

defender

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● Rethinking the Defence
of Australia

this issue

● The West and
its Challenges

● Taking stock
of terrorism

● Niche forces:
First thoughts
from an army
perspective



● Northern exposure

● Association update

defender

THE NATIONAL JOURNAL OF THE
AUSTRALIA DEFENCE ASSOCIATION

(ABN 16 083 007 390)

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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 bipartisan community watchdog and 'think-tank' on national security issues. To preserve its independence and ensure transparency the Association is formally organised as a company limited by guarantee and registered under the *Corporations Act 2001*.

The ADA seeks to promote, foster and encourage the best form of defence for Australia. In particular, the Association seeks the development and implementation of a deterrent national security policy encompassing:

- a security strategy based on the protection of identifiable and enduring national interests;
- the development of adequate forces-in-being capable of executing such a strategy; and
- the development of manufacturing and service industries capable of sustaining defence force operations.

The Association seeks the support by subscription of all Australians and the categories of membership and support are detailed on the back cover of this journal. ADA members are spread across Australia and there are Association 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 website at: www.ada.asn.au. The Association is frequently called on to contribute to public, academic and professional debates on national security issues. The ADA is also often invited to make submissions to parliamentary inquiries, especially those conducted by the all-party Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade.

The Association maintains regular contact and cooperation on security and related matters with individuals, research institutes and public bodies in 12 allied and friendly countries in the Pacific Basin.

OUR COVER

Local clergyman Barnabas Nixon destroys a military-style weapon handed back by Harold Keke's men on the Weather Coast of the Solomon Islands.

Photo courtesy DoD.

Vision, coherence and rigour

Events continue to require increasing Australian Defence Force (ADF) and Australian Federal Police (AFP) deployments across our region and further afield. Unsurprisingly the AFP and its State counterparts now have insufficient members for the 200 or so offered to PNG in our latest commitment to regional country rescuing. The AFP cannot be blamed; it met the sudden challenges of the Bali bombing investigation and the Solomons' rescue mission with distinction.

More than ever we need to draw intellectual breath and apply long-term vision, coherence and rigour in our national security planning. We must re-examine our principles and our sorry record in structuring, resourcing and sustaining our defence force and our intelligence, security and law-enforcement agencies. Appropriate levels of funding would then follow.

Our lack of a coherent and long-term vision concerning national security has resulted in insufficient investment. Despite Government rhetoric and its comparatively good record to date in at least facing up to national security issues, there has been no real increase in defence spending, for example, above the three per cent extra per year promised in the now long outmoded 2000 Defence White Paper.

Even this is only a partial catch up for the chronic underinvestment of the last three decades. There has been

no attempt to close the \$120 billion gap between the spending promised in (and needed to flesh out) various Defence White Papers since 1987 and the money actually delivered to build and sustain the ADF in doing what we require it to do.

The \$12 billion unfinanced black hole in the current 10-year, \$50 billion Defence Capability Plan is but one result of this sustained underinvestment.

Not since the late 1960s has public support for a large increase in defence and security spending been so strong. We support prudent federal budgets, however, a further \$2–3 billion annually must be injected into our national security spending just to catch up and face the future with reasoned confidence. Hard decisions are required now to properly fund the hard strategic challenges we face.

Increased funding for defence, in particular, needs to be matched with widespread reform in how it is managed. Many of the numerous flaws could be fixed quickly and easily. ADF commanders must be allowed to actually command, and be allowed to give military advice to the government without fear or favour and unfiltered and untrammelled by bureaucratic interference.

A resurgence of ill-informed commentary from some academics, journalists and other would-be national security 'experts' has not helped the debate required. Just as 'Generals' are often accused of trying to fight the last war, these would-be 'experts' fall into a mirror-image trap. It is simply naïve at best to believe that you can conclusively foresee future threats and the nature of future warfare, and then dictate how the ADF should be configured in detail accordingly.

Force structuring and equipping the ADF remains too prone to the eddies and flows of ideological (and often mindless Anti-American) posturing, the latest media opinion scare, strategic 'faddism' by Defence bureaucrats and academics, silly accounting constraints and even, at times, party-political whim or pork barreling.

Time is running out for Australia. Strategic Update 2003 was a profound disappointment and provided no vision or path to reform. A new, comprehensive and integrated National Security White Paper is a matter of urgent national importance. Most importantly, the Government must clearly enunciate what Australia needs the ADF for and what it is to do—now and in the future.

Long-term vision and intellectual rigour is needed to maximise the versatility of the ADF for a wide range of barely foreseeable and unforeseeable tasks 20–30 years out in a mostly unknowable future. Government guidance on defence, including substantially increased funding, should follow this principle accordingly.

It does not mean limiting the ADF's structure and funding to what we now assume or guess might happen, or what current strategic planning fads clamour for. ♦

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letters

The Winter edition of *Defender* was excellent and informative—keep up the good work.

Wally Neale
Queensland

Great work on the June issue of *Defender*.

Bernie McGrath
Victoria

The latest *Defender* was excellent.

Alan King
Western Australia

A fine issue of *Defender*. I also caught our new Executive Director's recent interview with Derryn Hinch on 3AW's Drivetime program. This received such an overwhelmingly favourable response that the interviewer decided to break his own rule and broadcast it again the following Friday. Keep the good work going.

Frank Lee
Victoria

I thoroughly enjoyed Stewart Woodman's thorough demolition job on the Defence Department's 2003 strategic update [*Defender*, Winter, 2003]. He made more sense in one and a half pages than the supposed update did, in its 14 or so pages of photos and lightweight prose in a 27-page glossy pamphlet overall. I also relished his deployment of whimsy to ram home the point.

Brian Cobb
Northern Territory

My congratulations to the editor and his crew on the intellectual 'oomph' and added bite of the last *Defender*. 'Garnering Disaster' was especially spot on.

Trevor McCormick
South Australia

As an Australian working in Indonesia I found 'Fragmentasi' [*Defender*, Winter 2003] one of the best outlines of Indonesia's underlying national unity problems that I have seen for some time. The comparison of Australia and Indonesia's founding myths was also a particularly apt one.

Name and address supplied
Indonesia

I would be interested to know if ADA has received any feedback from the ABC or the seemingly ubiquitous 'Friends of the ABC' regarding 'Ducking Criticism' [*Defender*, Winter 2003].

Toni Spencer
New South Wales

Editor's note: Photocopies of the article were distributed to all members of the ABC Advisory Council (of community representatives) at their mid-year meeting by a member of the Council who had read it in 'Defender'. The article apparently attracted considerable interest and broad support.

The constant travails of your very popular columnist Major Furphy—who I believe is my third or fourth cousin, twice removed, on my mother's side—prompt me to seek help from your readers.

Shepparton's J. Furphy & Sons, today one of Australia's most versatile engineering and steel fabrication companies, is arranging a limited edition book by a renowned Australian historian on the position of the Furphy Water Cart in Australia's history.

The original cart was first produced around 1878, they were manufactured in their thousands until 1983 and many remain in use. Their use in 1st AIF training camps in Victoria by troops gathered around them for a drink and a gossip led to 'furphy' entering the military, and then wider lexicons, as an expression for rumour or gossip.

We would welcome hearing from people who have recollections, stories or material (photos, purchase receipts, advertising brochures, etc.) relating to the Furphy

Water Cart. We guarantee the safe handling and return of any material loaned to us.

Material should be sent to J. Furphy & Sons, PO Box 7066, Shepparton, VIC, 3632. Further information can be obtained by ringing (03) 5832-1400 or by emailing andrewf@furphys.com.au

**Andrew Furphy
Victoria**

The ADA address to the Homeland Security Conference 2003 and the very informative article by Professor Djalal [*Defender*, Winter 2003] both brought home to me the complexity of the problems we face in the war on terror. I thoroughly agree with both articles on the crying need for Australia's and Indonesia's Muslim leaders to speak out strongly against Islamic extremists.

Until such leaders are prepared to speak out forcefully and consistently we will never defeat the terrorists. Here in Australia the theory and practice of multiculturalism itself will collapse unless our supposed Muslim leaders join us and not them.

I also object to the way the ABC and several newspapers appear to regularly claim a supposed widespread backlash against Muslim Australians. Even if such alleged persecution is occurring, and in the absence of any compelling evidence I very much doubt it, it would still pale in comparison to the callous murder of 88 Aussie tourists in Bali just because they were perceived to be 'white people' and 'crusaders'.

**Name and address supplied
New South Wales**

Now in mid 2003 we are finally meeting our responsibilities to assist the Solomon Islands, as called for in the Autumn 2001 and Spring 2000 editions of *Defender*. Perhaps now more of our diplomats, intelligence analysts, journalists and decision-makers could become subscribers to our quarterly journal. For, given the Solomons example, if they had been subscribing and listening over the years, then maybe: the taxpayer would be far better off and the Defence, Police and Civil advisors not as overstretched as they appear to be.

**DM Ryan
Victoria**

Apropos Michael O'Connor's review of *Mad Harry* in the Winter 2003 *Defender*. In 1941 my late father, Lt Col Mark Barnett ED, was a Master Gunner 3rd class (also the WO2 BSM of 101 Tank Attack Battery). He served with Harry Murray and recounted a number of stories regarding Murray to me before he died.

In 1941 101 Tank Attack moved into Selheim Camp outside of Charters Towers in North Queensland. Whilst they were setting up camp he noticed what he thought

was a hygiene labourer watching them, asking many questions about the 2 pounder portees and associated matters. The labourer was dressed in sandshoes, khaki shorts and a Jackie Howe singlet as it was very hot. Father said to come back at stand down and he 'would give him the Cooks Tour'. As the man drove off in a staff car father concluded that he was the CO's driver, an old soldier showing interest in modern equipment. At stand down the man returned in the car and asked for the Cooks Tour.

At the conclusion the man asked my father would he like a beer in the Mess and leaned into the car pulling out a shirt with lieutenant colonel's rank on it. My father pointed to his rank wristlet saying 'Sorry sir these are butterflies.' To this Murray VC responded: 'I've been carrying this GOC's signal around all day—your commission's through with date of seniority some time in the past.'

There was also an interesting story regarding his VC. As is well known he is the highest decorated Australian soldier. One of the camp drivers once asked Murray if he had the VC and Murray replied that he did. The young digger then asked if he could see it. Murray said that would be no problem. The next evening the drivers returned to their tent and on one of the stretchers there was a wooden box containing all Murray's medals. Six weeks later the boys decided they had better give them back. Murray said thanks and that he was a bit worried because he had forgotten where they were and would need them in a week or so.

Another story regarded the stealing of a camp payroll. The payroll cash had been placed in a picketed and locked room with no one inside. Upon opening it was found that the money was gone. Murray went into the Commonwealth Bank at Charters Towers and cashed a personal cheque for around forty thousand pounds: '... so the boys won't miss out on their leave ...'.

My father's stories about Murray's Orderly Room hearings were equally unique and interesting.

**Joel Barnett
Queensland**

The excellent article on the strategic value of Taiwan by Ambassador Okazaki [*Defender*, Winter 2003] should be taken very seriously by those responsible for our strategic thinking. The particular importance of Taiwan to Australia and Oceania cannot be overemphasised.

I am continually surprised in conversations with people in both the government and private sectors, how little they appreciate that a forcible mainland Chinese annexation of Taiwan would have far-reaching economic, strategic and moral consequences for Australia.

**Desmond Oppenheimer
Victoria**

association update



Vale Jim Harding

The last of the three founders of the Australia Defence Association Jim Harding, passed away on 30 June 2003 at his home in Perth. Jim was born in November 1922 and served for many years as a senior official with the Western Australia branch of the Federated Clerks Union.

In 1975, with fellow war veterans Air Marshal Sir Valston Hancock, and Peter Firkins from the Perth Chamber of Commerce, Jim had the vision to found the ADA as an independent and non-partisan 'ginger group' of concerned citizens. Jim remained a strong member of the Association until his death. The ADA and the people of Australia owe an enormous debt to Jim for his unswerving belief in the need for a strong defence effort.

Jim's character, clear headedness, courage and negotiating skills can also be attested by his leadership within his union and the community. In August 1974, for example, these leadership skills, his compassion and ability to see the broader perspective enabled him to be instrumental in coordinating action by a number of unions at Perth Airport to prevent a young Russian musician visiting Australia from being forced to return to the Soviet Union against his will.

The young defector, Georgy Ermolenko, was later smuggled out of the country by RAAF aircraft at Prime Minister Whitlam's insistence. However, when finally released from the Soviet Union in 1976 he noted it was the international spotlight shone on his predicament in Perth that had saved him from serious reprisals and encouraged the release of his family to live in the West. It is not just Australians who have much to thank Jim for.

The Association was represented at Jim's funeral at the Infant Jesus Church, Morley, on 4 July 2003 by a retired President of our Western Australia Branch, Noel Monks, and by other longstanding members including Colonel Laurie Clark and Mrs

Joan Dowson. The Association has also passed its condolences on to Jim's wife, Gert, and to his children Chris and Vaughan and their families.

Our continuing tribute to Jim Harding, and to Valston Hancock and Peter Firkins, is the work of the Australia Defence Association and our dedication to the organisation and the cause they championed. ♦

Retirement of Len Hansen

On 30 June 2003 Len Hansen retired from the ADA Board of Directors and as Chairman of the Association's Mackay Chapter. Len has been on the board since 1998 (and the previous national council since 1983) and had led the chapter since 1983. Just before his retirement, a well-attended public testimonial dinner was held in Mackay to honour Len's service to the community, of which his efforts for the ADA were only one small part. The dinner was chaired by Mackay's retired federal MP, Ray Braithwaite. Attending dignitaries included Mackay's current and several retired mayors, and senior representatives from the local branches of the Army Reserve, ADA, Australian Flag Association, Australian Institute of Management, Red Cross, Freemasons, and Rotary where Len has been a member for 44 years and is a Paul Harris Fellow. Earlier in June the current federal MP for the Mackay area, De-Anne Kelly, also spoke warmly of Len when recording his service to his community and nation in a speech to the House of Representatives.

Len Hansen was born in Mackay in 1917 and, apart from his war service, has lived there in the same house all his life. The only other break in his residence was when the house was washed into the middle of the street by the cyclone and tidal wave that hit Mackay in 1918.

Len joined his local Militia battalion in April

1939 and transferred to the 2nd AIF's 2/15th Battalion the day it was raised in May 1940. He served with the battalion during the siege of Tobruk and has remained a prominent member of the 'Rats of Tobruk' Association ever since. Mackay's well-known 'Rats of Tobruk' memorial, which features prominently on the North Queensland tourist trail, owes its erection largely to Len's persistent efforts. It occupies pride of place in the park near Len's home and can be seen from his house.

Len continued to serve with the 2/15th throughout the war, including Al Alamein, Syria, New Guinea (Lae, Finschhafen and Sio) and finally in Borneo (Brunei and Labuan). In the battle at Bumi River in New Guinea, Len then company sergeant major of B Company, took temporary command when his company commander was killed.

After the war Len qualified as an accountant and became a prominent businessman in Mackay for twenty years, before serving in the management of the Mackay Gas Company (later a branch of Boral) until his retirement from paid employment in 1983. He has also been a Justice of the Peace for many years. Len's nominal retirement from full-time employment has enabled him to devote determined voluntary efforts to a wide variety of causes and local organisations in Mackay and further afield.

Len also joined the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) in Mackay when they were raised in 1948 and served with the 31st and 42nd Battalions. He was commissioned in September 1950. After commanding the Mackay-based B Company of the 42nd Battalion in the early to mid 1950s, his final military posting in 1958–59 was as officer commanding the battalion's Administration Company.

Len has been an ADA stalwart for over two decades and his initiative, leadership and persistence have been key factors in the Mackay Chapter being the ADA's largest local chapter outside the capital cities. He always made a point of travelling to Melbourne, at his own expense, for national council and later board meetings. Last year the ADA Board presented Len with a special plaque to mark these milestones and to offer a concrete note of gratitude and respect for his long and distinguished service.

At the Association's Annual General Meeting on 31 August 2003, ADA National President, Dr Brian Ridge, moved a special motion of thanks to Len and noted:

'There are some people whose lives are marked by the term "service". Len Hansen is one such person. Len belongs to that special generation whose active service in World War II allowed many of us to forgo the "pleasures" of similar service and

so provided a world that has enabled numerous lives to prosper.

'But Len's service to his community and his nation did not end there. In the national sense he later served in the CMF for many years and at a national and local level with the ADA. Anyone who has had the privilege of being a guest at one of the Mackay Chapter's quarterly dinners can well understand what this "Len factor" has been in the Chapter's strength and success. The dinners have attracted high quality speakers, including the new Governor General and the current CDF, and have been an institution for quite some time.

'Len's obvious organisational skills and general high quality commitment to promoting debate about defence are something that wider circles in Australia have much to be thankful for. His contribution to the national board of the ADA reflected his commitment and his advice always offered the refreshing perspectives of regional and northern Australia.

'Len now tells us he is in retirement. As the old TV ad goes, "I'd like to see that"! But, we all wish Len well and offer him our sincerest and largest "thank you". May life be good to you Len.'

As the biography at his testimonial dinner noted, Len Hansen has made a truly lifelong contribution to his nation, his State and the city of Mackay. The Australia Defence Association in particular thanks Len Hansen for his long, devoted and highly valued service. ♦

Retirement of John Macneil

On 30 July 2003 John Macneil retired from the ADA Board of Directors and as Chairman of the ADA's Melbourne–Geelong Chapter. Born in April 1927 John was too young for World War II. As a young school teacher he joined the CMF when it was formed in 1948 and the RAAF in 1951.

His early air force career included service in the Korean War. Following commissioning and qualification as a navigator he served in a wide range of squadron, staff and instructional postings. He served on exchange with a USAF bomber squadron in 1967–69 and was later Australian Defence Attache in Malaysia. His last posting was as the Director-General of Service Conditions in HQADF. John retired from the RAAF as an air commodore in 1982.

