edge of a dramatically new way of doing its core business. Wide area surveillance systems are being networked to provide an unheralded transparency to the country's surrounds. New-generation aircraft and ships will be able to operate in markedly different and exciting new ways. There is scope for genuinely transforming Australia's capabilities to defend itself - but who has been told about it?

It is time that this vision for a higher technology, dramatically improved Defence Force was sold to the Australian people. My experience has been that when citizens are briefed on the potential that lies ahead, they are amazed and deeply enthusiastic. It is time that Defence took the citizenry more fully into its confidence. A program to sell its

vision for the future could go a long way to reinforcing community support, sustaining increased defence expenditure and attracting a new generation of highly educated recruits.

The Challenge of Making it Happen

Overall, the 2000 *White Paper* is a substantial advance. Its success can, however, only be judged in five-ten year's time. That is when we will know whether the budget has proved sufficient, the key new capabilities have been introduced into service on time, the Defence Force reaches its full personnel strength and whether adequate progress has been made in delivering more cost-effective total capabilities. That is also when we will know whether Defence has been successful in selling its vision of the future to the Australian public and effectively forging a new "security contract" with the Australian taxpayer.

The *White Paper* is a great start, but substantial and sustained efforts will be required to properly implement the good intentions on time and on budget.



Dr Ross Babbage is the Director of the Centre for International Strategic Analysis (CISA), headquartered in Perth. CISA is a non-profit corporation committed to bringing the highest quality analytical minds to bear on the key issues facing Australia's corporate decision-makers. Dr Babbage has previously held positions in the Department of Defence, the Office of the National Assessments, the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at ANU and with ADI Limited.



The key to defending Australia is to control the air and sea approaches.

Defence 2000 - Our Future Defence Force

“The End of Round One?”

By Commodore Sam Bateman AM RAN (Ret)

The new Defence White Paper does little to resolve any of the difficult policy choices set up as “straw men” in Defence Review 2000. All three Services are “winners” with the White Paper. There are no “losers” and resolution of the real policy choices will be through the usual processes of Defence decision-making and in-fighting over the next decade or so.

My article in the special edition of the *Australian Defence Force Journal* on the public discussion paper, *Defence Review 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, suggested that the discussion paper created an exercise in “Defence Darwinism”. This brought back memories of the period 20 years ago when Australia’s defence planners sought “the survival of the fittest” from the new tactical fighter project, the follow-on destroyer program and the aircraft carrier project. Then the Navy became the “loser” with the downsizing of the follow-on destroyer program and the loss of its organic fixed-wing air capability. The Navy now has a long, hard battle ahead in ensuring that it does not become a “loser” again as a result of its major projects being “competitors” with a replacement air combat capability.

Hopefully the new approach to capability planning introduced in the *White Paper* might seek to avoid the situation where major projects compete against each other and only some survive. Effective long-term planning should avert “block obsolescence” but the opposite was the case in the late 1970s when carefully orchestrated decision-making delays and “paralysis by analysis” pitted major projects against each other.

The *White Paper* is only the first round of a long, tedious process and the result is at best a draw between major Defence projects. The survival of its major projects in the *White*

Paper provides some comfort for the Navy although the document contains relatively little significant strategic and force structure justification for major naval capabilities. Its language dealing with these capabilities is heavily qualified and certainly there is nothing to match the clear statement that “Air combat is the most important single capability for the defence of Australia”.¹

The *White Paper* states that “The key to defending Australia is to control the air and sea approaches to our continent, so as to deny them to hostile ships and aircraft, and provide maximum freedom of action for our own forces”.² It equates this principle with a maritime strategy but by itself, it is a rather incomplete maritime strategy. A maritime strategy should go beyond the simple defence of the maritime approaches. The later acknowledgement in the *White Paper* that “the ability to operate freely in our surrounding oceans, and deny them to others is critical to the defence of Australia, and to our capacity to contribute effectively to the security of our immediate neighbourhood” gets more to the point.³

The *White Paper* does acknowledge that “our armed forces need to be able to do more than simply defend our coastline”⁴ but the strategic thinking associated with “doing more” is not evident in the document. It will be crucial to Navy’s case to justify its major projects that this thinking is done.

A complete maritime strategy needs to give consideration to elements such as reach and sustainability, as well as the full range of Australia's maritime interests, including seaborne trade, sea lines of communication (SLOCs), the security of offshore territories and resources, and the more intangible consideration of "maritime security in our wider region".⁵ The *White Paper* acknowledges the utility of air and naval capabilities in the latter context but then says little more about how we might contribute and the constraints that might be encountered in basing air and land forces overseas.⁶ Flexible sea-based capabilities would be preferred due to their marked utility for operating within the region just as they have for operations elsewhere around Australia and our offshore territories.

A complete maritime strategy should also acknowledge that, in higher level defence contingencies, adversaries would likely select a range of options to threaten Australia. They would not only threaten Australia in the way that we were most capable of resisting. SLOCs, both coastal and overseas, would come under threat and the forward operating bases in northern Australia would be vulnerable to a range of threats, including long-range missile attack and lower-level harassment. However, the *White Paper* appears to envisage a "worst" case scenario simply of an attack on Australia by conventional surface ships and aircraft crossing the sea-air gap.

The primary Capability Goal for Maritime Forces in the *White Paper* is "to maintain an assured capability to detect and attack any major surface ships, and to impose substantial constraints on hostile submarine operations in our extended maritime approaches".⁷ A secondary goal is "to maintain the ability to support Australian forces deployed offshore".⁸ The discussion that follows these goals stresses "a highly capable air-based maritime strike capability" and then identifies several major issues,⁹ the first being "the adequacy of ships' defences against the more capable anti-ship

missiles that are proliferating in our region".¹⁰ No priority is accorded any naval capabilities except the replacements for the Fremantle Class Patrol Boats that "are accorded a high priority by the Government".¹¹

The priority given in the *White Paper* to Defence support for coastal surveillance and enforcement is very welcome. It is an acknowledgement of Defence's responsibilities for maritime security, broadly defined, that was not evident in *Defence Review 2000*.

It is perhaps one of the best examples in the *White Paper* of some notice being taken of the process of community consultation. That process revealed a widespread view that Australia's coastal surveillance effort was inadequate.

Significantly there is no mention whatsoever in the *White Paper* of the protection of shipping and SLOCs that could be vital to the maintenance of our northern bases and the support of defence activities offshore. In the broader context of contributing to regional security, SLOCs are now an important security concern of most regional nations, particularly Japan. For both the direct defence of Australia and as a potential regional contribution, the ADF requires capabilities for the protection of merchant shipping but these are not acknowledged in the *White Paper*.

The proliferation of submarines in the region suggests that anti-submarine warfare needs to be firmly on the Defence planning agenda again. The submarine threat is acknowledged in the Capability Goal for Maritime Forces in the *White Paper* but it then barely figures in the subsequent discussion of necessary capabilities.

While acknowledging the problem of weapons of mass destruction,¹² the *White Paper* does not appear to view the associated proliferation of long-range missile systems in the region as a direct threat to Australia. The "new class of at least three air-defence capable ships" foreshadowed in the *White Paper* should be capable of providing Theatre Ballistic

Missile Defence (TBMD).¹³ Indeed this will become the determining capability for these ships. Naval TBMD is now regarded as a unique deterrent and warfighting capability that is mobile, capable of sustaining long periods on station and relatively free from reliance on overseas bases and support. In the region, Japan already has TBMD at sea and South Korea and Taiwan are to acquire the capability. Yet in Australia the project to provide the capability might well become the naval one most vulnerable to "Defence Darwinism".

It was perhaps expecting too much of the *White Paper* for it to provide anything more than a somewhat inconclusive Round One to the great force development battles that now lie ahead. At least the *White Paper* has set some "goal posts" not least of all is the recognition of maritime strategy and of the importance of a balanced force.¹⁴ The Defence bureaucracy and the Services now face further

rounds of bitter in-fighting to find "winners" from the current set of major projects. As many commentators have noted, the *White Paper* does not firmly commit future governments. Inevitably there will be some "losers" with projects either being cancelled entirely or subject to major modification or long delay.

NOTES

1. *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*, Defence White Paper, para. 8.37.
2. *ibid.*, para. 6.6.
3. *ibid.*, para. 8.51.
4. *ibid.*, para. 4.2.
5. *ibid.*, para. 8.53.
6. *ibid.*, para. 6.12.
7. *ibid.*, para. 8.53.
8. *ibid.*
9. *ibid.*, para. 8.54.
10. *ibid.*, para. 8.56.
11. *ibid.*, para. 8.67.
12. *ibid.*, para. 3.52.
13. *ibid.*, para. 8.60.
14. *ibid.*, para. 6.29.



Sam Bateman retired from the RAN in 1993 and is now a Principal Research Fellow in the Centre for Maritime Policy at the University of Wollongong. His naval service included four ship commands, five years in Papua New Guinea and several postings in the force development and strategic policy areas of the Department of Defence. Between 1979 and 1981 he was the inaugural Director of Naval Force Development in Navy Office Canberra.



