

Securing Australia in 2003:

The need for an integrated approach

A summary of the ADA address to the Homeland Security Australia Conference 2003 held at the Sydney Convention Centre at Darling Harbour on 28–29 April 2003.

At some point in each new war those involved face the realisation that they have ‘learned a few new lessons but re-learned a hell of a lot of old ones’. Each war or other major crisis that confronts us poses few new lessons, especially where principles or other fundamental characteristics of warfighting or strategic crisis management are concerned.

Our struggle against the latest variant of transnational terrorism, be it a ‘war’ or a law-enforcement campaign, is essentially no different. We may have some new lessons to learn but we surely have far more old ones to re-digest and react accordingly. This address will touch on six key themes where old lessons are being, or need to be, re-learned:

the nature of threat from transnational terrorism and the broad response required by the international and Australian communities;

- the need to refine the Australian view of the concept of ‘national security’ to realign it with the reality of the complex situations and threats we face;
- the need for a whole-of-government approach to a whole-of-nation problem;
- the need to fully involve the Australian people and the need for national unity;
- the extent to which the Australian Defence Force (ADF) needs to be restructured, and if so, by how much, where and at what cost, and
- the question of whether or not to join other like-minded countries in defence of our common interests.

The nature of the threat

First, some brief points on the nature of the current threat from transnational terrorism.

Our first re-learned lesson is that terrorism and the responses to it are, by their nature, clashes of wills (just as war is). No matter whether the current struggle against transnational terrorism is a war or a law-enforcement campaign, or both, it remains fundamentally a clash of wills. The terrorists have to be made to realise that we will beat them and we will persist in the struggle until this occurs.

Our second re-learned lesson is that a terrorist by definition is not a legitimate combatant and treating terrorists as criminals under international and Australian law is a key part of winning this clash of wills. Terrorists such as the Twin Towers attackers or the Bali bombers must never be accorded the status of combatants, not just because they are actually criminals, but also because describing them as combatants might incorrectly bolster the alleged legitimacy of their supposed cause.

Our third re-learned lesson is that Islamic fanaticism and Islamic fundamentalism are not necessarily the same — as in most religions. Just as in previous struggles with charismatic but deviant Islamic preachers in Sudan, in the late 19th century (the ‘Mahdi’) and Somaliland in the mid 20th century (the ‘Mad Mullah’), the fanatics are virtually all fundamentalists — but not all Islamic fundamentalists are fanatics. Genuine, moderate Muslims have a key role in our struggle against the fanatics. Indeed we would all probably feel a lot more comfortable if moderate, mainstream Muslims, both in Australia and overseas, could be more vocal and active in their criticism of the fanatics. This latter point is developed further in the address by Professor Hasjim Djalal (‘An Indonesian Perspective on Security and Terrorism’).

No threat to our safety and our way of life can be effectively defeated without understanding its roots,

isolating the threat's centre of gravity and then destroying or neutralising it. Terrorism by Islamic fanatics has political and cultural as well as theological strands. Particularly when considered in the long term, the strategic centre of gravity of transnational (and non-state-based) Islamic terrorist groups is probably their ability to recruit. This, in turn, largely depends on a combination of four factors:

- the perceived righteousness of their cause among potential recruits;
- the poor or narrow understanding of Islam that allows recruits to be inculcated with the perverted values and extremist beliefs of the most bigoted forms of fundamentalist Islam;
- the generally deprived social, economic and political conditions that produce potential recruits, allow bigotry and zealotry to thrive, and which appear to justify 'martyrdom' and 'jihad' against non-believers as viable solutions; and
- the unfortunate trend whereby many Muslims throughout the world are prepared to give the benefit of the doubt to fundamentalists, fanatics and even terrorists because they are 'Muslims', but see any response by non-Muslims to terrorist or extremist actions as an attack on Islam, no matter how justified such a response may be under accepted international law, custom and practice.

This is also not to say that all Islamic fanatics willing to commit murder or suicide for their supposed cause are young, poor, uneducated and without viable futures in their own or wider societies. As the Twin Towers attack in particular shows, some are just zealous bigots and at least some of them come from comparatively privileged backgrounds. In such cases, it would appear that their perverted perception of the political, geostrategic and cultural humiliation of Islam has replaced poverty and deprivation as the third factor. This is especially so if they are adherents of one of the more fundamentalist, puritanically intolerant or bigoted forms of Islam.

