



# Australian Defence Force JOURNAL

## Journal of the Australian Profession of Arms

Address by the Chief of Navy to the RAN's Sea Power Conference  
Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, Chief of Navy

Address by the Chief of Army to the RAN's Sea Power Conference  
Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, DSC, AM, Chief of Army

Address by the Chief of Air Force to the RAN's Sea Power Conference  
Air Marshal Leo Davies, AO, CSC, Chief of Air Force

Religious Diversity and Secularism in the ADF  
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Lessons from Operation URGENT FURY—Grenada, 1983  
Squadron Leader Christopher McInnes, Royal Australian Air Force

Campaign Planning and Evaluation  
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Rebecca Karlsson

Does Australia Face a 'China Choice'?  
Major Joseph Wheatley, Australian Army

Towards a More Comprehensive Understanding of Strategic Thinking  
Major Leon Young, Australian Army

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## CHAIR'S COMMENTS

Welcome to Issue No. 199 of the *Australian Defence Force Journal*.

For this issue, we feature speeches by each of the Service Chiefs to the RAN's Sea Power Conference. They usefully articulate how the ADF perceives its role in the future operating environment, reinforcing that the ADF regards professional mastery of joint warfare as its primary mission.

We then have a selection of contributions, beginning with an article by Colonel Phillip Hoglin on the topical issue of religious diversity and secularism in the ADF. Squadron Leader Christopher McInnes then offers some insightful lessons for the ADF from Operation URGENT FURY in Grenada in 1983.

Alison Hickman and Rebecca Karlsson then report on the findings of a Defence Science and Technology Group study into campaign planning and evaluation. Major Joseph Wheatley addresses the question of whether Australia faces a 'China choice'. We conclude with an article by Major Leon Young on strategic thinking, presenting some of the work undertaken during his CDF Fellowship in 2015.

There is also a selection of book reviews. As always, we remain keen to hear from readers wishing to join the list of reviewers, who are sent books provided to the Editor by publishers. If you are interested, please provide your contact details and area of interest to the Editor at [editoradfjournal@internode.on.net](mailto:editoradfjournal@internode.on.net)

Finally, I would like to mention that the Board will be meeting later this month to again discuss reinvigoration of the *Journal*, to include a redesigned format for its printed and on-line versions, as well as other ways to increase its contributor base and readership. Further details will be advised in due course. However, to feature in the first newly-designed issue, contributors should aim to have submissions to the Editor by late June. The guidelines are at <[www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au](http://www.adfjournal.adc.edu.au)>

I hope you enjoy this edition and would particularly encourage your contribution to our next issue.

**Ian Errington, AM, CSC**

Principal

Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies

Chair of the Australian Defence Force Journal Board

## FORTHCOMING SEMINARS AND CONFERENCES

### 21 April 2016

Lowy Institute, Sydney  
Hayder al-Khoei  
'Iraq after Islamic State'  
12.45-1.45pm

<http://www.lowyinstitute.org/events/event-conversation-hayder-al-khoeli>

### 20-22 May 2016

Institute for Regional Security, ANU  
Future Strategic Leaders Conference  
'The Nexus of Sovereignty and Security: Global interdependency and the border continuum'

<http://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/event-2181801>

### NOTE

To advertise forthcoming seminars and conferences in future issues of the *Journal*, please email details to the Editor  
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# Address by the Chief of Navy to the RAN's Sea Power Conference <sup>1</sup>

## Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, AO, CSC, RAN, Chief of Navy

This is the third Sea Power Conference at which all three Chiefs of Service speak at the opening session. This triumvirate is a reminder that we in the ADF are really beyond joint—we are increasingly operationally interdependent.

Australia's strategic military focus must remain above, on and under the sea. The distances we need to traverse remain a key consideration. Our Navy operates around the region and the world meeting our Government's tasking. Ultimately, our peacetime task, along with other navies, is to provide what the old naval prayer calls 'a safeguard for those who pass upon the seas on their lawful occasions'.<sup>2</sup> In practice, we are playing our part to secure the freedom of the seas so that the commerce of the world can build the wealth of nations. Trade is the basis for global prosperity.

The Australian Navy, from its inception, has been and will remain a global navy. Our ships have operated in both hemispheres and across the world's oceans during the last century, in peace and war. In 1914, the First Fleet Unit's ships, led by HMAS *Australia*, patrolled the Indo-Pacific and deterred raiding of our sea lanes, frustrating Germany's ability to realise its political objectives by military or naval means. In November 1914, HMAS *Sydney* was detached from troop convoy protection duties to engage the commerce raider SMS *Emden*, which was sinking ships and blocking the movement of troops and resources across the Indian Ocean. Our first naval action at sea as a nation was a victory in defence of our troops. When our sea lanes were secured, our fleet headed for the North Sea and the Mediterranean.

However, maintaining a global navy with a global focus remains a continuing challenge. Australia has a continent to defend and a small population with which to do it. Beyond our shores, we have legal responsibility for an area even greater than the mainland. Not surprisingly, over most of the RAN's existence, we have needed to be a prudent beneficiary of the experience and investment in research and development of initially the Royal Navy and, in more recent decades, the US Navy.

Some years ago, Rear Admiral James Goldrick, one of our conference speakers and an authority whom many of you know, identified the key problem the RAN faces in the modern era. He spoke of the recurring difficulty for medium-power navies being 'the mismatch between the expertise that we can generate and sustain ourselves, and the wide range of capabilities that we need to operate'.<sup>3</sup> He suggested that at least part of the solution may be a revival of some of the shared approaches by which the original fleet unit concept prospered.

There are many like-minded navies, culturally and organisationally similar, faced with capability problems relating to scale. We can undertake to engage in this new era of self-reliance while acknowledging that we are in partnership with many others who, like us, need to pool their expertise and resources in order to equip, maintain and operate their navies efficiently and effectively. Necessity is the mother of invention.

We now have a new understanding of the opportunities for greater interdependence, which allow for an international approach to problems that are hard for any medium power with a medium-sized Navy to solve on its own. But we have been trending this way for some time. Our regional success will be very much driven by how we build architecture around our design from the outset. This next decade presents us with expanded opportunities for building capability in partnership with others. More than ever, technology unites us; it enables us to be powerfully and seamlessly interoperable as never before.

The Government's announcement in August 2015 regarding shipbuilding in Australia means the decades of building and stopping only to then restart years later—and all the waste and lost opportunity that resulted—should be over.<sup>4</sup> A generational shift in our thinking and in our understanding of what Australians can and will do to provide for our future surface fleet has begun. This is a national

undertaking by a mature country; a country that does not duck a difficult task that is well within its national industrial capacity.

But as a national strategy, continuous shipbuilding is not only about its primary purpose of building a fleet of ships. This decision also heralds investment in Australian technological industrial infrastructure. Continuous shipbuilding will be an engine of employment and stimulant to economic growth. But at a deeper level, continuous shipbuilding unites the Navy and the nation in a far-reaching strategic enterprise. This is because continuous shipbuilding invests the Australian Navy and the Australian nation with the means to deliver a common enterprise and, at the same time, to exercise a greatly enhanced global influence.

I suggest that this Sea Power Conference is taking place at the most significant time for the Navy in Australia's modern history. I can state this with confidence because we have now reached this point of new departure in our national and our naval history where we will be recapitalising our fleet at a greater tempo than at any time since World War 2.

Let me give you an image of just how significant this change will be. Outside my office in Canberra hang the portraits of 30 of my predecessors. These sepia photographs show the Admirals who were entrusted by Australia to command the Australian Navy from 1913 to the present. Of those 30, fewer than five saw the Navy expand in capability during their time in office. Many saw a slow process of occasional ship acquisition. Most were hard put to hold onto what they had inherited—and a few saw the fleet diminish dramatically. This was particularly true as the requirements of the nation fighting a war at sea came to an end in 1919 and 1945.

The first in this line of 30 was Vice Admiral Sir William Creswell. He was our professional ancestor. He argued and won the case for the Australian Fleet unit against considerable opposition. He saw a fleet, built from nothing, arrive in Australia in 1913, go to war, earn the praise of the British Admiralty and return home. My point is that only Creswell, a century ago, experienced a major fleet expansion in peacetime on the scale we will see in the decade ahead for our Navy.

This building of a new Navy will be a challenge. Professor Geoffrey Till has noted that defence acquisition is 'one the most demanding forms of human activity' for good reason.<sup>5</sup> Too often in the past, what Till describes as long gestation periods and 'iterative tinkering with original specifications', have caused delays and cost over-runs.<sup>6</sup> Historically, once ships were operational, the great challenge was to keep them that way. Availability is the critical precondition for decisive and distributed lethality. I continually argue this! Our ships need to be ready for duty in the numbers needed to undertake the missions we are given.

In the past, too often new ships were fitted 'for but not with' all the weapons systems and sensors they needed to make them lethal. This was not wise and, in the long run, not cost effective either. Our future platforms will be built and fitted with what they are designed to carry. They will be ready for service across the spectrum of operations from their first day of service. Flexibility will need to underpin our shipbuilding programs so we can adopt new technologies as they become available throughout the life of the ship.

Development in stealth technologies, in the sphere of cyber warfare and in the domains of electronics, weapons systems, propulsion systems, automation and materials technology were impossible to predict when ships—which operate today—were designed 30 years ago. We cannot know exactly what technology, still being developed in a research lab, may be available in a decade. What we do know is that we must design ships that anticipate the need for adaptation and future enhancement.

We will build the ships we need for our time and place in the world and, with our global partners, we will develop the indigenous industry to sustain our fleet indefinitely into the future. We have made an excellent start with our two Canberra class. These ships not only transform the Navy's capability but will also transform the ADF's. They are also fine example of international collaboration—designed and laid down in Spain and equipped and fitted out here in Australia. This has been a sensible and successful pooling of expertise.

But they are only a very impressive beginning. The first of our three Hobart-class destroyers will join the fleet next year. They have not been without challenges. But these are smart ships with state-of-the-art Aegis combat systems and weapons fit to match. They will provide long-range protection and lethality. They will be the teeth of a future RAN task force and they will be in Australia's service for decades to come.

But as our ships continue to be delivered, our shipbuilding plans need to be future-focused—for an uncertain future. As Prime Minister Turnbull pointed out in September 2015, one of the emerging characteristics of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is the power of disruptive technologies to provide new and completely unimagined opportunities—opportunities both to discharge existing tasks better and to take on new ways of doing things.<sup>7</sup>

However, capturing the advantages of disruptive technologies as they emerge across the national economy is a whole-of-nation task. Innovation, including in military equipment, will only be possible to the extent that each sector of the economy can leverage developments in other, and possibly totally unconnected, sectors. Innovation often comes from shifting to new paradigms rather than continuing in existing ones. Connecting previously unrelated technologies is the bedrock of innovation.

As I review the pace of technological change over the span of my own career, I am amazed at the speed with which we have been able to accept technological novelty and turn it into the commonplace. Whether it is the advent of the GPS, the internet, the exponential expansion of communications systems or the power of IT technology, we now assume their availability as we await the arrival of the next disruptive technology. These technologies, and their developmental systems, are changing the way in which traditional enterprises operate. The interdependency that underpins Navy's capabilities and their support systems did not exist when I was a junior officer.

All of you attending this conference are witness to that fundamental change in Navy's basic operating system. This technological interdependency has two significant consequences. First, it forces capability managers, especially the Chiefs of Service, to redefine their roles as network managers and systems operators rather than the simple owners of discrete military arsenals. It forces us away from 'platform-think' to 'systems-think'. Second, it forces capability managers to see the delivery of capability systems as a whole-of-nation enterprise.

Many of you would have followed with as much interest as I have the ongoing discussion about naval shipbuilding among naval experts, strategists and commentators. What many of the commentators have missed is what I might call the 'joined up' nature of the modern defence enterprise—the interconnected nature of the skills, resources and capabilities that make up modern military power. This interconnectedness is only going to grow. Education, skills development, innovation, and the creation of new knowledge-based industries are already central to the evolution of military capability.

Many of you here have backgrounds in naval architecture, heavy engineering, metallurgy, avionics, logistics, weapons system engineering, propulsion and information technology. Many of us have considerable operational experience. But we are, for the most part, very conventional in our approach to capability development—evolutionists rather than revolutionaries. Audiences at future Sea Power Conferences may include nanotechnologists, behavioural scientists, biomechanical scientists, industrial designers and autonomous robotics engineers, not to mention creative designers and organisational theorists whose imagination will expand the scope of both agility and performance. In other words, revolutionaries will be welcome.

I have acknowledged the impact of disruptive technology on global affairs and the speed and agility with which we need to respond. The speed and scale of technological advance is impossible to disregard. And the ramifications are difficult to comprehend. We in the RAN and the ADF have a massive undertaking ahead of us.

To address the range of opportunities and challenges which face us, earlier this year I launched Navy's strategy to 2018, my period in office. This is Plan PELORUS, which positions the Navy to navigate the future strategic environment and provides us with our course and headmarks.<sup>8</sup> PELORUS is a strategic plan that acknowledges the changing character of global affairs, and recognises the need for a more agile, flexible and responsive Navy—a fifth-generation Navy and beyond.



PELORUS recognises the need for technologically-advanced ships to combine in the modern fleet system, and to integrate seamlessly in the joint and networked environment. This is a plan which recognises the need for ships to be capable of delivering the lethal force on which deterrence depends. It is a hard-nosed plan; one that recognises the need for ships to be affordable, adaptable and available—and ready to serve the nation's needs.

But Plan PELORUS looks beyond individual ships. It recognises that in the future, ships will only be entirely capable when they operate in fleet systems. In the future, the whole will be massively greater than the sum of its parts. PELORUS is also about our people. They remain what they have always been—the greatest single factor in our success in operations. PELORUS addresses those serving now and those we need to recruit because they have skills we need if we are going to operate the systems we will be acquiring.

But none of the issues I have discussed so far can be addressed comprehensively unless we know what is the purpose of navies and what we may be called upon to do. So I also want to speak briefly of values and ethics. Values stand the test of time. They draw us together and offer our profession a critical moral and ethical legitimacy. Our profession is committed to the defence of the values that unite our nation, and is defined by them. Honour, honesty, courage, integrity and loyalty are the values of my Navy.

Without values, and without leadership imbued with a moral sense, our profession would be purposeless. We must never forget that sea power is not about mere power. Sea power is not about brute force. Sea power is about service at sea as a force for good. The prosperity of our nations and their citizens depend on our ability to trade freely across the oceans and to enter and leave the ports of customers and suppliers.

I recall Alfred Mahan, who wrote at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century that sea power at its best 'enables the quiet and the weak to go about their business and to sleep securely in their beds'.<sup>9</sup> Mahan was speaking of the values that are elemental to the strategic purpose and the operational concepts around which the Fleet is designed. Australia seeks to stand beside all other free nations in the promotion and defence of these values. Ours is a nation with global reach and global responsibility for defending our maritime interests, and maintaining the international systems on which our way of life depends. Central to our *raison d'être* is that the Navy does this in concert with the other arms of the Defence Force, and alongside our friends and allies.

In the present age, as lethality is distributed across fleet systems, cooperative engagement capabilities mean that one platform can cue several, and that commanders have access to almost unimaginable destructive power. As lethality is distributed, so is responsibility. This means that when we operate together as the constituent elements of complex fleet systems, we must have an unabridged confidence in each other. We must share an understanding and a trust, above and beyond the level of technical proficiency.

In practical terms, we must seek every opportunity to exercise cooperatively at sea. We must take advantage of every chance to prepare collectively for the challenges that might confront us in the years and decades ahead. Increasing regional and global connection means no nation can expect to act alone to bear the burdens of security and stability. We must look to those things that unite us, rather than those that differentiate us, as we work together to advance good order and observance of legal norms at sea. At the same time, we must leverage the capability differences between us to deliver the common purpose.

Australia is an alliance partner with the US and we continue to work closely with the US Navy as we have done for decades. Australia is also reaching out to partner even more closely with regional navies. This year, by way of example, RAN ships have worked with Indonesian and Indian ships in very useful bilateral exercises which proved that interoperability is not only possible but increasingly normal practice.<sup>10</sup> Operating together to defeat drug smuggling and piracy in the Arabian Sea and in waters round the Horn of Africa for ten years has had the beneficial effect of providing all of us with experience of maintaining a maritime overwatch in those formerly-uncontrolled waters.

In addition to bilateral exercises and operations, the maritime security architecture is shaped and reinforced by our maritime regional forums which build cooperation and agreement, security and stability. Speaking regionally, I refer to the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, the Indian Ocean Naval

Symposium and the ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting Plus Experts' Working Group on Maritime Security.

Individually significant, the collective effect of these separate forums is of immeasurable importance. Each is committed to close working relationships, enhanced transparency and to the joint endeavour in which we are all engaged—the peace and prosperity of our countries and their people. Australia and the Navy are committed to these multinational maritime arrangements and to every other opportunity we have for cooperation. Our obligation is to ensure that we advance our work together to maintain good order and justice at sea.

I have spoken today about fundamental principles, about shared problems and challenges, and about values that unite us and that inform our stewardship of the destructive power of nations. We should recognise that we can stand together to uphold enduring and universal principles. It is our collective responsibility to ensure that we work cooperatively because we are the custodians for our governments' use of sea power. We have the capacity to exercise it to provide the maritime security and international confidence that is the foundation for economic development and stability in our region. If we do not provide security of the seas, no-one else can or will do so.

*Vice Admiral Barrett joined the Royal Australian Navy in 1976 as a Seaman Officer and later specialised in aviation. A dual-qualified officer, he served in Her Majesty's Australian (HMA) Ships Melbourne, Perth and Brisbane and HMS Orkney as a Seaman Officer, and then as Flight Commander in HMA Ships Stalwart, Adelaide and Canberra.*

*His staff appointments include Deputy Director Air Warfare Development, Director Naval Officers Postings and Director General of Defence Force Recruiting.*

*Vice Admiral Barrett has served as Commanding Officer 817 Squadron, Commanding Officer HMAS Albatross, Commander Australian Navy Aviation Group, Commander Border Protection Command and, most recently, as Commander Australian Fleet. He assumed command of the Royal Australian Navy on 1 July 2014.*

*Vice Admiral Barrett holds a Bachelor of Arts in Politics and History and a Masters of Defence Studies, both from the University of New South Wales. He recently completed the Advanced Management Program at Harvard Business School.*

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of an address to the RAN's 'Sea Power Conference', held in Sydney from 6-8 October 2015. The original version is available at <[http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/20151006\\_Seapower\\_Conference\\_2015\\_CN\\_Keynote\\_Speech.pdf](http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/20151006_Seapower_Conference_2015_CN_Keynote_Speech.pdf)>
  - <sup>2</sup> See, for example, 'Forms of prayers to be used at sea', *Church of England* [website], available at <<https://www.churchofengland.org/prayer-worship/worship/book-of-common-prayer/prayers-to-be-used-at-sea.aspx>> accessed 1 March 2016.
  - <sup>3</sup> James Goldrick, 'Vernon Parker Oration', Australian Naval Institute, 4 August 2011, published in *Headmark*, Issue 143, March 2012, pp. 22-6, available at <<http://navalinstitute.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/headmark-143.pdf>> accessed 1 March 2016.

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- 4 Prime Minister and Minister for Defence, 'The Government's plan for a strong and sustainable naval shipbuilding industry', joint press release, 4 August 2015, available at <<http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/2015/08/04/joint-media-release-prime-minister-and-minister-for-defence-the-governments-plan-for-a-strong-and-sustainable-naval-shipbuilding-industry/>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 5 Geoffrey Till, 'Indonesia as a growing maritime power: possible implications for Australia', *Soundings*, Issue No. 4, May 2015, p. 7, available at <[http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Soundings\\_No\\_4.pdf](http://www.navy.gov.au/sites/default/files/documents/Soundings_No_4.pdf)> accessed 1 March 2016, citing Ken Hambleton, Ian Holder and David Kirpatrick, 'Ten chronic challenges in UK defence acquisition', *Defence Studies*, Vol. 13, No. 3, 2013, pp. 361-71.
- 6 Till, 'Indonesia as a growing maritime power', p. 7.
- 7 See, for example, Simon Thomsen, 'Turnbull's vision for Australia: "disruption is our friend"', *Business Insider Australia* [website], 15 September 2015, available at <<http://www.businessinsider.com.au/malcolm-turnbull-disruption-is-our-friend-2015-9>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 8 See, for example, 'Navy strategy', *Navy News*, 23 April 2015, p. 4, available at <<http://www.defence.gov.au/Publications/NewsPapers/Navy/editions/5807/5807.pdf>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 9 Alfred Thayer Mahan, *The Influence of Sea Power Upon History 1660-1783*, Little, Brown and Company: Boston, 1890, Chapter 18.
- 10 See, for example, 'Royal Australian Navy Task Group Completes Visit to Malaysia and Indonesia', *Department of Defence* [website], 9 November 2015, available at <<http://news.defence.gov.au/2015/11/09/royal-australian-navy-task-group-completes-visit-to-malaysia-and-indonesia/>> accessed 1 March 2016; also 'Australia and India Maritime Exercise', *Navy* [website], September 2015, available at <<http://video.navy.gov.au/play/2059>> accessed 1 March 2016.

# Address by the Chief of Army to the RAN's Sea Power Conference <sup>1</sup>

## Lieutenant General Angus Campbell, DSC, AM, Chief of Army

All three Service Chiefs appreciate the importance of maritime issues to the future security of Australia and the Indo-Pacific region. In 2011, in a paper titled 'On Military Grammar: the Australian Army beyond Afghanistan', the eminent Australian military strategist Professor Michael Evans posited that the Australian Army had to master three enduring, recurring roles, namely conventional combat, stabilisation operations and amphibious warfare.<sup>2</sup>

He was and is right. Conventional combat, in any domain, remains the benchmark from which a professional force can adjust to the requirements of a specific campaign. Stabilisation operations were as much a feature of the wider Palestine campaign in the First World War as of Afghanistan today. And, in Australia's maritime approaches, when our vital interests were at stake during the Second World War, Australia either conducted effective amphibious operations or ceded the initiative to our enemy.

In concluding his paper, Professor Evans offered the following advice to future Chiefs:

Every future Chief of Army needs to hang on his office wall two quotations as a historical reminder of the land force's strategic constancy as an overseas expeditionary force. The first is Major General Sydney Rowell's laconic January 1942 remark to the Americans that, if the Japanese were foolish enough to land troops in Northern Australia, he would respond by sending for the Australian Army's Salvage Corps 'to pick up the bones [because] there is no water between Broome and Alice Springs'. The second is Prime Minister Robert Menzies' September 1950 speech to the effect that any Australian land force optimised to fight on Australian soil will always be 'the equivalent of a wooden gun'. In these two statements from yesterday lies the essence of strategic wisdom for the land force of today and tomorrow.<sup>3</sup>

For a nation dependent on global trade, freedom of navigation and an international rules-based order, it should come as no surprise that Australia has long sought to realise its security through a maritime strategy. Looking beyond our shores is not a choice, it is a necessity; not as a justification for military adventurism and the careless squandering of blood and treasure but as a considered geostrategic response to preserving and promoting our interests *in extremis*. And yet, a Parliamentary Library Research Brief of 2004, titled 'Australia's Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century', noted that:

If our nature is characterised by our myths and legends, then Australia is not a maritime nation. As a people, we are happy to lie at the beach and toss pebbles at the waves, or turn our back upon it and fix our gaze on the dusty enormity of our island continent.<sup>4</sup>

Quite poetic for a library report really—and still true to a regrettable extent. But in the ten years since that was written, I think there has been significant change within the ADF, Australia and the Indo-Pacific, compelling Australia to embrace a maritime culture. And, I suggest, with the introduction into service of Her Majesty's Australian Ships *Choules*, *Canberra* and *Adelaide*, the first tangible expression of that modern change is apparent.

Compared to many other armed forces, the ADF is a joint force, which is essential given our size and the scale of its defence responsibilities. But it has only become the force it is today because of the consistent, driven leadership of its commanders over at least 30 years. And everyone would agree there is more to do. These ships form the centrepiece of a next 'forcing function', to continue toward realising a truly joint force—expert within distinct environments and seamlessly integrated in the planning and execution of operations.

