

# defender

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- Political mudslinging over defence decision-making not in the national interest and is harming ADF morale

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- New submarines for real strategic sting
- Australia's strategic outlook over the long term
- Should parliament vote on us going to war?
- Dragging international law into the wars of the 21st century
- Unintended consequences of the Iraq war



- **Sorting out the future air combat capability muddle**
  - **Why do opponents of our Army having tanks tell so many lies?**

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Many of our politicians of all hues tend to view Australian history through party-political prisms that reflect well on their own party and its prominent personalities but badly on their political opponents.

More specifically, renewed slanging matches between the new government and the new opposition over past defence procurement decisions have sought to paint various blunders or successes within purely party-political narratives, rather than objectively examine what actually occurred and why.

Much of the media encourage such political mudslinging because reporting it in such terms is easier than researching the history and finding out the facts — and confrontation not explanation sells more newspapers and attracts more viewers, listeners and advertisers anyway.

The centralisation of defence reporting in Canberra's Parliamentary Press Gallery over the last decade or so exacerbates the problem. It has increased the tendency for defence issues to be reported by political journalists in political terms — rather than by specialists with a longer, deeper or coherent understanding, as occurs with most reporting on economics, science or health matters.

Every Minister for Defence is constrained by the political and economic circumstances and Cabinet dynamics of his tenure; and by the strategic circumstances of the era, including whether it is peacetime or wartime. How we remember ministerial records is also influenced by their subsequent careers and later popularity (or otherwise).

But much defence decision-making is rightly independent of party politics because it involves objective consideration of longer-term and enduring national interests. Moreover, much defence planning succeeds or fails no matter which party is in office or no matter who is the Minister for Defence.

Both sides of politics have defence initiatives to be proud of. Both have also made bad decisions that have resulted in needless strategic risks, costly procurement blunders or other long-lasting negative repercussions.

Bad decision-making can be minimised or prevented from recurring only by an objective rather than a politically-slanted appraisal of historical lessons. Ministers have to be prepared to admit that predecessor governments of their particular political hue got some things wrong, even if we only know this in hindsight.

The 1991-92 Force Structure Review (FSR) under the Keating Government is one example among many. This, and associated measures, reduced the size of our defence force by some 30 per cent in order to satisfy short-term, politically-driven, budgetary imperatives. One no doubt unintended result has been major capability shortfalls and enduring morale and personnel retention problems in the ADF down to the present day — over 16 years afterwards. Especially, in having insufficient forces to cope with the greatly increased operational tempos since the 1999 East Timor crisis.

Similarly, the highly useable Ready Reserve spawned by the FSR was abolished by the incoming Howard Government in 1996 in another seriously short-sighted and mistaken decision taken on narrow ideological grounds. The loss of

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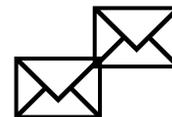
### Our cover

*An Australian Army Chinook helicopter is unloaded from a USAF C-17 Globemaster II at Kandahar in Afghanistan.  
Photo courtesy of the ADF*

this short-notice, full-strength, three-battalion, brigade group came back to bite the ADF particularly savagely during the East Timor crisis in 1999.

Our severe shortages of infantry and cavalry have continued to constrain our strategic freedom of action in all subsequent crises.

Reactive political mudslinging about the purported competence or otherwise of past defence decision-making needs to stop. The national interest, including the efficiency and morale of the defence force — and sustaining the confidence of the Australian people in the ADF — is more important than splashy headlines, transient political or budgetary gains, or the egos of present and past politicians. The past, and its lessons for our current and future defence efforts, must instead be confronted honestly by both the Government and the Opposition. ♦



**The letters pages are an important part of *Defender's* role in furthering informed public debate on defence and wider national security issues. Letters to the Editor of *Defender* are submitted on the condition that the Australia Defence Association as publisher may edit all letters and reproduce them in electronic form. Emailed letters should be sent to <defender@ada.asn.au>. All writers must supply their name, address and daytime telephone number. Identification of writers will be withheld where justified. Letters should be kept to a maximum of 300 words (ideally 150-250) and avoid personal attacks.**

Sir: The item on 'me-too-ism' between the Labor and Coalition parties in the November 2007 issue of *Defence Brief* had a clever and witty sting in its tail, but in so doing completely misses the point identified in its opening. The concern over the absence of interest or expertise in defence matters in a potential (now actual) Labor deputy prime-minister is dismissed as an issue of perspective because the last deputy prime-minister in the Howard Government suffered from the same deficiency. This somewhat glib view overlooks the fundamental difference between the two situations.

Practice to date has the position of deputy prime-minister in a Coalition government filled by the leader of the junior coalition party. As such, he or she will only ever serve as an interim prime-minister while the sitting members of the senior party, the Liberals, go through the process of electing a new leader; a process in which he or she would not be candidate. On the other hand, a Labor deputy prime-minister serves as an acting prime-minister until the Labor caucus either confirms him or her in the position permanently or elects a new leader of the parliamentary party (and prime-minister) instead.

Thus the former has a potential term as prime-minister that is calculated in days, perhaps weeks, whereas the latter has a potential prime-ministerial term of years. It is a significant difference, most definitely not 'traditional me-to-ism', and it presents a concern in the current circumstances that should not be dismissed so lightly.

**Bill Mellor  
Queensland**

Sir: Your ever-perceptive Russell Hill diarist has advised that our CDF, an air chief marshal in the Royal Australian Air force, now has a ceremonial kilt in the Australian Army tartan [*Defender*, Winter 2007]. Was this just another of the alleged anti-RAAF jibes attributed to Major Furphy by some, or is it true and does this denote some new level of jointery in the ADF. I think we should be told.

**Lee Shaw  
Tasmania**

*Editor's Note: The Office of the CDF and several readers who should know have confirmed the veracity of the report. Major Furphy continues to reject as unwarranted the inference that he or his respected boss harbour any anti-Air Force biases.*

Sir: With the retirement of Graham Edwards from parliament and the election of Dr Mike Kelly the number of war veterans among our 226 federal parliamentarians remains at one. If Kelly had not won Eden-Monaro we would have had the first parliament since federation without a single member or senator who was a veteran — a pity because ex-Service people have served the parliament better than most in that time.

This is troubling to say the least for the even more important reason that we are not yet living in a period where war has happily been abolished from international discourse. I, for one, would be lot more comfortable if those governing us and committing the ADF to combat — and their parliamentary opposition — had some in their ranks with first-hand experience of what was really involved. Not just here and now, but including our national responsibility for the care of a new generation of veterans stretching well into the future. Perhaps they should start encouraging such candidates now.

**Peter Phillips  
Australian Capital Territory**

Sir: Our new government has significantly increased the amount of ministerial oversight in the Defence portfolio. Whereas the Howard Government allocated only one and half ministers to this responsibility the Rudd Government has appointed two full-time ministers. They have also doubled the number of parliamentary secretaries to two. I also note that a Labor election promise was to reduce the size of the Department of Defence bureaucracy (both civilian and military).

The increased ministerial oversight is an essential reform too long delayed. We are slowly inching towards the oversight by three ministers recommended by the 1957 Morshead Review as necessary for a unified Department of Defence — but deliberately ignored by Sir Arthur Tange's bureaucratic empire building in 1973-74.

In the years since, what has really changed? With snail-like velocity Defence has moved towards a coherent command and control structure for the ADF, and its capability development, but also an ever-growing and burdensome administrative and policy bureaucracy in the department.

It is difficult to fathom whether these changes have been the product of the seemingly unending succession of reviews of the department — or whether those reviews simply provided the justification to implement what the department sought while conveniently spreading the blame even further and delaying the blindingly obvious.

For example I suspect the last review led by Ms Proust in 2007 was unduly constrained by its terms of reference. It

was limited to examining 'business processes' only — and forbidden from using a first-principles approach about how our national defence should be organised and overseen or how our defence force could be controlled by the elected government rather than public servants.

I understand Proust's recommendation, about clearly defining the diarchic responsibilities of the Secretary and CDF, was rejected on the advice of those most affected.

After 50 years what needs to be done is obvious. Will it require further costly, time-wasting and subverted reviews or will the new plethora of ministers and parliamentary secretaries seize the moment and demand real action? I wait with interest.

**Pat Beale**  
**South Australia**

Sir: The Rudd Government has rightly quarantined defence spending from expenditure cuts in line with its election promises and any reasonable assessment of our current and future strategic situations (and the state of the ADF). But in light of the cuts being threatened or applied in other portfolios the other reason for quarantining defence spending needs to be better publicised to avoid misunderstandings in the electorate.

This case revolves around two clear facts. First, defence spending has already had more than its fair share of cuts over many years. It was so continually cut for so long that the current real increases are now essential to cancel out decades of sustained under-investment.

Second, the proposed cuts to other areas of federal spending come only after sustained and very large increases in the funding of those portfolios over the same period. Increased funding that was often only possible because of the longstanding and serious under-investment in defence.

The bottom line is that defence spending has remained in the historical band of 7-9 per cent of the federal budget for decades whereas spending on health, education and social welfare, for example, has increased to some 70 per cent from below 40 per cent over the same period. Furthermore, these federal increases are additional to the large amounts that the states and territories also spend on education, health and social welfare.

**Bruce Dowse**  
**Victoria**

Sir: Lately several defence commentators in academia and the media have taken to making the comment that 'each dollar invested in our defence can be spent once only'. Their inference is that funding for one particular defence capability means that the money involved cannot be spent elsewhere on other (presumably competing) capabilities and priorities.

But this perception of a rigid opportunity cost to every defence investment decision is simply not true, not least because it ignores the flexibility principle when comparing defence capabilities. The proponents of such a rigid opportunity cost are ignoring our history and demonstrating a fundamental lack of understanding about defence strategy and its execution by military operations. They also seem unaware of modern risk management principles as used in commerce and industry, which focus on embedding multiple options and flexibility in each asset.

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(02) 6231 4444 (International 61+2 +6231 4444)

defender@ada.asn.au

www.ada.asn.au

## EDITOR

Dr Malcolm Kennedy

## EDITORIAL BOARD

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Patrick Gallagher

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In an integrated, joint-focused, balanced defence force, many capabilities maintained primarily to deter or fight high-intensity warfare contingencies can often be scaled down to handle the much more frequent low-intensity tasks — such as counter-insurgency, nation-building, peacekeeping, reconstruction or humanitarian assistance. What is more, this can generally be done comparatively swiftly, easily and at little additional cost.