Our fourth re-learned lesson concerning terrorist threats is on the importance of resolve and the concerted international implementation of stern counter measures. Now, like it or not, the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Bali have 'awakened a sleeping giant' (as Admiral Yamamoto described the US after Pearl Harbour). For those concerned about the apparent resolve being shown in the US, UK and Australia, they might do well to remember that we have tried less comprehensive or supposedly more humane alternatives. The West got few results from discussions, sanctions, and even less from the ineffective and largely self-defeating 'air strikes on terrorist bases' that followed the 1988 Lockerbie bombing, the 1993 truck bomb at the World Trade Centre and the 1998 US Embassy bombings in Kenya and Tanzania.

Concerted international action needs to be taken to update international law, including revision of the UN

Charter. Some suggested areas for reform are:

- The suspension or non-recognition of State sovereignty where international terrorist crimes and their perpetrators are condoned or sponsored by UN member States, and the expulsion of guilty countries from UN membership.
- The introduction of similar responsibilities and proactive measures to combat terrorism as those that have quite successfully applied to the eradication of piracy and slaving on the high seas for the last century and a half (whereby vessels suspected of piracy or slaving can and should be sunk or boarded respectively without undue legal complications).
- A modernised version of the Martens Clause (from the 1907 Hague Convention on the Laws and Customs of War on Land) to sanction some forms of reciprocal 'gloves off' warfare against 'uncivilised peoples' until they accept to be bound by International Humanitarian Law.

In demonstrating our resolve, our response to the current transnational terrorist threat must be considered, prolonged and broadly focused. In World War II, for example, we did not stop when the fascist regimes were beaten. We continued until the regimes themselves were toppled and destroyed beyond hope of reconstitution. A modern version of the denazification imposed on Germany and Austria is required to eradicate Islamic fanaticism and the regimes and societies that tolerate it. Islam is not necessarily a violent religion. Genuine and moderate Muslims are vital in spearheading a moral and theological offensive against the perversion of Islam that causes the fanaticism.

A re-learned lesson about terrorism also has a wider application. When pondering the nature of the current threat, we need to face up to the fact that the attacks in New York, Washington and Bali require many in the West to understand a phenomenon (religion) that most Westerners are now quite unfamiliar with. The general decline of religious observance in nominally Christian countries over the last half-century has resulted in most Westerners lacking first-hand experience of bigotry by religious fundamentalists.

More importantly, many Westerners are now so secular or even irreligious in their general outlook that they no longer know how to recognise religious bigotry, differentiate it from legitimate religious belief, and refute it using the philosophical frameworks of conventional theology and religious tolerance. Many Westerners are now so devoid of religious understanding that they even misconstrue religion itself as the problem. A key lesson to be re-learned here is that religious bigotry thrives on such superficial understanding of religion but greatly fears, and is invariably best combated by a well-argued theological response.

Finally, and most importantly, the terrorist attacks in New York, Washington and Bali have re-taught us the lesson that the West has bigoted enemies prepared to murder on a large scale. The associated revision lesson

is that such extremists are generally beyond reasoning with, and that the only moral and practical answer is to destroy or neutralise such enemies and the conditions that breed and nourish their bigotry. These appear to be lessons that at least some Australians shirk from acknowledging.

Updating our concept of national security

Our second theme is the need to broaden and update our view of national security.

In the broadest sense, national security encompasses a wide range of economic wellbeing, bio-security and environmental challenges, as well as the more conventional view of the security of the realm — the defence of Australia, its people and its interests from armed threats. The term ‘defence’ is not defined in Australian legislation nor does there appear to be any agreed definition across the Australian government.

The Commonwealth Constitution grants the federal government power to provide for ‘the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth’. Section 4 of the *Defence Act 1903* does not define defence but does define ‘war’ as ‘... any invasion or apprehended invasion of, or attack, or apprehended attack on, Australia by an enemy or armed force’. The *Oxford Dictionary* defines ‘defence’ as ‘resistance against attack’.

The working definition of national security the ADA uses, however, concentrates on the latter aspects — armed threats to our people, territory and interests. We consider the luxury of worrying about the former types of threat is wholly dependent on there being a basically safe Australia to worry about in the first place.

Since Arthur Phillip founded modern Australia in 1788, during a time of similar strategic complexity and unpredictability, Australia’s view of protecting our territory, people and way of life against external threats has generally been within a defence paradigm. However, the complexity of the 20th century struggles against totalitarian ideologies, especially where they attracted some domestic following, also often resulted in significant internal security dimensions to external threats. Over the last two decades, either through general lotus eating or a pre-occupation with external security, we Australians have largely forgotten many of the internal security lessons from our defeat of the fascist and communist threats.