Amphibious operations are often described as the most difficult and complex of all military activities. I am not sure about that. In the land environment, urban warfare and counter-insurgency operations are also pretty tough, and I am sure my colleagues could cite other challenges within their environments. But to succeed in amphibious operations definitely requires uniquely high levels of joint conception, planning,

execution and support. And the margins of tolerance in amphibious operations, to avoid catastrophic error, are slim.

As our trials unit, the 2nd Battalion of the Royal Australian Regiment is learning, one equipment pouch too wide and you don't get out of a downed helicopter—and nor does anyone behind you. This is an obvious point for those that have long since mastered the basics. We did too, on a number of occasions and were very good at it, but Australian 'amphibiousity' suffered from a great forgetting, and so we are learning it anew.

It is the professional rigour necessary to master amphibious operations, at every level and across all Services, which presents such a challenge and such an opportunity for the ADF. In order to realise excellence, the ADF will need to take small steps, learn from others, appreciate advice and build a 'team of teams' approach, both domestically and internationally.

My greatest concern isn't our ability to generate a constructive, broad-spectrum amphibious capability, beneficial to Australia and our region. I am certain this will be achieved. Rather, my concern is for mastering the ability to successfully undertake a range of amphibious activities consistently but not exclusively of those other tasks the ADF must maintain, such as conventional combat and stabilisation in the case of land forces, without periodically relearning very hard lessons.

To paraphrase Field Marshal Erwin Rommel, speaking of the British, when he was a Colonel in the inter-war period, but adjusted to be a Service Chief's precautionary advice to his officers, Rommel sagely noted that 'the [Australians] write some of the best doctrine in the world, it [would be] [un]fortunate [if] their officers do not read it'.<sup>5</sup>

Lessons 're-learned' is an intolerable trade in the lives of soldiers for the ahistorical indolence of their leaders. We are better than that and the sea is famously unforgiving. I have visited HMAS *Canberra* twice now, once with Admiral Barrett. The current 'Sea Series' of exercises is proving to be an outstanding opportunity to validate concepts and build our initial capability step-by-step.

*Canberra* is a great ship and it can generate a great capability. The quality of the people assigned from each Service, especially the leaders, is immediately apparent. And, most importantly, their work together is embedding a deep culture of professional excellence and joint cooperation—a culture that will enable our best. In time, the ADF looks forward to opportunities to broaden the team, and to see multilateral exercising and support operations as a routine component of our training cycle.

Right now, the question on the minds of Army's senior leadership is how to embed amphibious competence within the force. The analysis of options is being led by Major General Stuart Smith, Commander of the ADF's Deployable Joint Force Headquarters. Additionally, some worthy advice is on offer including Peter Dean's insightful 2012 paper, 'Amphibious Warfare: lessons from the past for the ADF's future', and Ken Gleiman and Peter Dean's, 'Beyond 2017: the Australian Defence Force and amphibious warfare'.<sup>6</sup>

Both papers remind that we were once very good at amphibious operations, in all its forms, from humanitarian assistance to assault. While change is in the wind, it is notable that students at the US Marine Corps Command and Staff College spend more time on the Southwest Pacific campaign of the Second World War (an Army not Marine land force operation) than their Australian counterparts.

The key messages from these papers, regarding dedicated command, specialist enablers, assignment of high quality personnel, and professional learning, have all been well received. To put it simply, in terms of building Army's contribution to an ADF amphibious effect, the two key questions are what must be maintained as dedicated specialist expertise, and what can be rotated within the general force?

The whole-of-force professional standards and brigade readiness achieved through Plan BEERSHEBA has greatly strengthened Army as a combat force. This will be sustained. Hence these essential, amphibious sustainment questions will be answered within rather than instead of the BEERSHEBA force generation framework. I look forward to discussing the options and risks arising from these questions with my senior leadership team over the next few months. My team and I are listening.

So, in closing, be assured that Army is committed to the ADF's future amphibious capability and, more generally, to contributing to our national maritime strategy and the joint force it requires. The future is challenging but who would want it any other way.

*Lieutenant General Angus Campbell joined the Australian Army in 1981, graduating from the Royal Military College Duntroon in 1984. He served as a platoon commander in the 3rd Battalion (Parachute), The Royal Australian Regiment, followed by troop and squadron command appointments within the Special Air Service Regiment.*

*In 2001, he was appointed Commanding Officer of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. While in command, the battalion group deployed to East Timor. Lieutenant General Campbell has also served in a range of staff appointments, including Aide-de-Camp to the Chief of Army, strategic policy officer in Army Headquarters, instructor at the Australian Command and Staff College, and Chief of Staff to the Chief of the Defence Force.*

*In late 2005, he joined the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet as a First Assistant Secretary to head the Office of National Security and was subsequently promoted to Deputy Secretary and appointed Deputy National Security Adviser. On his return to the ADF in early 2010, he led the Military Strategic Commitments staff in Defence headquarters until January 2011, when he assumed command of Australian forces deployed in the Middle East Area of Operations. He subsequently served as Deputy Chief of Army from February 2012 to September 2013, when he was promoted to command the Joint Agency Task Force responsible for the implementation of Operation SOVEREIGN BORDERS. Lieutenant General Campbell was appointed Chief of Army in May 2015.*

*Lieutenant General Campbell holds a Bachelor of Science (Honours) from the University of New South Wales, a Master of Philosophy in International Relations from Cambridge University, and is a graduate of the Australian Army Command and Staff College.*

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of an address to the RAN's 'Sea Power Conference', held in Sydney from 6-8 October 2015. The original version is available at <<http://army.gov.au/Our-work/Speeches-and-transcripts/Chief-of-Army-address-to-Seapower-conference>>
- <sup>2</sup> Michael Evans, 'On Military Grammar: the Australian Army beyond Afghanistan', *Security Challenges*, Vol. 7, No. 2, Winter 2011, pp. 33-40, available at <<http://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Documents/vol7no2Evans.pdf>> accessed 26 February 2016.
- <sup>3</sup> Evans, 'On Military Grammar', pp. 39-40.
- <sup>4</sup> Alex Tewes, Laura Rayner and Kelly Kavanaugh, 'Australia's Maritime Strategy in the 21st Century', Parliamentary Research Brief No. 4, November 2004, pp. 1-65, available at <[http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/3L7F6/upload\\_binary/3l7f66.pdf;fileType=aapplication%2Fpdf#search=%22library/prspub/3L7F6%22](http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/download/library/prspub/3L7F6/upload_binary/3l7f66.pdf;fileType=aapplication%2Fpdf#search=%22library/prspub/3L7F6%22)> accessed 26 February 2016.
- <sup>5</sup> Rommel's original quote is generally regarded as saying 'the British write the best doctrine in the world and then fail to read it': cited, for example, by Chris Tripodi, 'The Doctrine of "Understanding" and the Illusion of Control', *Defence-in-Depth* [website], 8 June 2015, available at <<http://defenceindepth.co/2015/06/08/the-doctrine-of-understanding-and-the-illusion-of-control/>> accessed 26 February 2016.

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<sup>6</sup> Peter Dean, 'Amphibious Warfare: lessons from the past for the ADF's future', *Security Challenges*, Vol. 8, No. 1, Autumn 2012, pp. 57-76, available at <<http://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/Resources/Files/vol8no1Dean.pdf>> accessed 26 February 2016, and Ken Gleiman and Peter Dean, 'Beyond 2017: the Australian Defence Force and amphibious warfare', *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* [website], 29 July 2015, available at <<https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/beyond-2017-the-australian-defence-force-and-amphibious-warfare>> accessed 26 February 2016.



# Address by the Chief of Air Force to the RAN's Sea Power Conference <sup>1</sup>

**Air Marshal Leo Davies, AO, CSC, Chief of Air Force**

The composition of this event speaks eloquently about the nature of the security challenges facing Australia and the ADF as we approach the third decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Increasingly, modern military forces are required to conduct so-called 'whole-of-government' operations across a broad spectrum of contingencies. And, in this era of fiscal austerity, any military force which aspires to maintain its technological edge must enjoy a close, indeed a seamless, relationship with its business partners through shared research, development and experimentation.

Likewise, the presence of all three Australian Service Chiefs at this conference sends a clear message about how the ADF perceives its role in the future operating environment. It makes it clear that the ADF regards professional mastery of joint warfare as its primary mission. And, today, that implies delivering joint effects across the traditional land, sea and air domains, as well as the emerging realms of cyber and space.

These days, it is customary to adopt the expanded definition of the 'global commons', which embraces the domains of cyber and space. So when I employ that term, as I inevitably must in a forum such as this, please understand that I am using it in that expanded sense. However, in the interests of simplicity, I will simply refer to the global commons. This reflects the current lexicon of multi-domain warfighting. And these concepts must inform our force structure and doctrinal settings in the future.

Our extant strategic guidance directs the ADF to implement a maritime strategy in the defence of Australia and our wider interests, whether in our immediate region or further afield. Of course, the ADF is keenly awaiting the release of the next White Paper, which I expect will broadly reaffirm that commitment to a maritime strategy. Accordingly, the ADF will continue to develop capabilities which enable us to conduct decisive joint operations in the approaches to Australia. From such capable joint forces, we must be able to configure tailored task forces to conduct other military operations, including humanitarian aid and disaster relief.

My confidence that there will be such continuity in our grand strategic guidance is based on an examination of our history as a nation. Even before we articulated a coherent maritime strategy, we consistently implemented a pattern of strategic practice which conformed to the tenets of classic maritime strategy as expounded by Sir Julian Corbett.<sup>2</sup>

Australian strategic policy has always been shaped by our national culture, heritage and values, as well as our geography. While we must adapt to changes in the global political system, our history and our geography will continue to strongly influence our choices. As former Prime Minister John Howard has noted, we do not need to choose between our history and our geography.<sup>3</sup> They operate together to shape our strategy. His main protagonist, former Prime Minister Paul Keating, framed our strategic dilemma slightly differently when he stated that Australia needed to seek its security 'in Asia, not from Asia'.<sup>4</sup> I believe that our current strategic practice neatly fuses both those views.

If this sounds a bit academic, be assured that our national leaders have always implicitly understood the irreducible conditions for Australian security. None of them needed a PhD in International Relations to conclude that as an island trading nation, Australia's very survival depended on unfettered access to the global commons for our security and prosperity.

Recently, I read an excellent research paper by Professor Ross Babbage, prepared for the Menzies Research Centre, in which he made this very point. From our origins as a settler society, we have



always assumed that we alone simply cannot defend our homeland nor secure our wider interests. Initially, we contributed to Imperial defence by dispatching small force elements to British colonial wars. The Maori Wars, the Sudan and the Boer War all conformed to this paradigm. Significantly, this pattern was well established even before we achieved nationhood.

As the global balance of power shifted, we then supported the US in the maintenance of a liberal, rule-based global order. From the end of the Vietnam War until today, we have continued to seek security through the ANZUS alliance and numerous other partnerships. However, we also aspire to a significant degree of self-reliance in being capable of defeating any credible threat to our territory.

The unifying theme in our quest for security and prosperity has been our tendency to collaborate with the dominant liberal democratic maritime power of the day. In particular, we have been reliant on the maritime power of Great Britain and the US to guarantee freedom of navigation and good order at sea. And, in the post-colonial era, we have developed vital security relationships with our neighbours in the South Pacific and Southeast Asia.

The end of the Cold War coincided with—if indeed it did not cause—the phenomenon we loosely refer to as ‘globalisation’. Again, I like Thomas Freidman’s remark that ‘globalisation means stuff happens much faster than ever before’.<sup>5</sup> The unprecedented speed with which goods and information circulate has also reduced the tyranny of distance. Marshall McLuhan’s ‘global village’ is now a reality.<sup>6</sup> The interconnected world has made us even more reliant on alliances and coalitions to meet transnational security challenges. To paraphrase the metaphysical poet John Donne, ‘no island is really an island any more’.<sup>7</sup>

Technology has compressed time and space to a degree that was simply unimaginable when I commenced my career. Fortunately, the very same forces which compress time and space—and which make the security environment so dynamic—also assist us in the gathering and sharing of information with our partners. It has also enhanced the reach, speed and precision with which we can project military power. In addition to our collaboration with friends and allies to preserve our access to the global commons, Australia has traditionally sought to secure a technological edge to achieve a multiplier effect. We have never been able to rely on mass, especially in the scale of our land forces.

Australia faces a disruptive, fluid and dynamic environment which presents complex challenges. I now will describe how Air Force conceives the geostrategic context in which we will be required to provide air and space power. I then will describe our transformation vision, with a particular emphasis on how it will affect our ability to operate with the Navy. Of course, that inevitably includes how we deliver joint effects with the Army, especially those elements embarked aboard the Navy’s newest ships.

The entry into service of the Canberra-class vessels, and the initial certification of the Amphibious Ready Element, is of profound importance.<sup>8</sup> It represents a level of sophistication in our ability to conduct joint amphibious operations in our region which we have not possessed since the famed Oboe landings towards the end of the Pacific War.<sup>9</sup> Until recently, each of our individual Services was probably more comfortable and proficient at operating tactically with its allied counterpart than its Australian sister Services.

All of this was supposed to change after the 1976 White Paper, which called for greater self-reliance in defence of our sovereign territory and regional interests.<sup>10</sup> But truly joint capabilities were never adequately funded until the recent era. That was one adverse and unintended consequence of regularly providing niche contributions to allied coalitions. However, since the crisis in East Timor in 1999, I believe that we have become a truly contemporary joint force, both in structure and—even more importantly—in culture and mindset. Both our strategic guidance and the evolving nature of the global system demand that we become seamlessly joint and capable of multi-domain operations.

We do live in interesting times. The state system established in the wake of the Ottoman Empire in the Middle East is fragmenting. The stability provided by autocratic states like Iraq, Libya and

Syria has collapsed. In the wake of civil war and state failure, we have witnessed sectarian violence, genocide and massive refugee flows. That is why the Syrian civil war is our business. Both humanitarian doctrines of 'responsibility to protect' and realist requirements for stability demand a response from the West. Australia continues to support coalition operations against Islamic State, which seems likely to be a sustained commitment.

Whereas state failure and sectarian violence are the main sources of conflict in the Middle East, it is the relative strength of states that contributes to potential conflict in the Indo-Pacific region. Many strategic analysts have concluded that heightened competition between nation states in both Northeast Asia and the South China Sea constitutes the greatest risk to peace in this region since the end of the Cold War. Those strategic thinkers, like Martin van Creveld and Mary Kaldor, who so confidently predicted the end of conventional state-on-state warfare at the end of the Cold War spoke prematurely.<sup>11</sup> Nor have we seen an 'end to history' as predicted by Francis Fukuyama.<sup>12</sup>

After more than a decade of counterinsurgency, hybrid war and nation-building operations, we have received a timely reminder that the risk of conventional war between nations remains the ultimate risk for which responsible planners must prepare. High-end warfighting continues to provide the primary rationale for the existence of the ADF—and it must shape our force structure and inform our doctrine. Indeed, our strategic circumstances have been radically altered by globalisation in both its technological and geopolitical manifestations.

Yet we must also be capable of responding to natural disasters and climate events at the request of our neighbours. There were over 180 calls for assistance in response to catastrophic natural events in the Asia-Pacific alone in the past two years. We were the force of first resort for our Government. Moreover, we responded to these contingencies with forces capable of high-end warfighting.

Whereas during the Cold War our location made us a strategic backwater, today we are located at the very epicentre of geopolitical rivalry over hegemony in the Indo-Pacific region. According to Ross Babbage, Australia is both a 'hinge' and an 'anchor' in a pivotal region at a decisive moment in history.<sup>13</sup> The Indo-Pacific region is the scene of increased great-power rivalry. We have a direct interest in contributing to peace and stability in our own front yard.

Such a complex, dynamic strategic environment also demands robust security partnerships. It also requires Australia to maintain balanced joint forces. That is because no single Service or capability provides a 'silver bullet' solution. However, we must develop agile, conventional forces capable of operating across all domains and surviving in a fiercely-contested cyber space. In such an environment, any credible adversary will seek to deny our use of our space assets and blind the sophisticated sensors and communications systems on which we rely to fight.

As a professional, I will let others decide whether the very nature of war is changing or whether, as Clausewitz told us, the nature of war is constant but is also a true chameleon which adapts to the complexion of its social and political context.<sup>14</sup> If you accept that premise, then the proliferation of sensors and information will inevitably define the character of war.

That is why Air Force believes that 5<sup>th</sup> generation technology will have a transformative impact on warfare and military forces. In the past, air power theorists have been prone to overestimate the effect of technological advances on war. Many of us lived through a number of so-called 'Revolutions in Military Affairs' over the course of our careers.<sup>15</sup> I may be accused of engaging in panacea thinking or technological determinism in making the case for 5<sup>th</sup> generation transformation. But I passionately believe that its advent is a game changer for the ADF, providing we harness it properly.

I am encouraged by the similarities between Navy's Plan PELORUS and Army's Plan BEERSHEBA.<sup>16</sup> We have all arrived at similar conclusions about the demands of the modern battle-space. All of our responses are predicated on harnessing information, sharing a common operational picture and seamlessly linking sensors and shooters across all domains. The challenge now is to ensure that all our transformation visions are compatible with one another.

Let me make it really clear that Air Force's 5<sup>th</sup> generation capability is neither synonymous with nor confined to the Joint Strike Fighter. The introduction of the Joint Strike Fighter has provided the catalyst for our transformation. But it is the proliferation of sensors across our entire fleet of manned and unmanned systems that will define the 5<sup>th</sup> generation-enabled Air Force.

Our transformation vision was derived from recognition of that reality. We realised that it would be folly to operate the most sophisticated fleet of manned and unmanned systems in our history if they were unable to share information with one another. By extension, we then recognised that we needed to achieve greater synergies with Army and Navy. It seems incredibly obvious but we have not always done it. Plan JERICHO was named after a famous air raid to break down the walls of a Nazi prison camp.<sup>17</sup> As the name implies, we are looking at ways to break down stovepipes. The desired end-state is to create a 'system of systems'. This time we are determined to make the reality match the rhetoric.

In conclusion, I want to focus on two areas which are likely to be of keen interest to Navy. We are striving to enhance Air Force's maritime operations capability and to develop an integrated fire control capability. Most of the military commitments this century have been comprised of land-centric operations against hybrid/unconventional enemies. We have predominantly employed air power in its tactical roles of close air support and air mobility.

The demands of such operations inevitably eroded some of our conventional warfighting skills. And we neglected thinking about employing air power to strategic effect. In particular, some attrition of our maritime strike and sub-surface warfare skills occurred. We have been urgently remediating this capability since the return of our Orion P-3C maritime patrol aircraft from operations in the Persian Gulf three years ago.

However, the introduction of new platforms—including the F35 Joint Strike Fighter, the P-8A Poseidon maritime surveillance aircraft, and various unmanned aerial systems—will enhance our ability to share a common operational picture across our deployed joint force, especially in the maritime domain. Through Plan JERICHO, we aim to enhance joint air and maritime operations, such as maritime surveillance, maritime strike, and under-sea warfare, as well as protection of the Amphibious Task Group.

A key element of this will be our pervasive ISR (intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance) capability and our access to space assets, which will create and share the common operating picture in real time. We must develop redundancy in these systems through our regional partnerships, and develop the resilience of our networks, as well as train to operate without them in a worst-case scenario. We must also ensure Air Force capabilities can provide the communications gateways or relays necessary for the surface groups to retain information control in contested, denied-operating environments.

In addition to technology, we need to develop truly joint doctrine and the associated tactics, techniques and procedures. The Air Warfare Centre, being established in January 2016, will develop and deliver joint education and training for operators, planners and commanders to develop their professional mastery of anti-subsurface warfare, maritime strike and amphibious operations.

Plan JERICHO is as much about culture as it is about technology. I know Navy and Army believe this also. Ultimately, it is people who must make judgments and respond to the challenges of a rapidly-changing environment. In that regard, I wish to place on record how impressed I have been at the response to our 5<sup>th</sup> generation transformation process from our joint partners. We have already conducted significant joint experiments with them, with more being planned. The pace of our transformation will ultimately be dictated by Government funding. For that reason, I look forward to the release of the White Paper and fiscal measures contained in the next budget.

For the ADF's part, we must continue to be consultative and collaborative to ensure that each of our capability and platform decisions contributes to joint capability. And let me stress that I am very comfortable with the vector set by the Vice Chief of the Defence Force and my fellow Service Chiefs in that respect. Furthermore, I am optimistic that the 'First Principles Review' will also

help us to remove stovepipes in the way we plan force structures and procure major platforms. We must do this in a more cooperative manner from the earliest stages and involve industry in our deliberations as early as possible. The era of wasteful 'orphan' capabilities or enablers that cannot communicate with their joint equivalents must be consigned to history.

*Air Marshal Leo Davies joined the RAAF as a cadet Navigator in 1979 and graduated to fly P-3B and P-3C Orion aircraft with No 11 Squadron at Edinburgh in South Australia. In 1987, Air Marshal Davies completed pilot training and, after completing a F-111 conversion course, was posted in 1988 to No 1 Squadron at RAAF Base Amberley.*

*In 1990, Air Marshal Davies was posted to Cannon Air Force Base, New Mexico, to fly F-111D on exchange with the US Air Force. On return to Australia in 1993, he was posted to No 1 Squadron as the Operations Flight Commander, followed by one year as Operations Officer at Headquarters No 82 Wing. After a posting in 1997 and 1998 as the Executive Officer at No 1 Squadron, Air Marshal Davies completed RAAF Command and Staff Course. In 2000, he commenced two years in Capability Systems within Defence Headquarters.*

*In 2002 and 2003, Air Marshal Davies' long association with No 1 Squadron was again rekindled when he returned as Commanding Officer. He was the Staff Officer to the Chief of Air Force during 2004, before taking up the post of Officer Commanding No 82 Wing at RAAF Base Amberley. Air Marshal Davies worked as Director Combat Capability within Air Force Headquarters in 2006 and 2007, during which time he was deployed to the Middle East to work in the Combined Air Operations Centre.*

*Between 2008 and 2010, Air Marshal Davies was the Director General Capability Planning within Air Force Headquarters. He was then posted to Washington as the Air Attaché. Air Marshal Davies returned to Australia in January 2012 to take up his appointment as Deputy Chief of Air Force. He was promoted to Air Marshal and appointed Chief of Air Force in July 2015.*

## Notes

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- <sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of an address to the RAN's 'Sea Power Conference', held in Sydney from 6-8 October 2015. The original version is available at <[http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/UploadedFiles/General/2015\\_06OCT\\_SeaPowerConference.pdf](http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/UploadedFiles/General/2015_06OCT_SeaPowerConference.pdf)> accessed 29 February 2016.
  - <sup>2</sup> Julian Corbett, *Some Principles of Maritime Strategy*, Emereo Publishing: London, 1911, available at <<http://www.worldcat.org/title/some-principles-of-maritime-strategy-the-original-classic-edition/oclc/822040666>> accessed 29 February 2016.
  - <sup>3</sup> See, for example, David Humphries, 'Dr Howard sees nothing but opportunity in emerging world order', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 April 2012, available at <<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/dr-howard-sees-nothing-but-opportunity-in-emerging-world-order-20120410-1wmzq.html>> accessed 29 February 2016.