But the opposite is not true at all. Forces configured for only low-intensity and low-scale operations cannot be suddenly, easily or cheaply scaled up to handle bigger strategic problems. They also have little value in deterring them in the first place. To our national cost we relearn this lesson when rebuilding the ADF after every cycle of short-sighted defence funding cutbacks.

Furthermore, the type of defence capability being maintained also plays a big part. Strike aircraft and submarines, for example, have obviously limited (but by no means zero) utility in operations at the lower end of the conflict spectrum, or in diplomatic resolve, peacekeeping, nation-building, reconstruction or humanitarian assistance tasks. But this is not true for many broadly-useable capabilities, such as transport aircraft, utility helicopters, maritime patrol aircraft, amphibious ships and much of our ground forces and surface fleet generally.

Money invested in flexible and versatile defence capabilities is spent twice in the sense that the returns are maximised no matter what happens. Funding such capabilities, at the very least, is also far more likely to provide an efficient return on investment and do so over the long term. Luckily these are also generally the capabilities best able to handle unforeseen tasks and contingencies, and therefore investing in them also provides the best diversification against future risks.

The notion that each dollar invested in defence can only be spent once might apply to considerations about which particular capabilities we need to maintain to cope with the one-in-a-hundred-year flood-type of infrequent but potentially catastrophic threat (such as invasion). But to misapply this mistaken belief to investment in all defence capabilities is simply foolish.

**Kevin Walsh**  
**Victoria**

Sir: I have followed with interest the discussion in recent issues of *Defender* about the pre-World War II Singapore strategy and its parallels with the Defence-of-Australia (DOA) strategy identified with Dr Paul Dibb and others. Few seem to disagree that both strategies proved to be failures with the arguments really revolving around why they failed and what the alternatives were. Even here there seems to be general agreement that both failed because subsequent events were substantially different from the predictions built in to their flawed assumptions.

I am therefore surprised that neither side has drawn attention to another telling and tragic parallel between the two strategies; namely the vicious suppression of professional and intellectual dissent in the ADF officer corps by the proponents of the said strategies.

In the inter-war period several Chiefs of the General Staff had their professional advice continually ignored and were retired because their criticisms embarrassed the vacillating and parsimonious governments of the day. The careers of several senior RAAF officers also suffered. Criticism from the RAN was more mooted but certainly commonplace among both Australian and seconded British officers.

In the 1980s and 1990s, including well after the change of government from Labor to the Coalition in 1996, critics of DOA's failings within the Department of Defence and the ADF had their careers curtailed in many cases. Quite drastic censorship of professional debate occurred as White Papers and strategic updates were handed down as virtual *pronunciamientos*. Professional debates in the *Australian Defence Force Journal* and papers produced by the Service think-tanks were muzzled by senior departmental officials, while much of the ADF leadership seemed to stand moot.

The failure of both the Singapore and DOA strategies might have been avoided, or at least greatly ameliorated, if professional and intellectual debate about them had been encouraged rather than forcefully suppressed. Hopefully this lesson will be absorbed during the preparation of any future defence white papers.

**Paul Evans**  
**New South Wales**

Sir: The ADA's continued expressions of concern about the lack of understanding of defence matters among the media are well taken. The phenomenon is well entrenched among those in the media who admit no inadequacy and it has plagued defence-media relations since World War II at least.

Apart from the routine howlers — spelling marshal, the rank, with two 'l's, describing the governor-general as 'Major' — and so on, elements of the media have shown a cavalier disregard for legitimate operational security in favour of getting the story out first.

Two examples will suffice. In 1972 as the Labor Opposition was smelling the blood of a decrepit Coalition government, a politically-aligned public servant in the then Department of Territories leaked a secret document dealing with Australia's external territories. This was taken up by the media and by the Opposition which was campaigning quite legitimately for a change of administration in the Cocos Islands. With the exception of a few paragraphs, the document hardly warranted its secret classification but those few paragraphs dealing with a very secret defence project in another territory were very important. The document should never have seen the light of day unless those paragraphs were first excised. Fortunately little harm appeared to have been done because the consumers lacked the understanding of the project's importance.

The lesson was that too many people see their political or career interests as more important than the national interest.

The other case involved a journalist from a metropolitan daily who became aware of a very sensitive naval operation due to take place at the outset of the US-led coalition intervention in Iraq in 2003. He contacted me for comment in my then capacity as ADA executive director.

When I pointed out to him the danger to Australian personnel if he published the information in advance of the

operation, he was insistent that his story take precedence and asserted the support of his editor. It was not until I warned the Chief of Navy of the impending publication that commonsense and serious pressure were brought to bear and the story killed.

Many of my journalist friends have asserted 'the public have a right to know' as justification for this sort of reporting at all costs. In fact the public do not have such an absolute right, they generally understand that the lives of ADF personnel should not be risked by security breaches, and they would probably lynch the offending journalists if they knew the full story.

I have no brief for the defensive mind set of public affairs staffs in the Department of Defence, but it is all too easy to understand why there is a serious and dangerous lack of trust between the department and the ADF on one hand and the Australian media on the other.

**Michael O'Connor  
Victoria**

Sir: The arguments in *Defender* [Autumn 2007] about the unfair and clearly discriminatory indexation method used for defence force superannuants, and various compensation payments to disabled war veterans and other disabled Service personnel, were well put. Acceptable indexation measures for DVA-related compensation payments have since been legislated, but both sides of politics continue to resist reforming the discriminatory indexation of public sector superannuation schemes and the unfair taxation treatment of defence force (and Commonwealth public service) superannuants.

The fact of this discrimination is tough enough but the perceptions involved are also damning. Our parliamentarians very generously index their own pensions at a rate equivalent to a current backbencher's salary in the ultimate defined-benefit arrangement. They even index the pensions of social security recipients to a standard exponentially much better than that applying to former defence force personnel. What they are in effect declaring is that their promises to look after those they commit to combat, or expect to be ready for combat, do not count and they do not much care that this is recognised by those being disadvantaged.

This is magnified by the implicit admission (by both sides of politics) that they will not rectify this discrimination because ADF superannuants, or members prematurely discharged because of wounds, injuries or illnesses sustained during war or training for war, have so little perceived electoral clout that the continuing inequity can continue to be ignored.

Furthermore, the Treasury estimates cited as allegedly showing a high cost for reforming this indexation are flawed. They use gross figures only and ignore that the 2007 *Intergenerational Report* details the net unfunded liabilities for public-sector superannuation reducing from 0.05 per cent to 0.02 per cent of GDP over the next 40 years (even without factoring in the \$32 billion Future Fund ostensibly created to fund this liability). Research by the University of Canberra, commissioned by the Superannuated Commonwealth Officer's Association and endorsed by the Defence Force Welfare Association, has established that the real net cost of fixing the discriminatory indexation, after allowing for tax

revenue increases and reductions in aged pensions, would be approximately \$18 million in the first year – or about one tenth of one per cent of the 2007/08 projected budget surplus of \$17.3 billion.

Then there is the additional discrimination, and implied contempt for serving and former defence force personnel, whereby ADF superannuants do not qualify for non-taxed payments after age 60 under the new 'simpler super' arrangements. The Howard Government claimed that this is because ADF (and Public Service) superannuation schemes were and remain 'unfunded', and untaxed accordingly, being eventually paid out of consolidated revenue each year. Whilst this may be technically correct in terms of revenue distribution, it fails to acknowledge that the former Defence Force Retirement Benefits scheme (DFRB) was a statutory and funded scheme until its considerable assets were arbitrarily confiscated and diverted into consolidated revenue by both the Whitlam and Fraser Governments in the 1970s. Furthermore, no Australian superannuation scheme of any type was taxed at source before 1988 anyway. Therein lies the rub for many ADF retirees (and Public Service superannuants): if you are over age 60 and a DFRB or DFRDB (or Comsuper) superannuant, how are you really any different to other superannuants in Australia?

The bottom line is that former defence force personnel have:

- been expected by the Government and the wider Australian community to face dangers, hazards and general exigencies of military service that are well outside accepted community standards;
- been historically paid well below private sector standards for a range of similar employment categories; and
- paid tax at marginal rates before making their compulsory after-tax superannuation contributions (with some considerable carrot and stick qualification thresholds for benefit eligibility (eg. DFRDB required 20+ years of continual effective service otherwise you received nothing).

These loyal Australian ex-Service personnel now face:

- continued losses in their standard of living due to the declining value of their superannuation or disability payments because they are indexed to the CPI only, and not the better of the CPI or MTAW (as are all social security benefits for example);
- the added impost of continuing to pay tax at marginal rates if in receipt of superannuation or disability benefits well into the future (irrespective of the new but generally ineffective 10 per cent tax offset after age 60); and
- an inequitable regulatory regime that will limit access to a range of other Government benefits that are afforded more fully to the general community.

This collective situation is simply unfair, immoral and indefensible in terms of community equity and fails to achieve the Government's own stated policy objective 'to assist and encourage people to achieve a high standard of living in retirement'. In terms of recruiting and retention they are also plainly self-defeating if we hope to maintain an efficient and effective defence force.

**Peter Thornton  
Australian Capital Territory**

## Snapshots

This issue of *Defender* addresses topics across the spectrum of strategic policy, capability development and military operations. Rear Admiral Peter Briggs (Retd), in the first of two articles, puts the case for a next-generation underwater warfare capability. He then argues why planning for this needs to begin now in order for new submarines to be up and running by the time the Collins class boats wear out.

Peter Varghese takes a necessarily long-term view of Australia's strategic future. As he is generally looking further into the future than conventional Defence White Papers do, he confines his assessments to likely trends rather than detailed predictions.

Associate Professor Gregory Rose ventures where angels fear to tread. He discusses why international humanitarian law (IHL), and the sub-set of it known as the Laws of Armed Conflict, need to be updated so they can cope with regulating, modifying and limiting the mutating armed conflicts of the 21st Century. Various vested interests in the international community are resistant to such change but, as he notes, the outright resistance from the traditional institutional and academic champions of IHL is contradictory to their very *raison d'être*. If the example of David Hicks shows nothing else, it demonstrates that individuals caught up in the international campaign against Islamist terrorism can fall through gaps in existing international law and this must be fixed.