It is the ADA’s view that the struggle against this latest variant of transnational terrorism is essentially a law-enforcement issue domestically, and a continually changing mix of law enforcement and military aspects outside Australia. This is likely to remain the case in a world strongly influenced by cultural biases, religious bigotries, ethnic tensions and racial hatreds. It will definitely remain the case while there are at least some countries or societies where there are groups or individuals who mistakenly believe that terrorist attacks are somehow justified, and/or that non-Muslims are

somehow lesser beings under God and can be killed accordingly.

The dual nature of the transnational terrorist problem internationally is reflected in the comparative effectiveness of the relevant international bodies. Many of the international law-enforcement bodies and agreements appear to be working well (if not perfectly). There has been markedly less agreement and consequent success with collective security action by the United Nations to deprive terrorist groups of the territorial and jurisdictional sanctuaries that vastly increase their capabilities.

On the one hand, for example, we have the highly successful cooperative investigation into the Bali bombing by the Australian Federal Police (AFP) and the Indonesian National Police. This is cause for great confidence, particularly as the investigation was a subset of an overall quite vexed strategic relationship with Indonesia. On the other hand, however, we have the often timorous or hypocritical international reaction to collective ‘swamp draining’ operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. These examples provide more than just mild disappointment for the future.

The ADA contends that the current threat from transnational terrorist groups must be countered by a judicious mix of law enforcement and wider national security measures, and in a context of strategic policy maturity and national unity. The ADA further believes that the achievement of overall victory against the terrorists in such complex moral, legal and strategic circumstances should not be undermined or trivialised. It is our view that the struggle is not helped by an unfortunate penchant among some Australian public figures, and media commentators, to trivialise Australia’s international stance by their pursuit of essentially domestic party-political agendas. Winning the struggle with the terrorists is also not assisted by those journalists and academic commentators who automatically seek to view our national responses predominantly or solely within the narrow framework of domestic party politics. Party advantage, perceived or otherwise, is never more important than actual government.

A ‘whole-of-nation’ problem needs a ‘whole-of-government’ approach

This overall theme of national unity and country above party, faction or ethnicity leads neatly into our third theme. In modern cosmopolitan, multi-religious Australia the problem posed by Islamic terrorism means we need a whole-of-government approach, rather than one centred on haphazardly integrated defence, law enforcement or security intelligence perspectives.

In the late 1970s it was common to hear veteran ASIO officers refer to their agency as the fourth arm of the defence force. In that era it was widely accepted that

national security involved protecting Australia from threats of espionage, sabotage and subversion (not just espionage). At that time, for example, ASIO had the responsibility for maintaining the Commonwealth database of critical infrastructure throughout Australia requiring protection from sabotage and other (internal and external) attack. One of the first lessons re-learned from the current terrorist threat is that this responsibility should never have been dropped from ASIO's charter (or should have been picked up by some other agency).

But dropped it was in the early 1980s as perceptions of the sabotage threat contracted and associated matters were no longer seriously addressed. Despite the line between politically inspired vandalism and actual sabotage being crossed by some of those opposed to Australia's participation in the defence of South Vietnam, it became fashionable in political and intelligence circles to believe that sabotage was really only a problem during major wars against enemy states. In the perceived absence of such external threats the mistaken belief flourished that no one would ever seek to attack our national infrastructure from within.

A similar fashion evolved concerning the concept of subversion. This was particularly influenced by the highly polarised views resulting from the anti-Vietnam War protest movements of the late 1960s and early 1970s. The ASIO Act was even amended to omit subversion as a threat to national security requiring protection, although aspects of subversion flickered on by statute, however nominally, as 'acts of foreign interference'. Somewhat ironically, over the same period the concept of psychological operations enjoyed a resurgence in Western military and academic thought. We somewhat strangely appeared to believe we could always subvert our potential enemies but were somehow invulnerable ourselves to such measures.

You can't, however, wish away reality by ignoring facts inconvenient to your political beliefs or prejudices. The line between legitimate dissent and subversion had been crossed to varying extents during the Vietnam War protests, especially by Soviet funding of key front groups in the 'Moratorium Movement'. In the mid to late 1980s the cyclical resurgence of 'peace movements' supported by the Soviet Union provided a last hurrah for this long Australian tradition.

Once again old lessons about subversion have also now been re-learned. Our security intelligence and law enforcement agencies have always had to monitor the tiny extremist groups and individuals on the fringes of our society. However, the motivation of such extremists has largely been politically oriented, or they have been émigré groups supporting foreign terrorist organisations fighting their original country's government.

