defender

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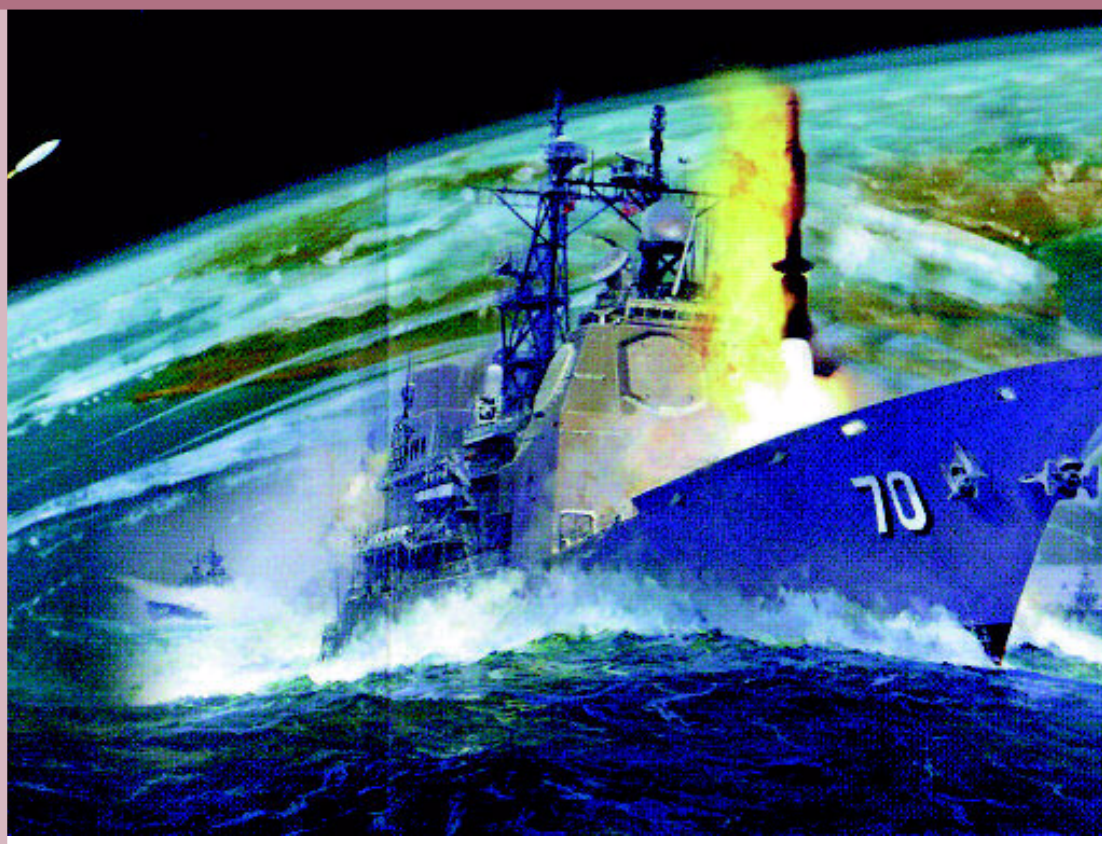
this issue

- Decoding the language of ballistic missile defence
- A critique of Owen Harries' Boyer Lectures
- The Pacific's broken-backed States?
- Border protection and the limits of ADF obedience
- The future of sky marshals



- Stretching the F-111 past 2010
- Improving the ADF's strategic mobility

defender

THE NATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE AUSTRALIA DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

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Responsibility for election comment is taken by Neil James, of the above address, acting as Executive Director of the Association.

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AUSTRALIA DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

(ABN 16 083 007 390)
<www.ada.asn.au>

Founded in Perth in 1975 by a retired Service Chief, a leading trade unionist and the director of a business peak body, the Australia Defence Association (ADA) is Australia's only truly independent and non-partisan community watchdog and 'think-tank' on national security issues. Detail on the aims, activities and structure of the Association can be obtained from the ADA website

As a guardian of the public interest, the ADA seeks to promote the development and implementation of national security structures, processes and policies encompassing:

· an accountable, integrated and flexible structure for making national security decisions
· robust means of continually assessing Australia's strategic situation
· the allocation of adequate national resources to national security according to such assessments
· the implementation of a defence strategy based on the protection of identifiable and enduring national interests
· the development and maintenance of adequate forces-in-being capable of executing such a strategy
· the development and maintenance of manufacturing and service industries capable of sustaining defence force capability development and operations.

The ADA seeks the support by subscription of all Australians and the categories of membership are detailed elsewhere in this journal. Association members are spread across Australia and there are ADA Chapters in many of the larger cities and towns.

On a national basis the ADA publishes a quarterly journal and a monthly bulletin, and also maintains a comprehensive website. The Association is frequently called on for media comment and for contributions to public, academic and professional debates on national security issues. The ADA is also regularly invited to make submissions to official parliamentary inquiries conducted by the all-party Joint Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; and ASIO, ASIS and DSD.

The Association maintains regular liaison with counterpart public interest organisations, research institutes and individuals in 12 allied and friendly countries in the Pacific Basin.

OUR COVER

An artist's representation of an Aegis-equipped cruiser firing an SM-3 anti-ballistic missile missile.

Photo courtesy US DoD

Defence debate or national security pantomime

Many Australians suspect that the current government intends using 'national security' as a cornerstone of its coming election campaign. This has a worrisome echo of the way people smuggling was thought by some to be misused in their last re-election bid. The national security card, as often played over the last few years, has had little to do with substantively improving Australia's defence, but has instead been a 'grab-bag' term to publicise essentially peripheral security issues.

Uninformed commentary about a supposedly 'khaki election' merely shows how little many commentators understand the Australian defence debate and its long history. The too-common public complacency temporarily dispelled by the 1999 East Timor crisis and the 2002 Bali bombing is re-asserting itself. This is because both government and opposition have tended to play the political angle on every issue rather than pursue the common good for fear of perceived unpopularity or party-political disadvantage.

There are also worrisome signs of rigid ideology rearing its blinkered head. Rumblings within elements of the Labor Party about limiting the ability of the ADF to operate offshore, in order to supposedly stop it ever doing so, are a cause for serious concern. The outdated belief that you can avoid 'foreign entanglements' by deliberately removing the ADF's capability to deploy or fight outside mainland Australia is simply naïve. As the lessons of 1914, 1939, 1950, 1991, 1999, 2001 and 2003 clearly show, the defence of Australia's interests and our wider international obligations in the real world inevitably result in the ADF being sent overseas anyway—but woefully under-equipped for the task and thus prone to unnecessary casualties, defeat or, at best, strategic and professional embarrassment.

The election debate that the major parties will not, but should, have concerns the continuing run down of our still under-resourced, but increasingly busier defence force, and our uncertain strategic future. The harsh reality remains that real defence spending is relatively static or in decline by any objective measure, especially in comparison to the high growth in several other major areas of public expenditure. The gap between the funding promised in successive defence white papers and the funding actually delivered continues to balloon.

Governments of both persuasions have governed too much with an eye on just getting re-elected and in rewarding their respective social constituencies, rather than governing in the long-term national interest. They have run down the ADF until, for example, it is now unable to deploy a real brigade-sized force quickly or sustain it in the field for more than a few months. Furthermore, the Department of Defence's fetish with constantly meddling in military professional matters, while remaining incapable of providing appropriate or adequate numbers of weapons and equipment in a timely fashion to our forces, is a national disgrace and one not solvable by additional funding alone.

In the coming federal budget and subsequent election campaign all parties should be honest with the Australian people concerning the sustained under-investment in defence. Budget surpluses should not be just splurged buying votes.

Governments have basked in the professional skill, dedication and bravery of our military personnel. They also tend to behave similarly with winning sports teams. The difference, of course, is that the defence force has to play for real. The time for poaching reflected glory is over; it is time for all members of parliament to 'fess up' about their neglect of defence—a fundamental responsibility of actual or would-be governments. ◆

contents

Comment and information

Editorial	3
Letters	4
Current Comment	7
Major Furphy	13
The Sharp End	29
Association Update	16
Conference Calendar	20
Subscriptions and Privacy Policy	12

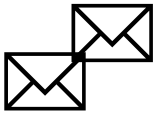
Articles

Learning and nonsense *Des Moore*	14
Broken-backed states *Malcolm Kennedy*	17
Decoding the polemics and the jargon on ballistic missile defence *Rod Lyon*	21
Border protection and the limits of obedience *Hugh Smith*	24
Sky Marshals: Interim measure or only solution *Jim Wallace*	27
Stretching the F-111 past 2010 *Carlo Kopp*	29
May the force be with you *Brian Cooper*	33

Reviews

Alamein: The Australian Story	37
A Bastard of a Place: The Australians in Papua	38
The Return of the Exiles	39
Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History	40
The Face of Naval Battle	42
Future Armies, Future Challenges	44
Sexing it Up: Iraq, Intelligence and Australia	45
Al Qa'eda: Casting a Shadow of Terror	46

letters



The letters pages are an important part of *Defender's* role in furthering public debate on national security issues. Letters to the Editor of *Defender* are submitted on the condition that the Australia Defence Association as publisher may edit all letters and reproduce them in electronic form. Emailed letters should be sent to <defender@ada.asn.au>. All writers must supply their name, address and daytime telephone number. Identification of writers will be withheld where justified. Letters should be kept to a maximum of 250 words (ideally 150) and avoid personal attacks.

Sir: Congratulations on the Summer 2003 issue of *Defender*. The quality of the content in general was significantly enhanced by contributions from academics, professional defence industry journalists and even a high profile politician. This resulted in significant substance representing a variety of perspectives; and substance is, for me, clearly preferable to a swag of lighter-weight opinion pieces.

I encourage you to continue in the same vein, perhaps sourcing material (with permission and attribution, of course) from relevant specialist journals and writers who merit a wider audience. I am sure most of them would be delighted to contribute to such a worthy enterprise as the ADA; in the interests of Australia's defence in such uncertain times. Keep up the good work.

Doug Nancarrow
New South Wales.

Sir: I am troubled by Mark Latham's statement in his recent *Defender* article that: 'We will not win this war by being better people. We will win by being better warriors. War is not primarily a test of character. It is a test of our ability to seek out and engage the enemy, to kill or capture him, and to repel his attack'.

Excusing the, no doubt, unconscious sexism of the statement, I am very surprised that any aspiring Australian leader (especially a Labor politician) believes character, and therefore conviction, is so unimportant when prosecuting war.

I am even more surprised that he evinces such a 'gung ho' approach, and ignores thousands of years of both Eastern and Western strategic thought, which places great emphasis on the importance of 'will' and in preferably defeating your enemy without direct fighting. Any war, especially one prosecuted by a democracy, is surely above all a test of character in both intent and conduct. This is what separates us from being barbarians motivated solely by hate, loot or conquest. Military proficiency not based in character is just unworthy and immoral.

Anne Molyneux
New South Wales.

Sir: I draw the attention of your readers to the short piece you published in the Summer 2003–04 *Defender* under the authorship of the now leader of the Federal Opposition.

One can grace Mark Latham's item with the generous comment that this was obviously a quick write before he knew he would soon assume his new position, and as such, it was not a deeply nuanced or full statement of his position on the broad range of issues that make up Australia's national security. Nevertheless, my confidence in a possible future Prime Minister was shaken by reading and re-reading his article. His diatribe against President Bush's 'war on terror' was superficial and little more than an undergraduate anti-American polemic. He followed this with a swipe at the egregious comments of Tony Abbott on terror. Finally, we got quoted wisdom from American liberal historian, Barbara Tuchman. This was, perhaps, an attempt to prove that he was not anti-American, only anti the current President.

The second last paragraph finally considered ideas about our immediate national interests. At last, I felt a glimmer of hope. I also hope that he has got the bile off his liver, and that he will give real thought to strengthening and developing the ADF's ability to protect our national interests and to play a careful role in our region. Unfortunately, Mark may find, if he becomes the next Prime Minister, part of regional security and/or humanitarian assistance or intervention, might require regime change.

Paul Beaton
Victoria.

Sir: Mark Latham's extolling of the importance of being a 'warrior' sits uncomfortably with the long Australian democratic tradition of the citizen soldier and the soldier as a citizen. Good soldiers, imbued with strong beliefs and who are well trained and properly equipped, will thrash 'warriors' any day—and rightly so in a world still scarred by barbarities such as terrorism, ethnic cleansing, Indonesian-backed 'militias' and Rwanda-style pogroms.

I understand there is only one Labor frontbencher with combat experience (which is one more than in the coalition). Perhaps he should have a quiet beer with his leader to fill him in on the true nature of Australian soldiering and why mateship, humour and beliefs are so important.

Lee Shaw
Queensland.

Sir: As far as I can make out from their website, the ALP does not have a defence policy.

I do not regard a policy for a homeland security department or a Coastguard as being part of a defence policy, except insofar as the latter may reduce a distracting burden from the ADF. Fisheries, search and rescue, customs and immigration matters may be important national security interests but they are not defence matters.

Kevin Rudd's 15 October 2003 address to the National Press Club, which was titled: 'The Three Pillars of Labor's National Security Policy', was actually about foreign policy, but is the closest I can find to a detailed statement related to defence matters.

Most press releases from Labor's Shadow Defence spokesman which I have seen have merely been rather shotgun attempts to discredit the Government, rather than articulations of a coherent plan to fix the ADF's many capability deficiencies and provide a 'joined-up' approach to defence policy and strategy.

John Macneil
Victoria.

Sir: While admiring the courage of Mike Stephenson in saying what many probably believe but most fear to say regarding Chinese bullying and hypocrisy, I must confess to puzzlement concerning what Norman Ashworth is proposing.

His letter (*Defender*, Summer 2003), and indeed previous ones, appear to consistently confuse the concepts of Australian sovereignty and Australian territory. Norman's opinion that the threat of direct military attack on our sovereignty is remote simply beggars belief, especially following the terrorist atrocity in Bali.

His other proffered opinion that the events of 11 September 2001 and the so-called 'war on terror' have in no way changed Australia's basic defence position also seems somewhat confused.

I suppose they depend on a very narrow and old-fashioned definition of 'military' and perhaps 'attack' and 'conflict'. They certainly ignore the asymmetric nature of much modern conflict and the possibility that attacks can come from non-State actors as well as countries.

Finally, I would question his doubtful proposition that the defence of Australia must remain the prime force structure determinant, unless he means the defence of both our territory and our interests (which together constitute our sovereignty).

Configuring the ADF solely for the defence of our mainland territory was the big strategic mistake of the last 25 years. Configuring the ADF now solely to combat terrorism or to 'support allies' would be equally silly.

Surely the prime force structure determinant must be ensuring sufficient flexibility and versatility in order to do all these things to some extent, and indeed to at least tackle all the other types of tasks that may arise but which, at this stage, we cannot foresee in detail or at all.

Peter Nicholson
New South Wales.

Sir: I agree with many of the points in your Summer 2003 editorial but have a concern regarding the risk that has arisen due to the de-skilling of our military at the senior levels. Recent announcements following the DCR do nothing to change this view and, moreover, the advantages and opportunities they give to the bureaucracy in controlling or stifling the ascendancy of military professional views in the defence of our country.

I find the views expressed in letters to *Defender* both refreshing and encouraging. They give strength to a theory I have entertained for some time that so much of what the Department (as opposed to the ADF) does is predicated on hearsay, rumour, perception and innuendo, including pronouncements on strategic posture and capability.

On a similar note and, perhaps, even as a consequence of this attitudinal and cultural trait within the Department, I suggest the 'ad hominem tactics' referred to in Peter Standish's letter (*Defender*, Summer 2003–04) are not just limited to the Department of Defence but are also alive and well across the whole Australian defence community.

Michael Fletcher
Western Australia.

Sir: While the latest version of the Defence Capability Plan makes much more sense than its predecessors, it still bears the heavy burden of long life-of-type legacy platforms often quite unsuited to contemporary or future needs—directly or by adaptation.

I could never understand, for example, why we purchased the FFGs, which were essentially useless in the Australian context (except as plug-ins to a US Navy carrier battle group), much less why we continued to plough millions of dollars into improving what was originally a cheap, disposable ship. They were never going to be a multi-role surface combatant, no matter how much we spent on them, but we still tried to make them one by default.

Even worse was the fact that we spend money on upgrading these largely useless ships and cancelled the Offshore Patrol Vessel project, which would at least have provided some reasonably capable constabulary vessels. Now we are stuck with using our hugely expensive FFGs to perform this essentially secondary role.

Likewise, I never understood why we replaced the Attack Class patrol boats with the Fremantle Class which were just the same joke of a 'warship' as their predecessor, only slightly bigger. Now we have replaced these with the Armidales, which are just as much of a joke of a 'warship', only slightly more seaworthy.

If you must have patrol boats for peacetime constabulary duties, then at least make them capable of having a combat role beyond carrying a platoon minus of commandos for coastal raids. Why not give them anti-ship missiles—even if only fitted for but not with?

Rather than any real analysis of Australia's strategic requirements much of our capability procurement has

been predicated more on unrealistic financial constraints, the politics of marginal constituencies, limited Australian defence industrial capacity, ideology-driven or out-of-touch bureaucratic advice rather than naval professional judgement, alliance-driven purchases of opportunity and, sadly, even Service 'rice bowl hugging'. One hopes that we will eventually grow up and start to take a more mature approach to defence capability development.

Name and address supplied
New South Wales.

Sir: Following up on concerns expressed in *Defender* concerning ABC bias. There is bias in the ABC, resulting from what I regard as its 'head wind'—a view of the world that prevails among its staff. But my concern is more about the ABC's news incompetence.

I write with inside knowledge. In a former incarnation, I was a chief sub-editor in both radio and TV news, the person who is basically responsible for the content of news bulletins and what goes to air.

We need to record two illustrative ABC gaffes over the Christmas–New Year period. The blame lies more on sloppy editorial practices than deliberate distortion.

Like many organisations that don't completely close down, the ABC pushes its second string into the front line over the holiday period. Unfortunately supervision seems to go on holiday too.

The first offending item was a pre-Christmas interview in Baghdad with the visiting Chief of the Defence Force, General Peter Cosgrove (not 'lieutenant-general' as he was introduced). The ABC's correspondent in Baghdad, Mark Willacy, questioned him on the failure to find weapons of mass destruction. At least twice, Willacy referred to WMD as 'the pretext for the war'. He could be right. But it is not an assumption a reporter should be trying to force on Australia's most senior military commander.

Later in the holiday period, reporting the (ludicrous) jail sentence handed down on the Egyptian people smuggler for the SIEV X deaths, ABC radio news reports first referred to the sinking as occurring 'off the coast of Australia' and later as 'off the northwest Australian coast'. This mistake ran all day and also, I believe, on some TV news. My concern is that such geographical misreporting reinforces the evil myth that the Royal Australian Navy should or could have rescued the unfortunates but chose to let them die.

SIEV X was an Indonesian vessel, and as 'the certain maritime incident' inquiry evidence showed, sank about one third of the way between Java and Christmas Island —just outside Indonesian territorial waters, well within the internationally designated area of Indonesian search and rescue responsibility, and well within what has always been commonly termed 'Indonesian waters'.

I used the ABC website to pass on these misgivings to the ABC news editor. But they need to go on the public record. Ominously, the ABC website warns it could be four weeks before anyone gets round to replying to e-mail. Certainly, over two months after lodging the complaint there has not been any acknowledgment, let alone a promise of corrective action.

John Stackhouse
New South Wales.

Sir: At last someone has appeared on national television and presented a clear and concise comment on that perennial chestnut—women in combat. I am referring to the appearance of the Executive Director of the Australia Defence Association on Channel 7's *Sunrise* program on 22 January.

Despite the increasing efforts of the interviewers to present the issue as somehow sexual discrimination, Neil James stood his ground. He clearly presented the ADA's view that it was first and foremost a question of ADF operational efficiency, especially where employments requiring frequent and direct, close combat were unduly affected by the lack of physical capacity of most females to take part on a truly gender-equal basis.

His analogy with physical contact sports was a telling one on a subject usually clouded by ignorance, emotion or ideology. The point he made about the battlefield being much harder than the top-level sporting field is a good one. I also enjoyed his point that no-one bats an eyelid about the Wallabies all being men but many can still somehow believe that female infantry are OK. In this he was saying that the ADA supports the Government and Opposition view on this matter and why they do so. I too accept this view although if I had my druthers I would not employ females in certain trades where they cannot really pass the trade test due to physical limitations.

Brian Cooper
Queensland.

Editors note: An explanation of ADA views on the employment of female ADF personnel in indirect and direct combat may be found on the ADA website.

Sir: Since the early 1990s ADF deployments overseas have finally involved the payment of appropriate allowances to the personnel deployed. Whether this was an admission of 'Defence on the Cheap' during times of peace or allowances in lieu of a substantial pay rise is not the subject of this letter.

Despite these allowances most servicemen and women are marginally better off financially for a short period only before lapsing back into a 'payday to payday' mentality. The new car, stereo or playstation loses its appeal and its back onto the credit treadmill with no real asset to show for the hard work overseas. This has been the story since 1RAR went to Somalia in 1992 and came back to new cars, mobile phones and stereos, only for most to be back in debt paying off mobile phone bills a month or so later.

Why is this allowed to continue to occur? Is there a lack of direction, leadership, knowledge or information available to our soldiers, sailors, airmen and airwomen to encourage them to save and spend their allowances wisely?

Jeff Gordon
South Australia.

current comment

by Australis

Australis is a collective name for a number of individual contributors to *Defender*

See how they run

The report of the inquiry by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD into Intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction is a good one. The report largely eschews political partisanship. It cuts to the nub of the real arguments concerning the current whereabouts of Iraqi WMD stocks and why no operational WMD have yet been found in Iraq. It effectively clears the current government of improperly influencing intelligence assessments on these matters.

The separation of the question concerning intelligence accuracy from the question of whether the intervention in Iraq was justified, or 'legal', is a good thing. The general public and many opinion leaders have been profoundly confused by what are in reality two quite separate issues. Paragraph 5.6 of the committee's report aptly summarises this last aspect: 'The evidence evinced in support of these arguments [to join the collective intervention in Iraq] within the government's speeches was not merely a matter of quoting intelligence. The arguments were based on a mixture of historical experience, first principles hypotheses, deductive logic, assumption and assertion, as well as specific intelligence'.

It is vital that the two questions be separated. The numerous problems with the tasking and operations of our intelligence and security agencies, and their inter-relationship with other national security functions, cannot be fixed in an atmosphere where most wrongly address the issue in terms of whether the recent collective intervention in Iraq was 'right' or 'wrong', or whether you support or hate the current government.