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- 4 See, for example, Maris Beck, 'Labor has "lost its story", but Keating not lost for words', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 7 November 2011, available at <<http://www.smh.com.au/national/labor-has-lost-its-story-but-keating-not-lost-for-words-20111106-1n1yp.html>> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 5 See the synopsis at Ross Babbage, 'The case for a new Australian grand strategy', *Australian Strategic Policy Institute* [website], 12 August 2015, available at <<http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/the-case-for-a-new-australian-grand-strategy/>> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 6 As popularised in Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: the making of typographic man*, University of Toronto Press: Toronto, 1962, available at <[http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/440463.The\\_Gutenberg\\_Galaxy](http://www.goodreads.com/book/show/440463.The_Gutenberg_Galaxy)> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 7 He actually said that 'No man is an island entire of itself': see John Donne, 'No Man is an Island', in John Donne, *Meditation XVII, Devotions upon Emergent Occasions*, available at <<https://web.cs.dal.ca/~johnston/poetry/island.html>> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 8 For an overview of these, see 'Developing the Australian Amphibious Force', *Australian Army* [website], available at <<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-people/Units/1st-Division/Developing-the-Australian-Amphibious-Force>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 9 Operation OBOE was a series of allied operations aimed at liberating the then Netherlands East Indies and Borneo in 1945: see, for example, the Australian War Memorial's description at <<https://www.awm.gov.au/exhibitions/alliesinadversity/australia/oboe/>> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 10 Commonwealth of Australia, *Australian Defence (1976 Defence White Paper)*, Department of Defence: Canberra, 1976, available at <<http://www.defence.gov.au/Publications/wpaper1976.pdf>> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 11 See, for example Martin van Creveld, 'Modern Conventional Warfare: an overview', discussion paper, 2004, available at <<http://indianstrategicknowledgeonline.com/web/MODERN%20CONVENTIONAL%20WARFARE%20AN%20OVERVIEW%20BY%20MARTIN%20VAN%20CREVELD%20HEBREW%20UNIVERSITY%20JERUSALEM.pdf>> accessed 29 February 2016; also Mary Kaldor, *New and Old Wars: organized violence in a global era*, Polity: Cambridge, 1999, available at <[https://blackboard.angelo.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/LFA/CSS/Course%20Material/SEC6302/Readings/Lesson\\_6/Kaldor%20-%20New%20and%20Old%20Wars%20-%201999.pdf](https://blackboard.angelo.edu/bbcswebdav/institution/LFA/CSS/Course%20Material/SEC6302/Readings/Lesson_6/Kaldor%20-%20New%20and%20Old%20Wars%20-%201999.pdf)> accessed 29 February 2016.
- 12 Francis Fukuyama, 'The End of History?', *The National Interest*, Summer 1989, available at <<https://ps321.community.uaf.edu/files/2012/10/Fukuyama-End-of-history-article.pdf>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 13 Babbage, 'The case for a new Australian grand strategy'; see also David Wroe, 'Australia should consider hosting bases with US forces, says defence analyst Ross Babbage', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 August 2015, available at <<http://www.smh.com.au/federal-politics/political-news/australia-should-consider-hosting-bases-with-us-forces-says-defence-analyst-ross-babbage-20150811-giwo8l.html>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 14 See, for example, the discussion by Georg Berger, 'Is Clausewitz or Sun Tzu More Relevant to Contemporary War?', *E-International Relations Students* [website], 3 April 2013, available at <<http://www.e-ir.info/2013/04/03/is-clausewitz-or-sun-tzu-more-relevant-to-understanding-contemporary-war-2/>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 15 See, for example, the overview by Gary Chapman, 'An Introduction to the Revolution in Military Affairs', paper presented at the XV Amaldi Conference on Problems in Global Security, Helsinki, September 2003, available at <<http://www.lincoi.it/rapporti/amaldi/papers/XV-Chapman.pdf>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 16 See, for example, Vice Admiral Tim Barrett, 'Speech by Chief of Navy to the Royal Australian Navy's Inaugural Ramadan Iftar Dinner', 23 June 2015, available at <<https://www.awm.gov.au/talks-speeches/speech-royal-australian-navys-inaugural-ramadan-iftar-dinner/>> accessed 1 March 2016; and Plan BEERSHEBA, *Australian Army* [website], available at <<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Projects/Plan-BEERSHEBA>> accessed 1 March 2016.
- 17 See Plan JERICO, *RAAF* [website], available at <<http://www.airforce.gov.au/plan-jericho/?RAAF-CrI57877JHUU/bo9YoJ64qWYIO7G/14Q>> accessed 1 March 2016.



# Religious Diversity and Secularism in the ADF

Colonel Phillip Hoglin, Australian Army

## Introduction

In its quest for cultural diversity, the ADF faces a particular and unique challenge in balancing the organisational context of religion and the needs of individuals. Like many Western military forces, the ADF is steeped in history, customs and traditions, many of which have an inherently Christian basis. However, the ADF is now approaching a period where, although it has already identified a need to become increasingly culturally diverse, must also recognise that religion has less overall relevance for an increasing majority of Defence members.

It is already an overlooked reality that the largest 'religious' grouping in the ADF no longer subscribes to, or is affiliated with, a religion.<sup>1</sup> As religion no longer plays the significant role in the lives of Australia's military personnel that it has in the past, it is likely that active and deliberate steps will need to be undertaken to transition the ADF toward secularism in order to remain relevant and attractive to non-Christians, the non-religious and the traditional Christian base alike.

This transition, for an organisation that is still overtly Christian, is non-trivial and likely to be challenging on many levels. However, a failure to adjust to this demographic change may both marginalise a numerical majority of personnel and act as a deterrent to potential recruits from minority religions in society, thus compromising diversity and inclusion objectives.

The evolutionary requirement to become increasingly secular, in concert with becoming religiously diverse, may initially seem to be in competition but they are not necessarily incongruent. It is quite possible that more religions can be represented within the ranks of the ADF and that it can simultaneously have less religious personnel in aggregate.

While the ADF should continue to support those with religious beliefs, it increasingly needs to have the capacity to support a broader range of beliefs, including those personnel with no belief at all. If the ADF is to truly become more culturally diverse, be seen to be facilitating diversity and inclusion, and have the broadest possible relevance for Australian society, then a transition toward secularism is essential, if not overdue.

In this article, the dual concepts of both increasing religious diversity in the ADF, while becoming organisationally secular are introduced. The emerging numerical dominance of the irreligious, non-religious, non-theist and other groupings will be highlighted, and a brief discussion about the possible need for formal advocacy for non-theists outside the traditionally Christian chaplaincy system will be introduced.<sup>2</sup> Ultimately, this article aims to open a discussion on the need for a secular ADF and non-theist advocacy, including welfare and support mechanisms for those who choose not to follow a religion.

## The need for religious diversity

A 2013 article by the author on the need for religious diversity suggested that there are many benefits in a religiously-diverse defence force, ranging from reputational, recruiting and operational effectiveness.<sup>3</sup> This view was affirmed in early 2015 by then Assistant Minister for Defence, Stuart Robert, and the Shadow Parliamentary Secretary for Defence, Gai Brodtmann, in their Ministerial Statements on 'Defence: capability through diversity'.<sup>4</sup>

These statements provided some indication about the future relationship between religion and the ADF through the diversity lens, and highlighted that 'combat power will be enhanced by widening the national recruitment pool and tapping into the tremendous latent resources that a culturally and linguistically diverse workforce brings to Defence'.<sup>5</sup>

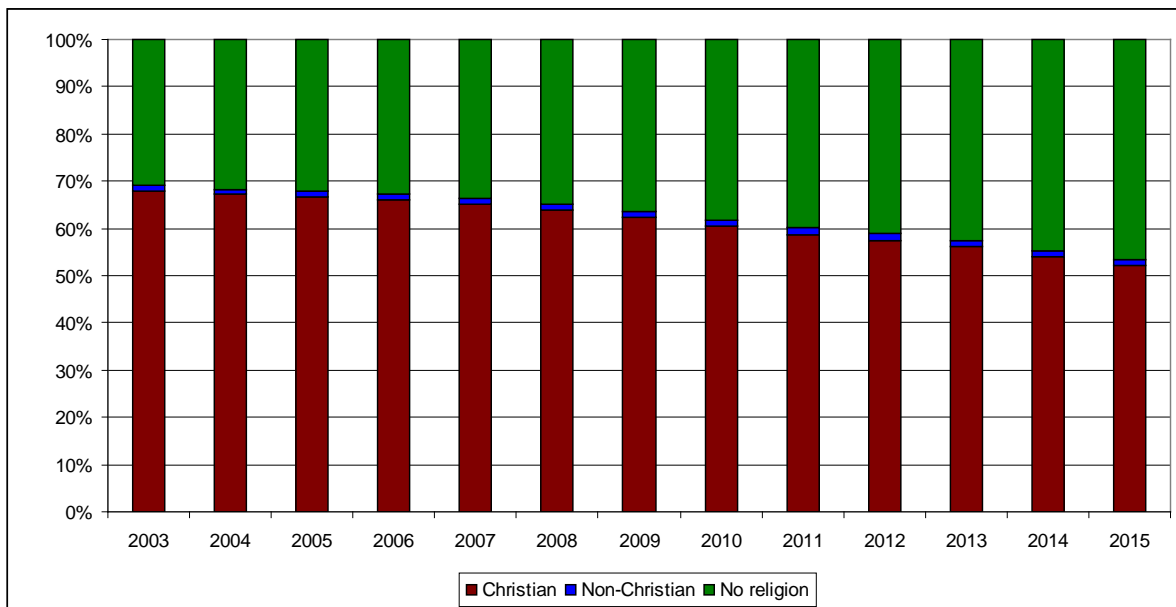
However, although the need for religious diversity seems relatively intuitive, the numerical reduction in religiosity has not received the attention that might seem obvious. Furthermore, the possibility that society will demand secularism in its public institutions has not been considered by an ADF that continues to maintain a relatively high-level (and dominantly Christian) Religious Advisory Committee to the Services, and a Principal Chaplains Committee.

The risk to the ADF is that it will continue to be perceived as predominantly conservative and Christian, when the reality is already different. Hence, while there are strategic benefits to becoming a more religiously-diverse defence force, there are also benefits to becoming organisationally secular, and a move toward secularism should occur in tandem with increases in religious diversity.

## Changing religious landscape

In the space of just one generation, the ADF has gone from an overwhelmingly Christian to an increasingly-irreligious organisation. Personnel indicating ‘no religion’ on census and human resource data are the largest single group in the ADF and, within just a few more years, this group will be numerically larger than all religious groupings combined.<sup>6</sup>

Notably atheism, which is still a relatively small group, is the single fastest growing in the ADF and recently entered the top ten ADF ‘religious belief’ groupings (albeit with no religious belief). Significantly, if it were classified as a ‘religion’, atheism would already have a case for advocacy or representation on the Religious Advisory Committee, in accordance with Defence Instructions and the associated memorandum of arrangements.<sup>7</sup>

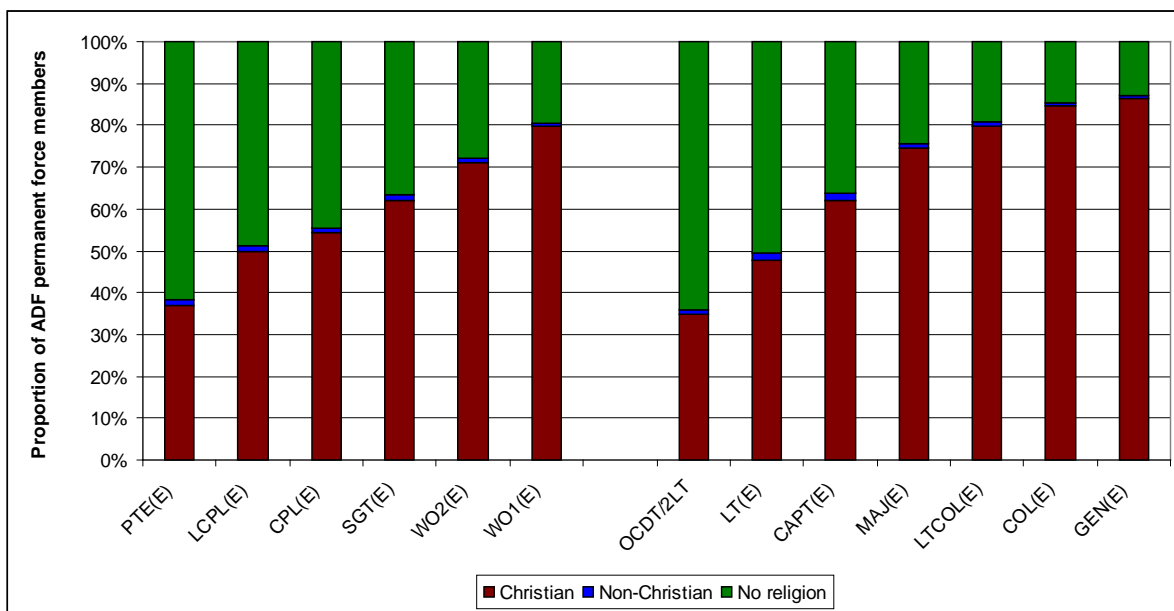


**Figure 1: Religiosity of ADF permanent force members 2003-2015**

Figure 1 shows the extent and pace of the demographic change in religious affiliation in the permanent ADF since 2003. Just 10 years ago, over two-thirds of all personnel nominated Christianity as their religious affiliation. In 2015, this proportion had reduced to just over 52 per cent, with personnel not identifying a religious affiliation accounting for over 47 per cent, and other non-Christian religions accounting for the remaining 1 per cent. Based on current trends, Christianity will account for less than half of the population by the end of 2016, and those with no affiliation will comprise the numerical majority in the following year.

This change may be even more rapid in junior officers and enlisted ranks. Figure 2 shows that currently 62 per cent of all Privates (E) and 64 per cent of all Officer Cadets and Midshipmen are not affiliated with a religion.<sup>8</sup> Based on these figures, in another 25 years, when these personnel filter into the senior enlisted and officer ranks, almost two-thirds of the ADF will not be affiliated with any religion. Assuming the ADF is successful in attracting personnel from a broader range of society, including smaller religious groups, it is likely that personnel with Christian affiliation will account for less than 30 per cent of the ADF by 2040.<sup>9</sup>

This changing landscape is in very stark contrast to previous generations, where religious affiliation was stable: one was either of a Catholic, Anglican or Protestant denomination. The near-binary nature of religious affiliation in previous generations is hinted in Figure 2, which indicates that over 87 per cent of the ADF's current star-ranked officers (typically recruited in the early 1980s or earlier) are affiliated with Christianity, as are 80 per cent of WO1s (E). This difference between the junior and senior ranks is significant and demonstrates the rapid and consistent change in religiosity in the ADF since the 1980s.



**Figure 2: Religiosity of ADF permanent force members by rank as at July 2015**

The emerging demographic, decreasing religiosity and stated desire to be more diverse and inclusive should encourage Defence to question the traditional hierarchical level and status that is currently afforded to religion in the ADF. In order to become visibly secular, religion will need to be transposed from its current and unique status within the ADF to the same level at which other dimensions of diversity, such as gender, LGBTI (lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and intersex), and indigenous affairs are considered.

As is already the case with these other dimensions, religion in the ADF may need to be subtly re-framed to specifically provide support to those members for whom it is necessary, rather than the current model that presumes an overwhelmingly religious population. This would require consideration of religion as a dimension in the culture and diversity spectrum, rather than its current stand-alone position in the workforce dialogue.

### The growing strength of non-theists

While religiosity itself has been declining in the ADF, declared atheism has been the fastest growing 'religious' grouping in the ADF, increasing in strength from just 89 in 2003 to over 470 in mid-2015. This



makes them the eighth largest religious grouping and roughly the same strength as Buddhists, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs combined. Additionally, agnostics have tripled in strength over the same period and are just outside the largest ten denominations. Some of this may be due to a greater societal awareness of atheism and non-theism; however, the growth also likely reflects a genuine shift in belief systems in Australia and in the ADF. Table 1 shows the change in the proportion of each religious affiliation between 2003 and 2015.

**Table 1: Comparison of 20 largest religious groupings/denominations in the ADF between 2003 and 2015**

rank	2003		2015	
	Religion/denomination	%	Religion/denomination	%
1	No religion	30.69	No religion	45.38
2	Christian - Catholic	25.91	Christian - Catholic	21.69
3	Christian - Anglican	25.06	Christian - Anglican	15.48
4	Christian - Uniting	5.44	Christian - Other Protestant	6.79
5	Christian - Other Protestant	2.55	Christian - Uniting	2.88
6	Christian - Presbyterian/Reformed	2.53	Christian - Presbyterian/Reformed	1.35
7	Christian - Other	1.83	Christian - Lutheran	0.87
8	Christian - Baptist	1.35	Atheist	0.83
9	Christian - Lutheran	1.31	Christian - Other	0.80
10	Christian - Salvation Army	0.46	Christian - Baptist	0.78
11	Christian - Eastern Orthodox	0.40	Christian - Eastern Orthodox	0.43
12	Christian - Pentecostal	0.40	Agnostic	0.35
13	Christian - Churches of Christ	0.38	Christian - Pentecostal	0.31
14	Buddhist	0.31	Buddhist	0.30
15	Christian - Latter Day Saints	0.17	Hindu	0.26
16	Atheist	0.17	Christian - Salvation Army	0.25
17	Christian - Seventh Day Adventist	0.10	Christian - Churches of Christ	0.22
18	Agnostic	0.10	Muslim	0.17
19	Muslim	0.09	Christian - Latter Day Saints	0.16
20	Judaism	0.06	Christian - Seventh Day Adventist	0.11
	Other	0.68	Other	0.57

It is notable that atheists and agnostics often make a very deliberate decision to designate and self-declare their religious views, rather than the more passive default of 'no religion'. This deliberate and personal decision has potential ramifications in the diversity sphere because it is likely that some atheists are not only irreligious but passionate about the removal of religion from public institutions.

Such personnel, although likely to be small in number in the ADF, may be vocal and likely to campaign for organisational secularism, a possibility that Defence's leadership may need to consider in the future and for which it is currently ill-prepared. It is likely that this group of non-theists will, in the passage of time, request equality of influence, consideration and advocacy from Defence's leadership.

## **Non-theist advocacy and the Religious Advisory Committee**

This article has suggested, based on numerical strength and supported by Figures 1 and 2 and Table 1, that religious faith-based support services will not be required to the same extent they have in previous generations. However, this does not suggest that they are not required at all. The ADF, as with society, will continue to have a large number of individuals who are dedicated to their religious beliefs and who require advocacy and support in pursuit of their faith.

However, Christian denominations are not the only groups where such support and advocacy will be required and, while there is an increasing need for the involvement of leaders from non-Christian faiths in Defence, it is also likely that non-religious groups will require advocacy and representation in their own right as they become larger, more visible and more clearly defined.

While non-theists may not necessarily require specific advocacy support in the same way that religious personnel do, the current lack of advocacy, support networks and discussion groups run the risk that this large and emerging demographic will be under-represented in relevant forums. Eventually, and as soon as late 2016, the Religious Advisory Committee will not represent the majority of Defence personnel or its fastest growing 'religious' groupings.

Without the inclusion of atheists, irreligious and non-theists in the diversity debate, there will be a continuation of the disproportionate influence of religion on military affairs at a time when strategic secularism is a more desirable objective for diversity and inclusion. However, to achieve well-balanced advocacy for the variety of religious affiliations likely to be represented in the ADF of the future, there will be a need to actively and deliberately create advocacy mechanisms within the diversity and inclusion dialogue.

## **A diverse but secular ADF – the benefits of secularism**

In the main, Australian Government departments are secular, and religion has almost no perceived or actual influence on the organisation.<sup>10</sup> Defence is one of very few State, Territory and Federal Government departments that maintains a large number of ongoing positions for chaplains, and the only department that holds both high-level (one-star/SES-band) and public office holder positions for the provision of strategic religious advice 'to provide the link between the ADF and the governing bodies of Church and Denominational Groups'.<sup>11</sup>

Whether perception or otherwise, this status of religious influence means that the ADF is functionally non-secular and that religion, especially Christianity, is ingrained and deeply imbedded in its organisational structure at a relatively high level. However, notwithstanding the current status of religion in the ADF, it is possible to have both a strong advocacy structure, and still become a secular organisation.

Such an approach would require several antecedents. Firstly, broader representation of religious minorities and non-theists would be required either as part of or parallel to the Religious Advisory Committee, with an equivalency of status.<sup>12</sup> Secondly, the hierarchical influence of the Religious Advisory Committee and Principal Chaplains Committee would need to be placed at the same level as that of other diversity advocates, committees and forums.

Once achieved, there are many significant benefits for the ADF, without detracting from or removing any of the support offered to personnel currently provided by the ADF's chaplains, as follows.

- **Perception of the ADF on operations.** It is likely that a largely Christian military operating in an environment where the local population, allies or adversary are not Christian, does the ADF few favours. At one extreme, it provides an adversary with another point of difference and a theological reason to maintain a conflict or target ADF personnel. To an equal extent, it can present social, cultural and religious barriers with the local population. While being secular may not necessarily mitigate this perception, being 'less Christian' might.
- **Perception of the ADF at home.** The ADF still has a largely white, Anglo-Saxon and male-dominated population.<sup>13</sup> To some extent, and in a different era, this type of population may have reflected society's expectations of its military. But this is no longer the case and the ADF cannot afford to be so significantly and demographically disconnected from the population it defends if it wishes to remain a well-regarded, modern and representative military. A detachment from religion and visible appearance as a secular public organisation would provide the ADF with social legitimacy and would become increasingly important for the reputation of the ADF as the nation's population changes.
- **Enhancement of recruiting.** A visibly non-secular organisation is likely to present a barrier to entry to some potential recruits, including those from non-Christian backgrounds and non-theists. While non-theists may be less deterred from entry, it is reasonable to expect that a candidate who is Hindu, Sikh, Buddhist, Muslim or of another non-Christian religion would not view a visibly Christian organisation positively or feel that their needs could be supported within that organisation. Removal of this perception may be sufficient to facilitate greater numbers of recruits who may also be from more culturally-diverse backgrounds.
- **Organisational inclusivity and acceptance.** Although there have been some recent advances, the ADF overwhelmingly remains a binary organisation where its members are Christian or not. There is very little recognition of the diversity of views and beliefs that already exist and almost no organisational attempt to understand this diversity. While the 2012 *Guide to Religion and Belief in the Australian Defence Force* mentions non-religion/non-belief (at the very last section of the document), theological beliefs are not equally catered for by Defence. When the ADF is visibly and truly secular, all its members would be able to feel and observe that their beliefs are treated equally and considered in the diversity dialogue.
- **Consolidation of counselling services.** A range of Defence personnel, including chaplains, currently provide counselling services for serving ADF personnel. The long-held view that chaplains can adequately support the counselling needs of the widest range of beliefs in the ADF's population, including non-Christian beliefs, is not as easily supported as it once might have been.<sup>14</sup>

While some irreligious and non-Christian individuals may feel comfortable seeking welfare support from a Christian chaplain, this is increasingly unlikely to be the case and will result in a demand for non-theist counsellors, psychologists or chaplains from minority religions. Secularism provides an opportunity to consolidate and coordinate the provision of counselling services so that it can be targeted towards the specific needs of the population rather than trying to adapt a non-secular model to a diverse population.

- **Development of a non-theist community.** Although not all non-theists would necessarily wish to be involved with an associated community, recognition of secularism and the diverse views of members would permit and facilitate the development of support networks and forums for those who do. The theist community already has many such communities, including the Military Christian Fellowship of Australia, Focus Military Ministry, The Australian Navigators, Solid Rock Ministries, Red Shield Defence Services and Everyman's Welfare Services, hence there is scope for active encouragement of the creation of other groups to support the broad range of beliefs that already exist.

## Pathway to secularism

In principle, a conceptual pathway to a secular ADF is not difficult to achieve. However, secularism would entail a reassessment of over a century of customs and traditions which has resulted in Christianity being

threaded through many seemingly routine activities, ceremonies and symbols. Nonetheless, while there may be no need to remove some customs and traditions, the current existence of Christian influence in the ADF does not provide an adequate reason for their continuance where they inhibit an aspiration of secularism.

There are several approaches that might facilitate an evolution toward secularism, ranging from a dramatic removal of religion and its references from all aspects of military life, to a more passive approach that accommodates religious diversity in all its guises. While the latter is more likely to succeed, both options would require the ADF to carefully reconsider the existing need and hierarchical position of the Religious Advisory Committee and the role of the Principal Chaplains Committee. Initially, the ADF would also need to critically review the current involvement of religion, especially Christianity, in the traditions of the ADF, including activities such as commencement ceremonies, graduations, formal dinners, memorial services, counselling services, external affiliations and general symbology.