We are now faced with the problem of having to monitor more mainstream groups and individuals within Australian society. That many of these groups are religious is a further problem we have not really confronted before on this scale. Few would seriously dispute, in the

current context of terrorism by Islamic fanatics directed at Australians, that the Australian authorities have a legitimate duty in so doing. Obviously commonsense checks need to be made to ensure that domestic Islamic groups and individuals are not harbouring, propagating, or at least inadvertently sheltering, those with views strongly inimical to our democratic, pluralist, multi-religious, cosmopolitan society.

Where the monitoring includes immigrant and religious groups from countries, or backgrounds, where the security and police services are not subject to the rule of law (as they are in Australia), there will obviously be some problems with overcoming suspicions in such groups as to why they are being checked out. It should be noted at this point that there are no indications that the monitoring of, and liaison with, such groups in such complex circumstances is being done with other than considerable professionalism, sensitivity and restraint by ASIO and the AFP.

We should not shrink, however, from defending the legitimate right of the Australian community, for example, to monitor the extremist, intolerant and subversive sermons preached in some mosques and Islamic prayer meetings. Community reaction to the need to monitor potential threats has, on the whole, been quite realistic. However, the reaction in some religious and ethnic circles to such commonsense counter-subversion measures has not been encouraging. In several cases it has demonstrated a grossly inadequate understanding of Australia's democratic pluralist way of life.

Such reactions, however exacerbated by inept and sensationalist media coverage, provide considerable food for thought concerning the nature of national unity, political and religious tolerance, subversion and even treason, in contemporary Australia. Incitements to religious intolerance or hatred are bad enough, but when they result in, or condone, terrorism they are a social evil no open and democratic society can safely tolerate.

It may very well be, for example, that we might have to eventually limit the entry into Australia of foreign clergy (of any religion). This may have to particularly apply where such clergy seek permanent residence but make no attempt to integrate into Australian society; such as by learning English or understanding how our systems of democratic pluralist government and religious tolerance work.

Other related concerns for national unity and national security in the current context perhaps include:

- a tendency for some Australian Muslims to withdraw from mainstream Australian society rather than contribute fully to the national mix (perhaps exacerbated by the disproportionate number of Australian Muslims concentrated in Western Sydney compared to the rest of Australia);
- the increasing tendency for many Islamic congregations to split along ethnic lines;
- the dramatic increase (from 144 students in 1985 to 10,743 in 2002) over the last two decades in segregated Islamic schools, some with highly questionable aspects of

their curriculum and/or foreign sponsorship from unsavoury regimes and groups; and

- claims to victimhood by some Islamic community spokesmen that are, at best, highly insensitive at a time when Muslim fanatics overseas are deliberately murdering Australians in large numbers, especially when vague or trivial claims of ‘Muslim vilification’ contrast so strongly with little or no apparent condemnation of Islamic fanaticism by the same ‘community’ spokesmen.

Another old lesson re-learned is about the need for flexibility in combating asymmetric threats such as terrorism. When the threat from international terrorism increased greatly in the early to mid 1970s the terrorist methods of the time, and consequent security measures, were mainly aimed at avoiding or resolving siege–hostage incidents or direct attacks against civilian airliners. While terrorism got added to the ASIO Act, the narrow focus of our counter-terrorism measures further submerged the fact that in-principle threats from sabotage and subversion had not been abolished by legislative or ideological fiat.

These are just some of the reasons why a whole-of-government approach to national security is required in modern cosmopolitan Australia. Nor should we be overly troubled by civil-liberties concerns as Australian history clearly shows our checks and balances work well in this regard. No constitutional law authority in Australia seriously disputes that the constitutional heads of power covering defence and national security purposes expand and contract as the seriousness of the situation dictates. The High Court has upheld major limitations on civil liberties during wartime and struck down other attempts to do so outside times of crisis and war, such as the Communist Party Dissolution Act in 1951. Another re-learned lesson worth noting is that the sixth (and last) edition of the Australian *Manual of National Security Legislation*, published in early September 1945, ran to two volumes each some three centimetres thick.

As another example of re-learning lessons about a whole-of-government approach, until 1958 the *Commonwealth Manual of War Precautions* (the ‘War book’) laid down, generally in considerable detail, the responsibilities of each federal and state department and major agency during time of war or impending war. Some of the more important precautions were permanent. In immigration and citizenship matters, for example, resident aliens were required to register with the immigration authorities until the mid 1960s, in large part so potential enemy sympathisers (or worse) could be monitored or even detained if Australia found itself at war with the country concerned. During World War II, for example, citizens of the axis powers were often detained for national security purposes, as were those Australians whose loyalty was seriously in doubt.