Longtime academic team-mates Associate Professor Ian Bickerton, an Australian, and Professor Kenneth Hagan, an American, summarise the theme of their recent book on the unintended consequences of wars fought by the United States. Many will not agree with much of their analysis, nor with all their conclusions, but they have tried to discuss the issue objectively and have not strayed into the polemics so common in this field.

In the *Sharp End*, Robert Marlow returns to the fray with another article discussing Australia's future air combat capability. He sets out the four options he sees as open to us and ably bails up some sacred cows. Just as importantly, he analyses some of the through-life aspects of maintaining the capability and avoids getting bogged down in the usual comparisons of specific aeronautical hardware.

In the second *Sharp End* article Dr Paul Monk brings his practised eye for argument mapping to the 2004 decision to update the Army's small tank force. He isolates and examines each element in the argument on both sides. His conclusion that the motivation of the objectors is essentially ideological, rather than factual, helps explain their puzzling vehemence about such a weak case. ♦

## New brooms but some cobwebs remain

The Rudd Government's appointment of two full-time ministers and two parliamentary secretaries to the Defence portfolio is a welcome sign of some fresh and deeper thinking in regard to improving ministerial oversight, curbing bureaucratic excess and making the department more efficient. It was therefore doubly disappointing to see that similar boldness was absent from the Minister of Defence's eventual allocation of responsibilities to his junior minister and his two parliamentary secretaries. This broke little new ground, conceptually or administratively.

The only exception is the major reform of Greg Combet assuming day-to-day oversight of the DMO as Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Procurement. The delegations to Warren Snowdon, as Minister for Defence Science and Personnel, are little different to those applying to his Coalition predecessor, although there is the logical change that responsibility for recruitment returns to the junior minister and is once again twinned with the responsibility for retention — the other side of the personnel numbers coin. Apart from his title, Parliamentary Secretary for Defence Support Mike Kelly's responsibilities are virtually the same as his Coalition predecessor.

But it is early days yet. The lessons that will be learnt from having a parliamentary secretary overseeing Defence procurement are likely to lead to this appointment taking up even more responsibilities connected with procurement — and eventually being upgraded to a second junior ministerial position in the Defence portfolio. Adding responsibility for DSTO to such a future junior minister also seems sensible, to strengthen oversight of the necessary links between technology, trials and experimentation on the one hand, and eventual procurement on the other.

Hopefully such a step would also lead to the existing junior minister's responsibilities expanding to include responsibilities for the ADF's day-to-day operational and training functions that are so inextricably connected to most personnel matters. Continuing to split them between the senior and junior minister makes little sense and the potential synergies and efficiencies are significant. The British Minister of State for the Armed Forces provides an excellent parliamentary, administrative and practical model.

As the ADA has noted before, the assistance of two junior ministers would greatly assist the Minister for Defence to concentrate on the big-picture aspects of the overall portfolio, particularly finance, corporate governance, defence strategy and capability delivery. With the ridiculous number of ministerial submissions now passing over his desk each year, every Minister for Defence should be freed from as much of the day-to-day minutia of the portfolio as is possible.

Flies in the ointment will of course probably occur. Given the normal run of events, especially for a new government with so many untried ministers, it could be that Greg Combet may not stay in the Defence portfolio very long before being promoted to a ministry elsewhere. If he is replaced by someone not as competent, or not as experienced in industry policy, the opportunity to mature the appointment of parliamentary secretary for defence procurement into a junior ministry may be postponed or even lost. This occurred in part when Mal Brough was the junior minister during the previous government. He was promoted quickly before his newly delegated responsibilities for implementing the Kinnaird reforms were bedded in to the junior minister's responsibilities.

Another possible difficulty is the greater scope for personality clashes arising among a larger ministerial oversight team. Such difficulties occurred at times in the previous government with only two ministers being involved, when factional differences caused tension or the senior minister had little confidence in the ability of the junior minister. The problem, and its flow-on effect for departmental administration and morale, was not helped by John Howard's unfortunate tendency at times to park less able junior ministers and some quite ordinary parliamentary secretaries in the Defence portfolio for party management reasons. This was not conducive to developing traditions of ministerial teamwork, effective burden-sharing and efficient administration of Government business in the Defence portfolio. Nor did it help the career development of potential future Defence Ministers.

Not continuing the recent practice of the Minister for Defence Science and Personnel also being the Minister for Veterans Affairs is mainly a good thing as the longer-term advantages cancel out some short-term disadvantages. There remains a clear need to improve and integrate the transition that many defence force personnel undergo if (with qualifying operational service) they subsequently become the responsibility of the Department of Veterans Affairs. This was well understood by the previous double-hatted minister, Bruce Billson, and is well understood by the new single-hatted one, Alan Griffin, so concentration on the reforms needed should not be unduly affected by there being separate ministers for defence personnel and veterans affairs.

One other minor difficulty that may emerge over time is that the minister, the junior minister and both parliamentary secretaries are members of the House of Representatives. This will work better than it should because Senator John Faulkner represents the Defence portfolio in the Senate, including estimates hearings. But his experience in Defence matters in particular and the Senate in general, and his responsibilities as Cabinet Secretary, are unique to him. Another advantage of eventually having three ministers in the Defence portfolio is to increase the opportunity for at least one in either house. ♦

## Minding our prerogatives

Since the reign of Edward III in the mid 14<sup>th</sup> Century parliaments in the Westminster system, as it has evolved,

have had a right to be consulted about the treaties that end a war. The Glorious Revolution of 1688 confirmed that parliaments have the power to limit ongoing commitment to a war through control of the revenues needed to fight it. But in Westminster system parliamentary democracies the legislature does not have the power to decide on going to war in the first place.

The war-making power has long been vested solely in the executive (effectively the Cabinet formed by the elected government) as a Crown prerogative. In Australia, the modern heads of power for this (the express powers) are primarily based in Sections 2 and 61 of the Constitution, and several Westminster system conventions including the practical interpretation of Section 68 (regarding the Governor-General's role as commander-in-chief of the ADF being titular only).

Section 114 of the Constitution gives the federal government exclusive power to maintain defence forces unless it decides otherwise. Section 119 prescribes the Commonwealth's responsibility to protect every state from external invasion, and assist with suppressing violent civil disorder internally if the state asks for such help. Sections 51(vi), 51(xxix) and 51(xxxii) provide the heads of power (incidental powers) that authorise the Australian Parliament to legislate on defence matters. Several other sections of the Constitution give Parliament effective control of Commonwealth revenues and expenditure, including those needed to maintain the ADF, fight wars and mount other operations generally.

This system of constitutional, statutory and procedural checks and balances has evolved in the Westminster system over the last seven centuries for a range of legal, moral and practical reasons. Recent calls from minor parties in the Senate for parliament, not the Government, to decide the question of Australia going to war appear to have been made without due reference to these long-established checks and balances and the reasons for them. ♦

## Dividing the war-making power

The Australian Democrats are proposing a private member's bill that would require both Houses of Parliament to agree, by resolution, before the ADF could be deployed outside Australia's territorial limits (with some provision for temporary deployments in emergencies without such sanction). Senator Brown of the Greens has also moved a resolution 'calling on the prime-minister and future prime-ministers to refrain from engaging Australia in war without first gaining the agreement of the Australian Parliament'.

Support for the general theme of parliament taking control of the constitutional war-making power has generally come from those ideologically opposed to Australian participation in US-led military actions, whether endorsed by the United Nations or not. Another significant source of support appears to be those agitating for major constitutional changes more widely. Any proposal to alter the checks and balances involved needs to be examined very carefully and debated objectively and openly. At the very least, any legislation

seeking to do so should not be considered without an exhaustive parliamentary committee inquiry.

The Australian Democrats' Bill is loosely based on a recent British Green Paper, *The Governance of Britain*, which discussed the option of similar legislation limiting the power of British governments to deploy the armed forces. This was in turn based on parliamentary committee inquiries by the House of Commons and the House of Lords in 2003-04 and 2005-06 respectively. The UK situation is somewhat different, of course, because of the absence of a written constitution and the upper house of parliament not being elected.

The British Government has subsequently rejected the option of legislation (although not ruling it out entirely in the future). They have opted instead for a parliamentary resolution to, in effect, establish a constitutional convention. This change of mind was largely due to comprehensive debates in the House of Lords where, by tradition, many of the Life Peers are former armed forces commanders. These distinguished military experts argued forcefully that the national interest meant maximum flexibility on the issue needed to be preserved, especially as overseas military deployments in this day and age may change swiftly from humanitarian assistance to peacekeeping to warlike actions and back again. They also noted that many military deployments often occur in emergencies where consulting parliament beforehand is impractical, would involve an undue risk of communicating information or other comfort to the enemy, might imperil sensitive negotiations with allies, or invoke a combination of all these complications.

In consultations by proponents of the Australian bill, several former senior ADF officers of varying political inclinations have expressed similar professional concerns about its desirability or practicality. Further broad objections have been raised about the bill's narrow focus on 'the territorial limits of Australia' as the criterion for determining deployments that would need parliamentary approval.

- Many overseas deployments do not involve warfare, such as international exercises, ship visits, aircraft transits, disaster relief, peacekeeping or evacuations of Australian citizens from threatening situations.
- The ADF has always been used more often to defend or further our national interests than to defend our territory *per se*, including Australia's responsibilities under the UN Charter for collective security action and under various treaties for collective defence action.
- In Australia's enduring strategic circumstances of small forces, continental responsibilities and limited resources, the deterrent value of elements such as strike aircraft, submarines and Special Forces would be weakened or lost altogether if a potential enemy knew that they could not be used without the public fanfare of parliamentary debate.
- The requirement for both houses of parliament to approve action is likely to be problematic in practice. The Senate balance of power can be held by minor parties or independents. These tend to be motivated by ideologies towards an extreme of the political spectrum, and/or are

unduly subject to the vagaries and pull of the simplistic populism that tempts those who know they will never need to implement such policies in actual government.