On retiring from the air force, John worked for the Victorian Branch of the National Trust as their property manager for over five years, and then as a secondary school teacher at Richmond Girl's High School for another five. After operating a small

antiques business he returned to the national security field in the mid 1990s, at the Defence International Training Centre at Laverton, teaching English language and Australian culture courses undertaken by foreign students prior to them studying at ADF colleges and schools. Throughout his military and post-military careers John has displayed a gift for cross-cultural awareness training and a keen interest and respect for other cultures. These skills were valued but insufficiently exploited in the ADA.

John has served several separate terms on the Association's Board of Directors and as chairman of his local chapter—now the biggest in the country. A powerful advocate for strong defence, John has been an enthusiastic and innovative leader of the Association at both the local and national levels.

At the Association's Annual General Meeting on 31 August 2003, ADA National President, Dr Brian Ridge, moved a special motion of thanks to John and noted:

'John Macneil has given sterling service to the ADA. He has always been willing to take up the plough when leadership roles were required and his undoubted ability as an administrator and a motivator has enabled the Association's largest Chapter to run quite smoothly.

'John has also been an innovative organiser, recruiter and publicist not least in his coordination of joint functions with the Melbourne branches of the Royal United Services Institute, the Australian Institute of International Affairs, and other bodies interested in national security issues. The increased membership and attendance at Melbourne–Geelong Chapter meetings has owed a lot to John's enthusiasm and belief in the need to broaden the type of functions conducted. John's advocacy of, and methods for, recruiting young members have also been innovative, persistent and effective.

'The organising and hosting of highly successful functions addressed by the Prime Minister and Minister for Defence over recent years are testaments to John's abilities and reputation. His robust and shrewd questioning of visiting speakers has also been an inspiration to younger or more retiring members.

'The Melbourne–Geelong Chapter, in particular, and the Australia Defence Association in general, have been lucky to have John as such a willing and capable leader. I know that his fellow board members have appreciated his well and often forcefully argued contributions and it has been an honour to serve with John on the ADA Board.'

The Australia Defence Association thanks John Macneil for his dedicated and highly valued service,

and wishes him well for a well-earned third or fourth retirement.

New Directors

Following the retirements of Len Hansen and John Macneil, two new directors were elected to the ADA Board at the Annual General Meeting in Melbourne on 31 August 2003. Both new directors, Alan Collier and Tom Magee, continue the ADA tradition of drawing directors from across the country and from a broad range of backgrounds and perspectives.

Alan Collier is a resident of Brisbane where he is a company director, consultant lawyer and business and management consultant. Tom Magee resides in Townsville and is a senior executive with a leading Australian corporation. They both bring considerable commercial and corporate strategic planning expertise to the board. ♦

Further detail on both new directors can be found on the ADA website at <www.ada.asn.au>.

BEQUESTS TO THE ADA

Have you considered making a donation or bequest to the Australia Defence Association?

The Association runs a very lean operation and every dollar makes a difference. A suitable form of bequest is 'I bequeath the sum of \$___ to the Australia Defence Association (ABN 16 083 007 390)'.

If you have already made a will, you don't have to change it; you can simply make a codicil.

The Association can assist with the provision of will or codicil forms, or referral to a solicitor. Further details may be obtained from >bequests@ada.asn.au< or by contacting the national office.

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

Intelligence Inquiry

In early July 2003, the Association was invited to make a submission to the inquiry being conducted by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on ASIO, ASIS and DSD into certain matters relating to intelligence on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction. We believe the Association was the only public body to be so invited. The Association submission was prepared by a team of retired intelligence specialists and other experts with extensive experience of working in, or with, all six intelligence and security agencies.

The 13-page submission addressed the wider problems facing these agencies rather than just concentrating on the Iraqi WMD issue. It may be downloaded from the parliamentary website at: <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/pjcaad/WMD/subs/sub11.pdf>>.

An uncorrected *Hansard* transcript of the Executive Director's subsequent oral testimony to the inquiry may be downloaded from the same website at: <<http://www.aph.gov.au/house/committee/pjcaad/WMD/proof.pdf>>.

Due to the very nature of intelligence work, staff from Australia's intelligence and security agencies often have difficulty in airing professional issues in a public domain. After the committee authorised the posting of the ADA submission on the parliamentary website, the Association received numerous telephone calls, emails and other contacts from staff within the agencies. We also had numerous contacts from retired staff, and from several senior 'customers' of intelligence over the last thirty years. All expressed strong support for the ADA submission.

The Association also strongly supports recent public comments by the Director-General of ASIO, Dennis Richardson, pointing out that additional funding alone will not increase the capacity of his agency as Australia cannot simply conjure up experienced intelligence officers overnight. DGASIO's comments mirror a key thrust of the ADA submission, which stresses the operational importance of respecting and nurturing career professionalism among intelligence and security agency staff. The Association notes that this means offering such professional staff viable career paths that include senior management at all levels of each agency.

The strong and supportive response from within the intelligence community to the ADA submission was somewhat unexpected. The submission attracted national and international media coverage, with both CNN and the BBC seeking interviews because of the parallels to the British House of Commons Inquiry into similar matters. ♦

Casting stones from our grimy glasshouse?

Is it hypocrisy or ignorance that leads so many Australians, from the prime minister to the cacophonous disputants on Iraq, to avoid any reference to Australia's ability to do much more than talk about the problem? As a community, we have become expert at pointing the finger of scorn at the United States in general, and President Bush in particular, but rather reluctant to look at ourselves, except perhaps to abuse Prime Minister Howard, usually for all the wrong reasons.

As a member of the coalition of the willing, Australia contributed some 2000 military personnel to the liberation of Iraq and has some 800 ADF personnel still in the region. That contribution to the liberation was particularly niggardly and certainly not reflective of the public relations balderdash that accompanied it. A contribution proportional to that of the British would have seen 15,000 Australians on the job.

That the United States misjudged the scale of the post-conflict security problem in Iraq is hardly surprising and the task remains a major challenge. Australia, however, true to its traditions of getting out before the job is finished, has all but walked away from Iraq.

For its part, the government denies that it has been asked for additional troops. This is probably true in the formal sense because it told the Americans it was no longer very willing. In public, it has suggested that its ongoing but diminishing commitment to East Timor (450 soldiers) and the new task in the Solomon Islands (2000 troops) leaves us unable to do more in Iraq.

To sustain indefinitely the combined commitment of 3250 personnel of all three Services would require around 10,000 personnel. However, the irreducible military infrastructure of administration, training, specialised units

and logistics should not account for the balance of 40,000 personnel in the regular ADF. Even if it does, Australia's resultant inability to deploy and sustain a tri-Service force of little more than 3000 personnel gives us not merely a very small self-defence capability, but also a serious lack of options for governments of any colour to use the ADF in support of its foreign policy.

Fulsome pats on the back from allies and boastful public-relations spin from our own government do not affect the hard-nosed judgements that both allies and potential adversaries will make about Australia in private. Nor should they be persuasive to the Australian electorate.

The real reason for our claimed inability to do any more is the refusal of the government to spend money on operations, which add considerably to the standing costs of the defence force. For all its rhetorical commitment to national security, the present government has cut personnel numbers by 11 per cent. Even now it is talking about capability cuts to a force that has been compelled to retain equipment that has long passed its use-by date while deferring new projects. Defence spending, which averaged 9.0 per cent of total federal outlays in the 1980s, has fallen to an average 7.3 per cent under the present government.

For its part, the Opposition's contribution to the national security debate has been virtually non-existent, at least in any substantial way. Apart from nit-picking criticism of administrative detail, there are no policies and no commitments. The Parliament's joint sub-committee on defence is increasingly restricted to references received from the government while its reports vanish into the archives. Attempts to debate the reports founder on a lack of cooperation from the government or an almost total lack of interest and knowledge by MPs.

What the community thinks of all this is difficult to discern. Public-opinion polls rarely ask about national security and even when they do, the studies lack any sort of context that would force a considered response. With very few exceptions, the mainstream media lacks both interest and expertise with reports and commentary generally lacking any strategic context. As a direct result, the ADF has become less of a national defence force than some sort of utilitarian organisation to be deployed for political aggrandisement rather than national security.

Alternatively, we have a community and a body politic that is unwilling to face up to the hard decisions demanded by contemporary security challenges. ♦

Whither the WMD?

Hectares of newsprint and hours of television and radio coverage have been devoted to the subject of Iraq's apparently undiscovered weapons of mass destruction. Much of this coverage would appear to be more motivated by seeking to embarrass the current US, British and Australian governments than by genuine interest in the whereabouts of the weapons.

The ADA submission to the parliamentary inquiry noted several key points in relation to the matter. The

first and most important of these is that Iraqi possession, development and use of such weapons is indisputable. When UNSCOM was finally forced out of Iraq in 1998 there were numerous unresolved matters. Most of these were taken up by Hans Blix and UNMOVIC in late 2002. The key to the mystery is what happened in the four-year hiatus between UNSCOM and UNMOVIC inspections.

From April 1991 until the collective intervention in April 2003, Iraq continually disregarded its responsibilities and obligations under international law to both disarm and to disarm in a verifiable manner. In a nutshell, Iraq was never able to prove to the UN's satisfaction that it had ceased its WMD programs as required by the international community. On the contrary, UNSCOM continually discovered active Iraqi measures to evade its disarmament obligations and continue some WMD programs, especially regarding prohibited chemical and biological weapons.

As the final head of UNSCOM from 1997–1999, Richard Butler, testified to the current Australian parliamentary inquiry into Iraqi WMD:

'It was expected that, following the invasion and occupation of Iraq, substantial quantities of remaining weapons would be found. But they have not been, and that, of course, is a problem, at least in logic. Why haven't they been found? I put it to you that positing the concept of these things being unaccounted for is not the same as positing the existence of these things there are four possible explanations for this in objective logic.

'The first explanation is that those weapons have been destroyed, and there is some evidence that some destruction has taken place. The second explanation is that they continue to exist, but up to the present point they have been successfully hidden and may one day be uncovered. We do not know yet. The third explanation is that they have been removed to another country or place; that they are not in Iraq. In the past, I saw some evidence of Iraq warehousing some of its material across the border in Syria from time to time, but I am making no accusation about that. The fourth logical possibility is that they have not been found because they actually do not, and did not, exist; that the posited quantities actually did not exist.

'I have already hinted that I think there has been some destruction but, if you want to ask me which of those four I think is the best explanation, the only honest answer I can give to you is that I do not know but I think we should try and find out.'

It's a big country to search and at least part of the problem is public expectations as to what would be found. Rather than Scud missiles on launchers buried in sand dunes, much of the unaccounted for WMD materials are drums of chemicals and bacteriological growth medium. The UN has the documents proving Iraq procured the material. Iraq has not been able to satisfactorily account for what happened to it.

The totalitarian nature of the previous Iraqi regime, and its sudden and violent end, may also be part of the

problem. The methods used to conceal weapons and materials from UNSCOM were known to very few. Hiding places were particularly closely kept secrets. It may well be in some cases the only people who know the whereabouts of some of the hidden caches are now dead or still too frightened to come forward. It may also be that Iraqi officials feared to tell Saddam Hussein the truth, especially if they had inadvertently or deliberately destroyed or lost track of the material.

Finally, the search has been unnecessarily hampered because no UNSCOM and UNMOVIC records have been made available by the UN to the US-led Iraq Survey Team actually searching for the WMD. This is just plain silly. ♦

Good Fences Mean Good Neighbours

The Australia Defence Association applauds the rest of the country finally catching up to its longstanding advocacy of actively assisting Australia's South Pacific neighbours, rather than just throwing money at them and hoping they stay out of strategic sight. Few can seriously doubt that socially and economically strong countries make far more secure neighbours, and a far more secure region, than weak and disintegrating ones.

As one of only two developed states in the region, the arc of national debility and instability to Australia's north and north-east is an arc of Australian strategic and moral responsibility.

For a variety of cultural, political and economic reasons many of the macro, and all the micro, states of the Pacific are struggling to sustain themselves as sovereign states. Our policy of generous foreign aid (\$330 million annually to PNG alone) has often been in vain. Even ignoring how much of it has been squandered, and the corruption it has financed among many of the island political elites, the billions of dollars of Australian aid over the last 20–25 years has unfortunately hindered such countries from making the decisions needed to stand proudly on their own two feet.

Australia's reluctance to risk getting its hands dirty in helping these countries, and our over-reliance on financial aid rather than comprehensive 'hands-on' assistance, may have been necessary for a short period after these states achieved independence from Britain and France. It was, however, continued for far too long and for quite unnecessary reasons. The current government is to be congratulated on its recent initiatives. Perhaps it should also consider resurrecting the Hawke Government's initiative of a Minister for Pacific Island Relations to assist the Minister for Foreign Affairs in this regard.

The current police and military assistance to Solomon Islands, and the support 'offered' to PNG, also demonstrate how our strategic decision-making processes have matured. This strategic maturity was sadly lacking throughout the 1980s and 1990s, fostered primarily by wrong-headed thinking in much of the DFAT and Defence

bureaucracies. This 'groupthink' on avoiding supposed South Pacific entanglements proved remarkably resistant to actual experience. Better integration of advice in a formally constituted National Security Council would help avoid such policy dead ends in future.

The Solomon Islands example demonstrates some clear lessons. If we had provided the assistance required when it was first requested over two years ago it would not have involved anywhere near the size of force now required, nor would it have cost as much, nor would we have probably needed to remain as long. The overall risk of failure would also have been reduced.

That said, our assistance to Solomon Islands has gone far better than anticipated. Most of the worst warlords are cooperating and the disarmament of the factions, and indeed the criminals, has progressed very well. Even most of the doomsayers, wallowing in their outmoded 1950s politico-babble by Fanon and Sartre, have shut up.

The real test of our good neighbourliness is, however, still to come in PNG where the standard of living has actually declined for many since independence. This is a much bigger, more diverse and more populous country than Solomon Islands. In some ways its social deterioration and law and order problems are worse, certainly those caused by urban drift, unemployment and underemployment. Cash for example, has had to be moved to and from highland banks by helicopter for well over a decade.

PNG's political class have also not had the wake up call that their Solomons equivalents experienced after the coups in the latter country and the ensuing economic and social collapse. Too many of them continue to believe they are not primarily at fault and that PNG's problems are caused by 'dark outside forces'. Regional assistance to PNG led by Australia will therefore require considerable tact and patience. ♦

How Crabby is the Hermit?

The contradictory responses from North Korea following the recent and inconclusive six-party talks hosted by China are to be expected. Once again we see a mix of compromise, belligerence and intransigence from the totalitarian North Korean regime.

Judicious pressure on the regime to conform to the norms of international behaviour, especially in standing by agreements it has made, need to continue. Chinese influence on the North has been very positive and China continues to hold the key to the ultimate resolution of the Korean problem. Background activities such as the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI) provide useful checks and balances on North Korea kicking over the traces again.

While there are risks in raising the PSI option they are outweighed by the advantages. The recent PSI maritime exercises conducted in the Coral Sea by the USA, Australia, Japan and France are the type of restrained

demonstration of international resolve needed to further effective diplomacy. North Korean criticism of the exercise was to be expected and can be ignored.

The Korean Peninsula is the last serious flashpoint left over from another era. There are other leftovers from the 1947–1989 Cold War between democracy and totalitarian communism, such as the China–Taiwan dispute, but they are generally not as serious.

Any war on the Korean Peninsula would, of course, be catastrophic unless North Korea imploded quickly with the effort. No matter how catastrophic, however, Australia would be involved. We are a signatory to the 1953 armistice and our alliance with the USA, Japan and South Korea, and our international reputation generally, would be severely damaged if we tried to opt out of our responsibilities.

North Korean threats to use nuclear weapons in its defence continue. No one outside North Korea really knows if that country has nuclear weapons and if so how many. No nuclear explosions have ever been detected and it might all still be bluff. Public estimates by the CIA put the figure at two weapons at most. Other estimates believe it might be higher. The difference is that one or two would constitute a last resort capability only while half a dozen would allow some ability to strike and then counter-strike. No one really knows how much plutonium the North possesses, either processed at its Yongbyon reactor or perhaps smuggled in from overseas.

The most reliable public estimates state that North Korea has about 14.8 kilograms of plutonium derived from Yongbyon in the early 1980s and, on International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) figures, at least 8000 spent fuel rods. If (or when) reprocessed, and it's a big 'if' (and even bigger 'when'), the 8000 rods might allow five or six nuclear weapons depending on the state of North Korea's nuclear engineering technology (another little understood subject).

The North's ability to actually deliver a nuclear weapon is also uncertain. While its bombers have some limited capacity to deliver a bomb of such physical dimensions, the technology gap in airpower compared with the US and South Korea mean the chances of this occurring, except through complete surprise attack, must be considered negligible. Similar criteria and the paranoia of the regime make the covert deployment of a nuclear weapon, on a ship for example, relatively unlikely.

North Korea's longest range missile considered capable of carrying a nuclear weapon payload can reach all of South Korea and most of Japan. In 1998 North Korea actually test fired a 'Taepodong' missile over Japan into the North Pacific Ocean.

The recent deployment by the US of a Patriot Advanced Capability missile battery to South Korea is a prudent step in helping contain the North Korean problem. The North, of course, has described it as a 'provocative action to complete US preparations for war', but as Christine Keeler famously said in another context, 'they would wouldn't they'.

The whole problem of North Korea will go away one day. The real problem is that it might not go away soon enough or that its going away through the inevitable collapse of the regime might be very messy. ♦

Weighing the Balance of Terror

As the first anniversary of the terrorist attack in Bali approaches the recent convictions in Indonesian courts of leading perpetrators of the attacks give some confidence for the future.