Australians of the time accepted such measures as both necessary and morally legitimate. No doubt this was partly due to a less varied Australian society in ethnic, cultural and religious terms compared with 2003. But we should not forget that the Australia of 1916, 1942 and 1951 was

still a society frequently buffeted by strong political, ideological and sectarian currents. We would be naïve to assume that the societal divisions in modern cosmopolitan Australia are much different in scope no matter how much more varied they may appear to be in nature. Surely another re-learned lesson is the importance of national unity. There would appear to be a growing feeling that the ideology of ‘applied multiculturalism’ (as opposed to organic cosmopolitanism) has mutated out of control, become divisive rather than inclusive, and has reached its community health and safety ‘use-by date’.

Finally, in terms of implementing a whole-of-government approach to national security the Australia Defence Association considers that the time for three key structural reforms has well and truly arrived.

First, since the promulgation of the UN Charter in 1945 no country has declared war — as under international law armed conflict can exist as a fact irrespective of individual national interpretations. The lines between transnational crime (smuggling, poaching, trafficking, piracy, terrorism, etc.), international crises and ‘war’ are therefore often blurred. The ADA has long called for the formation of a coastguard in order to:

- better manage border security (including seamless territorial surveillance);
- enforce our maritime laws (customs, immigration, quarantine, conservation, resource management, etc.); and
- meet our other maritime responsibilities, including Australia’s responsibilities under international arrangements for maritime search and rescue (SAR) and safety of life at sea (SOLAS), in the integrated manner now required.

Furthermore, in regard to the practical interface between law enforcement and defence, and with regard to cost, resources and bureaucracy minimisation, the ADA has been of the firm opinion for many years that an integrated approach to littoral and coastal surveillance and response also requires a dedicated coastguard. Finally, an Australian coastguard would also allow clearer control of ADF support to such activities, not least in minimising and regulating the constitutionally and professionally distasteful uses of ADF elements in what are predominantly domestic law enforcement situations.

The ADA’s second recommendation for national security structural reform concerns the clear need to significantly rejuvenate Radio Australia, so it can regain its once respected voice in our region. We have a definite strategic (political, diplomatic and moral) need to be able to speak directly to the many peoples of our region in order to provide them with:

- a regular, comprehensive, consistent and credible insight into Australia, our way of life and our view of the world;
- facts and alternative views not otherwise available to them because of political biases or limited educational or social opportunities in their own societies; and
- facts and alternative views and explanations that the

often censored or biased media of their own countries might prevent them otherwise obtaining.

Combating the bigotry that underwrote the recruitment and motivation of the Bali bombers, for example, would be greatly enhanced, at little financial and strategic cost, by Radio Australia being able to broadcast facts and a range of views about Australia and the world widely and in detail. It is worth noting that a related re-learned lesson is that Australian commercial media also have a responsibility in this regard. Too many Australian journalists, unfortunately, appear to lack professionalism and an adequate sense of perspective. This is especially so when they drum up a story overseas by deliberately presenting Australia in a poor light, or by consciously generating a foreign reaction that might otherwise not occur or occur to the same extent.

Last but certainly not least in terms of structural reform, Australia needs a small, statutory National Security Council. As the Secretary of the Commonwealth Attorney General's Department, Robert Cornall, noted in his opening address, 'counter-terrorism is a bureaucrat's paradise'. Australia does not need a dedicated department or agency for homeland security (as in the USA) but it does need a National Security Council rather than the current practice of either ad hoc multi-agency 'task forces' or too formalised, frequently bureaucratic and often too senior, interdepartmental committees. A council would allow us to permanently integrate and manage national security planning and interdepartmental coordination, and it would also assist the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) much better than current arrangements.

As the Senate Committee Inquiry into the interdepartmental bungling to do with the so-called 'children overboard' affair clearly showed, much of the misunderstandings, chaos and destroyed reputations involved could have been avoided by an established, standing and comprehensive procedure for interdepartmental and multi-agency coordination. In contrast to this debacle, a National Security Council would instead allow us to foresee and manage actual or potential crises using clear lines of responsibility, accountability and command for orders and actions. It would also provide a sound structure rather than one, as at present, which appears hamstrung by interdepartmental rivalries and personality clashes, and, even more importantly, is compromised (in perception, fact or both) by what can only be described as 'hazy' political-bureaucratic interfaces.