Whether any Australian government of either political complexion would support such a blanket limitation on its freedom of action in situations of *extremis* is doubtful. There are also doubts about the constitutionality of the method involved. The Bill seeks to limit a government's ability to deploy the ADF overseas without authorisation from the parliament by amending the *Defence Act 1903*. Whether the entrenched and exclusive Crown prerogative in such an important matter could be restrained so totally in this manner is open to question. The issue would inevitably end up in the High Court the next time we have to fight a war that is not overwhelmingly supported politically.

Finally, there is also no small irony that the ideas represented in the bill might enjoy broader support, including in defence circles, but for the indifferent quality of contributions by minor party senators to debate about defence matters in general, and during initial and subsequent debates about ADF deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan in particular. ♦

## Globalisation of subversion

The Internet and the degree of globalisation it has helped spawn has generally been a blessing to mankind. The consequent phenomenon of the 'blog' has also brought many benefits, not least a degree of terror to authoritarian and totalitarian regimes dependent on the strict control of information and public debate for their survival.

But the world-wide-web in general, and blogging in particular, also have a downside in that the extremist, the ignorant and the downright mad or bad can now easily contact each other to spread and reinforce their respective messages. All wars are ultimately contests of will and end when one side gives up. The heightened ability of extremists, conspiracy theorists, the crazy and the plain nasty to spread their beliefs, and advocate commensurate action, make it much harder for liberal democracies to fight wars effectively.

In Australia, the exercise of legitimate dissent in public debates on such wars is not subversion *per se*. It becomes so only with active support by the foreign enemy concerned and if this is known or recklessly ignored by the 'dissenter'.

The danger of modern subversion via the web is simply through the increased ease it provides our external enemies, or deliberate enemy sympathisers and conscious or unknowing defeatists within our own society, to spread subversion and propaganda in order to undermine our national will to prosecute a war. The web also simplifies enemy targeting, recruitment and manipulation of those Australians unusually susceptible to subversive approaches through polemical belief, gullibility, marked contrarian tendencies or a combination.

The reverse side of this coin is equally dangerous although not subversive directly. Comments on the web by a minority of Australians, whatever their motivation, can also provide comfort to our enemies by exaggerating the

degree, or confusing the nature, of domestic opposition to national policy.

Within mainstream Australia, blogs and the comment pages of the established media provide some insight into the problem. When Sergeant Mathew Locke of the SASR was killed in action in Afghanistan, for example, media reporting and commentary was generally of a high standard — as would be expected in the circumstances. But the comments lodged by a small minority were more than disappointing in their callousness, ignorance, malevolence or warped senses of humour or perspective. In one of many examples, a short AAP story run on *news.com.au* at 10:44AM on 26 October 2007 generated 194 on-line comments by 5:00PM. Now most of the 194 comments would widely be regarded as acceptable contributions to public debate even where too many appeared not that well informed on the issues.

Seven comments (three per cent), however, were highly offensive or provocative. Some stated or inferred that ADF personnel were ‘murderers’, ‘deserved what they got for being the aggressor’ or that because ‘no-one is forced to join the ADF’ the death of a soldier is somehow the soldier’s fault. All seemed to miss the point that in fighting wars the ADF does so on behalf of us all and only at the lawful direction of the elected government.

A further 53 comments (27 per cent) criticised Australia’s participation in the Iraq or Afghanistan wars but generally acknowledged the tragic loss of a digger. The remaining 134 comments (70 per cent) paid courteous tribute to Sergeant Locke with many also taking issue with the offensive comments or opposition to the wars. It was noteworthy that the bulk of these latter comments were generally made in a calm and reasoned manner — in stark contrast to the offensive three per cent.

The example described is hardly definitive in terms of determining the numbers of Australians who might be unusually vulnerable to enemy subversion or exploitation. Nor the larger numbers who might be otherwise useful to the enemy, to some extent, because they oppose our participation in the wars concerned to varying degrees. The sample involved only those who have Internet access, read *news.com.au*, do so during the day and were motivated to comment. It was also one of those thankfully rare occasions when we have had a digger killed in action and the incentive to comment, on both sides, might be assumed to be greater than normal.

But it does highlight two important facts that are ultimately fundamental to the way liberal democracies such as Australia wage war successfully. It also reminds us of dangerous trends that if not checked, could develop into a serious problem. First, there are definitely some Australians who, knowingly or unknowingly, may be bolstering the will of the enemies we are fighting. Second, the world-wide-web now gives them a much greater opportunity to do so. They are no longer isolated from each other or from a ready means of contact with those our country is fighting, and they now have much greater access to a means of spreading their message domestically and internationally. ♦

## Modern counter subversion – relearning old lessons

Countering subversive behaviour must be done carefully. Any counter-measures must distinguish between allowing legitimate dissent and countering ill-informed, extremist or potentially seditious or treasonable actions. Public refutation of the latter by responsible Ministers, including warning of the dangers involved, is an obvious first step.

At the very least, where extremists or polemicists deliberately describe ADF personnel as ‘murderers’, ‘mercenaries’, as ‘deserving death’ or worse, they should be publicly condemned by the government and responsible commentators in the media, academia and general community. Throughout the early 1990s the then Minister for Defence, Senator Robert Ray, was very forceful in this regard. His strong condemnation of a Victorian high school textbook for misdescribing ADF personnel as ‘harmworkers’ (in supposed contrast to health workers) set a good example of what is needed

Few Australians now have much contact with the ADF on a day-to-day basis. Even fewer have personal or family experience of war and what is required to win one. Understandings that were previously instinctive or widely spread in the Australian community are generally no longer as common. Some principles and facts to do with national defence therefore need public re-emphasis by the Government, public commentators and the media. Key points include:

- The ADF is our defence force and is comprised of fellow Australians not strangers or, according to some, supposedly depraved militarist automatons bent on killing for its own sake.
- Our defence force defends all Australians equally and has long protected our right to free speech and belief, including to legitimate dissent from government decisions to send the ADF to war.
- The ADF prosecutes its operations in accordance with international law and only at the lawful direction of the elected government.
- Our defence force is duly and rightly apolitical institutionally in the public controversies of the day, and this neutrality of culture and action is a fundamental tenet of liberal democratic societies.
- Critics of Australian foreign or strategic policy should direct their criticism at the government of the day, not at the ADF collectively or the individuals serving in the defence force and their families.

Finally, while ignorance alone should not be a crime, the offence of criminal libel (a defamation likely to cause a breach of the peace) remains on the statute books. It is prosecuted rarely and only applies to the libel of individuals. Some thought now needs to be given to extending this to cover the collective libel of members of our defence force for doing their duty at the lawful direction of the elected government. While such prosecutions might give some the purported martyrdom they seek, it would send a strong message that untrue, unfair, malicious and often cowardly comments about our defence force are not tolerated by Australians as a whole. ♦



# Help us to help Australia's Defence

The Australia Defence Association (ADA) is Australia's only independent and non-partisan public-interest guardian organisation on defence and wider national security issues. Membership of the Association is open to all Australians interested in Australia's defence and in effective public debate on such matters.

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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) has long been Australia's only truly independent and non-partisan, community-based, public interest watchdog and 'think-tank' on defence and wider national security issues. Detail on the aims, activities and structure of the Association can be obtained from the ADA website

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

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

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The ADA publishes a quarterly national journal and a monthly bulletin, and also maintains a comprehensive website at [www.ada.asn.au](http://www.ada.asn.au).

The Association is frequently called on for media comment and for contributions to public, academic and professional debates on national security issues. The ADA is also regularly invited to make submissions to official and parliamentary inquiries, especially those conducted by the all-party Joint Standing Committees on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade; and Intelligence and Security.

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REPLY PAID 320, ERINDALE CENTRE, ACT, 2903,  
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# Major Furphy

## Fast night at the proms

The new prime-ministerial edict about senior officials needing to be in their offices by 0700, and contactable by mobile telephone from 0600, has had some interesting effects at Russell Offices. Our office is all on deck by that time anyway, of course, to keep up with Barney (my boss, Air Marshal Barney Stoush, the VCDF). One side-benefit of being bright-eyed and bushy-tailed is that you can get a parking spot within a kilometre of R1 at that hour and thus avoid the 20-minute hike that becomes so necessary for thousands shortly afterwards.

There have been several big results of the edict on R1 culture. Many of the under-mandarins and deputy-under-mandarins have expressed surprise at finding out just how much earlier the military begin work each day. Those with southward-facing windows also now seem to understand, finally, what their staffs have long been saying about the dearth of parking within cooe of Russell Offices when you don't have a reserved spot in the basement.

Barney has been enjoying the drowsy discomfiture of the early arriving under-mandarins and the more ambitious deputy under-mandarins. He has taken to strolling around the fifth floor, as the lifts hit at 0655, and cheerily wishing all and sundry 'good morning' as they scurry past. This is just another sign that his traditional good humour is coming to the fore once more, following his life-saving workload decrease now he is no longer double-hatted as Chief of Joint Operations.

The VCDF has even started to acquire a social life again, although not without some repercussions for the office and, surprisingly, departmental ethics awareness policy. On a recent Monday Barney arrived at work somewhat thoughtful and pre-occupied. I was soon summoned for some discreet tasking. 'Find out', he commanded, 'what it costs annually to become a corporate sponsor of the Canberra Symphony Orchestra'.

After completing the task I hovered about a bit more when delivering correspondence for signature at various times during the day. Slight hints of explanation started to emerge. Further clues appeared when he told the ADC to arrange a quick joint chat with the CDF and the head of the Defence Materiel Organisation. Later, as all personal staff officers need to do occasionally, I filled in some further gaps by debriefing his driver. Over the next few days other background bits of the puzzle were dredged from the A2 and B5-rated smokers' huddles, various coffee queues and gossip updates from my fellow PSOs to the great and good. Finally, Barney himself offered a few key tidbits during philosophical conversations as we walked the corridors between meetings.

The story, as pieced together and by no means complete, exemplifies the combination of determination, shrewdness and strong personal ethics that have carried Barney to the most senior levels of our defence force. Fittingly, it was music to my ears.

Now the VCDF had long been known by his staff to be a fan of all types of music, both country and western. But Mrs Stoush has apparently been working hard of late to broaden



his musical tastes even further. As part of her plan she purchased a CSO season's ticket to help smooth over some of his fighter pilot edges and retune his supersonic ear.