Once such a review is completed, the ADF could then consider each activity separately with a view to enhancing those where more religious diversity is achievable, retaining others where the religious connotation has been lost over time, or removing those that are no longer required or could be viewed as insensitive. For example, counselling services may need to become broader, ceremonies may need to become multi-religious, and other activities may need to be discontinued altogether. Importantly, any activities where one religion is over-represented or dominates should be reassessed with particular focus on the perception of that activity and the relevance of religion in that activity.

The method that the ADF uses to achieve secularism will require, like other aspects of diversity, a deliberate, sensitive and well-thought-out strategy. In many quarters of society, the observance of religion remains a highly-contentious and emotionally-charged issue, including the freedom to exercise no religion. However, as exhibited by its gender and LGBTI strategies, which had their own sources of internal and external change resistance, the ADF is wholly capable of transitioning to a secular organisation should it choose to do so.

## **Conclusion**

The ADF is on a journey of increasing its diversity across many dimensions but, despite significant demographic changes in religious affiliation that have already occurred, religiosity and secularism remain marginal and elusive topics. It is a reality that religion no longer plays the same role in the everyday lives of a large proportion of servicemen and -women that it once did. Yet organisationally, Christianity remains prominent in many of Defence's current-day activities. As the predicted number of non-religious personnel reaches and then exceeds a numerical majority in the next two years, Defence should reconsider the organisational position that religion currently holds.

Reviewing the role of religion will not be easy for the ADF, not least because of its intricate association with many customs and traditions. However, there are good reasons to pursue a secular military. A secular ADF would remove many cultural barriers to entry, encourage a more balanced perception of its personnel, and position it as a truly impartial organisation that is able to adapt to a wide range of operational environments free from religious constraints.

In reflecting the broader range of beliefs that exist in Australian society, it will become increasingly important that the ADF is perceived as an institution able to fulfil both the needs of its members and the secular expectations of the nation. If this is not achieved, the ADF will risk perpetuating an image that isolates it from both its own membership and the Australian population.

Despite the changing religiosity, the need to become secular does not reduce the significant role that religion has, and will continue to have, in the lives of many Defence personnel. Even though their strength is declining, the ADF will still need to provide support to those wishing to pursue their religious beliefs; however, it will need to do so in a renewed context through the lens of cultural diversity.

To achieve this, religious advocacy committees will need to be positioned at the same organisational and influence level as other diversity committees and forums. Simultaneously, the ADF will need to increase its ability to support non-Christian religions and non-theists in the same way that it currently provides support to its Christian personnel.

For the same reasons that Defence wishes to be perceived as an inclusive employer of women, Indigenous Australians and members of the LGBTI community, it should also aspire to appeal to a broad range of recruits from diverse cultures and religions. In its journey to achieve this, the ADF will need to take measures to become visibly and functionally secular far beyond the application of its associated rhetoric. This will provide some challenges for the ADF and may need some of its long-held views, customs and traditions to be examined closely through the context of diversity and inclusion. Such challenges have been successfully faced and overcome by Defence before, and it can be done again.

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## Notes

- 1 In the context of cultural diversity, this article considers religion to be intricately linked to culture.
- 2 There are many emerging terms for non-religious individuals. This article uses them interchangeably with much the same meaning but it is recognised that in literature some distinctions are often made. These terms include but are not limited to atheism, agnosticism, apatheism, humanism, non-theism, rationalism, anti-theism and others.
- 3 P. Hoglin, 'Religious diversity in the Australian Army: the next diversity frontier?', *Australian Army Journal*, Vol. X, No. 3, 2013, pp. 79-96, available at [http://www.army.gov.au/~media/Army/Our%20future/Publications/AAJ/2010s/2013/AAJ\\_2013\\_3.pdf](http://www.army.gov.au/~media/Army/Our%20future/Publications/AAJ/2010s/2013/AAJ_2013_3.pdf) accessed 8 February 2016.
- 4 Government of Australia, 'Parliamentary debates: House of Representatives Ministerial Statements, Defence: capability through diversity', 2 March 2015, pp. 1643-1649, available at <http://parlinfo.aph.gov.au/parlInfo/search/display/display.w3p;query=Id%3A%22chamber%2Fhansard%2Fdc5babf6-d13a-4d24-9679-f44e8a7ac864%2F0152%22> accessed 8 September 2015.
- 5 Government of Australia, *Parliamentary debates*, p. 1644.
- 6 Data from the 2011 Defence Census (internal to Defence) indicated that 37 per cent of permanent force Defence personnel reported no religious affiliation (2011 PMKeyS data indicated 39 per cent). 2015 census data was not available for this article at the time of publication.
- 7 Department of Defence, *Defence Instructions (General) Personnel 26-1: Religious Advisory Committee to the Services and Principal Chaplains' Committees*, Department of Defence: Canberra (internal to Defence), states that a 'denomination/faith-group with more than 250 self-declared adherents in the permanent forces may subsequently approach the Minister for Defence for representation through the Religious Advisory Committee'. This requirement has been removed from the recently-released *Defence Chaplaincy Manual*.
- 8 Between 2011 and 2015 (inclusive), an average of almost 5300 permanent force members were recruited each year, 63.9 per cent of whom did not indicate a religious affiliation. In 2015 alone, 70.0 per cent did not indicate a religion.

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- 9 The ADF should not necessarily be surprised by this rapid change, as it is not unique to the ADF. Although the rate of change is somewhat faster, the same trend exists more broadly in the Australian population, where almost 40 per cent of young Australians aged between 20 and 29 either had no religion or their religion was not stated on the 2011 census.
- 10 Some police and emergency service departments continue to have a small number of chaplains, although their employment status and funding within the organisation varies from that of an employee to an honorary appointment, to a volunteer association in times of higher demand. Some State and Territory schools also utilise the National School Chaplaincy Programme. Even when used, chaplains provide targeted religious support to the membership. There is no equivalent to the high-level religious advocacy structure offered by Religious Advisory Committee and the Principal Chaplains Committee in Defence.
- 11 Department of Defence, *Memorandum of Arrangements Between the Commonwealth of Australia Represented by the Chief of the Defence Force and Heads of Churches Representatives (Religious Advisory Committee to the Services)*, Department of Defence: Canberra, 2 December 2008 (internal to Defence). The responsibilities and authority of the Religious Advisory Committee, as outlined in the memorandum, is extensive and includes advice, policy development, selection and recruitment and other matters usually associated with command and administration.
- 12 In creating an advocacy for non-theists, it is acknowledged that the notion that a 'majority' demographic would need its own representation in a diversity context may seem a little inconsistent with other diverse workforce segments that are clearly under-represented in the ADF. However, non-theists have historically constituted a minority, and retain many of the associated characteristics.
- 13 Furthermore, chaplaincy itself remains remarkably homogeneous. As at July 15, 95 per cent of all permanent chaplains were male, their average age was 51 (just 10 per cent are under the age of 40), over 83 per cent are married, 83 per cent were born in Australia or the UK and only 2 have self-identified as an Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander. These figures make chaplains among the least diverse employment category in ADF.
- 14 To a regular serviceman or -woman, chaplaincy and religion are inextricably linked. Chaplains dress according to their faith, are often identifiable by religion in their accoutrements, have offices adorned with religious artefacts, coffee tables and desks have bibles, and hymn books reside on bookshelves. This reality means that the provision of welfare support by chaplains can potentially and increasingly be confronting and inappropriate for non-theists, exemplified by a current brochure, 'Army Chaplains: a force for hope', asserting that a chaplain is 'first and foremost a priest/minister/pastor of his or her particular religious group or church'.



# Lessons from Operation URGENT FURY—Grenada, 1983 <sup>1</sup>

**Squadron Leader Christopher McInnes, Royal Australian Air Force**

## Introduction

On 25 October 1983, a US military force of 20,000 descended on Grenada to evacuate foreign citizens, remove the Communist presence, and establish conditions for subsequent elections. The ‘sledgehammer’ of Operation URGENT FURY overwhelmed some 2000 Grenadines and Cubans, and successfully achieved its objectives by dusk on 27 October.<sup>2</sup> During the operation, 19 American personnel and at least 94 Grenadines and Cubans were killed, with many more wounded.

A breakdown in law and order on the island, following a coup, as well as concerns about the potential threat to American shipping lanes and neighbouring Caribbean islands, precipitated the US intervention.<sup>3</sup> Some have contended that the US also saw an opportunity to demonstrate that American power was not a ‘paper tiger’.<sup>4</sup> However, despite overwhelming strength and ultimate success, the operation was so beset by problems that it arguably ‘came within a hairsbreadth of being a military disaster’.<sup>5</sup> Domestic and international opprobrium resulted, and the operation’s difficulties were a catalyst for major reforms to the US military.

Insights from Operation URGENT FURY are valuable for the ADF, as the operation was an expeditionary joint combat operation similar to those expected of the ADF in the near region. It is particularly relevant since the ADF has not experienced combat as an Australian joint force or held operational-level command during joint combat operations since 1945.<sup>6</sup> URGENT FURY provides insights that the ADF should heed because, as Graeme Dobell cautions, ‘the lesson to take from East Timor in 1999 was not how well it ended, but how dangerously it started’.<sup>7</sup>

Drawing on five key observations from URGENT FURY, it will be argued in this article that the ADF’s current doctrine and capabilities posture it to avoid the operation’s major mistakes. However, it will be contended that the ADF needs to bolster its operational-tactical interface capabilities, otherwise it risks repeating some of URGENT FURY’s mistakes by relying on *ad hoc* command arrangements. The ADF’s deficiency in this area is particularly concerning because Australia cannot compensate through mass as the US did during URGENT FURY.

## The media and multinational forces

Systemic weaknesses in US military engagement with other actors undermined URGENT FURY’s unity of effort and effectiveness in achieving political objectives. The weaknesses manifested themselves in ineffective use of the media and multinational forces at the operational level. These problems undermined URGENT FURY’s narrative, which was crucial in publicising America’s military victory and enhancing its legitimacy through multinational participation.<sup>8</sup>

Vice Admiral Metcalf, the commander of URGENT FURY’s Joint Task Force 120, initially banned the media from Grenada. This policy remained until the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Vessey, forced a change three days after the invasion. Even then, the media felt manipulated. The relationship deteriorated to the point that Metcalf’s forces threatened to sink a boat carrying journalists seeking to land on Grenada.<sup>9</sup> When subsequently questioned about what would have transpired had the boat not turned around, Metcalf replied ‘we would have blown your ass right out of the water’.<sup>10</sup> Metcalf’s attitude reflected a media adverse culture stemming from experiences during Vietnam and the failed 1979 Iranian hostage rescue.<sup>11</sup>

Vessey’s imposition of strict planning compartmentalisation amplified this bias, as it resulted in the exclusion of public affairs staff from the planning process. The censorship furore subsequently prompted

Vessey to describe media management during URGENT FURY as a 'huge mistake', noting that 'we missed a great opportunity to have the American people get reports about how well the Rangers and Marines operated'.<sup>12</sup>

Operational-level failures to grasp the importance of multinational participation also weakened URGENT FURY's international legitimacy. The Reagan Administration repeatedly emphasised that the basis of its actions was, in part, a request to intervene from the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States.<sup>13</sup> This political legitimacy was to be buttressed operationally by the involvement of a Caribbean Peacekeeping Force in a 'visible but relatively safe role ... [from] early on' in the operation.<sup>14</sup>

However, despite specific guidance from Vessey to Admiral McDonald, the commander of Atlantic Command and Metcalf's superior, the requirement to integrate the Caribbean Peacekeeping Force was not addressed in operational plans. McDonald contended that he received written direction on the afternoon prior to the invasion, by when it was too late to integrate the force. Metcalf attempted to meet the force's commander on 24 October and left instructions for it to be airlifted to Grenada. But poor planning at Atlantic Command meant Metcalf stood little chance of integrating the force in the time available. As a result, the US could not generate a multinational narrative to counter the international perception, including among its allies, that URGENT FURY was an example of superpower bullying.

The ADF's doctrinal position that media engagement and multinational operations are important in building a dominant narrative reduces the likelihood of repeating URGENT FURY's mistakes. ADF doctrine emphasises media engagement at the operational level as part of generating and disseminating an effective narrative to support its strategic objectives, asserting that 'the media is fundamentally important to strategic communications and must be comprehensively and effectively engaged'.<sup>15</sup> The doctrine further posits that strategic communication is a deliberate, multi-agency activity that 'establishes the dominance of the narrative ... [which] is central to convincing ... audiences that our aims and actions are valid and beneficial, and to winning their support'.

The prevalence of positive narrative guidance in ADF doctrine, along with recommendations such as synchronising joint task force headquarters with 'key morning and evening broadcasts', reinforces this view of media engagement as a key operational-level instrument. This flows from the recognition of the narrative's centrality in the contest of perception at the heart of many political objectives, albeit care needs to be taken to ensure that this doctrinal view of the media as an instrument to be exploited for military purposes does not weaken the ADF's narrative through perceptions of insincerity.<sup>16</sup>

The ADF also regards the ability to 'operate effectively in coalition with other nations when required' as one of its foundation warfare concepts.<sup>17</sup> This doctrine was evident in Australia's successful leadership of coalition forces in East Timor, reinforcing that 'multinational engagement will be the primary context for [any] military intervention in the forthcoming decades'.<sup>18</sup> Importantly, the ADF appreciates that the principal value of multinational participation may be its narrative impact in bolstering the perceived legitimacy of any operation, which is precisely what URGENT FURY lacked because of its failure to include regional-state participation. Indeed, ADF doctrine notes that:

The primacy of unity of effort in [multinational operations] is such that less efficient organisational options that nevertheless optimise unity of effort may be selected over options that in other respects are more efficient.<sup>19</sup>

## **Power projection capabilities**

US airborne and amphibious projection capabilities provided the operational-level manoeuvre necessary for its forces to succeed in Grenada. Both capabilities demonstrated their strengths, weaknesses and complementarity. US Army elements depended on air transport provided by the US Air Force, predominantly C-130 medium transport aircraft and larger C-141 transports. The rapid build-up of American forces and materiel on the island—more than 5000 members of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division were present after three days—highlighted air transport's ability to rapidly insert forces.<sup>20</sup>

However, two limitations were also apparent. Initial planning for the airborne insertion of Ranger battalions to capture Point Salines airfield, using only C-130 aircraft, potentially limited the assault to 250 Rangers.<sup>21</sup> The employment of such a small force raised concerns that the Rangers may not have been



able to achieve the necessary decisive superiority to capture the airfield. The commitment of C-141 aircraft ultimately enabled a larger assault but the difficulties encountered by this larger assault in securing the airfield suggest a smaller force would have indeed failed, highlighting the capacity limitations of air transport.

A further limitation of relying solely on air transport evidenced itself in the lack of vehicles for US Army units.<sup>22</sup> This deficiency, which was due in part to poor logistics management, played a role in delaying the advance of Army forces beyond the airfield. The Army's ponderous movements contrasted starkly with the Marines, which were able to advance swiftly around the northern half of the island, facilitated by the mobility and protection afforded by vehicles and tanks delivered from ships offshore.

The Marines' reliance on amphibious logistics support also provided superior flexibility in the early stages of the operation. They could insert and withdraw vehicles, supplies and personnel at will, while avoiding the large logistics footprint of air-dependent Army elements, which is an important consideration for evacuation operations. Further, sea-based helicopters provided invaluable transport, fire support, reconnaissance and medical evacuation.

However, the absence of ammunition for the Marines' tanks highlighted an important aspect of amphibious logistics—it was on the ships but could not be readily accessed, as the vessels had been 'administratively' loaded for an already-planned move to Beirut. As the next available Marines unit would have taken six more days to reach Grenada, diverting the Beirut-bound Marines and inserting Army forces by air were the only realistic options for getting US forces quickly into the theatre.

The ADF's enhanced operational-level manoeuvrability enabled by C-17 heavy transport aircraft and the Canberra-class amphibious ships marks the end of what has been termed 'Australia's strategic dissonance', by aligning capabilities with Government expectations.<sup>23</sup> With three times the payload of a C-130, the C-17 allows the ADF to insert larger forces faster, vastly improving the ADF's ability to concentrate forces decisively. Similarly, the amphibious capability enabled by the Canberra-class ships has been described as Australia's 'capability of first resort', through its ability to provide a persistent and flexible Australian presence throughout the region.<sup>24</sup>

This contrasts with the ADF's inability in 1987 to provide viable options for Operation MORRIS DANCE, after a military coup in Fiji, because of the lack of amphibious power projection capability. Both ADF entries to East Timor were similarly constrained by limited amphibious capacity. The 1999 operation was heavily reliant on access to intact dock facilities while, in 2006, a lack of dock facilities resulted in all three of Australia's amphibious ships taking three days to land an infantry battalion group and supporting vehicles. A single Canberra-class could reportedly land the same cargo across a beach in three hours, with significantly greater vehicle and helicopter capacity, highlighting the ADF's dramatically-improved capability to project and sustain decisive power.

## **Strategic-operational interface**

Ambiguity and dysfunction in the command hierarchy above the Joint Task Force hampered performance at the operational level during URGENT FURY by confusing the operation's objectives and diffusing effort. The order to capture the Grenadian barracks at Calivigny by dusk on 27 October best illustrates the level of dysfunction. The order was annotated with 'the Joint Chiefs of Staff direct', although Vessey denied issuing the order; subsequent investigations suggest it came from over-enthusiastic staff officers at Atlantic Command.<sup>25</sup> While there were concerns on the ground that the hasty timeline increased the risks to the assaulting forces, for no appreciable benefit, it proceeded at the cost of three US dead, 15 wounded and three helicopters wrecked.<sup>26</sup>

Problems such as Calivigny arose because no authority below the Secretary of Defense could overcome inter-Service politics to provide unified, clear direction. Atlantic Command's authority was repeatedly undermined by interference from the Joint Chiefs of Staff but the Joint Chiefs of Staff could not arbitrate because Vessey's authority depended on consensus amongst the four Services. This was exemplified by the Marine Corps' insistence on the inclusion of its elements in the initial assaults—every military Service wanted to be involved and there was no authority that could counter this drive.<sup>27</sup>

Accordingly, operational objectives were subordinated to inter-Service political priorities. For example, the decision to deny special forces the advantage of darkness by delaying their assault until 0500 hours was in part driven by the political need to ensure Marines were among the first to set foot on Grenada.<sup>28</sup> Similarly, simultaneous and isolated operations by Marines, Army units and special forces on the first day, against targets of little military value, illustrated the complexity that confronted Metcalf in ensuring that each Service 'had a piece of the action'.<sup>29</sup> Metcalf's inability to effectively incorporate the Caribbean Peacekeeping Force and media is more understandable in light of this complexity.

Atlantic Command was nominally the key strategic-operational interface for URGENT FURY. But its lack of expertise in joint operations and inability to coordinate effectively undermined its credibility. Atlantic Command's peacetime focus on maritime operations in the Atlantic, with predominantly Navy and Marine staffing, meant it lacked air and land expertise, as well as knowledge of the Caribbean.<sup>30</sup> McDonald and his staff were also unfamiliar with the coordination needed for joint operations, while McDonald's parochialism was illustrated by his welcoming comment to an Army liaison officer that 'we've got a tough job to do and we don't need the Army giving us a hard time'.<sup>31</sup>

Together with General Vessey's imposition of strict operational security, these factors saw crucial supporting agencies—such as intelligence agencies, logistics and communications experts—excluded from the planning process. Atlantic Command's failure to optimise the involvement of the Caribbean Peacekeeping Force also exacerbated the intelligence impacts by denying the Joint Task Force access to local intelligence that would have filled many gaps, including the accurate location of American medical students needing to be evacuated.<sup>32</sup>

McDonald also engaged URGENT FURY's assigned and supporting elements in isolation and opted not to boost his command's air and land expertise by standing up air and land component commands. Atlantic Command's lack of credibility as the centre of planning effort was underlined by the insertion of Vessey into the chain of command on 21 October to coordinate Atlantic Command's activities with the Services. Little wonder that Metcalf allocated half of his scarce headquarters staff to managing up. The problems, particularly at Atlantic Command, underpin the observation that 'the real issue in preparing the intervention was not so much the lack of planning time but the lack of quality planning in the time available'.<sup>33</sup>

The ADF's clear strategic-operational command arrangements mitigate the risk of URGENT FURY-style dysfunction. The Chief of Joint Operations (CJOPS) is solely responsible to the Chief of Defence Force (CDF) for the command and management of ADF operations.<sup>34</sup> The three Service chiefs retain advisory roles but their authority is largely restricted to force-generation matters. The decision in 2007 to make CJOPS a three-star rank further enhanced the position relative to the Service Chiefs.<sup>35</sup>

CJOPS' rank and ownership of the preponderance of ADF planning resources should also negate the need for CDF to command operations directly, as occurred in 1999 and 2003. The CDF's individual command authority and direct link to CJOPS also means decisions do not require broad consensus, further limiting the Service Chiefs' leverage. This clarity establishes a firm foundation for unity of effort and purpose in pursuing political objectives at the operational level.

A doctrinal and pragmatic emphasis on joint and interagency cooperation in the ADF complements these command arrangements by fostering unity of effort across elements. This is symbolised by CJOPS' genuinely joint staff and its collocation with air, maritime and special forces command elements, as well as an array of agency and departmental liaison personnel at Joint Operations Command's dedicated facility. This collocation is complemented by the policy of 'dual-hatting' individual officers as CJOPS' specialist advisors, while simultaneously managing force-generation activities on behalf of their respective Service Chief.

For multi-agency operations, unity of effort is facilitated through a series of committee arrangements from the peak National Security Committee of Cabinet down through inter-departmental committees to liaison arrangements such as those at Joint Operations Command. ADF doctrine recognises that 'few security challenges can be resolved by the application of military force alone' and acknowledges that, in many instances, the ADF's will be a supporting effort.<sup>36</sup> Well-practised inter-departmental and joint coordination arrangements at the operational and strategic levels give effect to the ADF's emphasis on

multi-agency cooperation and provide firm foundations for unity of effort across departments, complementing the vertical unity through command structures.

## **Domain and functional unity**

URGENT FURY was a loosely-federated set of activities by independent task forces rather than unified joint action.<sup>37</sup> The disunity was particularly evident among ground forces, with a Marine officer purportedly considering the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division a greater threat than Grenadian soldiers.<sup>38</sup> Marine, Army and special forces units spent considerable time planning in isolation to capture the same objectives. Another example is that a Marine colonel initially refused to transport Army soldiers in Marine helicopters to enable the soldiers to evacuate American students from the Grand Anse university campus.<sup>39</sup>

Metcalf's adoption of a hands-off command approach prudently recognised his headquarters' limited expertise in non-naval operations. But it had its drawbacks. His decision not to invite Marine or Navy representatives to a command conference with Army commanders on the morning of 24 October because 'he knew how they operated' suggests he initially saw little value in coordination below his level.<sup>40</sup> However, his appointment of a deputy commander as *de facto* land component commander on 26 October indicates he quickly grasped the problem. Metcalf's initial approach may have facilitated flexibility but was not complemented by the structures, such as component commanders, necessary to synchronise domains and functions.

URGENT FURY's air and logistics efforts were also handicapped by poor unity of effort arising from the lack of a single controller to coordinate and prioritise activities. Metcalf's failure to coordinate task force-level logistics led to inefficiencies and unprecedented demands on the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division. The air bridge to Grenada was degraded by the absence of a single controller to prioritise demand and control cargo flow. This led to individual Services requesting and receiving airlift directly, with loaded aircraft departing the continental US heading for Point Salines. The lack of air bridge control meant personnel at Point Salines did not know what each aircraft carried so aircraft landed on a first-come, first-served basis. Exacerbating this was Point Salines' inability to unload more than one aircraft simultaneously.