Since the attacks in New York and Washington in September 2001, all major terrorist attacks have occurred against soft targets in the 'Third World'. This is not to say that Western countries are safe from such attack as the probability is that we will again be surprised at some time. It does indicate, however, that the ability of transnational Islamic terrorist groups to strike at the 'West' with impunity is not as great as first feared, and will remain so if we do not let our guard down.

As argued in the last *Defender*, the strategic centre of gravity of these groups is their ability to recruit. The civilised world must continue to remove the ignorance that the terrorist's bigotry thrives on, and the 'causes', both real and imagined, that motivate their extremism.

The struggle against transnational terror by Islamic extremists requires us to carry the fight, both physical and socio-economic, to the terrorists and the societies that breed and nurture them. The struggle will not be won if we sit behind our military, social and economic ramparts and cede the initiative to the terrorists. ♦

The Road to International Legal Limbo is Paved with Good Conventions

The provisions of international law usually tend to lag well behind the practice. Determining the status, treatment and duration of detention of those detained at the US-administered terrorist prison at Guantanamo Bay in Cuba are a case in point.

The US has agreed to provide the detainees with conditions not less than they would be entitled to if they qualified as Prisoners of War (PW) under the Geneva Conventions. This, at least, largely solves the treatment issue.

Few seem to doubt that the overall status of those detained has outrun the provisions of international law. With the possible exception of some wholly Taliban members, especially Afghan ones, they cannot be classified as soldiers fighting for a lawful belligerent as defined by the Conventions. Nor, as armed belligerents, do they fall under the protection of the Conventions as civilians caught up in the fighting.

International law is fairly clear on what those detained at Guantanamo Bay are not. It is much less clear on what they are. The term unlawful combatant is uncertain in

international law, not least because the word combatant is interpreted by some as bestowing undeserved credibility to perpetrators of terrorist actions. Whatever their status ends up being under international law, it is unlikely to be resolved in the short term.

The duration of their detention under international law depends on their status being decided. Few critics of their detention seem to appreciate this. In general terms they would appear to be detainees and not prisoners, although the distinction may appear arcane to some. They are not prisoners because they are not either PW or convicted criminals serving a prison sentence.

US Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, stated recently that many of the detainees might have to remain there until the 'war on terror' was over—in other words just as if they were actually PW. The statement re-ignited debate about the situation of those detained. One of the few points not in disagreement on both sides of the debate is that the war on terror might last a very long time.

It appears that many critics of Guantanamo Bay want to have it both ways. They claim that the detainees should be accorded Prisoner of War status under the Geneva Conventions. They then object, however, that their detention should not be indefinite (until the relevant war ends), and that those detained still have the right to a criminal trial of some sort. Few critics appear to notice the contradictions inherent in their claims. No truly viable alternatives to the status quo have been proposed and so the situation, in legal terms, remains quite static.

If the detainees could achieve the status of PW they could be held until hostilities cease or until repatriated under Red Cross auspices to the territory of the belligerent for whom they were fighting. In the case of Al Qa'eda the repatriation provisions cannot be applied because it is not a country or indeed any form of legitimate international actor under international law.

Some Australian PW in World War II were held for nearly five years. Several US PW from the Korean War were held for decades. The longest serving US PW in the Vietnam War who was ever released was held for three weeks short of nine years. In the 1980–88 war between Iran and Iraq many PW on both sides were held for well over a decade. Many Kuwaiti PW from the 1991 Gulf War were never returned to Kuwait and are presumed murdered by the Saddam Hussein regime.

In the case of those detained at Guantanamo Bay, it is surely premature to agitate for their release on the grounds that they are PW. The longest serving of them is still under the two-year mark. International law will probably catch up with their situation well before they risk setting any new records for length of incarceration.

The cases of the two Australians detained at Guantanamo Bay, David Hicks and Mamdouh Habib, appear to have significant differences. Habib was apparently not captured when fighting—either as a legal or illegal combatant. The situation of Hicks on the other hand, who was captured fighting in Afghanistan as at least a combatant of some sort, would appear to differ little

from most other Guantanamo Bay detainees.

Assuming criminal charges for terrorism are not applied under some as yet unspecified or unresolved jurisdiction, continuously evolving international law is therefore likely to free Habib before Hicks. If one, or both, of them is eventually tried (as their proponents demand) their current status as unlawful combatants not covered by the Geneva Conventions could actually shorten their imprisonment (compared with if they were classified as PW). This would be especially so if they are as innocent as some claim and they can prove it at their trial.

This is an emerging area of international law and patience and a sense of perspective need to be maintained. This is especially so as the nature of the judicial and penal processes to be used, and sentencing options applicable, are still evolving. High-level Australian negotiations with the US Government have at least resulted in agreement that any trial that might take place under US auspices would not be much different in form, substance and fairness from Courts Martial conducted in Australia.

Both men are clearly in an unenviable position of international legal limbo, but one for which they are themselves primarily responsible.

It is also worth noting that if tried, both Hicks and Habib will receive a far fairer hearing than the arbitrary methods used by terrorist organisations to select, punish and kill their victims. ♦

Back on the Rails at Last

The completion of the \$1.3 billion, 1420 kilometre, standard gauge railway linking Darwin to Alice Springs and hence the mainland State capitals is of considerable strategic significance.

The inevitable increased use of Darwin as a port of import and export rather than ports further south has more than just economic, national development and national sovereignty implications. Being able to transport products by rail to and from northern Australia lessens our potential vulnerability to the interdiction of coastal and transoceanic shipping and, to some extent, simplifies our sea control problems during times of crisis.

The railway also provides a speedy and secure alternative when supplying bulk fuel to military and civilian needs in northern Australia. Finally, the railway allows bulk stores and munitions, and the army's armoured, mechanised and heavy construction units, to be deployed around most of the country without needing to rely on sea or long-haul road transport.

Rail links are, of course, somewhat vulnerable to interdiction by sabotage, airstrike and ground attack. But so are highways and shipping. Rail links are, in fact, relatively hard to sever for lengthy periods and very hard to deny permanently. There are few modern infrastructure developments that simplify defence planning. The linking by rail of RAAF Base Tindal, and the navy, army and air force bases in Darwin, to the rest of the country are a noteworthy exception.

Another Spin of the Defence Management Merry-Go-Round

The defence management merry-go-round is off again with the acceptance by the Government of the report into defence equipment acquisitions by Adelaide industrialist Malcolm Kinnaird (assisted by Len Early and Bill Schofield).

After all it was only three or so years ago that we were assured, with the creation of the Defence Materiel Organisation (DMO), that once again all was finally well and the optimum management model had finally arrived. Only three years before that the 1997 Defence Efficiency Review (DER) had made similar bold promises.

Since the end of the seven-year moratorium on reform following the 1974 merger of the defence group of departments, these reviews and reports have come along at approximately 2–3 year intervals. We have had Utz in 1982, Cross in 1984, Cross again in 1987, Baker in 1988, Sanderson and the Force Structure Review (FSR) in 1991, Baker again in 1995 (mainly ADF only), the DER in 1997, and Mueller et al in 2000. These eight reviews have been supplemented by many other reviews that at least touched on higher defence management, including Dibb, Cooksey, Wrigley, the Defence Regional Support Review (DRSR) and McIntosh.

A common thread throughout all of them is that management nirvana would finally arrive in the Department of Defence when their recommendations were implemented. Other common threads have included inexorable growth in the Defence civilian bureaucracy and ever-increasing civilian bureaucratic interference in military professional matters. Overall civilian numbers fell in the early years only because defence-owned factories and shipyards were privatised. This is rarely admitted in public when figures are quoted. Indeed many tables purporting to show a decline in departmental civilian staffing are deliberately stretched out to include the years when Defence owned a large, blue-collar industrial workforce.

Over one in five public servants in the now mainly office-bound department are now a purported lieutenant colonel equivalent or higher. In Canberra alone there are about as many of these purported lieutenant colonel equivalents as there are commanders, lieutenant colonels and wing commanders in the entire ADF.

The large and complex Department of Defence that has resulted has frustrated successive ministers. It has also frustrated most members of the ADF tired of being regularly scapegoated for the resulting lack of accountability and ensuing bureaucratic failures. Even more insidiously, the correct relationship of the government to its principal military advisers has been progressively smothered in self-serving and self-perpetuating bureaucratic processes.

Well, now it appears the DMO might become the Defence Procurement Agency (DPA) or somesuch. If there is a name change at least the letterhead and business-card printers will be happy.

One wag has already suggested that with the new

agency to be financially autonomous from the Department of Defence we are almost back to the pre-1974 Department of Supply. But, like the curate's egg the Kinnaird Report is good in parts. The proposal for an eight-person advisory board with four private-sector members is a good measure, and similar to several ADA proposals over many years.

A new three-star position is also to be created within the Department of Defence to manage capability development. The 1997 DER, of course, was meant to have ensconced this responsibility with the VCDF. This new position could lead to appropriate reform if left in ADF hands but we remain skeptical. While ostensibly open to both military and public-service appointees, the clear trend in the department over many years is for such jobs to mutate to exclusively civilian incumbents.

The previous VCDF, the very capable Lieutenant General Des Mueller, ruefully noted as he left that the bureaucratic structure had prevented him from being able to achieve much. It is worth noting that he did not attribute his difficulties to the Service Chiefs, yet again they have been unfairly scapegoated for the capability development morass.

Sadly, another opportunity to restore equilibrium to the management of Australia's defence (and to let commanders command) would appear to have been lost. The merging of departmental central functions with the old HQADF has not worked and was never likely to because of the completely different institutional cultures and functional agendas involved. Several years ago the ADA suggested that one real option to resolve the problem was to de-merge them. We suggested a further option could be to have two VCDFs, with one leading capability development and the other managing strategy and operations. As well as restoring a military chain of command to military functions (a key fault in the current flawed structure), this would also have allowed abolition of the civilian position of Deputy Secretary for Strategy. Funny how the option was never entertained by the huge civilian bureaucracy.

Now we are apparently to have a new three-star equivalent quasi-VCDF for capability development but the position is to be open to civilian incumbents. We are also to retain the civilian Deputy Secretary for Strategy. One could ask what the VCDF will now do on a day to day basis, especially if he is also frozen out of supervising strategy and operations?

The real question for many years has not been what is wrong with the Department of Defence. A better question is to ask why we keep having to have so many reviews and re-organisations. Another good question is why they keep failing to achieve much.

What is really required is a return to first principles concerning civil political control of the military and the correct delineation between military professional and departmental administrative tasks. Even the diarchy should not be sacrosanct from review. After all, no other country has a Department of Defence structured like ours —and for a very good reason. ♦

Major Furphy

The wisdom of Solomon



Barney (my boss, Air Marshal Barney Stoush, the VCDF) was in a twitting mood when I finally reported on my overseas deployment.

‘Have you absorbed some of the wisdom of Solomon?’ he asked with what I took to be a jovial smirk. ‘If you haven’t gained something, you’ve certainly lost some of that waistline.’

He was right. Three weeks spent checking out our latest overseas deployment had featured hard slogging through the jungle, some pretty ordinary food (and not much of it) and all without the benefit of some relaxation to pick up a tan. Still, I felt as fit as I have ever done. Barney had sent me off as his personal envoy to see how the boys and girls were managing in a pretty nasty part of the world. Now, of course, it was back to reality; he wanted my report straight after lunch. At least, I’d got out of the habit of lunch in the past three weeks but I’d also got out of the habit of writing reports for our bureaucratic and political masters. You see, I’d been living with people whose language was forthright to the point of rudeness and who reported what was happening rather than what they wanted to happen.

Barney told me he wanted a classified version and an unclassified version of my report. This is pretty difficult to achieve these days. Once upon a time, it was enough to do the full classified job and then trim out the classified bits for the unclassified version that could go to the media and the politicians—same thing, really. One difficulty with this process these days is that the unclassified version has to demonstrate that everything is going to plan so that no awkward questions will be asked, least of all by the politicians who might even realise that real wars are not fought by press releases. The other difficulty is that someone is likely to leak the classified version to the media so that politicians will be asked awkward questions. That’s another reason why the classified version has to be kept from the politicians because they are the most likely leakers.

In a deployment like the current one, the politicians need to be told that the populace loves us unreservedly when actually they couldn’t care less, at least out in the villages where they have not seen any form of government for 20 years.

It’s a bit different back in the capital where the local spivs are enjoying making money out of us and while those who can speak English line up for the flood of journalists looking for some quotes, useful or otherwise, before the afternoon plane leaves for Australia.

But back to the report. Barney wants a cost estimate to be included so I went over to see the Supervising Chief Finance Officer in charge of the deployment. He was blunt.

‘Do you want the real figure, the leakable figure or the PR figure?’, he asked.

I said I thought he ought to give me all three with the explanation for each and I’d leave it to Barney to decide.

He explained. ‘The real figure is what the deployment costs over and above the standing costs we would have to pay for the troops in barracks here in Australia. We subtract the costs of the training exercises they would be doing back here but add the food, fuel and so on consumed for the deployment. We even add the travelling expenses for your inspection trip. Of course, we also add in the pay supplement, which adds quite a bit.

‘The leakable figure is the real figure to which we add the ordinary running costs of having the troops back here while the PR figure adds the standard departmental overhead charge, which is a fixed 500 per cent. This means that the real cost does not look too stingy and adds credibility to the politicians’ claims to be saving civilisation.’

I objected that, if this were taken to its logical conclusion covering all projects, we would spend the defence budget three or four times each year.

He disagreed. ‘We can’t do that because the money isn’t in the bank. Of course, it’s mostly a case of paper shuffling and no one stops to add it all together. Anyway, it’s an accounting convention and you have to have an MBA to understand that.’

I wondered aloud if we were not heading in the same direction as the old Soviet Union, which fudged its figures to such a degree that no one knew what was going on. He tried to reassure me.

‘My dear chap, we always know what the real figure is. We may have to delude the public but to delude ourselves would be corrupt. We can’t have that, can we?’ ♦

The West and its challenges

Tony Abbott

The West's contribution to the contemporary world is corruption, depravity and violence, say the Ayatollah Khomeini, Osama bin Laden, Abu Bakar Bashir and other evangelists for terrorism. To the authors of September 11 and Bali, Western civilisation is an abomination in the eyes of God to be wiped from the face of the earth. To Al Qa'eda and its offshoots, every country which does not adopt a particular version of submission to Allah is a blasphemous usurpation. The separation of church and state is a satanic perversion akin to privatising God.

The hallmarks of Western civilisation are scientific and cultural curiosity, belief in the equality of man, freedom under the law, and a sense that diversity is a potential source of strength not weakness. Unfortunately, what the contemporary West takes most pride in: pluralism, libertarianism, feminism and multiculturalism, is what much of the Muslim world most stridently rejects, even to the extent of cheering when passenger jets are flown into civilian skyscrapers.

Victor Davis Hanson is right about the West's total supremacy in any contest between armies. But this kind of military superiority is irrelevant when the enemy is a civilian with a bomb belt under his shirt. If the fall of the Berlin Wall ended one era, September 11 marked the beginning of another that could turn out to be longer and more dangerous than the struggle against Soviet communism. Unlike hostile governments, people infatuated with death are hard to threaten, impossible to reason with and have nothing to lose.

The challenge is to identify and infiltrate terrorist groups, isolate and disarm terrorist states, disrupt and pre-empt terrorist strikes but, most of all, to address the issues which can turn otherwise unremarkable human beings into agents of human sacrifice. Although the 'war on terrorism' has an important military dimension, it's a war which weapons can't win because, even in death, (in a twisted version of the aphorism that the blood of

the martyrs is the seed of the Church) terrorists gain a kind of victory.

If the war on terrorism just involves finding targets and destroying them, it will fail and, in the process, the West will end up sacrificing its values in order to save them. But it won't fail for the reasons usually advanced: because it involves American unilateralism or a surfeit of 'hard' over 'soft' power.

Josef Joffe thinks that America must put the 'co' back into 'coalition'. Should America try to work within the United Nations if it can? Of course. Should America take traditional friends into its confidence? Yes. Should America avoid giving offence? If possible. But why should America accept a French veto over how it might protect its own citizens when the French would never accept an American one. More plausibly, Michael Ignatieff thinks that the 'martial plan' must be succeeded by a 'Marshall Plan'. Yes, as long as reconstruction is serious and can't be caricatured as giving Baghdad a new KFC.

It's not enough for Western civilisation to demonstrate its technological prowess, military strength and material abundance. It needs to show moral strength which even its critics can recognise and come to admire. Iraqis will not embrace pluralist democracy because they hear lectures (in English) about George Washington and affirmative action. They want hard evidence that America and its allies (unlike the old regime) will deliver on their promises.

Huntingdon was right about the challenge of mutant forms of Islam but wrong about the inevitable clash of civilisations. Fukuyama was wrong about the end of history but right about the potential appeal of liberal democratic values. Compared with the West's golden rule: 'do to others as you would have them do to you', the bitter maxim: 'kill and be killed' only makes sense as a rule of life by assuming away all human solidarity.

Despite the emotional, cultural and imaginative abyss separating a New York metrosexual from a fundamentalist mullah, there is common ground based on shared humanity. But it would take at least a latter-day T.E. Lawrence to find it, not people seeking an 'exit strategy'.

It would be easier for others to respect Western civilisation if the contemporary version had less emotional distance from Burke's notion of society as a partnership between those who are living, those who are dead and those who are yet to be born. The West's wealth and openness are an irresistible magnet. Its narcissism, materialism, and arrogance offend billions of people who might otherwise find its traditional virtues resonant with their deepest instincts.