On the preceding Saturday afternoon the Stoushs had seized the opportunity of a rare, uninterrupted, weekend together and attended a quarterly Proms concert in the gardens of Government House. Sitting comfortably on the lawn in front of the stage, deeply submerged in the appreciative anonymity of the season-ticket holder enclosure, they relaxed to the Spanish-themed program. Barney had apparently been quite enjoying himself, not least because the crowded enclosure of the musically cultivated was so totally bereft of ADF officers.

But, as with much of his professional life at Russell Hill, Barney's concentration was disturbed by an unwelcome intrusion. Bizet's *Carmen Suite Number 1* was increasingly overcome by steadily rowdier conversation behind him. The orchestra has a number of corporate sponsors prominent in Canberra business circles and part of the deal is champagne-fuelled entertainment tents at outdoor concerts. On studying the pavillioned source of the noise the VCDF soon put two and two together. Especially when recognising the near-complete hierarchy of the Air Force, plus a goodly number of retired RAAF one and two-stars, engaged in animated conversation with hands and champagne flutes cutting arcs through the air as various acrobatic encounters were relived.

Now Barney is no snob about music, his parent Service or anything else, indeed quite the opposite. He understood that the growing cacophony was no doubt mainly due to musical tastes for C&W being widely shared in the Air Force — and that they meant no real disrespect to the opera being ignored. There was also nothing he could do at the time amid the throng. Members of the crowd closer to the simulated aeronautical action, and further back from the stage, eventually dropped the requisite subtle hints when not wishing to miss the softer excerpts from Rossini's *Barber of Seville*.

But it would seem, after Barney's subsequent chat with the CDF and the head of the DMO, that there are costs to developing a broader musical appreciation. And to orchestra sponsorships, corporate entertainment and ethical considerations concerning future defence procurement contracts. ♦

# Australia's strategic sting:

## Maximising our future underwater warfare capability

Peter Briggs

### Retaining a strategic capability edge

If Australia is to maintain its regional capability edge in underwater warfare, avoid a capability gap and retain an effective undersea warfare capability, the first of class of a future submarine for the ADF must commence sea trials no later than 2022. Planning and initiation of long-lead activities, such as research and development (R&D), are now on the critical path to inform decisions to be taken in 2011 on technologies likely to be available for a contract let no later than 2016.

In the Australian context, no matter the weapon platform, key factors are always range and endurance. In the absence of a major and mature domestic nuclear engineering industry it is unlikely that Australia could maintain nuclear-powered vessels in our navy. Except for Russia, no country now builds long-range submarines that are not nuclear-powered.

The design, development and construction of Australia's future underwater warfare capability will therefore again be an Australian enterprise, as a developmental project with strong support from the USN and European submarine designers. But this time around, it will also be able to build on the hard-won and unique Collins pedigree.

To mitigate development risk, the combat, command, communications, intelligence and ship control systems of our current Collins class submarines need to be further developed, evolved and migrated into the future class of submarines.

Key messages arising from this situation are:

- the future underwater warfare capability project should be listed in the Defence Capability Plan in 2008;
- an extension of the Australia-US agreement on submarine co-operation to cover future underwater warfare capability is urgently required, noting that the extent of access to USN submarine technology and associated USN sensitivities will be a critical factor in the ADF acquisition strategy;

- bilateral government-to-government agreements with selected Western European conventional submarine design partners should also be negotiated urgently; and
- supporting studies and R&D projects with DSTO, industry and capability partners should be initiated as an early priority.

Some preliminary thoughts:

- A project team with the capacity to scope the issues, initiate the studies and contribute to Defence White Paper 2008 and other key Canberra-based processes is the most urgent requirement. Lateral solutions will be required to achieve this in a timely fashion. The Defence White Paper process should facilitate agreement on the top-level capability, acquisition strategy and timescales for the future underwater warfare capability.
- The process should not be used to delay initiating the immediate essential actions identified above.
- ASC should not be sold until the conditions necessary to access the critical submarine technologies are known and factored into the pre-conditions for sale.
- This process must also critically review the capability of the Collins Class to meet the requirements of the much more demanding environment of 2018–2031 whilst the transition to a new class of submarines is effected. This includes whether a major upgrade of the Collins class, such as the fitting of Air Independent Propulsion (AIP), or an earlier transition to the new class of submarines may be required.

### General strategic setting

Without attempting to predict the precise shape of Australia's strategic environment in the period 2020-2050, it is already clear that there are powerful forces at work. These will determine both the strategic settings within which Australia will need to make its strategic choices and the boundaries within which Australia will seek to exercise its policy freedoms.

In the interests of brevity, Australia's overall strategic setting has been well covered publicly in *Defender* and in recent ASPI and Kokoda Foundation papers. Australia's long-term way of life, standard of living and economic success will remain largely dependent on seaborne trade over secure sea-lanes. Our major trading parties, such as the USA, China and Japan, share these characteristics.

Radicalised Islam will continue to mount a fundamental and violent challenge to the value system of liberal democratic societies using asymmetric force; Australia and western interests in South East Asia will continue to be targets. It is unlikely, however, to challenge our national survival or seriously degrade our economic security on its own.

China and India will emerge as major global and regional strategic players, exercising political, economic and strategic power in pursuit of their national objectives while at the same time constraining others in the pursuit of theirs. The centre of gravity of global economic power will continue in an easterly direction in the period of the strategic outlook so that, by 2050, it sits largely in South and East Asia.

A fierce global competition for resources will become an increasingly important strategic factor, particularly energy (both hydrocarbon and nuclear), key strategic minerals and water. China and India will compete in this domain with the industrialised nations – the USA, Japan and the members of the European Union – as well as the emerging industrialised nations such as the members of ASEAN, key South American nations such as Argentina, Brazil and Mexico, the emerging powers of the Middle East (particularly Iran) and Russia.

As canvassed in several recent articles in *Defender*, and in an October 2007 ASPI paper by Professor Michael Wesley, while Australia is well endowed with energy sources, the trend is heading from a *sensitivity to energy interruption* to one of *vulnerability* – increasingly serious economic and strategic vulnerability.

## Increased importance of our maritime environment

Against this uncertain future strategic outlook, the maritime environment will become more significant in both economic and strategic terms. Sea Lines of Communication (SLOC), increasingly more critical for the economic and energy sinews of the global economy, will become more heavily populated and hence the vulnerability to commercial shipping (of all nations) will increase.

The maritime security environment will also become more demanding. The investment being made in maritime capability throughout the region will give states the capability to assert their maritime sovereignty rights, including in the undersea environment. The growing dependence on the sea for resources derived from it, or carried on it, will provide the stimulus to use this capability. Surface and sub-surface passage will be subject to legal and quasi-legal interference and constraint. In short, more countries will seek to practise undersea denial. There is also an increased probability that non-state actors will use various forms of sea denial, such as mine-laying.

Access for surface warships or military aircraft may become constrained in many circumstances. Submarines, on the other hand, are able to exploit their stealth and will continue to provide Governments with options in such scenarios.

## Regional investment in submarines

Significant investment is underway by regional nations in order to acquire or improve their submarine capabilities. Modern Western European technologies are being fielded in many regional navies. India and China are also acquiring European and Russian submarine technology of considerable sophistication. Indonesia's program to acquire 10 Russian Kilo class submarines is the most recent example. By my reckoning, publicly available figures indicate that by 2025, there will be in excess of 130 modern submarines in our region (in addition to those of Australia and the USA).

These developments illustrate a near universal acknowledgement of the force multiplier effect of a modern submarine force. This especially applies to their ability to present such a real threat to a potential aggressor that a disproportionate effort to neutralise the threat is required.

## Australia's need for a strategic sting

Former Defence strategic policy official, Allan Behm, recently used the term *decisive lethality* to describe Australia's need for the ability to deliver a decisive blow in its defence:

*Australia's strategic problem is unique: how to manage the defence of 20 per cent of the earth's surface (including the EEZ) with 0.3 per cent of the world's population? The answer lies in good policies that reduce the prospects of war – strategic diplomacy – working in tandem with defence capabilities that are decisively lethal should they be employed. Such capabilities are not premised on weapons of mass destruction. But neither can they be premised on massive conventional capabilities, because Australia has neither the resources nor the people to develop and maintain them. Rather, decisive lethality is premised on tailor-made capabilities that Australia is uniquely able to develop and deploy, for which effective counter-measures exceed the capacity of possible adversaries. (Strategic Tides: Positioning Australia's Security Policy to 2050, Kokoda Foundation, 2007).*

This attribute becomes all the more important given the struggle to access the increasingly scarce and critical resources outlined above, a significant portion of which reside under Australia's control.

A strategic sting is designed to make an aggressor avoid a military confrontation with Australia. As a submariner, let me explain why Australia's future underwater warfare capability constitutes this type of critical strategic sting and, indeed, is the only capability in our defence force able to do so.

## Only a submarine

A submarine's unique capabilities of stealth, long range and endurance allow it access in key areas denied to other weapons platforms. This will be critical in the strategic scenarios ahead of us. Other weapons platforms can do parts of these missions; none offers the covert combination of capabilities of the submarine. In terms of its force element groups, submarines are the Special Forces of the Navy, operating far behind traditional front lines, independently observing and reporting and, where appropriate, striking lethally at key points when least expected.

The correct investment strategy in a future submarine force will confer a significant strategic deterrent capability on Australia. This can be measured not only in defence force terms but also in contributing to the security of our energy supplies.

A significant factor in the deterrent value of long-range submarines is the exorbitant and disproportionate cost involved in trying to counter a capable submarine force. This includes the degree of doubt engendered that, regardless of the investment, whether the defensive or offensive ASW effort can succeed. This is a significant strategic return on investment.

The future strategic setting outlined above will result in a reinforcement of existing roles and an expanded range of strategic effects that can be achieved by Australia's submarine force. These new or modified strategic effects expand the roles required of the future underwater warfare capability beyond those currently expected of the Collins class force.

Let me briefly discuss the most critical. I preface these points by emphasising the importance of good operational command, control and real-time intelligence support to maximise the effect of submarine operations.

**Surveillance and intelligence gathering.** The ability to gain access to areas denied to other units, combined with the ability to concurrently observe activities underwater, on the surface, in the air and over the electromagnetic spectrum, are particular strengths of the submarine. Combined with the ability to fuse and interpret the observations, and react immediately to maximise the opportunities for further collection against, and understanding of, the activities concerned, these make a submarine a unique platform for this role.