Interdependence – Soldiers from 2RAR awaiting air-lift to HMAS Tobruk after completing a night beach assault exercise.

Photograph: LSPH K. Bristow

Steady-as-you-go

By Associate Professor Anthony Bergin, Director, Australian Defence Studies Centre,
Australian Defence Force Academy

The Defence White Paper released in December 2000 is the fifth such paper since Australia entered the Vietnam War in 1964. It is the major guide for Defence personnel, the community, industry, allies and neighbours on the philosophy of Australian defence and future structures.

Despite some of the early post-release hype, it is not a massive remilitarisation program. The status quo has largely been preserved. Very few of the projects identified in the paper were not already programmed in the public defence five year plan.

The paper's central message is one of "steady-as-you-go and here's just enough money to do it". It contains few surprises, but it does present a significant shift in emphasis. This befits a government which has spoken of Australia being able to defend its national interests at a distance, initiated our intervention in East Timor and increased the overall preparedness of the ADF.

While defence of the homeland remains paramount, there is now an honest, realistic recognition that rather than defending the country from direct attack, it is much more likely that the ADF will be required to participate in regional engagements in our area of strategic interest and beyond. These may range from peacekeeping to medium-level conflict and would be undertaken with the approval of regional countries or as part of a larger coalition. Defending Australia is now interpreted far more broadly and away from ideas centred on defence of the "sea-air gap" to the north. It means defending our interests, which includes the capacity to deploy into the region. This recognises that defence of Australia does not begin at our coastline.

While the Pacific islands get rather fobbed off, the broad approach in the paper is relevant to the short- and medium-term security challenges facing Australia. It shows a sensible grasp of history and strategy. A large scale direct military threat to Australia has only materialised once in the last 200 years and is unlikely to arise again in the foreseeable future. It is the contingency for which we would have most warning and one the US would not tolerate. Throughout our history we have always acted pre-emptively with

powerful allies to fend off security threats at a distance, rather than waiting till an invader appears on our northern beaches.

The paper's heartland is force structure and military capability and it does include reference to the role of ADF personnel in the development of Australian military capability. It rightly emphasises a commitment to a proper balance of forces. As outlined the force structure will be more flexible and deployable. That does not mean that we are about to create a marine corps or ask neighbours for overseas basing rights. While it sensibly does not embrace the idea of full battlefield interoperability with US armed forces, the paper lacks a genuine vision of joint warfighting - the interdependence of Navy, Army and Air Force - for the conduct of successful military operations.

Army's role - often viewed as to bayonet the wounded that get through the northern moat - is now recognised as critical in wider regional contingencies. Recent events have established the importance to Australia of developments on the landmasses that dominate our northern approaches. The presence of soldiers on the ground is paramount in operations to create a stable security environment. The Government was genuinely

shocked to learn that if the INTERFET deployment in East Timor had carried on much longer, then Australia faced the serious risk of running out of military capability. Doing "Timors" better is a key theme of the new *White Paper*.

The paper implicitly acknowledges that numbers had been cut too far in recent years for Army to contribute to joint and coalition expeditionary operations offshore as well as on the continent. The decision to maintain the two extra battalions added for the Timor deployment is sensible. Credible military responses will also be assisted by the move to incorporate Reserves into regular units, although this approach will demand a change of attitude within the ADF and the community. Governments will need courage to call out Reservists and not rely on volunteers.

Offshore deployments require maritime assets and Navy's role in transport and resupply is acknowledged. A commitment to replace HMAS *Tobruk* is new and welcome. Given the proliferation of anti-ship missiles in our region the decision to acquire at least three air-defence capable ships is significant. This will allow a contribution to allied naval task forces and strengthen the ability to deploy land forces in a hostile environment.

While the paper emphasises regional engagement, Air Force have not been relegated to a subordinate role. The importance of dominating the air environment in future conflict is recognised with the decision to purchase four airborne early warning aircraft, (although not the seven Air Force wanted). There is a useful recognition of the need for strategic lift, tactical resupply of deployed forces and enhancing air-to-air refuelling. The endorsement of the need for air dominance and strike is important, although the approach adopted in the *White Paper* to life after the

F/A-18 and F-111 aircraft seems very replacement-oriented.

Defence funding is traditionally seen in the context of this year's budget, not of the needs of the nation in the long term. By promising a 3 per cent real increase a year for the next decade the Government has significantly reduced the risk of the ADF becoming a museum exhibit. With management efficiencies, Defence should get by. But this scenario could be de-railed by rising personnel costs, further depreciation of the dollar, changes in strategic circumstances, or each Service succumbing to the temptation of developing their own high-end capability requirements.

If former Defence Minister John Moore can pull off a ten year funding commitment this will be an historic achievement in Australian defence policy. The half-life of *White Papers* on resource commitments is, however, about 18 months. The *White Paper* itself admits that in later years funding increases may fall below 3 per cent. Defence may have won the budget battle. They could still lose the finance war.

The biggest challenge, however, is Defence personnel recruitment and retention. If the economy maintains growth, then the ADF will continue to experience difficulties in getting the right people. The *White Paper* initiative to boost school cadets funding at about \$20 million more per year makes sense as a source of potential recruits. But for the most part the people section of the paper is disappointing, with a grab-bag of measures that do not demonstrate how the Defence Organisation will ensure its people can contribute to the best of their ability. If the new Defence Minister, Peter Reith, is serious about solving Defence personnel issues, then it should not be a second order priority handled by the junior minister. He should assume responsibility.



The Politics of the Defence White Paper: Illuding the Public – Again

By Graeme Cheeseman, University of New South Wales

Media commentary on the Howard Government's Defence White Paper, Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force, has tended to focus on the new roles and capabilities proposed for the Australian Defence Force. Less has been said about the strategic rationale for the changes, and almost nothing about the broader political or discursive purposes that the White Paper serves. Yet a grasp of this last issue in particular is central to making sense of what is going on.

Defence planners on Russell Hill and their advisers have, since the early 1980s at least, been primarily concerned with making Australia strong militarily. The stated rationale for this policy has varied over time and with changing governments and circumstances: from helping protect the free world, through defending Australia against the region and joining with others in keeping our surrounds both stable and secure, to, in recent years, demonstrating our importance on the world stage. Underlying these declared reasons have been a number of unstated, and largely unchanging ones: pandering to our allies, asserting our right as a regional leader, using the defence budget to win votes and bolster domestic political constituencies, and overcoming the insecurity complexes that stem from various “stains” in our national and military psyche.

Developing ourselves as a regional military power has been neither easy nor straightforward however. Their rhetoric notwithstanding, governments of both persuasions have failed to deliver the resources promised and needed to make Australia really strong. Poor departmental decisions and management practices have seen much of what was obtained frittered away. The plan itself, and its underlying assumptions, have been challenged, first, by the end of the Cold War and, a decade later, by the Asian economic crisis which undermined the Defence Department's confident predictions of the implications of the demise of the Soviet threat,

and heralded what some commentators believe to be a fundamental shift in global affairs. As evidenced by the strategic basis and Defence White Papers issued since the late 1980s, instead of responding to these various challenges, our defence planners have tended to portray or constitute them in ways that justified the continuing build-up of our military capabilities; to use an evolving “discourse of danger” to coerce Australians into accepting the establishment's own strategic assessment and its underlying logic.¹ No matter what the circumstances, the answer was always the same: high technology military forces capable of fighting conventional wars either alone or in concert with our powerful friends and allies.

The Howard Government's Defence *White Paper* has continued this tradition but with a twist. Rather than telling Australians what was required, the Government directly implicated them in the process. The peoples' views were sought by a community consultation team whose report was written by Defence Department officials and whose findings - which mirrored remarkably the Government's own policies and prescriptions - were featured prominently in the ensuing *White Paper* (as supporting quotes rather than as part of the document's analysis).²

That the narrative contained in the *White Paper* is as much a political or a discursive as a strategic one is clear from the various tensions, contradictions, and silences contained within it. The *White Paper* states, for example, that

globalisation is one of two “key factors” serving to shape Australia’s security environment. But it then insists that “the most critical issue” for security in the Asia Pacific is the nature of the relationships between the region’s major powers. It acknowledges that, within Australia’s nearer region, the key security concerns are non-military in nature but then proceeds to advocate military strategies and solutions for dealing with these and their potential consequences. It puts great store on such phrases as “strategic stability” and “internal cohesion” without asking whether and how these are likely to contribute to regional security. Indeed, unlike its predecessors, the *White Paper* does not acknowledge the multidimensional and interconnected nature of security beyond the perceived need to integrate strategic policy with “wider diplomatic and political policies”. It acknowledges that the prospect of major interstate wars is declining and that the deployment of the ADF on recent peace and security operations “is an important and lasting trend” with “significant implications” for how our forces are to be structured and used. Yet it continues to give precedence to the forces, capabilities, equipments and values needed to fight major conventional wars.