The 'war on terrorism' is not primarily a test of military technology or of social service delivery. It's a test of character. In a culture conditioned to be in two minds about everything, Western leaders need to match their adversaries' conviction and clarity of purpose and Western citizens need to be more dedicated to enhancing civilised life than suicide bombers are to taking it. The task is not to win over intellectuals addicted to finding fault (to have a debate about Iraq which is really about us) but to demonstrate to the wider world that those noble aspirations about the poor huddled masses yearning to be free are really meant.

Post September 11, there are some encouraging signs that Western society is not as decadent as it seemed. For instance, America, Britain and Australia made the moral judgment that a leader who had used weapons of mass destruction to murder his citizens, invaded his neighbours and funded suicide bombers had forfeited any claim to legitimacy. They made the prudential judgment that removing the Iraqi dictator would do more good than harm. It was the geo-political equivalent of interfering in a particularly savage domestic and took similar physical and moral courage. But people who can respect the 'Western way of war' are not necessarily impressed by the Western way of life, which is why winning the war is turning out to be easier than winning the peace.

For Britain and Australia, involvement in Iraq was not 'doing America's bidding' but sharing the burden of upholding common values. Historically, America, Britain and Australia's instinctive responses to foreign challenges are almost identical. A common language, similar cultures, entwined histories and countless personal links mean that there will be a tendency to think and act as one people rather than three countries. In any event, a

strong and confident country with working alliances will be the most effective force for good and the best friend to all.

In Australia, there has been a timely rediscovery of the Anzac tradition. Generally, there seems to be new respect for people who take risks for others rather than demanding that others take risks for them. It's not that lobbyists, financial planners and psychologists are redundant or that they don't sometimes need courage in their daily work. It's just that a threat to national security gives a new perspective to most domestic issues (although there are still people who feel they can't possibly worry about Saddam Hussein while they have John Howard to deal with).

The 'down with us' brigade, identified by Roger Scruton, is still around although there is a new tendency to stress responsibilities over rights and unity over diversity. The habit of being non-judgmental of other cultures but hypercritical of our own seems less entrenched. Multiculturalism means that migrants aren't expected to pass Australian-ness tests, not that anything goes. In East Timor, Afghanistan and Iraq, Australian soldiers have seemed like models of chivalry. Perhaps

their example might mean that long neglected ideals of honour, duty, and service henceforth play a bigger part in the life of the West.

The sensuality, licence and frivolity (which so enrages the authors of September 11 and Bali) are still on display but at least some countries have shown a newfound ability to call things by their true name and take commitments seriously.

It would be a happy paradox if the terrorist threat prompted a rediscovery of sterner and higher virtues and thereby renewed the West's appeal to a wider world. ♦

Tony Abbott is the Federal Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations.

'The war on terrorism is not primarily a test of military technology or of social service delivery. It's a test of character.'

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Taking stock of terrorism

Dr Greg Barton

Terrorism is a reality for Australians in a way it never used to be before the attacks of 11 September 2001. In the year that followed those attacks, there was restless speculation about the extent to which al Qaeda-style radical Islamist terrorism had penetrated South-East Asia. By the end of October 2002, after the Bali bombing, this speculation had given way to a series of increasingly disturbing revelations about the degree to which this was a problem for our part of the world.

So, two years on from the horror of watching the twin towers collapse, how has our part of the world changed? Should we be 'alarmed' as well as 'alert', or can we safely assume that the worst has now passed?

Like most truly important questions, there are no simple or conclusive answers to these questions. The best we can do is take stock of what we do know and accept that if things are not as good as we would like them to be then they are also not as bad as they could be.

The following points may help to give us a feel for the underlying issues that need to be considered:

- Since the attacks of 11 September 2001, radical Islamist terrorism has not enjoyed mass support anywhere in the Muslim world.

This probability was resoundingly reinforced in Indonesia after last October's bombing in Bali. Over the past year it has become clear that support for radical Islamism has fallen significantly, certainly in Indonesia, as ordinary Indonesians, horrified by the indiscriminate violence of the bombings, have become much less inclined to accord radical Islamists any 'benefit of the doubt'.

On the other hand, however, there are disturbing signs that the Indonesian authorities are feeling uneasy about dealing systemically with terrorism, presumably for fear of provoking a social or political backlash in the run up to the April 2004 general elections.

Clearly it is one thing to sentence the likes of Amrozi and Samudra to death by firing squad but quite another to take on Abu Bakar Bashir, his (above ground) organisation Majelis Mujahidin Indonesia, and his Jemaah Islamiah-linked pesantren and its graduates. How else can you

explain the fact that Indonesia is the one country in the world where Jemaah Islamiah (JI) is not officially banned—the very nation that has suffered most from JI's indiscriminate terrorist violence?

- The attacks of 11 September 2001 in the US, 12 October 2002 in Bali and the August 2003 bombing of the Marriott Hotel in Jakarta have raised awareness about the scale of the threat presented by radical Islamist terrorism.

In Indonesia, and across South-East Asia, information that has emerged from interviews with dozens of arrested JI operatives has provided an extraordinary picture of the extent and nature of a threat previously ignored or dismissed.

At the same time, however, lingering denial persists, especially among the political elite of Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Malaysia, where resurgent nationalism and a weakness for blame-shifting conspiracy theories threaten to dangerously sap political will for decisive action at a time when it is most needed.

- In the year since the bombing in Bali there have been unprecedented police advances and encouraging evidence of fruitful interregional cooperation.

Nevertheless, incidents such as the escape in August of JI's master-bomber Fathur al-Ghozi from a supposedly 'high-security' cell in Manila, and the continuing operation of substantial terrorist training camps a little further south in the Philippines, are reminders of the extent of security concerns in the region.

Semi-dysfunctional states and incompetent and corrupt security institutions provide ideal conditions for terrorist groups to operate in.

- Good initial police work in Bali has led to the rapid dismantling of JI.

However, we still have no way of knowing how large JI is and what proportion of its operatives have been detected and arrested.

What we do know is that the situation today looks much worse than we imagined it to be before the 12 October 2002 attack. Not only does JI's network now appear to be more extensive and sophisticated than previously thought, its capacity to regenerate remains completely unknown.

- There has been extraordinary global cooperation in the past two years, but we continue to face difficult and dangerous circumstances and influences across the globe.

What has become clear is that such issues can no longer be considered in isolation. Radical Islamist terrorists are just as effective at exploiting globalisation as any Fortune 500 corporation, a reality that has been overlooked for too long.

- The 21st century needs to be Islam's democratic century.

We are fortunate to be living in the day of democracy, and in our lifetimes we can expect to see great advances across the world and especially

in those nations where most of the world's 1.3 billion Muslims, largely poor and often downtrodden, are struggling for democratic reform of their own societies.

Unfortunately, at this moment, we are also living in the hour of radical Islamist terrorism. It will pass, but a struggle lies ahead. ✽

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Conference Calendar

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

Chief of Army Conference 2003
'Land Forces, Ways in War and Future Coalition Operations'
Adams Hall, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra
1–2 October 2003
Enquiries: (02) 6265-9624

Royal United Services Institute Triennial International Seminar
'Global Security in the New Millennium'
National Convention Centre, Canberra
9–10 October 2003
Enquiries: (02) 6266-2042 or austrusi@defence.gov.au

Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers 12th Annual Conference
'Winning in the Intelligence Game'
Rydges Lakeside Hotel, Canberra
21–23 October 2003
Enquiries: (03) 6234-1424 or www.aipio.asn.au

Australian Defence Magazine Inaugural Conference
'Doing Business with Defence'
National Convention Centre, Canberra
19–20 November 2003
Enquiries: (02) 9080-4307

Royal Australian Navy Sea Power Conference 2004
'Positioning Navies for the Future'
Sydney Convention and Exhibition Centre, Darling Harbour
03–05 February 2004
Enquiries: (02) 9248-0894 or www.tourhosts.com.au/seapower2004

Rethinking the defence of Australia

Dr Paul Monk

‘...the bottom line is that we do not need a new defence policy. Unless, of course, some erudite so-called defence expert can come up with a new set of force structure priorities that are financially responsible and bear more than a passing relevance to our unique strategic circumstances.’

– Paul Dobb, 30 October 2001 (1)

‘It probably never made sense to conceptualise our security interests as a series of diminishing concentric circles around our coastline, but it certainly does not do so now.’

– Robert Hill, June 2002 (2)

‘Our current strategy has four major deficiencies. It is based on a misplaced geographical determinism that ignores the diverse and globalised nature of modern conflict; it has shaped the ADF for the wrong wars; it gives insufficient weight to the transnational threats which confront us; and it fails to recognize that modern defence forces must win the peace as well as the war.’

– Alan Dupont, April 2003 (3)

For seven years the Howard Government has sought to reframe and reform the way defence policy is made and implemented. It has faced entrenched resistance from a set of boffins and bureaucrats wedded to the old defence policy. Chief among these are Paul Dobb and his protégé Hugh White. They have fought a tenacious rearguard action against successive Defence Ministers, Ian McLachlan, John Moore, Peter Reith and now Robert Hill. But they are losing the fight. It’s important to understand why this is so and what the implications are.

The old defence policy emerged in stages after the Vietnam War. Its most basic premise was that the forward defence posture that had led to engagement in Vietnam should be abandoned in favour of defence in depth of Australia and its surrounding oceans.⁽⁴⁾ A decade after the Vietnam War, Paul Dobb, then a senior intelligence analyst with the Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO), was asked by the Hawke Government to formalise this policy. The review he

undertook, in 1986–87, has been the basis for defence policy ever since.⁽⁵⁾

The 1987 White Paper, ‘The Defence of Australia’, gave priority to air and naval forces for the defence of what Dobb described as the ‘sea–air gap’ to the north of Australia against a substantial conventional assault. The assault would come from a power in, or lodging itself in, the archipelagic screen extending from Aceh to the Solomons.⁽⁶⁾ The forces that would repel such an assault would be surveillance, aerial combat and strike aircraft and naval vessels at the cutting edge of defence technology. Should any of the assault force make it to the Australian littoral, a mobile land force would deal with them.

Beyond such defence of the continent in extremis, the White Paper, commonly known as the Dobb Report, postulated that Australian forces would make a significant contribution to regional allies under duress. They would also be equipped at need to respond to low intensity crises within the island archipelago to the north, should the need

arise.⁽⁷⁾ A long-range capital equipment acquisition program was envisaged and an annual defence budget set at a firm 2.8 per cent of GDP.

This grand design appealed to many people, from those reluctant to involve Australia in further foreign wars to those likely to profit from producing the massively expensive weapons systems it called for. It suffered, however, from three fundamental flaws, which became more and more evident over the first decade of its existence and have now reached the breaking point.

First, defence expenditure was not pegged at 2.8 per cent of GDP, but declined steadily to less than 1.8 per cent of GDP, radically undermining the capital equipment program the policy called for. It has now inched up to about 1.9 per cent, with recent increments. The cumulative shortfall in funding over the period 1988 to 2000 has been estimated at well over \$100 billion in 2000 dollars.⁽⁸⁾

Second, the contingency placed front and centre in the Dobb Report—having to engage in a serious battle against an assault on Australia itself coming from the archipelagic screen to the north—was always vanishingly remote and has become more so, not less, with the passing of the intervening years. The consequence has been the accumulation of a defence force not adequately equipped for the war it is designed to fight and barely equipped at all for the contingencies it has actually faced.⁽⁹⁾

Third, the combination of a preoccupation with a purely notional need for continental defence in the ‘sea-air gap’ with chronic failure to deliver the capital expenditure needed to fund such a capability created a higher defence organisation that was at once ponderous and demoralised.⁽¹⁰⁾ All of this was evident by the time the Howard Government took office in 1996. It was compounded by a realisation that many of the major weapons platforms acquired or maintained under the existing policy were approaching the end of their life cycles.⁽¹¹⁾ They would need replacing in the first decade of the new century, or soon thereafter—if the old policy was to be continued. There was, in short, a rising problem of block obsolescence in the Dobb arsenal. Overcoming it would cost an estimated \$80 billion to \$110 billion over the period 2000–2020.

What was to be done? The Howard Government acknowledged the complexity of the problem and asked the boffins and bureaucrats to rethink things and come up with policy and force structure options. Dissatisfied with the initial offerings, in 1998 it signalled a desire to shake up fixed assumptions by announcing that it would create and fund an independent institute for strategic policy.

This idea triggered furious bureaucratic politicking, as those whom Chief of Army Lt-Gen Peter Leahy dubbed

‘the gatekeepers of strategic doctrine’ fought to keep control of the agenda. In consequence, two things occurred that reflected political compromise, but policy ineffectiveness. First, a new White Paper, intended to be a fundamental review of the basic premises of defence policy was drafted by those (Dobb and White) whose assumptions it was intended to challenge.⁽¹²⁾

Second, White was appointed to head the new ‘independent’ Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI), immediately after completing the 2000 White Paper.⁽¹³⁾ Meanwhile, Dobb had moved across to the ANU to head the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre. While keeping top secret security clearances and an office on Russell Hill, he both undertook many private consultancies and strenuously defended the axioms of his policy against all comers. There were surely conflicts of interest entailed in doing all these things simultaneously.

The Howard Cabinet has persevered, nonetheless, with its defence agenda. It had to improvise to be able to carry out both the INTERFET operation in East Timor (1999) and the contribution to the overthrow of Saddam Hussein (2003). At the same time, it has been moving step by step to bring about a culture change in the defence policy and force structure planning environment.

Three moves stand out in this regard. First, it has lent support to the ANU’s revitalisation of graduate programs designed to educate a whole new cadre of strategic policy and intelligence thinkers. The appointment of Ross Babbage to replace Paul Dobb as head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre has breathed new life into a moribund program. The appointment of Bill Maley to head the proposed new College of Diplomacy, despite his trenchant criticism of the Government’s handling of East Timor in 1999, is similarly promising. Both steps are long-term measures, not quick fixes.

Second, the appointment of senior diplomat Ric Smith as Secretary of Defence is a sign of the priority the Government places on overhauling the defence portfolio. Former ambassador to both Jakarta and Beijing, Smith was also, briefly, Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Intelligence, in 1995, before being posted to Beijing. He knows the region and the threat environment as well as anyone in the civilian service.

Third, ASPI itself is carefully being reconsidered, with the appointment of three new members to its advisory board: Paul McClintock, former head of the Cabinet office and overseer of long-term policy guidance; Jim Wallace, a recently retired Commander Special Forces; and the SDSC’s Alan Dupont. Given the public clashes between Dobb on the one hand, and Wallace and Dupont on the other, this is a clear signal that the thinking of the institute is going to be edged in the Government’s preferred direction.

In addition, the Menzies Research Centre, a Liberal Party think-tank, has been holding a series of seminars

There was, in short, a rising problem of block obsolescence in the Dobb arsenal. Overcoming it would cost an estimated \$80 billion to \$110 billion over the period 2000–2020

on strategic policy and global developments, which have been well attended by senior figures in the defence and intelligence establishment. It is of considerable significance that the first seminar in the series, in late 2002, featured Alan Dupont, who had already emerged as the most insistent public critic of the Dobb doctrinal line.

All these developments indicate that the Dobb era is at an end. Yet it is worth looking more closely at the underlying arguments, before concluding that the Dobb era should end. After all, the twentieth century is littered with cases of defence intellectuals discarded or disregarded by their governments who turned out to have been right in their analyses or prognoses.

Dobb and White are both charming and highly intelligent individuals, with long-developed views on Australian security. Those views should not be lightly discarded. We need to get their arguments clear, not just the policy and political trends that are overtaking them. Fortunately, we can do so, because their views are a matter of public record, not something classified and, therefore, inaccessible.

The first line of defence for the Dobb doctrine, one might have thought, would be to claim that the chronic underfunding of defence had undermined a perfectly sound doctrine; and that the answer is to make up the shortfall, by increasing defence expenditure to at least 2.8 per cent of GDP, or by around \$7 to 8 billion a year.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, this has not been the line Dobb or White has chosen. It would simply not be politically realistic to advance such an argument at this point; least of all for them.⁽¹⁴⁾ They insist that with only a little topping up, the existing policy is perfectly viable. Australia can, as White expressed it on television some months ago, both walk (stick to the existing policy) and chew gum (engage in low intensity or coalition operations around the world on an ad-hoc basis) at the same time.

The first line of defence chosen by them has actually been to assert that their critics are feckless and irresponsible dilettantes who would put the country at risk of invasion by giving us a force structure unsuited to continental defence.⁽¹⁵⁾ In a public blast at his critics, in late 2001, Dobb wrote: 'As the defence White Paper that was issued in December last year says: preventing or defeating any armed attack on Australia "is the bedrock of our security and the most fundamental responsibility of government"'.⁽¹⁶⁾

Now, of course, since he and White were its real authors, quoting the 2000 White Paper as an authority is rather like saying, 'As I and those who agree with me wrote last year...'. Nonetheless, the words in the White Paper are, in themselves, unobjectionable. Who would disagree that preventing or defeating an attack on Australia is, in some sense or other, the bedrock of our security?

The real questions are, what attacks are we in danger of and what means available to us would best enable us to prevent or defeat such attacks? Dobb is rather vague on these questions. Australia, he wrote, 'is not New

Zealand or Canada. We face an arc of instability to our north, a weakened South East Asia and an uncertain balance of power with the rise of China. Indonesia ... has an unpredictable future'.

He acknowledged that we 'enjoy security from conventional threats', but added 'that is at least in part because the ADF has the demonstrable capability to deal with credible threats that could arise at short notice'.⁽¹⁷⁾ What he did not do, though, is specify what 'credible threats' he had in mind, or what he meant by 'at short notice'. Nor, indeed, did he specify what the 'demonstrable capability' of the ADF actually is in regard to such putative threats. How, then, is one to grapple with his argument?