The information provided will contribute to allied and Australian knowledge, enabling us to gauge intentions, deploy diplomatic and military preparations and, in the event of a contingency, position our limited military capability for maximum effect.

**Land strike.** A submarine fitted with land-attack cruise missiles is able to position within launch range without alerting the adversary, withdraw quietly if not required, or launch on order and withdraw without provoking or offering an opportunity for further or escalated engagement.

While suitable land-strike cruise missiles can be carried in combination with other weapons such as torpedoes, mines and anti-ship missiles, this direct land attack role requires a profile from the submarine that is incompatible with roles requiring a more proactive stance, a factor when force structure is being considered.

**Battlespace preparation.** A submarine has the ability to gain access to denied areas covertly, assess the environment and deployment of opposing forces without alerting the opponent, and relay this back in order to allow future maritime task force, air or seaborne operations in the area. This makes the submarine a preferred option for effective battle space preparation.

With suitable capabilities embarked, the submarine is able to identify and neutralise threats prior to a coalition task force or shipping convoy moving into an area. Once such a task force operation is underway, the submarine is able to provide direct support (noting that a conventional submarine lacks the mobility to support a rapidly moving task force — but is able to do so for short periods or in key geographical areas, thus requiring more than one submarine deployed along the line of advance).

**Anti-submarine warfare.** The mirror image of this capability is the challenge posed by the growth in regional submarine capabilities. Australian submarines are arguably Australia's most potent anti-submarine weapon and this is their most demanding role. This capability is enhanced by the optimised sensor suite possessed by a submarine compared with all other ASW platforms. Maintaining an edge across the spectrum of stealth, sensors, weapons, countermeasures and training is critical to success — an ongoing investment in R&D and programs to continually upgrade capabilities in all these areas is the price of a viable capability.

Where practicable our submarines should operate as part of an ASW network. However, there are many likely contingencies where we will lack sufficient sea and air control to permit the deployment of surface and air ASW assets.

ASW by submarines is a very challenging role. It must be supported by a R&D effort that achieves a technology edge, and current and accurate intelligence, and be executed by the most capable command and control support. These will be the difference between success and failure and all aspects of the underwater capability must be sustained and focused to achieve this. Despite all these efforts to ensure a winning edge, the margin between success and failure is small and attrition of our own submarines must be anticipated. This reality and the relatively low mobility of conventional submarines are key force structure considerations.

**Network contributor with unique abilities.** The submarine's ability to gain access to critical denied areas allows it to make a unique contribution to the overall network of systems. The technical challenge is to do so without compromising the submarine's covert stance. Off-board vehicles and low probability of interception communications channels are some of the tools to achieve this.

**Extended-range Special Forces operations.** Given future strategic settings and the trend for asymmetrical conflict, submarine-borne Special Forces operations at extended ranges are likely to be a growth area for the future underwater warfare capability. Exploiting the submarine's ability to covertly transport, launch and recover Special Forces elements, provide command and control and, if necessary, a level of tactical fire support, will be a significant design driver. It is also likely to require the fitting of additional weapons capabilities, such as short-range, tactical land-strike and AAW missiles.

**Offensive mining.** Mining using sophisticated, discriminating mines or mobile mines where necessary, will enable us to deny or impede access to selected areas or ports not under our sea or air control. Depending on the situation, these can be declared – leaving the choice to the adversary whether or not he wishes to challenge the mine. Mines can be laid in areas inaccessible to other units and activated on command, if necessary, by the submarine.

**Unmanned vehicles.** Unmanned underwater vehicles and unmanned aerial vehicles are force multipliers that will extend the manned submarines' reach, effectiveness and survivability. Remote sensors deployed or carried by an unmanned vehicle could offer a winning advantage to the larger Australian submarine in an ASW encounter with the smaller submarines proliferating in the region. These vehicles are a key component of a future underwater warfare capability. They should be considered an integral part of the overall project. It is a major area for R&D and a design driver for Australia's future submarine capability.

## Force structure considerations

In considering Australia's strategic setting and our geographical area of interest, it is likely that Australia will wish to maintain submarines concurrently at very long ranges (over 3000 nautical miles) in the critical roles of surveillance, intelligence gathering, indications and warning and, in the event of a contingency, land strike. Concurrently Australia will also wish to provide submarines in support of maritime-based task force operations or for Special Forces missions closer to home (2-2500 nautical miles), and to train our own anti-submarine warfare forces – a key requirement in a contingency.

The issue of concurrent roles and allowance for attrition of our own submarines employed on offensive operations are additional factors in the calculation of the force structure required to achieve the appropriate strategic effects. As Dr Andrew Davies correctly concludes in his recent ASPI paper, *Keeping our heads below the water: Australia's future submarine*, size and numbers count. From a force of six submarines only 70 per cent (3-4) will be operational on a given day. This is unlikely to meet future requirements nor does it provide the impact required for a real and sustained strategic sting.

The strategic setting and the additional roles and effects to be delivered by the future submarine capability point towards an increase in the size of the ADF's submarine force. The reaction of some to this proposal is to suggest this can only be achieved at the expense of the surface fleet or other major defence force capabilities.

I disagree; the Defence White Paper process now underway is the legitimate process for agreeing the top level capability and the military effects to be achieved by future submarine and surface forces. If this concludes that a larger submarine force is required then the government will have to make a decision based on the national interest and national capacity as to what can be afforded. They should do so in the full knowledge of what is required. We should not pull our punches in the analysis phase or prejudice what the Government's decision may be.

The inference is that if the Navy adopts a replacement mindset, and settles for six or maybe fewer submarines, then there will be more funds available and an easier argument for the replacement of surface ships. This belief is misplaced.

The proposed Defence White Paper provides an excellent opportunity to consider these issues and identify the top level requirement for the future submarine capability. However, there is much to be done in the lead up to this project and limited time in which to do it. It could be a serious mistake to await the outcomes of Defence White Paper 2008 before initiating the long-lead activities.

## Some conclusions

No serious strategic commentator in Australia doubts that we should maintain a significant future underwater warfare capability. The only real debate is how, and at what direct and foregone expense.

The strategic environment of 2020–2050 demands an advanced underwater warfare capability, centred on a long-range, sophisticated submarine backed by a through-life R&D-based improvement program to achieve and maintain a qualitative edge.

The Collins class submarines start to reach the end of their 30-year hull life in 2025. The likelihood of significant strategic discontinuities, and major shifts in global power balances over the next four decades, create a compelling case for the acquisition of a new and expanded undersea warfare capability to ensure there is no capability gap as the Collins class boats are retired.

Moreover, the capacity of Collins class submarines to deliver the required capability in the transition period 2018–2031 needs critical examination.

Compared with our Collins class submarines the future underwater warfare capability will be required to operate in a more demanding environment, at greater range and to achieve an expanded number of strategic effects. The underwater warfare capability will be a critical and unique asset in Australia's defence capability; providing the *strategic sting* to deter 'would be' aggressors and if necessary causing them to desist from aggressive actions.

It will also provide an increasingly important contribution to our US alliance obligations.

The strategic effects, consequent roles, the need for concurrency and an allowance for attrition should be factored into force structure considerations. The preparation of Defence White Paper 2008 offers an opportunity to set the top level capability, not an excuse for delay in initiating the long-lead activities.

In a subsequent article I will consider some of the issues arising from the acquisition of a future submarine capability. This will include design issues, lessons learnt from building and operating the Collins class, industry issues and personnel matters. ♦

*Rear Admiral Peter Briggs, AO, CSC (Retd) is the president of the Submarine Institute of Australia. He commanded HMA submarines Otway and Oxley and headed the Submarine Capability Team which was responsible for the Collins Project Recovery Program 1999-2000.*

# Australia's Strategic Outlook

## A Longer-Term View

Peter Varghese

In addressing the strategic outlook over the next 10-20 years — about as distant as it is prudent to look — much of what I discuss must be speculative. The past is not always a reliable guide to what will happen in the future and big strategic changes do not always happen slowly. If we were looking forward twenty years in 1987, who would have anticipated the sudden end of the cold war, the swift collapse of the Soviet Union, the Asian financial crisis or the 9/11 attacks?

Australia does not face any direct threat to its territorial integrity. Our continental geography and maritime approaches give us great strategic depth. We have deeply-rooted political stability and a strong economy. So we are quite well equipped to manage the consequences of strategic change. Yet the historical memory of Australians is one of strategic anxiety, an angst which has been shaped by many elements: a small population on a large continent, a historical sense of isolation from cultural roots, a pattern of instability in near regions and a visceral recognition that things can sometimes change quickly for the worse.

Geography, culture and history — including our wartime experiences from the Sudan campaign of 1885 to Afghanistan and Iraq today — have combined to make Australians acutely sensitive to the fact that sunny strategic skies can quickly cloud over. In strategic analysis, national psychology can be as important a vector as national capability.

Australia may be tucked away in the southern reaches of the southern hemisphere but our sense of strategic space is far broader than our locality. Our strategic horizons have always stretched well beyond our geography. Australia has long seen its own security tied to broader regional and global stability. Indeed, of the many instances where Australia has participated in military conflict, only once — in 1942-43 — was it in direct defence of Australian territory. In all other cases it reflected either a defence of principle or a calculation that Australia should help defeat a threat before the threat defeated Australia.

Against this background let me offer some observations about strategic outlook. Let me also acknowledge at the outset the dynamic tension between continuity and change which lies at the heart of all long-term projections. In the next 10-20 years, the foundations of the global order — such as US primacy — will remain familiar, even while they slowly change.

### Global cross-currents

Nation-states will remain the building blocks of the world system, despite globalisation and terrorism. National interests will stay the main driver of strategic events but national values will have increasing prominence.

To 2025 we are unlikely to see the widespread emergence of alternative political and economic systems to rival the success of market-based liberal democracy. So the sense of common values that underpins political and economic life in the West will stay strong. It will keep having broader appeal, including among countries where authoritarian regimes hold power. It will continue to influence the norms of global life — defining what is acceptable in state behaviour and governance, and what is beyond the pale.