These and a range of other tensions and contradictions give lie to the claim that the latest *White Paper* represents an exercise in objective and rational planning. Instead, as always, it reflects the desires and vested interests of the major actors within the Defence establishment and those, mainly within industry and government, who stand to gain from the \$160 billion that will be outlaid on defence over the coming decade.

Implicated in all of this are the Government, the Opposition, the media and academe. For largely party political reasons - it would look good in the bush and add to Howard’s desire to be seen as a strong and uncompromising leader - the Government has been prepared to invest a sizeable proportion of its budget surplus on

expanding Australia’s force projection capabilities and acquiring a range of high-technology weapons and support systems. As in so many other areas of policy, Labor has either supported or not objected strongly to these moves. This is in spite of the fact that the assumptions that underlie the prescriptions and arguments contained in the *White Paper* are being challenged within academic and broader policy communities overseas (although not in Australia where more and more “defence academics” are closely associated with, or depend on the largesse of, the Defence Department). For its part, the media remains largely obsessed with the personalities and day-to-day activities of the Minister for Defence and his Department, or with the characteristics of our latest weapons and military equipments.

It is not as if there are no grounds for challenging the *White Paper’s* contentions and assumptions, or no space for a more far-reaching and sophisticated debate over the meaning and practice of defence and security in the twenty-first century. As we enter the new millennium, for example, it is possible and increasingly important, to (re) imagine the world in a range of different ways.³ We need to see it not only as a system of autonomous or semi-autonomous states but also as an expanding international political economy in which multinational companies, international financial institutions, or regional organisations are the central actors and geoeconomics rather than geopolitics is the key currency of power and status; as a global web of movements of people, goods, ideas and social relations that crisscross state borders; or as a world society with expanding global norms, rules and international organisations. These different visions have significantly different implications for the meaning of security - in particular who or what is being secured and against what - as well as for the future roles of military force(s) in global affairs.

Decision-makers in other areas of policy seem to have little problem in recognising and responding to this multifaceted and increasingly

complex world. Not so Defence which continues unduly to privilege the Westphalian model and its underlying assumptions. This is a shame because it reduces both their understanding of, and capacity to respond to, the challenges and opportunities facing us today. But it is not altogether surprising. A more nuanced worldview is likely to raise a range of difficult questions and concerns. Who, in an increasingly globalised world, is likely to risk international condemnation and economic and financial sanctions by physically attacking Australia or its near neighbours and what is to be gained by such a move? Is the emphasis being given to military threats and traditional military responses to perceived sources of insecurity reasonable or appropriate in a post-Cold War and post-industrial world? If we are moving towards a system of world (dis) order that is dominated by geoeconomics rather than geopolitics, is it reasonable or appropriate to be focussing our efforts and resources on building up our military power? Indeed, would it not be better to concentrate on achieving “world’s best practice” in such areas as education, research and development or environmental management than in armaments and warfare? And is it reasonable and advisable to continue to leave the formulation of Australia’s security policies and practices in the hands of the strategic analysts in the Department of Defence?

Australia will continue to require military forces of some kind into the future. But just as our means of understanding and responding to our changing world must change, so too must our basic approach to defence and security, and the roles, capabilities and organisational and value structures of our armed forces. This is the key lesson of East Timor, Indonesia,

Bougainville and the other regional security issues in which Australia has been implicated. There is little evidence that this insight is either understood or welcomed by our defence and military planners. The Howard Government’s *White Paper* represents old rather than new thinking on defence and security. It is a conservative document harbouring conservative ideas: a document for the past rather than the future. Contrary to the Government’s propaganda, it is less a radical rethink or overhaul of Australian defence and security thinking as a reassertion of long-favoured axioms and prescriptions. Like the public consultation process which preceded it, it is as much about politics as policy in which those who represent our interests use their access to public funds to achieve their own, quite specific objectives, and invoke the language of power and patriotism to obscure and justify their actions.

NOTES

1. For a more detailed exposition of this argument, see the essays contained in Graeme Cheeseman and Robert Bruce (eds), *Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers: Australian Defence and Security Thinking After the Cold War* (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996).
2. See Graeme Cheeseman and Hugh Smith, *Consulting the Public on Defence: Evaluating the Howard Government’s Community Consultation Initiative* (Canberra: Australian Defence Studies Centre Working Paper No.62, Australian Defence Force Academy, November 2000).
3. See, for example, Greg Fry and Jacinta O’Hagan, *Contending Images of World Politics* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2000); Kim Richard Nossal, *The Patterns of World Politics* (Scarborough Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada, 1998) and “The Interregnum: Controversies in World Politics 1989-99”, *Review of International Studies* 25 (Special Issue), 1999.



Graeme Cheeseman is a graduate of the Royal Military College Duntroon (1968) and the University of New South Wales. Following service in the Australian Regular Army, the Department of Defence and as the Defence Adviser to the Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, he entered academe in 1988 initially as a senior research fellow at the Peace Research Centre at ANU and then as a senior lecturer in politics at the University College, Australian Defence Force Academy.

Australia's Best Defence White Paper?

By Professor Paul Dibb, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University

The Howard Government has produced a benchmark Defence White Paper. It is a unique document not shrouded in the internal defence debates of the past. This White Paper, for the first time, has been heavily informed by both the community and internal defence consultation processes. In another first, the National Security Committee of Cabinet and the key bureaucratic players in Canberra have been deeply involved in its detailed consideration.

This is a skilfully put together document. It has a tough-minded approach to the geopolitical realities of Australia's strategic environment, it restructures the Defence Force so that it will be able to operate in a sustained manner in our immediate neighbourhood, and it provides the necessary long-term force structure guidance. What is most surprising about the *White Paper* is its financial commitment. The Government has committed itself to an increase in the defence budget next financial year (2001/02) of \$500 million, and in the following year (2002/03) of an additional \$1 billion, and an average increase over the decade of 3 *per cent* real growth a year. By the end of the decade, defence spending will stand at approximately \$16 billion, compared with \$12.2 billion this year. This means that defence expenditure is expected to increase by a total of almost \$24 billion in real terms over the decade, compared to spending had the defence budget been held flat at its current level. Of course, there must be scepticism that any government will persist with defence budget increases of this magnitude over such a long period of time. None has in the past.

But, at this stage at least, this is a generous commitment by the Howard Government and at the upper end of what might have been expected. It will provide the following for new capabilities over the period 2000-01 to 2010-2011:

- \$3.9 billion on equipment for the Army;
- \$6.1 billion for air combat and strike capabilities;

- \$1.8 billion for the Navy;

- \$1.9 billion for intelligence, surveillance, communications and command systems.

So, given these large amounts of anticipated equipment spending how radical a change from the past is this *White Paper*? Contrary to the expectations of some ill informed contributors in the July/August edition of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*, it does not involve a restructuring of the ADF for "out of area " high intensity combat in Northeast Asia.

The *White Paper* – quite rightly – identifies Australia's "most important long-term strategic objective is to be able to defend our territory from direct military attack". This is described as "the bedrock of our security, and the most fundamental responsibility of government". So much for those who proclaimed (with no defence policy experience) that the defence of Australia is irrelevant. On my reckoning, about 90 *per cent* of the proposed new force structure outlays in the new Defence *White Paper* are primarily designed for defence of Australia tasks. And whilst the ADF most certainly should be able to make a "major contribution" to the security of our immediate neighbourhood, John Howard stated expressly in his tabling address in the Parliament on 6 December 2000 that: "We will not develop capabilities specifically to undertake operations beyond our immediate region". So much for those irrelevant academics who so confidently asserted that Australia should not base its force structure "mostly on dealing with phantom



HMAS Success flanked by HMAS Perth and HMAS Darwin during exercise with USS Cimarron.

Photograph: LSPH S. Gurnett

threats in the inner arc". The Government has clearly changed its mind on this issue since it first came to office when there seemed to be a view in some quarters that a return to "forward defence" was on the cards.

What about the expectation that we are developing an expeditionary force structured and equipped for intervention in our region? There are some who believe that the real role of the Army should be armoured warfare on the Korean peninsula. The decisive answer to these colonel blimps is the statement in the *White Paper* that: "we have, however, decided against the development of heavy armoured forces suitable for contributions to coalition forces in high intensity conflicts". But the Government has introduced an important new policy priority to have defence forces able, if

asked, to make a major contribution to the security of our immediate neighbourhood. There is no doubt that Army is a major beneficiary of this switch to what I call "the regional defence of Australia". However, a close examination of the *White Paper* shows that Army will not expand beyond the current six battalion groups. Moreover, the Army's apparent share of the \$3.9 billion of new capital expenditure in the coming decade is artificially inflated by the inclusion of expenditure on transport aircraft (C-130s and Caribous) and upgraded and replacement amphibious lift capabilities. And there is no evidence that this so-called expeditionary force will be structured and equipped to mount an opposed landing against a well-armed enemy.