We may reasonably assume that he does not anticipate an assault on continental Australia by a power in or lodging itself in the archipelagic screen to our north, to use the time-honoured language of the Dobb Report. Such a power would be either Indonesia—the only substantial state in the archipelago—or China. But Indonesia is demonstrably incapable of such an assault and could not mount one 'at short notice'. And for China to lodge itself in the archipelago would require a geo-political upheaval that cannot occur 'at short notice'. So what does he have in mind?

It simply is not clear. Consider his observation about the 'arc of instability to our north'. Troubles in Aceh and West Papua, insolvency in East Timor, political decay in Papua New Guinea, strife in Bougainville and the Solomons, uncertainties about the political stability of Fiji and, most importantly, political rumblings at the very heart of Indonesia certainly constitute an arc of instability. But how does this translate into threats to Australia that the ADF, under the Dobb doctrine, has the 'demonstrable capability' to 'deal with ... at short notice'?

Even in a sustained defence of his doctrine delivered within the precincts of Parliament House, in October 2002, Dobb failed to address these very basic questions. Yet he had had at least two years by then, since the INTERFET insertion into East Timor, to reflect on them. That operation had shown starkly, to those paying close attention, just what could be required at short notice in the arc of instability and how far the ADF was from having the 'demonstrable capability' to handle it.

Yet, in that 2002 address, Dobb blurred the substantive point at issue, by alleging that he is a 'regionalist' opposed to those he dubbed 'the expeditionary school' who seek to develop 'long-distance power projection capabilities or expeditionary forces capable of taking on a major enemy'.⁽¹⁸⁾ But this is not what his critics actually call for. Rather, as I read them, they propose the development of amphibious, logistical and special forces capabilities for engaging in the actual (as distinct from the purely notional) regional challenges we face (such as in East Timor); and for participating in coalition operations against major enemies (such as in Iraq, Korea or the Taiwan Strait).⁽¹⁹⁾

Dobb has weakened his own case by his dogged refusal

to acknowledge the merits of his opponents' arguments, as well as by his tendency to conflate the problems posed by the arc of instability with those that would be posed by a major military assault on continental Australia by Indonesia or China. Ultimately, his case would seem to rely on two questionable propositions. First, that Australia will be at greater risk of major assault by Indonesia or China if it abandons his force structure priorities. Second, that what is really needed at present can be supplied without fundamentally changing those priorities.

The first of these claims is spurious. Ordinary Australians, ignorant of military realities, may feel reassured by the thought that we have the latest combat and strike aircraft and naval surface combatants to fend off an imagined Indonesian or Chinese threat to our sovereignty. Those who are better informed know that the problems we face in regard to Indonesia are not such as to require those capabilities; nor are they in prospect of becoming so.⁽²⁰⁾

As for China, it is many years away from having anything resembling the capability to threaten Australia in such a fashion. If it acquired such a capability, only American power could constrain it, not anything even envisaged in the Dobb doctrine. Moreover, there is a case to be made (which he nowhere so much as entertains) that by changing our force structure now—at the obsolescence cross-over point—we would position ourselves better to face serious challenges ten to fifteen years down the track.

To address this proposition, though, it is necessary first to consider Dobb's second claim: that what is really needed at present can be supplied without fundamentally changing current force structure priorities. In the final part of his October 2002 address, 'Force Structure and Budget Implications', Dobb spoke of strengthening the Army, adding new capabilities of various kinds, buttressing homeland security and enhancing intelligence collection and analysis, without interfering with current force structure commitments.

To do all this, he stated, would require an extra \$1 billion per year in the defence budget. This is, he declared, 'hardly the time for the Australian government to pretend that it can do defence on the cheap'.⁽²¹⁾ But he does not, in this calculation, allow that far more than an extra \$1 billion will be required to replace the platforms crucial to his doctrine. Much less does he give any credence to the idea that these platforms might actually be uneconomical and unnecessary. He simply engages in rhetorical flourishes about regional instability and public fears.

Suppose, however, that one was to call his bluff? Suppose we were to contemplate doing what he plainly regards as unthinkable—come up with a 'new set of force structure priorities that are financially responsible and bear more than a passing relevance to our unique strategic circumstances'? What might be entailed? Three things, to begin with: a willingness to accept that capital equipment programs can be cancelled; preparedness to shape our force structure according to our strategic

commitments, not the other way around; and the nerve to leapfrog the block obsolescence problem by embracing a paradigm shift.

A key decision that would indicate all three of these undertakings would be cancellation of the Joint Strike Fighter acquisition, or at least a more cautious decision to buy only 50 or 60 rather than 100 of the new aircraft. Seen as a replacement for the F-A18 Hornets, which they cannot properly replace anyway, one hundred of the JSFs would cost in the vicinity of \$16 billion. They are only being bought because the F-22, the more logical replacement for the Hornets, is too expensive; but more fundamentally because of the untested assumption that the force structure must be maintained as it is.

Yet there is no compelling logic for spending all this money. By common concurrence, the JSFs will be the last manned fighters developed in the West and by the time we have them in commission they would be effectively out of date, as well as inordinately expensive. If, instead, we scrapped or at least curtailed the program, put \$2 billion into research and development on unmanned combat aircraft⁽²²⁾ and leapfrogged the last manned platforms, we would free up a significant proportion of the defence budget for re-equipping the ADF in several ways consistent with 'our unique strategic circumstances'. Other such measures are just as conceivable.

Such an approach would enable Australia to reposition itself rapidly for the world of asymmetric warfare that it faces, especially in the arc of instability, without requiring massive increases in defence expenditure—simply a bold, but prudent reallocation of defence resources from the prodigal and misconceived to the vital and forward-looking.

This, unless I am very much mistaken, is the sort of thing the Howard Government has wanted to see thought through. The time for doing so is now, but neither Dobb nor White is the man for the job, because they are too wedded to the existing set of priorities and assumptions, as they have shown over a period of years. They are being moved aside not, as they claim, because of thoughtless meddling with strategic realities by others, but because they have shown an abiding unwillingness to rethink fundamental assumptions. ♦

Footnotes

(1) Paul Dobb, 'Tinker With Defence Policy and Risk Attack', *The Australian*, 30 October 2001, p. 13.

(2) Senator Robert Hill, Minister for Defence, 'Beyond the White Paper: Strategic Directions for Defence', Address to the Australian Defence College, Canberra, 18 June 2002. Hill's remark was a transparent allusion to the map featured in the 1987 Dobb Report, depicting a series of concentric circles radiating outwards from Australia, indicating the radii of potential threats to the continental heartland.

(3) Alan Dupont, 'Modern Wars Can't Be Based On Obsolete Battle Plans', *The Australian*, 14 November 2002, p. 11.

(4) The Dobb review of Australia's defence policy was commissioned by then Labor Minister for Defence Kim Beazley, in 1985. It emerged initially as 'Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities', Australian Government

Printing Office, Canberra, March 1986. It attracted considerable critical response, but nevertheless formed the clear basis for the 1987 Defence White Paper, 'The Defence of Australia', AGPS, Canberra, 1987. For the fully developed articulation of his views, see 'The Conceptual Basis of Australia's Defence Force Planning and Force Structure Development', Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 88, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1992.

(5) Dibb had been a senior analyst within the Joint Intelligence Organisation for more than a decade when Beazley asked him to do the review in 1985. After completing it, he became Director of JIO and then Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Intelligence, before moving across to the Australian National University to head the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre.

(6) The historical memories behind this broad scenario were, of course, the Japanese blitzkrieg of 1942 and the tensions with Sukarno's Indonesia between 1958 and 1965. That Dibb did not, in the mid to late 1980s, seriously consider China to be a security threat to Australia may be gauged by the fact that, under his direction and continuing subsequently, when, as Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Intelligence, he had oversight of intelligence priorities, JIO/DIO's and DSD's coverage of China fell away drastically. In 1987, there were something like twenty China analysts in JIO and considerably more than that in DSD. By early 1994, by which time JIO had been renamed DIO (the Defence Intelligence Organisation), the number of China analysts had shrunk to zero. When I took over the job of senior China analyst, in April of that year, the position had been vacant for six months. Yet as staff numbers shrank steadily, so far as I was able to establish, no review was undertaken of collection or analysis requirements. Notionally, JIO/DIO continued to comprehensively monitor China's internal affairs, economy, military capabilities, diplomatic and security relations. In reality, less and less was being done. Before I departed DIO, in late 1995, I had been given three analysts to assist me in analyzing China.

(7) Dibb was at pains to underscore this in his 23 October 2002 address at Parliament House to the National Institute for Asia and the Pacific. 'In the infamous 1986 Dibb Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities we defined an area of primary strategic interest that embraced the whole of Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, or some 25 per cent of the globe. We never thought that Australia's defence began and ended at its coastline. To quote the 1987 Defence White Paper, 'This paper has stressed that the priority need for the Defence Force is to fulfil the national task of defending the nation. It has also dealt with the need for Australia's defence effort to take account of developments in our region of primary strategic interest, and to be capable of reacting positively to calls for military support elsewhere, should we judge that our interest require it. The Government considers that Australia can deal with both, but to do so we must be alert to priorities.' 'Does Asia Matter To Australia's Defence Policy?', NIAP Lecture Series, Australian National University, 1 November 2002, p. 4.

(8) As was pointed out by the Australian Defence Association, in a detailed response to the 2000 Defence White Paper, '2.8 per cent of GDP, the 1987 benchmark, stands today at around \$18.5 billion. The shortfall over the past thirteen years compared with the 1987 White Paper is \$102 billion in today's dollars. The shortfall is more accurately measured by personnel shortages (28 per cent cut in regulars over the past decade and hollow units), equipment cuts and obsolescence (40 year old APCs, helicopters, Caribous etc), training and maintenance cuts'.

(9) The fundamental problem for the Dibb doctrine has always been the implausibility of its basic national security scenario. As the ADA paper just cited remarked, the 2000 White Paper advances 'the fundamental nonsense that direct attack on Australia at one of three different levels of intensity is our most serious problem, but then goes on to assert that such a threat is unlikely in any significant sense. Of course it is. The difficulties for any adversary who does not use long range missile attack on Australia are virtually insurmountable unless he first acquires substantial base facilities in our inner region extending from Indonesia to New Zealand'.

(10) This was the most trenchant criticism leveled at the 2000 White Paper by the ADA: 'Most disappointingly, the White Paper makes no commitment to serious reform of the management and command system. This bloated, erratic, disorganized and expensive structure is designed to manage Australia's involvement in a Third World War, which we are told and we know, is not going to happen. In ADA's view, serious reform of the higher defence organization is the most urgent issue in defence. It has been ignored in this statement of government policy'. (emphasis added).

(11) Between now and 2015, the F/A-18 Hornet fighters, the F-111 strategic strike aircraft, the P3C long-range maritime patrol aircraft, the C-130 transport aircraft, the guided missile frigates and amphibious support ships are all scheduled to come to the end of their natural working lives.

(12) Despite moving across to the ANU, Dibb retained his high-level security clearances and was also awarded significant private consultancy work by the Department of Defence. White subsequently rose to the position of Deputy Secretary (Strategy and Intelligence) and has worked closely with Dibb in seeking to control the strategic policy agenda.

(13) In January 1999, I pointed out that the proposal to create an independent strategic policy institute was being resisted by 'bureaucratic interest groups in the Russell Hill Defence complex'. The idea of creating something which would breathe new life into strategic policy and force structure thinking was a good one, I argued, but 'there are ominous signs that, instead, the institute will be created as an arm of the Department of Defence, directly controlled by the Deputy Secretary for Strategy and Intelligence. Should this happen, the whole exercise will very likely prove self-defeating. Watching it happen would be very like watching an episode of Yes, Minister—one called, say, The New Strategic Policy Institute'. 'Time To Bring Spy Agencies Out of the Cold', Canberra Times, 29

January 1999. In due course, Hugh White was given the job and the budget was provided out of Defence coffers. The results have been pretty much what one might have expected under those conditions.

In the January 1999 article, I outlined criteria by which an independent institute would need to work if it was to make a genuine difference to strategic policy thinking:

'Intelligence agencies exist to inform policy-makers of things they would otherwise not be aware of which could have significant implications in their domains of responsibility. Strategic thinking is about imagining how things could change or be changed in ways which would have non-trivial consequences for your goals and interests. Well, the creation of a new institute is meant to address the failure of the existing intelligence agencies to keep the government aware of, or to prompt strategic thinking about, the changes which have been transforming international affairs over the past decade. As the former head of the East German foreign intelligence service, Markus Wolf, has written, the quality of a country's intelligence is generally in inverse proportion to the number of bureaucrats who process it; and the strategic thinking of a government is dependent on its decision-makers being willing to listen to advice that conflicts with their preconceived views.

By its very nature, a normal intelligence agency for these very reasons produces indifferent intelligence and makes little useful contribution to strategic thinking. Ours are no exception. Nor will they become exceptions, being what they are. That's why a truly independent institute for strategic policy could make a difference. The question is how to create one.

There are several quite simple criteria to use in imagining such an institute. First, it must be able to work directly with those who make policy, not through layers of bureaucrats. Second, it must be a globally networked organisation, engaged in conversation with the best centres of thinking world-wide. Third, it should have a charter to work as a consultancy in strategic thinking for clients other than the Federal Government, in order to underwrite its independence and to test its analyses more widely in the marketplace.

For all these reasons, it should be located outside Canberra and be granted its own management and advisory boards. Could all this be done? Quite certainly. But it will require that the Department of Defence bite the bullet and allow critical thinking to take precedence over secrecy and bureaucratic politics'.

(14) *At a time when there are major budgetary struggles over funding of every significant portfolio, even an extra half billion dollars a year for Defence is difficult to gain. This would be far more serious, if the case for maintaining, not to mention enhancing, the Dobb arsenal was robust.*

(15) *In November 2002, for example, Dobb ridiculed what he called 'a phony defence debate' being whipped up by 'my Australian National University colleague, Alan Dupont, a former captain in the army'. He attributed Dupont's views to 'his failure to understand practical defence policy' and his 'fundamental misapprehension of the processes of government'. 'Defence Policy is on the*

Money', The Australian, 13 November 2002, p. 13. In a televised debate with Jim Wallace, he remarked tartly that he was not in the habit of consulting 'retired brigadiers' about strategic policy. ABC TV Lateline, 11 July 2002. He concluded one article with the dismissive remark: 'Short attention span proposals that simply react to the latest media fad or academic fashion are simply not good enough'. 'Tinker With Defence Policy and Risk Attack', The Australian, 30 October 2001, p. 13.

(16) Dobb 'Tinker With Defence Policy and Risk Attack', loc. cit.

(17) Ibid.

(18) *'Some believe that we have entered a completely new strategic era and that we should do away with the defence policies of previous governments, going back to the 1976 White Paper, and indeed that we should scrap the Howard Government's own 2000 White Paper, which gave priority to the defence of Australia and to our regional security interests. This school of thought, which I shall call the expeditionary school, believes that Australia faces no threat for at least the next 10 or 15 years and that there are no foreseeable regional contingencies where the use of military force will challenge us'. [Emphasis added.] The last clause here is a complete misrepresentation of his critics' views, as Dobb had to know when he uttered it. For a serious reflection on Australia's policy challenges in the South Pacific, see Graeme Dobell 'The South Pacific: Policy Taboos, Popular Amnesia and Political Failure', The Menzies Research Centre, Australian Security in the 21st Century Seminar Series, Parliament House, Canberra, 12 February 2003.*

(19) *The key document is Alan Dupont's 'Transformation or Stagnation? Rethinking Australia's Defence', Australian Journal of International Affairs, Vol. 57, No. 1, April 2003. '...the maritime strategy that underpins DOA (the Dobb doctrine) is a maritime strategy in name only. A true maritime strategy, based on the use of substantial naval power to control major sea-lines of communication, or to contain major continental powers, is well beyond Australia's capability. However, the real problem with the maritime strategy is that the so-called sea-air gap is not a gap at all. It is an archipelago occupied by numerous islands of varying size, importance and population where any conceivable military operation would require the effective use of land forces including the means to transport and sustain them. For traditionalists, who pride themselves on understanding the importance of geography, the failure to recognise the archipelagic nature of the northern approaches to Australia is an inexcusable misappreciation'. [Emphasis added.]*

(20) Bob Lowry, 'The Armed Forces of Indonesia', Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, NSW, 1996, esp. pp. 85-115.

(21) NIAP paper, 1 November 2002, p. 15.

(22) *The eminent science journal, 'Nature', in its latest issue, has reported that research is already being jointly conducted by the US Defence Advanced Research Projects Agency, the US Air Force and Boeing into something called the X-45C Unmanned Combat Air Vehicle Demonstrator System. The Australian, 5 June 2003, p. 3.*

Niche forces?

First thoughts from an army perspective

John Essex-Clark

The phrases ‘niche force’ and ‘niche capability’ are being bandied about as a way to describe current Australian contributions to coalition operations. In a military, if not political, sense this concept may lead to the stagnation of the Army’s ability to conduct military operations.

The concept of a ‘niche force’ is founded on the notion that it is appropriate to make force contributions whose specific capabilities are disproportionate to the actual investment of resources and personnel. This approach to multinational operations is alliance policy on the cheap. It might also be seen as a morally corrupt, economically shortsighted and operationally insignificant course of action. There is a danger that we might end up being considered by the United States and Britain, not so much as staunch military friends but more as political opportunists.

We are in danger of treating our armed forces as a commodity, rather than as citizens who, by putting on uniforms, have assumed the responsibility to fight in order to uphold our national values and interests. By focusing on trading our special skills, we derogate from the moral impact of our decision to send troops into combat. We do well to consider the dictionary definition of a niche market:

A section of a market that can be highly profitable if the product supplied is specially designed to meet targeted needs; or trade or traffic especially as regards a particular commodity.

Is this the message that we want to send when we deploy our troops—that they represent a commodity in international terms and are not sent on operations as the coherent and self-contained demonstration of our national will and values?