This particular committee has produced a good report because the committee itself functions very effectively for a range of reasons. First, it has a statutory basis rather than just a parliamentary procedural one. Second, it has a formal, specialised and essential oversight role over what are genuinely secret executive functions: the activities of the three most sensitive intelligence and security agencies. Third, the matters within its purview are important, essential to the daily practice of effective government and require real (compared with merely convenient or polite) secrecy and discretion. Fourth, the committee is not all-party in composition, with membership deliberately limited to senior emeritus figures from the current and only alternative government. While controversial to some there is little doubt this limitation works, in this instance, in the national interest. Fifth, the committee benefits from having two long-serving ex-Defence ministers among its membership. Sixth, all its members are unusually long-time parliamentarians from both houses. This generally works in its favour. Finally, all these factors contribute to an approach that tends to put purpose above party and minimise or exclude partisan politicking in its deliberations.

A key lesson from this inquiry, especially given the difficulties originally encountered in investigating an agency (ONA) outside its statutory mandate, is the obvious utility of permanently expanding that mandate. Given the committee's record with the report it's high time its responsibilities included all six intelligence and security agencies, and the security aspects of the Australian Federal Police and perhaps Coastwatch. The committee should be renamed the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security and the relevant statutes and procedures amended. ◆

Flood or ebb tide for the amateurs

The joint committee's report largely confined its recommendations to matters of broad principle. It unanimously recommended a further independent inquiry into the performance and inter-relationship of the intelligence agencies in detail. The government has appointed Phillip Flood, an ex-head of both DFAT and ONA to the job. This second inquiry and report must get down into the nitty gritty of why the questionable Iraqi WMD assessments joined a line of intelligence failures over the years. They joined an even longer line of bureaucratic and political failures to believe or act on accurate intelligence predictions. The follow-up inquiry must not confine itself just to the Iraqi WMD issue. Of at least equal importance, for example, was the failure of at least two agencies in predicting the occurrence, sequence or ramifications of the 1999 East Timor crisis. Even more important in cases such as these have been the consequent policy process failures in DFAT and the Defence civilian bureaucracy. These, in turn, have largely stemmed from an intellectually undisciplined or arrogant refusal to believe, or respond to, the very accurate intelligence estimates produced through the long-proven intelligence estimate staff process employed by ADF intelligence staffs.

Mr Flood needs to ask why is it that the predictive and intellectually robust intelligence estimate model and process can be so successfully employed by the ADF at the tactical, operational and strategic levels, but that both ONA and DIO are so inept at undertaking strategic intelligence estimates? He will find at least part of the answer lies in these agency's over-emphasis on intelligence analysis—a far easier intellectual process. Much of the answer also lies in the intelligence estimate process being a through-career skill and not, as with many analytical tasks, an expertise that can be gained or employed relatively lightly. That many in ONA and DIO do not even begin to conceptually recognise or acknowledge the problem involved only testifies to its seriousness and extent.

The ADA has some concern Mr Flood, as an ex-diplomat and an ex-ONA head, may find it hard to establish or maintain

public credibility given this career ballast. The Opposition's Foreign Affairs spokesman, Kevin Rudd has already noted: '... the inquiry should not be led by a recent head of an intelligence agency, nor by anyone without demonstrable intelligence expertise'. Undoubtedly many, perhaps most, within the intelligence profession would agree with the thrust of this statement. Many intelligence professionals would no doubt also observe, in both sorrow and perhaps with some anger, that there are actually few people with 'demonstrable intelligence expertise' and sufficient seniority or public profile to undertake such an inquiry. None of the other names floated as potential inquirers met these criteria either. The very absence of career intelligence professionals in the top ranks of our intelligence and security agencies bedevils the efficient operations of the intelligence community as it now does this nascent inquiry.

Mr Flood will need to include some real career intelligence professionals in his inquiry team to have any credibility among the intelligence profession, and indeed among the wider community. As an ex-diplomat, Mr Flood's difficult position is made even more so. One of the major problems with the Australian intelligence community is the practice of appointing ex-diplomats to head ASIO, ASIS and ONA, or to senior management positions within those agencies, as almost a matter of course. The fact that most diplomats, and those who appoint them, cannot recognise this as a problem only demonstrates the sad extent of the groupthink mindset involved. A similar insidious mindset and practice has embedded itself regarding senior positions in the three intelligence agencies belonging to the Department of Defence. In this case, senior departmental bureaucrats, or senior and generalist ADF officers, with no intelligence experience and often little aptitude, have been parachuted in to the exclusion of promotable career intelligence professionals.

In DIO in particular, this has resulted in the most talented intelligence professionals moving elsewhere after their first few years. In the case of ADF intelligence specialists, they often avoid postings in DIO wherever possible and concentrate their careers in operational and tactical-level intelligence staffs and units in the ADF itself. This creates somewhat of a self-perpetuating problem. Due to the department's overall flawed institutional culture the parachuted functionaries are often people not tortured by self doubt. On working in DIO they often fail to notice they are really being carried by their career professional subordinates. Another alternative is they come to believe, quite wrongly, that the middle-level staff they meet in DIO (including the long-serving or complacent 'plodders' left behind by the exodus) are indicative of the skills and talent base across ADF and defence intelligence categories as a whole. The apparent general discrimination within DIO against ADF staff exacerbates the problem. This is also one of the main causes why DIO is so markedly inept with the production of strategic intelligence estimates.

While justified at times, the widespread and unwarranted exclusion of career intelligence professionals from within the intelligence community, from many management positions in that community, is simply counter-productive.

This is especially the case in the specialist collection and analysis agencies—ASIO, ASIS, DSD and DIGO. This irrational exclusion and discrimination, on almost an 'Indian caste' basis, detrimentally affects the operational performance of the agencies. It also weakens their specialist operational culture (admittedly not always a bad thing), damages morale, eventually hampers recruitment, harms professional and career development, hinders corporate knowledge and causes serious retention problems as staff move elsewhere to move up in life. None of this is to say Mr Flood will necessarily be incapable of recognising the problem and recommending appropriate cures. To reverse an old saying, 'many a gamekeeper has become a successful poacher'. Indeed an ex-diplomat is in many ways ideally suited to finally convincing his fellows, and their masters, that diplomats rarely make good intelligence analysts and even more rarely, with ONA an occasional exception, provide the optimum talent available to head intelligence and security agencies. ◆

Railing critics again refuted

In early March the ADF used the newly completed Darwin–Adelaide railway for the first time, albeit on a small scale. Thirty-five armoured vehicles and associated logistic support from the 1st Brigade in Darwin were moved by rail to the Cultana Training Area near Port Augusta to undertake combined-arms training with regular and reserve units based in southern Australia. The railway now allows the full range of combat manoeuvre training using armoured vehicles to be conducted all-year-round rather than limited by the 'Top End' wet season. The railway also allows a greater diversity of training areas. This has great operational benefits and also environmental advantages through being able to 'rest' training areas for longer between robust use.

As most *Defender* readers will know the ADA has been a long-time proponent of the strategic value of the Darwin–Adelaide railway. Indeed throughout the 1980s and 1990s the Association often seemed the only advocate for the railway on strategic grounds. This was especially so when a frightened Department of Defence knew the railway would be a great strategic asset but feared to support the project in any way, even verbally, in case it then had to contribute funds.

More importantly, what the many delays and difficulties of the railway case underline are the problems caused when such projects of national importance are examined and considered in isolation. Australia urgently needs a proper, statutory National Security Council (NSC), rather than the current system of overly bureaucratic or overly politicised and often ad-hoc, cross-functional consultation between departments, and between the federal, state and territory governments. If we had a real NSC then the strategic value of such important national projects could be properly aired and integrated with the consideration of their economic and social benefits. ◆

On the border between Never Never Land and Lotus Land

As we move into detailed consideration of the next federal budget, and indeed into real and promised election-year splurging of previous and future budget surpluses by both Government and Opposition, discussion of defence funding

is again often obscured in the public mind by it being a wholly federally funded responsibility.

Many politicians and commentators on all sides of politics wrongly imply that defence spending is at an historically high level when in real dollar terms the opposite is the case. To paraphrase Christine Keeler, well they would wouldn't they. Defence spending has, in fact, slipped from the single largest Commonwealth budgetary outlay to fifth over the last generation. It was even sixth for a while until we reduced our level of foreign debt repayments. In broad terms we currently spend at least eight times more of our national resources on welfare, over four times more on health and just under four times more on education as we invest in our defence. In the latter two cases, much of this spending is by the states and is often forgotten when the comparisons are drawn. As an example, in broad terms, the annual cost of defence and the cost of running all our government-funded universities are now about the same. The far greater expenditure on primary, secondary and vocational education is hidden because most of it is funded by the states and territories. A similar situation applies to health spending.

It is not just a question of spending but also one of revenue. In 2003–04 GST revenue alone, which all goes to the states and territories, is about $32.4 billion, or over twice the current annual defence budget. It is estimated that over the next four years some $160 billion of GST revenue alone will accrue to the states and territories to supplement their many other indirect taxes and Commonwealth grants.

This is not to say, of course, that social spending by either federal or state governments is not important. Far from it. We merely make the point that the historical strong correlation of defence expenditure to several areas of social spending has all but disappeared. Spending in these other areas has rocketed.

The reason is obvious. While growth in social spending has usually been substantially greater than both general expenditure growth, and often national economic growth, defence spending has been comparatively static or has declined in real terms. Levels of defence spending have not even kept up with the levels promised in successive defence white papers. Since 1987 alone the gap between the spending promised and the funds actually delivered has widened to at least $107 billion—or about seven year's worth of defence expenditure at current levels.

In broad terms we are governed according to a three-year federal electoral cycle. This sits uneasily with the 15 to 25-year planning and procurement cycle for defence equipment. Governments of all political persuasions have a tendency to postpone difficult and expensive decisions for the future, perhaps in the hope that some new treasure chest may be discovered or to dump the problem on their successors. Over the last three decades, such factors have led to dramatic reductions in the personnel strength of the ADF in order to divert resources to re-equipment projects. Despite this, our sustained and increasing under-investment in the ADF has now resulted, among other things, in serious block obsolescence and re-equipment programming difficulties.

Virtually everyone agrees on the extent of this problem. Few politicians and commentators with real knowledge of the problem disagree in private about its causes. Public debate on the issue, however, is seemingly bogged down in argument as to how we got to this point. In the party-political arena, much effort is wasted in political point scoring and in hurling blame. Meanwhile, the national interest—rejuvenating our defence effort—is forgotten or only token steps are taken to fix the underlying problems. As an example of the latter, nearly every defence equipment spending decision is now announced about half a dozen times through the project cycle involved—to gull the public that each is a separate infusion of funds. Similarly, spending is announced to cover a period of several years so the amounts seem much bigger at first glance.

As Australia's strategic situation grows ever more fluid, however, we now call on the ADF to do more and more with effectively less and less. We continue to gamble with national security and our future, apparently without being prepared to confront our relative addiction to ever-higher levels of social spending at seemingly any cost. While it is, of course, comforting to fantasise about spending budget surpluses on tax cuts, or on even more welfare, health and education spending, at least some of these surpluses do need to be invested in protecting our future. As it stands, we are risking our children's lives when they are adults, just as the governments of the 1920s and 1930s risked and lost their gamble of insufficient defence spending.

We may be an island continent geographically but our national interests and moral obligations mean splendid isolationism is not an option. The world is no longer as safe as it was and grows ever more complex strategically. We will need to maintain a defence force for the foreseeable future. We need to make the ADF the type of versatile force that can handle likely contingencies and also able to handle the contingencies we cannot foresee or even imagine. Versatility and effectiveness do not come cheap but neither are they unattainable. The same goes for freedom, security and survival. The bottom line is that even the world's best schools, universities and hospitals, or the most comprehensive social welfare safety nets, are not much good if someone with a different view of our place in the world is able to take them all away from us. ◆

Dire straits as intimidation backfires

On 20 March Taiwan is holding its second totally free presidential election. The vote will be free as far as Taiwan's constitutional processes and vibrant democratic politics are concerned. The vote is not free to the extent it is occurring in an atmosphere of external coercion from mainland China. This includes the mainland regime's deployment of around 500 medium-range ballistic missiles targeted at Taiwan, with a rate of increase of about 75 missiles annually.

Taiwanese voters are also being asked to vote in two referenda intended to bolster Taiwan's strategic and moral positions, and also the re-election hopes of President Chen Shui-bian of the pro-independence Democratic Progressive Party (DPP). The two referendum questions ask:

· The people of Taiwan demand that the Taiwan Strait issue be resolved through peaceful means. Should mainland China (the PRC) refuse to withdraw the missiles it has targeted at Taiwan and to openly renounce the use of force

against us, would you agree that the Government should acquire more advanced anti-missile weapons to strengthen Taiwan's self-defence capabilities?

· Would you agree that our Government should engage in negotiation with mainland China (the PRC) on the establishment of a 'peace and stability' framework for cross-strait interaction in order to build consensus and for the welfare of the peoples on both sides?

The referenda questions have enraged the mainland communist regime. This is especially so as its questionable legitimacy, behaviour and endemic corruption are disguised by pseudo-populist campaigns such as the one to 'reunify' with Taiwan. As veteran Hong Kong journalist, Frank Ching, recently noted in the *Japan Times*: 'Whereas in 1992 about 45 per cent of Taiwanese considered themselves Chinese rather than Taiwanese, only 9 per cent now do. By contrast, a recent survey by the *China Times* shows that 50 per cent now consider themselves as exclusively Taiwanese rather than Chinese. This is a major shift in the political landscape and the trend is likely to continue.'

This shift has led the Kuomintang-led opposition to modify its longstanding stance on the 'reunification' issue, even to the extent of conceptually acknowledging that an independent Taiwan may be an eventual option. The KMT also appears to have come round to the previous highly contentious view in Taiwan that there are different countries on each side of the Taiwan Strait. No major political faction in Taiwan now advocates 'reunification' with the mainland. There are three supreme ironies in this situation. First, the mainland communist regime has only itself to blame, largely because its authoritarian and sclerotic cognitive and decision-making processes are unable to understand why every move they make to coerce the Taiwanese people and their vibrant democratic discourse backfires so spectacularly.

Second, in Taiwanese strategic studies circles, which were once straitjacketed by repressive oversight under the old KMT regime, a vigorous debate now occurs. Major subjects include whether Taiwan can ever be free while the mainland is not, and what options are available in engineering some form of accommodation with the mainland communist regime.

The third supreme irony remains that a mainland China willing to acknowledge that Taiwan can 'reunify', or go their own way as an internationally recognised independent state, would be the type of country most likely to tempt Taiwan 'back' into some form of confederal or bi-lateral polity.

The resurgent confrontation between China and Taiwan has the potential to completely upset the strategic architecture of the Asia-Pacific region, and for a very long time. It could even start a new 'Cold War', and one perhaps more hot than cold at times. Should China employ force against Taiwan it is likely the United States, and perhaps other democracies, would intervene to shield Taiwan from invasion or air attack. This would result in China perceiving that it had no alternative but to become a strategic peer competitor to the United States.

On current projections the Chinese economy will rival that of the United States by 2050 and demographic trends will continue to develop in China's favour. The United States is going to great lengths to prevent a situation where China feels bound to develop into a major strategic competitor.

Such a development is in no country's interests. Except for a strongly armed and belligerent Indonesia, Australia's worst strategic nightmare is a future where China is bent on dominating the region through the use of force rather than being a responsible member of the international system. Until China democratises, in detail and irreversibly, there appears to be no viable alternative for Australia than to continue encouraging major US involvement in the region. This must be managed carefully. The United States may go home one day, even if it is a century or so hence, leaving China the only big kid on the regional block. In a worst-case scenario, this may mean Australia assisting in the defence of Taiwan someday, and then fervently hoping that China democratises and comes to understand our position before our protective shield of US power dissipates.

At present though there remains, in effect, a one-sided confrontation across the Taiwan Strait. Only one side causes the confrontation, keeps it going and can defuse or stop it —mainland China. A good first step would be redeploy and then disarm the 500 medium-range ballistic missiles that the mainland regime is targeting at its claimed 'fellow citizens' on Taiwan—hardly the action of a government that is genuinely concerned for the welfare of its 'citizens' on either side of the Taiwan Strait. ◆

A genuine barbecue stopper—the stench of rotting fish

A real barbecue stopper in ADF and modern strategic studies circles at the moment are worrying reports of a strange resurgence of the ideological 'Defence of Australia' (DOA) view of the world in Labor defence policy development forums. The Labor Party needs to be very careful here in terms of its intellectual and professional credibility in defence matters. While there remains admiration and respect for Kim Beazley's turn at the Defence helm in the mid 1980s, this does not extend to the flawed and negative DOA policy that sprang from that era.

Just as the ADF in particular, and defence matters in general, are starting to shed the long dead hand of the 1986 Dibb Review and its 1987 bastard child white paper, there come intimations of a recurrent nightmare. In a *Sydney Morning Herald* interview Mark Latham reportedly said: 'We support Defence of Australia first and foremost and we have considerable concerns about the expeditionary force capability announced by the Government, because it comes at the expense of the defence of Australia'. Mr Latham has said no more on the matter. It is sincerely hoped that party deliberations on their new defence policy are continuing apace.

The remarks, if truly representative of the views of Labor's upper echelon, prompt concern because they reflect a position based, at best, on some serious fallacies. At worst, they reflect an intellectual retreat to the type of outdated and narrow ideological comfort zone that Mark Latham has long castigated in regard to consideration of Labor views on modern economic and social policy.

There are several complex factors involved when examining the DOA concept. First, the use of the historically loaded term 'expeditionary' is merely confusing. In the late

1990s even the Howard Government reacted quite adversely when the term was used accidentally and conceptually in the first version of the Army's capstone doctrine publication. The real problem in this regard bedevilling the ADF over the last few decades has been inadequate strategic mobility and sustainability regarding overseas operations. Our assistance to East Timor and Solomon Islands, for example, was only possible because of their relative proximity to major ADF mounting bases. INTERFET in East Timor nearly failed because the deployable logistic capabilities required had been so severely reduced by the DOA fixations foisted on the ADF during the Dibb ascendancy in the Department of Defence. The all-party Defence Sub-Committee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade were horrified to learn the details during a special 'no holds barred' post-operation briefing.

Second, it is a fallacy that equipping the ADF so it can operate in the region, or if ever need be further afar, somehow reduces the ability to defend 'Australia' (whatever that means). A modern, mobile and versatile ADF is more likely to be able to defend Australian territory (and/or Australian interests) than was the older ADF tailored to the tightly bound DOA straitjacket. The DOA presumption also wrongly assumed regional and wider international stability would merrily occur, on our terms, without Australia ever having to perhaps lead the way or participate, or have to meet its regional and wider international responsibilities as a middle-order democracy and South Pacific regional power.

Third, the DOA concept fundamentally misunderstood the nature and importance of balance and manoeuvre, and that the ability to defend depends in at least some measure on the capability to deter and attack. DOA was hostile to the need for balance in the ADF, probably because its architects did not understand the concept of balanced force. DOA was also essentially based on a naïve view that maritime manoeure did not include the ability to project land forces ashore. Finally, in this regard, the DOA concept ignored or misunderstood the principle that obstacles (in this case the purported 'sea–air gap'—in reality a 'sea–land–air gap' full of islands) need to be defended from in front of them not behind them, including the ability to withdraw when required.

Fourth, the DOA straitjacket, and the Dibbite view of the world underlying it, failed their first test in East Timor and have flunked all others subsequently. The methodology that produced DOA was flawed because it 'situated the appreciation' (rather than appreciated the situation) on a grand scale. It also tailored its quasi-strategies to the funding thought to be available rather than that required by Australia's strategic reality. Most dangerously, however, it sought to configure the ADF so it could handle only those contingencies it thought important or likely. It is worth strongly noting that none of the ADF deployments undertaken since the mid 1990s were of the type envisaged in the Dibb Review or by its acolytes.

Fifth, 'jointery' in the ADF needs to be encouraged not discouraged. While its architects may not have realised it, the DOA policy and its accompanying 'ascendancy class' resulted in harmful growth in the size of the Defence civilian bureaucracy. By accident or design this meant many obstacles and delays to the efficient development of joint-force capability development, strategy development, doctrine and practice.

Sixth, whether DOA could ever work or not, or whether its architects are right or wrong in their view of the world, these should not be party-political issues. The hypotheses involved should be debated openly and fairly. They should not, as occurred during the late 1980s and early to mid 1990s, be enforced in a ruthless ideological manner that sought to traduce, silence, punish or exile critics no matter how genuine their motivation or objective their argument. Australian defence policy and strategy need to be developed and reviewed using widely drawn, inclusive and objective processes. Only then can we optimise the ADF for the future. This was an objective test that the flawed DOA policy failed utterly.

Finally, a late 1980s vignette to illuminate many of the above concerns about DOA. The concept was always heavily 'Cold War driven' with a doctrinaire focus on Asia and with scant attention paid to the South Pacific. After numerous problems revealed by our ad-hoc rescue preparations during the 1987 Fiji coup crisis and the 1988 riots in Vanuatu, contingency planning was initiated to put future rescue operations on a surer footing. This included an attempt to avoid the problem that occurred during the 1987 Fiji coup when senior civilian officials (with no military experience of any kind) had arbitrarily directed, allegedly in Defence Minister Kim Beazley's name, that no more than 100 troops were to be used and no machine guns were to be deployed. When Minister Beazley visited the rifle company concerned some weeks later he was questioned about the stupidity of the order but advised the diggers he knew nothing about it.

In 1989, during the first detailed, combined contingency plans to deploy the ADF and NZDF into the South Pacific, the same crop of senior civilian bureaucrats again tried to prescribe quite arbitrary and dangerous limits on the size of forces to be used—because they claimed the numbers needed were somehow 'provocative'. It is worth noting that our similar intervention in East Timor a decade later had very few casualties in part due to the overwhelming force used. Their amateurish interference, in a matter of clearly military judgement, created much unnecessary angst and would have needlessly risked casualties in a real deployment. The same bureaucrats then insisted all the troops deployed would each need a current passport—presumably to be checked locally by co-operative immigration officials during lulls in any fighting. Planning then revealed the need for minor purchases of communications equipment. ADF planners were advised, by an Olympian pronouncement from the senior civilian bureaucracy, that contingency plans would never be sufficient grounds to justify the purchase of the equipment required to carry them out. The plan took some months to complete instead of a week or so because of constant silly and unwarranted interference of this nature. As the old Chinese proverb notes: the fish rots from the head first. ◆

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Major Furphy

The lean, green and not so mean machine

For all of us mere mortals, life offers a series of mixed blessings. As my loyal readers will be aware, Barney (my boss, Air Marshal Barney Stoush, the VCDF) went on leave. But, then, I lost my office with a view to yet another new bureaucratic conglomerate.