The fact remains, as the *White Paper* acknowledges, Australia's defence policy gives priority to a maritime strategy that aims "to control the air and sea approaches to our continent, so as to deny them to hostile ships and aircraft". (A concept first proposed in the infamous Dibb report in 1986). Even a cursory glance at the funds earmarked for air combat and strike shows that air power remains ascendant in the minds of our defence planners. The most important single decision to be made in future defence planning will be to acquire replacements for the F/A 18s and F-111 strike aircraft, starting in 2006, at an eventual cost of some \$10-15 billion. Air Force will also get airborne early warning and control aircraft, new in-flight refuelling capabilities, and a major refurbishment or replacement of the P-3C maritime patrol aircraft. This is where the big money is, not in Army.

What about Navy? It seems to have come out the loser in all of this. But apart from costly upgrades to the Collins class submarines and the ANZAC ships, as well as replacements for the Fremantle class patrol boats, HMAS *Australia* and eventually HMAS *Success*, Navy gets a promise of "at least three air-defence capable ships" to replace the six FFG frigates when they are decommissioned from 2013. It is expected that these ships will be significantly larger and more capable than the FFGs. Contrary to media speculation, there is no provision in the Government's ten-year Defence Capability Plan for mini aircraft carriers or large amphibious assault ships. There will be, however, the eventual replacement of the amphibious support ships HMAS *Manoora* and *Kanimbla* in 2015. One wonders how the Australian Defence Association, which has long trumpeted the

need to defend our sea lines of communication across vast open oceans, will respond to the fact that no large air defence capable destroyer is in sight to replace the DDGs for the next 12 years. It looks as though our surface fleet will eventually dwindle in size to eight upgraded ANZAC ships and "at least three air defence capable ships".

The bottom line is that this is a realistic and well thought through *White Paper*. It is arguably the best - and certainly the most comprehensive - Defence *White Paper* Australia has produced. It reflects John Howard's personal commitment to a strong defence force. And, make no mistake about it, it also reflected the sheer political skills of the former Defence Minister, John Moore. No one should assume that an outcome of this quality was possible without a great deal of hard work. Hugh White, the Deputy Secretary in the Department of Defence who was the prime drafter of this *White Paper*, and his team, deserve unstinting praise. The most important hurdle now is the implementation of this clear statement of Government policy against the resistance that probably exists amongst some recidivist elements (both uniformed and civilian) in the Defence Organisation.

Is this "the most significant reshaping of the defence force in decades", as the Prime Minister states? Or is it in straight line of descent from the Fraser Government's 1976 Defence *White Paper* and the Hawke Government's 1987 *White Paper*? The answer is - despite the Prime Minister's claims - that it is an evolutionary rather than a revolutionary document, as good as it is. In short, it is the King James authorised version centred on the defence of Australia and adjusted for the new strategic circumstances in our immediate region.



Professor Paul Dibb is Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University and a former Deputy Secretary in the Department of Defence.

The Politics of the White Paper

By Graeme Dobell, Radio Australia/ABC Foreign Affairs & Defence Correspondent

The revolution in military affairs in Australia has, so far, been more about politics than technology.

For Defence, the revolution has been a rolling series of reviews and reforms. The politicians have decided they don't always believe or trust the military and civilian culture of Defence.

The politics surrounding the *White Paper* are as influential as the geopolitical future the planners have tried to predict.

The word "politics" goes far beyond Parliamentary and Party cut-and-thrust to encompass a complex mix of budget issues, Ministerial and Cabinet decisions, bureaucratic infighting, and personality differences.

An important factor in the *White Paper* process was the suspicion the Howard Government developed about Defence.

Part of the Howard attack has been on the comfortable Defence view that it's all the fault of the politicians that previous spending targets have never been met. Kim Beazley's 1987 *White Paper*, for instance, aimed to give Defence between 2.6 *per cent* to 3 *per cent* of GDP. Today, the Howard Government trumpets a promise to hold Defence spending at about 1.9 *per cent* of GDP for the rest of the decade.

The new political spin is to blame Defence, not past Cabinet budget compromises, for the failure to reach previous GDP targets. After all, the politicians argue, why give more money to an organisation that couldn't properly use the cash it already had.

The first policy expression of this was Ian McLachlan launching the Defence Efficiency Review in 1996. The most dramatic personal version was John Moore seeking the bureaucratic execution of the Secretary of the Defence Department, Paul Barratt, a botched "hit" that ended up in court in 1999.

Beyond the problems with the Collins submarines, the Howard Cabinet was horrified at the limited options Defence was able to offer when Australia decided to contribute to the US-led coalition against Iraq in February, 1998 (a company from the Special Air Service regiment and two Boeing 707 air-to-air refuelling planes). The blunt question asked in Cabinet at the time was: "Is this all we get for 10 billion dollars?"

So Allan Hawke, after 100 days as Secretary, was on firm political ground when he attacked his own Department's leadership for being seen "as lacking coherence, as failing to accept responsibility and as reactive...There are certainly elements of what I would call a culture of learned helplessness among some Defence senior managers – both military and civilian."

In that speech in February, 2000, at the start of the Green and White Paper process, the Secretary said his Department had to restore confidence, both externally and internally: "There is widespread dissatisfaction with Defence's performance in Canberra – from Ministers, central agencies within the public service, industry, and even from within the Defence organisation itself. In essence, we have a credibility problem."

This is the political context for the *White Paper* setting out "the most specific long-term defence funding projections provided by any Australian government in more than 25 years". The aim is not just set to keep future Cabinets honest, but to remove any excuses if Defence fails to achieve clear goals.

In February, 2001, (exactly 12 months after the Hawke "learned helplessness" speech) the new Defence Minister, Peter Reith,



High technology air and sea forces that can defend Australia.

declared that the *White Paper* does not mark the end of the cultural revolution: "Defence is a unique organisation but it is not a government within the government. It is responsible to the government."

Mr Reith told the Defence Senior Leadership Summit that they had lost credibility with the Cabinet and with the economic portfolios of Treasury and Finance. The new Minister ordered his leadership team to stop bleeding in full view of the media: "Defence cannot effectively deliver the Government's outcomes unless it has credibility with the rest of Government. My Cabinet colleagues quite justifiably become concerned when classified or sensitive material appears in the media. If Defence cannot keep national secrets how can Government be expected to work closely with you?"

While the Howard Cabinet's political angst is part of the context of the *White Paper*, its

changed perceptions of geopolitics are explicitly on display. It is instructive to look back to the Coalition's Strategic Policy document, released in December, 1997, which confidently proclaimed that Australia had moved beyond a primary focus on South-East Asia and the South Pacific: "Our strategic focus has expanded to cover the whole Asia Pacific."

Such overreaching ambition has evaporated amid the smoke of East Timor, the chaos of Indonesia and the uncertainty of the South Pacific. Australia worries about a "sea of instability", the description given by the Defence Minister, John Moore, on the day the *White Paper* was released: "You look at the strategic outlook - we made a judgement that surrounding us is a sea of instability, Indonesia right through, and we are operating now on Timor, Bougainville, Solomons, and there's no likelihood of a quick resolution."

The key phrase in this discussion is the idea of the “immediate neighbourhood”, which is defined as Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea and the islands of the Southwest Pacific. Australia says it will act to deal with outside military challenges to these immediate neighbours, or major internal challenges that threaten stability and cohesion.

A significant regional or neighbourhood element has been added to the fundamental focus on the defence of Australia. And as Australia sees no threat to its territory, the increase in spending is very much about regional uncertainties. Tabling the *White Paper*, the Prime Minister, John Howard, defined key sets of military capabilities that must be available: “First we need high technology, air and naval forces that can defend Australia by controlling our air and sea approaches. These forces can also contribute to regional coalitions in higher-level conflicts as well as support forces deployed in our immediate neighbourhood. Second we need highly deployable land forces that can operate both in the defence of Australia and to undertake lower-level operations in our immediate neighbourhood.”

Australia's ten year real increase in military spending aims to create a land force able to deal with operations other than conventional war - as seen in Bougainville - and to contribute to coalitions as seen in East Timor. The Chief of the Defence Force, Admiral Chris Barrie, acknowledged “quite a shortfall” in the quantity and quality of the land force: “It's no longer about soldiers and barracks. It's about soldiers in the field”.

There will be obvious sensitivities in the neighbourhood, especially in Indonesia, about

Australia bulking up its military to have a proclaimed ability to operate beyond its borders. John Moore's description is of Australia seeking to be a responsible player: “We are not setting up a super power or a sort of deputy sergeant or whatever fanciful term. What we are setting out to do is to provide a defence force which primarily defends Australia and plays its responsible role within their area of influence.”

The new Bush administration in Washington gives early indications of expecting Australia to live up to its own language about playing a role in its immediate neighbourhood or area of influence.