These two factors combined resulted in the diversion of many critical cargoes while other payloads, such as visiting Atlantic Command staff officers, made it to Grenada. Point Salines' limited capacity was principally due to poor airfield management, resulting from the lack of clear authority to control and prioritise air assets including airfields. Aircraft from the Air Force, Navy, Marines and Army all operated independently from each other, with only ship-based aircraft and a limited selection of Air Force assets actually subordinate to the task force. The absence of a unifying air commander also contributed to poor fire support, including an incident in which a Marine fire support coordination team inadvertently directed a Navy aircraft strike onto a brigade headquarters of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division.<sup>41</sup>

The need to fully integrate elements from different Services into a seamless, joint team is a prevalent theme throughout current ADF doctrine. Indeed, a 'seamless force' is a key goal in the ADF's future vision.<sup>42</sup> ADF doctrine recognises the need for functional and domain unity within joint task forces through component commanders, in operations of sufficient complexity, including a logistics component commander alongside the traditional environmental commanders. This innovation is complemented by the establishment of Joint Logistics Command as the central authority for logistics movements and arrangements in support of ADF activities.

## **Operational-tactical interface**

The US military's command and control capabilities were not ready to project 'leadership to the unit in battle ... [nor] bring order and unity to the chaos and isolation experienced' during URGENT FURY.<sup>43</sup> The Joint Task Force's difficulties in integrating forces at short notice illustrate how *ad hoc* arrangements can hinder operational success.

What makes the bungling worse is that neither Atlantic Command nor the Joint Task Force should have played the role they did because an existing Joint Chiefs of Staff-approved contingency plan, OPLAN 2360, specified that US Forces Caribbean Command would be in overall command with XVIII Airborne Corps as

the on-scene headquarters.<sup>44</sup> Moreover, both these organisations had recently conducted exercises based on an URGENT FURY scenario. Caribbean Command had representation from all four Services, as well as Caribbean expertise and relationships, while XVIII Airborne Corps brought land operations expertise. It also managed logistics for deployments, was collocated with special forces, and practised joint integration.<sup>45</sup>

In the event, most of the coordination between 82<sup>nd</sup> Airborne Division and special forces during URGENT FURY was due to informal prompting from the XVIII Airborne Corps commander rather than McDonald. Yet McDonald, perhaps because like many of his staff he was unaware of OPLAN 2360 and exercises, excluded Caribbean Command and XVIII Airborne Corps from URGENT FURY.<sup>46</sup> Instead, he opted to manage the operation from his own poorly-suited headquarters and use Metcalf's Second Fleet as the Joint Task Force, seemingly because it was collocated with Atlantic Command in Norfolk.

Metcalf's ability to command and control his force was further constrained by communications problems and headquarters capacity. His staff was limited to 17 personnel once aboard the USS *Guam* off Grenada, demonstrating one of the drawbacks of afloat command. Moreover, half of this capacity was dedicated to keeping the superior headquarters informed, further reducing his capacity to integrate subordinate task forces. Metcalf could only speak to McDonald via the radio channel to which every ship in the fleet could listen and did not have radio communications with Army forces on Grenada.<sup>47</sup>

In turn, Army forces did not have direct radio links to Navy and Marine ships and aircraft, or Marines on the ground.<sup>48</sup> These communications problems stemmed from poor collaboration at Atlantic Command but also from failures to build interoperability into Service capabilities. Some *ad hoc* arrangements in short-notice operations are inevitable but URGENT FURY's command approaches introduced avoidable friction that degraded the operation's unity and purpose. Metcalf's claims that URGENT FURY demonstrated the US military's readiness to conduct 'come-as-you-are' operations beggar belief. A more accurate characterisation would be that US soldiers, sailors, airmen and Marines succeeded despite the command and control arrangements.

The ADF arguably risks re-learning this lesson from URGENT FURY because it lacks the joint, high-readiness command and control capabilities necessary to provide the operational-tactical interface on short-notice joint combat operations. The key problem is organisational focus and resource investment, particularly personnel.<sup>49</sup> The ADF doctrine on joint teamwork implicitly acknowledges the issue, contending that 'at the tactical level a foundation is built through regular exposure by tactical elements to the joint environment'.<sup>50</sup> However, URGENT FURY demonstrated that a 'foundation' and 'exposure' were insufficient without proficient command to build unity.

The ADF's command and control systems have been strengthened by an increased emphasis on joint integration, particularly the growing status of the Vice Chief of the Defence Force, further reducing the likelihood of technical issues that occurred on Grenada.<sup>51</sup> But proficient, focused teams are necessary to enhance unity of effort to exploit technical capabilities. And the ADF's pool of proficient people is limited because joint operations training throughput is small and the content focused on strategic-operational interface rather than the operational-tactical. Also Joint Operations Command is unlikely to directly command expeditionary operations because of its immobility and broad responsibilities.

ADF doctrine instead posits the Joint Task Force as the primary means of commanding specific operations. However, a high-readiness, genuinely joint headquarters does not exist. The resulting reliance on *ad hoc* arrangements threatens to negate much of the work done to improve the ADF's doctrine and capabilities for short-notice operations. The ADF's existing Deployable Joint Force Headquarters is unsuited, as it is not collocated with Joint Operations Command, and remains a predominantly Army headquarters. Its amphibious responsibilities have enabled it to become more joint but this effort is focused on the specifics of amphibious lodgement rather than joint warfare, resulting in limited Air Force participation and limited consideration of afloat command's drawbacks for broader joint operations.<sup>52</sup>

The Deployable Joint Force Headquarters' peacetime duties as Army's 1<sup>st</sup> Division also militate against it leading short-notice contingencies. The headquarters led the longer lead-time operation in East Timor in 1999 but not the short-notice reinsertion in 2006, suggesting that the ADF's investment is at the wrong end of the contingency scale.

David Horner and Bob Breen have argued that reforms at the operational-tactical interface are the last piece of the puzzle in the ADF's evolution towards a genuinely joint force.<sup>53</sup> Breen suggests forming a complete standing Joint Task Force under CJOPS to overcome limited warning time that history suggests, according to Breen, will be less than four weeks.<sup>54</sup> But this approach would be costly and may limit ADF force structure flexibility.

A more flexible and cost-effective approach, addressing the specific issue of operational-tactical interface friction during short-notice operations, would be to establish a genuinely joint standing deployable headquarters within Joint Operations Command. A focus on the operational-tactical detail of applying the ADF as a joint combat force within a multi-agency and multinational context, using domain and functional expertise, would enable this headquarters to provide the nucleus for a rapidly-constructed Joint Task Force.

Such an organisation would also address concerns about the ADF's joint culture by providing a focal point for detailed joint integration. Collocation with Joint Operations Command would also foster interagency collaboration by placing the task force at a key centre of Australian government coordination. It would also address some of the compartmentalisation issues encountered during URGENT FURY.

Horner cautions, probably correctly, that such an arrangement's implementation is unlikely until tested.<sup>55</sup> But that attitude ignores the lessons from URGENT FURY and Dobell's warning at the head of this article. In the absence of a standing headquarters, the ADF will be forced to rely on *ad hoc* arrangements that degrade the ADF's ability to exploit its doctrinal and capability strengths, while introducing avoidable friction. Many of the problems arising during URGENT FURY stemmed from an *ad hoc* approach. An American sledgehammer won the day in Grenada. But the ADF does not have that option.

## Conclusion

The ADF's current joint, multi-agency and multinational doctrine and capabilities posture it to avoid many of URGENT FURY's mistakes.

The prominence of the narrative and multinational operations in ADF doctrine mitigate the risk of the ADF operating in a manner as occurred in Grenada. Australia's acquisition of the Canberra-class ships and C-17 aircraft gives the ADF complementary operational-level manoeuvre capabilities with which to pursue Government objectives in Australia's region. The ADF's strengthening of joint authority and investment in joint enablers mitigate the risk of Australian forces lacking interoperability. Clear command arrangements at the strategic and operational levels also provide a strong basis for unity of effort within the ADF and across Australian Government departments.

However, the ADF's ability to exploit these doctrinal and capability strengths remains untested in short-notice joint combat operations. Weaknesses in the ADF's operational-tactical interface portend problems similar to URGENT FURY, because the ADF lacks a suitable high-readiness, genuinely joint headquarters to provide the nucleus for executing short-notice joint expeditionary combat operations.

It has been argued in this article that a headquarters should be established within Joint Operations Command to capitalise on the ADF's existing strengths and serve as a focal point for joint integration and culture. URGENT FURY's *ad hoc* command arrangements degraded unity of effort and political effectiveness. The US mitigated this risk through mass but this is not an option for Australia. The ADF should address this deficiency to ensure its capability and doctrinal strengths can be translated into an effective, unified effort in pursuit of Australian policy.

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## Notes

- 1 This is an edited version of a paper, titled 'Analyse the 1983 Operation Urgent Fury in Grenada from an operational level of war perspective .... What observations would you make regarding current ADF joint, multinational, and whole of government doctrine and capabilities?', submitted by the author while attending the Australian Command and Staff Course in 2015.
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# Campaign Planning and Evaluation

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## Introduction

The quality of ADF campaign planning is dependent on an understanding of the situation, the quality of thinking and judgment that produces ideas to exploit the potential for change, and the quality of processes that challenge conjecture.<sup>1</sup> However, recent operations have demonstrated that methods for achieving this level of quality, though appropriate to the planning, monitoring and evaluation of programs in other domains, are often not well suited to Defence's unique requirements.

Decision-makers in Defence must typically translate government direction amidst a high degree of uncertainty and in an environment where Defence is not an isolated actor, as well as being subjected to a variety of non-military influences. Contributing factors and causal dynamics are also often unclear, making the application of commercial planning and evaluation models of inputs, outputs and milestones inappropriate.

Moreover, traditional campaign planning and assessment processes used within Defence are not well-suited to integrate the level of contextual information required in modern ADF operations. This includes the need to monitor whether desired conditions are emerging in the operating environment, whether the presence of these conditions is likely to continue, and the extent to which the ADF is able to influence them. Accordingly, the then Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO) was tasked to devise a new process for campaign-level monitoring and evaluation, which would be both comprehensive and evidence based. This article provides an overview of the resulting study and its conclusions.

## Current campaign planning

Campaign plans are long-term planning instruments designed to articulate Defence's intended contribution to a government initiative via a cohesive program of military activity. As shown at Figure 1, the military component of a national strategic objective can be broken down into broad 'decisive conditions', which in turn devolve into actionable 'effects' (or progress milestones).

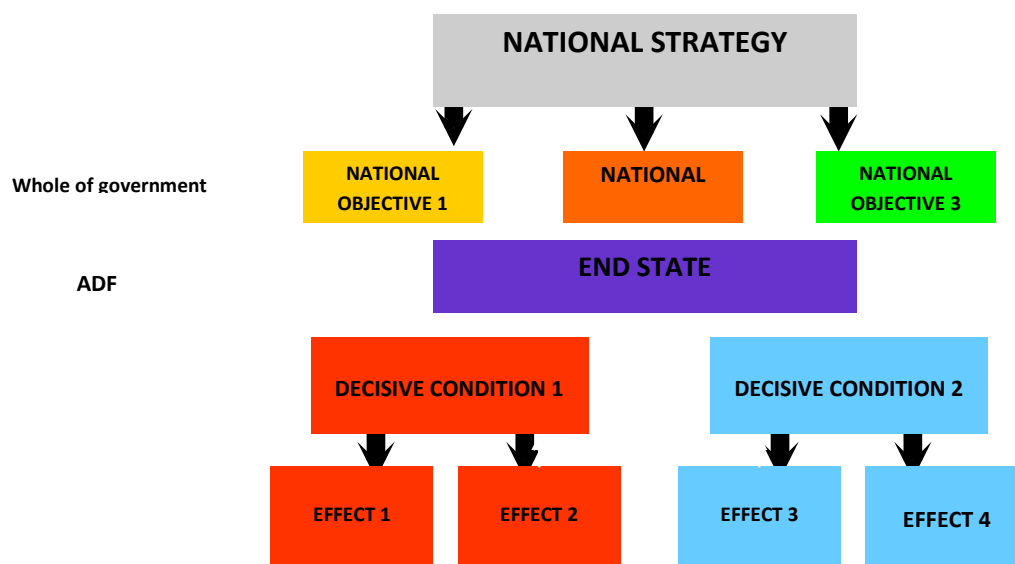


Figure 1: The evolution of ADF campaign planning

These effects define the boundaries for the range of activities the ADF plans to undertake, and describe the expected scope of influence in the area of operations.<sup>2</sup> Importantly, effects are written as outcomes rather than actions, with each describing a condition or change in condition expected to be achieved by associated tasks and activities.

The quality and longevity of a plan is contingent on the articulation of clear and logical links between the various elements of the hierarchy. This is demonstrated by the extent to which effects can be aggregated upwards to lead logically to the emergence of decisive conditions. Subsequently, decisive conditions can be seen as pre-conditions for achieving the ADF's required 'end state'.

However, the study identified that a major issue in campaign planning was often the inadequate articulation of the plan's intent, scope and expected outcomes. While plans typically included stated objectives and various levels of goals, it often was not clear why a series of operational objectives were expected to lead to an overall positive outcome or to what degree and in exactly what form the achievement of a goal could be construed as a 'success'. Hence research was conducted to identify the key information components within a campaign plan, as well as examining how they can be derived.

Currently, Defence doctrine does not prescribe the extent to which these linkages should be detailed in campaign plans. However, these links—which relate to logic, assumptions and risk—are considered to be priority information requirements for campaign planning and assessment.

For example, the logic of a course of action is often assumed to be self-evident, and the planner's perception of the operating environment is assumed to be accurate and enduring.<sup>3</sup> However, as program failures and unsuccessful military operations have demonstrated, both logic and assumptions can be flawed or, at the very least, require revision to align with an evolving reality.<sup>4</sup>

It is also evident that entire plans can be developed based on a set of assumptions that are never articulated. This would significantly impact on the degree to which the intent of the plan is accurately understood and translated into appropriate action. Without articulated logic and assumptions as a reference point, plans cannot easily be modified in response to shifts in the operating environment. It also becomes difficult to identify indicators of progress or divergences from intended paths, when those paths are not clearly articulated. This is a significant obstacle for effective planning review and evaluation.

## **Campaign assessment**

Campaign assessment is the means by which the ADF reviews progress towards the goals defined in a campaign plan. Progress is defined in terms of the likelihood of success, as well as the resources and time required to achieve success. Such assessments can be made at regular intervals, comparing actual with intended progress.

In recent years, DSTO has been involved in the campaign assessment process by assisting decision makers at all levels to:

- maintain visibility as to whether the original Commander's intent is being sustained;
- identify whether resources are being put to best effect (that is, whether gains are being built on, and where less effective activities can be discontinued); and
- where necessary, adapt initial plans and goals to align with changes in the environment.

As defined in DSTO guidance, campaign assessment must look beyond ADF inputs and outputs, and cannot be conducted by simply reviewing the performance of the ADF on operations or simple battle damage assessments.<sup>5</sup> It requires the construction of a 'rich picture'—containing many contextual variables, such as the influence of non-ADF actors—to make campaign assessment a reliable source of situational awareness for senior ADF decision makers.

There are also several unique characteristics within Defence that limit the applicability of evaluation techniques from other domains, such as industry and international development agencies. Firstly, campaign planning and evaluation has traditionally not been a discrete and well-resourced activity in Defence's operational cycle. The ADF does not have a team dedicated exclusively to conducting program-

level evaluations, and interfacing with planning staff. Accordingly, any practical addition to ADF planning and evaluation processes will likely require additional staff and resources.

Secondly, any solution must be applicable to the ADF's complex and often highly-uncertain operating environment, where delay or paralysis due to uncertainty is not acceptable. While planning and assessment of the likelihood of success is undoubtedly enhanced by greater contextual understanding, there must be a limit to the time and resources expended on establishing understanding prior to acting. Therefore, evaluation frameworks must not be dependent on certainty about context, inputs, outputs, timeframes or sequence.

A third constraint is the limited capacity for gathering planning and evaluation data in a conflict or crisis situation. In so-called 'non-permissive' operating environments, where there are adversaries or the potential for deterioration if certain information becomes available to a target population, the scope for collaborative planning and data gathering through participative research is limited. Also, planning for crisis responses is characterised by short lead times for consultation and information gathering. This is contrary to many existing techniques for enhancing planning and evaluation, which advocate lengthy pre-planning scoping studies, participative research and collaborative evaluation.<sup>6</sup>

Finally, because the ADF operates in response to political direction, the scope for Defence planners and evaluators to determine operational direction and scale is usually limited. Hence, techniques designed to focus on the 'green-field' scoping of solutions and strategies may waste time by attempting to analyse factors which cannot be altered within the Defence context.

## **Existing theoretical constructs**

Having identified logic, assumptions and risks as critical information elements, the study then reviewed existing theoretical constructs, as follows.

### ***Theory of change***

Theory-based evaluation frameworks, usually referred to as 'theory of change', aim to evaluate the action undertaken as part of the program, simultaneously with the theory on which those actions and decisions were based. Rather than listing or quantifying desirable outcomes, theory-based impact evaluations produce a narrative theory of the change which offers insights into why a program is executed in a given manner and, subsequently, why it did or did not generate the anticipated outcomes.<sup>7</sup>

All plans, programs and activities contain theory of change and associated assumptions about how and why action will bring about change. However, as Frans Leeuw and Jos Vaessen point out, that rationale may be either explicit or implied.<sup>8</sup> Theory of change is not a prescribed set of steps or a methodology but rather a way of thinking that prompts planners to ask certain questions, as well as requiring the articulation of answers in a certain way.<sup>9</sup> When a theory of change is made explicit, it is able to be tested against operational realities and revised as necessary.

The inclusion of theory of change in campaign-level planning offers transparency and clarity in the planning process. For Defence's planning and evaluation purposes, theory of change is valuable for determining and documenting *what* is expected to be achieved, and goes part of the way to identifying *why* those achievements are expected to come about. However, it does not systematically provide enough detail on *how* goals will be achieved, particularly in terms of assumptions about intangible consequences of action.

The absence of this level of detail accordingly reduces the potential comprehensiveness of any set of indicators of change derived from theory of change. It also does not necessarily lead to the sequencing of activities that would enable planners to combine categories of effort or recognise interdependencies. However, achieving this level of detail is necessary to define specific triggers of *when* activities should start and end (which are also referred to as 'decisive points'), and to become aware of contradictions between courses of action and the risks that need to be monitored throughout the life of the plan.

## ***Program theory***

'Program theory' is defined as an approach that brings together theory of change with a theory of action to provide a cohesive plan explaining *how*, *when* and *why* change is intended to come about.<sup>10</sup> Similar to theory of change, the value of program theory does not reside in creating something that would not otherwise exist—a plan will always comprise some sort of intended change and a series of actions that are anticipated to achieve that change. The value of program theory is the way in which it prompts the articulation and systematic consideration of intents and actions.

The inclusion of program theory in planning and evaluation enables the development of indicators which will monitor the plan's logic and not just its outcomes. This means that planners become aware of when their plan is not leading to expected outcomes and when its assumptions and logic may require reconsideration. When used in evaluation, program theory enables greater testing of whether a failure to achieve intended outcomes was due to faulty theory of how to achieve the outcomes or faulty implementation of the program itself.

Program theory is most effective when applied during the initial planning phase. When applying it to an existing plan, it may be found that some elements of the model do not exist and the process for retrofitting them may not be desirable at a later stage. This is often the case in Defence's strategic-level planning context, where support for planning or evaluation is requested after a plan is well advanced or even being executed. The concept of converting an established plan into a program theory model is likely to be rejected as requiring excessive time and staff inputs for Defence's very tight operational decision cycles.

## ***Cognitive and causal mapping***

Another approach, which aims to make explicit the intent and logic of activities or behaviour, is 'cognitive and causal mapping'. In a military context, it has been observed that 'ultimately, shared implicit intent is the most important aspect of command and the key determinant of success in an operation'.<sup>11</sup> Having visibility of the mental model behind a plan enables subordinate commanders to decide on action that is consistent with the original intent, and also enables assessment of whether there has been or is likely to be progress towards intended goals. The value of this method 'is not in the tool itself but the conducting of the interview which will lead to the establishment of the cognitive map'.<sup>12</sup>

A variation on cognitive mapping, which refers to subordinate interpretations of program logic, is 'theory of mind'.<sup>13</sup> It refers to the formation of assumptions about what another person is thinking (that is, their cognitive map). When executing a plan, it is necessary to make assumptions about the cognitive map of planners, in order to interpret how they intended the plan would be translated into action.

Different stakeholders may form very different theories of the mind, depending on their experience and access to planning information, which will affect the consistency and effectiveness of overall execution. The significance is that by using the term 'theory of mind', we have a vocabulary for differentiating between the cognitive map (logic) of planners and what theory of mind (subordinate assumptions) are made by those who translate the plan into action. This gives both planners and evaluators an additional level of granularity for assessing why a plan may be contested or may be failing to achieve its objectives.

While cognitive and causal mapping requires engagement from decision makers to articulate their decision path, such access to high-level decision makers is unlikely, particularly during crisis response planning phases. At best, one may hope to apply them retrospectively or at lower levels of planning. Regardless, this is essentially an exercise in surfacing the assumptions that planners are making about the intent of decision makers, which suggests that elements of theory of mind may be the most appropriate form of cognitive mapping to apply to campaign assessment.

## **Development of a new framework**

Theory of change, program theory and theory of mind are mental models rather than techniques. In this sense, they are theories rather than methodologies, offering guidance for scientifically considering a problem rather than the actual techniques for application. The study sought, therefore, to develop a mechanism for consistently applying these mental models to the phases of planning and evaluation.<sup>14</sup>

The outcome was a 'logic, assumptions and risk framework' designed to promote a structured framework for thinking. In practice, it is intended to serve as a checklist for drawing out the essential information that planners and evaluators need to consider. Its representation as a matrix, facilitating the systematic extraction of a set of priority information requirements, is shown at Figure 2.<sup>15</sup>

<b>Line of Operation</b>					
a. <b>From</b>	b. <b>To</b>	c. <b>Logic</b>	d. <b>Assumptions</b>	e. <b>Risks</b>	f. <b>Questions</b>
<b>Effect 1:</b>	<b>Decisive Condition:</b>				
<b>Effect 2:</b>					
<b>Effect 3:</b>					
<b>Effect 4:</b>					

**Figure 2: 'Logic, assumptions and risk framework' matrix**

### **Logic**

The framework's logic component was designed with a 'From' and 'To' column to enable users to define what level of a plan or what aspect of strategic guidance they are going to nominate as a start point by placing it in the 'From' column. This information should be easily identifiable in any plan or program, even at the earliest drafting stages. From there, the more difficult question can be posed of why participants expect that column a) will lead to column b). It is this explanation of causality that can be captured under the 'Logic' column.

When populating this component of the matrix, restating the aims or objectives of the plan or strategic guidance will have little value. Instead, participants are encouraged to interpret the theory of change logic from a) to b) as they understand it, so that it can be understood in the absence of euphemisms, political semantics and organisational terminology (as inherent assumptions and risks are more obvious without the distraction of unnecessary detail and context-specific terminology).

The framework does not assume that participants can simply be asked to articulate the logic behind their plan to begin populating the matrix. As cognitive mapping has shown, it is far easier for individuals to state their goals or intended activities than to articulate the thought process behind why they seek those goals or why they believe one course of action is preferable to another.

Therefore, it is often useful to ask for a narrative of what they saw as their start point, and the story of how they envisioned progressing from there to the desired end state. This is aligned with the technique for surfacing logic through theory of change or cognitive mapping. Questions that may prompt such narrative include:

- What are the thresholds for success/failure, and what degrees of each are acceptable?
- What longer-term outcomes do we seek and what interim outcomes and contextual conditions are necessary and sufficient to produce those longer-term outcomes?



- How will our intervention be received and perceived by locals?
- Are we seeking sustainable change?
- Who are the stakeholders in this initiative? What do we need them to do and what are we assuming they are doing? When do they need to do it? What are the links between different stakeholders?