Involving the Australian people

Our fourth theme is the need to fully involve the Australian people in the struggle against transnational terrorism. I have already touched on aspects of this when

addressing national resolve, national unity and the need for a whole-of-government approach.

There is little doubt that involving the Australian people might be hard. We are an often-cynical people — at least on the surface — as all the fridge-magnet jokes show. More to the point, it is a long time since the bulk of the nation felt individually threatened enough to take a sustained interest in national security matters.

However, the national reaction to recent events indicates that most Australians have a reasonable grasp of the fundamentals of national security, particularly when confronted with instances where their everyday security is threatened. Examples include:

- the widespread condemnation of Indonesian atrocities following the 1999 East Timor Referendum and the general recognition that the threat or use of armed force was required to stop them;
- the highly successful public-consultation process on the Defence Green Paper in 2000; and
- the calm and measured public response to the Bali atrocity last year, where emotional calls for vengeance were few, virtually no serious community repercussions were experienced by Muslim Australians, and most Australians soberly realised the gravity of the situation.

These indications of an increased national awareness, and maturity, on national security issues are further reinforced by the popular reaction to our participation in the collective intervention in Iraq. Despite much biased media hype inflating the importance of protests by those against our involvement in Iraq, despite the general poverty of the arguments offered by many of those protesting, and, as shown by the comparatively small numbers and narrow constituencies supporting such protests, it seems clear that most Australians can objectively assess when their national interests and/or safety are threatened.

The key lesson we are re-learning here is that the Australian people, at large, can be trusted and should be regularly consulted on national security issues. Indeed one of the key failings of the discredited isolationist strategic thinking in some political, bureaucratic and academic circles during the 1980s and early 1990s was in their elitist disdain for, and condescension to, popular views.

The other key aspect of popular involvement is that national unity in the face of the threat posed by transnational terrorism is a vital aspect of the resolve required to win the struggle. This is not to say that we should enforce some form of cultural homogeneity. There is, however, an obvious need to cultivate shared community values, particularly concerning tolerance and pluralist democracy. Those Australian groups and individuals that seek to divide us, especially when their motivation is not just the expression of legitimate dissent, must be exposed to the vigorous currents of democratic debate that the terrorists so despise and fear.

ADF Force Structure

Our fifth theme is the fitness of the ADF for the fight against transnational terror.

The ADA has long advocated that the task of the ADF and the Department of Defence is to provide the government of the day with the widest possible range of military options should such measures become necessary. Such measures need not necessarily involve the use of force as they include the deterrent effect of demonstrating the willingness and capacity to do so. As Frederick the Great notably remarked, 'diplomacy without arms is like an orchestra without instruments'.

To use a poker analogy, however, you cannot play or bluff successfully with a weak hand. The ADA is strongly of the view that the defence force should be primarily configured for high-end military operations both in Australia and overseas. This is primarily for reasons of deterrence and long-term strategic flexibility. However, it is also because forces so configured can more easily, and swiftly, scale down to handle lower-level threats than low-end forces can scale up (even in the unlikely event there was sufficient time and recognition of an emerging threat to do so).

Building on the need to fully involve the Australian people, the ADA is also firmly of the view that there is also a real role for high-readiness reserve forces, both generally, and in providing the types of incident response unit to deter, prevent or ameliorate terrorist attacks in particular. However, the role of the ADF, both regular and reserve, is not to provide static guard forces for elements of key national infrastructure or highly visible 'national icons' (as some State premiers somewhat foolishly requested after the Twin Towers attack).

From the perspectives of conventional defence of Australia and its interests, and also with regard to counter-terrorism, there is little doubt that the ADF is not big enough. This is borne out by our contribution to the recent collective intervention in Iraq. It should be of concern to all Australians that this country was apparently unable to contribute what would historically have been regarded as our share of the collective burden. Forty-five thousand British personnel were committed to the theatre of operations and a proportional Australian commitment would have numbered around 15,000 rather than 2,000. The simple fact is that we do not have 15,000 ADF personnel capable of such a deployment, especially to what was a high-end battlespace. Even if we had enough time to scrape 15,000 together we could not have rotated or sustained them.

This is not to decry the fact that the small ADF elements committed have acquitted themselves very well. Nor is it to deny that, in some cases, their specialist niche capabilities have been especially useful. We need to remember, however, that the success of our forces in Iraq, and the success of the collective intervention overall, cannot justify the general rundown of the ADF over the

last generation.