In January, 2001, at his confirmation hearing as US Secretary of State, Colin Powell endorsed Australia's regional leadership: “In the Pacific, for example, we are very, very pleased that Australia, our firm ally, has taken a keen interest in what has been happening in Indonesia. So we will coordinate our policies. But let our ally, Australia, take the lead as they have done so well in that troubled country.”

The *New York Times'* David Sanger commented that Bush foreign and defence policy will be far less activist, and more selective, than that of Bill Clinton: “It sure sends a message – don't expect us to leave home as often, and don't expect us to whip out our American Express Card when we do.” This accords with the *White Paper* assumption that “the willingness of the United States to bear the burden of its global role where its interests are less direct could be eroded”. Canberra's worry is that America's direct national interests may be eroding in the area Australia calls its immediate neighbourhood.



Graeme Dobell is Foreign Affairs/Defence correspondent in Canberra for Radio Australia and ABC Radio. He has held the post several times since 1978, between postings to Europe and Asia. His previous position was as the ABC's South-East Asia correspondent. His book, Australia Finds Home: The choices and chances of an Asia Pacific journey, was published in August, 2000.

A Primary Strategic Partner – Can we afford it?

By Air Marshal S.D. Evans AC DSO AFC RAAF (Ret)
National President, Royal United Services Institute of Australia

Notwithstanding that a full scale invasion or major attack on Australia is extremely unlikely in present circumstances, the Government makes the point in the White Paper, quite firmly and in several places, that the defence of our country and our community from armed attack is one of its highest priorities. In the executive summary, (under "Strategy") it is affirmed that, "Australia's most important long-term strategic objective is to ensure the defence of Australia and its direct approaches". There is nothing ambivalent in these statements; and they are in accord with the views expressed by most people to the Community Consultation Team.

At the same time, the paper acknowledges that important security issues remain unresolved in East Timor. These could be exacerbated if Indonesia itself is beset by destabilising factors, whether they be economic or political; and which could, *inter alia*, weaken the authority of the central government over the militias in East Timor. The countries of the South West Pacific also face a variety of destabilising problems; ethnic, political and economic: all cause for concern to the Australian Government.

The concern here is that Australia, with limited resources, could well find itself committed to a set of demanding tasks in extending support in these contingent circumstances. The Government makes no secret of the fact that it sees Australia as the primary strategic partner of the nations noted above. Even now it would seem clear that our involvement in East Timor could be protracted - perhaps extending for a decade or more. We have already been involved in Papua New Guinea for a lengthy period and again there is no short-term prospect of withdrawal. In fact, there is almost an equal chance that our commitment could increase.

Whilst not denying that the Australian Defence Force has demonstrated a commendable level of professional skill in all operations of a peacekeeping, peacemaking and humanitarian support nature, which it has undertaken over a decade or more, the call on resources has not been inconsiderable. Furthermore, our

demonstration of such professionalism and our readiness to accept the plaudits of the international community may tempt the Government and the ADF to seek opportunities to participate and even to play the leading role in future such non-warlike operations. The danger is that by scattering our limited resources we may well jeopardise the structuring of the Defence Force to meet the role stated to be the Government's first strategic objective - the defence of Australia. It is correct, as stated in paragraph 6.2 of the *White Paper*, that "forces built primarily to defend Australia will be able to undertake a range of operations to promote our wider strategic objectives". However, if our resources are absorbed in meeting secondary objectives, we may never be able to structure the force required for the primary task. Simply, we should not look upon maintaining stability in neighbouring countries as being solely, or even primarily, a matter for Australia. It is a matter for the United Nations, with Australia contributing in accordance with our capability at the time. It is far better to have a viable force for the defence of our country than to receive kudos for doing the work of other nations.

My second concern, and I hope it is misplaced, relates to what seems to be emerging within elements of the force structure as mere tokenism rather than viable and credible capability. This stems from the proposal to acquire four AEW&C aircraft *with the possibility*

of acquiring a further three aircraft later in the decade. What is the rationale for only four of these aircraft, critical to air defence and an important element of modern strike operations? Surely, no one would suggest that four aircraft would meet the operational requirement. Clearly it is a figure plucked out of nowhere - tokenism. A factor that makes this particular decision difficult to understand is that the cost difference between acquisition of four and seven aircraft is relatively small. I have the same unease in regard to the acquisition of only three of the new class of ship to replace the FFG'S from 2013. One can only hope that there is genuine intent in the *at least three* stated in paragraph 8.60 of the paper. Again one must ask what operational assessment led to the figure of three?

However, in relation to surface ships I found it difficult to draw any conclusion from the discussion on naval forces (paragraphs 3.45 & 3.46). The opening statement is that "naval forces will become more capable over the coming decade". The paper refers to the proliferation of anti-ship missiles and the improved capability of such weapons. It refers also to the several delivery platforms now available, and the expectation of missiles with greater range and supersonic speed. Does this make the surface Navy more capable or more vulnerable? One sentence suggests that ships will carry improved defences against these more capable missiles - but where does this leave us, toward better surface ships or away from them?

Chapter 9 on defence industry is a welcome advance on the austere treatment given to this important subject in the *Public Discussion Paper*. Perhaps the main factor to emerge is the expression of a genuine desire for a partnering between the Department, the ADF and industry. Chapter 8 has given industry a guide to the future

requirements of the ADF, so that it can plan with some confidence to meet those requirements. Of particular relevance here is the promise of early involvement of industry as expressed in paragraph 9.36.

However, the Government clearly appreciates some of the constraints applying to Australian defence industry - small runs of manufactured items militating against competitive pricing; and on again off again procurement as the Services struggle to accommodate budget constraints. Government also recognises that these constraints severely limit the efficacy of manufacturing many items of defence equipment in Australia. It therefore emphasises integration of systems, weapon fits and through life support of the force as the logical role of Australian defence industry. Ship building would appear to be the exception although the notion that our shipbuilding can be competitive would be difficult to support from historical data.

Whilst there would of course be much value in the export of defence equipment in improving the viability of our defence industry, as proposed in the *White Paper*, industry is once again confined, and often frustrated, by the over sensitive concern regarding the export of military equipment within our region - the area where Australian would be most likely to succeed.

Notwithstanding the comments made above, all of which will undoubtedly be addressed as Defence professionals proceed with strategic and force structure considerations, this *White Paper* has presented a degree of detail and transparency not attempted in the past. In so doing it has established a level of understanding, and hopefully confidence, not attained in the past. One might hope that it represents a more accurate prediction of future implementation than past White Papers.



Air Marshal David Evans AC DSO AFC, graduated as sergeant pilot RAAF in August 1943. After World War II he flew Transport operations including Courier to Japan and Berlin Airlift. Air Marshal Evans has extensive flying postings (8600 hours) including Canberra bombers in Malaya and Vietnam (Commanded No.2 Squadron) F-111's when Commanding RAAF Amberley. Senior Appointments include Chief of Air Operations, Deputy Chief Air Staff, Chief of Joint Operations and Plans and Chief of Air Staff.

The Problem of Distance

By Rear Admiral Richard Hill, (Ret)

An outsider – even an outsider who has visited Australia several times and regards the country with admiration, affection and some knowledge – is bound, when commenting on Defence 2000, to ask where the map is. Surprisingly, the document has only a representation of the whole eastern hemisphere in the context of humanitarian and peace operations. For a map showing Australia's area of defence interest one has to refer back to the endpapers of Dobb and subsequent work in the 1980s.

It is banal to say that area is very big and distances are very great. But the banality is necessary because the *White Paper* is, to this observer, quite coy about discussing those very problems of distance that must dominate the defence of Australia – which is stated at several points to be the core function of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Range

Take as an example the question of the range of combat aircraft. The *White Paper* says (8.37) that “control of the air over our territory and maritime approaches is critical to all other types of operation in the defence of Australia”. This is an ambitious objective for any medium power; in the case of Australia, whose landmass alone is 3200 kms north-south and 4000 kms east-west, is to be achieved by 71 F/A 18 aircraft supported by four tankers, the capability to be somewhat enhanced over the next decade. Without going into details of endurance, payload and basing, it is clear that control of the air is a tall order for such a force. Argentina discovered in 1982 how difficult it is for aircraft near the limit of their effective range to dispute, let alone control, the airspace above a maritime conflict zone.

The problem reads across into the projected capability of Australia's surface naval forces (8.55-8.57). Here, after the imminent retirement without replacement of the DDGs, organic anti-air systems will be limited to point defence only until 2012 at the

earliest. For well over a decade, therefore, a very tautly-stretched land-based air force will be the only long-range air defence for the fleet, which will rely on self-defence systems for final protection. It is not clear how auxiliaries or amphibious forces will be defended against air attack.

Denial

The capacity of Australia's projected forces to defend Australia, against a determined and competent adversary, thus does not look very bright. But, as the *White Paper* acknowledges, such an adversary does not at present exist, nor is one likely to develop quickly and dangerously. In fact Australia's position is in some way analogous to that of the UK during the Cold War: the least likely contingency, in the UK's case an all-out attack on the alliance's core territory and values, was the one most demanding of resources – and one that could not be ignored.