### ***Assumptions***

The process of seeking to understand the underlying assumptions of an operation can be likened to evaluating the validity of a hypothesis.<sup>16</sup> When populating the framework, facilitators should be seeking to surface the following forms of assumptions:

- Definition of the issue for resolution;
- Connections between long-term, intermediate and early outcomes;
- Expectations for pre-conditions, inputs and mechanisms for change;
- Certainty of causal links between activities and outcomes;
- Value judgments about standards and acceptable behaviours; and
- Contextual/environmental factors that support or hinder progress.<sup>17</sup>

An assumptions column is provided in the framework linked to each strand of logic, so that when an assumption is shown to be incorrect, it will indicate that its associated logic requires revision.

### ***Risks***

The risk component of the framework provides a space to specify the ‘so what’ of the information elicited in the other columns of the matrix. Risks may emerge in two forms: the risk of each strand of logic or assumption being flawed, and the risk associated with failure to achieve each element of the plan.

Also, divergent views on achievability or likelihood of goals can be captured as risks, enabling planning to proceed despite a lack of consensus. Each risk should be stated in terms of likelihood and impact, so that there is an emerging indication of which lines of the plan are considered most likely to fail and which would have the greatest consequence.

## **Preliminary assessment of the new framework**

Subsequent to the study, DSTO has used a structured discussion format as a means for drawing out information for populating the framework, utilising techniques commonly applied in program theory, theory of change and cognitive mapping. This format provides a significant degree of adaptability because facilitators can use the matrix to prompt questions and drive discussion where information does not flow freely or where participants are unsure of what is required.

Alternatively, facilitators may use the matrix as a reference point to anchor discussion, where information flows freely from participants but needs to be focused. Each of the categories does not have to be worked through in sequence and, in some instances, it may be easiest to go straight from logic to risks. The focus at all times is on prompting useful insight, rather than slavishly populating the template.

The technique described above has been used for applying the framework to four different types of trials. Although some details of the ADF operations to which they were applied are classified, the form and outcomes of each are described below.

### ***Initial planning***

The application of the framework in early phase campaign planning was primarily aimed at providing structure for the planning team to draw out the information they had identified as being critical to include. The provision of structure during this phase was considered necessary to demonstrate rigorous, comprehensive consideration and also to provide momentum and clarity for planners trying to navigate through the synthesis of a number of complex variables into a single cohesive plan.

The framework was first used for this purpose during the drafting phases of an ADF regional campaign plan. When DSTO's support was requested, the draft plan already had proposed objectives based on strategic guidance. The task of confirming that the guidance had been appropriately represented needed to be undertaken, as well as surfacing the detail of the proposed objectives, the scope of how they would be achieved and how success or failure would be assessed. To that end, the framework was used as the basis of a half-day workshop to review each of the draft objectives and consider how the causes, opportunities, consequences, stakeholders and desired changes in each objective were being translated into logic.

From the outset, participants were encouraged not to repeat familiar explanations from draft documents but to state the logic in their own terms of how the 'effects' in column a) were expected to lead to the achievement of the 'objectives' in column b). These statements often revealed divergences in interpretation of intent, and expectation of the mechanisms for achieving it.

Where these divergences arose among participants, they could be noted as assumptions. Discussion of logic eventually brought about a consensus, with some participants being able to justify their version of logic as being derived from directives or relevant experience. On other occasions, participants were willing to agree to a given statement of logic, as long as a number of risks associated with it were noted in the framework and the draft plan for ongoing monitoring.

Deriving the logic of some effects took longer than others, due to the viability of those that were particularly problematic or rested on excessive assumptions or risks being questioned as part of the process. As a result, a number of effects were re-drafted or moved to contribute to the achievement of a different objective. Duplications in logic or the apparent risk of high degrees of interdependency also highlighted the need to merge or delete overlapping effects.

### ***Continual situational awareness***

Prior to the initiation of one of the quarterly assessment cycles for the ADF's campaign plan for Operation SLIPPER in Afghanistan, the framework was proposed as a means of quickly exposing team members to the entire plan, while prompting them to share and discuss their interpretation of it. To do this, the matrix's first two columns were populated with 'effects' and 'decisive conditions' from the current campaign plan. Participants were then asked to populate the remaining columns in any order.

This activity quickly generated a constructive discussion that centred on the premise of the plan and an understanding of what the plan's terminology and structure were intended to mean in practice. Notably, the process revealed individuals' areas of expertise, strengths and weaknesses, giving participants the opportunity to request explanation of aspects of the plan or its logic they did not understand, fostering a group dynamic of seeking and offering assistance. The greater depth of understanding of assumptions and risks also meant that the team was better placed for appropriate allocation of tasking and to identify information requirements—and to consider what they should be looking for in those information sources.

At the conclusion of the activity, there was an enhanced sense of team identity, with less experienced team members having gained greater confidence in their understanding of the plan and, in turn, in their ability to conduct relevant analysis of assessment data. It became evident that even team members who were very familiar with the plan and its context were able to find new perspectives and consolidate their understanding of linkages. At the same time, they benefited from the ability of less experienced team members to contribute fresh insights into the risks or assumptions associated with widely-accepted logic.

### Revision of plans

The framework provides an effective structure for considering the components of a plan in a short timeframe, highlighting key risks to the plan's logic. It is, therefore, well suited to use as part of a revision/redrafting process.

In early 2012, for example, the research team trialled the application of the framework to review the ADF's campaign plan for operations in East Timor. The matrix was populated with the plan's effects and decisive conditions in columns a) and b) respectively. The remaining columns were then populated as described in other applications above. The outcome was that no significant gaps or duplications in logic were identified and the manner in which effects had been grouped created a cohesive macro-theory for how each decisive condition would be brought about.

If gaps or flaws had become evident for a particular effect or an entire grouping under a decisive condition, the flawed assumptions and unacceptable risks would have highlighted why planners needed to revise the plan and what problems they needed to address. This is a particularly useful function of the framework because users of a plan may often feel that while it is flawed or outdated, they are unable to specify and justify why it requires review.

### Generation of indicators for assessing progress

Campaign assessment typically uses an evaluation framework with a set of 'measures of effectiveness' assigned to each effect, which are aggregated to assess progress towards bringing about a decisive condition. The framework was used to review the existing measures of effectiveness for the East Timor campaign plan. The aim was to identify key risks and assumptions that could be added to a template for ongoing monitoring, as shown in Figure 3.

<b>Effect 1: Destabilising elements in society have been reduced</b> – <i>the influence of destabilising elements has been reduced to such an extent that they are no longer an impediment to the sustainable development of Country X.</i>						
<b>Assumption:</b> <i>Economic and social development is an impetus for the population to support the legitimate government and turn away from support to destabilising elements.</i>		<b>Does this assumption hold true?</b> [Narrative response]				
		<b>Comment on assumption</b> [Narrative response – offer any thoughts on changes, upcoming events or indicators which are anticipated to verify this assumption]				
<b>Risk:</b> <i>Uneven distribution of economic development could generate further destabilising elements.</i>		<b>Has the likelihood of this risk increased or decreased?</b> [Narrative response with supporting examples]				
		<b>Has the impact of this risk increased or decreased?</b> [Narrative response]				
<b>Measure of Effect</b>		<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Supporting data / examples</b>	<b>Source of data</b>	<b>Reliability of data</b>
1.1						
1.2						
1.3						

**Figure 3: Example of measures of effectiveness, assumptions and risks response template**

Those who provided input by filling out the template were also requested to make an assessment of whether each assumption continued to be true or whether it was disproven during the reporting period.<sup>18</sup> Similarly, each respondent was also asked whether the likelihood or impact of risks identified for each effect had increased or decreased during the reporting period.

## Conclusions

The benefits of the developed framework have been trialled across a diverse range of planning and evaluation phases, and for operations of very different scale and context. One of its particular advantages is that it can be applied rapidly. This makes the framework highly practical in different environments with variable numbers of participants, and regardless of whether it is used as a complete workshop or as one of several steps in a larger activity.

Its utility, for example, could give structure to a whole-of-government planning forum or be used to summarise concerns held by those responsible for executing a plan at the tactical level. In both cases, it would provide an effective and constructive form of communication to accurately capture and convey concerns.

Another particular benefit of the framework is its scalability, allowing users to choose which level of a plan they wish to take as the start point for review. For example, the logic, assumptions and risks could be reviewed from a plan's highest-level premise. Alternatively, the logic, assumptions and risks associated with lower-level effects and tasks could also be effectively scrutinised. In summary, the developed framework has the potential to significantly enhance the ADF's ability to undertake campaign assessment which should, in turn, improve the quality of ADF campaign planning.

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## Notes

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# Does Australia Face a ‘China Choice’? <sup>1</sup>

**Major Joseph Wheatley, Australian Army**

The growth of the power of Athens, and the alarm which this inspired in Sparta, made war inevitable.<sup>2</sup>

## Introduction

Thucydides’ dictum implies there is inevitability of conflict between an established power and an emerging power. Some might argue this applies to the current situation in the Indo-Pacific region, where the US has enjoyed established primacy but now faces the challenge of an emerging China. The corollary is that Australia must make a choice on its grand strategic alignment between the US and China.<sup>3</sup>

Thucydides proffers advice on the relationship between alliances, which resonates with the current debate on whether there is a ‘China choice’. As the nature of war and politics is a human endeavour, his insights remain as relevant today as they were over 2000 years ago. However, it will be argued in this article that Australia does not need to face a ‘China choice’, requiring an absolute decision between China as an emerging power and the US as a traditional ally. Instead, it will be contended that an ‘Australian answer’ is required to embrace the dichotomy of China’s economic development within the umbrella of security that the US alliance provides.

These arguments will be addressed by defining Australia’s strategic environment and examining the choices available. The perceived inevitability of conflict between China and the US will then be examined, using the very principles that it is founded on—fear, interest and honour. Finally, the policy implications of an ‘Australian answer’ will be discussed, including middle-power diplomacy, hedging on China’s rise, and defence diplomacy. The article will conclude that because conflict is not inevitable, a ‘China choice’ is not required, and that Australia’s national interest would be best served by embracing China’s growth while maintaining a strategic alliance with the US.

## ‘China choice’ or ‘Australian answer’?

The two fundamental components that shape Australia’s strategic environment are economics and security. This was clearly articulated in the *2013 Defence White Paper*, which argued that Australia’s strategic outlook is tied to the security and prosperity of our region.<sup>4</sup> It was also reflected in the *2013 National Security Strategy*, which identified the intrinsic link between national security and economic well-being.<sup>5</sup>

The deduction is that there are two inter-related components to Australia’s desired strategic environment. The first is an economic environment in which Australia prospers with Asia, and where China is key.<sup>6</sup> The second is an alliance network that enhances our security in the region based on shared interests and values, where the US is key.<sup>7</sup> Therefore, Australia’s desired strategic environment should reflect a strong economic partnership with China and a robust strategic partnership with the US. However, as China increases its influence and seeks to contest US dominance in the region, Australia could potentially be faced with a difficult choice.

Some would argue this choice implies that Australia must align itself with one or the other of these powers. On the one hand, according to this argument, it could maintain a strong strategic alliance with the US that would potentially sacrifice economic engagement with Asia, and risk being drawn into conflict with China. Alternatively, Australia could accommodate China’s increased influence in the region and distance itself from the US.<sup>8</sup> However, neither of these choices reflects Australia’s desired strategic environment, and both are contrary to current strategic thinking.



A third option, not making a choice, was articulated in the *2013 Defence White Paper*, which asserted that:

The Government does not believe that Australia must choose between its longstanding Alliance with the United States and its expanding relationship with China; nor do the United States and China believe that we must make such a choice.<sup>9</sup>

This 'non-choice' reflects the best outcome to achieve Australia's desired strategic environment and is the essence of an 'Australian answer'. The emergence of China as the world's second largest economy and Australia's biggest trading partner has clear implications.<sup>10</sup> China must be a fundamental aspect of Australia's strategic environment. Likewise, the US alliance provides a framework of protection to Australia and other like-minded regional states.

However, as the uncontested dominance of the US in the Indo-Pacific region is challenged by China's rise, the divergence of Australia's economic and security interests must be rationalised. Rather than make a singular choice that will jeopardise one or the other, Australia needs to embrace the dichotomy of China's economic rise and the strategic benefits offered by the US. Instead of making a 'China choice', the third option should be an 'Australian answer', based on foreign policy that maintains the *status quo* of China-US relations so that neither entrapment nor abandonment eventuates.

This fear of entrapment and abandonment has been a feature of alliances since the Peloponnesian War.<sup>11</sup> In Australia's context, it is about the consequences of US disengagement or the abandonment of alliances in the Indo-Pacific region. It is also about being trapped in a conflict with China over US interests, or that of its allies, in the region. For example, a conflict between historical rivals China and Japan could extend to the US by virtue of alliance obligations. A binding alignment to the US could then see Australia drawn into conflict with China, its largest trading partner. Regardless of the scenario, it is obviously essential that Australia's alliance and foreign policy commitments do not result in unintended or unwanted consequences.

As China's influence in the Indo-Pacific region continues to expand, there will be incidents where US interests are challenged. These are particularly likely to arise in relation to China's territorial claims in the East and South China Seas and the establishment or threat of associated air defence identification zones.<sup>12</sup> Thucydides famously stated that 'the strong do what they can and the weak suffer what they must'.<sup>13</sup> A 'China choice' would likely result in Australia suffering in order to maintain its alliance with the US. However, an 'Australian answer' would involve sophisticated foreign policy designed to prevent either entrapment or abandonment.

## **No trap, no choice**

In further examining why a 'China choice' is not required, it is useful to examine the misconception that conflict can become inevitable because of fear, interest or honour.

'Fear' is the first of Thucydides' triptych, and in contrast to the Peloponnesian War, it can have a role in preventing conflict. Particularly in the nuclear age of mutually-assured destruction and conventional military capabilities that are just as terrifying, fear between rivals can prevent incidents from escalating to war.<sup>14</sup> The US bombing of China's embassy in Belgrade during the war in Kosovo in 1999, and the near-miss between the USS *Cowpens* and a Chinese naval ship in 2013, are examples where the fear of escalation likely provided a constraint on what otherwise may have been an inevitable escalation to more serious incidents.

While there will be tensions as China increasingly asserts its place in the region, it is not inevitable that it and the US will catastrophically collide. China's President Xi Jinping has acknowledged this challenge and recognises the lessons from the Peloponnesian War, contending that 'we all need to work together to avoid the Thucydides trap'.<sup>15</sup>

'Interest' takes the form of economic co-dependence within the Indo-Pacific region, which can significantly reduce the likelihood of direct military conflict. Interdependence is no panacea for peace and stability but it raises the threshold of military action as an option for dispute resolution. Beijing and Washington share a complex system of economic co-dependence, which fosters a desire to maintain the

*status quo*. This also extends to US alliances in the region, such as Japan, which is a source of tension and a potential trap to draw the US into conflict with China.

Despite a historically-tense relationship, China is Japan's largest trading partner, and Japanese investment with China is worth more than US\$58 billion.<sup>16</sup> This economic co-dependence does not prevent tensions and diplomatic challenges. But an escalation to armed conflict is greatly reduced if the economic cost is too high. There have been a number of incidents between China and the US, particularly in the South China Sea, which have not escalated beyond diplomatic issues. Although the mechanism for mediation is poor, the reluctance of both countries to resort to armed conflict demonstrates that mutual interests can significantly mitigate the risk of war.

'Honour' is the most dangerous feature of the US-China nexus but arguably is outweighed by the other two components of the triptych. In this context, honour is the ideological and cultural framework that defines each nation. These differences are reflected in their respective political systems and arguably possess the greatest potential for conflict. However, the fear of armed conflict and the risk to mutual interests seem likely to prevent an escalation of hostilities so long as the threshold can be maintained.

That threshold was not reached in 2001 when a US Navy surveillance aircraft collided with a Chinese fighter aircraft, resulting in the death of a Chinese pilot and detention of US aircrew.<sup>17</sup> While diplomatic efforts on that occasion were not perfect, they succeeded in de-escalating the situation, with efforts made on both sides to save face.

Another stark difference between the current situation and the era of the Peloponnesian War is the current international system of conflict resolution and mediation, which provides a variety of mechanisms to assist in the management and resolution of crises.<sup>18</sup> The diplomatic statesmanship that can occur within contemporary multilateral forums potentially allows reputation, credibility and dignity to be restored in crisis situations, de-escalating the risk of resort to premature military action. In this sense, modern international systems provide opportunities for nations to maintain their honour in tense diplomatic situations.

### **Policy implications of an 'Australian answer'**

The policy implications of an 'Australian answer' include middle-power diplomacy, hedging against China's rise, and increased defence diplomacy. Furthermore, these policy implications are underpinned by an understanding that the rise of China is not a zero-sum game. Middle-power diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region involves using multilateral institutions to offset the diverging interests of Beijing and Washington.

The aggregate influence of middle powers in this region is significant and can be used as a counter-balance and mediation towards a convergence of US-China interests. Raja Mohan and Rory Medcalf have contended, for example, that the combined diplomatic power of Australia, Japan and India is substantial—and has the potential to be critical in leveraging influence within the region.<sup>19</sup> Hence, the policy implications in an 'Australian answer' would include increased multilateral arrangements in order to counter the bipolar dynamic of Beijing and Washington. In particular, India's emerging growth is prospectively central to this effort.

Accordingly, Australia's foreign policy should place greater importance on multilateral organisations such as the South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation, which is focused on eight countries anchored on the Indian sub-continent.<sup>20</sup> It provides a forum where the cooperation and unification of middle powers can influence the 'Indo-Pacific strategic arc'.<sup>21</sup> In order to benefit from the economic growth of China and the security provided by the US, it would seem useful for Australia to recalibrate its foreign policy to enhance the influence of middle-power diplomacy in the region.

Australia's foreign policy should also be recalibrated to hedge against China's rise. There is no guarantee that China will continue its unprecedented growth—and the only country in the region with the long-term potential to rival China is India.<sup>22</sup> India is emerging as a significant player in the Indo-Pacific region and its influence will become critical in realigning the balance of power. In concert with middle-power multilateral arrangements, Australian policy should have considerable emphasis on bilateral relations with India. Hedging could also be achieved by further strengthening the military alliance with the US.<sup>23</sup>

An 'Australian answer' builds on the *status quo* situation of benefiting from China's economy and the security provided by the US but it does not gravitate around China. Australia's national interests should be the central theme of Australia's grand strategy, rather than what China is or is not doing. Therefore, hedging against a rising China through engagement with India would also provide future options to maintain Australia's interests in the Indo-Pacific region.

The increased function of using defence diplomacy as an instrument of foreign policy would also be important in achieving an 'Australian answer'. Australia would need to ensure that the operational benefits of defence cooperation are nested within strategic objectives. Defence diplomacy is another tool to build trust, improve communications and reduce tensions.<sup>24</sup> Concomitant to this is the requirement to establish a robust defence force that can project force into the region.

A strong defence capability, enhanced by the US alliance and regional networks, will provide an effective platform for defence diplomacy in the Indo-Pacific region.<sup>25</sup> Australia's new amphibious capability is an effective means to achieve this, particularly as a foundation for providing humanitarian aid and disaster relief.<sup>26</sup> Defence diplomacy nests with the concept of 'smart power' that bridges the extremes of soft diplomacy and hard military intervention.<sup>27</sup>

Defence diplomacy should be used as an instrument of foreign policy and synchronised with strategic objectives to achieve the optimal effect. The recalibration of defence diplomacy, hedging the rise of China, and middle-power diplomacy are essential in shaping Australia's strategic environment. Furthermore, these policy implications would be underpinned by the concept that competition is not exacerbated by zero-sum conditions.

The US-China dynamic in the Indo-Pacific region is not a zero-sum game: therefore, Australia's foreign policy should not be limited to the perception that there must be a winner and a loser. The mercantile system of economics is obsolete and the rise of China does not necessarily come at the expense of its neighbours or the US.<sup>28</sup> If ideological and cultural differences are set aside, then the prosperity of China and the US can be complementary. President Obama used his 2014 APEC address in Beijing to highlight this very point, saying that:

Job creation and trade is not a zero-sum game. One country's prosperity doesn't have to come at the expense of another.... I believe it's particularly true for the relationship between the United States and China.<sup>29</sup>

The absence of a zero-sum game creates an opportunity for China and the US to co-exist as great powers in the Indo-Pacific region. Cultural and ideological differences will still lead to tensions but can be offset by the potential gain of both countries. If zero-sum conditions existed then competition, tensions and conflict would increase exponentially.<sup>30</sup> Contrarily, the absence of these conditions would allow an 'Australian answer' to embrace the benefits from a rising Chinese economy, while maintaining the US alliance that contributes so significantly to Australia's security.

## Conclusion

The perceived need for a 'China choice' is predicated on the inevitable clash of wills between an established and rising power. However, in contrast to Thucydides' dictum, it has been argued in this article that the US and China are not on a trajectory to certain military conflict. Rather, the fear, interest and honour normally associated with escalating tensions are in fact reducing the likelihood of war.

The absence of this inevitability allows the pursuit of an 'Australian answer', rather than a China-centric decision. The policy implications of an 'Australian answer' involve a greater emphasis on middle-power diplomacy to provide a counter-balance in China-US relations. This would enhance Australia's influence with its neighbours and hedge against China's rise. This hedging should be directed towards India, which has the most potential for substantial growth in the long term.

Increased defence diplomacy would also provide another tool to pursue strategic objectives within the region. Underpinning these policy implications is the principle that prosperity and growth in the Indo-Pacific region is not a zero-sum game, and that China's rise does not necessarily need to be at the expense

of other countries. The deduction is that Australia does not face a 'China choice' that involves an absolute decision between China as an emerging power and the US as a traditional ally.

Instead, it has been argued in this article that an 'Australian answer' is required to embrace the dichotomy of China's economic development within the umbrella of security that the US alliance provides. This would allow Australia to pursue its desired strategic environment by leveraging off both the economic rise of China and the security provided by its strategic alliance with the US.

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## Notes

- <sup>1</sup> This is an edited version of a paper, titled 'Does Australia face a "China Choice"? If so, what is the nature of that choice? If not, why not? What are the policy implications ...?', submitted by the author while attending the Australian Command and Staff College course in 2015.
- <sup>2</sup> Richard Strassler, *The Landmark Thucydides: a comprehensive guide to the Peloponnesian War*, Touchstone Books: New York, 1998, p. 16.
- <sup>3</sup> The concept of 'China choice', albeit primarily in relation to the US, was first propounded by Hugh White, 'Power Shift: Australia's future between Beijing and Washington', *Quarterly Essay*, No. 39, August 2010, abstract available at <<https://www.quarterlyessay.com/essay/2010/08/power-shift>> accessed 14 March 2016.
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- <sup>5</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Strong and Secure: a strategy for Australia's national security*, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet: Canberra, 2013, p. 4.
- <sup>6</sup> Australian Government, *Australia in the Asian Century*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade: Canberra, 2013, p. 23.
- <sup>7</sup> Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Strong and Secure*, p. 22.
- <sup>8</sup> Peter Jennings, 'Move Closer to US to Avoid Bowing to China', *Australian Financial Review*, 17 February 2014.
- <sup>9</sup> Department of Defence, *2013 Defence White Paper*, p. 11.
- <sup>10</sup> David Hale, 'China's New Dream - How Will Australia and the World Cope with the Re-Emergence of China as a Great Power?', Special Report, Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI): Canberra, 12 February 2014, p. 3, available at <<https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/chinas-new-dream-how-will-australia-and-the-world-cope-with-the-re-emergence-of-china-as-a-great-power>> accessed 15 March 2016.
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# Towards a More Comprehensive Understanding of Strategic Thinking

**Major Leon Young, Australian Army**

Developing organizational capability for strategic thinking can be one of the most significant contributions executives and managers can make to organizational performance.<sup>1</sup>

## Introduction

The absence of good strategic thinking may rest on a poor understanding of the epistemology. Recent online dialogues through the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) and 'The Conversation' blog have demonstrated not only the diverse application of the word 'strategy' but also the commonly-acknowledged perception that we (Australia) need to be better at doing 'it'.<sup>2</sup>

It is the intention of this article to provide a working definition of 'it', that is, strategic thinking, to allow further structured development in this area. The article will explore the contemporary usage of the term 'strategy' and its associated cognitive process, 'strategic thinking'. This analysis will reveal that strategic thinking is a way of thinking that looks to create long-term value.