It is the ADA's view that our inability to contribute a larger commitment to Iraq, or indeed a more broadly based one — including basic capabilities such as infantry equipped for a modern battlefield — is just another indication that we have let our defence capabilities run down too much during the last three decades. There are three main causes for this.

First, and most importantly, there has been insufficient funding for the ADF over a sustained period, due in part to unfocused public involvement in national security matters. The following examples highlight the gravity of the situation:

- The gap between the minimum funding identified as required in Defence white papers since 1987, and the funding actually delivered, is in the order of 100 to 120 billion dollars.
- Current defence expenditure is about 1.8 per cent of GDP but needs to be in the order of 2.5 per cent for a sustained period in order to catch up.
- Since 1991, ADF regular and reserve numbers have declined by 28 per cent.
- Our intervention in East Timor in 1999 was essentially a low-intensity operation very close to a major mainland mounting base. Even then it was a close run thing logistically and we came close to running out of infantry. If the UN had declined to take over from INTERFET, we would have faced major problems in sustaining the operation without the re-introduction of conscription.

Second, an essentially isolationist strategic view had too great a sway over defence decision-making and force structuring over the same timeframe.

Third, as the recent Senate Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report again revealed, the ADF suffers greatly from a cumbersome and often stultifying civilian bureaucratic hierarchy in the Department of Defence. This bureaucracy dilutes appropriate ministerial control, prevents ministers interacting effectively with senior ADF leaders (and the ADF at all levels), hampers the ADF in undertaking its core tasks, and prevents military capabilities being developed and delivered in an effective and accountable manner. The bureaucracy also perpetuates and exaggerates inter-Service rivalry in order to claim a spurious *raison d'être* for its bloated size, excessive influence and constant interference in military professional matters.

While the ADF's funding has increased to some extent over the last few years it is still plainly insufficient for the international and domestic security situations now confronting us after East Timor, the Twin Towers, Afghanistan, Bali and Iraq. Some of you may think the ADA view is somewhat alarmist and that my second name is probably Cassandra. Please feel free to read, in the introductory chapters to the first volume of the official histories of World War II, how similar complacency caused numerous defeats, casualties, deaths and eventually even higher expenditure in the 1939–42 period.

Similarly, while the proponents of the 'defend the moat' strategic siren songs of the 1980s and early 1990s are in retreat, having largely reduced our army to the capabilities of a field gendarmerie, the final wooden stake has yet to be driven through their hearts to prevent their regeneration. Australia has now deployed armed force overseas in defence of its interests twelve times in the last century and a half. We have directly defended Australian territory, from our territory, for two limited periods only (a few months in mid-to-late 1914 and in 1941–42). The struggle against transnational terrorism has been largely no different from both a military and police perspective. The simple truth remains that the defence of Australia and its interests will continue to require the deployment of the ADF overseas — and it should therefore be configured and resourced accordingly.

No real or at least economically efficient redevelopment of ADF capabilities can be achieved without root and branch reform of the Department of Defence. At the very least, the CDF and Service Chiefs must be re-empowered and freed from the managerialist shackles preventing them from truly commanding the forces entrusted to them by the Australian people. The Navy, Army and Air Force are major Australian institutions. The CDF and the Service Chiefs assume their positions after a lifetime of varied professional experiences and service. Their decisions and their advice to ministers, and their political control by the government, should not be perpetually frustrated by bureaucratic layers of civilian public servants with significantly less experience, far narrower responsibilities, much more limited professional perspectives, and frequently with self-interested agendas. When Australians learn that the heads of the armed forces are regarded in the federal bureaucracy as deputy secretary equivalents, most are simply astounded.

One final point on the subject of whether the ADF is best equipped for the current situation. Much is made of how good our special forces are by world standards and they are indeed a first-class capability. However, the reason the special forces are often suggested as the best contribution we can make to coalition operations is simply because they constitute one of the few ADF capabilities that are maintained to both a world standard and at high states of operational readiness.

However, for obvious reasons, there are not many of them and they are stretched somewhat thin. While the ADF may be coping at present, there will obviously be operational tempo problems if the special forces are required elsewhere. This may be why Australia does not plan on contributing much of a force to the occupation of Iraq — we do not have the military capacity to do so.

More to the point, a successful special forces capability cannot be maintained without an adequate critical mass in the 'unspecial' bits of the rest of the ADF from which they are recruited, trained, gain their initial experiences from, and from which they are supported. Put simply, especially in the case of the Army, if more conventional

military units are continually run down we will eventually not be able to sustain our special forces anyway.