Now, Barney has returned but GLOP, that intrusive conglomerate, has left for exile in, I believe, Queanbeyan or Bungendore. The dark side of the moon might have been more appropriate as far as I was concerned.

Of course, Barney's return has more than one downside. Today's meeting of the Defence Corporate Environmental and Finance Management Task Force Co-ordination Committee was a case in point. (I'm not authorised to use an acronym for the committee because we already have a DCEFMTFCC but I'm not sure what the other one is.) We may have to change the name of the Committee and Barney has a 15-person joint-Service and civilian administrative research group, and a contract consultant, working on that! However, for the purposes of this report, which is intended for normal human beings, I will use DCEFMTFCC.

The DCEFMTFCC is a high-powered committee with no fewer than three of the five Deputy Secretaries, four First Assistant Secretaries and two two-stars in addition to Barney as the Chair. Incidentally, he abhors that term. As he has said on many occasions, 'I've got five children; I'm a ChairMAN, dammit!'.

The DCEFMTFCC was charged by one or other of the two—or is it three these days—Defence Committees to draft a Defence Instruction on saving money in an environmentally sensitive way. We were required to save money on water and electricity. Perhaps not surprisingly, there was no mention of gas, though.

DepSec (Finance Management and Co-ordination) thought we should turn off all lights and shut down the air conditioning plus all computer and communications systems except between 0830 and 1230, and between 1330 and 1651 hours Monday to Friday. Barney pointed out that most ADF operational work was done outside those hours because staff officers were otherwise tied up in departmental meetings. DepSec (FM&C) was not impressed by that. He questioned whether ADF operations were really important anyway, especially in terms of their effect on higher priority matters such as departmental policy making and administration.

DepSec (Corporate Services) thought that security lighting should be allowed outside those hours but only when the threat level was raised to Condition Red. At other times, security patrols could use torches provided additional funds were allocated for an increase in consumption of torch batteries.

DepSec (FM&C) also insisted that water must be saved. There was too much water wasted, he claimed, and the effect on the environment was disastrous. People were dying of thirst in Africa because we were using too much water. I thought to myself— because no one listens to me— that water was rarely wasted; it was simply recycled. Eventually it would come back purified as rain and we could start using it again.

My old sparring partner, Major General Mary (Take No Prisoners) England who, whatever her faults, is a fairly hard-boiled old soldier suggested that closing down the sewage system and digging a few deep pits in the courtyard would save a lot of water. 'Some of the denizens of this place might start to realise what it's like to be a soldier', she argued.

Being unaccustomed to living in the field, neither Barney nor our tame admiral thought much of that idea so the idea was quickly scotched. Speaking of which, some expressed the related view that the Mess should be instructed to beef up the spirits content of the drinks served and cut back on the soft drinks. One objector who had the temerity to point out that beer was mostly water was sharply told that it was not our water so we were not wasting it.

After some four hours of discussion (it was a quicker than usual meeting), Barney exercised his prerogative of adjourning the meeting for three months. As Secretary, I was instructed to prepare a draft Defence Instruction for circulation to members for approval at the next meeting.

After they had moved on to their next meeting, Barney called me over. 'We'll follow standard departmental corporate procedure for once. There's no need to get the draft DI out too soon. Make sure they get it not more than 15 minutes before the meeting starts so they don't have time to read it. And make it not less than 12 pages so they won't want to anyway.

'But I want to see it by the weekend.' ◆

Learning and nonsense

Des Moore

Australia is fortunate in having attracted, and then attracted back, a man Teddy Roosevelt would never have accused, as he did a British Ambassador, of possessing an intelligence 'of about eight guinea-pig power'. In his recent and much-remarked six-part Boyer Lectures on ABC radio,[1] Owen Harries,[2] the Welsh immigrant not long returned here from making his impress in America, has once again exhibited the penetrating thought, the engaging style, the apposite quotation gleaned from wide reading, which have long distinguished his writings—and at one time the speeches of highly placed others.

The Lectures were a grippingly bold, if highly contentious, wide-sweep *tour d'horizon* of contemporary international relations, treating by explanation and criticism such large themes as the place in world politics of culture, civilisation, and globalisation; the implications of promoting, or even imposing, liberal democracy globally; the self-conceived grand purpose of the USA in the world, whether it is achievable, and at what cost; the challenges the USA faces, both within and without, in pursuing its deeply instructed purpose in the world.

All those wide and fundamental issues, of great moment to Australia as to others, were covered in Harries' first five lectures. Only in the sixth Lecture did he narrow his gaze to Australia. That Lecture began with an intriguing and novel identification of three contrasting Australian foreign policy traditions, personalised as the Menzies, Evatt, and Casey-Spender versions; and goes on into an extended critique, 'on realist grounds', of the Howard Government's policy on the wars against terrorism and Iraq.

That policy Harries describes as 'unhesitating, unqualified and ... conspicuous support' for the USA, justified by others on Menzian grounds of 'protecting one's own security and paying one's insurance premium to a great and powerful friend' and on the non-Menzian ground of shared values.

Harries, in disagreeing with the policy, criticises all those grounds. In doing so with redoubled scorn, he makes seven points. All are misplaced.

First, Harries unavailingly worries that our sending forces to Afghanistan and Iraq has increased, not decreased, the terrorist threat to Australia; and he draws a false distinction between our combating global terrorism and protecting Australia itself from terrorism. False, because the proper distinction is between dealing with the terrorist threat in Australia—best dealt with by ASIO and police; and the threat to Australia—best dealt with, if by armed force, at its directing and operational seats however far from Australia. For distance these days is not an important factor in the size and nature of the terrorist threat; terrorism even from afar is changing our laws and how we behave in our everyday lives. Moreover, terrorism is directed at Australia and others for what we are, not what we do; so our retiring into a sort of Saddam-hole of inaction, as Harries favours, will not decrease the threat.

In thus failing to understand that distance does not matter, Harries falls for the thinking underlying the discredited 'concentric circles' theory of defence, better termed the Tyranny of Proximity.

Second, that thinking leads him into drawing another false distinction, between what he calls alliance policy and regional policy. False, because 'the region', 'our backyard' as many even more misleadingly call it, is not an intimate inglenook but is enormous, covering one third of the Earth; and because even so it is not the only area important to Australia—weight, not assumed nearness, is what matters in international affairs and is what makes Asia, especially North East Asia, of moment not just to Australia but to everybody. We are part of the world, not an artificial 'region', and must meet threats where they arise, and as best suits us, whether inside or outside artificial map lines.

Third, Harries fashionably finds uncompelling the case for war against Iraq. That view conveniently forgets that every member of the Security Council, and many others besides, had long decided that Saddam's Iraq was a threat, that sanctions had not worked, that Saddam had not convincingly explained when, where and how he had rid himself, as required by the UN Security Council, of his WMD and that he would be visited with 'serious consequences' if he did not forthwith meet his responsibilities. Perhaps his arsenal was not as potent as we had justifiably feared; but it was Saddam's obstructions and lies, not any deception by our political leaders, which led to our apparent overestimation.

True, making a nation out of an artificial state split by ethnicity, sectarianism, tribalism and clannishness, with the different elements all self-interestedly jockeying for political power and position in the new Iraq, is not proving easy. But that endeavour was not the reason for the war; rather an unavoidable consequence of it.

The war will prove to have been wrongly undertaken not if weapons of mass destruction (WMD) cannot be turned up (though programs have) but only if the new Iraq, whatever its shape and its governance, determines on

policies (internal and external) just as threatening to others and despairing to its own people as Saddam's were.

Fourth and fifth, Harries unnecessarily warns against expecting America to be permanently grateful for our joining it in coalitions of the willing, and warns against expecting that shared values will overcome disparate interests. Underlying both warnings is the charge of US perfidy. But in joining our efforts with America's in Afghanistan and Iraq, we were not seeking gratitude or paying another instalment on our supposed insurance premium to American Mutual. What we were seeking was to advance and protect Australia's interests; and the only way to do that, we not commanding sufficient to do the job by ourselves, was to join in the US effort.

Neither are we so naive as to suppose that shared values trump national interests. But Harries in making his point sidles into characterising America as an unreliable ally, giving Suez and Dutch New Guinea as examples of American failure to support its allies Britain, France, the Netherlands and Australia.

That criticism based, be it noted, on examples outside the terms of the North Atlantic and ANZUS treaties, supposes that America must support any non-security treaty action taken by an ally, no matter what. But that would be to give each of its allies a blank cheque, which in the last 100 years has been given by a major power only once: by Germany to Austria-Hungary, with the disastrous Great War as the result.

'Alliances are not, as some seem to think, examples of reciprocal altruism, where one ally does another a favour in the expectation of the favour being returned one day. Rather they are examples of naked self interest ...'

Alliances are not, as some seem to think, examples of reciprocal altruism, where one ally does another a favour in the expectation of the favour being returned one day. Rather they are examples of naked self-interest, joined in defined circumstances to treaty obligations arising from others' threats to the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of the Parties.

Thus Washington absolutely reasonably saw the Dutch New Guinea business as a colonialist hangover that was not in America's interest to support. And France, which Harries says decided after Suez never again to depend on the USA, was being naive in the extreme to suppose that it could count on American support for an aggression (mis) conceived in secret and justified by lies.

Does that mean the USA, when its ANZUS obligations are not involved, won't automatically support any and every Australian policy? Yes.

Does that make the USA an unreliable ally? No—any more than Australia is an unreliable ally for applying the test of national interest when considering support for American actions. Strange for some to think that it is quite all right, indeed necessary, for Australia to show that it has 'an independent foreign policy' by not supporting the USA on occasion, but not all right for America to do likewise.

Another Harries' charge against the USA is that it gives less weight to the views of those (like Australia, is Harries' unstated sub-charge) whose support can be taken for granted than those whose support it wishes to gain.

Evidence for, or against, that proposition is inherently unlikely to be found. But it founders in logic.

When faced with a particular security issue, Washington does not ask others what it should do but first arrives at its own preferred course of action. It then usually consults others. Some will offer support, some will suggest modifications, some will oppose. But in every case the weight accorded by Washington to the views expressed will be determined not by the expectedness, or unexpectedness, of the views but by their soundness and by the importance of the view-giver to the USA's plans.

That importance, measured in military, political, and economic terms, will vary with circumstance. Tiny Qatar, for example, mattered far more to Washington in the run-up to the Iraq war than the views of, say, Pakistan, because the support of the one, but not the other, was crucial to US war plans. But in the run-up to the Afghanistan war, it was the other way round.

So whether another country's views are ignored by the USA or embraced is not at all influenced by whether that other's support - or refusal, for that matter - can be taken for granted. Even so, as Australia has so often fought in coalition with America, does Washington now take Australian support for granted? Again, evidence either way is inherently hard to come by. But it is highly unlikely, for taking us for granted assumes that we will always support the USA because we will always judge that to be in our national interest. That, as the Americans surely recognise, is an assumption too far. Indeed, even in Treaty-envisaged situations, where Washington would be justified in taking Australia's support for granted, it is entirely up to Australia what and how much support to give. The ANZUS requirement is that Australia 'act' in treaty situations; but the content of our action is for us to decide, as the USA well appreciates.

Which explains why Richard Armitage, now US Deputy Secretary of State, far from taking Australia for granted, so famously felt it necessary to question some years ago what Australia would do if the USA and China were to come to blows in the Taiwan Straits (which are covered by ANZUS).

Some Australians, reckoning that any war there would be started by China, not America, are certain that Australia[1]s national interest would be to fight alongside the USA; for if China were to prevail, the whole of Asia would fall under China's sway as America disappeared over the horizon. But plenty of other Australians have made plain that they would turn themselves inside out to find a way of 'finessing' Australia to the sidelines. Not much comfort there for those who think Australia can be taken for granted.

Sixth, says Harries, Australia by joining in military action not specifically authorised by the UN has foolishly weakened its position in the UN just at the time it is

becoming more important as a means of restraining the USA. That criticism might hold water if Australia wanted to be a restrainer. But we have no reason to want that: America, despite Harries' forebodings, is not on a crusading rampage. Indeed, if anything we should be worried by Washington's restraining itself, notably by getting out of Iraq too soon, before Iraq is properly back on its political, economic and security feet.

Seventh, says Harries, Australia is acting dangerously and irresponsibly by fighting beyond 'its region' when our army is so small and when Australia is not 'directly threatened'. But this is simply a re-run of the foolish concentric circles concept, which would have had us stay at home in 1914 and 1939, and which foolishly supposes that the only threat to be attended to is one of imminent invasion. Moreover, the Harries' criticism ignores the responsible fact that our limited military contribution—involving not just the army, as he states, but all three Services—was well within our limited military and economic means. So we passed, not failed, his recommended Walter Lippmann test of relating commitments to resources. And we should be ready to do so again when national interest calls. ◆

Des Moore is Director of the Institute for Private Enterprise in Melbourne and is a member of the Council of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in Canberra. In the late 1980s he worked at the Institute of Public Affairs in Melbourne, where he was responsible for establishing the Pacific Security Research Institute under the Presidency of Owen Harries.

Endnotes

1. The annual Boyer Lecture series on ABC Radio have been delivered by prominent Australians, selected by the ABC Board, for over 40 years. The ABC describes them as having 'stimulated thought, discussion and debate in Australia on a wide range of subjects. The lectures showcase great minds examining key issues and values'.
2. Owen Harries is a Senior Fellow at the Centre for Independent Studies in Sydney. He was, until July 2001, the founding Editor-in-Chief of the Washington DC-based foreign policy journal, *The National Interest*. Prior to that he was Visiting Fellow at the US think-tank, The Heritage Foundation, where he exerted a significant influence in the framing of US and British policy on UNESCO. During his career he has been Australian Ambassador to UNESCO, Head of Policy Planning in the Department of Foreign Affairs, Senior Advisor to the Prime Minister and Senior Adviser to then Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock. During his time in government he chaired a committee that produced a report on 'Australia's Relations with the Third World'. Prior to government service he held academic positions at both the Universities of Sydney and New South Wales.

association update

Len Hansen honoured

Retired ADA Director and longtime stalwart of the Mackay Chapter (and many other organisations), Len Hansen, was awarded the Order of Australia Medal (OAM) in the Australia Day honours list for his many and long services to the community. Len's lifelong dedication to a range of local and national community causes was detailed in the Spring 2003 *Defender*. The Association has passed its congratulations to Len as have many members individually.

Retirement of Michael O'Connor

After a recent operation and some continued ill health, previous longtime executive director Michael O'Connor has decided to retire from the ADA Board of Directors. Mike has served on the board since 1998 and on the national council since 1981. He will continue to assist on the editorial board of Defender where his measured counsel and long experience remains highly valued. Mike's long and sterling service to the Association was detailed in the Winter 2003 *Defender*. The ADA wishes Mike a speedy recovery and continued enjoyment of his hard-earnt retirement.

ALP National Conference

As part of its neutral, public interest role, the ADA (and the Police Federation of Australia) conducted a national security workshop for delegates attending the recent ALP National Conference in Sydney. The workshop, which was attended by 117 delegates and observers, was also addressed by Labor's shadow spokesmen for defence, foreign affairs and homeland security matters, and by the chairman and secretary of the Caucus Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee. The discussion was spirited but good humoured, with most of those attending gaining a far better understanding of the complexity of national security planning, and the difficulties of adequately financing our national security. A similar workshop was conducted for the Liberal Party National Convention in Adelaide last July. The Association has also offered its good offices to other parties for the conduct of workshops at their conferences.

Parliamentary inquiry submissions

In February the ADA made detailed submissions to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into the effectiveness of Australia's military justice system, and to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Inquiry into Australia's defence relations with the United States. The Board of Directors again thanks those members who contributed their expertise and judgement to the preparation of the submissions. Both submissions may be downloaded from the relevant committee page of the Australian Parliament House website at: <http://www.aph.gov.au/committee/inquiries_comm.htm>. ◆

Micro States or broken-backed states?

Malcolm Kennedy

Contemporary discussion of Australia's regional relations suffers from an endemic problem. Most Australians ignore the issue until it bites them. Even those who write on the issue often focus on what they would like to happen rather than analyse what could occur and what is likely to eventuate. It is, of course, always much easier to pronounce upon what ought to be and this provides the opportunity to vent one's ideological steam.

This article briefly examines the reality of the region and the likely directions of change. It ignores fashionable views on what ought to happen and seeks to avoid the dead hand of ideological fixes for third-world nations. Relationships with the island states of the Pacific are of increasing concern. More importantly, a number of fundamental aspects of the contemporary relationship will result in continuing economic and military demands upon Australia.

There are many aspects of Australia's comparative success that are and will continue to be a major cause of difficulty in our relations with the island states. We cannot avoid being, and being perceived to be, the regional 'big brother'. Australia has so much that the citizens of the region can only dream about. In the past it was just our standard of living. It is now increasingly our political, social and economic stability, our largely honest governments, our high standards of public health, and the ever-growing gap in comparative incomes.

Australians know that we are a federation of ex-colonies not a post-colonial nation in the sense of our Pacific neighbours. In the eyes of the region, however, we appear to be a 'post-imperialist' power, especially to those unwilling to face the real reasons for the failure of 'independence' to bring much improvement for the general populace. Not only are we bigger, stronger, wealthier, more developed and more populous, but we are perceived as more resource-rich and more fortunate generally than any of the island states. Australians at many levels of society are keen to provide aid and assistance to the less fortunate in the island states. The majority of Australians, however, have little detailed knowledge of, or interest in, the region, apart from superficial tourist experiences. Moreover, apart from a tourist connection, some charity effort or a seasonal disaster in the region, most Australians are happy to be unaware of what goes on in these countries.

Indeed, one of the most common reactions to any problem in the region is a degree of exasperation that 'they still haven't got their act together'. There is in Australia a general attitude that we have done a great deal for them and they ought to be more developed (and grateful). In Australian government circles, there is often an obsessive and somewhat paternalistic demand that the region must be kept stable. At least until recently, Australian governments have shown a degree of irritation whenever a political, social, environmental or economic crisis erupts in the region.

This irritation has often been expressed in a demand that any external assistance should be limited and short-term. Long-term joint activity is thought to be undesirable and the quick fix is the preferred option. Impatience is becoming greater with Papua and New Guinea, which is the largest recipient of Australian aid, but continues to 'waste our money'.

Eight fundamental factors will continue to shape and influence our relationship with the regional states.

· Change will be a more common aspect of the situation than stability.
· Australia will no longer be able to ignore or fob off economic, ethnic, law and order and general security problems.
· Major changes must be made to the island states' economies if they are to avoid sustained and perhaps steep declines in their standards of living.
· Ethnic, economic, political and religious conflicts are likely to cause repeated if not continual unrest and lawlessness.
· The disparity between the standard of living in New Zealand and Australia, compared with that of the island countries, will continue to cause increased, and often irrational, envy and tension across the region.
· The small nations are vulnerable to temptation, pressure or corruption from transnational terrorist and criminal groups.
· The largely reactive approach to the region requires radical change, with the implementation of long-term co-operative involvement by Australia and New Zealand.
· The cost of remoteness and small size will remain a huge geographic, economic and security problem.

Over 18,000 islands are spread along the 7000-mile curve, which reaches from the southeast to the north-west of Australia. These islands make up an enormously diverse range of countries or quasi states. From the south island of New Zealand through the arc to Timor, the islands states can be assigned to groups and sub-groups based on economic, ethnic, geographic, political, and religious factors. These factors play key roles in the current extreme variations in economic, social and political development.

Geographically Australia is the hub surrounded, on three sides, by an outer wheel of island states. It is easy to picture the islands radiating from different parts of the Australian coastline. The circling islands are often referred to as our region or our near neighbours. The economic, geographic, military,

political, and social nature of the 'wheel states' reveals a very different picture to that made popular by the Australian media and government officials.

The common view of the island states ranges from tropical paradises ideally suited to undemanding holiday fun, to islands subject to catastrophic storms or places of danger filled with lawless unrest. Often these bleak images are accurate pictures of some of the island states or some parts of them. In the medium to long-run the realities are far more complex and highly changeable. An assessment of the current situation and basic demographic, economic and military data provides a picture of the difficulties these island states will experience. Australia will not be able to avoid involvement in future crises.

The demographic problem

The table provides a snap shot of the populations of the region, which ranges from tens of thousands through to New Zealand at 4.0, Papua New Guinea 5.3 and Australia at 20 million. The relationship of population, birth rate and the land area to each other are key indicators to future problems. Australia and New Zealand have birth rates that need additional migrant inflows to sustain population replacement or increase. At the other extreme the birth rates of Kiribati, the Solomons and Vanuatu, given their limited land area, mean that critical problems of over-crowding, unemployment and the demand for migration destinations are already beginning to emerge. PNG is also experiencing acute problems of population drift to the towns. This brings high levels of under-employment and unemployment, over-crowded housing and the full panoply of alienation, corruption, crime and lawlessness.

Demographic data

	Population	Birth rate*
Australia	**20,000,000**	**13.0**
East Timor	**897,000**	**N/A**
Fiji	**827,000**	**23.5**
Kiribati	**94,000**	**33.1**
Nauru	**75,000**	**12.3**
New Zealand	**4,000,000**	**14.14**
PNG	**5,300,000**	**31.7**
Solomons	**510,000**	**32.45**
Tonga	**101,000**	**27.2**
Tuvalu	**11,000**	**21.4**
Vanuatu	**195,000**	**32.1**

**World average 22.5 births per 1000 of population*

In PNG, inter-tribal hostility and in New Zealand ethnic tensions are important causes of unrest. Even across the Tasman, the continued increase in regional migration into New Zealand is adding to an already high level of ethnic and political tension as one in four Kiwis is of Polynesian origin and the percentage of Asian New Zealanders grows apace (more to the apparent concern of Maori than Pakeha). In PNG, the struggle for decent living standards in the towns is complicated by growing tribal hatreds and the levels of violence. High birth rates and increased regional and internal migration are likely to result in much higher levels of conflict and violence.