The political and strategic rationale for being part of a coalition force in Iraq to support the national interest is reasonable. Coalition operations represent the future of the Australian Defence Force (ADF). However, the simple

reason we only sent a niche force to Iraq is that we do not have a modern conventional army capable of battlefield interoperability with our major allies. Being platform-based, the Navy and Air Force appear to be more capable of achieving interoperability with allies by the simple integration of their environmental capabilities. Land forces face the more complex task of integrating human capabilities across a broader potential range of tasks. Furthermore, we are sending a message that we do not yet possess the political will to maintain a modern army in terms of either the financial commitment required, or in terms of our willingness to accept casualties.

There are plausible reasons for the deployment of niche forces on alliance operations, particularly when the Australian contribution will be comparatively minor in relation to the American colossus. We need to weigh the advantages and disadvantages of investing in operational specialisation. We also need to consider whether we run the risk of developing as a ‘boutique’ force—available for some operational tasks, but incapable of broad-spectrum tasking.

The best argument for committing niche forces to coalitions is that it enables the ADF to operate, albeit on the margins, with the most powerful military force in the world today. It also simplifies the task of negotiating the size and composition of the force contribution, particularly when the lead nation is eager to establish the operation’s legitimacy by a display of ‘flags on the ground’. As we have witnessed in Afghanistan and Iraq, there is no denying that a small force has the potential to deliver high operational and political value to the coalition. That contribution can have a relatively low financial cost compared with the cost of forces needed for modern conventional warfare. Furthermore, by keeping the force small and specialised, and limiting the number of combat troops involved, the deployment of a niche force minimises the risk of casualties. There are operational advantages as well. Niche forces used at an

operational level of war gain experience in conducting low-level joint and combined operations with our major allies.

This approach would also allow uncomplicated and cheap rotation of the force if the operation were to be extended. Finally, focusing on niche capabilities reduces the costs of providing, maintaining and training a force that would be needed for a conventional war.

Most of these arguments reflect an economic or political incentive. Unfortunately, perhaps, those incentives count for little when forces end up engaged in the one conflict that no one anticipated. Cast your minds back a few years and consider which operations, in which the ADF has been involved, would have appeared likely only a year before they occurred.

Developing a niche philosophy holds particular perils for the Army. Some of these are already evident. First, if only Special Forces are used as the Army elements in a niche force, and these forces are expanded, it will drain quality and quantity from the remainder of the Army. It is doing this already. Second, the needs for special niche force training and equipment can reduce and divert resources and funds from training for conventional war. Such reduction and diversion may already be happening. Third, niche force structuring does not exercise Australian senior tactical command and control at the operational level of war. Fourth, such structuring could cause our 'principal allies', who provide the major conventional forces and therefore 'do the hard yards' and take the major casualties, covertly to disrespect the Australian niche force, though overtly praising the capabilities and actions of the force in order to satisfy political or strategic objectives. Fifth, developing a niche force structure may appear to some to dilute the requirement, and therefore the costs, for essential major military development needed to prepare for modern conventional war. Additionally, focusing on niche capabilities could diminish the scope of our 'Training for War' environment. Finally, we are in danger of creating a Defence culture of special operations to the detriment of the rest of the Army. This culture could lead to a concentration on niche operations rather than the ability to fight conventionally. Over-specialisation could lead to a further diminution in the quality and quantity of modern conventional weapons, especially in the Army, leading to further reduction of land force capabilities, and it is likely to lessen the quality of deterrence in our National Strategy.

If we are going to fly our flag with pride alongside our allies, we should establish and train a larger and more combat-effective Army in order to enable an operationally and logistically independent force to fight alongside the much larger conventional forces of our major coalition partners. In the era of network-centric warfare, the capabilities of the force—that is its firepower, manoeuvre, command and control, communications, intelligence gathering, and logistics management—must be compatible with the capabilities of our major partner. This is an expensive but morally correct and balanced option for the longer-term effectiveness and deterrent effect of the

Australian Army, and represents the only sound foundation for a firm relationship with our allies.

We need, at least, a modern conventional and fully deployable mechanised infantry brigade that can fight alongside our allies. The Army already possesses the structure. We need the modern combat and logistic equipment and technologies to make it useful as an independent tactical command within a coalition. For example, in Iraq we could have deployed elements of a cavalry regiment, plus a mechanised infantry battalion, artillery, combat engineer elements, aviation, Special Forces, and logistic support. They could have conducted reconnaissance-in-force probing missions or flank protection of the main force in the early days of the war, supported by RAAF ground attack and logistics. They could have then been used for lines of communication and area security in the latter stages of the war. Although deploying a more coherent, self-contained force would have represented a greater financial cost, it would have gained the ADF much in international dignity, and especially much-needed modern warfare experience in coalition operations. At the conclusion of operations, such a force would have had ongoing utility in the critical peace-enforcement mission that inevitably followed the combat phase. By maintaining a force commitment, Australia would not have faced the charge that it was squandering the moral (and it must be admitted, the political) capital that it had built up in assisting to overthrow the Ba'ath regime.

The choice of a 'special-to-task force' would have required the political courage and national will to have funded, developed and deployed as part of a coalition force, but it would have improved the Army's capability and morale significantly. We must consider whether this experience will become an opportunity missed or a lesson learnt.

The option of deploying a coherent, balanced and self-contained force package probably requires the ADF to access the expensive, yet highly politically attractive, modern technologies that enable network-centric warfare to operate within a coalition. However, we need not get too carried away by this prospect. Self-contained forces represent a stand-alone capability and can be employed as such. What is important is the establishment of operational synergies with alliance partners that will enable us to cooperate on the future battlefield. In pursuing the information edge over our opponents, we should not trade off the ability to manoeuvre or our capacity to apply firepower. We certainly need good intelligence and an operational capability in the 'war against terrorism' and this, correctly, is influencing much of our thinking. Nonetheless, we must be wary of being seduced by a technological ideology exaggerated by extraordinary success against an enemy such as Iraq whose forces were 'all show and no go'.

How do we determine the balance between 'brain' and 'punch', both operationally and financially? There is no doubt that the Special Forces elements of our Army should be designed and fully equipped primarily to support both

counter-terror action and conventional operations in our geographic region of interest. If we need a niche force to satisfy a political desire and special operational need within a coalition, we should use only the elements within our current capability. However, there is much thought now within some military and political circles that special niche force capabilities should be enhanced. Without a significant increase in the size of the Army and the purchase of modern equipment, such enhancement could only occur at the expense of our conventional forces combat capability. But we are told that we should 'fight better with what we have' and that no increase in the size of the ADF is necessary. However, there is a very real danger that accepting an expanded niche force concept will require us to fight better with what we have left.

Unfortunately, a niche force appears to satisfy principally the political demands of showing the flag internationally, at the lowest cost possible to gain the maximum strategic and political kudos at the expense of a real warfighting capability. If we go down this path, our Army will pay the price with the loss of its capability to operate across the full spectrum of potential operations. The principal danger of such a policy is that a slow cultural change to a belief in soft-option warfighting will result in the loss of an aggressive and powerful winning capability in real battle. The Army must remain prepared for the unforeseen—the only certainty about our next deployment is that it will be unexpected. We do not want to be in the position of going to a gunfight armed only with a knife.

How can we prevent this danger to our Army culture? Irrespective of the attractiveness of special operations niche forces, we must never lose sight of our ability to

fight alone and win. Importantly we must let our decision makers—both military and political—know precisely, accurately and irrefutably what we need if we are to maintain an essential degree of operational self-reliance. Communicating this message is a colossal and essential task for our Army's leaders. Our current Army niche forces are proven, gallant, and valuable assets but, in the end, a tough, committed and well-equipped Army is the only element of the ADF that can win a battle where the physical control of land or people is vital to success.

The Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Peter Leahy, has made it clear that the twin challenges of operations in Australia's geographical defence and operations in Australia's interests 'that may be far-flung' must both be met and that there is no 'either-or' choice. I believe that, if we were ever to have to fight on Australian soil against a powerful opponent, we would inevitably be in a coalition with our allies. Therefore, rather than preparing to provide a niche force within a coalition, the preparation of a well-equipped modern Army that maximises the use of the available human resources remains paramount. The niche-force concept could be a serious distraction. ♦

Brigadier John Essex-Clark, DSM, (Retd), served as a rifleman, infantry section commander, platoon sergeant, platoon commander and rifle company commander in counter-insurgency operations in the then Rhodesia, Malaya, Nyasaland and the Belgian Congo. He saw active service in South Vietnam as a battalion operations officer and commander of a combat-support company. In his post-Vietnam Army career, he commanded an infantry battalion and was commandant of both the Infantry Centre and the Army Command and Staff College.

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Northern Exposure

Developing a multi-capability approach to maritime surveillance and resource protection

Ian Bostock

In August 2001, the stance of the Australian government towards border protection changed inexorably from one of muted and moderately effective response to incursions and offences detected in the maritime environment, to one where the invulnerability of Australia's northern coastline is now seen as a measure of Canberra's leadership and its national priorities.

For the Australian Defence Force (ADF), the sea change in border security for the world's biggest island nation has engaged its maritime patrol and response capabilities in operations that have stretched the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) in particular; impacting on its training and maintenance schedules and adding longer periods at sea to some vessels that are already considered past their use-by date.

For the RAN, the sudden surge in patrol and response activities required of its fleet under Operation Relex also revealed a certain uneasiness at a professional navy undertaking what are, essentially, maritime policing roles.

For its part, the RAN is nonetheless well versed in meeting the unique challenges posed by low level, non-military threats that emanate from the sea-land-air approaches of Australia's vast northern maritime frontier. It enjoyed considerable success during Operation Relex and is the undisputed authority on long-range detection and response in the maritime environment throughout Australia's near neighbourhood.

In conjunction with the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) and to a lesser extent the Australian Army, the RAN effectively halted people smuggling voyages by sea following the flood of attempts during August and September 2001, one of few countries in the Western world to do so. However, that it was able to stem the tide of illegal immigrants arriving by boat is as much a reflection on Australia's enviable (and unenviable) geographic characteristics as it is on the capabilities of the RAN and the resolve of the Federal Government.

The figures paint a broad canvas: a coastline 37,000 kilometres long surrounding a mainland territory of 7.687 million square kilometres; an exclusive economic zone approaching 15 million square kilometres; and an area of responsibility stretching from the uninhabited but resource-rich Southern Ocean to the waters encapsulating Christmas Island some 2000 kilometres northwest of Western Australia, north to the borders with the southernmost sections of the Indonesian archipelago,

West Papua and Papua New Guinea, and east into the scores of tiny and largely aid-dependent island states of the South West Pacific.

It is an area of responsibility unmatched for its size, natural resources and variety of maritime environments, but serviced by an inventory of patrol and response assets too small to ever contemplate complete coverage. Given these geographic realities, it is remarkable that the RAN—Australia's principal provider of sea-based patrol and response platforms—has the use of just 15 elderly 42m Fremantle-class patrol boats (FCPB). Compare this to India's total of 46 inshore and offshore patrol vessels patrolling a 7500 kilometres coastline or Italy with around 100 vessels (navy and coast guard combined) and a coastline of just 5000 kilometres.

With this degree of coastline permeability, particularly that surrounding its northern shores, the threat from sea and airborne people smuggling operations, narcotics, native wildlife and firearm trafficking, and poaching of fish stocks is unlikely to lessen over the medium term. This is particularly the case with smugglers entering Australian waters and airspace from the 13,000-island Indonesian archipelago, Papua New Guinea and the South West Pacific islands, where the effectiveness and/or willingness of law and order authorities to combat such activities is questionable.

While per task or intercept the RAN and its FCPBs are efficient at what they do, the vessels themselves are nearing the end of their service lives; some say that point was reached several years ago. Of European design and never acceptable ocean-going vessels, the FCPBs have a range of around 4800nm at economical cruising speed, or 1450nm at the maximum speed of 30 knots. Armament consists of an unstabilised and refurbished (ex-World War II stock) 40mm/60 Bofors gun and two 12.7mm M2 heavy machine guns on pintle mounts.

For apprehension and detention of a suspect illegal entry vessel (SIEV), the FCPBs rely on suitable sea conditions and the use of embarked rigid hull inflatable boats (RHIB) to ferry the parent vessel's boarding party to the SIEV. Typically, vessels caught carrying illegal immigrants or prohibited goods or fishing illegally will be towed back to port, whereupon the boats are often burnt en masse and the crews prosecuted and jailed. The Patrol Boat Force is located at bases in Darwin and Cairns.

The Australian Customs Service (ACS) also operates

a fleet of eight 38-metre Bay Class patrol vessels designed and built by Austal Ships. The Bay Class boats possess a maximum range of 3000nm and endurance to permit 28 days of consecutive operations at sea. While a maximum standard speed of 24 knots is indicated, propulsion system options enable speeds up to 50 knots to be achieved.

Airborne maritime patrol and surveillance is provided by the RAAF's fleet of AP-3C Orion aircraft. Based at RAAF Base Edinburgh in South Australia, the 18-strong AP-3C fleet is currently the subject of an extensive systems upgrade, with the last modified aircraft due to be handed back to the RAAF in late 2004.

The upgrade, under the \$A902 million Sea Sentinel project, effectively shifted the emphasis of capability from one of anti-submarine warfare to that of anti-surface warfare, surface surveillance, detection and tracking in both open and congested waters. With an Elta EL2022(v)3 imaging radar system installed and a Star Safire 2 electro-optical system integrated into the existing sensor suite, the AP-3C is understood to be able to detect and track up to 100 surface targets simultaneously. Mission range is believed to be around 2500nm.

Coastwatch, a division of the ACS, provides a civil maritime surveillance and response service with a range of assets under its charter as part of the National Civil Surveillance Program (NCSP). These include the eight Bay Class boats belonging to the ACS's National Marine Unit (which in early 2002–2003 was allocated 2400 sea days per year), the RAN's FCPBs (1800 sea days per annum) and 250 hours of offshore patrol work a year by the AP-3C Orions.

These supplement six Coastwatch Pilatus Britten Norman Islander aircraft and one Shrike AC 500 Aero Commander aircraft for visual surveillance; five de Havilland Dash 8-200 series aircraft fitted with digital radar and electro-optic sensors including a Wescam infra-red turret; three Reims F406 aircraft equipped with radar and night vision equipment for both visual and radar work adjacent to the shore; one Bell 412EP helicopter with an infra-red detection system; and one Bell Longranger IV helicopter.

Following a Prime Ministerial Task Force recommendation for the introduction of measures to monitor all Coastwatch operational activities, the National Surveillance Centre (NSC) was established in Canberra in January 2000. The NSC is equipped with advanced communication links and an internal capacity to analyse information from deployed assets and other agencies in order to better manage the national surveillance effort.

Canberra has pledged to double the operational capacity of the Bay Class boats by employing an extra crew rotation, as well as add a further 1600 hours of Coastwatch surveillance flying and introduce improved Coastwatch communications capabilities.

The current surveillance contracts that provide the operational capabilities utilised by Coastwatch are set to expire from June 2004. Coastwatch has commenced a project known as Civil Maritime Surveillance 2004 to

develop and implement future civil maritime surveillance and response capabilities. Against a backdrop reaching out 20 years and taking into consideration the types and scope of future threats and risks facing effective border control, the project, through industry consultation and open tender, will seek to implement contracts for the provision of state-of-the-art civil maritime surveillance in support of Coastwatch's concept of operations.

To better support patrol and response operations against SIEVs in the far northwest, the ADF has permanently based a Mk 50 Sea King maritime utility helicopter and 20 air and ground crew on Christmas Island. The helicopter, which is likely to be rotated with other RAN rotary-wing aircraft such as the S-70B-2 Seahawk, will be tasked with surveillance, shore-based response and search and rescue.

Despite the variety of assets and agencies involved in coastal surveillance efforts, Australia's oft quoted 'tyranny of distance', sparsity of population in the northern states and subsequent lack of infrastructure capable of supporting more expansive surveillance capabilities ensure that Australia's borders remain somewhat porous in many areas.

And in spite of a wealth of natural undersea resources in those northern areas where poaching by predominantly Asian fishermen and organised poaching outfits endangers lucrative fish stocks, Australia's less than fully integrated and tiered patrol and response capability of just 23 patrol boats (15 RAN FCPB and eight ACS Bay Class) shows no sign of increasing in number.

Capability Boost

While the RAN's project to acquire a new fleet of Replacement Patrol Boats (RPB) will not address the overall deficiency in vessel numbers, Project Sea 1444 will deliver the first of 12 Armidale-class RPBs by early 2005. These vessels will have significantly improved sea keeping and availability in all areas within Australia's marine jurisdictional zones, except those territories in Antarctica and deep in the sub-Antarctic Southern Ocean, into which only the RAN's Adelaide and ANZAC-class frigates (with their extra size, robustness and helicopter support) can effectively venture.

In pursuit of the requirement to enforce relevant Australian and international laws at sea, the RPB force will be capable of undertaking the following tasks: patrol, response, surveillance, surface contact detection, identification and interception; boarding of vessels using members of the RPB crew as boarding parties; sea boat operations for ferrying personnel and equipment to other vessels or ashore while the RPB is underway and making way; apprehension of vessels; tow to port apprehended vessels; the provision of steaming parties comprising members of the RPB crew to sea ride on apprehended vessels; maritime search and rescue and aid to vessels in distress.

To be built by Austal Ships at its Henderson, Western

Australia yard under a A\$550 million contract (build phase value A\$350–\$450 million), the RPBs will also undertake a range of military tasks in both peacetime and during military contingency operations. These include: the provision of support to embarked military forces (e.g. transportation, insertion and extraction of special forces elements and their equipment, and communications relay for shore-based units); a limited ability to protect harbours, naval bases and coastal shipping; participation in Australian and foreign military exercises; regional engagement deployments; the provision of support to government agencies such as the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO); disaster relief operations in Australia and overseas; defence aid to the civil community; medical evacuation and the collection of environmental data.