The ADF has not been immune to failures in strategic thinking. A senior Army commander deployed to the Middle Eastern Area of Operations during 2011 stated that the ADF needed to identify and develop commanders that thinking at the strategic (macro) level in order to design and implement effective campaign plans.<sup>3</sup> Similarly a senior RAAF officer from Air Force Headquarters stated in 2012 that there was plenty of room to improve the education of military planners to think in terms of effects instead of aircraft.<sup>4</sup>

The lack of strategic thinking is not limited to the military. Ingrid Bonn has argued that strategic thinking is crucial to remaining competitive in an increasing turbulent and global environment, and that the need for strategic thinking has never been greater.<sup>5</sup> This claim is based on a comprehensive research project of a large body of corporate executives, who all asserted that their main developmental problem was strategic thinking.

At the national level, Australia has arguably fared little better. Ross Babbage asserted in 2008 that the National Security Committee of Cabinet tended to focus much of its attention on immediate issues with far too little attention on 'longer-term strategic shaping'.<sup>6</sup> He contended that this short-term focus led, in turn, to senior officials neglecting the development of strategic staff skills. Along similar lines, Allan Behm proposed that this short-term focus is a consequence of Australia's lack of confidence in the conduct of strategic diplomacy, a view shared by former Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, who asserted that it also contributed to Australia's perceived lack of strategic independence.<sup>7</sup> So what is strategic thinking? For that matter, what is strategy?

## A brief foray into strategy

According to Douglas Lovelace, Director of the US Strategic Studies Institute:

We tend to use strategy as a general term for a plan, a concept, a course of action, or a 'vision' of the direction in which to proceed at the personal, organizational, and governmental—local, state, or federal—levels. Such casual use of the term to describe nothing more than 'what we would like to do next' is inappropriate and belies the complexity of true strategy and strategic thinking.<sup>8</sup>

Any discussion on strategy is bound to include an argument over definitions. The term is widely used across a range of domains. For instance, there are currently 4.8 million articles listed on Google Scholar that contain the word 'strategy', with at least 391,000 articles containing 'strategy' in the title. The search revealed titles ranging from very specific tasks ('strategy for detection of prostate cancer' and 'the split-



apply-combine strategy for data analysis') to organisational ('international marketing strategy', 'human research strategy' and 'the luxury strategy') to the state ('competing visions for US grand strategy' and 'a grand strategy for America').

The unfortunate position is that the term strategy has, in the words of Hew Strachan, 'acquired a universality which has robbed it of meaning'.<sup>9</sup> Richard Hooker terms it a minefield where, in the military domain alone, we find national security strategy, national defence strategy, national military strategy, grand strategy, coalition strategy, regional strategy, theatre strategy, and campaign strategy.<sup>10</sup> Hooker goes on to explain that the word derives from the Greek *stratègia*, meaning 'generalship', or *stratègos*, meaning 'my leader'.

Classically, strategy was quite literally 'the art of the general' that eventually implied the duties of military governors. Colin Gray claims that the only accepted aspect of strategy that is 'known, indeed is uncontested, is the universal and eternal fact that strategy is always made by, in, and for a political process'.<sup>11</sup> The emphasis on political is quite deliberate because, as George Tovstiga has asserted, 'strategy is practised in social contexts'.<sup>12</sup>

Carl von Clausewitz stated that strategy is 'the employment of the battle as the means towards the attainment of the object of war'.<sup>13</sup> Gray expanded this definition to define it as:

[S]trategy is the bridge that relates military power to political purpose; it is neither military power *per se* nor political purpose. By strategy I mean the use that is made of force and the threat of force for the ends of policy.<sup>14</sup>

Gray takes great pains to ensure the reader understands the difference between cause and consequence or instrument from effect. Using the example of airpower, Gray states that the term 'strategic airpower' is wrong, as it confuses the 'capability with effect'. Instead one should refer to the 'strategic effect of airpower', as this ensures that the capability or instrument (airpower) is not mistaken for the effect. He argues that airpower in this case is merely a tool that can be employed to achieve tactical or strategic effects, and that strategic always refers to the consequences of military behaviour, not its conduct.<sup>15</sup>

To link strategy to the military domain is understandable given its epistemological ancestry. To state that strategy furthers policy ends would, however—in the view of Robert Kennedy—misrepresent the 'end-ways-means' strategic framework and strip it as 'an important tool of at every level of human endeavour'.<sup>16</sup> Kennedy argues that policy should be viewed as a means and thus serve broader national goals; in fact, the sum total of such policies is (or at least should be) a product of a grander strategy and, under such circumstances, policies serve strategy.<sup>17</sup> Policy then is merely another means, or even capability, within the national arsenal that can be used to further national ends or goals.

Late last century, Williamson Murray and Mark Grimsley remarked that confining strategy to military matters was overly restrictive and did not really reflect the contemporary understanding of strategy.<sup>18</sup> Julia Sloan summarises the contemporary (non-military) understanding of strategy as 'imply[ing] a will to win, an element of competition, a process or framework to win, an extended time horizon, determination of a broad and major aim, unifying intent, and decision about resource allocation'.<sup>19</sup> Tony Grundy, in his recent book on management strategy, describes strategy as 'how you get from where you are now to where you want to be—and with real competitive advantage'.<sup>20</sup>

## What makes strategy, strategy?

I see strategy as the purposeful actions undertaken by an actor within a specific environment with the intention of shaping future outcomes to the actor's benefit.<sup>21</sup>

Good strategy almost always looks this simple and obvious.<sup>22</sup>

### ***Connecting capabilities with effects***

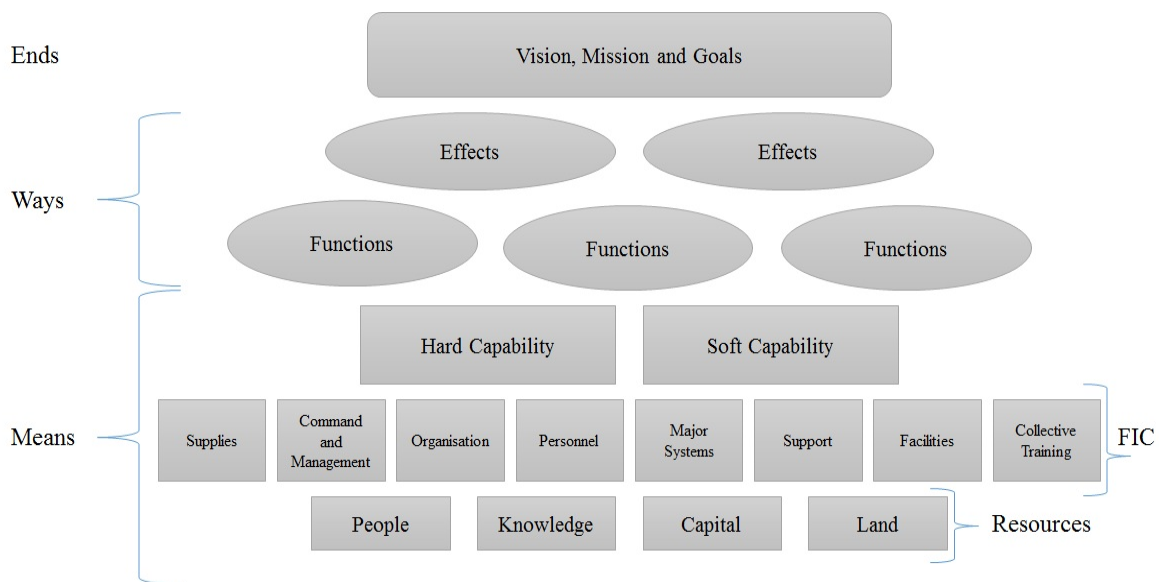
Strategy is about connecting your capabilities with your intended effects or 'the integrated application of available means to accomplish desired ends'.<sup>23</sup> The US Army War College defines the strategy framework as:

[T]he relationship among ends, ways, and means. Ends are the objectives or goals sought. Means are the resources available to pursue the objectives. And ways or methods are how one organizes and applies the resources.<sup>24</sup>

Recently adopted by the ADF, this framework has proven to be very popular in modern strategy literature.<sup>25</sup> Indeed, Richard Chilcoat has similarly defined strategic art as the ‘skilful formulation, coordination, and application of ends (objectives), ways (courses of action), and means (supporting resources) to promote and defend the national interests’.<sup>26</sup>

While this strategic framework is very military-centric, and does not appear to be fully embraced by the business world, there is still some utility in this thinking. The ‘means’ are another term for an organisation’s capabilities, the ‘ways’ can be viewed as the functions and effects of the capabilities, and the ‘ends’ are the organisation’s positioning or vision. In these terms, Hussein Abbass defines strategy as ‘the “ways” in which we use the “means” (resources and capabilities) to reach and achieve the “ends” (objectives and goals)’.<sup>27</sup>

This view certainly aligns with Gray’s thoughts on separating the strategic effects (ends) from the capabilities (means), and David Jablonsky’s reworking of the traditional definition of strategy as ‘the calculated relationship of ends and means’.<sup>28</sup> Combining our understanding of resources, inputs to capability, capabilities and effects, with this understanding of the strategic framework can be presented as shown at Figure 1.



**Figure 1: Mapping capability to strategy<sup>29</sup>**

***Planning for the long term***

Strategy is also about planning not doing. Quoting Wayne Hughes, Gray states that ‘[s]trategists plan, tacticians do’.<sup>30</sup> Sloan has called it a ‘framework to win’, while William Cook saw that strategy pushed the ‘existing system towards that [planned] reality’.<sup>31</sup> In his insightful book on the difference between good and bad strategy, Richard Rumelt has asserted that good strategy has ‘coherence, coordinating actions, policies and resources so as to accomplish an important end’.<sup>32</sup> Strategy, to his mind, is not a proven method but rather a ‘new hypothesis and its implementation an experiment’. Hence, it is about planning, with Rumelt also making a clear connection between ends and resources.

Strategy is also focused on the future. Sloan believes that strategy involves an extended time horizon, which is because strategy provides a 'coherent blueprint to bridge the gap between the realities of today and a desired future'.<sup>33</sup> This view is endorsed by Cook, who believes that planning can only really be strategic when it sees a new reality and pushes the existing system to that reality.<sup>34</sup>

### ***Competition between actors***

Strategy involves competition between actors or wilful entities. The previous quotes by Sloan clearly define a level of competition, while Gray has stated that strategy was not a game played against nature. Thirty years earlier, Malvern Lumsden stated that a model only became strategic when 'the source of uncertainty in the outside world is another actor (an individual or a group), as it implied a choice of action that may result in more than one outcome'.<sup>35</sup>

More recently, Renee Malan, Ronel Erwee and Dennis Rose have articulated strategy as a competition for advantage.<sup>36</sup> This theme was reinforced by Kennedy, who saw it not just as an act of 'human intercourse' but about influencing behaviour by getting into the decision loop of others to 'get them to do what they might not otherwise have done'.<sup>37</sup>

### ***Independent action***

Strategy can only be practised by independent entities. While the use of the term strategy is varied and within a wide range of contexts, what appears to be common is that an effect is only strategic when it affects the whole system. Writers such as Lumsden and Malan refer to the organisation when they define strategy. Harry Yarger states that strategy 'differs from operational art and tactics in functional, temporal, and geographic aspects'.<sup>38</sup> Often, tactical actions are taken in response to a given task and accomplished with provided resources. Strategy, however, appears to rely on organic assets and the specific path is not directed by an external or superior agency.

Reflecting on the earlier quote from Lyon, strategy then is a future-orientated intent by an independent actor that connects capability with effect and seeks to create competitive advantage. However, as strategy results from strategic planning, can we conclude that strategic thinking is merely the act of strategic planning conducted by strategic thinkers? This, as it turns out, is a fallacy perpetuated by consistent misuse of the taxonomy. So how does strategic planning differ from strategic thinking? And what is strategic planning?

### ***Strategic planning is not strategic thinking***

Strategic thinking is often used as a synonym for strategic planning. It is actually the very utility of the word strategy and its many offspring that seem to create this confusion. The use of the terms 'strategic art' and 'strategic management' are two classic examples that serve to illustrate that one of the basic conceptions still widely accepted is analogising 'strategic thinking' with 'thinking about strategy'.<sup>39</sup>

This is despite the highly-acclaimed and widely-accepted work of Henry Mintzberg, expounded in 1994, that strategic thinking could be distinguished from strategic planning, with Mintzberg arguing that 'strategic planning does not mean strategic thinking so much as formalized thinking about strategy—rationalized, decomposed, articulated'.<sup>40</sup>

This is not to say that strategic planning is outmoded or has no place in contemporary usage; rather, it should never be confused with strategic thinking. Ingrid Bonn is in good company when she describes strategic planning as 'a process that takes place after strategic thinking'.<sup>41</sup> Strategic thinking is not strategic planning, even if it is comprehensive and long term. Strategic thinking generally takes place before strategic planning, although it also should be engaged throughout the whole process.

## What is strategic thinking?

Strategic thinking, in contrast, is about synthesis. It involves intuition and creativity.<sup>42</sup>

Countries that invest in strategic thinking and planning have more capacity to deliver better quality policy. Countries that don't take strategy seriously risk policy drift and ultimately losing national advantage.<sup>43</sup>

Like the term strategy, strategic thinking is equally mired in confusion. According to Bonn, there is no agreement in the literature on what strategic thinking is, which is perhaps because it has almost become accepted as an axiom within the strategy field.<sup>44</sup> It could refer to simple interactions between two competitors, such as that used in game theory and cognitive heuristics.<sup>45</sup> Alternatively, it could refer to the ability to think in a manner that is creative, innovative and with vision.<sup>46</sup>

Reflecting back on the 'ends, ways, means' strategic framework, Abbass defines strategic thinking as 'the creative process used to design and connect the means, ways and ends'.<sup>47</sup> Given the diversity of uses of the term 'strategic thinking', any study into strategic thinking models would logically require a working definition based on the consensus of contemporary experts in the field.

When reviewing the literature for this research, almost all of the authors prefaced their articles and text on strategic thinking with a short comment stating that there is very little consensus on the meaning of strategic thinking. Some, like Lara Jelenc and Paul Swiercz, claimed that strategic thinking has turned into a synonym for almost all of the concepts, with strategic as their first word.<sup>48</sup> It was seen to be difficult because there did not exist a clear definition, rather a number of 'slightly moderated descriptions and attributes'.<sup>49</sup>

However, the epistemology allows us to understand the foundations and common usage of the term 'strategic thinking'. Due to the variety of use, this article seeks to establish the key concepts common among authors, and use these to map strategic thinking domains. The domains are then used to create a definition that reflects contemporary usage of strategic thinking across business and government sectors.

### ***Strategic thinking domains***

Since 1978, the evolution of the concept 'strategic thinking' has occurred over four quite stable domains: creating value; means-ends thinking; future orientation; and way of thinking. Interestingly, several of the definitions provided cross-references across several of the domains (such as future orientation/create value or way of thinking/future orientation).

#### *Create value*

Strategic thinking, be it from a national, military or commercial perspective, has always been about creating an advantage for your organisation or system. In fact, this domain was front-and-centre from the start of the literature review. Kenichi Ohmae saw it as a combination of analytical method and mental elasticity used to gain competitive advantage.<sup>50</sup> The two great writers on business strategy, Henry Mintzberg and Michael Porter, both reinforced this view as simply creating value. However, over the next two decades, the domain evolved to include innovation and developing unique opportunities.<sup>51</sup>

This focus on creative development appears to be influenced from the cognitive traits that started to appear in the 'way of thinking' domain. The cross-domain influences are most apparent in the description that is summed up as a 'cognitive process that contemplates the future to create a competitive advantage'.<sup>52</sup>

#### *Means-ends thinking*

The domain of 'means-ends thinking is derived from military theorists such as Chilcoat, Gray and Yarger, and others such as Reed Larson and David Hansen, who strongly support the ends-ways-means strategic framework.<sup>53</sup> This domain really looks at grounding strategic thinking and calls for practical application. The goals or aspirations need to be connected to the resources and capabilities (means) that are available or required by the organisation to produce the advantage or effect (ends).

Interestingly, this domain had the least number of references, which were almost solely sourced from military theorists. The lack of recent literature that specifically mention mean-ends could be due to strong agreement within the military field, yet little cross-pollination in the organisational management fields, although Malan’s description (way of solving strategic problems) resonates in this domain.

### Future orientation

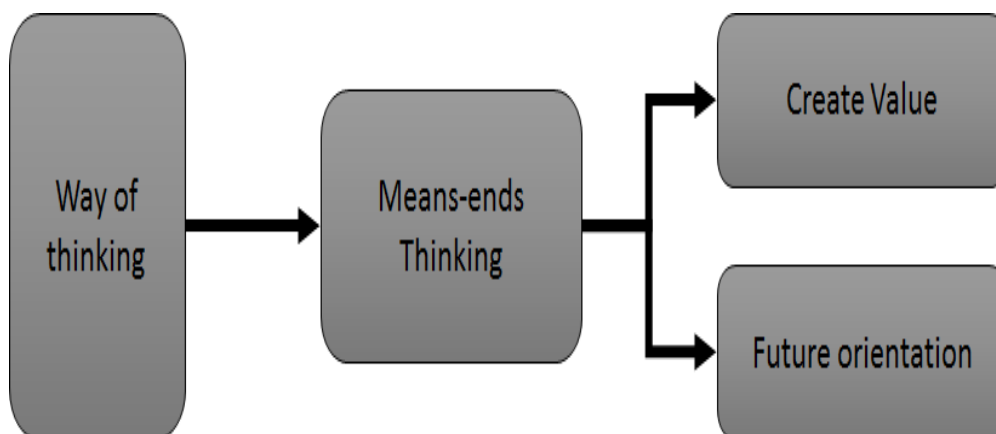
The focus on the future is sporadic until Bonn invoked the use of visions. This could be seen as a cross-over from means-ends as an influence of ensuring that strategic thinking focuses on the ends or goals. This, according to Bonn, would require a vision of the future. From 2001, there is support for a future or temporal orientation within strategic thinking, with a number of writers describing strategic thinking as affecting the future of the system or organisation.<sup>54</sup>

### Way of thinking

Mintzberg pushed the point that strategic thinking was not strategic planning. While this has already been discussed, the recurring domain throughout the literature is that strategic thinking is a way of thinking or a state of mind. Jeanne Liedtka specifically states that it is a way of thinking, and both Bonn and Malan describe it as a ‘way of solving strategic problems’.<sup>55</sup> It appears to be from this perspective that we start to see the introduction of cognitive styles, from K. Pelligrino and Jerry Carbo and the investigation by Bonn, Liedtka, Malan and others of specific cognitive traits that correlate to strategic thinking.<sup>56</sup>

### **Strategic thinking definition**

Importantly, each domain is independent of the other, as indicated by the number of definitions that only link to one domain. However, there appears to be a distinct flow. For instance, Fiona Graetz has stated that strategic thinking seeks ‘innovation and imagines very different futures’, indicating that ‘different futures’ (future orientation) is a result of ‘innovation’ (way of thinking).<sup>57</sup> Similarly, Iraj Tavakoli and Judith Lawton state that strategic thinking is a cognitive process (way of thinking) that creates competitive advantage (create value).<sup>58</sup> This flow is represented in Figure 2.



**Figure 2: Strategic thinking domain flow**

### **Implications for the ADF**

Based on the review of the literature, this article would define strategy as ‘a future-orientated intent by an independent actor that connects capability with effect and seeks to create competitive advantage’ and strategic thinking as a ‘means-ends way of thinking that is future orientated and seeks to create value or

an advantage for the system'. This foundational work then allows us to understand the implications for the ADF.

Firstly, it can be argued that contemporary military forces (specifically the ADF) no longer make strategy. This is primarily based on the logic that the military is no longer an independent actor. While contentious, this view understands that the ADF rarely operates, either domestically or internationally, by itself. That is, the ADF is almost always accompanied by other Australian government agencies. These other agencies, such as Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade or the Attorney-General's Department, have primacy in an emergency or security response. Thus the ADF does not create strategy even though it provides a strategic effect.

As a profession, we always rely on a provided direction and rarely, if ever, operate alone. Usually, the direction is given through the political system and always shows itself as 'commander's intent' within the military-planning tools. This does not mean the military should abandon the development of strategic thinking. The military often plans for low-probability, high-impact events and should always be prepared to operate in a command vacuum, where intent is either not provided or unclear. Secondly, and probably more importantly, strategic thinkers have huge utility in modern warfare. The complex and dynamic nature of war requires strategic thinking. Additionally, it is often the military which is best placed to advise political leadership on the most appropriate strategy, in the holistic sense.

## Conclusion

An historical analysis of the modern evolution of the use of strategic thinking allows us to understand its current place in world. While strategy is firmly rooted in a strong military foundation, the versatility of the word has seen a proliferation across most modern domains. However, this should not excuse the misuse or dilution of the term.

What this article has shown is that there has been a consistent trend since the end of Vietnam War to link strategic thinking with the proper use of strategy. That is, strategy is a 'future-orientated intent by an independent actor that connects capability with effect and seeks to create competitive advantage'; while strategic thinking is a 'means-ends way of thinking that is future orientated and seeks to create value or an advantage for the system'.

By limiting the strategy to independent actors, it has been argued that most modern militaries are unable to create strategy. While a contentious point, perhaps it is this unconscious realisation that has led to our past failures in strategic thinking. However, it is also clear that the military profession should not abandon strategic thinking. It is the military that is generally best placed to advise the often short-term political leadership on the most appropriate strategies for the increasingly-complex and dynamic environments we find ourselves in.

*Major Leon D. Young was the 2015 Chief of Defence Force Fellow. He has deployed on operations, been part of joint, coalition and international operational planning headquarters, and provided input and advice on strategic policy. He has taught post-graduate courses on strategy, capability and future studies. He is a member of the Association of Professional Futurists, World Futures Society, Australian Society of Operations Research and an international speaker on futures. He holds a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Operations Research.*



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## Book reviews

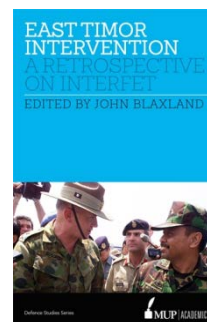
### ***East Timor Intervention: a retrospective on INTERFET***

John Blaxland (ed.)

Melbourne University Press: Melbourne, 2015, 328 pages

ISBN: 978-0-5228-6776-3

\$59.99



**Reviewed by Dr Stephanie Koorey, Deakin University**

Evolving out of a collaboration between Military History and Heritage Victoria and the Australian National University, this engaging collection of essays covers the build-up to the crisis in East Timor, and the response in 1999 in the form of INTERFET (International Intervention Force East Timor).

INTERFET was an international, Australian-led coalition into the small island of East Timor, then part of Indonesia. Following escalating Indonesian violence after an overwhelming referendum for independence in September 1999, Australia was tasked by the UN to work with Indonesia and Portugal, the former colonial power of East Timor, to deploy a peacekeeping force into the half-island. INTERFET was the second of three sequential UN-mandated missions, each with different mandates.

INTERFET was a small but significant slice of Australian and Asia-Pacific history. It was not the largest Australian-led intervention. Australia had led the UN intervention into Cambodia earlier that decade. As General Sir Peter Cosgrove points out in his chapter, INTERFET 'was the first time that in such a large force the commander, the major headquarters, the majority of the troops and the overwhelming preponderance of the logistic assets were Australian'. Former Prime Minister John Howard echoes this point, stating in his foreword that by 1999, INTERFET 'was the most decisive demonstration of Australian capacity and influence in our region since World War Two'.