Rising population densities in Kiribati, the Solomons, Vanuatu, and Tonga are already increasing the levels of urban pressure, unemployment and unrest. These problems, exacerbated by inter-tribal or inter-clan rivalry, are intensified by the islands' limited economic opportunities. In Fiji the ethnic division and hostility between indigenous Fijians and Indo-Fijians becomes ever more complex. The authority of the Great Chiefs has been broken and, although some have achieved greater economic power, this has left many of the rural and remote Fijians in poverty. This has not necessarily, however, meant that they have become allies of the poorer Indo-Fijians. The Fijian Labour Party, which has had considerable appeal for Indo-Fijians and the urban poor of both races, has not been able to build a firm alliance with the rural Fijian poor. The racially-biased constitution has been thrown out but the ethnic divisions, reinforced by the inequitable division of economic opportunities and rewards, has created an even more conflict-riven polity. Fiji remains in danger of violent struggles as the underclass seeks a greater share of resources and the assailed power brokers fight to maintain or extend their power by exploiting racial tensions.

The economic dilemma

Australia is the economic giant of the region and only New Zealand, with a GDP about a fifth the size, has an advanced, developed and mixed economy. Although PNG is the largest of the other island economies, at one fortieth of Australia's GDP, it is, and will continue to be, an economy, society and governmental structure heavily dependent upon foreign aid.

The figures for per capita income show that only Australia and New Zealand provide their citizens with a high standard of living. Nauru's ostensibly high level of per capita income is perhaps over stated, because they have suffered significant Trust Fund losses from poor investments. The range in living standards is acute and many of the people of the island states live well below the norms set for poverty in Australia. It is a glib argument, which claims that these people, given their climate and life style can be satisfied with much lower income levels than Australians and New Zealanders. They are aware of the standards we enjoy and every day, even those islanders living in remote villages, view images of our life style through the mechanisms of the global media.

The nations in this region are poor, under developed and have severe economic and socio-cultural limits. Their economic resources are few. The potential for them to become major players in the world fishing industry faces acute barriers in a lack of capital, expertise, cultural orientation, government policy and international competition. Moreover they face the major constraint of remoteness from markets and the cost of long distance transport.

Tropical island products face considerable limits. Most land is devoted to traditional food production and plantation products. Increasing urbanisation is taking up larger areas of flat and arable terrain. The expansion of tourism, although generating jobs and new income, exerts further huge pressures on land stocks. Even a major expansion of tourism in all the island nations would not absorb the existing unemployed labour or that which is emerging.

The scale of agricultural production is limited and attempts to establish import replacement industries have had poor results. There are some abundant mineral deposits in PNG, but even these face huge infrastructure investment costs and

the complex negotiation of 'landowner' compensation. Fiji's gold mining, while valuable, is a limited asset.

Economic Indicators

	GNP	Income per capita
Australia	**$397 bn**	**$21,000**
East Timor	**$113 m**	**$ 130**
Fiji	**$1.85 bn**	**$ 2,310**
Kiribati	**$81 m**	**$ 910**
Nauru	**$1.282 bn**	**$17,730**
New Zealand	**$78.5 bn**	**$20,100**
PNG	**$10.85 bn**	**$ 2,100**
Solomons	**$800 m**	**$ 1,700**
Tonga	**$172 m**	**$ 1,730**
Tuvalu	**$14.7 m**	**$ 1,400**
Vanuatu	**$227 m**	**$ 1,180**

Economic development of these states, inhibited by distance from major overseas markets, is extremely difficult because many of the islands within their boundaries are remote from the centre of government and are neglected. Economic management has been poor. The break down of law and order and the debilitating effects of crony capitalism have made it worse, especially in the Solomons, Fiji and PNG. There are also numerous cases of the squandering of valuable government and NGO aid programs. The continued use of aid monies to prop up inefficient and largely compromised economic management will make the long-run economic future of these nations even worse. It is time Australia and New Zealand had the will and perseverance to demand proper accountability, but also to take the initiative in providing more radical long-term suggestions for the real independent development of the island state economies.

The increasing pressure on land stock, the limited natural resources, and limited capacity for agricultural expansion means that a radical approach must be adopted if a successful economic future for these nations is to be found. One major finding we can derive from the study of economic history is that late starters can exploit the special benefits of skipping certain technologies. There is no point in the island states attempting to move through the past pattern of industrialisation. The age of the new electronic technologies is, however, perhaps, the best path out of a future of declining living standards. A major boost to education of the increasing cohort of young islander people, directed explicitly toward creating cutting-edge work in applying electronic service systems, could overcome the constraints of distance, small numbers of people and limits on land resources. It would also provide the types of employment that give higher incomes, and a socially acceptable form of work for both men and women spread across huge areas of ocean.

Geographic space

A quick sweep of the map gives the impression of a close geographic relationship of the island nations to Australia and New Zealand. This is one of the most dangerous ideas about Australasian relationships with the islands. Superficially, there is the apparent direct line from the Australian or New Zealand coasts to each of the island states; however, the actual transport connections are much more complex. The distances are thousands, not hundreds of kilometres; the islands are insular and remote. There is little contact, apart from radio and aircraft between the islands. Transport connections are hampered by insular attitudes and rivalry between the island states.

Two vital points must be stressed. The majority of the island states are widely scattered across thousands of miles of ocean. They face considerable difficulties in communicating with each other. Although there are aircraft connections, these are in contrast to the small scale and costly communications by shipping. The second difficulty is that these countries are huge distances from our main ports and airports. If Australian and New Zealand forces tasked to provide peace enforcement face hostile forces, movement by air will be difficult and sometimes impossible. It is essential that as part of our overall combined forces development that a fuller complement of naval vessels is acquired to provide the capacity for fully supported across-the-beach landings. The transport and landing ships must have the capacity to land armour and carry close support air units.

Australia and New Zealand have been increasingly successful in brokering peace agreements and sponsoring peacekeeping operations in the region. In future we must be prepared and have the capacity for the more violent peace enforcement operations. These operations will have to be conducted at more than one to two thousand miles from major bases and ports in Darwin, Townsville, Brisbane, Sydney and Auckland. It is essential that adequate assets are acquired and joint operations training be conducted to deal with such commitments, not least the capacity to provide logistic support over huge areas of ocean at any time of the climate cycle.

Security and resource protection

The territorial integrity of the island states is a natural right and Australia and New Zealand must be prepared to publicly underwrite it. An attack on any of these small countries by the armed forces of another nation, or criminal groups, would demand New Zealand and Australian involvement, and in most cases draw American attention, and that of France in the case of New Caledonia.

Isolation, to a large degree, provides security from external threats. Moreover, for the immediate and medium-term, the main and most credible threats are from internal conflict. Given the islands' precarious economic state, the threat from criminals involved in illegal logging, poaching, money laundering, drugs, weapons and people smuggling is potentially high. Such activity in small polities is likely to have a major destabilising impact. Terrorist activity is possible, but unlikely since it would generally be very difficult to conceal. Australia should, however, provide support for training in the detection of such activities.

Unfortunately, New Zealand has continued to reduce its capacity to provide sustained high-level military support across the region, although it is increasing its capacity for amphibious lift and land force tactical mobility. While Australia and New Zealand have provided troops for peace enforcement operations and nation-building activities in East Timor and the Solomons, there are two fundamental limits on these activities. Government policy in both countries appears to demand the most rapid turn-around times possible, and this is

then justified by the failure to give the ADF the capacity to sustain such operations for an extended period. The most obvious conclusion about the success of nation-building commitments by military forces is that the duration of the operation cannot be set. Balanced against this is an increasing willingness to deploy police and bureaucratic support for the long term.

Military Expenditure and Capacity

	Personnel	% GDP*	Cost per capita
Australia	**51,791**	**2.8%**	**$460**
East Timor	**1,500**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Fiji	**3,000**	**2.4%**	**$61**
Kiribati	**none**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Nauru	**none**	**UK resp.**	**n/a**
New Zealand	**8,660**	**1.2%**	**$151**
PNG	**4,300**	**1.4%**	**$7.06**
Solomons	**n/a**	**n/a**	**n/a**
Tonga	**125**	**4.9%**	**$21**
Tuvalu	**none**	**n/a**	
Vanuatu	**300**	**n/a**	

**World average is 2.6%*

The small army being developed in East Timor will need support from overseas forces for several years until the threat from organised or semi-organised cross-border raids disappears. Security in the island states can be significantly enhanced by a shift in emphasis. In Papua New Guinea and Fiji the armies need to be significantly downsized, and perhaps even abolished. The crying need in both countries is for community-based but uniform law enforcement rather than 'military assistance' to overstretched and chronically under-resourced police forces. If military forces are retained, they should be focused on a far more active (but politically uninvolved) national development role more akin to Thailand's border patrol police. The vast resources of the oceans need to be utilised more fully and resource-protection capacity across the region needs to be increased by the development of a regional co-operative coast guard. Australia and New Zealand need to give even more support in the broader development of the island state police forces. In Bougainville, East Timor, Fiji, the Solomon Islands, West Papua, and possibly Nauru, political, social, economic and ethnic unrest has the potential to rupture the economies and social cohesion, and seriously degrade law and order. This would cause significant loss of life and population displacement. Such crises will demand significant military, police and civil aid, most of which will have to be supplied by Australia and New Zealand. The unhappy scenarios identified can be avoided, but it will take a major shift in Australia's policy and behaviour.

The Australian government rightly promotes accountability, transparency and sustainability as principles for governance in the Pacific. Australia's current skills-based immigration program and perceived policy on asylum seekers, and its lack of grass roots involvement in the region, sustains widespread ignorance, confusion and even anger across the Pacific Island states. Our past reputation, of being a good and powerful friend, risks being squandered. It will take a huge effort in all aspects of Australia's interaction with the island states to restore our credibility and our capacity to assist in building stronger nations and stronger countries in the region. ◆

Dr Malcolm Kennedy served for 14 years as an officer in the Australian Army and currently teaches at Monash University. He is the editor of 'Defender' and a Director of the ADA.

Conference Calendar

ADA members and other *Defender* readers may be interested in the following public conferences scheduled over the next few months:

DSTO and Department of Industry JSF Conference
'JSF Opportunities—Leveraging Our Research and Development'
Hilton on the Park Hotel, Melbourne
21–22 April 2004. Enquiries: (02) 6265-7947 or www.jsf.communicationlink.com.au

Land Warfare Studies Centre Rowell Profession of Arms Seminar
'Ethics, Moral Values and the Australian Military Profession in the 21st Century'
Telstra Theatre, Australian War Memorial, Canberra
15 July 2004. Enquiries: (02) 6265-9890

Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies Conference 2004
'Internal Drivers for Security Policy: Looking to the Future—Australia in 2025'
Blamey Theatre, Australian Defence College, Canberra
06 August 2004. Enquiries: (02) 6266-0652

Royal Australian Air Force Conference 2004
'The Future of Air Power: Network-Enabled Air Forces'
National Convention Centre, Canberra
16–17 September 2004. Enquiries: (02) 6287-6563

Land Warfare Development Centre and DSTO Land Warfare Conference 2004
'Weapons, Webs and Warfighter'
Melbourne Convention and Exhibition Centre
27–30 September 2004. (08) 8259-5455 or www.dsto.defence.gov.au/corporate/conferences/landwarfare

Decoding the polemics

and the jargon on ballistic missile defence

Rod Lyon

The issue of ballistic missile defence seems to wax and wane in Australian political debate and is likely to generate further heat rather than light in a probable election year. It was the subject of particularly heated public exchanges in January this year, coinciding with a visit to Australia by General Richard Myers, Chairman of the United States Joint Chiefs of Staff. At issue is the eventual scope and nature of Australia's involvement in the United States' development of a ballistic missile defence system, for which the Howard Government had announced some in-principle involvement in December 2003. That defensive system, dubbed 'Son of Star Wars' by its detractors, is intended to destroy ballistic missiles in flight, and so prevent their warheads from reaching their targets.

The decision of the Australian government to support the research and development phase of the system, and apparently to keep open the option of deploying our own missile defences, has clearly excited controversy, both within Australia and beyond. At least some of the critics appear to have ignored that any government has a primary and unavoidable responsibility to provide for national defence against credible threats—and maybe some incredible ones given that the issue of credibility is one of perception.

To make sense of this issue in order to have an informed debate we need to untangle some of the strategic underpinnings of ballistic missile defence. Let me start by saying straight out that ballistic missile defence is a complex subject. Over the past twenty years, good strategic analysts—both here and abroad—have disagreed over the place and priority that such defences can and should have in Western strategic planning.

Critics denounce missile defence proposals as strategically destabilising, ruinously expensive, and ineffective. They believe such defences will incite missile proliferation, and they denounce missile defence supporters for seeking a technological solution to a problem that (they believe) can only be solved by political co-operation. By contrast, supporters claim that missile defences strengthen both deterrence and arms control, and address the unique threats posed by the growth of 'undeterrable actors' in the modern security environment. Supporters believe such defences will constitute an important hurdle for ballistic missile proliferants, and will lend discipline to efforts to strengthen political co-operation.

Why has the issue of building defences against ballistic missiles become so contentious? In large part, the answer is that advocates and critics of such defences have different views about the threat posed by ballistic missiles. Those differences tend to concentrate on the rate of proliferation. Both sides can agree that ballistic missiles are the natural partners of weapons of mass destruction (WMD). That is because such missiles have almost assured penetration to a target, but relatively unimpressive accuracy. Ballistic missiles, especially the cruder versions of them, frequently have median miss distances or, more technically, Circular Errors of Probability (CEPs) of some kilometres at their maximum ranges. Essentially, a CEP of three kilometres means that 50 per cent of the missiles fired at a particular target would land within a circle of that radius centred on the target. There are a number of ways that an attacker has to compensate for that inaccuracy. He can simply fire more missiles, of course, but that wouldn't improve the accuracy of any of the individual missiles. Alternatively, the attacker can fire his missiles at large targets—cities, for example—and take comfort from hitting some part of the target area, even if not particular buildings or facilities. And finally, the attacker can increase the yield of the warhead on top of the missile. That final strategy, partnering the missile to a warhead of mass destruction, is what drives concerns about ballistic missile proliferation.

Now we come to the second part of the puzzle. Just how vigorous is ballistic missile proliferation? Here advocates and critics of ballistic missile defence part company. Those interested in reading further on this point should have a look at the article Thomas Graham wrote in *The Brookings Review* in Fall 2001, and compare it with the report of the Commission to Assess the Ballistic Missile Threat to the United States, delivered in July 1998. But the debate is only partly one of numbers and the sorts of intelligence

warning that we might have of particular programs. Ballistic missile proliferation is a concern not just because of 'how many countries' might build such missiles, but because of 'which particular countries' might build them. In that sense, ballistic missile proliferation parallels the sorts of concerns that Professor Robert O'Neill once expressed about nuclear weapon proliferation: that—over the decades—the actors who are proliferating have slipped from being global great powers to the world's 'underdogs'.

That slippage, of course, merely quickens the debate about the extent to which proliferation is a genuine concern, because the tempo of underdog effort will always be much less impressive than that of great power effort. How seriously, for example, should we take North Korean ballistic missile development efforts? Are those efforts dreadfully serious, because the North Koreans will eventually develop small numbers of missiles able to target opponents at intercontinental range? Or are they relatively unimportant, because Pyongyang will only ever have at its disposal a small number of missiles able to target opponents at long range? In order to make that judgment, we need to know more than the vigour and the extent of Pyongyang's missile program. We need to know whether North Korean leaders are rational and risk-averse, and the value judgments that might guide their resort to weapons use.

'... ballistic missile proliferation parallels the sorts of concerns ... expressed about nuclear weapon proliferation: that—over the decades—the actors who are proliferating have slipped from being global great powers to the world's 'underdogs'.

Those are difficult judgments to make even where we can make them, but the evidence that might guide conclusions on those matters is not comforting. Weak international actors don't always have rational and risk-averse leaders, nor the resources or democratic depth to throw at the difficult problems of command and control. Further, they usually have far fewer policy options at their disposal than does a great power, so even a disposition to use WMD as weapons of last resort might still lead to actual use far earlier in a crisis than might be the case with a more advanced state.

So it would be wise for us to act as if ballistic missile proliferation is going to be a worry. How should we address it? Some critics claim that we should address that problem principally through dialogue and arms control. We do. But the current tools for containing such proliferation are few in number and uncertain in their effectiveness. The Missile Technology Control Regime (MTCR), for example, has been in force since 1987. It is an agreement amongst the world's key missile production countries, and as anyone who has ever consulted the MTCR Handbook can testify, it is highly detailed in the constraints that it imposes upon a wide range of technologies that could assist ballistic missile production. The agreement is intended to slow the transfer of key missile technologies to states of concern. Unfortunately, not all countries that can build such missiles are party to that agreement: North Korea, for example, is quite capable of manufacturing and exporting both full missile systems and the technologies that allow others to build their own missiles. And even if the MTCR worked as well as it ever could, it would not address the problem of the indigenous development of such capabilities.

Because of some of those weaknesses in the MTCR, we also attempt to address the problem of ballistic missile proliferation more proactively, through the more recently developed Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). That measure aims to halt the actual transfer of missile-related technologies, if necessary, by the forcible interdiction of sea- and air-based cargoes. Such interdictions pose their own set of problems. Australia is a member of the Initiative, and has hosted an exercise designed to rehearse the procedures necessary for such interdictions. Again, such interdictions are primarily intended to slow the rate of transfer of ballistic missile technologies; they would not constrain indigenous development of such capabilities.

So what can ballistic missile defences bring to efforts to constrain ballistic missile proliferation? Put simply, they threaten to devalue the currency of ballistic missiles, thereby making them less attractive to the would-be proliferants. That's a good thing. For Australia to support the program, and to keep alive the options for its own eventual deployment of key capabilities as the government is currently doing, is merely good sense. Australian companies can benefit from involvement in the research and development of such defences and, more importantly, Australian security benefits from an environment where ballistic missiles are less useful to rogues and dictators.

True, the program can succeed in achieving its objectives only if ballistic missile defences can be made to work reasonably effectively. It is wrong to believe that any form of defence is valueless unless it works perfectly: a defensive system that prevented 80 per cent of warheads from reaching their targets, for example, could still offer important gains. But while defences don't have to be perfect, they do have to meet certain levels of effectiveness. A defensive system that worked successfully only a small percentage of the time, as Theodore Postol argues the Patriot interceptor missiles did during the 1991 Gulf War, would not be accepted as viable. So can the system be made effective? In part the answer to that question lies in what we are asking it to do.

In one important sense, it is wrong to think about current US missile defence plans as being the 'son' of President Reagan's initial Strategic Defence Initiative. SDI was intended to defeat a ballistic missile attack by a rival superpower—an attack possibly involving tens of thousands of warheads. As such, the initiative was intended to change the central strategic relationship between the

world's great powers. Critics of the initiative were horrified by that prospect, pointing out that the global order was shaped by the triumph of offensive technologies, and that defensive systems could play a meaningful strategic role only when combined with an offensive strategy. Further, even advocates of SDI were obliged to admit that the transition between a deterrence-based world and a defence-based one would be a delicate task. And underlying all concerns was a deep worry about the feasibility of such a proposal, because the technical demands on SDI were terrifyingly steep.

But current missile defence plans do not constitute such a vision. Rather, they envisage the gradual emergence over a number of decades of a capacity to defend against a relatively small number of ballistic missiles. Indeed, it makes sense to think about current plans as constituting a hurdle for midgets to jump. Constructing such a hurdle is probably technically feasible, although it will take time. Further, a hurdle is strategically desirable. It is strategically desirable because the exclusivity of the 'club' of those powers possessing WMD is breaking down. As it breaks down, so too does the utility of the doctrine of deterrence, because at the level of WMD, deterrence has much to do with equivalence and symmetry. Washington will never be content to have with Pyongyang the same relationship that it has with Moscow and Beijing.

At this point we arrive at a number of challenging issues. Why is the massive expenditure on ballistic missile defence justifiable in response to tiny ballistic missile arsenals, when it wouldn't be in relation to more massive arsenals? Isn't the political cost of missile defence just too high, because it is bound to destabilise key great power relationships, in particular the one between Beijing and Washington? And at what point should asymmetrical contests and weak actors shape key security decisions?

Let's start first with the calculation about cost. It's undeniable that large sums of money are going to be spent on missile defence. But what's the metric for deciding what an appropriate sum is? Some calculations suggest that the 11 September 2001 attacks 'cost' the United States approximately US$120 billion. That's a lot of money too. Indeed, if we draw a line under that figure, it might be possible to argue that a missile defence system would need to work only once—that is, save only one city on one occasion—to be 'profitable'. Of course, the 'cost' issue can also be argued as opportunity cost, by asserting that American and Australian security would be better served by spending the sums dedicated to missile defence in other ways. This argument is entirely plausible, but we might only know the answer to the question in hindsight.

What about the issue of China, then? The prospect that China may suddenly embark on a large scale ballistic missile build-up in order to ensure successful penetration of any missile defence shield is often put forward as an argument against heading down the missile defence path. That argument contains a kernel of logic to it. But it overlooks the possibility that China has done its own homework on ballistic missile defence, knows that some kind of limited system is likely to be deployed in coming decades and is confident that it can successfully overwhelm any such defences with relatively painless changes to its own large arsenal. Those changes would probably include better counter-measures to any deployed shield, and increasing use of multiple-warhead deployments on existing Chinese missiles.

China's real worries about ballistic missile defences aren't about its own abilities to overwhelm such a shield. Rather, they focus on the potential political instabilities that such a shield might surreptitiously encourage in Asia. Taiwan, in particular, is a focus of those concerns. Any missile defence umbrella which 'sheltered' Taiwan would simultaneously reduce Beijing's ability to intimidate Taiwanese leaders and possibly embolden Taipei to attempt a greater degree of separation from the mainland. But this is essentially a problem that can be eased at the diplomatic and political levels: by itself, this shouldn't be a problem that stands in the way of a strategic evolution that would be broadly beneficial.

And finally, we need to think carefully about the extent to which asymmetric contests should be a key determinant of the global security agenda. In the aftermath of 11 September 2001, it became fashionable to assert that the global war on terror would, at least, have one benefit, because it would require the Americans to put aside plans for ballistic missile defence. Critics claimed that missile defence would have been of no use at all in protecting the American homeland against terrorism. Such judgments involve a fundamental misreading of the lessons of '9/11'. Those lessons are that a new set of 'weak actors' is emerging in the international security environment, and that Western nations will need to play to a different set of strategic strengths in coming decades. Ballistic missile defence looks like being one of those new strategic strengths. The strategic logic underlying such a system is becoming more compelling, and Australia is better located inside the missile defence tent rather than outside it. ◆

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Border protection and the limits of obedience

Hugh Smith

In the course of 2001 border protection and the right of the government to determine, in John Howard's words, 'who comes to this country and the circumstances in which they come' became an important and divisive political issue. In the view of many the election in November that year was decided by the way in which the government dealt with two events that closely involved the ADF. The first was the rescue in August of 438 passengers and crew from the Palapa, a 20-metre Indonesian fishing boat adrift on the high seas, by the Norwegian cargo ship Tampa and their subsequent transportation to Nauru and PNG. The second was the interception in October of Suspected Illegal Entry Vessel 4 (SIEV-4) by HMAS *Adelaide,* which gave rise to the 'children overboard' affair.