It is at this point that medium powers, particularly those that rightly aspire to self-reliance, need to be as brave as lions and cunning as foxes. The *White Paper* goes a long way in this direction by acknowledging the unlikelihood of direct attack on Australia. It could go further (though perhaps planning staffs have already gone that far) by placing more reliance on the deterrent effect of the highest-level combat forces, strike and submarine. These forces, robustly used, could inflict losses that any likely aggressor would



HMAS Huon entering Sydney Harbour.

Photograph: ABPH T. Nelson

find unacceptable by comparison with any possible strategic gain. They could, also potentially or actually, put pressure on allies to intervene.

In this context Paul Dibb's "strategy of denial" (*Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, 1986, p.49ff.), vilified by some traditionalists at the time, begins to look remarkably attractive. But that is not at all to say that the air combat forces or the surface fleet have no part to play in the doubly unlikely contingency of a determined and competent adversary *and* the failure of deterrence. On the contrary, as part of a balanced all-arms defence they would be essential to contain and repel aggression. They might not be the most crucial players,

and they do have limitations as has been pointed out, but they would be needed.

Limited Operations

To turn to far more likely levels of operation, the *White Paper* is clearly more comfortable and so is this reader. As the (only) map indicates, Australia's "force for good" has been widely deployed in the past decade and the requirement is likely to increase rather than the reverse. The plans, particularly for Army structure and sea lift, are sensible; one might question whether a parachute battalion is an appropriate formation for the 21st century, but no doubt recruiting, tradition and sentiment have something to do with it.

Once more, however, the question of air defence for the fleet arises. The further from Australia's shores, the more acute becomes the problem. No Australian combat air support can be expected in an expeditionary situation and the warships' self-defence system can scarcely be expected to protect transports and auxiliaries as well as themselves. The loss of the DDGs could in some circumstances be felt acutely. Indeed, if hostile air effort beyond a very limited level is anticipated, it is hard to see Australian forces being deployed without a highly capable ally engaged. This is acknowledged implicitly by the *White Paper* (6.20) but sometimes media pressure to "do something" can get out of hand. It would be comforting if the fleet was more self-reliant in this field.

A further limitation is apparent in the area of mine countermeasures. It is said that the aim is "to protect *Australian* [my emphasis] ports from sea mines" (8.53) but the more important function, as the Gulf War showed, is to protect amphibious shipping. Will the "Huon" MCMVs be deployed?

Reach

All this discussion leads us back to the map. How far, and at what level of operation (many levels are non-shooting) are Australian forces expected to deploy? God forbid that strategy should be based on scenarios, or

circles on maps, but some very hard-headed thinking is needed beforehand about how far one should go and how deep one might get in. The *White Paper* is pretty good on the principle of "Sustainment" and encouraging in outlining the measures to promote it. One can only say that the British experience in the Falklands, full of improvisation as it was, could not have been successful had it not been for far-sighted previous provision (often in the face of narrow and limiting policies) of sufficient, organic, oceanic reach.

In Conclusion

Someone once said of a colleague that he was doing a damn difficult job damn badly. I think *Our Future Defence Force* has done a damn difficult job rather well. It has all the principles right, its judgements are sound, and if it does not provide all the kit for the business, that is nothing new in Defence White Papers. There is one maritime deficiency that could hurt badly; one hopes it will not be put to the test.

Finally, one must applaud the public consultation process that is highlighted throughout. It would be good to see this in a British Defence Statement sometime. We do not, of course, know whether the British would show so much sense or robustness as the Australian public clearly did. But we might try to find out.



Rear Admiral Richard Hill served at sea from 1946-1962 and then mainly in staff appointments until his retirement in 1983. He has since written and spoken extensively on maritime strategy, particularly in the context of medium powers. He is editor of The Naval Review.

The 2000 White Paper – a personal view

By Michael O'Connor, Australian Defence Association

Last December's White Paper was the fourth published by an Australian government over the past quarter of a century. Together with such statements of defence policy as the 1991 Force Structure Review, the 1997 Australian Strategic Policy and Restructuring the Australian Army, it tends to follow a pattern in presentation and, at least in respect of financial commitments, a consistency in failing to meet promises of increased resources or a highly disciplined performance in justifying and achieving cutbacks.

Only time will tell whether this White Paper will be any more effective in achieving political commitment to funding promises. Moreover, time will tell whether Australia's strategic circumstances will remain sufficiently benign to allow for what are modest resource commitments to a small and hard-pressed Defence Force.

The Conceptual And Strategic Overview

The first part of the *White Paper* attempts to set out a conceptual approach to national defence and the strategic context in which that approach is to be placed. This is not at all easy given that the section includes a range of judgements about modern conflict that represent a worst case position that is increasingly at odds with historical experience. Similarly, judgements about regional countries are strikingly bland and unhelpful, and quite different from what we read in the daily press. Hopefully, the classified estimates are more complete. Clearly these judgements are couched in terms that in a public document do not give offence to the governments of those countries. For the Australian reader, however, they lead to the conclusion that the defence strategy is of questionable relevance to the strategic environment.

The *White Paper* asserts that conflict between states is rare but cannot be ruled out. It refers to changed international attitudes to security which make intervention to contain or end armed conflict more probable than in the past but tends to rule out the substantial benefits to Australia by reiterating the vague and somewhat plastic concept of self-reliance. Unlike the 1976 *White Paper* which introduced self-reliance, this version seems to suggest that self-reliance means demonstrating that

Australia is prepared to do more for itself while still ultimately relying on the American alliance. This is hardly a unique concept and, indeed, it is one which fits neatly with the current strategic environment.

That said, the *White Paper* then goes on to assert the contradiction that direct attack on Australia at one of three different levels of intensity is our most serious problem but then goes on to assert that such a threat is unlikely in any significant sense.

Of course it is. The difficulties for any adversary who does not use long-range missile attack on Australia are virtually insurmountable unless first acquiring substantial base facilities in our inner region extending from Indonesia to New Zealand. To my poor untutored brain, that suggests that our highest defence priority should be to contribute as far as possible to the security of that inner region so as to keep it in friendly hands. The *White Paper* argues, however, that the first priority must be to defend Australian territory against direct attack. If that were the policy, I would have expected to see a strong contribution to the development of the Theatre Missile Defence.

To achieve this protection against direct attack, the *White Paper* asserts that we pursue a "maritime strategy" of defending the so-called sea-air gap by naval and air forces. That



The strength of Australia's military forces has always been the quality of its people

is in fact only one and the first element of a classic maritime strategy – the strategy of sea denial. It is designed to prevent others from using our sea approaches but does nothing to ensure that we can use them for our purposes which might be no more than keeping our sea – and air – lines of communication open, a strategic interest not mentioned although one which is of more than passing importance for a country so dependent upon international communications.

In the context of the sea-air gap strategy, the *White Paper* again misses the point that, within the sea-air gap, there are some largish lumps of land, on one of which Australian ground forces have been operating for almost two years.

Personally, I find the whole strategic argument totally unconvincing. The assessments on which it is based are either shallow or hidden. There is a dearth of logic and a degree of incoherence which can be defended only by pointing to the same characteristics in previous *White Papers*. There

is no notion of that basic strategic concept of trading space for time which works well for security from direct attack on our territory, less well for the protection of our wider interests.

In effect, it would be easy to conclude that the strategic posture has been constructed to serve a particular force structure concept rather than the other way around. It does nothing to provide what a peacetime defence policy should always provide – a range of strategic options for the use of or threat of use of military force in Australia's interest.

Personnel

Section Three, comprising one chapter only, deals with Personnel emphasising that "People are Capability". Apart from a commitment to increase the size of the regular ADF by an average of 250 personnel a year for ten years, the chapter is a collection of platitudes and inaccuracies. (Reserves are actually 26 *per cent*, not 42 *per cent* of the Total Force). The only financial commitment is, for heaven's sake, to cadets!

The Financial Program

Like all of its predecessors except the 1994 version, the *White Paper* has made some significant financial commitments over a further ten years. The commitments for the first two years of an increase of \$500 million and \$1 billion respectively are specific and dramatic. Moreover, there is a reasonable chance that, the election cycle notwithstanding, they will be kept.

After that, the promises are necessarily more vague. There can be no legislative commitment to further funding which will depend upon decisions to be made by future governments. Even if the commitments are sustained, defence spending will begin to decline as a percentage of GDP and of total Federal outlays. In that sense, the opportunity to build a more sustainable force will be lost.

The 1987 *White Paper* considered that an average 2.8 *per cent* of GDP should be spent on defence. That stands today at around \$18.5 billion. The shortfall over the past 13 years compared with the 1987 *White Paper* is \$102 billion in today's dollars. The shortfall is more accurately measured by personnel shortages (28 *per cent* cut in regular personnel over the past decade and hollow units), equipment cuts and increasing decrepitude (40-year-old APCs, helos, Caribous etc.), plus training and maintenance cuts.