The 56m Armidale-class will provide a minimum of 3000 available sea days per calendar year. In addition to this, the RPB force must be able to provide a surge capacity of an additional 600 sea days per year, at no more than 48-hours notice when deployed from Darwin or Cairns. The RPBs will be expected to maintain a mission availability rate of at least 98 per cent per quarter. It is anticipated that up to two thirds of the RPB fleet will be home ported in Darwin.

Each RPB will also have an area set aside for the separate transportation of up to 20 personnel in austere accommodation. These personnel, for instance, could be other ADF elements or groups of apprehended illegal immigrants, smugglers or poachers. Crew size would typically be under 25.

The minimum required range of the RPB will be at least 3000nm with 20 per cent fuel remaining. Payload is to enable stowage of 42 days worth of dry and frozen provisions and 14 days of fresh provisions. A typical deployment for an RPB unit would be at least 42 days, with extended deployments up to 90 days in duration.

Even though range and endurance are the primary performance parameters, vessel speed will also be important in response and pursuit missions. In this context, the RPB shall possess a maximum continuous speed of no less than 25 knots, a cruising speed of 12–16 knots and a continuous loiter speed of 4–10 knots. Speeds must be sustainable to the top of Sea State 4 in all areas of operation.

The two ‘mission critical’ components of the RPB will be the embarked RHIBs and the communications-sensor system. The former is to comprise two self-righting 6m (minimum) RHIBs capable of 25 knots and with a range of 100nm at 12 knots when fully laden. A full boarding party would typically comprise eight naval personnel, one fisheries officer and support equipment. The RHIBs must be robust enough to withstand hard use in coral waters and enable the boarding of other vessels ranging in size from a small dinghy to a large merchant vessel.

The RPB crew will be able to communicate with and receive a variety of communicable data from the

entire spectrum of military and civil surveillance stakeholders: ADF command and headquarters organisations; relevant ADF and civil surveillance assets; government agencies (Coastwatch, ACS, Australian Fisheries Management Authority, Department of Immigration, Australian Federal Police and State police services); other maritime users (Australian and foreign flagged commercial ships, aircraft and port authorities); the public switched telephone network; existing and modernised high frequency networks; ADF Joint Command and Support System; RPB sea boats and detached boarding parties and landing parties.

On Land

Selected land elements of the ADF also play a part in building up a surveillance picture of Australia’s northern coastal regions. The 4th Intelligence Company manages extensive civil reporting and coastwatcher networks across Australia’s north to detect unusual activities along our coasts and their hinterlands. These networks are backed up (and a limited response capability to small-scale incursions provided) by the Australian Army’s Regional Force Surveillance Units (RFSU), which collectively total around 1500 personnel, many of whom are drawn from local aboriginal communities. The RFSU include the Western Australia-based Pilbara Regiment; the Darwin-based Norforce and the 51st Battalion, Far North Queensland Regiment.

Equipped as light infantry and with the use of modified 110 series Land Rovers and Zodiac inflatables, the RFSU can maintain a presence in and around remote vessel and vehicle access points, as well as monitor coastal shipping from vantage points and uninhabited islands dotted around the coast.

Radars to the Rescue

To combat in part the remoteness of the northern coastline and its expansive sea and air approaches, the ADF first investigated the feasibility of establishing radar coverage over these areas to act as a ‘tripwire’ in provision of advanced warning of suspected illegal entrants.

Up until the mid-1990s, most efforts were focused on the development of the ambitious Jindalee Operational Radar Network (JORN), which, after five years delay and cost overruns, was officially declared operational in April this year. Under development

since the late 1970s by DSTO and overseas sub-contractors, JORN is one of few large scale over-the-horizon radar (OTHR) capabilities to enter service worldwide, and is expected to provide around 20 million square kilometres of radar coverage over northern Australia.

Primarily tasked with the detection and tracking of surface and airborne platforms, JORN will be able to pick up targets as small as a fishing boat and low flying light aircraft attempting to pass through known 'blind spots' in existing ADF and civil-operated radar systems. The complete JORN capability consists of transmit and receive radar antennae installed near Laverton in Western Australia and near Longreach in central Queensland.

An equally valuable capability in either the maritime or air surveillance environment, JORN will be capable of picking up contacts out to at least 3000 kilometres. Reports indicate that in 1997 the experimental JORN site at Alice Springs in the Northern Territory detected missile firings by China's PLA off Taiwan, information about which was passed on to the commander of the US 7th Fleet. Minimum effective range is approximately 500 kilometres.

By bouncing radio waves off the ionosphere and detecting and then tracking surface targets at long stand-off distances from the coast, JORN will add significantly to the RAN's ability to respond to and apprehend SIEVs, giving RPB commanders a baseline surveillance picture of the area of interest together with most of the surface and air movements contained therein.

Of more recent developmental lineage, the Surface wave Extended Coastal Area Radar (SECAR) originally developed by DSTO and now Daronmont Technologies will provide broad area littoral surveillance across northern Australia under a \$A15 million February 2003 trials contract with the Department of Defence.

To be operated by the company on behalf of the ADF and Coastwatch, the trials are expected to confirm SECAR's ability to provide coastal radar coverage out to approximately 300 kilometres and over an arc of 120 degrees. Both surface vessels and low flying aircraft can be detected. According to Daronmont Technologies, SECAR can provide radar coverage of a designated area in around five minutes, compared to four hours and 60 hours required by radar-equipped fixed-wing aircraft and patrol boats respectively.

SECAR, which utilises 5–20 Mhz high frequency radio waves that 'stick' to the sea surface, is able to see well beyond the horizon, and will likely fill the capability void between land-based and horizon-limited microwave radars and long-range OTHR such as JORN should trials prove successful.

Other locally-developed hardware includes the Sonacom Sea-Watch underwater surveillance system that has so far been trialled in a deepwater port (Sydney Harbour), the shallow tropical waters of the Great Barrier Reef and in the Indian Ocean off Broome, Western

Australia. Remotely monitored, Sea-Watch is built around a low-cost, Australian-made sonobuoy containing an integrated sensor and communications system. These sonobuoys float on the surface and are positioned in a predetermined pattern. With power supplied through solar panelling to enable extended unmanned operation (up to six months), Sea-Watch sonobuoys can detect a range of surface and sub-surface targets, the latter including submarines and special forces 'swimmers'. Data collected from the peripheral sonobuoys relating to that surveillance picture is then fed back through a 'master buoy' to a monitoring station using radio frequency or satellite links. The ADF and overseas military and paramilitary forces have expressed interest in the product.

JORN and SECAR will complement the RAAF's new B737-700 inspired airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) aircraft due to come online in 2007/2008 under the A\$3 billion Project Wedgetail. In addition to undertaking the traditional airborne command and control role for RAAF air combat assets, the AEW&C capability will also involve, by default if not design, considerable means by which to detect, track and in some cases classify sea surface targets at long range. With a Northrop Grumman Multirole Electronically Scanned Array radar installed along the aircraft's centreline as the primary aircraft sensor, it is thought the aircraft will be capable of simultaneously detecting sea and air targets out to around 200 nm, with 360-degree coverage every 10 seconds in the maritime mode. Time on station is approximately eight hours.

Under Phase 2 of Joint Project 2062, it appears likely that a quantity of Northrop Grumman RQ-4A Global Hawk high altitude, long endurance, unmanned aerial vehicles (UAV) will be acquired by the RAAF to undertake predominantly maritime surveillance. This follows what were believed to have been fruitful trials of Global Hawk during a six week self-ferried deployment to Australia in May–June 2001 under which the aircraft flew no less than 11 surveillance missions and profiles at various geographic locations, including participation in the combined ADF/US Marine Corps Tandem Thrust 01 joint exercise. During a maritime surveillance tasking, Global Hawk was able to detect and track a small surface target at 170 kilometres distant. The aircraft's synthetic aperture radar later identified the contact as a 12-metre fishing boat.

Global Hawk was flying with a number of modifications, including an enhanced maritime surveillance mode engineered largely by DSTO to suit ADF requirements and those, including the US military, with an interest in broad area maritime surveillance. Should the, as yet, unapproved JP 2062 proceed as currently envisaged, the first Global Hawks could enter Australian service around 2007. ♦

Ian Bostock is a director of the ADA. A modified version of this article appeared in the May 2003 issue of 'Jane's Navy International'.



The Spirit of Kokoda Then and Now

Patrick Lindsay

Reviewed by Dr Malcolm Kennedy

Lindsay has linked his own fascinating personal odyssey to the physical, historic and spiritual reality of the Kokoda Track. In response to deep personal trauma, Lindsay walked and harnessed the spirit of the Track.

A highly professional body now organises walks for small groups of Australians who seek to take up their quest on the Track. The participants all find that the physical demands are almost beyond human abilities; however, more important is the impact of the historic and spiritual experience. It is simply not enough to be strong enough for the heat, wet, cold, rain, mud, slush, insects, mountain climbs and ascents, the precarious cliff faces and the steam room humidity of the jungle. Survival demands a mental ability to walk the Track—‘putting one foot ahead of the other’. Lindsay provides a brief, but excellently balanced, overview of the lead up to World War II and the campaign in Papua and New Guinea. He sets the stage with absolute clarity, pointing out the ‘near treason’ of Australia’s interwar neglect of defence spending. The country, which raised an army of over 300,000 and gave two of three to death or wounds in WWI, was now faced with attack from a hitherto victorious nation, which had captured most of the region in a matter of months.

Australia sent a brigade of Militia troops to block the supposed ‘gap’ on the Kokoda Track, which would prevent seasoned Japanese forces, some six times their number, from capturing Port Moresby. The view of the Owen Stanley Ranges from the map tables in Australia was as distorted as seeing a desert filled with oases. The only possible way to understand the nature of this battlefield was to be there, and the information from the men who were there was unwelcome and misunderstood by their commanders in the safety of MacArthur’s headquarters, almost three thousand miles away.

The book spells out in relentless detail the day to day nature of the battle for the Track. The reader comes close to the men in this awful campaign. The cloying nature of the environment, the cunning and skill of the Japanese, the constant tension of fighting an enemy mostly unseen, the wait for the crack of a sniper’s shot, the whack of a mate hit, the narcotic sleep of exhaustion broken by the scream of an enemy charge, all these experiences and more are recreated in the mind and emotions of the reader.

The author has given us a carefully crafted account of the nasty, brutish and sudden battles along the trail. He focuses on the key four-day battle for Isurava, which was a turning point in the Japanese advance. The Japanese were close to overrunning the battalion blocking the Track when a number of Australians charged the advancing Japanese, killing numbers of them and demoralising the remainder by their courage. One key soldier, Bruce Kingsbury charged the enemy firing his Bren gun, although he turned the attack, in the last moment he was shot by a sniper. He was awarded a Victoria Cross. The courage of other members of the force was recognised with medals, however, all members of the force gave their utmost in the battle.

Lindsay covers the rest of the campaign and the eventual victory over the Japanese, of whom only one in ten survived the attempt to capture the Track and Port Moresby. The first time the Japanese had been defeated and driven back in the Pacific theatre was achieved by those MacArthur had described as ineffective.

This is a most readable and instructive book, which provides a wealth of pictures, many in colour, good maps and climbing diagrams, a brief but useful bibliography and index, and there are numerous short comments from many contributors, which added personal depth to their view of the track. The author stresses the relationship, between Gallipoli and the Kokoda Track, as being fundamental aspects of Australia’s military and national heritage. If Gallipoli was the birth of a federated nation, then Kokoda was the first major victory as a nation defending our own territory. These are essential and correct symbols of Australian’s military history, demonstrated in resolution, determination, skill, mateship, courage and sacrifice in the face of overwhelming odds from a fierce environment and enemy.

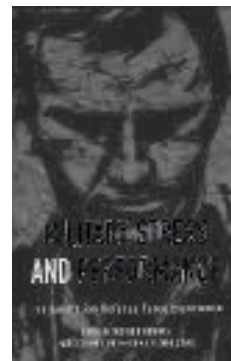
This book is a profoundly evocative story, which will hit the hearts and minds of all those who have been to the Bomana war cemetery or who have had any experience of the Track. The Track’s power is undiminished and attracts more and more young Australians, because it has so many of the crucial elements of what it is that makes one truly an Australian. ♦

Patrick Lindsay, ‘The Spirit of Kokoda Then and Now’, Hardie Grant Books, South Yarra, 2002, paperback, 193pp., \$29.95.

Military Stress and Performance: The Australian Defence Force Experience

George E. Kearney, Mark Creamer, Ric Marshall & Anne Goyne

Reviewed by David Schmidtchen



Of the 52,000 Australian Defence Force (ADF) personnel who served in Vietnam between 1962 and 1972, approximately 3000 were either killed or wounded in action. In 2002, the Department of Veterans' Affairs recognised one in five of those who had seen service in Vietnam as suffering from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder. What does this tell us? First, that psychological injury is the most prevalent form of injury suffered in conflict. Second, that the debilitating effect of operational stress persists beyond the life of the incident or operation. Third, that psychological injury is likely to be the greatest post-conflict personnel cost borne by the ADF and Australian society. Since the Vietnam war a more inquisitive and informed public has watched as the social and emotional costs borne by ADF personnel and their families are revealed.

Military Stress and Performance brings the current state of operational stress research and practice to our attention. It provides a comprehensive review of the ADF experience and practice. A range of professional disciplines, which includes psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors, social workers and chaplains, is struggling to understand the source, scale and dimension of the problem of stress on operations and its consequences. In Australia, professionals approaching the problem have deliberately adopted a multidisciplinary approach that supports a healthy balance between research and practice. *Military Stress and Performance* reflects this tradition by drawing on a range of professional disciplines to provide an account of the ADF's experience.

The book covers treatment methods, debriefing practices and first-hand accounts and observations. It is structured around four themes: The Stress Phenomenon; Enabling Resilience; Health and Welfare after Deployment; and Caring for Casualties. I was particularly drawn to the personal account of the stresses encountered by a commander at sea given by Lee Cordner. Commodore Cordner moves from his experiences in preparing HMAS Sydney to participate in the 1990–91 Gulf War and the Maritime Interception Force in the North Red Sea through to being 'bemused by all the fuss' on their return home. The value of commanders documenting their experiences of stress in command cannot be emphasised enough.

The contribution of four experienced Australian Army Psychology Corps psychologists on the advances

made in delivering psychological support during the 1990s are revealing. Their reflections bring together the collective experiences of the Psychology Corps and the Defence Force Psychology Organisation to demonstrate how the theory and practice of psychology in operations has evolved. They also provide a clear statement on where practice can be improved. On finishing this contribution, it was clear why the cumulative experiences of the ADF's practical approach to operational stress are in demand from military forces around the world.

Professor Kearney does a commendable job of bringing together the main conclusions of the book. He does so by showing that the problem of operational stress has a long and difficult history that parallels society's struggle to acknowledge, accept and address the problem. In Professor Kearney's words, 'This book contains advice on the best treatment methods; suggestions for the optimal method of debriefing; and accounts of first-hand observations. Highlighted throughout is the conclusion that there is a need for better understanding and more carefully controlled research'. I agree, with the addition that it also shows how far the ADF has come in addressing the problem.

The editors acknowledge the difficulties of structuring the material to allow an easy flow from one section to the next. I believe that this book is best approached as a compendium of stand-alone articles that together contribute a better understanding of a diverse topic. It can be distinguished from other books addressing similar topics by the experience of the authors and the currency of the information. It combines the insights of some of Australia's foremost researchers and practitioners in the field with the experiences of currently serving officers. The book left me with the sense of a work in progress in that we have come a long way but considerable distance remains before we can claim to have solved the problem. I recommend this book to scientists and practitioners working in the area of operation stress. But, I can also see commanders benefiting from a better understanding of how stress on operations affects people, the process of treatment and the factors that influence recovery. ♦

George Kearney, Mark Creamer, Ric Marshall & Anne Goyne (Editors), *Military Stress and Performance: The Australian Defence Force Experience*, Melbourne University Publishing, 2003, paperback, 294pp, RRP \$34.95.

The Battle History of the Royal New South Wales Regiment,

Volume I: 1885–1918 and Volume II: 1939–45

Major General Gordon L. Maitland

Reviewed by Phil Carey

More than a third of the troops Australia deployed in two World Wars were citizens of New South Wales. Their deeds went a long way towards making the Legend of Anzac from 1915 to 1918 and continued the tradition of courage, sacrifice and determination into the second of those wars from 1939 to 1945. The Royal New South Wales Regiment is a comparatively recent creation, formed as part of a major restructuring of the army in 1960, when the CMF infantry battalions in each Australian State were brought together to form State regiments. The army has experienced many re-organisations in its history and in all probability none was more traumatic than in 1960. However, a redeeming feature was the decision to carry on the honours and traditions of the old battalions of the AIF and the Militia in the 'new' state regiments.

These are Major General Gordon Maitland's third and fourth books and the two volumes chronicle the battles fought by all the infantry units from New South Wales. Some actions of Light Horse regiments are also included since these too are relevant to the 'new' RNSWR. Volume I covers the period from 1885 to 1918, including the State's commitments to the war in the Sudan, South Africa and World War I. Volume II covers the inter-war period and World War II.

All the battle, theatre and campaign honours awarded to the battalions raised in New South Wales are included as distinct chapters and, where appropriate, are prefaced by an introductory narrative fixing the events in their overall politico-strategic setting. Some readers may only be interested in the battles. They are well served. The real key to understanding is found in concise 'bridging' narratives, which tie chapters together. Especially in Volume II, these provide the political and strategic glue, which place the campaigns and battles in context and sequence. Volume II also includes sections on 'Between the Wars', 'The Second World War', 'The Japanese Thrust' and 'The Unnecessary Campaigns?'. For students in particular these bridging narratives are essential reading.