Aspects of these events have been examined in a limited number of books, notably Patrick Weller's *Don't Tell the Prime Minister* (Scribe Publications, Melbourne, 2002), David Marr and Marian Wilkinson's *Dark Victory* (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003), and Frank Brennan's *Tampering with Asylum* (University of Queensland Press, 2003). Events related to SIEV-4 also led to a lengthy inquiry by a Senate Select Committee with numerous submissions and extensive public hearings. Its 547-page *Report on A Certain Maritime Incident* was tabled in October 2002.

One of the key lessons from these events is that a government, with ample coffers and at least the tacit consent of a majority of citizens, can pursue and achieve objectives in a determined and even ruthless fashion. Setting 'border protection' as its primary policy, whether to safeguard Australia or to win the election, the executive pushed matters to the limit in several areas: the law and customs of the sea; the international law providing for the protection of refugees; dealings with PNG and Nauru which were persuaded by offers of financial and other assistance to accommodate the asylum-seekers; and relations with Indonesia which was hectored as to its responsibilities with respect to refugees, and with Norway, which diplomatically stated its 'disappointment' with Australian policy. (It is interesting to speculate whether events would have taken a different turn if the Tampa had been, say, an American or Chinese vessel.)

Also pushed to the limit, and perhaps beyond, were the Public Service and the Australian Defence Force. A great deal of attention has been given to the part that public servants played in response to instructions from Max Moore-Wilton, head of Prime Minister and Cabinet, to 'find a way' to deal with the problem. The related role of ministerial staff in acting as filters, ferrets and fixers for their masters, and the difficulty of getting unwelcome advice to ministers, likewise received much comment. The publications mentioned above, especially Patrick Weller's, devote considerable attention to these issues although more needs to be said about how ministerial staff and public servants should deal with military personnel. Rather less attention has been accorded to the implications of these events for political–military relations, although *Dark Victory* provides much useful material and I have reflected on this topic, particularly in relation to Ministers Moore and Reith, in 'A Certain Maritime Incident and Political–Military Relations' (Quadrant, June 2002).

The particular aspect I wish to explore here is the limits of military obedience. Under what circumstances and on what grounds might the ADF be entitled to resist or refuse directions from the government? As a fundamental principle, of course, the armed forces are subordinate to the government of the day. This is central to any democratic system and essential for sound public order. In practice, matters are rather less straightforward. Orders from the government must be lawful—a matter which can be subject to genuine disagreement. Orders must also come from those with proper authority (a principle that was not observed in the so-called 'spy-flights' over Tasmania in 1983 when a RAAF officer acted in the mistaken belief that a request from the Attorney-General's department had been authorised by the Minister for Defence). Other limits on government authority over military personnel are even more hazy, perhaps including orders that are legal but obviously unethical, which undermine sound military practice or which place undue demands on personnel. The events

of 2001 give rise to a number of reflections on this topic.

A preliminary observation is that the military's ingrained habit and culture of obedience to orders allows the ADF to be used in ways hardly possible with other agencies. For example, the Defence Force's relations with the media could be closely controlled. Individual personnel were prohibited from talking to the media while all publicity had to be handled by the office of the Minister for Defence. Where the ADF normally takes pride in telling the community what it does, it was subjected to what one Defence official before the Senate Committee bluntly called 'censorship'. Activities were kept out of public view so that events were simply not reported, at least not until much later. This control of information was complemented by a government policy prohibiting reports that would 'humanize' asylum-seekers or create public sympathy for them. The media uncovered some information on the few occasions it managed to talk directly to ADF personnel or in some cases to their spouses (who are not officially subject to censorship). But often inquiries were blocked or delayed. In any case, media attention was more focused on the election campaign that was in full swing.

'... the military's ingrained habit and culture of obedience to orders allows the ADF to be used in ways hardly possible with other agencies.'

A second observation is that of all agencies of government, the military are most accustomed to undertaking unpleasant and dangerous tasks. As retired US Army officer and author Ralph Peters has observed: 'A military's reason for being is to do its nation's dirty work'. Operation Relex, the name given to the ADF's role in border protection at sea, certainly provided numerous occasions for military personnel to be involved in highly unpleasant activities. Naval officers, for example, were put in the position of deciding whether refugee vessels were seaworthy enough to be turned around or taken in tow without endangering life. The SAS, under orders to pressure the Tampa to sail from Christmas Island, informed the captain that any necessary medical aid would be provided only when the vessel left Australian waters. In less than 30 minutes medical officers examined the 438 people taken on board the Tampa to determine whether they needed to be brought ashore (not what the government wanted) in time for a Prime Ministerial statement to Parliament. Military personnel then served as maritime jailers for asylum-seekers, sometimes deceiving them as to their final destination, sometimes making promises that could not be kept, sometimes compelling them to go ashore against their wishes. One senior officer ferrying human cargo to Nauru likened HMAS *Tobruk* to a slave ship.

Against this background, were there occasions when the ADF might have resisted political direction? Several possible circumstances can be considered: requirements to abandon normal military practice; undue workloads placed on service personnel; demands to perform ethically dubious activities; and potentially unlawful orders. The events of 2001 raised all these issues but only on the last are there indications of serious resistance by the ADF.

Normal military practice was clearly overridden in at least one instance, namely acceptance of the government's requirement for instant reports from HMAS *Adelaide* on the situation of SIEV-4 such that its captain, Commander Banks, was compelled to respond to requests in the middle of a difficult operation. As Brigadier Mike Silverstone testified to the Senate Committee this was contrary to normal practice. It was this situation that led to the erroneous report that children had been thrown overboard, a report the ADF subsequently found impossible to eradicate from the minds of ministers. Almost certainly, normal procedures would not have given rise to such an error or would have corrected the mistake very quickly. As noted, too, the ADF acceded to the government policy of censorship. Military personnel more than once warned the government of adverse publicity that its policy might engender if things went wrong. But neither the management or mismanagement of information was a matter on which military personnel could make a definitive stand.

The Navy did express its concern to the government about the pressures on personnel of continuous duty at sea in Operation Relex but found no sympathy. Long, arduous duty can be regarded as part of what any military person signs up for, and it is not an issue on which governments can be opposed. The problem is rather more subtle. Morale is likely to be adversely affected as personnel feel they are facing excessive workloads and burnout and are spending too much time away from families—all problems reported in the *Defence Attitude Survey* of 2002 in relation to Operation Relex. The views of naval personnel were also evident when sailors who refused anthrax injections en route for the Gulf in 2003 were threatened (unofficially and improperly) with transfer to Operation Relex.

A more serious issue on which military personnel might take a stand occurs when personnel are required to perform tasks they find unethical. A senior consultant psychiatrist who was also a Naval Reserve officer concluded that Operation Relex involved personnel in activities 'highly likely to be harmful to psychological health and moral development' and that many 'knew that what they were doing was wrong'. (*Dark Victory*, p. 278) This accords with what the author has heard from several quarters. The standard response, of course, is that personnel are free to resign or seek transfer to other activities. This is easier said than done. And the problem remains that distasteful activities, combined with long working hours and lengthy absence at sea, are likely to

undermine retention and possibly discourage future recruitment. (Perhaps the best argument for a separate Coastguard is that military personnel will be less likely to have to undertake such activities again.)

The most promising issue on which the military might have resisted the government is that of safety of life at sea. Normal practice among mariners is to take people on board if their vessel is at risk. In the case of asylum-seekers in 2001, however, the government wanted the Navy to turn 'marginally seaworthy' ships back onto the high seas or take them in tow rather than bring their passengers and crew on board. The latter action, in the words of Commander Banks to the Senate Committee, would have been considered 'mission failure'. The effect of government policy here was to put lives at risk—not only those of asylum-seekers but also those of naval personnel. Thus when SIEV-4 actually began to sink after being under tow for 24 hours over 220 asylum-seekers had to be rescued from the water, while members of HMAS *Adelaide's* crew risked their own lives, jumping into the sea to rescue individuals in danger of drowning.

The bravery and skill of naval personnel, together with a measure of good luck, helped ensure no lives were lost. But naval personnel had been placed in positions of physical danger and moral hazard. Able Seaman Whittle who rescued a mother and child from the water might reasonably have decided not to risk her life—only to be left wondering if she had contributed to their death if they had drowned. Commander Banks was clearly under pressure not to take people off SIEV-4 until the last possible moment—not to be 'suckered' (his word) into early rescue on the basis of safety of life at sea.

Of course, the government could say that naval personnel were instructed that safety of life at sea was always paramount. But at the same time it prevented the Navy from following normal and customary practice, which is to err on the side of safety. On this basis, it could even criticise Commander Banks for having acted too late since both asylum seekers and naval personnel ended up in the sea. Worse still, if SIEV-4 had foundered earlier and more rapidly, *Adelaide's* captain could have been (unfairly) blamed for major loss of life because of an error of judgement as to the seaworthiness of the vessel. Even if such criticism were not made, the lives lost would no doubt have weighed on his conscience.

It matters little in moral terms that some aboard SIEV-4 may have contributed to the sinking. The vessel might have foundered earlier simply due to its doubtful seaworthiness. Most aboard SIEV-4 probably played no part in efforts to sink the ship. And even if those at sea have deliberately put themselves at risk (including racing yachtsmen and women), the moral duty to rescue remains.

Military personnel are often called upon to make difficult decisions about life and death, but this is usually the consequence of enemy action rather than the policy of their own government. In the event Operation Relex was not an occasion on which Navy leaders felt they could insist on following normal practice. Nonetheless, according to Marr and Wilkinson, they seem to have been prepared to refuse to tow the Tampa back out to sea from Christmas Island if the government had so ordered. Maritime law provided clear grounds for denying the government since the vessel was licensed to carry only 40 people and its master had already declared a 'distress situation'. The government drafted a bill that would permit the removal of ships from Australian territorial waters regardless but did not proceed with it. Perhaps because of the Navy's likely refusal, perhaps because the Labor Party refused to support it. It is also possible the bill was simply a tactic to put pressure on the Tampa, the ALP and perhaps the Navy.

Marr and Wilkinson conclude that senior military officers were 'outwitted, out-gunned and outmanoeuvred' by the government (p. 288). This seems a harsh judgement but not without some element of truth. Certainly, the military must do as the government demands unless orders are manifestly illegal. Precisely because of this readiness to serve, however, the government has a moral and political obligation to take great care in deciding what it requires the military to do. The events of 2001 suggest that on this occasion the government asked more than it properly should have done. ◆

Dr Hugh Smith recently retired after a 33-year career teaching political science at the Royal Military College, Duntroon, and the Australian Defence Force Academy. He has a long and respected record as a leader in the study of military ethics and politico-military relations in Australia.

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Sky marshals:

Interim measure or only solution?

Jim Wallace

The defeat of even the most unconventional of threats usually relies on a good deal of conventional wisdom and the current threat of aircraft hijacking is no different.

The air travel industry in Australia has a most enviable record regarding the safety of both its aircraft and passengers. When the incredible level of aircraft travel is considered throughout the world on any given day, even the international record is good.

This record has been maintained in an environment where the major human threat to aircraft safety, outside pilot error, was the possibility of a person or group of people hijacking an aircraft as a means of seeking asylum in another country. Second, and more dramatic, was the use of the aircraft and its human cargo as a pawn in negotiations to achieve some political end. In these scenarios, procedures both on board the aircraft and in the receiving airports of at least Western countries, could generally assume the advantage of time—time for the terrorist to make clear their demands and time for the authorities to disavow them of their intentions.

In flight the captain remains responsible for the aircraft and its safety. Negotiation-motivated terrorists could remain relatively assured that unless they had been short sighted enough to hijack an aircraft in the old Soviet Union, or a country with equal emphasis on deterrence over the value of life, that the aircraft would not be shot down. Their problem, while still in flight, was mainly to ensure that the aircraft captain took them where they wanted to go and that the usually very much more numerous passengers had no opportunity to overpower them. However, this was always unlikely given the valid assumption of any passenger that to resist the terrorists in flight would be to place the safety of everyone at risk.

Once landed, the procedures in the receiving airport were almost routine. Emergency services swung into action and the necessary security perimeters attempted to ensure the isolation of both the aircraft, and as much as possible, the drama of the incident. Although technically a highly specialised target for any assault, the routine of the incident managers was relatively predictable and paralleled very strongly that of any other siege-hostage terrorist incident.

A well-rehearsed command and control team managed a multi-agency response including police, intelligence, emergency services and, when authorised, the military. All this was conducted from the relative comfort of the well-equipped communication facilities to be found in airports. National counter-terrorist command arrangements would swing into action, ensuring that any offensive action in particular would normally be approved at the highest levels of government.

In short, despite the critical nature of any act of terror and the obvious risk to human life, the authorities had a model that reduced the problem to a manageable if still unpredictable dimension. It was a model that encouraged confidence that the necessary important decisions to be taken would be done so at the highest possible level of government.

September 11 destroyed this comfortable paradigm in spectacular fashion. It graphically changed the dimension of the problem facing those responsible for aircraft security. The terrorist aim was now the event—the intention to kill and destroy—leaving the promotion of the political ideal to others later. It demanded an immediate response to re-establish public confidence in air travel.

The previous imperative of taking decisions to the highest level possible is now irrelevant. Foiling the terrorists' aim to use the aircraft as a weapon, not the safety of the aircraft or passengers, must necessarily become the object—but how? Now the intervention of the authorities is almost surely

precluded, except in the very unlikely scenario of them having an armed military aircraft in the vicinity, and those authorities being prepared to order it to shoot down a civilian passenger aircraft.

Decision-making and action in such a situation must rest, not necessarily with even the captain of the aircraft, but with those in a position to do something in the cabin.

In this scenario, covertly positioned and armed air marshals are a reasonable immediate response. There is, of course, no guarantee they will succeed. Initiation of action by them to kill or neutralise the terrorists will not necessarily be possible at a time, or in circumstances, of their own choosing. However, the right people, chosen carefully and trained to a high level in close quarter battle, could prevail. The cold reality is that while they would, of course, be acting with the intention of saving the aircraft and passengers, this would not be the ultimate measure of success. The ultimate object remains to stop the terrorists from achieving their purpose of using the aircraft itself as a weapon to achieve some dramatic ballistic effect in the air or on the ground.

'The ultimate object remains to stop the terrorists from achieving their purpose of using the aircraft itself as a weapon to achieve some dramatic ballistic effect in the air or on the ground.'

Perhaps as problematic as the operational problems involved, is the retention of the right people as marshals over time, as the boredom of repetitive, long international flights and no action takes its toll. In this regard, the deployment of sky marshals is no different from most long-term and complex close-quarter personal security tasks.

The need to preserve adequate levels of motivation, alertness and skill is an argument justifying drawing the marshals from a larger pool of available talent. This is one reason why some have recommended the use of state policemen, especially from special tactics squads, rather than drawing solely on the Australian Protective Service with its necessarily smaller critical mass. Certainly the duties of a sky marshal are not for the unfit, or for ex-military or ex-police personnel trained only in the routine duties of their original service. Being an effective sky marshal, both in action and to provide a measure of general deterrence, requires quick-thinking, highly skilled operators who have, in addition, the necessary maturity to decide not only how but also when to fight.

All this seems to suggest that sky marshals, while a necessary interim response, are not the long-term answer to this new tactic of terrorism. This is where more conventional logic might be stronger.

The key to the terrorists succeeding in their use of the aircraft as a weapon is control of the cockpit. If this can be denied, we will have achieved our primary objective, even if accepting the inevitability of some human tragedy through the loss of the aircraft.

Such a solution is possible. Cockpits have already been secured by the installation of Phase Two cockpit doors and the next step, inevitably, is to create a self-contained secure capsule of the cockpit. This would remove any need for the crew to exit the cockpit during even long flights, remove any means of entry and exit and therefore any opportunity for the security of the cockpit to be violated. However, even with Phase Two doors, and the use of effective procedures and perhaps increased surveillance, the security of the cockpit has already been greatly increased.

Physically and operationally sealing the cockpit also accrues two additional advantages.

The emergence of this type of hijacking threat does not mean that all aircraft hijackings will now have the objective of using the aircraft itself as a weapon. More conventional hijackings will continue to occur and will have a high chance of peaceful resolution provided the aircraft is allowed to land. However, with a sky marshal or marshals aboard, the decision to act is automatically devolved to reasonably junior officers forced to act on the spur of the moment on an assumption of the worst-case scenario. We may, therefore, endanger a lot more aircraft and passengers through the presence of air marshals than we might otherwise save.

Second, the expense of maintaining marshals, both through the cost of their recruitment, training, operations and the inevitable need to increase the size of the pool from which they are drawn, will be considerable over time. To this, of course, must be added the cost to the industry and government of providing the seats taken by the marshals—all lost revenue.

In the short term, the placing of air marshals in aircraft is a necessary immediate response. Because it is an active one, it is likely to provide some confidence to the travelling public. The longer-term solution, whatever the costs to the industry, and ultimately to the public of modifying aircraft, is to seal the cockpits.

Certainly if the access to the cockpit can be denied, as should be possible in most if not all cases, terrorists will have had at least one weapon of their senseless imposition of misery removed. ◆

Brigadier Jim Wallace, AM, (Retd) is a former commander of the SAS Regiment, the Special Forces and the Army's 1st (Mechanised) Brigade. He is a visiting fellow at the Australian Defence Studies Centre at UNSW (ADFA) and a Council member of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.

Editorial Note: The proposed early retirement of the F-111 fleet in 2010 before the new Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) comes on line around 2012–2015 was briefly discussed in the Summer 2003–04 issue of *Defender*. The decision has attracted much comment and aroused some controversy. Several specialist aerospace and defence industry publications have published articles criticising the decision and some of its underlying reasoning. The case for the early retirement has not received the same degree of coverage. Articles outlining both arguments have not, to our knowledge, appeared together to assist in judging their respective merits.

The intention has been for this issue of The Sharp End to include short articles summarising both sides of the debate to allow *Defender* readers to make their own judgements on the implications, and especially on the degree of strategic risk involved, in not maintaining a dedicated and specialist strategic strike capability (and deterrent) for a period of five years or more. The ADA invited Dr Carlo Kopp from Monash University and the ADSC to present a case for retaining the F-111 aircraft in service until it could be replaced by the JSF. We also invited Air Force Headquarters to contribute an article explaining the decision to retire the F-111 fleet early.

Dr Kopp wrote his article first. In early February Air Force Headquarters were provided with a copy to assist in preparing a focused reply. Shortly before publication *Defender* was advised that the RAAF would not be providing an article at this time.

In analysing the new Defence Capability Plan the position of the ADA has been greatly reassured by the view of the CDF and Service Chiefs that the plan offers the best way forward given current constrained resourcing levels. More to the point the ADA notes that if the ADF had been, and in future is, appropriately funded then strategic risk management decisions which appear to be primarily driven by perceived comparative costs, such as the early retirement of the F-111 fleet, would not be necessary.

We regret that we are not able to provide *Defender* readers with the opportunity to easily compare the merits of the respective cases.

Stretching the F-111 past 2010

Carlo Kopp

Recent assertions by Defence arguing that the RAAF's F-111 fleet would present support problems and a high risk of 'loss of capability' post 2010 lack credibility under close scrutiny. Defence has argued that the F-111s should be retired due to their age, reasoning that the cost of maintaining the F-111 will become prohibitive over the next decade. This centres Defence's position in the technical domains of airframe fatigue and reliability engineering.

The thrust of the argument is very curious seeing that the US intend to fly their much older B-52H bomber fleet to 2040, and will most likely operate a good number of KC-135R tankers and C-5 heavy airlift aircraft into the same period. The US approach has been to extend the life-of-type of these aircraft by wing rebuilds, re-engining and ongoing avionic and systems upgrades — the B-52H and C-5 being the next likely candidates for engine refits. Statistics from USAF fleet operations indicate that engine hot-end maintenance accounts for up to 50 per cent of support costs on older aircraft.

The issue of airframe fatigue in the F-111 is complex in detail, but much simpler at a system level. The basic airframe was built for a service life of 10,000 hours and stressed for aircraft carrier operations. It is overbuilt and slightly overweight against the early 1960s specification. Thirty years of cumulative experience has shown that nearly all of the fatigue-limited load-bearing structure resides in the wings — the D6AC steel wing pivot fittings, and particular hotspots in the aluminium alloy wing structure and skins. The fuselage has never been a source of serious fatigue troubles, including the wing carry-through box which mounts the wing pivots.

The DSTO Sole Operator Program (SOP) focused on the wings, and modifications were devised to 'fatigue proof' the wing pivot fittings by changing the stress distribution in the part. Within the aluminium parts of the wings, the problems are well understood by DSTO and fixes could be applied to put additional hours into the wing

structure. Stress relieving patches, skin panel replacements, selective structural component replacements, and reworking of the *Taperlok* fastener holes are all options. To date, the strategy has been much simpler - buy surplus wings from lower time F-111F and F-111D airframes mothballed at AMARC in the US, and refurbish and refit them. With around 200 F-111 aircraft in AMARC, there is an ample supply of additional wings to work with. In principle, between retrofits sourced from the large pool of spare wings and structural rebuilds of wing stocks, there are potentially decades of fatigue life available to an F-111 fleet of up to dozens of aircraft. Wing rebuilds have been successfully undertaken for the B-52, KC-135 and C-5 in the US and represent a means of adding 'fatigue life' almost indefinitely.

'... the problems are well understood by DSTO and fixes could be applied to put additional hours into the wing structure.'

Chief of Air Force, Air Marshal Angus Houston, commented in Hansard (03 June 2002): 'We were able to find some really good wings in the United States...Those wing sets have cost us next to nothing. In fact, most of the cost involved with getting them is to do with transportation and putting the wings through wing bay servicing at Boeing Australia at Amberley.'

The RAAF recently commissioned its Cold Proof Load Test facility, in which F-111s are chilled down and 'bent' with hydraulic rams to verify that the primary structure is safe to fly. No such guarantee exists to ensure structural safety on any other ADF aircraft.

The fuselage structure has not exhibited any critical fatigue problems, and a rework of the fuselage longeron *Taperlok* holes is an option to add further life to the fuselage. If need be, selective replacement of some specific machined alloy parts, or patching with boron epoxy, remain options.