Summarising

To a considerable degree, the 2000 *White Paper* represents an orthodox view that has changed little over a quarter of a century. While there are some sound elements, it fails to meet the intellectual challenge of what is really a new era in international conflict management.

Even in orthodox terms, it must be seen as a catch-up program to make up only partially for a decade or more of neglect. For example, the program to acquire armed reconnaissance

helicopters in 2004–05 neatly avoids reference to the 1994 *White Paper* commitment to have those aircraft in service last year.

Secondly, like previous White Papers, this is a statement of intent. There is no actual legal or constitutional commitment to providing the resources for the program that has been outlined. Not only does it not commit future governments – or even the present one – it is proof neither against changing personal or institutional preferences within the Defence machine, nor of course against changing strategic circumstances.

On the positive side, the program reflects the determination to improve the deployability of joint forces, especially the air and land elements. This reflects strategic reality and is somewhat at odds with some of the declaratory, orthodox and politically correct aspects of the document.

The suggestion in a number of areas that Australia can be defended almost solely by future air power supported by naval and ground forces is overly simplistic. I've been hearing this sort of assertion for most of my life and it has never been proved to be true. It sounds like one of those simple, all-encompassing solutions to not just one but a series of complex problems. Apart from the problem that it puts all our financial eggs into one basket, it removes from the government of the day a whole range of options for the use or threat of use of military force.

Most disappointingly, the *White Paper* makes no commitment to serious reform of the management and command system. This bloated, erratic, disorganised and expensive structure is designed to manage Australia's involvement in a Third World War which, we are told and we know, is not going to happen. In my view, serious reform and streamlining of the higher defence organisation is the most urgent issue in Defence. It has been ignored in this statement of government policy.





New Zealand and Australian troops during Operation Lavarack.

Photograph: SGT Gary Ramage

A Considered View

By The Hon. D. F. Quigley, Consultant

As the most recent Australian Defence White Paper (the White Paper) shows, security relations around the world are in a state of flux. Nowhere is this more evident than close to home in Indonesia. In many countries there is also a new approach to nationalism, which, on occasions has resulted in open conflict. Within Australia's area of direct strategic concern, Bougainville, East Timor, the Solomon Islands and Fiji are local examples. Papua New Guinea – especially on its border with Indonesia – is another potential trouble spot.

Given this environment, Secretary of State Colin Powell's statement to the US Senate that countries like Australia will increasingly be expected to take a lead role in regional security raises three important questions. First, what does regional security entail? Secondly, is it a viable option in this part of the world? And thirdly, assuming it is, does Australia's current military strategy cater adequately for this type of engagement?

The answer to the first question is contained in *The Posture Statement of 7 March 2000* by Admiral Dennis C. Blair, US Navy Commander-in-Chief, US Pacific Command, to the Senate Armed Services Committee which now appears to be official Bush Administration policy:

“Regional Engagement. The character of US military engagement will be a significant determinant in the future security in the Asia Pacific region. Current circumstances provide the opportunity and the necessity to develop more mature security arrangements among the nations of the region. Regional engagement is a process to achieve national objectives, not an end in itself. Our program improves the ability of regional partners to defend themselves, strengthens security alliances and partnerships, increases regional readiness for combined operations, promotes access for American forces to facilities in the

region, deters potential aggressors, and promotes security arrangements better suited to the challenges of the 21st century.”

Successful initiatives designed to reduce tensions in the area and resolve their basic causes are likely to require a range of solutions, including diplomacy, disputes resolution, assistance in rebuilding civil structures, humanitarian and disaster relief, peacekeeping and peacemaking.

The East Timor deployment suggests that the answer to the second question may well be yes. It has certainly demonstrated the value of a coalition operation to nations in the region and spurred interest in moves to develop standard procedures for planning and conducting these types of initiatives. However it also emphasised the need for better communications amongst the region's armed forces and for them to be better coordinated, trained and equipped. This suggests that much still needs to be done before local nations are likely to be ready to assume this new responsibility.

There are at least two reasons for this.

The first is that unlike much of Europe which has now had over 30 years of close cooperative experience on a range of issues, many of the countries in this part of the world have little in common other than membership of a geographic entity. Because of this – assuming that there is a desire for a collective approach – it will take time and effort to work

out who does what in ways that can produce a coherent solution to the problems that do arise from time to time.

The second reason is that although individual governments tend to conduct a mass of research on foreign policy, security and defence issues, these exercises are invariably in response to an immediate funding crisis or a narrow capabilities problem. This means that more wide-ranging topics like collective security are usually given scant attention. The result is that most individual defence forces are still structured and equipped to perform narrow national interest tasks rather than to enhance the collective capacity of a potential coalition task-force.

The results of this approach was highlighted in the 1998 United Kingdom Defence White Paper:

“Too few [European defence forces] have been modernised to meet today's requirements. Too few can be deployed to crises quickly, are flexible enough to meet the difficulties they will face, or [are] sustainable over long periods in difficult conditions.”

The East Timor deployment, which showed up the limited capacity of some contributors to participate fully, is a local illustration of the same problem.

Key questions for Australia are whether the policy thrust of the *White Paper*, which accords priority status to “the defence of Australia ...without relying on the combat forces of other countries – self-reliance” is the most constructive way to overcome these deficiencies; or should there be more attention directed towards a collective security approach?

An article in *The Economist* of February 3rd - 9th 2001 (page 34) appears to favour a combination of the two:

“... East Timor seems to have emerged as a model for the sort of go-it-alone role Australia may have to play in and around the Pacific in the future, without the benefit of American involvement.”

but adds that had another nearby conflict called for a simultaneous intervention, Australia would probably not have been able to respond.

The article also appears to overlook the fact that Australia's involvement in East Timor did not amount to a “sort of go-it-alone role”; but rather a new approach from the Americans, with that country adopting a supporting stance and providing a unique and significant range of capabilities that helped to ensure the success of the Australian-led initiative without stretching America's own capacity to conduct other operations worldwide. Its contribution included essential planning, communications systems, intelligence, logistics, strategic airlift, helicopter lift and civil affairs support. Coalition partners who were more directly involved provided the majority of the military forces on the ground.

The reality is that the ADF is extremely unlikely to have to “go-it-alone” either in conventional warfare or in regional peacekeeping or peacemaking. This suggests that the answer to the third question: “does Australian's current military strategy cater adequately for [collective regional security]” may well be no.

This is because the key objectives in the *White Paper* seem more about attempting to maintain a conventional defence force – with the phenomenal costs and inherent risks that that may well entail – than establishing the structure and capabilities for the more likely ADF task of “contributing to the security of the immediate neighbourhood”.

These comments may seem unusually harsh in view of the aim of the *White Paper* to increase the number of people in the Defence Force and defence spending from A\$12.2

billion a year to A\$16 billion a year by 2010. However they reflect a considered view based on a lifetime's involvement in politics, the dramatic change in the nature of warfare, the cost and sheer complexity of new defence systems and the rapidly evolving state of military technology; and suggest the need to be more – not less – selective in retaining and acquiring military assets and in determining defence priorities.

But perhaps that's too pessimistic. Maybe Australia's politicians are the exception to the rule and can be relied on to provide the necessary funds and the new approach to defence planning that is claimed to set the current *White Paper* apart from its predecessors. In case that doesn't happen however, it may be prudent (and good insurance) for the ADF to heed the US message on the “necessity to develop more mature security arrangements amongst the nations of the region” and begin to address some of the questions that will inevitably require consideration if collective security is to become a reality.

A starting point may well be a consideration of the following:

Who are the likely key players and participants?

What tasks might a regional collective defence force be expected to perform, with whom, and how often?

What degree of United Nations approval and/or involvement would be appropriate?

What assistance could most usefully be provided by the United States?

Do the likely participants have the appropriate force structures, capabilities and training regimes to enable them to

contribute effectively, or is a greater degree of coordination desirable?

Are there areas of initial cooperation – such as information sharing, procedures development, planning, basic training, exercises, participation in search and rescue, disaster relief and peacekeeping – that can be developed (or expanded) to promote further understanding, trust and confidence amongst the nations in the region?

How could or should actual and potential initiatives be funded?

What lessons can be learnt from previous regional coalition deployments?

Does the European Council's December 1999 decision to establish a deployable military force for “humanitarian, peacekeeping and potential peace enforcement tasks to ensure effective performance in crisis management” or the UN's initiatives to establish a stand-by force have any relevance in this region?

If more effective regional capabilities were to be developed, what impact, if any, would they be likely to have on existing defence relationships such as the *ANZUS Treaty*, the *FPDA* and the *Closer Defence Relationship* between Australia and New Zealand?

Would or should the existence of more effective regional capabilities for crisis management be taken into account in determining the roles, force structure and capabilities of the individual defence forces of contributing countries?

These questions suggest that new thinking is required on two issues: how to develop a new approach to determining national defence interests and acquisitions; and, how a multinational consultative mechanism might be shaped to define regional defence interests.