Furthermore, not every strategic problem can be solved by the commitment of special forces. For the foreseeable future we will continue to require larger numbers of more conventionally equipped and conventionally roled units. However, if the bulk of the Army is not given the chance to use their skills, or maintain them at modern levels, we will eventually suffer such morale and retention problems that we will lose the very personnel required to have both an effective army and the recruiting base anyway for our special forces.

Eschewing neo-isolationism

Our final theme is the issue of combating transnational terrorism alone or in company. It must be said that this question is really one of degree rather than an 'either/or' choice.

Despite the efforts of a strangely large section of the New Zealand populace and the more extreme fringes of Australian society, you cannot make the world stop while you attempt to get off. Ignoring the threat from transnational terrorism does not make it go away — as even New Zealand's Labour government acknowledges. The prefix 'trans' in the term 'transnational terrorism' means that some degree of international cooperation will always be required.

Australia has no practical or moral alternative but to assist in the fight against transnational terrorism at its sources, and these are predominantly outside Australia. There is obviously also considerable benefit to the sole world hyper-power being exposed to other points of view from trusted allies. There are obvious risks in supporting the US and UK so closely. Again this is not a new lesson. The 'old firm' of the UK, Australia, Canada, New Zealand and the USA faced down threats to international order at least six times over the last 100 years. The struggle against transnational terrorism is just another example of where the foot soldiers of Anglo-Saxon democracy again show their willingness to take up the burden of combating international evil.

The ADA view is that Australia has little alternative for both moral and practical reasons. In addition to a long history of shared values and democratic resolve, Australia and the US are also the only first-world democracies to directly border on third-world neighbours.

In Australia's case one of these neighbours is the world's largest Muslim country. Even excluding the wake up call of the Bali bombing, Australia's geostrategic vulnerability compared to most other Western countries is usually not understood or is ignored by critics of our stance on international security issues. It is not, anyway, the Australian way to shirk a fight that needs fighting, nor to pass the buck in the defence of those unjustly attacked. Our participation in the struggle against transnational terrorism is also just another example of our consistent international good citizenship.

Some have suggested that Australia should not become involved in the fight against transnational terrorism, or that we should somehow hide or publicly downplay our involvement, because our participation might heighten our danger as a terrorist target. Such a suggestion is simply morally despicable as well as unsound both strategically and operationally.

Conclusion

The ADA's view on this complex topic may be summarised in eight key points:

First, the struggle against transnational terrorism has meant we are mainly re-learning old lessons rather than absorbing many new ones.

Second, the terrorists are Islamic fanatics who hate our way of life and us enough to want to kill us. We need to recognise this unpalatable fact and respond accordingly by demonstrating our resolve to destroy both them and the conditions that generate them. Mainstream Australian Muslims have a significant role to play in our struggle.

Third, Australians need to refine our perception of national security. At the very least this means acknowledging many old lessons about national unity, subversion, sabotage, the limits of democratic and religious tolerance, the balance between temporary impositions on individual liberty versus national safety, and the nature of treason.

Fourth, Australia needs a whole-of-government approach and structure concerning national security issues. This includes establishing a National Security Council and a coastguard, reinvigorating Radio Australia, and adequately resourcing and realistically focusing ASIO.

Fifth, the Australian people can be trusted and should be consulted on all important national security issues.

Entrusting the formulation of national security policy to narrowly constituted bureaucratic and academic groups has been disastrous. A comprehensive national consultation process is also a key element in nurturing the national unity required to win the struggle against the terrorists.

Sixth, the ADF is grossly underfunded and has been so for at least three decades. The ADF is also inadequately equipped in depth and breadth and has clearly insufficient elements at realistic levels of operational readiness. To add insult to injury, the ADF has also been unnecessarily shackled by an overly large, cumbersome and seemingly unaccountable bureaucracy in the Department of Defence. Greater and sustained funding for the ADF is required but only after root and branch reform of the departmental bureaucracy is undertaken to ensure the money will be spent wisely.

Seventh, Australia has little moral or practical choice but to join with other like-minded countries in combating the common enemies of civilised international discourse. We are, however, unable to pull our weight at present because the ADF has been so badly circumscribed and emasculated.

Finally, the struggle against transnational terror is likely to be a long and difficult one. It will be longer and still more difficult while the conditions that nourish the terrorists' perverted and bigoted beliefs survive. The struggle will continue to require us to actively do something about the countries, societies and cultures that give succour to the terrorists.

It will also mean we should not shrink from robustly criticising those countries or groups that duck the fight, especially when they hypocritically sling off at us for taking the actions they know are necessary but fear to do.

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