Corrosion could prove to be an issue for some fuselage honeycomb skin panels in the future. To deal with this, DSTO devised a method for reverse engineering these panels and designing drop-in carbon fibre composite replacements. In principle, any problems which might arise could be handled by selectively replacing these with tougher and more durable carbon fibre replacements.

Other structural components, such as undercarriage, wheels and miscellaneous fuselage parts could simply be lifted from AMARC, or replaced with new parts manufactured in Australia or overseas, using the original, or more durable materials.

The cost of structural life extension would depend on the scope and scale of the effort, and how much extra life was sought. Public evidence in Hansard (08 June 2002) by former Vice Chief of the Defence Force, Lieutenant General Des Mueller, was that 'the airframe could be managed through to the period 2015–20'. Structural life extensions can be planned years ahead and scheduled into planned overhauls and upgrades. The airframe life of the aircraft could be extended seamlessly and typically with small funding increments over decades of use—as the US has done with many operational types regarded as too expensive to replace.

The Boeing Australia-operated Amberley Weapon

A 'what if' scenario

It is worth considering what impact would have been achieved in March 2003 if the RAAF had deployed F-111s rather than F/A-18As to Iraq. In terms of numbers let us assume that eight F-111s were stationed at Doha and integrated into the US-planned Air Tasking Order. In terms of weapons the F-111s would have delivered 2000lb GBU-10 bombs, 500lb GBU-12/22 laser-guided bombs (LGB), and 2000lb GBU-24 laser-guided bunker busters, as well as 500lb Mk 82 and 2000lb Mk 84 dumb bombs. Given the limited number of US aircraft capable of lifting the 5000lb GBU-28 laser-guided bunker buster, previously carried by the US F-111F, odds are that a special clearance would have been issued for the RAAF F-111s to carry this weapon as well. Borrowed USAF ALQ-131 jam pods would have been carried, with an EMC clearance done at Amberley before deployment.

Operationally, the F-111s would have been used instead of the smaller US F-15E and larger US B-52H and B-1B bombers, subject to immediate demand. The first week of the campaign would have seen primarily strikes on high-value targets using the GBU-10 and GBU-24, but as stocks of these were used up the aircraft would have been swung to medium altitude persistent 'killbox interdiction', armed primarily with GBU-12 or GBU-22 LGB, but also with mixes of Mk 82 and Mk 84 LGB. Sorties would vary in length between eight and 12 hours, with support provided by USAF KC-135R and KC-10A tankers, but with a much smaller total number of required refuellings compared to what our F/A-18A squadron needed.

While the total sortie count of the deployment would be lower in proportion to the smaller deployment size, per sortie the number of targets bombed would have been much higher, due to greater payloads lifted and a greater proportion of total sortie time spent over the target areas (rather than in transit to and from Doha). Statistically, the F-111s would have logged more hours airborne than the F/A-18As, spent more time over Iraq, destroyed more targets, and required a smaller number of aerial refuellings.

System Business Unit combines the depot facility and engineering design/software development capabilities to perform most of any structural life extension which might be sought to extend life past 2015-2020. DSTO would provide expert engineering support, while a robust pool of contractors exists now that could manufacture replacement structural parts should AMARC replacement parts of suitable condition cease to become available.

In terms of avionics and systems the F-111 is also in good shape. The Avionic Upgrade Program completed in late 1999 saw much of the C model's avionics and wiring replaced, and follow-on block upgrades have seen this process continue. At this time the only issues which might arise are in some cockpit instruments, some components in the *Pave Tack* targeting system, and possibly some radar components. While it is feasible to push all of these through to 2020, economically it would be cheaper to replace with more reliable and later generation technology. For instance, glass cockpits are around 100 times cheaper to maintain than conventional instruments, and usually pay for themselves in maintenance savings in 3–5 years. Modern AESA radars cost around $US 2–3 million each and are 5 to 10 times more reliable than older mechanically-steered radars.

Avionics have historically not been an issue in long-lived combat aircraft, since their replacement is driven by capability factors rather than old age. While Boeing Australia at Amberley can provide all of the required design, software and integration capabilities, there is a larger pool of players across the Australian aerospace industry able to support or design avionic and electro-optical sub-systems. These include BAE Systems Australia, Thales/ADI, Honeywell, Daronmont, CEA Technologies, OEA and others. Given available numbers, unique parts such as digital flight controls can be sourced from AMARC stock to cover decades of fleet life.

Whether imported components or domestic ones are used, avionics are simply not a long-term issue, both up to and beyond 2020. The aircraft's hydraulic system is supported by Rosebank Engineering in Victoria, which provide precision machining and engineering capabilities. The F-111's TF30 engines are currently supported by the RAAF-operated Engine Business Unit (EBU) with expert assistance from DSTO. Replacement of the original TF30-P-103 engines with later model TF30-P-108/109 engines and the addition of further durability fixes would see engine time between overhauls grow from around 1000 hours to in excess of 2000 hours, a remarkable improvement for a 1960s turbofan.

While the existing pool of engines is expected to last past 2020, there are additional TF30 engines available in AMARC from later-build F-111Fs, and now increasingly US Navy F-14As. While this stock of engines could no doubt be used to push into the 2030 timescale, economically it would be better for a post 2020 fleet to retrofit a newer engine. The F-16C's F110 engine ($US 4-5 million unit price) would be first choice, as a retrofit kit exists for TF30 replacement, designed for the F-14B/D and almost adopted for the USAF F-111 fleet in the early 1990s. The F-111's engine bays are large enough to fit the F/A-22A's new F119 series turbofan as well, although this would require more engineering to adapt.

From an engineering perspective many good and quite economical solutions exist to enable our F-111s to push well past the original 2020 withdrawal date. If the required work was scheduled over a two-decade period under a rolling technology insertion program, the annual funding impact would be quite low. A 2040 withdrawal date similar to the B-52H, B-1B and KC-135R is technically feasible for the RAAF's F-111s.

The issue of annual running costs of the F-111 fleet is also worth scrutinising, given the assertions by Defence on this matter. Currently, the annual cost of engineering support by Boeing Australia, the RAAF's EBU and other local contractors sits somewhere between $A80 and $A100 million. This is a modest slice of the approximately $A800 million reported in DAR 99 for the total capability, itself between three per cent and four per cent of the total annual defence budget.

'Replacement of the original TF30-P-103 engines with later model TF30-P-108/09 engines with the addition of further durability fixes would see engine time between overhauls grow from around 1000 hours to in excess of 2000 hours.'

Defence claims the cost increased by six per cent annually over recent years, itself a curious finding given that RAAF's total costs over that same period grew by around 18 per cent. Based on this, the F-111 fleet showed much slower cost growth than other RAAF platforms.

On the basis of a five per cent annual compounding cost model, Defence insists that the F-111 will become uneconomical by the end of the decade. This claim is not one which Defence can easily support. The costing model they used is designed for aircraft supported with a different maintenance regime, and one not subjected to an 'ageing aircraft engineering program' of the ilk instituted two years ago by Boeing Australia, the F-111 SPO and DSTO. Such programs identify components approaching wear-out and systematically depopulate the fleet of these parts, so that the aircraft never climbs the 'bathtub curve' of age-related failure rate and cost increases. Within two years the Boeing Australia depot cleared a large backlog of accrued maintenance, replaced most wings in the fleet, fixed endemic fuel leaks (related to sealant choice in manufacture, not age) and also identified and corrected a host of problems previously attributed to age, but actually resulting from incorrect prior maintenance regimes.

Even were the F-111 fleet maintained using bathtub curve-prone airline maintenance techniques, the unusual burst of repairs and maintenance over the last two years makes these unsuitable as a costing baseline for a

compounding cost model. It is known that engine support costs have reduced by about 50 per cent since 1990, and are projected to further decline as DSTO-devised fixes are incorporated. The technical evidence indicates that annual engineering support costs for the fleet are apt to remain similar to current levels, and likely to decline over time if avionic and other technology insertion programs are undertaken. Claims by Defence of significant cost increases, not unlike their claims of a high risk of 'loss of capability', cannot be supported by the available evidence or US case studies. It is worth noting that in 1996 US Air Force F-111s cost less to own than US Navy F/A-18Cs. There is little evidence to support the case for early retirement of the F-111 fleet and much evidence to make a case for postponing the withdrawal until well after 2020. ◆

'It is worth noting that in 1996 US Air Force F-111s cost less to own than US Navy F/A-18Cs.'

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Hard facts

The F-111 provides around 50 per cent of the RAAF's punch, whatever conventional measures of effectiveness might be employed to calculate this. The aircraft carries about three times the internal fuel of an F/A-18A, or about twice the internal fuel of the new Joint Strike Fighter (JSF). The F-111 can also lift around twice the weapons payload of the F/A-18A or JSF.

In terms of deliverable combat effect, depending on the operational scenario involved, replacing a single F-111 sortie typically requires two or more sorties by a smaller fighter type and 50 per cent of an available tanker sortie. Loaded with 250 kg dumb or smart bombs, an F-111 can lift about half the bombload of a US Air Force B-52H bomber - or more than half if additional fixed pylons are fitted. The current digital avionics system, fitted during the 1990s, supports a wide range of laser-guided and dumb bombs, and the Harpoon anti-shipping missile. The Block C-4 upgrade, currently in progress, will add the latest technology VME computer hardware, a Military Standard 1760 digital weapons bus and the AGM-142 Stand-Off Weapon. Previously planned follow-on upgrades would permit addition, at the cost of software and clearance testing, of the satellite aided GBU-31/38 JDAM bomb, the AGM-158 JASSM cruise missile, the ASRAAM air-air missile, and the new 130 kg GBU-39/B Small Diameter Bomb (SDB). An ARDU F-111G was used as trials platform for testing supersonic drops of the SDB demonstrators. The F-111 also boasts prodigious speed. In a region where the principal air defence capabilities reside in fighters rather than dense surface-to-air missile (SAM) and anti-aircraft artillery systems, speed presents an important advantage in the survivability game. The F-111 remains the fastest combat aircraft in Western service, making it extremely difficult to intercept at any altitude. Assertions by Defence that the F-111 is not particularly survivable do not stack up to close scrutiny, as results from multinational Exercise 'Red Flag' deployments will confirm.

The contentious issue of survivability is really dependent on how the F-111 is operated and how it is armed. The US Air Force plans to fly far less survivable B-52H and B-1B bombers to about 2040 — protecting them with F/A-22A escorts to deter fighters and suppress or destroy SAM launchers. There are no fundamental reasons why the RAAF could not employ the same operational doctrine for the F-111—using its F/A-18 fighters and then the JSF for escort. The reality is that strike-tasked F/A-18A and JSF aircraft will usually need escorting in any event.

In strategic terms the value of the F-111 has quietly grown over the last three years. During this period Malaysia and Indonesia signed on for long-range Russian Su-30 strike fighters, a type already bought in the hundreds by China and India. Equivalent to the US F-15E, the Su-30 can, with buddy refuelling or available CIS standoff missiles, strike across the sea-air-land gap to the north of Australia. Losing the F-111 drives Australia in the direction of eventual 'strike capability parity' with the region. Another no less important development has been the rapid shift in bombing techniques away from traditional pre-briefed tactical strike profiles, to the new 'persistent strike' model of orbiting the battlefield to rapidly pounce on highly mobile ground targets. Persistent techniques demand large weapon payloads and large fuel payloads to permit a maximum of time on station. While generous use of tanker aircraft stretches the latter, it does not stretch the former. Over Iraq last year, typical fighter sorties grew from 4-6 hrs out to 6-12 hours airborne, pushing a huge burden on the US F-15Es and the badly overstretched US tanker fleet. The F-111 is ideal for this style of combat.

May the force be with you:

Maximising the ADF's strategic air mobility

Brian Cooper

'For the want of a nail a shoe was lost; for the want of a shoe the horse was lost; and for the want of a horse the rider was lost, being overtaken and slain by the enemy, all for the want of care about a horseshoe nail'.

—Benjamin Franklin

Defence White Paper 2000 states that the primary role of the ADF is the defence of Australia. However, while Defence of Australia (DA), Contributing to the Security of our Immediate Neighbourhood (CSIN), Supporting Wider Interests (SWI) and Contributing to Coalition Operations World Wide (CCOW) are the principal tasks of the ADF, the Government has stated in *Defence Update 2003* that there will be an increased requirement to deploy expeditionary forces under the CCOW task. Whichever task the ADF is called upon to perform it will require the deployment of forces to achieve the required effect where it is needed and when it is needed. So assuming you have the required capabilities, deployability of the force is vital to success.

Being an island nation Australia needs to be able to deploy her forces by air or by sea. The Government has stated that there is a need 'to enhance the lift requirement for deployment'. Deployment by sea is not always the best solution. The 1999 operation in East Timor was extensively supported by sealift because it was so close to Darwin. Operations elsewhere in the region would mostly not share this good fortune. The simple rule is the longer the distance involved the more time it takes to deploy or resupply matériel by sealift. The delays observed even in the East Timor case multiply with distance from Australian ports and in a broader conflict many Sea Lanes of Communication (SLOC) may be closed or contested, further adding distance and time. Some heavy equipment by weight alone, such as Main Battle Tanks (MBT) at 50–70 tonnes must travel by sealift. Also ammunition and fuel due to their bulk are also better transported by ship. However, personnel and material including M113AS3/4, ASLAV light-armoured vehicles, towed artillery, and general vehicles and palletised stores can be delivered by air. The further afield these deployments are, the greater the requirement for high range, or high payload, strategic air transport aircraft.

However, Australia's existing airlift force structure is optimised for intra-theatre airlift rather than strategic airlift. The C-130H, C-130J and Caribou are tactical transports optimised for intra-theatre work. The prospect of ongoing global and regional operations over coming decades presents an ongoing demand for a strategic airlift capability.

Project AIR 5402 program objectives are to provide the RAAF with 4–5 medium-sized, twin-engine tanker aircraft 'to replace and enhance the air-to-air refuelling capabilities of the ADF'. The new tanker aircraft are to provide both boom and dual-redundant hose drogue capabilities to provide refuelling for F/A-18A, F-111 and the new AEW&C aircraft, and coalition aircraft types. 'Additionally, the aircraft will be required to enhance strategic airlift in support of ADF forces deployed in-country or overseas'. AIR 5402 presents a valuable opportunity to address both aerial tanker and strategic airlift needs with a single low-cost solution.

The AIR 5402 contenders are the Boeing KC-767-200ER and the Airbus/EADS A330 Multi-Role Tanker Transport (MRTT) aircraft. The best option, however, the Boeing 747-400SF (KC-33A) aircraft is not being considered.

Ostensibly this is due to a formal requirement that the tankers will operate to and from the remote 'bare bases' at Curtin and Scherger, and be capable of delivering fuel to either. Curtin and Scherger are not suited to the operation of tanker aircraft as neither have the runway strength or length to permit such heavy aircraft to operate with useful fuel payloads. Their remoteness also presents difficulties in sustaining fuel supplies for high intensity operations using sea and ground transport. Resupply by

The Nose Cargo Door (NCD) has been an option on new-build 747 freighters since the 1970s. The NCD permits the loading of long payload items, either on pallets or in containers, and is especially useful for palletised vehicles and artillery pieces. Depicted is an Iraqi Airlines example equipped with an internal pallet loader (Boeing On-Board Loader), several of which were built two decades ago (Photo courtesy Boeing).

air is not feasible because, even if heavy aircraft could land at these bases, the tankers used would probably consume as much fuel as they could deliver. More importantly, in both strategic and tactical terms, most tanker-supported missions are likely to be flown from Darwin, Tindal and Learmonth because of the geographic spread of these three bases. All three are accessible for high-volume fuel resupply using land transport. All three have the runway quality to support a 747-400SF-based tanker without any limitations in basic fuel payload. A common criticism of the 747 as a tanker is that it requires more ramp space for parking compared to the KC-135 and twin-engine 767/A330 options. This might be an issue for the USAF and RAF who use their tankers mostly during coalition warfare in areas with often underdeveloped infrastructure. It is largely irrelevant for Australia. Even in coalition warfare Australia would be unlikely to deploy dozens of tankers (let alone own them). Used as an airlifter, the 747 would be interchangeable with the C-5 Galaxy in terms of ramp space needs overseas.

The 747 is unique among commercial transports as it is the only one in the 100-tonne payload class. The 767, A310, A330, DC-10 and MD-11 are all in the 40–60 tonne class. In the strategic airlift world size itself matters as it sets bounds on the dimensions of the items that can be carried as payload. It is no accident that the C-5 Galaxy and the An-124 strategic airlifters are 100-tonne payload aircraft. Another key consideration is cost and availability. Since 11 September 2001 we have seen the largest accumulated glut of used commercial transport aircraft in history. Dozens of 747-400s are available at bargain basement prices and present a unique opportunity.

The existing contenders for Project AIR 5402 are both excellent aircraft. Neither of them, however, can compete in key performance measures against the much larger 747-400.

We can distil the key issues in the debate between 747, 767 and A330 down to the following points, accepting that many are '100-tonne payload aircraft' versus '50-tonne payload aircraft' comparisons rather than type-specific issues.

· The cost of new build 767/A330 conversions is $US100m plus, compared with $US58m for a used 747-400SF without the air-to-air-refueller conversion.

· Airlift capacity for the 767/A330 is limited compared with the 747-400 series–with the design payloads being at best 50 per cent of the 747-400SF.

· The fuel offload capacity of the 767/A330 is 40–50 per cent of the 747-400SF series. This doubles crew demands per available fuel offload in aerial refuelling work.

· Service life—both the 767 and A330 will be superseded in production between 2010 and 2020 by newer types and the industry support base will contract post 2030.

· Both the 767 and A330 are 'slow' Mach 0.78–0.8 class cruise speed aircraft compared with the 747-400SF with a fast Mach 0.855 cruise speed.

· Both the 767 and A330 are limited in the size of the main deck payload items they can carry compared with the 747-400SF.

The primary role of an ADF strategic transport aircraft would be to deploy and support forces overseas, principally land forces. Army states 'As part of the ADF, the (Army) Objective Force will be optimised to conduct Manoeuvre Operations in the Littoral Environment (MOLE) in either a DA or CSIN context but will retain the flexibility to be employed in SWI missions and CCOW'. Australia has too few C-130H/J aircraft to use them for strategic transport, particularly as each can carry only one M113 armoured personnel carrier, unless the requirement is operationally urgent, hazardous, or the airfield cannot be used by a larger transport aircraft. A strategic transport aircraft is required that can deliver large

quantities of personnel, weapons, stores and equipment to the in-theatre Main Operating Base (MOB).

Onward delivery to a Forward Operating Base (FOB) would then be by C-130H/J or Caribou fixed-wing aircraft or by Army Chinook helicopter depending on the type and weight of the load and the distance involved. The ADF would not risk high-value aircraft such as C-17 or KC-33A into a hazardous FOB—assuming the FOB runway can survive repeated landings by heavily laden airlifters. Large airlifters are highly vulnerable to fire from large-calibre sniper rifles, shoulder-launched surface-to-air missiles, mortars, long-range artillery, rockets or tactical ballistic missiles. There is a high risk of the destruction of such a large aircraft closing the FOB down for many hours and stopping or impeding the vital flow of matériel and reinforcements.

The 747 as a Strategic Airlifter is the backbone of the US Civil Reserve Air Fleet which supplements, as required, the US Air Force fleet of C-5B, C-17A, C-141 airlifters during operations. The 747-100 is designated the C-19A, the 747-200 the C-25A and the 747-400 the C-33A. The E-4B airborne command post and VC- 25A presidential transports are based on the 747-200. The YAL-1A Air-Borne Laser is based on the 747-400F. The 747-400 strongly outperforms the C-17A in payload or range capability. It provides C-5B Galaxy class payload lift, yet is faster and has a longer range than the C-5B and C-17A. It does, however, lack their intra-theatre short-field, outsize payload and Roll-On Roll-Off (RORO) capabilities.

Political access considerations aside, and excluding US and Japanese military airfields, there are no less than 55 runways rated as suitable for the 747 within the arc from India through China to South Korea. Thailand has three such runways, Malaysia six, Brunei one, Singapore two and Indonesia no less than nine. Within the nearer region this is a total of 21 runways rated for 747 operations (excluding military installations).

With the KC-33A the ADF does not need to rely on USAF Air Mobility Command or commercially leased Antonov or Ilyushin aircraft for most of their strategic air transport requirements. We would have discretion in deciding where and how we lift which assets. With the KC-33A performing personnel and palletised materiel lift, RORO airlifters are needed only for the remaining fraction of outsized or oversized payloads, and short field operations if or when required.

Example deployment scenarios

· 1 Brigade—half a mechanised infantry battalion with 348 troops in six sorties, including personal weapons, 30 x M113 APC and up to 40 tonnes of stores on 463L pallets.

· 1 Brigade—one 6-gun 155mm M198 Battery in three sorties with 92-202 tonnes of stores on 463L pallets.

· 3 Brigade—half a light-infantry battalion with 348 troops in three sorties, including personal weapons, 10 x Unimog, 10 x Land Rovers and up to 50 tonnes of stores on 463L pallets.

· 3 Brigade—one 6-gun 105mm L119 Hamel Battery in two sorties with 42–82 tonnes of stores on 463L pallets.

Example deployment ranges

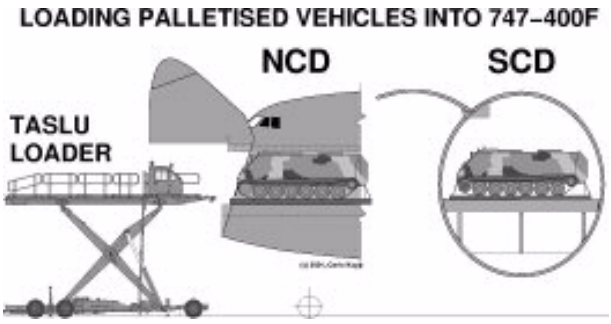
Achievable deployment range varies with runway parameters, aircraft configuration and engine fit, elevation, temperature, payload and fuel load. The cited examples are best estimates based on published performance figures for the 747-400F series. Townsville is limited to payloads of around 70 tonnes to achieve useful unrefuelled ranges. Darwin permits full payloads of around 110 tonnes for unrefuelled operations in the nearer region.

· 1 Brigade (Darwin) to approximately 4500nm with 70-tonne payload, approximately 2300nm with 110-tonne payload, subject to aircraft configuration and unlimited with aerial refuelling.

· 3 Brigade (Townsville) to approximately 2500nm with 70-tonne payload, subject to aircraft configuration and unlimited with aerial refuelling.