Another SEATO, NATO or EU defence arrangement isn't being advocated. Rather, the need is to consider regional issues away from conventional lines, that – in the main – tend to focus on matters of national interest and sovereignty.

A regional security conference might be a good starting point as it could slot in easily alongside existing regional bodies. If it became an ongoing event, it could also be useful in encouraging faltering or fledgling democracies while prodding along those tempted to backslide into old ways.

Its initial task might be to consider regional priorities ahead of national defence priorities.

As well as helping to share the burden, a regional solution might save local nations from drifting into decisions on defence acquisitions that lock them into capabilities for decades ahead when their priorities are likely to change. It might also allow each participant to identify areas they could handle best, rather than attempting to cover every role. Longer term, it might lead to a truly multi-national formation; or at least a series of structures and capabilities more appropriate for coalition activities.

Perhaps Australia and New Zealand could start the ball rolling with a proper assessment of their respective defence forces with the objective of maximising the potential of their combined capabilities. After all, both countries have a history of close cooperation, a shared strategic interest in our *immediate* neighbourhood and a clear understanding that each would come to the other's help in time of trouble.



Derek Quigley is a self-employed consultant residing in Auckland. He is a former New Zealand National Party Cabinet Minister, Chaired a major review of the New Zealand Defence Force in 1987; was chairman of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Parliamentary Select Committee that produced the "Defence Beyond 2000" report in 1999; and, reviewed – for the current Labor/Alliance Government – the F-16 contract which the previous administration had entered into with the United States of America.

Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force

An unofficial American view

By Thomas-Durell Young, Naval Postgraduate School US – Monterey, California

As could have been expected, the release of the Defence 2000¹ White Paper has resulted in a wide array of comments and reviews. Predictably, the reviews range from the White Paper does not represent anything new,² to typifying the Coalition's defence program as a major defence build-up.³ Notwithstanding many justifiably pointed questions one can raise concerning the financial viability of the Coalition's ambitious 10-year defence plan,⁴ the present writer detects a not so subtle, but fundamentally important, shift in Australia's official strategic thinking, if perhaps not just yet its strategic culture. And, if fully implemented, this change in the orientation and envisaged employment of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) could well be one of the most significant changes in Australia's defence policy and orientation since the seminal 1976 and 1987 Defence White Papers that established the policy of Defence of Australia. However, for this policy change to occur, it will require not only improvements in existing ADF capabilities, but also a change in the corporate strategic mentality of the Australian Defence community.

That which is significant about the *White Paper* is the important change in force development principles of the ADF. Since it was first announced in 1976, the force development orientation of the ADF has been based upon obtaining those capabilities that are directly relevant to the defence of Australia.⁵ There is nothing inherently wrong with this guidance given the magnitude of the scope of defending Australia and the relative limited resources to do so. However, a major weakness of this policy orientation has been the obvious fact that successive Australian governments, even from before Federation, have chosen to send Australians abroad in support of Australian national interests. Whether one agrees with the wisdom of particular past expeditions is irrelevant. The fact remains that Australian governments, irrespective of political ideology, have regularly decided that Australian national interests have dictated the dispatch of Australian forces.

What is so remarkable about the Defence of Australia school has been the fact that it has been embraced by the same governments

who have chafed at the limited options from which they have had to choose when participating in "out of area" operations. To be sure, DOA has had some important and far-reaching positive results. The ADF, today, is much more capable of conducting joint operations than before the first of the *Kangaroo* series of field exercises.⁶ Long gone are the days when the Services can expect to have major capability programs endorsed that are solely for meeting the "requirements" (however defined) of combined operations. Moreover, the massive investment in defence infrastructure since the 1970s in the west, and particularly in the north, despite all of its initial and subsequent operating costs, can be assessed as having been wise. Whether or not it is equally wise to "station" large numbers of the ADF in the north of Australia, however, is another matter.

That said, defence policies and strategic thinking should not be static and impervious to changes in the international environment for fear of producing, *inter alia*, debilitating intellectual stasis. In this respect, *Defence 2000* has signalled some subtle, if not

significant, changes in the recognition of the need for the ADF to be reoriented, the better to provide Cabinet with expanded and more effective options in responding to international events.⁷ Thus the *White Paper's* statement of Australia's intent to remain engaged in regional and global affairs should be seen as reassuring by Australia's allies and friends.⁸ Perhaps even more importantly is that "Australia's Military Strategy" will support this new orientation in terms of the development of ADF capabilities.⁹ This is an important change in policy from previous Defence of Australia force development priorities. As events in East Timor vividly demonstrated, the ADF needs the ability to project power from Australia's shores in support of Australian national interests, even, at times, without extensive support from allies. Thus, it is not an issue that if the ADF has this ability that it will lead to their adventurous employment beyond Australia's immediate region. Rather, it is simply recognition of the fact that, as the *White Paper* acknowledges, Australia has regional and even global interests that require defence capabilities to promote and protect.¹⁰

To be sure, the development of capabilities solely for coalition warfare purposes is not an option for Australia, given its limited resources. However, the recognition by the Coalition of the need to improve the power-projection capabilities of the ADF, the better to support and protect Australian interests in Australia's immediate neighbourhood and the wider Asia Pacific Region, is long overdue. Significantly, from the perspective of defence capability priorities, Army will be developed, in future, to deploy outside of Australia independently and within coalitions, and the capabilities of Royal Australian Navy will be enhanced to support such joint operations far afield of Australia.¹¹ In short, preparing for the "Defence of Australia" is no longer to be the sole preoccupation of the ADF.

In light of these significant changes one can truly state that, whilst *Defence 2000* may not constitute a sea change in Australian defence policy, it certainly does signal a move away from the previous long-standing tenets of Defence of Australia. Perhaps it is not exactly a revolution in defence policy, but it certainly is more than merely an evolution from previous *White Papers* and the Defence of Australia orientation. To be sure, the ability of the ADF to plan to undertake such operations can be attributed in part to the results of Defence of Australia and the ADF's joint capabilities and needed infrastructure in the north. But, as recognised in *Defence 2000*, the realities of the international environment now dictate the increased ability to deploy and sustain forces outside of Australia.¹² Nor should these very capabilities required for power-projection be considered mutually-exclusive of the prime responsibility of any defence force: the defence of the state. This must be assessed as being particularly in the case for Australia given its expansive and under-populated and developed north.

In sum, what one can see in this important policy document is the recognition of the need for the ADF to be better capable of projecting power, either independently, or within a coalition, with perhaps Australia being the lead nation. In this respect, the current writer disagrees with some who have described such capabilities are envisaged to allow the ADF to fight in regions of little or no interest to Australia, e.g. Korea.¹³ Rather, what appears to be developing, or perhaps even indeed "returning" to Australian strategic thinking, is a culture of expeditionary warfare as one finds as a result of recent reforms in the United Kingdom.¹⁴ The current writer hopes that the Australian strategic community does not respond to these bold new initiatives by attempting to typify *Defence 2000* as an atavistic return to policy of "Forward Defence". On the contrary, one hopes to see this policy shift is the result of a necessary



The RAAF Hawk 127, a new generation of Hawk lead in Fighter Trainers.

response to changes in Australia's region and recognition of the need to align the ADF's force structure more closely to national level policy and strategy.

* The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the official policy or position of the Department of the Navy, the Department of Defense, or the US Government.

NOTES

1. *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2000.
2. See Robert Garran's report that predicts little change in *The Australian*, 4 December 2000.
3. See Brian Toohey's essay in the *Sun Herald*, 10 December 2000.
4. See Gerald Henderson's commentary in the *Sydney Morning Herald*, 12 December 2000, and Peter Charlton in the *Courier Mail*, 9 December 2000 who outline the serious financial challenges facing defence.
5. *Australian Defence, November 1976*, Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1976, p. 10.
6. See *The Australian*, 22 September 1976.
7. See Robyn Lim's op-ed essay in *The Asian Wall Street Journal*, 12 December 2000.
8. *Defence 2000*, p. 30.
9. *ibid.*, 47-49.
10. *ibid.*, pp. 29-32.
11. *ibid.*, pp. 53-54.
12. *ibid.*, pp. 29-32.
13. See Paul Dibb's op-ed essay in the *Australian Financial Review*, 7 December 2000.
14. See Richard Connaughton, "Britain's Permanent Joint Headquarters (PJHQ)—From Concept to Operations Palliser and Barass, Sierra Leone 2000", *Small Wars and Insurgencies*, Volume 12, No. 1, Spring 2001, forthcoming.



Thomas-Durell Young is European Programme Manager, Center for Civil-Military Relations, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, CA., USA. He is author of Australian, New Zealand and United States Security Relations, 1951-1986, Boulder, CO.: Westview Press, 1992; and "The Australian-United States Security Alliance," in Australia's Security in the 21st Century, edited by J. Mohan Malik, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1999, 53-66.



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