Of course, not everyone will accept Western values as universal. Some states, with substantial middle classes opting for economic and social stability over democracy, will choose their interests over Western values when the two collide. Others will sometimes invoke values for tactical reasons as they vie for economic gain and political advantage. We should also not dismiss the potential appeal in some non-Western countries of models which promise economic growth and more personal space but stop well short of democracy.

Meanwhile, the world will be ever more connected. Further globalisation to 2025 as well as technological and demographic change will magnify the strategic impact of some future events. Globalisation certainly will not abolish war — but it does raise the cost of war and thus can act as a deterrent of sorts.

Global connectedness moreover does not always herald an alignment of interests. It can widen divisions. The disruption which globalisation brings to traditional societies, including in the Muslim world, stirs grievances that extremists can stoke. Access to the technology and knowledge base of open societies enables terrorists to wreak havoc far beyond their numbers. Even societies that benefit much from globalisation will be vulnerable, especially as electronic information systems which might be subject to attack become even more important to governments and economies.

Pressures associated with demographic change will require careful management. In Japan and Europe, shrinking populations will slow growth and lower living standards if

unpopular economic reforms are not pursued. China is already grappling with the economic and budgetary consequences of its ageing population and emerging gender imbalances. The US and India have more favourable demographic profiles, though India's challenge will be to keep its growing population adequately employed.

More people will try to migrate to the West, often with little education or savings. People-smugglers, taking advantage of such aspirations, will target prosperous countries, especially those with weak border controls and poor maritime surveillance capabilities.

To 2025 Western and other governments will pay more attention to resource security — including oil supplies, water scarcity and fish stocks — than at any time since the oil shocks of the 1970s and early 1980s. This will heighten tension among major and emerging powers but should not by itself cause war.

Failing states will remain a persistent problem, including in Australia's region, producing ongoing security and criminal threats and high intervention costs. Intervening states may be called upon to make long-term commitments — typically involving a mix of security and non-security personnel — but the success of such efforts will depend on a better understanding of how to build nations. There will also be no success without a local partner whose leadership has the vision, commitment and means to see it through.

## The future of war

Strength of will and strength of arms will remain the ultimate arbiters in politics among states. But military power now is mainly though not exclusively for coercion, status and operations other than conventional war, including support for nation-building. Public concern in the West at the humanitarian cost of the use of force will sometimes limit the options open to democratic governments. Long commitments, though often needed for counter-insurgency, counter-terrorism and support to nation-building, may get harder for governments to sustain politically.

Still, continuation of current trends towards less conventional warfare and more nation-building is not certain. National leaders may eventually forget the 20th century's errors and horrors and work less hard to prevent the types of situations that can make inter-state wars unavoidable. The nature of war itself will also keep changing. Increasingly it reflects a broad asymmetry in which conventional combat gets more precise and narrower in its applicability, while unconventional methods become more common, more sophisticated and more lethal.

Keys to superiority in battle will include advances in technology, in precision-strike, speed, stealth and satellite-based networks. These are areas where the US aims to stay unbeatable. In general, the gulf between rich states armed with new technologies and poor states lacking them will widen. Even so, rising powers that put much new wealth into defence — notably China and India — could match all except the US. Indeed, how rising powers develop force projection capabilities will be a key determinant of the global strategic future.

Some weaker states, and sub-state groups, will be attracted to irregular, asymmetric means of war, deterrence and coercion. They will choose what they can from such options as terrorism and insurgency, attacking information infrastructure and — in rare and extreme cases — the possibility of threats to build or brandish weapons of mass destruction. In some cases they will develop increasingly sophisticated propaganda campaigns — heavily using new media — in conjunction with threats and acts of physical violence.

Still, the human factor will continue to matter, and remains something of a leveller. Iraq and Afghanistan show how important raw numbers and training are in ground combat. In ground forces, the need will often be for the special-forces qualities of soldiers in small units and networks, drawing on information superiority, elite training and non-combat skills such as languages. Soldiers will have to have wide-rangingly impressive skills, which many militaries will struggle to recruit in the face of demographic trends, private-sector competition and public complacency.

## Terrorism

Terrorism will stay a destabilising force globally for at least a generation. It will be a danger to Australian and allied nationals, a challenge to the authority of many governments, and a disruption to the patterns of trust and openness that globalised economies need. The West will have little ability directly to influence Islamist ideology or the political environment in Muslim states, which will change only slowly. Even elimination of Al Qa-eda's operational capability would not cripple the global terrorist threat. Such terrorism will keep adapting and decentralising with a continuing flow of recruits and with autonomous cells looking to Al Qa-eda more for inspiration than for orders and capability.

At the same time, counter-terrorism measures are improving as are co-operation among states and within whole-of-government approaches. But tactical wins limit terrorists' capabilities without always breaking their generally strong motivation.

Islamist terrorism in particular has in-built limits as a strategic threat to Australia. It has little scope to endanger the existence of, or take territory from, the Australian state. Nor will terrorism threaten Australia's fundamental freedom of action to the extent that might, for example, occur through coercion by an economically or militarily powerful state. Islamist terrorism in Southeast Asia will remain a danger for at least a decade. But thanks to the efforts of Indonesia and other regional states it is probably a diminishing danger as the strengthened capability of regional law enforcement agencies keep the pressure on Jemaah Islamiyah.

## WMD and missiles

Weapons of mass destruction and missiles will remain a primary element of the global security landscape. Nuclear weapons will retain their prime roles of deterrence against nuclear attack and of leverage in crisis. Though we should expect some spread of WMD capabilities to 2025, accelerated

proliferation is unlikely as is use of WMD by states. Nuclear weapons are difficult and expensive to make. Moreover, the normative influence of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty is resilient, despite dire predictions by some observers.

More than ever, the focus of proliferation fears, and of international measures, will be the tough cases — North Korea and Iran. These cases show no sign of becoming easier.

A larger risk is from terrorist use of a probably rudimentary chemical, biological or radiological weapon — though this is more likely to cause mass panic than mass casualties. More probable than WMD use is the prospect of WMD ambitions again being a catalyst for tensions. The spread of ballistic and long-range cruise missile technology to many more states is unlikely. To 2025 efforts to build defences against missiles will continue apace, though such defences will remain useful only against small-scale attacks.

## Major power dynamics

In the world to 2025, a few powerful states, especially the US, will largely shape the strategic landscape. Indeed, as the century moves on, we face the rise of mega-states, giants unprecedented in their economic and strategic weight but also in the scale and complexity of their potential domestic problems.

Absent major shocks, by 2025 the combined GDP of developing economies in purchasing-power-parity terms will exceed that of the advanced economies, including Australia and its allies. But — as now — there will not be any simple correlation between economic power and strategic weight. In my view a concert of powers — roughly equivalent to the European concert formed after the Napoleonic wars — is unlikely to emerge. That is mostly because the US will not want it, and a rising China and India will not be content with the existing power relativities, as European powers were in the first half of 19th century. But there should still be a fair measure of co-operation among major and middle powers, even if it occurs more often through ad hoc coalitions rather than through the United Nations.

Other than the US — which will retain its strategic pre-eminence — the big powers that will most shape Australia's strategic environment in the decades ahead are China, Japan, India and, in a different way, Indonesia.

A range of Chinas is possible to 2025, including one that is internally much the same as today, though with much more economic and military clout. Barring major setbacks, China by 2025 will have strategic influence beyond East Asia and will have the strongest Asian military. It should stand — with the US and Japan — among the largest economies. China has an advantage and a shackle earlier rising powers lacked: its rivals have deep stakes in its economic success — and it cannot, for reasons of internal stability, afford to disrupt a world economic system which is generating wealth and opportunities for its people — many of whom remain poor and increasingly frustrated.

China has other priorities too. It will stay determined to stop Taiwanese independence. It expects to become the pre-eminent power in East Asia. Its relationship with the US will

contain elements of both engagement and competition. All the while, it is likely that China will be at pains to be seen as a friendly power in its region. None of this will be simple, not least given Beijing's need to square strategic calculations with rising public expectations, including nationalist sentiment. Moreover, plenty of commentators remind us that China's economic trajectory is not guaranteed.

Japan's economic weight will stay great in global terms, though its economic fortunes will be bound increasingly to China's and those of the US. Tokyo will keep moving carefully to a more active security posture, within the US alliance and multilateral coalitions. Still, Japan faces a challenging time in keeping its level of influence in Asia as China continues to rise.

India, meanwhile, is likely to go far in translating economic growth into greater strategic weight. Like China, it is focused on fostering development while seeking recognition as a power with global interests. It also seeks defence capabilities commensurate with its widening interests. India will not want its global aspirations hostage to old tensions with Pakistan. It will want a deeper partnership with the US. In its ties with China, it will try to reconcile burgeoning economic relations with elements of competition, including over energy resources and their utilisation.

I will not dwell here on the European Union or Russia. Their strategic horizons will overlap Australia's but for the most part selectively and indirectly. To 2025 the EU is unlikely to play anything like the global strategic role suggested by its economic weight, but the UK and France will remain players with global reach.

## The United States

The US will stay in a league of its own to 2025. Washington's global leadership will be sustained by its strong democratic values and its global interests. In the decades ahead, however, its lead over other powers is likely to shrink noticeably in economic weight and soft power, although generally not in technology or warfare. We can expect others to probe the limits of US will and strength and what they might see as the tensions between its democratic values and its hard strategic equities.

A lasting impact of the 9/11 attacks and Iraq will be the way these events influence US choices, including about the resort to force, force structure and alliances. The US defence budget will have to balance the divergent priorities of land forces (including for irregular combat) and powerful maritime capabilities. In the West Pacific, US maritime military advantage over China will diminish. The US is set to retain its strong engagement and strategic presence in East Asia. As it comes to rely less on permanent bases, strategic partnerships could become at times even more useful than some formal alliances. Still, the US alliances with Japan and Australia will continue to anchor Washington's East Asia strategy. South Korea's alliance with the US, though it will feel growing stress, has every chance of enduring.

## Northeast Asia

Australia's security will turn largely on how the US, China and Japan manage their complex relationships. Never have China and Japan been so strong at the same time. In China, the US has a vital stake in a rising power's growth. Japan-US defence ties are closer than ever.