Some payloads will remain incompatible with the KC-33A for reasons of size, weight or both. These items must by moved by sealift or by RORO airlifters such as the C-5B, C-17, An-124 or C-130. The height of S-70 or UH-60 Blackhawk helicopters in stowed configuration is too large for Nose Cargo Door (NCD) access to the KC-33A. Without significant upper fuselage disassembly these cannot be carried. The Leopard and M1 series tanks are too large and heavy. In practice, tanks are not generally carried by airlift anyway, even if the C-5B, C-17

The Side Cargo Door (SCD) is available as a retrofit on 'Special Freighter' 747 conversions, or a new-build option on Freighters and Combis. The SCD is larger than the main cargo door in the tail of a C-130 Hercules, but fuselage width limits payloads to a length of about 6 metres. Concurrent unloading of a 747-400 via both the SCD and NCD permits the aircraft to be emptied in half the time of a single-door aircraft of such size (Photo courtesy of Boeing).



The wide availability of high performance air transportable mobile loaders, such as the Australian TASLU, US Air Force Halvorsen (licenced TASLU) and Tunner, permits the use of the 747-400SF for strategic lift in and out of locations without an existing pallet and container handling system. The flexibility of these loaders permits palletised vehicle loading and unloading as an alternative to RORO techniques (Diagram C. Kopp).

and An-124 are able to carry one tank each. Cabin height is the principal limitation on loading trucks via the NCD. The retrofit of soft top cabin roofs and folding windshields to most truck types would permit access via the NCD.

M113 variants, including the M113AS3 and stretched M113AS4 are suitable for palletised carriage. NCD access is limited to subtypes without turrets. Land Rover *Perentie* variants are suitable, but with height restricting NCD access for some models. Palletised L119 and M198 artillery pieces are suitable for NCD access, the L119 also for Side Cargo Door (SCD) access. ASLAVs may prove suitable for SCD loading, but a clearance check is required to prove this. The Unimog 1700L/38 4x4, 2450L 6x6, Mack MC3 and *Bushmaster* Infantry Mobility Vehicles are too large for either door, although minor modifications to the Unimogs would permit NCD access.

Use of the 747 in the tanking role is not new. In the late 1970s there was a US Air Force program to provide a tanker transport aircraft to support fighter wing deployments from the US to Europe and Pacific rim bases. Although the 747 lost the competition to the McDonnell Douglas DC-10-30, Boeing produced complete production documentation packages for the 747 tanker design in anticipation of further orders. The Shah of Iran purchased the prototypes and additional aircraft conversions to support Iran's fleet of F-4Es. Boeing abandoned marketing of 747 tanker conversions in 2000 to avoid competition against its new build medium-size 767 tanker.

There are good operational reasons for favouring the KC-33A over smaller twin-engine tankers:

· Strike operations at 1000nm or greater favour heavy tankers over medium-sized ones.

· Persistent strike operations against highly mobile targets favour heavy tankers over medium-sized ones.

· Only defensive fighter patrol support at 500nm or less favours medium-sized tankers over heavy versions.

· Fast 747 Mach 0.855 cruise speed does not impose speed restrictions on fighters refuelled by the KC-33A unlike twin-engine tankers.

· Four engines on the aircraft provide mission-critical reliability for long-range or long-endurance refuelling missions unlike twin-engine tankers.

· An additional satellite antenna for communications relay will not incur a significant performance penalty unlike with twin-engine tankers.

The operational effectiveness of the KC-33A used as an aerial refueller can be summarised thus:

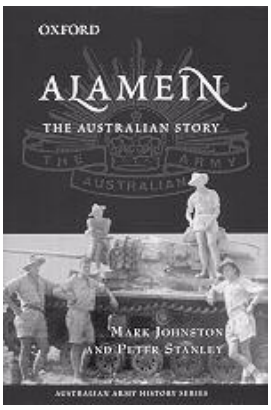
· The large fuel offload and freight capacity permits its use in the same global deployment support role performed by the USAF KC-10A Extender fleet.

· The main deck freight payload of the 747-400SF is equivalent to five C-130H aircraft. This permits a small number of KC-33A aircraft to support global deployments of ADF F/A-18A and F-111 aircraft with a low number of sorties.

· Its large offload capacity makes the KC-33A a very attractive contribution to coalition air campaigns, especially to support carrier-based US Navy and US Marine Corps assets. The KC-33A is also well suited to supporting extended-range coalition operations in the Pacific rim from secure Australian basing—supplementing limited US Air Force KC-10A Extender numbers.

As a Project AIR 5042 alternative, the KC-33A (an aerial refuelling conversion of the 747-400SF) represents a lower acquisition cost and higher performance alternative to the twin-engine tankers currently being sought under AIR 5402. Most of these advantages accrue from the unique size of the 747 design, permitting it to perform many tasks that are beyond the reach of the smaller alternatives. The glut of used 747-400s has driven prices down to unprecedented low figures, presenting an opportunity never observed before. There is a compelling case to be made for adopting a used 747-400 aircraft solution over the existing AIR 5402 plan. ◆

Brigadier Brian Cooper (Retd) served in the Australian Army 1952–1985, first as an armoured corps trooper then, from 1954, as an artillery officer. He transferred to the Australian Army Aviation Corps on its formation in 1968. He is the author of 'The Diaries of Genghis Khan'.



Alamein: The Australian Story

Mark Johnston & Peter Stanley

Reviewed by Dr Malcolm Kennedy

A great British historian, Tawney, advised that to be any good as a historian, one must master the documents and the archives, but even more importantly a historian must wear a stout pair of boots. History, he argued, lacked surety, unless the writer had walked the ground and had an intimacy with the environment.

Johnston and Stanley have read the Australian, British and German records and their knowledge of the ground has helped them paint a clearer picture of the battle and the physical conditions the combatants faced each day.

Alamein according to the authors '... was arguably Australia's greatest single contribution to Allied victory' ... in World War II. They make a powerful case that we should celebrate Alamein with Tobruk and Kokoda as great Australian military achievements.

Johnston and Stanley set themselves the following tasks. They seek to give Australians and others a better and more accurate understanding of how Alamein was a vital turning point in World War II and the significance of the Australian forces' role in the battle. The book seeks to counter the huge British literature on the North African campaign, which often fails to pay the Australian forces their due. The narrative, covering the period July to November 1942, seeks to provide a rounded account of the Australian contribution from the level of the digger through to that of the commanders. Finally, they aim to give a balanced assessment of the Ninth Division's contribution to the British Commonwealth's effort in the theatre.

How well have Johnston and Stanley achieved their goals? The remainder of the book provides a wealth of detail, explanations and conclusions, which meet their objectives and more. This is one of the most readable military histories I have had the pleasure of reading in over a decade. The attention to detail in facts, figures, the past debates and in the use of fresh and new material is outstanding.

The context of the North African campaign is set with a carefully argued case for the complexity of the war faced by Auchinleck. Given the defeat of many Italian forces, at first sight, it seems odd that the British forces took so long to defeat the remaining Italians and the Africa Korps.

Johnston and Stanley show how the geostrategic situation placed huge and conflicting, demands upon Auchinleck. He had to maintain control of an area, which encompassed Cairo to the Cape and from Egypt through the Middle East to India. Two strategic assets were of vital concern — the Suez Canal and the Middle East oil supplies.

The great unknown threat was the possibility of a pincer movement by the German forces from the west and the east. Given the huge Soviet losses in the initial German onslaught, and the German success against the Soviet winter campaign, it was not impossible for them to develop a pincer attack on the Middle East. The worse case was that the Africa Korps would sweep across North Africa and into Egypt and with a Soviet collapse in the Caucasus, the Germans could swing south with a spearhead driving through Turkey into Persia, Syria and Palestine.

Johnston and Stanley stress the importance of Auchinleck's dilemma. He dispersed his forces denying himself the concentration of troops needs to defeat Rommel quickly. They note that 'Auchinleck was wrong: in hindsight'. The German thoughts on any possible pincer movement were only excited later as an opportunistic idea. The chance of a pincer strategy never developed. Although in the strategic climate of Christmas 1941–42, when the Axis forces were winning everywhere, the possible eastern attack had to be covered with a screening force. The first half of 1942 added successes for the Germans and the Japanese, who swept through East and South East Asia. The war in North Africa had swung from the edge of victory to the Germans having forces inside Egypt.

In the prelude to Alamein battle, four factors had harmed the British forces. Leadership at all levels had been a failure. Ritchie failed to exert his will on his forces and the battlefield. The co-ordination of arms was almost completely lacking in contrast to the almost seamlessness of Rommel's method of mobile warfare.

The British forces had a unique advantage in Ultra intelligence briefings, although it was not until mid-1942 that the necessary leadership and trained forces were available to make best use of it. Moreover, Rommel's intelligence operators were able to make good use of the British failure to maintain strict radio and signal discipline.

The iron law of logistics exercised a decisive limit on operations. The further one operated from base supplies, the greater the amounts of fuel that had to be used to carry forward each ton of supplies. The harsh environment also added to the difficulty of supply and service life of vehicles, weapons and men. Rommel's successful advance into Egypt now put him at the logistical disadvantage. The German

forces applied battlefield deployment of armour, artillery, anti-tank guns and infantry in a more effective way than the British forces. Ritchie's defeat, and the loss of Tobruk, which had been held for eight months by the Australians, was a crucial turning point in the supply of equipment. The defeat led Roosevelt to help Churchill with a massive surge in the re-equipment and supply of the Eighth Army. The battle of Alamein was the first time in North Africa that these four elements were finally changed and applied to the benefit of the Eighth Army.

The Australian Ninth Division played a key role in the battle of Alamein. The Division comprised some 17,000 men, the core of whom had successfully defended Tobruk. Commanded by General Leslie Morshead, the division's success in the Alamein battles was built upon skilled leadership, a highly resourceful staff, increased supplies of equipment, combined arms operations and the repeated courageous actions of small groups of troops.

The 10 July 1942 battle by the Division's 26th Brigade, which took key elevated objectives on Rommel's left flank, captured Company 621 an important signals intelligence unit. This attack proved the efficacy of combined-arms operations and has been identified as the beginning of the end for the Axis forces in North Africa. The Australians showed that the Germans were not supermen. The powerful counter attacks involving Stukas, artillery, panzers and infantry were beaten. Over 1000 prisoners were captured; probably 20 tanks and more than a dozen guns were destroyed. This decisive action was to set the pattern for the eventual defeat of Rommel's forces at Alamein.

Johnston and Stanley lay out in detail the subsequent development of Montgomery's command, planning, training and eventual defeat of the Africa Korps defences at Alamein. They note that Montgomery's detailed preparation was flawed by having no plan for the pursuit and capture of the surviving forces.

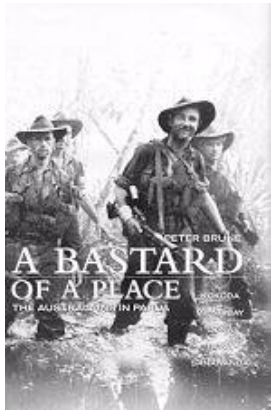
The book carries through to the end of the campaign and meets Johnston and Stanley original objectives. They demonstrate conclusively that Alamein should be one of our national celebrations of military excellence.

The result of painstaking scholarly research and writing, this volume maintains the high standards of the Army History Series and Oxford University Press. The excellent text is enhanced with 29 excellent maps, 24 pages of notes, 8 pages of bibliography and an extensive index. It also has a useful list of abbreviations although this has been, unfortunately, placed at the back of the book.

The lessons of the Alamein campaign still have relevance for the ADF. Success in battle can only be secured with good leadership at all levels, close all-arms co-operation, thorough and creative planning, the use of initiative, the ability to call for massive fire support on demand, the plentiful supply of modern arms and equipment, and well-trained and determined troops. ◆

Mark Johnston & Peter Stanley, 'Alamein: The Australian Story', OUP, South Melbourne, 2002, Hardback, 314pp, RRP $59.95.

A Bastard of a Place: The Australians in Papua



Peter Brune

Reviewed by Peter Ryan

This is by no means Peter Brune's first book about Papua in World War II. So *A Bastard of a Place* proceeds with welcome confidence and competence. Brune (like Les Carlyon with his magnificent *Gallipoli*) in his own stout boots has covered kilometres of the weary terrain. Both authors know that there is no other way of getting the scene exactly right.

This is a big book with various ambitious themes that at times elbow each other aside, seeking attention. Brune tries to make the three Papuan mini-theatres coherent and contextual so we can appreciate the relation to each other of Kokoda, Milne Bay and Gona–Buna–Sanananda. He thinks (and I agree) that Kokoda occupies a disproportionate share of Australia's public imagination and fame. Kokoda was but one phase of the Papuan campaign and the others—just as bloody and just as heroic—are less understood and renowned. For example, the Australian victory at Milne Bay should enjoy far more fame than it does, as the first land defeat inflicted on the enemy in the whole Japanese war. (Not, it must be stressed, that Brune plays down the Kokoda achievement).

It is marvellous what he has packed into this book. We see the reality of fighting along appalling mountain tracks and through stinking coastal swamps; the character and spirit of the young Australian troops, their courage and suffering; the problems of front-line supply—usually on strong black shoulders; the evacuation of casualties, frequently on the identical black shoulders that had just laid down a load of rations or ammunition carried forward.

We see aspects of the wider context of World War II as it ravaged the globe. A surprising amount relates in one way or another to the Papuan campaign. For example, the experience of Australian Imperial Force troops in their tough battles in the Middle East and Greece turned them into superb fighting units, although they still had to learn even the rudiments of how to fight in the jungle.

Australia's military effectiveness was hobbled by our absurd system of two armies: the AIF, ready to serve anywhere in the world; and the militia, enlisted for home defence only and often disparaged as 'choccos'—chocolate soldiers—although by no

means were all of them conscripts.

Brune is judicious in his elucidation of this vexed matter. He concludes that, although the AIF and militia began sometimes with mutual suspicion, before long they operated together with respect, acknowledging that they were both, after all, Australian. No AIF veterans today would deny the heroism of the militia's 39th Battalion that fought with them on Kokoda. And as soon as the Australian government allowed, militiamen in their tens of thousands volunteered to transfer to the AIF.

Brune appreciates the wider strategy. For example, the Australians in Papua, although under the supreme command of US General Douglas MacArthur, seemed to carry alone the burden of the land fighting. Brune reminds us that the superb, bloody fighting on Guadalcanal Island by the US Marines significantly eased Japanese pressure on the Australians battling it out on the Kokoda Track.

The author relies extensively on our official war history, especially on Dudley McCarthy's humane and heartrending Volume V (*Kokoda to Wau*), and on classics such as Raymond Paull's *Retreat from Kokoda*; Vic Austin's book about his own brave 39th Battalion, *To Kokoda and Beyond*; Sydney Rowell's autobiography *Full Circle*; and 'Blue' Steward's immortal *Recollections of a Regimental Medical Officer*.

But Brune's many detailed interviews with serving soldiers, and his personal acquaintance with the track enable him to treat those authors as—almost—collaborators rather than as mere references. (Professor David Horner believes Brune is the most knowledgeable expert on the participation of Australians in the Papua campaign).

The book is agreeably free from errors of fact and there are few significant omissions. I would have liked just a mention of Lieutenant Colonel John Minogue. When no generals and few staff officers risked muddying their boots, Minogue, of his own initiative, slogged forward with his pack on his back, sending terse messages back to New Guinea Force Headquarters in Port Moresby—to small effect. Brune's account of the media's role is admirable—there was no television in those days. Journalists Osmar White and Chester Wilmot should remain famous for their courage and their dispatches, as should Damien Parer and George Silk for their pictures. Aspiring war correspondents today might still turn to them for lessons.

The besetting horrors of Kokoda are frequently blamed on the terrain, the climate and disease. But they derive equally from Australia's normal peacetime neglect of its armed forces. The start of the Pacific War saw us with little equipment, limited mobility, no developed doctrine and no troops trained in jungle warfare. There were no staff studies of, for example, supply in tropical areas. We sent our first soldiers into battle at Kokoda wearing pale khaki uniforms designed for the desert—each man a perfect target for Japanese marksmen against the deep-green background.

By Papuan standards, the Kokoda terrain was not especially tough. The country behind Salamaua and Lae and down the Finisterre Mountains to Madang was higher, colder, steeper and rougher, yet we fought there with efficiency—after we had learned how to do it.

Brune's sharp critique of the Australian and US high command and staff, and of the Australian government, moves to rage and despair, but it is well-founded and judiciously told. MacArthur and General Thomas Albert Blamey emerge shabbily; any colonel or brigadier successful in battle along the Kokoda Track or elsewhere ran the risk of the sack from jealous superiors.

A Bastard of a Place is a very good book—even the index, by today's standards, is useful. A chronology of events (such as those in the official war histories) would have been a help. But Brune has produced what may be called almost an encyclopedia of the vital Papuan campaign. Any high school that lacks a copy in its library has ceased to teach Australian history. ◆

Peter Brune, 'A Bastard of a Place: The Australians in Papua', Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 691pp, RRP $49.95.

The Return of the Exiles: Australia's Repatriation of the Indonesians 1945–47

Frank Bennett

Reviewed by Professor Jamie Mackie

In mid-October 1945, barely two months after the Japanese surrender announcement and the Indonesian proclamation of independence on August 17, the *Esperance Bay* left Sydney for Jakarta (then Batavia) to repatriate 1416 of the 2856 Indonesians stranded in Australia by the Pacific war. They happened to be virtually all voluntary returnees, mostly seamen from Dutch ships, members of the Netherlands East Indies armed forces, and detainees, who had been prisoners held in exile before the war in the notorious Dutch camp at Boven Digoel, north of Merauke in West Papua. But they were due to be repatriated as soon as the war ended in any case, in accordance with the requirements of the 'White Australia Policy'.

The story of the return of these exiles, comprehensively researched and engagingly related by Frank Bennett, a former US diplomat now living in Melbourne, provides an illuminating record of how relations between the Australian, Dutch and Indonesian governments developed in those early months of Indonesia's struggle for independence. 'Australia was [then] in the process of defining a distinct foreign policy of its own', he notes, 'and the *Esperance Bay* incident was part of the evolutionary development of such a policy'. Because various issues arose, some of them quite minor ones, on which the Chifley Government found itself seriously at odds with the Dutch (and sometimes also the British, whose forces had landed in Java and Sumatra to handle the surrender of the Japanese), Australia became directly involved in making decisions about both the exiles and the new Republican government in Indonesia, which crucially influenced the course of Australian policy there from the outset. Bennett points out that the various Australians who became directly involved in negotiations with the Indonesian leaders, MacMahon Ball, Justice Richard Kirby, Tom Critchley and Alfred Brookes were favourably impressed by them, but mostly critical of the stiff-necked stubbornness and arrogance of the Dutch, who even then were trying to re-establish their former pattern of colonial rule.

Chifley and the young Acting Secretary of External Affairs, John Burton, also became increasingly unsympathetic to the Dutch and their policies, although Australia remained committed to *de jure* recognition of Dutch sovereignty. Bennett makes an interesting point that a comparison of the situation in Indonesia with that in French Indochina shows that the lack of interest in the latter by Mountbatten's forces (and, politically, by the US) enabled the French to re-establish their rule quickly, which later gave rise to the long and bitter war of liberation there. Conversely, in Indonesia the involvement of the British and Australians, and later the Americans too, made it essential for the Dutch to start negotiating with the Republic of Indonesia almost immediately. So the Australian government was thereby 'pushed into a direct relationship with the new Republic from its earliest days' by its experiences with the seamen and refugees', as well as 'the pressure to get them out of Australia'.

Perhaps we were lucky that our controversial immigration policy had such a serendipitous political outcome! Although the voyage of the Esperance Bay forms the major part of his book, along with the later, less controversial three voyages of HMAS *Manoora* in 1946–7, Bennett has traced very well the background to the broader story of how the Indonesians came to be in Australia between 1941–5 and what they did here after they heard about the proclamation of Indonesian independence. (Those of us who knew of the parts played by Molly Bondan and her splendid Indonesian husband will be pleased to read of their sensible handling of some politically complex problems in their relations with the Australian authorities.) Old naval men like me will also find a lot of intriguing nuggets of interest in the very detailed story, almost too detailed at times, of the *Esperance Bay*'s unique problems of transporting an over-crowded boatload of Indonesian men, women and children whom it had promised to deliver to a port under Republican control at a time when neither the Dutch nor the British military authorities in Batavia were at all happy about receiving them anywhere.

My only (minor) complaint about this book is that not enough effort has been put into the job of transforming a good and very detailed Monash University MA thesis into a more attractively readable book. Not that the book is not readable: it is. But it is overburdened with the scholarly apparatus required for a thesis, such as references and footnotes, and it has so much detail that it could easily have been pruned drastically. Short books are generally better books. And a book and a thesis serve different purposes. A graduate student's concern to satisfy demanding examiners about a thesis should not apply to a book, since any assiduous reader can go to the thesis for further details if they are needed. Bennett says he hopes his book will help to make this remarkable story better known than it is to today's young Australians. His conclusion that 'the story of Australia's reaction to the Indonesian exiles and their campaign of resistance to the Dutch is an inspiring one' deserves our respect and appreciation. ◆

Frank C. Bennett Jr., 'The Return of the Exiles: Australia's Repatriation of the Indonesians, 1945–47', Monash Asia Institute, (Monash Papers on Southeast Asia, Number. 58), Monash University, 2003, paperback, 328pp, RRP $59.95.

Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History

Chin Peng

Reviewed by Professor Peter Edwards

Imagine, for a moment, that Osama bin Laden were to remain alive, if not especially active, for some decades in the remote sanctuaries on the Afghanistan–Pakistan border. Then (to continue the hypothetical

scenario) he admits defeat, negotiates immunity from prosecution and emerges from seclusion, looking more like a mild-mannered and moderately prosperous businessman than a fanatical terrorist. With the aid of a couple of Western journalists, he writes his memoirs, consulting the archives of the governments against which he directed his attacks. In the book he candidly admits to mistakes and errors of judgement, but also responds vigorously to many of the assertions made against him, both by political leaders at the time he was active and by historians during the intervening decades.

Historical analogies are never perfect, but that scenario will give some idea of the impact, at least on some people of a certain age, of the notion that Chin Peng has written a book to present his 'side of history'. In the early 1950s, during the Malayan Emergency, he was 'Public Enemy Number One' to the British colonial authorities fighting the insurgency led by the Communist Party of Malaya (CPM) of which he was Secretary-General.

After the Emergency was declared over in 1960 (minor guerrilla activities petered on in Southern Thailand and northern Malaysia until the early 1980s), he based himself in Beijing. His forces remained on the Thai-Malaysian border until 1989 when they finally laid down their arms.