The great strengths of this work are in the big voices behind the contributions, the international diversity of the contributions, and the strategic, operational and tactical insights they all bring. The book is also engagingly well-written, and each chapter is easy to become absorbed in.

The calibre of the contributions is clear in the roll call of contributors who were involved in INTERFET. In addition to Prime Minister Howard and commander Cosgrove, there are contributions by Australian and international senior military officers, as well as operational commanders and officers, who each contribute their own compelling experiences and perspectives. The vital role of the Australian Federal Police (AFP) is given voice through a chapter by Federal Agent Marty Hess. While Blaxland gives a comprehensive acknowledgement of the literature on the East Timor intervention, until Hess's chapter, the role of the AFP has often been overlooked, only previously and vividly portrayed by the compelling ABC television film 'Answered by Fire'.

During a visit to the Indonesian Defence Force Headquarters in Jakarta in 2009, this reviewer was fortunate in being able to pause and reflect at the Seroja Memorial to the Indonesian military, police and civilians killed in East Timor while it was part of Indonesia. Having grown up with an Australian perspective on the Indonesian occupation of East Timor, and previously written on the East Timorese armed struggle, this was a sobering and educational experience. The chapter from martial law and military commander Major General Kiki Syahnakri brings this often overlooked Indonesian military perspective into light.

While compiling a single work from numerous contributors brings its own challenges, this work suffers from very few incoherencies or inconsistencies. It also acknowledges up front that there were numerous others involved in East Timor at the time, particularly the non-government and international organizations, as well as many others from the 21 contributing countries. Importantly, this book

acknowledges at the outset that at the political and military levels, INTERFET placed a huge strain on the Australia-Indonesia relationship.

The book largely celebrates INTERFET as a successful mission. Indeed, chapter contributor Bob Breen has previously branded INTERFET as 'Mission Accomplished'. After its quarter of a century of armed and political struggle, East Timor did achieve liberation—and INTERFET was also very low on coalition battle-casualties. Further, Damien Kingsbury draws the conclusion that six years before the adoption of the 'Responsibility to Protect' by the international community in 2005, INTERFET can be seen as the 'first explicit example' of where its core principles, and obligations to respond, can be retrospectively tested.

While not all works can be all things to all people, this book could have had a stronger East Timorese perspective. There are two chapters devoted to East Timorese perspectives of the intervention: one co-authored by East Timorese students at the Australian National University (who do not appear to have been given papers to either conference from which the other contributions came), and one from former East Timorese military and political leader Xanana Gusmao.

However, the Timorese civilian and security sector perspective could have been given more prominence. This is especially so as there is now an East Timorese military officer cohort keen to engage with Australia and the region. As Hess reminds the reader in his chapter's conclusion, '[t]he cost [of the referendum ballot] for the East Timorese people was very high, in terms of post-ballot casualties, and it is they who should be the ultimate arbiters of whether the sacrifice involved in conducting the ballot was worth it or not'.

In his final chapter, Blaxland reminds the reader of how the winning triumvirate of Gusmao, Cosgrove and Syahnakri are 'emblematic' of the enduring positive relationships between East Timor, Australia and Indonesia. But he also cautions how easily the intervention could have spiralled out of control. This must be an equally-enduring memory.

The only apparent inconsistency is in the spelling of the acronym for the East Timorese liberation army: Forças Armadas De Libertação Nacional de Timor Leste (Armed Forces for the National Liberation of East Timor). In some chapters it is FALINTIL, in others it is FALANTIL. The more common is the former, although it is a particularly Australian predilection to use the latter.

All up, this book has done an excellent job of capturing and presenting the thoughts and experiences of many senior people involved in INTERFET. It should be a useful companion for scholars, those interested in Australian foreign policy and military history, and the general reader alike.

## ***Hunter Killer: inside the lethal world of drone warfare***

T. Mark McCurley, with Kevin Maurer  
Allen & Unwin: Sydney, 2016, 368 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-7602-9217-1  
\$32.99



### **Reviewed by Air Commodore Mark Lax, OAM, CSM (Retd)**

Most observers of the evening news bulletins will have seen the effects of an air strike on a terrorist compound or training camp. The imagery is captivating if not voyeuristic. The author of this work calls it 'Pred Porn'. More than in the past, such strikes are often carried out by remotely-piloted aircraft (RPA). With the wars in Afghanistan, Iraq, Yemen and Syria requiring an increased demand for intelligence, surveillance and firepower without the risk to aircrew, one answer is the Predator. This book is about one such RPA, the MQ-1 Predator, a deadly machine that has been on operations in that theatre for over a decade.

While dozens of books have been written about the exploits of the SAS, Delta Force, commandos, snipers, US Marines and the like, little has been written about the air war and the contribution air makes to the joint fight. It is the mostly unseen air war that has had a profound effect on and shaped modern combat operations. Every ground sub-unit now has access to direct-feed video of their surroundings provided by airborne sensors, and every sub-unit can now call in a Predator strike to rescue them from a sticky situation. Knowing how this is done and the safeguards in place makes this book important reading for all members of the profession of arms.

Despite years of trying to convince the media that RPAs are not mindless drones, the term 'drone' persists. However, these aircraft are anything but mindless. Each requires a sophisticated ground control centre which hosts a pilot and sensor operator, a secure communications system between aircraft and controller and between controller, and the Joint Operations Centre. It is the sensor operator who finds and locks on to the target. It is the JOC that gives the order to fire a Hellfire missile, after higher level clearance, and the JOC that decides mission, target and monitors rules of engagement. This complex system involves hundreds of people. Through this book we learn that the in-theatre crew prepare, maintain, launch and recover the Predator but the mission flying is done from a base in New Mexico. All commanded and controlled through secure satellite links.

To be cleared to operate the Predator, a pilot and sensor operator must undergo an intensive training course, regular flight assessments and, finally, pass a strenuous qualification test before being posted to a Predator squadron. Flying is done in shifts, with the Predator airborne for up to 24 hours or more, so the crews get eight hours on station before relief. This book tells the story of the training, the missions and how the Predator is flown and indeed fought in a readable and easily understood format unlike much previously available to the general public.

The author is experienced Predator pilot, US Air Force Lieutenant Colonel T. Mark McCurley, who tells the story as part biographic, part operational discourse. He also tells of the ridiculous demands on the Predator squadron and how inter-Service rivalry in the US forces is still rife. At one point, he complains that Predators get blamed for every combat error even when not tasked. McCurley describes the problems he faced in taking command of a Predator squadron which had low morale and used sloppy procedures. He explains how he turned the unit around.

Interestingly, given the American obsession with mission secrecy, McCurley specifically covers in detail the Predator stalking of three significant terrorist targets—the American-born terrorist Anwar Al-Awlaki, Abu Musab al-Zarqawi and one he calls 'the Facilitator'. While they got Al-Awlaki and the Facilitator, a simple mistake allowed Zarqawi to escape. It is a riveting story.

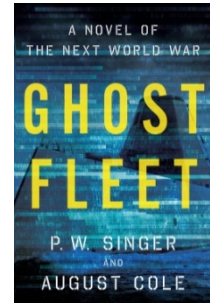
Fortunately for the general reader, McCurley had the foresight to seek the help of a professional journalist, Kevin Maurer, to assist in removing the military jargon, acronyms and, critically for the success of the book, to add a level of suspense to the narrative. As such, the book reads much more like a Tom Clancy novel than an operator's manual and it is a great read. The chase to catch Anwar al-Awlaki across Yemen in 2011 is one such example. This makes it appealing to a much wider audience than otherwise might be expected.

I rate this 'highly recommended' for all professional military officers, those generally interested in the counter-terrorism war, the air war of the future, and for the Chief of Air Force's reading list for 2016.



## ***Ghost Fleet: a novel of the next world war***

P.W. Singer and August Cole  
Houghton Mifflin Harcourt: New York, 2015, 404 pages  
ISBN: 978-0-5441-4284-8  
US\$28.00



**Reviewed by Wing Commander Jo Brick, Royal Australian Air Force**

In 2005, Brian Nichiporuk published a report to guide US Army force structure planning, using ‘alternative futures’ methodology. The report used five development variables—geopolitics, economics, demographics, technology, and the environment—as a foundation for building six plausible versions of the security environment for the future.

These six ‘alternative futures’ were used as the compelling narrative to assist US Army planners in constructing six alternative force structures. The study is a useful demonstration of how imagining the future can provide guidance about the security environment that military forces are likely to face, and whether existing or planned capabilities are up to the task.

In *Ghost Fleet*, P.W. Singer, author of *Wired for War*, and August Cole, Director of the Art of Future War project at the Atlantic Council, deliver a scenario involving war between China and the US. The new Chinese government—a technocratic diarchy between business and the military, called ‘The Directorate’—attacks and seizes Hawaii after the Chinese discover a source of gas in the Mariana Trench.

The story is told through a number of characters, including the captain of a US Navy ship, the USS Zumwalt; a female ‘hunter’ exacting revenge on the Chinese occupiers of Oahu; a band of insurgents; and a Branson-esque entrepreneur and inventor who offers one side a technological advantage as a means to restore peace. Through these characters, Singer and Cole write a detailed narrative of what a future war would look like. It is one involving the destruction of space-based systems, cyber warfare and unmanned systems, which coalesce with societal changes such as the ready use of ‘stims’ to boost human performance and the use of ‘viz’ (similar to Google Glass) technology as a means of managing information, education and training.

These technologies are current or are viable developments for the near future, and the story demonstrates how they may be used in a war between global hegemonies. For military forces such as the ADF, which invest heavily in the latest high-technology weapon systems, the more sobering parts of the story involve the exploitation of the vulnerabilities of such systems and the ensuing powerlessness of such forces.

One salient example involves the downing of a F-35 after its microprocessors, which had been hacked with malicious code at the point of manufacture many months previously, are used as a homing signal for Chinese air-to-air missiles. This example also highlights the reality of military capability acquisition and sustainment: that the development, manufacture and sustainment of high-technology weapon systems relies heavily on partnerships between governments and corporations, and that the seams of this relationship can be exploited by nefarious actors.

An interesting aspect of Singer and Cole’s account is the story surrounding the insurgency against the Chinese occupation force in the Hawaii Special Administrative Zone. This story arc is perhaps the authors’ way of pointing out that we may have all the technology in the world but it will take more than technology to defeat a determined resistance movement. Further, this aspect of the story also identifies insurgencies as a type of conflict that will continue into the future. This is expected, given the prevalence of this type of conflict over that between states throughout history.

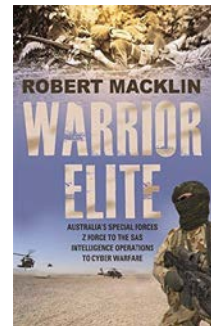
The focus on technology in *Ghost Fleet* is not surprising, given the depth of expertise of the authors in the field of future weapons and warfare. The detailed bibliography at the back of the book demonstrates the depth of research that forms the foundation of the book. However, the human element remains an important aspect of the nature of war and the only criticism to make about this story is the undue

emphasis on weapons technology over a deeper incorporation of the human aspects of the narrative. As Patton once commented, '[w]ars may be fought with weapons, but they are won by men'.

*Ghost Fleet* is a thoroughly enjoyable and insightful story that also provides us with plausible scenarios that highlight the vulnerabilities of high-technology military forces. For this reason, it is of direct relevance to the ADF, as each Service brings future concepts, such as the fifth-generation Air Force, to fruition.

## ***Warrior Elite: Australia's Special Forces Z Force to the SAS, intelligence operations to cyber warfare***

Robert Macklin  
Hachette: Sydney, 2015, 400 pages  
ISBN: 978-0-7336-3291-4  
\$35



### **Reviewed by Jim Truscott**

This book is the broadest history of Australian Special Operations that has ever been published and, as such, it draws a line in the sand for histories to come. Special Operations are essentially any government activity that requires clandestine measures—and the book traces their evolution from World War 2 until the present day.

Uniquely and arguably correctly, it brands the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) as 'Special Forces'. It also poses a prognosis for the future with the contention that Special Forces units in this widest sense across government are the future for security preparedness. It is almost as if the 'Big Army' will be there just to train Special Forces!

Most of the history is not new but it is a compilation in a way that has not been done before. At times, it is a colloquial history and, indeed, the account starts notably with the 2/2 Independent Company's refusal of an order to surrender in Timor, along with other operations in Timor, PNG and the Northern Territory by Special Operations Australia, including the so-called 'Nackeroos' (the North Australia Observation Unit) and the other independent companies. In hindsight, the fact that the Australian Special Operations capability was almost completely dismantled at the end of World War 2 was really quite amazing.

The history moves on to the establishment of the Commandos, SAS, ASIO, ASIS and the Defence Signals Directorate (DSD). It recounts spy scandals, jungle patrols and ambushes in Borneo, where Australia developed a pedigree in jungle and covert warfare, and five years of patrolling and helicopter operations in Vietnam. It describes targeting with electronic warfare support and how SAS sometimes provided plausible cover for electronic warfare activities. There are early relationships with US Special Forces and it accurately describes the arguments over the use of SAS in reconnaissance and direct action.

There is the period of the long military peace from 1971 until 1999, with a focus on ASIO and ASIS mandarins and the Canberra bureaucracy, the two Royal Commissions on Intelligence and Security, ASIS successes and failures in Indonesia, Chile, East Timor and Cambodia, the development of the counter terrorist capability and the growth of DSD. The account is made interesting by stories about the Sheraton hotel debacle, Soviet spies in Canberra, and economic intelligence gathering by ASIS in support of Australian business. There are a few minor inaccuracies but such is the difficulty of compiling a huge secret history like this. It is not an official history and maybe there will never be one.

The book describes the formation of Headquarters Special Forces and Headquarters 1<sup>st</sup> Commando Regiment to support the counter terrorism capability, the re-rolling of 4RAR as a commando unit, the Blackhawk helicopter disaster, growth in the Australian satellite system, and the involvement of DSD and

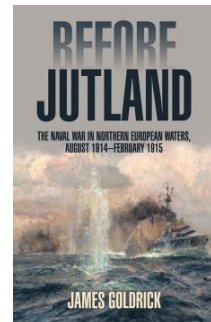
the Defence Imagery and Geospatial Organisation in operations in the Middle East, East Timor, the Sydney Olympics and the Tampa refugee crisis.

There is yet another inquiry into ASIS, more operations again in Afghanistan and Iraq, the convergence of Special Forces activities in East Timor and Afghanistan, the direct support of the Australian Signal Directorate (formally DSD) to SAS and Commandos in Afghanistan, and cyberwarfare against Chinese operations. The book concludes with counter-people smuggling, other homeland, border security and ongoing cyber operations.

By the necessity of government secrecy, a book like this can never reveal the complete history, and so it is a veritable potted history laced with human interest stories, making it very readable. The book finishes with the prediction of even more convergence of the pillars of Special Forces. While some may find this book off-putting or threatening, it should be mandatory reading for senior ADF officers, as well as those in other Government departments responsible for planning and executing Special Operations. One outcome is certain. The jihadists, people smugglers and Chinese cyber agencies will have already read it!

***Before Jutland:  
the naval war in northern European waters,  
August 1914 - February 1915***

James Goldrick  
Naval Institute Press: Annapolis, 2015, 382 pages  
ISBN: 978-1-5911-4349-9  
US\$44.95



**Reviewed by Commander Robert Woodham, RAN**

From a maritime perspective, the ‘Great War’ was pretty simple: the Royal Navy enforced a blockade, which turned the screws on the Germans in the war of attrition on land sufficiently that the German army eventually fell apart from within. There was an inconclusive action at Jutland—‘an assault on the gaoler, followed by a return to gaol’—which didn’t change anything, and oh, the German submarines made things a bit dicey. That’s about it, right?

In this fascinating and authoritative book, James Goldrick shows us that there is much more to the war at sea than this. He describes the ships, introduces the personalities, explains the technologies and sets the political context for maritime operations at the start of the Great War. Or the lack of war, since—although the British, Germans and Russians had spent a great deal of time and money in acquiring impressive battle fleets—they were then reticent about exposing them to risk.

The Royal Navy held back from a close blockade of Germany, basing the newly-named Grand Fleet in the Orkney Islands’ anchorage at Scapa Flow, while the Germans were even more timid in husbanding their naval strength. Like a chess-player who is down on his pieces, the Germans believed that losses could only be contemplated in situations where they could be certain that the Royal Navy would lose more.

It seems odd that the British, having spent enormous sums in building a large, modern battle fleet, then hid it away at a remote Scottish island as soon as hostilities began. The explanation is that the capital ships could not be provided with guaranteed protection from torpedo boats, and later on from submarines, either at sea or, perhaps more surprisingly, in their home ports. The basic concepts and practicalities of using screening ships in a coordinated manner with battleships had not been fully developed, much less practised to the minimum level of competence required in wartime. As the author notes ruefully, both sides suffered from this shortcoming, and would have to learn as they went along.

It is surprising, given that the Royal Navy had enjoyed a century of ‘Pax Britannica’ in which to prepare for a major war that everyone had seen coming, that in some respects they were unprepared when it

arrived. The book discusses problems with propulsion and hull design, the want of training, the lack of secure bases, and inexpert command and control. The Germans also struggled with problems which one might consider foreseeable, such as being unable to obtain high-quality steaming coal from Wales, as they did before the war, and finding the quality of their own coal lacking. There are lessons here for us all.

The submarine started the war as something of an unknown capability but soon proved that, handled well, it could be a serious threat. Early attitudes to this submarine threat by the Royal Navy were sometimes naïve, with tragic consequences. For example, the book recounts the sinking of three Royal Navy cruisers, HM Ships *Cressy*, *Aboukir* and *Hogue*, which were obligingly steaming at slow speed, and without zigzagging, when the first of them, *Aboukir*, was attacked by the German submarine U9. When HMS *Hogue* stopped in the water to pick up survivors, she too was torpedoed and sunk. This did not deter *Cressy* from reducing speed to dead slow in order to pick up survivors of the previous two attacks and, by this stage one would have thought predictably, taking her turn to be torpedoed and sunk too.

Other new technologies brought their own uncertainties. The fledgling air arms, including the use of airships by the Germans, probably did not contribute much at this early stage of the war. As the author points out, 'most aviators, whether in fixed wing or lighter-than-air machines, were doing well if they managed to take off and land safely, let alone conduct a mission'.

Radio communication was in its infancy, yet clearly played an important part, although it was not the technology itself which provided challenges but rather the manner of its employment. Even simple matters, such as providing unambiguous geographical positions in contact reports, were not always thought through, and generated confusion at times.

A further fascinating thread to the story is that, in late October 1914, the Royal Navy gained the ability to break German codes. This was achieved through the capture of a complete set of code books from three locations, namely the North Sea, by the Russians from the German cruiser *Magdeburg* in the Baltic, and also by the RAN. The Royal Navy also made effective use of direction finding and traffic analysis, even when the actual messages could not be decrypted.

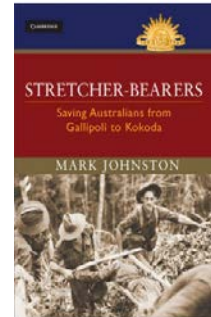
There is a lot of detail in this book, including thorough descriptions of the various naval actions which took place, including German raids on England's east coast, the battle of the Dogger Bank, numerous minor actions and skirmishes in the North Sea, and the generally-successful mining operations by the Russians in the Baltic. But a great strength of the book is the attention which James Goldrick also gives to various broader themes: command and control, operational art, and social pressures arising from social change as well as from the personalities involved. And there are certainly some big personalities in this story, including Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty, and Admiral Jackie Fisher as First Sea Lord.

This book has many attractions, not least of which is the fluent and compelling writing style. I found it an absolute joy to read. I expect to re-read it before long, suspecting that I may have missed many a gem in the text, not through any opacity of expression but simply because there is so much information to assimilate. The book is well presented, with photographs of the principal characters and ships, and provided with a comprehensive index, notes and bibliography.

This book is informative, engaging and thought-provoking, and certainly achieves its aim to be a definitive study of the war at sea in northern European waters up to 1915. Given that this is the scope of the book, may we hope for sequels? I thoroughly recommend it to the *ADF Journal's* readers.

## ***Stretcher-Bearers: saving Australians from Gallipoli to Kokoda***

Mark Johnston  
Cambridge University Press: Port Melbourne, 2014,  
ISBN: 978-1-1070-8719-4  
\$59.95



### **Reviewed by Captain Ryan Blignaut, Australian Army**

The cry 'Stretcher-Bearer!' has resonated on the cliffs of the Gallipoli peninsula and echoed through the jungles of Kokoda. Very few 21<sup>st</sup> century soldiers would argue the vital importance of medical intervention on the front line. But this indulgence was not always shared by the men of the Australian Imperial Force. It was only through valour and perseverance that the men emblazoned with an 'SB' brassard earned the respect and admiration that we have come to know today. It is the legacy of the 'body-snatchers' that author Mark Johnson has endeavoured to capture in his chronological and pictorial account, *Stretcher Bearers*.

The book befittingly and beautifully launches with a detailed description of a 'Mark II' ambulance stretcher. This elucidation of the most basic of medical hardware enforces the theme, 'I was only doing my job'. One of the most interesting aspects of the book is certainly the early opinion that stretcher-bearers should be chosen from the weak or from those who might be 'anti-violence' inclined. However, these men proved themselves to be capable and courageous, as iterated by General Sir Ian Hamilton when speaking on the events of the Gallipoli campaign, saying 'No braver corps [Medical Corps] existed, and I believe the reason to be that all thought of self is instinctively flung aside when the saving of others is the motive'.

The contrasting duality of purpose between the service of war and the service of humanity forms the essence of heroic tales and stoicism beyond comprehension. The book uses photographs to illustrate this duality, depicting the mortality of the men while compassionately carrying out their duties. The majority of the book contains the aforementioned photographs accompanied by short narratives on their origin, location and history (where available). These images cover several World War I and II theatres, including Gallipoli, Palestine, the Western Front, Middle East and the jungle campaigns.

The book concludes as poignantly as it begins by providing a biopic of Private George Fowler, a 22-year-old stretcher-bearer, Military Medal recipient, husband and father. His citation read, 'continued with ceaseless energy to attend and to carry wounded to the dressing station despite heavy sniping and artillery fire from the enemy. By his unselfish devotion to duty he was instrumental in the saving of life and his cool and gallant bearing set an example to all'. Private Fowler was sadly killed by artillery fire in his Battalion's last fight in Australia's final week of fighting in World War I. Set against the backdrop of his youthful photograph, it not only delivers a testament to the spirit of the stretcher-bearers but serves as a reminder of the fee associated with valour-inducing scenarios.

Overall, this is a beautifully written book oozing hours of research and passion. The great value of this book to all ADF medical personnel creates hesitation in criticising it in any way. As a General Service Officer within the Royal Australian Army Medical Corps, I would recommend it to all my colleagues. It epitomises the Australian spirit of mateship and loyalty, and would therefore leave a lasting impression on a broad range of readers interested in such matters.

## Reading lists

Professional military reading plays a vital role in developing knowledge that will assist with good judgment, effective leadership and the pursuit of excellence.

Each of the single Services regularly publishes a 'recommended reading list' for its officers. The listings are not meant to be exhaustive but provide a starting point to find material according to an individual's particular interests.

They are recommended to all ADF officers, and to others who wish to further their professional education and development.

### **Chief of Navy's reading list**

<<https://www.navy.gov.au/spc/publications/chief-navy-reading-list/cn-reading-list-2014>>

### **Chief of Army's reading list**

<[http://www.army.gov.au/~media/Files/Our%20future/LWSC%20Publications/SP/sp323\\_CAs\\_Reading\\_List\\_2012-Land%20Warfare%20Studies%20Centre.pdf](http://www.army.gov.au/~media/Files/Our%20future/LWSC%20Publications/SP/sp323_CAs_Reading_List_2012-Land%20Warfare%20Studies%20Centre.pdf)>

### **Chief of Air Force's reading list**

<<http://airpower.airforce.gov.au/Publications/Details/581/CAF-Reading-List-2014.aspx>>