Both volumes have been written with the general

reader in mind rather than the regimental history buff and are worthy books for all generations. They will have a special value for senior secondary school students and are essential additions to school libraries. From the start the layouts are helpful to the younger reader. In Volume I there are short chapters, placed early in the book, explaining terminology, nomenclature, battle honours and army organisation, which can sometimes be confusing even to someone with military experience. Both volumes have useful glossaries, informative endnotes and comprehensive bibliographies. Unfortunately the indexes in both volumes are not as extensive as desirable but this is no reflection on the author. Places, personalities and some events are adequately listed, but students wishing to delve deeper could be disappointed. In any event the arrangement of chapters in both volumes is probably sufficient to offset the difficulty of finding the reason for some obscure decision or policy.

General Maitland's intention over both volumes is to present a narrative of events, not an analysis. But they are not passionless accounts of distant events. Neither are they trite regimental histories or collections of anecdotes. The two volumes are a very human story of Australians with all the pathos, exhilaration and sorrow that goes with war. The style is easy to read, thoroughly compelling, constant and evocative throughout, punctuated at times with necessary and apposite criticism and liberally sensitised with quotations from the soldiers themselves. Other authors, prominent historians in their own right, are tastefully quoted to bring strength and clarity: Bean of course, and few are as compassionate as Bill Gamage or as competent as Michael McKernan and John Terraine.

When it came to illustrations the author excelled himself. First-class maps, diagrams, cartoons and veritable battalions of new and old photographs from both Australian War Memorial and private collections bring the text to life, add to understanding and present an aura of outstanding quality. If this were not enough, the addition of poetry to bring out the enormity of the experience

and the emotional significance of its impact on the men and the society from which they came, cements the work in a lasting reality.

Some readers might think it a little churlish to compare or contrast the two volumes but, after reading both General Maitland's signal histories of his beloved regiment, one is struck by certain similarities as well as significant differences.

Volume I is notable for its meticulous research, clarity and an easily read style. Although it is intended to be a narrative rather than an analysis of events, it is much more than this; a carefully constructed saga. Volume II excels in the same way but there are subtle differences. The sheer scope of Australia's contribution to that war gives the second volume a larger dimension; the more immediate and dangerous threat to Australia's existence in 1942 gives it a greater urgency. The fact the author lived through the events that led up to war in 1939, was himself in the army of the time and knew many of the people who made the history of that war, gives it a much more personal touch.

Chapters in Volume I include names that became household words that stirred both the imagination and reverence of generations of Australians in the aftermath of 1918: Sari Bair-Lone Pine, Pozieres, The Somme, Bullecourt, Ypres, Menin Road, Polygon Wood, Beersheba and of course, The Landing at Anzac and Gallipoli amongst many more. A specific aim of Volume I in particular is to address the growing interest of young people in their Anzac heritage. Accordingly it will assist the young soldiers of today to understand the roles they have assumed and enable all young Australians to appreciate the sacrifices their citizen soldier forebearers made in the interests of freedom and security.

NSW Premier Bob Carr says in his excellent foreword to Volume I, 'The story of the Royal New South Wales Regiment is essentially one of what can be achieved by soldiers of all ranks who never forgot that they were, first and last, Australian citizens'. Former Governor of New South Wales, the Hon. Gordon Samuels in his own insightful foreword to Volume I notes that the author is '...an historian of great capacity who has recounted the battle history of the regiment with sensitive and accurate scholarship, taste and skill'. Both of these comments sum up the excellence of both volumes very nicely.

Volume II is the story of a second generation of citizen soldiers; those young men who enlisted in the Second AIF and their younger cousins of the Militia who, no less, rose to the same task. Following the example of their fathers and uncles of 1914-18, and often led by veterans of the old AIF, they embraced and enhanced the traditions of Anzac. This volume is a story of what Premier Carr has called 'The Greatest Generation'.

The central units and personalities of Volume II are, of course, the units and personnel of the New South Wales battalions of the Second AIF and the Militia, who fought the battles listed as its chapters. Significant mention is made of units from other States that fought beside or in concert with them, and it should be remembered that as the war proceeded needs of reinforcement meant that personnel from other States joined the NSW battalions. Theirs is essentially a human story and the author readily brings out the human factor with all its vigour, courage, compassion and tragedy, and just as importantly, its humour.

World War II operations are described with great sensitivity and the descriptive narrative is appropriately illuminated by extracts from soldiers' diaries and their first-hand accounts given to the author or recorded in their unit's publications. Honoured names like Bardia, Alamein and Tobruk, Tempe Gorge, Merjayun, Muar and Gemas, Kokoda and Wewak, Bougainville and Balikpapan, roll off the pages; and the deeds that were done there rolled into the history of the Australian people.

Commenting on the peace treaties at the end of the World War I, Marshal Foch ruefully proclaimed that it was not a peace at all, but merely a cease-fire for twenty years. How right he was! Gordon Maitland traces the period between the wars with excellent clarity and goes on to point out that Australia's generals were particularly prescient in their analyses of the strategic situation facing our nation. Whereas their political masters constantly avoided the difficult decisions inherent in devising a suitable defence policy; parsimoniously cutting the Army's funding, neglecting its equipment needs, training and administration, and effectively rendering it ill-prepared for war in 1939.

Just as prophetic was the repeated advice of Australia's senior soldiers in respect of Japanese ambitions in the Pacific. Generals Chauvel and Lavarack were prominent in warning of Japan's likelihood of attacking while Britain was preoccupied with a war in Europe. Their misgivings about the infamous Singapore strategy, though realistic, were also overridden. General Maitland assesses the impact of this folly and the consequences that our soldiers had to bear. There are clear principles and lessons here for how we should structure the strategic management of Australia's defence in the 21st century. ♦

Major General Gordon L. Maitland, 'The Battle History of the Royal New South Wales Regiment', Volume I: 1885-1918 and Volume II: 1939-45, Kangaroo Press (Simon and Schuster), Sydney, 2001 and 2002 respectively, 333pp and 454pp respectively, both volumes casebound and jacketed, \$75.00 each

Operation Orders: The Experience of a Young Australian Army Officer 1963 to 1970

Pat Beale

Reviewed by Neil James

Australian Army experiences in Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam in the 1960s sowed both good and bad seeds in the furrow of military professionalism that produced the Army of today. To a great extent, excelling in relatively small-scale jungle warfare at the tactical level with light forces became an end in itself. From the 1970s to the 1990s the Army's protracted struggle, with mixed success, to re-equip itself intellectually, doctrinally and materially was in large part because it was so bogged down in its 1960s tactical-level successes.

I finished my time as a platoon commander in 1RAR only months before Pat Beale took command of the battalion in late 1978. My peers who remained to serve under him have always spoken highly of the experience. After reading *Operation Orders* I now have a deep understanding of the mentoring I missed from a man who obviously was rarely, if ever, incapable of seeing the bigger picture. Pat Beale's book is the best intellectual and professional analysis of Australian infantry platoon and company leadership on operations I have read. As a general account of such sub-unit leadership it is at least on par with Jo Gullett's *Not As A Duty Only*.

Beale's experiences, which would be the envy of most young officers of the post-Vietnam period, are recounted with insight, modesty and humour, although few nowadays would share his relish at seven years as a platoon commander. The thematic rather than strictly chronological structure of the book adds to its utility and depth. Without squeezing, Beale's book drips nuggets of commonsense, intellectual honesty and real insight.

His obvious respect and affection for the Aussie soldier, and all his abilities and foibles, shines throughout the book. His discussion of fear, both of battle and death, and the best way to manage them are succinct and reasoned. Beale's ability to extrapolate experiences and derive principles is a gift. When discussing then secret cross-border operations in Borneo he observes: 'In the long run, victory and indeed self-preservation, can only be assured by taking the fight to the enemy, a principle that applies as much in the realm of national security as it does at the tactical level on the battlefield'.

Beale's views on the Army Reserve and the lessons to be learnt today from the failure to deploy formed reserve units to Vietnam are a refreshing contrast to many of his peers. His discussion of PNG unity, and the national and PNGDF development activities he undertook with 2PIR in the late 1960s, demonstrate a deep affection for, and

understanding of, the people of PNG. His observations on special operations theory and training circa 1969, and their relative unsuitability for an Asian battlefield, resonate with similar practical dilemmas still faced today.

Beale's accounts of his service commanding a battalion of Montagnards in the highlands of South Vietnam occupies much of the latter parts of the book. Much of it is moving as well as informative. His observations on combat stress and combat exhaustion, and the inadequacy of combat leadership based solely on what he calls the 'two quaint schools of thought ... the qualities approach ... and ... the inspirational one' should be read by all sub-unit and unit leaders. By his own admission he stumbled on the functional approach to leadership via battlefield experience and instinct.

Finally, an earlier passage has considerable relevance when considering the force structuring problems the ADF faces today, particularly in an era when the phrase 'professional military judgment' is sneered at by many of the political class and the denizens of the Department of Defence. Beale recounts his pre-deployment training at Canungra before joining the Australian Army Training Team—Vietnam (ATTV) and notes:

'I enjoyed the urgency and dynamism of the place and also the more-than-passing salute to its past. Much of the esprit of an army is bound up in such customs and traditions. I would shortly be going to a job [commanding a Strike Force Battalion of Montagnards] where I would be adrift from those traditions, except those I could carry in my mind or heart.

'Till then tradition had unavoidably played a large part of my life. It underpins most activity of an army from its daily routine to the most splendid ceremonial. Some would discard tradition, disdaining the symbolism and its trappings. They contend that a modern army, fighting on a modern battlefield, cannot be encumbered by the past. On the other hand, there are those who cling to tradition as a shield against change, a prop for their prejudices and a crutch for their intellectual laziness.

'These extremes are a nuisance: the hide-bound conservatism of the latter leads to attitudes of "Colonel Blimpism", while those who abandon tradition in the name of modernity would deny the soldier an important element of his morale.

'Hopefully an army can use its traditions positively, not as an anchor to the past nor an encumbrance on the present, but as a tool for the future.'

When I graduated from Duntroon my father, a 2nd AIF veteran, gave me a copy of *Not As A Duty Only*. If my son or daughter was graduating from Duntroon this year or next, I would give them a copy of *Operation Orders*. ♦

Pat Beale DSO, MC, 'Operation Orders: The Experience of a Young Australian Army Officer 1963 to 1970', Australian Army History Unit and Australian Military History Publications, Loftus, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 141pp, RRP \$45.00 postage included.

The Once and Future Army: A History of the Citizen Military Forces, 1947–1974

Dayton McCarthy

Reviewed by Neil James

From the departure of the last British regiment in 1870 until 1945 the story of the Australian Army, and its role in Australian society, is primarily one dominated by the contribution of the citizen soldier. Formations and units throughout this period had limited numbers of full-time (or regular) personnel, although the large wartime armies of 1918 and 1945 possessed most of the characteristics of professional regular armies.

Dayton McCarthy's excellent account explains why this inevitably changed over the three decades following World War II. The book, based on his 1997 PhD thesis, ends with the watershed Millar Report of 1971 and its partial implementation over the next few years. A short postscript summarises key developments until the present day.

This is both a scholarly study and an immensely readable and well-written account. The research is thorough and balanced, and the book fills a significant gap in the historical record. McCarthy's recounting and assessment of the often disparate views within and without the CMF/Army Reserve are measured and judicious. Most notably he lances most of the mutually antagonistic conspiracy theories expounded by some reservists and regulars.

From the viewpoint of the operational utility of the Army Reserve the book distils and superbly discusses several key themes including:

- the importance of its reserve component to the Army retaining the intimacy of its links to the wider civil community, both locally and nationally;
- the continual difficulties in recruiting and retaining junior ranks;
- the perpetual battle to balance the advantages and disadvantages of centralised versus decentralised (unit) training;
- the importance of middle-level NCO and junior officers in reserve units;
- the importance of employer incentives and legislative civilian job protection for military reservists, and the problems continually caused by inadequate measures;
- the fatal handicap caused by the Defence Act so severely restricting the operational employment of formed reserve units for so long (including the lost opportunity to employ a reserve unit in Vietnam);
- the bungling of several 'total Army' initiatives and schemes over the years; and
- the mutual suspicions and antagonisms fed by different perceptions of military professionalism, especially the financial cost of reserve units

balanced against the legislative restrictions on their employment, that continually handicap relations between the Army's reservist and full-time components.

McCarthy sets the CMF (and its Army Reserve successor) properly in its historical, cultural and demographic contexts. Two key threads skillfully woven throughout the book are the perpetual problem of populating the junior ranks of reserve units, and the constant decline in the numbers of experienced senior NCO to train and lead them. With only very temporary exceptions such as 1980, when the Fraser Government quickly expanded the Army Reserve but then failed to sustain it, reserve units have only approached full strengths when an element of conscription or unusual incentive has been involved.

In the 1950s national service scheme most 18-year old males underwent three months of full-time training in their first year (with strong echoes of the current system of common induction training) then three years in the active reserve followed by three years in the standby reserve. In the 1964–72 national service scheme, when only one in forty 20-year olds was liable for two years of full-time service in the regular army, the CMF was well populated by those potential conscripts who chose the option of serving five years as a reservist instead.

In the early 1990s, the comparatively small Ready Reserve Scheme resembled a form of voluntary national service with financial incentives replacing conscription. Ready Reservists underwent one year of full-time service followed by four years in the active reserve, and such units approached full strength in strong contrast to most general reserve units.

As McCarthy details, the 1950s national service scheme stretched both the Army's regular and reserve components but there were still enough experienced senior NCO (including 2nd AIF veterans) to make it work. In the 1960s scheme there was less of this senior NCO and junior officer backbone, but enough to generally handle the smaller size of the CMF. By the 1990s the Ready Reserve scheme only succeeded in this regard because of much smaller numbers, the use of regular NCO, and the one year of initial full-time training laying a good base for growing future NCO. The general trend, however, since 1950 has been one of constant decline in overall numbers and especially in experienced reservist senior NCO.

Finally, the book recounts the lamentable delay in the CMF obtaining appropriate conditions of service. Tax-free pay, for example, was only granted in 1964 and civilian job protection and employer incentives were ineffective until the 1990s. McCarthy also records in detail the fatal handicap on Army Reserve morale, development and utility caused by the reluctance of governments until the

1990s to effectively remove the legislative restrictions on its employment.

Dayton McCarthy's *The Once and Future Army* is a solid, truly analytical and optimistic appraisal of why the Australian Army should value its reserve component. The book should be compulsory reading for any officer before taking up sub-unit command in either the regular or reserve components of the Army. It is essential reading for any Australian who needs to form a view or make a decision on whether we need an Army Reserve. ♦

Dayton McCarthy, *The Once and Future Army: A History of the Citizen Military Forces 1947-1974*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2003, casebound and jacketed, 303pp, RRP \$55.00.



Howard's War

Alison Broinowski

Reviewed by Neil James

The Army's Command and Staff College (C&SC) was based at Fort Queenscliff in Victoria from 1946 until it merged with the new Joint Command and Staff College in Canberra in 2000. Fort Queenscliff's tertiary-level course was one of the best in the world and its Australian defence and strategic studies components were particularly well structured. Near the end of the course each year three academics or prominent commentators would be invited to provide their perspectives on Australia's future from the left, centre and right of the political spectrum respectively.

Alison Broinowski, a retired diplomat and sometime academic, occasionally presented the left-wing view when other champions of the Left, such as Professor Joe Camilleri, were unavailable. It is a tribute to the Australian Army that its intellectual and professional integrity enabled C&SC students to have such experiences. This could be contrasted quite distinctly with the pronounced lack of diversity or balance in many other Australian university courses—and in many books ostensibly on the subject of Australia's national security.

Books written before or just after the shooting

has ended are rarely good journalism, perceptive commentary or memorable history. Alison Broinowski's polemic, *Howard's War*, reinforces this rule although it is at least broadly consistent with the politely couched but dogmatic views she first espoused at Fort Queenscliff over a decade ago.

A few parts of the book make some attempt at academic-style rigour but this is almost invariably marred by the general tone of shrill and unleavened condemnation, and by its continual deployment of flawed assumptions with no attempt at objectivity or balance. If you hate John Howard, or indeed any right of centre Australian politician since World War II, you should relish this book for its subjectivity.

Howard's War is based on an underlying and not always unspoken assumption that the USA and especially its current government are always 'the baddies', and that Australia's alliance with the US is both completely wrong strategically and utterly immoral. Her book regurgitates most of the simplistic and tired old anti-American prejudices common in Australian undergraduate discourse since the early 1950s.

You really have to wonder whether Mrs Broinowski's views have matured since the days of the anti-Vietnam moratorium marches. This book offers no real alternative proposals for Australian national security policy. There are some ephemeral suggestions of appeasement and moral isolationism, especially in her views about accommodating terrorism by Islamic extremists rather than fighting it. Many would also quibble with her position that while Iraq is now free of its despotism this is no moral or other justification, secondary or otherwise, for Australian participation.

Other critics of John Howard's decision to join the 'Coalition of the Willing' over Iraq have mounted cogent and sustained arguments to support the general proposition. It can be done if an objective effort is made and this book is especially disappointing for the lack of effort and rigour applied. Her argument that Australia's alliance with the US makes us a target for Islamic terrorists is simply shallow. Others have made far better attempts and have avoided the whiff of moral cowardice when so doing.

Howard's War is the type of book read by only four groups of people. First, are reviewers who have to read it. Second, are close family members of the author. Third, are those who simply want their political prejudices massaged to climax. The final group are those who read such intellectual cowardice and tripe to keep their disgust fresh. ♦

Alison Broinowski, *Howard's War*, Scribe Publications, Carlton, 2003, soft cover, 144pp, RRP \$19.95.



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