In 1999 he came to Australia as part of the process of writing these memoirs, carrying out research in the Australian War Memorial and participating in a fascinating workshop at the Australian National University with a number of historians working in relevant areas.

The book is as easy to read as a spy novel, but more satisfying for being non-fiction. The principal source is Chin Peng's memory, which must be extraordinarily powerful if every detail in this book is accurate. But it has an authentic ring, and the book gains credibility both from its balanced tone and from its willingness to admit tactical errors and false judgements. Specialists will find it frustrating that there are no footnotes. Thus, when Chin Peng (or, to give his real name, Ong Boon Hua) criticises 'Western historians' for this or that claim, as he frequently does, his targets are not clearly identified. But it is hard to not be impressed by his assessments of the strengths and weaknesses of major players on both sides.

Among the leading British politicians and soldiers, for example, Malcolm MacDonald emerges as a scheming manipulator and Gerald Templer as a choleric egotist, but Lieutenant General Sir Harold Briggs, author of the Briggs Plan, is generously acknowledged as the principal architect of the CPM's defeat. Robert Thompson, the official whose reputation as an expert in counter-insurgency took to him to leadership of the British advisory mission in Vietnam, is not even mentioned.

For Australian readers, perhaps the most interesting passage relates to the 1948 visit to Singapore by Laurence Sharkey, head of the Australian Communist Party, on his way back to Australia from a communist congress in Calcutta. At the time, the British argued, Moscow had directed communist parties around the world to adopt a more militant line, and Sharkey had carried this message to the comrades in Malaya. The outbreak of the Emergency therefore showed that the British were fighting against global communism, not an anti-colonial insurgency.

Chin Peng's account dismisses the 'Calcutta Conference' approach to the outbreak of the Emergency. He portrays the CPM as motivated by nationalism, rather than by adherence to Moscow, and insists that he had virtually no contact with the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. The book, especially its last chapters, presents an authentic picture of the relations between communist parties, especially the balance between independence and subservience that the CPM had to display towards Beijing.

But there is an extraordinary aspect to Chin Peng's account of the Sharkey visit. The CPM leaders, it is said, asked the Australian how he dealt with non-union strikebreakers. Sharkey, admired as a strong and effective communist leader, says: 'We get rid of them'. He explains that he means that the Australian communists kill strikebreakers, but only in rural and mining areas.

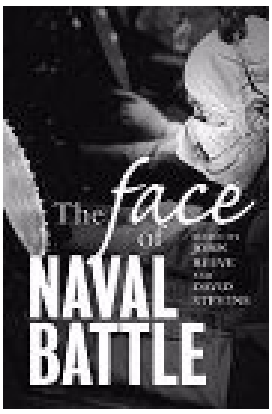
According to Chin Peng (p. 204), 'Sharkey's words sent a rush of reinforced fervour through our gathering'. Sharkey was almost certainly indulging in braggadocio, but he may well have encouraged the CPM on a path that led to many more Chinese than Europeans being killed in this supposedly anti-colonial uprising.

There is much else of value and interest in this account from 'the other side of the hill', not only to historians of the Malayan Emergency. Those conducting the 'war on terror' today would do well to read it and reflect on its insights. ◆

Peter Edwards was Australia's official historian for the Malayan Emergency.

Chin Peng (as told to Ian Ward and Norma Miraflor), 'Alias Chin Peng: My Side of History', Media Masters, Singapore, 2003, paperbound, 527pp, RRP 39.95.

The Face of Naval Battle: The Human Experience of Naval War at Sea



John Reeve & David Stevens (eds)

Reviewed by Rear Admiral Gerry Carwardine

This book is a collection of essays drawn largely from papers presented at the RAN's second King-Hall Naval History Conference held in Canberra in 2001. It seeks to show the human factor in warfare. The editors, both noted Australian naval historians and authors, have skilfully coalesced the conference papers into chapters with essentially a human theme, covering the past 100 years or so. That is, the life of the RAN.

The book covers not just Australian experience but includes distant wars and stories of friends and allies and even past enemies. It looks at most dimensions of war at sea including surface, air and sub-surface warfare and touches on joint service activities. Its contributors are both Australian and international and it is pitched at the local and international market. The inclusion of a few more chapters reflecting RAN experience might have been useful. But more of that later.

A first impression is that the theme wanders from its aim in some chapters with historical narrative stories and no analysis, and a few topics covering roles and capabilities; strategy and tactics; and even technical matters. Nevertheless most chapters with such an initial lean return to the theme and bring out the human factor.

Part one opens the book with 'Setting the Scene', two superb chapters by John Reeve and Andrew Gordon. The former considers the anatomy of the face of naval battle against an historical background and the latter operational command at sea. Both are worthy of expansion into books in their own right. Parts two and three address aspects of the face of naval battle and the warrior and his foe respectively. Many are quite excellent.

The chapter by Peter Overlack on Admiral Graf Von Spee and the German Cruiser Squadron in the Pacific in 1914 vividly shows the loneliness of command and the effect of the lack of clear, indeed largely any, strategic direction from his superiors. David Parkin writes of amphibious matters and joint operations in defence of Australia starting with our first military operation as a nation, the capture of German radio stations in New Guinea by the Naval and Military Expeditionary Force in September 1914. Michael Dowsett tells of the compassion and care extended to Emden survivors by HMAS *Sydney* and her medical team after the battle at Cocos Island. This aspect is also mentioned by David Stevens in his interesting chapter on the faceless foe. After HMAS *Voyager* recovered survivors from an Italian submarine they 'were pleased to find the Australians did not kill without mercy'. Similar acts of kindness (following the custom of the sea) in the Mediterranean included leaving boats with provisions and oars at the scene of actions and even making plain language signals to the enemy advising of the position of survivors. However, such care was not without considerable hazard. And Admiral Cunningham, the Commander-in-Chief, directed that as distasteful as it is to leave survivors, Commanding Officers (CO) must harden their hearts, for the operations in hand and the security of their ships and crew, take precedence.

Guy Griffiths provides a personal perspective on naval battle based on his 43 years in the Navy and experience in three wars. He was a midshipman in the battle cruiser HMS *Repulse* in World War II in the chase for the Bismarck and a survivor of the former when sunk by the Japanese off Malaya. He served in the cruiser HMAS *Shropshire* at the Battles of Leyte Gulf and Lingayen Gulf. In the Korean War he had two tours as a gunnery officer, firstly, in the carrier HMAS *Sydney* and then the destroyer HMAS *Anzac*. As CO of the guided missile destroyer HMAS *Hobart* his final war was Vietnam. His experiences are fascinating and he brings out the critical human aspects including lack of information, exposure, boredom, stress and fear particularly during suicide air attacks. The importance of mail, food, air

conditioning, training, motivation and confidence in weapon systems is also emphasised, not least the improvement evident in many of these areas during command of Hobart.

The story of 'The Gunner', J.E. Macdonnel, whose books were required reading in the mess decks of HMA ships in the 1940s and 1950s is told by Peter Stanley. Excerpts of turret action are amongst the best descriptions of naval war one can read. And the story of 'Joe the Cook', as perceptively noted by Stanley, shows the mutual bonds of support and obligation that criss-cross the ship, making individuals part of a wider and stronger whole. It matters not if one is a gunner, steward or a stoker, or the chaplain or the dentist because the crew of a warship are 'all of one company'. Each has a job to do in war and the whole is no stronger than the individual.

The chapters by Lee Cordner and Michael Whitby look to sea command. The former relates to experience in command in war and peace. The author, who commanded two guided missile frigates, gives account of command in the 1991 Gulf War and of a second deployment to undertake maritime intercept operations in the Red Sea. It provides keen insight into the demands of command, and the author is frank in analysing what he perceives as his own shortcomings. Whitby provides possibly the best chapter in the book. It tells by way of the diaries of Commander Layard, a World War II Escort Group Commander, of the 'strain of the bridge' during the Battle of the Atlantic. His personal thoughts are brutally honest. He writes of self-doubts, lack of confidence and indecision. He agonises over past decisions and those yet to be made. He was nonetheless an admired and highly decorated successful war at sea commander. Most COs with courage to do so would no doubt have admitted similar concerns.

Most of the remaining chapters also provide good coverage of their topics. Though in truth one or two are well removed from the human face of battle.

To return to the Australian content, some further inclusions may have been worthwhile. It could be argued that it is difficult to reconcile an Australian book about the human face of warfare with that subject when the book excludes some notable Australian figures. These could include for example our two treble DSCs, Stan Darling and K.R. Hudspeth (both alive at the time of the Conference); our four mine disposal George Crosses; our sung heroes such as Hec Waller and Teddy Sheean; our unsung heroes such as H. Henty-Creer, the CO of the third X-craft to reach the Tirpitz (the other two COs, Place and Cameron, received the VC); and perhaps Rankin, the CO of HMAS *Yarra*, whose engagement of a vastly superior enemy was not dissimilar to that of Fogarty Fegan, the CO of HMS *Jervis Bay*, or G.B.Roope, the CO of HMS *Gloworm*. Both the latter received the VC.

As for the human factors of life at sea in peace and war, most are covered except perhaps one critical aspect—that is belief. The need to 'throw themselves on the mouth of the cannon' or go in harm's way, whilst seldom demanded of sailors is never more than a heartbeat away. Sailors must have complete trust in their superiors particularly their CO and belief in the cause in which they are involved to accept willingly the rigors and dangers of the enemy and indeed the sea. This is mentioned but briefly. Gordon Johnson in writing of Hobart saw two factors as contributing to her miraculous survival in the war. One was the extraordinary skill of the 'revered Captain Harry Howden' who 'undoubtedly saved our lives'. Cordner also mentions the belief, trust and respect that a CO must engender in his crew.

Having said that, the book is an enjoyable and interesting read. In short it achieves its aim. The editors are to be commended. It is educative and many chapters are good 'Boys Own' yarns. It gives excellent background reading for those interested in the Navy and for all students of naval history. It also provides good insight into the ways of the Navy for members of the other Services. And just as this reviewer was issued with Volumes I and II of the Admiralty Manual of Seamanship 50 years ago on entering the Naval College, today's midshipmen entering the Naval College and ADFA should be provided with *The Face of Naval Battle*. The final paragraph by Peter Jones fittingly concludes the book: 'Historically, the best-trained and led sailors have invariably won the war at sea, and the maritime war of the future is unlikely to be significantly different'. ◆

John Reeve & David Stevens (eds), 'The Face of Naval Battle: The Human Experience of Modern War at Sea', Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2003, paperback, 363pp, RRP $39.95.

It would be desirable if every Government, when it comes into power, should have its old speeches burned.

—Philip Snowden

Future Armies, Future Challenges: Land Warfare in the Information Age

Michael Evans, Russell Parkin & Alan Ryan

Reviewed by Professor Jeffrey Grey

There is an art to editing conference proceedings, which too often when published are less than the sum of their parts. They often date quickly, and I sometimes wonder, in the age of the Internet, why commercial publishers continue to bother with them.

This volume is a refutation of that observation, not least because of the care and skill of the editors, who have ensured that the chapters were current as could be to the time of publication, and who clearly have guided the contributors to that end. The volume contains the proceedings of the 2001 Chief of Army Land Warfare Conference, and could not be more timely. It draws on writers from Australia, Britain, France and the United States and divides neatly into three, connected sections. These deal with the changing nature of conflict, likely future challenges, and recent operational lessons.

There is much here to interest readers of *Defender*, the chapters by Ralph Peters on the West's future foes and Roger Spiller on operations in urban areas being especially interesting. Many will probably turn most readily to the chapters that address specifically Australian concerns, and here again there is much to consider. The contributions by Hugh Smith, Alan Ryan and Michael Evans stand out from a strong field.

The first looks at the issues and problems currently facing the ADF, and notes the very different cultural environment in which it must operate today compared with that which faced earlier generations of Australians. Put simply, Australia is a different place from what it was forty years ago, but in many respects the ADF continues to reflect that earlier Australia. He notes the need to reinforce notions of professionalism, not least through a greater emphasis on higher education for the officer corps, and by implication the need for the ADF to take professional military education as seriously as it takes training, which at present is not the case. The chapter also includes an excellent analysis of the former Ready Reserve (RRes) scheme, abolished in 1996 with too little thought and understanding of its potential benefits in an era of demographic, economic and social change, and of consecutive, multiple and simultaneous ADF deployments.

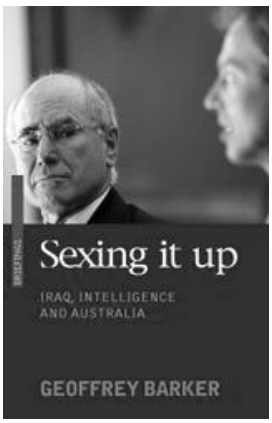
Alan Ryan's chapter on coalition operations draws on recent experience in Cambodia and East Timor, and is likewise concerned with cultural issues and their implications for the success or otherwise of operating in a multinational military environment. These challenges are much more acute for armies than for air or naval forces because of the dominance of the human factor over the platform in the land environment. In the conclusion to the book, which he also wrote, Ryan notes succinctly on this theme that 'high explosive, however smartly delivered, is a poor tool for resolving those cases of conflict that reside in the human heart'. The continuing requirement for sufficient numbers of highly trained and educated, and properly equipped, ground forces within the ADF is a point that can not be made often enough in the face of a strategic argument that has long since passed into the realm of theology.

A short summary will not do justice to Michael Evans' chapter on the changes in the security environment that have taken place since the early 1990s, resulting in what he terms 'a globalised yet deeply fragmented world'. For my money, Evans is the most interesting, and certainly the most erudite, writer on defence matters currently publishing in this country. His prose has a force and an elegance largely lacking in the political scientists and defence commentators elsewhere. Evans' writings generally are a model for Hugh Smith's broader point about the need to encourage greater intellectual rigour in defence debates in Australia, both those in public and, even more so, those conducted within Defence itself.

The book is a valuable and timely contribution to the public debate of defence issues. It is essential reading for any policy maker seeking to contribute to the formulation of Australian defence policy and strategy. *Future Armies, Future Challenges* is also essential reading for anyone genuinely interested in the intellectual and professional foundations for configuring and sustaining the Australian Army. ◆

Michael Evans, Russell Parkin and Alan Ryan (editors), 'Future Armies, Future Challenges: Land Warfare in the Information Age', Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2004, paperback, 370pp, RRP $35.00.

Sexing it up: Iraq, Intelligence and Australia



Geoffrey Barker

Reviewed by Dr Hugh Smith

The term 'sexing up' appears to have entered the vocabulary of politics as a type of 'spin' placed by politicians on information and assessments provided by intelligence agencies. Geoffrey Barker, a highly respected Australian journalist, has written an extended essay on this phenomenon in relation to the war in Iraq. The focus is Australia and Howard but George Bush and Tony Blair also feature prominently.

The book was completed by October 2003 and so does not cover more recent developments. But this does not detract from Barker's central purpose, which is to raise important questions about the relationship between intelligence and policy. Nor does the fact that the tone of the book is critical of Howard's policy undermine the significance of the issues he canvasses. Even those who believe that Australia was justified and/or prudent in joining the war against Iraq need to reflect on his critique.

Clearly, there was some disjuncture between what intelligence agencies were concluding about Iraq and what politicians were telling the public. There were also differences between what both of these groups were saying before the event and what has been discovered about Iraqi capability since the war. The reasons for this, as Barker recognises, are complex and subtle. It is not a matter of intelligence agencies heroically presenting the truth to government and of villainous politicians twisting the facts. Nor is it a matter of inaccurate intelligence reports misleading national leaders. The reality is rather more subtle and more obscure.

Most Western intelligence agencies, if not all, apparently failed to pick up the substantial collapse of Saddam Hussein's efforts to maintain weapons of mass destruction in the course of the 1990s. Few were prepared to go out on a limb and say that he was no longer dangerous. The Iraqi dictator's own behaviour made that conclusion even more difficult. It is possible, too, that Saddam Hussein was never told by his officials that the programs were failing—for fear of unpleasant consequences. At the same time, Barker argues, President Bush was determined to rid the world of Saddam Hussein for reasons that included finishing the job his father had begun, giving a clear warning to nuclear proliferators and democratising the Middle East—a 'complex mix of revenge, self-interest, logistical necessity and idealism' (p. 86). Against this background, politicians presented so-called intelligence to the public with a degree of confidence and lack of qualification that some would regard as reckless, others would regard as simply politics.

In this swirling maelstrom Australia was a small eddy that had no significant impact on the outcome. Yet the questions to be answered remain critical. Some relate to the place of intelligence in national policy, including: was there a 'policy cringe' in the agencies; had careerism become rife; was there a layered massaging of assessments as they made their way to the top; what did it mean when John Howard stated that ONA approved everything he said about Iraq; how reliant was Australia on US and British intelligence; did Australia's leaders challenge and question the basis of intelligence reports sufficiently and how can and should intelligence matters be responsibly presented to the public?

A related set of questions deals with the public justification for the war—and any future war. Does it matter that different reasons were given prominence after the war (good riddance to an evil dictator) compared with before the war (elimination of the WMD threat)? Does it matter that talk was of actual WMD before the war and 'programs' after the war? Does it matter that the imminence of the threat from Saddam Hussein was not precisely as claimed? Does it matter that the degree of certainty about the threat evinced by political leaders was apparently somewhat greater than intelligence warranted? Public opinion in each of the three coalition members may reach rather different views on these matters.

Geoffrey Barker's conclusion is that the war was not justified and that its costs outweigh the benefits. This, of course, as John Howard has said, is a matter for political judgement and is likely to remain contentious for some time. The full consequences are yet to reveal themselves, and it may be years before the war can be judged a creeping disaster or a brilliant triumph—or somewhere in-between. Yet national leaders in democracies had to take decisions on a mixture of uncertain intelligence and reasoned speculation—and sell their conclusion to their electorates.

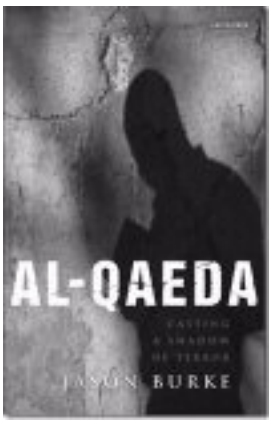
Sexing it up is a valuable introduction to these issues. Unburdened by footnotes, the text is short, clear and readable. Whether one agrees with Barker's views or not, the issues are important and will not, or should not, go away. ◆

Geoffrey Barker, 'Sexing it up: Iraq, Intelligence and Australia', UNSW Press, Sydney, 2003, paperback, 112pp, RRP 16.95.

Al Qa'eda: Casting a Shadow of Terror

Jason Burke

Reviewed by Tony LeRay-Meyer



Jason Burke has produced a rare analysis of Al Qa'eda and Islamist militancy that allows the reader to consider the 'adversary' from the adversary's perspective. Burke seeks to deconstruct 'Al Qa'eda' and challenges what he describes as the prevailing Al Qa'eda-centric focus of the 'War on Terror'. Burke poignantly argues that the real threat is more 'diverse, dynamic, and protean and profoundly difficult to characterise'. The book is essential reading for those seeking to understand the phenomenon of Al Qa'eda, and more broadly the reality of the threat from Islamist terrorism.

Burke, Chief Reporter for London's *The Observer*, based this one-volume work on his experiences reporting from Afghanistan and Pakistan in the four years leading up to the fall of the Taliban in 2001. He uses extensive interviews and a comprehensive use of documentary evidence to support his research. The book is well organised into sixteen chapters. The first two chapters introduce a number of key concepts that are central to a critical analysis of Al Qa'eda. Chapters 3–8 consider the history of Osama Bin Laden. The final six chapters closely analyse Al Qa'eda and its operations between 1996 and 2001, before drawing conclusions about the reality of the actual threat today.

As one of the first Western journalists to enter Kabul after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, and to observe what he refers to as the tragedy of the Battle of Tora Bora, Burke asked himself—why? Why had it come to this? Why did September 11 occur? The answer to this, he felt, would provide a more accurate insight into who 'they' are and what is evolving, rather than a more linear and conventional focus on 'how' did it happen, 'how' many of 'them' are there or how many are left to capture or kill. Burke maintains that the reality of Islamist terrorism transcends Al Qa'eda. His stark logic is compelling as many of the post-9/11 books have not provided this perspective.

The basic premise of Burke's analysis is to question whether Al Qa'eda was and is a coherent organisation or a network of networks controlling and directing trans-national Islamist terrorism. He concludes that Al Qa'eda usually operated at the margins of the real threat of Islamic terrorism. Many of the acts attributed to Al Qa'eda, such as the East Africa bombing in 1998 or the 'Millenium Plot' in 1999, were conceived and attempted by individuals or groups outside the aegis of the inner hardcore grouping of Al Qa'eda. Osama Bin Laden was and is by no means the master controller. Consequently the jihadi-salafist Al Qa'eda world view acts more as a formula than a network, a function not an entity. 'Islamic militancy is a broad based, multivalent, diverse movement. It goes far beyond the deeds or words of one man or one small organisation'. There is no 'network of networks' nor are there 'tentacles of terror', as each applies a degree of central control that Burke believes simply does not exist.

Burke's analysis is complex and detailed, as are ostensibly much of the Al Qa'eda genre published to date. In contrast to many, however, he references his narratives and arguments extensively and has made wide use of primary interviews. There are some weaknesses in the evidence provided, especially in the degree of corroboration, the use of unidentified interviewees and even some unsubstantiated statements. However, on balance, he has made a genuine attempt to provide credible and comprehensive referencing to support his analysis. Although at first this book is not easily read, you should not be distracted by its detail. Whether Burke is describing the nature and evolution of political Islamism in Pakistan, the operations of the terrorist training camps in Afghanistan, or the planning and execution of the Millennium plot in 1999, his analysis is persuasive and thought provoking.

The most contentious aspect of his book is likely to be his conclusions on Western responses to Islamist terrorism. Burke considers the West's response was initiated without a thorough appreciation of the problem or the adversary. If Burke is correct—that Western responses are wrongly based on an Al Qa'eda-centric strategy—then these responses fail to deal with the actual threat beyond the existence of 'Al Qa'eda' or Osama Bin Laden.

The value of this book is not whether you agree with his conclusions but in his attempts to understand the reality of the threat from Islamist terrorism. Burke sought to find an answer to 'why' and then in turn 'who'. Even if his arguments are contentious or disputed, Burke has achieved his aim. He provides a unique contribution to the ever-growing and not always informed commentary on the nature of Islamist terrorism. ◆

Jason Burke, 'Al-Qa'eda: Casting a Shadow of Terror', I.B. Taurus, London, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 292pp, RRP $39.80.