

strong with modern equipment. A proportionate Australian contribution would have been 15,000 not 2,000. One of the reasons we did not send a larger force was that we couldn't. Even if we had the time to scrape together a larger force, it would have lacked enough modern equipment to fight in a modern battlespace and we could not have rotated or sustained the force anyway.

The vehemence of the debate between the two camps, at least since the 1980s, is partly due to the defence debate having been unfortunately monopolised by a relatively small group of academics, bureaucrats and diplomats. Various governments, and the people of Australia, should have not permitted this sad state of affairs to arise, let alone to allow it to flourish like a noxious weed. At the very least, this latest strategic lesson for Australia over Iraq has (as did the East Timor crisis before it) emphasised a vital point. Public debates on national security issues should be just that — public and debated. What passes for a debate must never again be monopolised by self-selected, intellectually incestuous, insular and self-styled 'elites'. The results of strategic deliberations must never again be a supposed consensus foisted on us by such a flawed process.

## Time for a national security Green Paper?

Any strategic deliberations have to grapple with the profound sea change gathering force in our global strategic architecture. Despite being rescued by the US, UK and Australia over prolonged Iraqi defiance of its strictures, the UN and its underlying concept of collective security continues to struggle for effectiveness and credibility.

As the UN and regional collective security organisations dither, debacles of national disintegration and horrific human rights abuse continue in west, central and southern Africa. North Korean brinkmanship is resurgent and Japan is now openly proposing a break with its post-World War II restraints concerning the projection of force. The macro- and micro-states of the Pacific basin continue to disintegrate socio-economically, although some optimism is beginning to revive about Fiji. Terrorism by Islamic fanatics threatens the West, delays resolution of the Israel–Palestine dilemma and destabilises central, south and South East Asia.

The US can, and now is, withdrawing forces from Saudi Arabia in toto, and increasingly from Turkey, Germany, France and the Low Countries. NATO seems increasingly driven by the types of membership tensions, wishful thinking and loss of focus that led to SEATO's demise. In North Asia, the US appears to be headed towards a redeployment and large downscaling of its 100,000-strong forward deployments in South Korea and Okinawa.

The time for an integrated Green Paper on Australia's national security is now well and truly upon

us. This should, in turn, lead to a single, integrated White Paper rather than separate defence and foreign affairs and trade versions.

Just as importantly, such papers must be developed by intellectually and morally robust, and professionally inclusive, processes. The White Paper in particular must be drafted by a broadly drawn expert team, which includes the full range of ADF and diplomatic expertise available, and which is supervised by the Chief of Defence Force, Service Chiefs and relevant Permanent Heads. In this way we would avoid the many flaws, underlying intellectual dishonesty and overly prescriptive nature of most recent Defence White Papers. These numerous flaws in process and result largely occurred because principles of accountable governance and ADF professionalism were forgotten or deliberately ignored. This wrongly allowed recent White Papers to be developed in detail, and with far too much internal bureaucratic secrecy, by a small, narrowly drawn and closeted clique of Defence civilian bureaucrats.

## On the right path but too small a step

The recently announced government initiative to form a Defence and Security Division within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet is a small step forward in interdepartmental and inter-agency cooperation. The proposed separation of international issues into a separate division, however, does seem somewhat contradictory. If the bureaucratic method is to be followed, perhaps what is really needed is one integrated national security division.

The ADA has long believed, however, that solutions primarily dependent on bureaucratic reorganisation, or which are focused on one problem at a time, will not adequately address the real need for integrated national security decision making as well as bureaucratic coordination. This is the main reason why a specialist department of 'homeland security' is not required in Australia's case.

Starting from first principles, the National Security Committee of Cabinet appears to have functioned particularly well in the current government. The Association believes that this cabinet committee would function even better if directly served by a National Security Council. This Council should be established by statute and vested with appropriately delegated executive authorities and administrative co-ordination responsibilities. The Council should be supported by a deliberately small and independent secretariat not a division within the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet.

Most Australians would understand why the last Defence White Paper went to the National Security Committee of Cabinet accompanied, appropriately, by the then Chief of Defence Force (CDF) and Secretary