The crucial relationship, in East Asia and globally, will be between the US and China, and will likely stay a delicate mix of engagement and competition. Both will find the threads of competition, co-operation and economic co-dependence hard to weave into consistent policy. A major upset in economic relations or a lurch towards protectionism could hasten strategic competition. Differences between Japan and China are unlikely to vanish, especially over history. As a general rule, these powers will steer an unsteady course of expanding economic ties coupled with strategic wariness. Where they deepen regional co-operation, as in the growth of East Asian diplomatic and financial architecture, it will be partly a contest for influence over these institutions.

Over Taiwan, US-China relations carry the only foreseeable risk — currently low — of war between major powers. Both powers will try very hard to avoid such a strategic, economic and humanitarian disaster.

A high-intensity war in Korea is a very small likelihood but other worrisome scenarios are more likely. Though the North Korean regime has proven surprisingly resilient, we cannot rule out its collapse — a possibility that would unpredictably change North Asia's strategic equilibrium.

## Middle East and Southwest Asia

Further turbulence in the Middle East to 2025 is certain. The need for the US to sustain deep strategic engagement in the region will stay large. The Middle East's dominant share of oil reserves will be strategically more important. The region will continue facing serious religious and political rivalries and inter-state mistrusts along with population growth and rising water scarcity. It will face increased unrest from a youth bulge, especially in countries with high unemployment and limited economic openings, including weak involvement in the global knowledge economy. The Sunni-Shia divide is likely to emerge further as a fault-line in the geo-politics of the region.

Political structures in some Arab countries will likely become somewhat more representative. However, I believe these changes will be only incremental, and may continue to bring to power governments with Islamist and anti-Western agendas. Many regional governments will also face leadership transitions, with potential for heightened instability as regimes try to respond to pressures for liberalisation while retaining political control.

Diverse outcomes in Iraq are possible. The most likely scenario is an Iraq which stays together as a federal state with democratic elections, and with Islam holding a prominent place in its political culture. Political violence will not recede quickly and the risk of increased sectarian conflict will remain. Iran's future nuclear weapons intentions will likely remain a first-order concern. A nuclear-armed Iran would have a strengthened hand in opposing Western interests. Iranian pursuit of nuclear weapons will depend in part on how Tehran perceives Iran's rightful status and



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its strategic circumstances, not just on whether its ideology stays hardline.

Saudi Arabia and, even more, Pakistan will stay keystone states. They remind us that radical Islamist capture of state power, in the Middle East or beyond, is a small possibility but one with dangerous consequences. Still, it is less likely through a revolution or coup than in observable stages of disorder exploitable by extremists.

Afghanistan will need heavy international support for ten years — and potentially much longer — including high-quality Western military forces, police and development assistance suited to the range of stabilisation, combat and capacity-building roles.

## Southeast Asia

Power relativities in Southeast Asia will shift, but less than in Northeast Asia. Southeast Asia should remain fairly stable and reform-minded enough to sustain reasonable rates of development. It's weaknesses will still cause more trouble than its strengths. Higher economic growth and improving governance is likely to reduce but not end terrorism, insurgency and communal violence where it occurs in the region.

The character of the government in Jakarta will remain crucial to our strategic outlook. To reduce chances of population pressures bringing instability, Indonesia will need prolonged economic growth, supported by sustained legal reforms to assure investors.

## South Pacific and East Timor

The South Pacific and East Timor are where we can most expect difficulties of the kind which generates pressure for Australia to respond directly. Australia will stay under pressure to play the leading foreign role in making up for local administrative incapacity and to respond to lawlessness in Melanesia, as well as to humanitarian and natural disasters throughout the islands.

The region's very small states with fast-growing populations will struggle to stay viable. China-Taiwan rivalry over ties with island states can further weaken governance. Transnational crime will keep exploiting porous borders and other vulnerabilities. PNG's challenges are on a scale apart. Infrastructure and law-and-order problems, fast population growth and poor education and health all threaten the population's welfare and erode efforts to strengthen the state.

As a general rule, nation-building in our neighbourhood — like nation-building, counter-insurgency and counter-terrorism in more remote places — will often be a long and only partly successful struggle.

## Conclusion — strategic shock

I will end where I began — on strategic shocks. I have focused more on likely trends than on the improbable — an approach some would say smacks of continuity. So I reiterate that we should expect the world to 2025 to face strategic shocks of one kind or another, even though each specific scenario for a crisis is in itself unlikely.

The timing of shocks is by definition unpredictable, their cascading effects hard to gauge. The range of wild cards is wide. Some are already imaginable, like regime change in North Korea or a convergence of terrorism and WMD. Other possibilities are currently harder to imagine, including the ways multiple shocks might interact. Fast environmental degradation and natural disasters, along with pandemics and economic crises, are possible systemic shocks which military capabilities cannot do much to prevent.

Any big strategic consequences from climate change probably will not be felt until after 2025. Managing these consequences will attract increasing attention, including the prospect of environment refugees, internal movements of population and the effect of environmental stress on internal stability. Damaging weather or clearer evidence of climate disruption before 2025 could provoke increasingly strong public responses in anticipation of more serious climate change in coming decades.

More new or virulent diseases may emerge. With changes in the flu virus, and in the human and animal populations it can infect, the chance of another flu pandemic on the scale of 1918 is real. The economic, social, political and security impacts would be very large.

So the list of issues affecting Australia's security in the years ahead is long, and will keep growing. Looking back, it is clear that new strategic problems advance faster than old ones retreat. In a complex and interdependent world, the new issues do not replace the old — they join them on a more crowded horizon. ♦

*Peter Varghese is Director-General of the Office of National Assessments. He has also served as the Senior Adviser (International) to the Prime Minister and as a Deputy Secretary in the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This article is based on his address to the Security in Government Conference in Canberra on 05 December 2007.*



### AUSTRALIAN PEACEKEEPING MEMORIAL - AN INVITATION TO BE A SPONSOR OR MEMBER

The Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will commemorate and celebrate Australian peacekeeping. It will honour the sacrifice, service and valour of Australian peacekeepers given in the same spirit as in other conflicts honoured in cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and on ANZAC Parade, Canberra.

#### Progress to Date

The Federal Government, through the Department of Veterans' Affairs, has provided an initial grant of \$200,000 to assist with the construction of the Memorial, which experience indicates requires about \$2.5 million to fund such a major national memorial in Canberra. A committee for the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project has been convened with duly elected office bearers and representatives from the ADF, the AFP, State and Territory Police, and peacekeeping veterans.

The APMP Committee welcomes membership and support from all peacekeeping veterans, interested individuals and organisations.

Full details of the project are listed on our website : [www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au](http://www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au)

# Updating international humanitarian law

## and the laws of armed conflict for the wars of the 21st Century

Gregory Rose

Aspects of international humanitarian law (IHL) and the international law of armed conflict (LOAC) are out-dated because they are ill-adapted to new battlefields. Some innovation is needed in them to address the complexities of the networked insurgencies that we see today.

War between states has declined in prevalence and importance relative to armed conflicts across societal groups, both within states and across national borders. Private organisations are likely to dominate armed conflicts for the foreseeable future, including those in the Asia-Pacific and beyond, where Australian expeditionary forces are engaged. Often called 'non-state actors' in the international legal parlance, they typically conduct hostilities through irregular but systematic attacks, including bombings, shootings and psychological operations. Are these armed conflicts to which LOAC even applies?

The asymmetrical balance of forces resulting from the confrontation between states and non-state actors leads typically to tactics by the latter that include violence intentionally directed against soft targets such as civilians. These tactics can be defined as war crimes or terrorism, although application of each of these categories is legally controversial. The criminality of the tactics used raises the need for mechanisms for prosecution of these crimes. Such mechanisms need to be applicable across a wide range of novel armed conflict circumstances and be sufficiently robust to withstand intensely political scrutiny of their legitimacy.

In addition, the privatisation of American military operations in Iraq has been extraordinarily extensive and responses to allegations made against the conduct of private security corporations have demonstrated that the framework for their accountability is poorly developed. To whom are they liable and should they be covered under status-of-forces agreements as military auxiliaries? Under what circumstances might they be regarded as mercenaries?

### Confronting sacred taboos

Both IHL and LOAC naturally reflect what we have learned from the wars of the past. The fresh lessons of the World War II motivated a rewrite and further development of international law, producing the four 1949 Geneva conventions. The mid-20<sup>th</sup>-century experience of

decolonisation led to the two 1977 Protocols to the Geneva Conventions.

Although those treaties and protocols are partly based on enduring moral principles, they are also partly based on international political processes. Such processes are reflective of their contemporary attitudes and circumstances and often articulate fractious compromises. Thus, it should not be surprising to find that the Geneva conventions and protocols are not fully attuned to the early 21st Century, just as they could not reasonably be expected to anticipate all the exigencies of the 22nd Century.

Yet, the new dilemmas of 21st Century war have been pressing upon legal policy makers with increasing urgency for over a decade without being addressed. The extraordinarily important function of IHL and LOAC in civilising armed conflict has attained a sacred status. The current treaty instruments have themselves become a holy canon. The suggestion that aspects of them might be inappropriate or ill-adapted to 21st Century asymmetrical conflict, and that they need rethinking, attracts consternation and opprobrium among many expert practitioners. The International Committee of the Red Cross has stated its position firmly; it sees no need to revisit the Geneva Conventions and Protocols.

### New conflicts – new moral and legal dilemmas

Nevertheless, there are endless debates and confusion on many matters to be found in newspapers, academic journals and legal and defence circles. These include deciding whether particular insurgents are or are not terrorists; when are insurgents to be regarded as combatants and if, when and how might they retain civilian status; what rights and protections are they entitled to, and what might the rights and obligations of state powers be. Such practical and legal quandaries demonstrate the uncertainty generated by the ambiguities and anachronisms in the Geneva Conventions and Protocols. Guantanamo Bay has aptly been called a legal black hole. The so-called 'War on Terrorism' gives these problems profile and urgency.

At the heart of today's doubts, needs, iniquities and questions are the problems caused by changing battlefield practices. These include asymmetry of forces, non-distinction

between combatants and civilians (especially by terrorists) and the privatisation or civilianisation by contract of military support structures and protective security elements. These are exacerbated by a fundamental lack of reciprocity between belligerent parties, especially nation-states bound by and adhering to IHL and LOAC, and their terrorist adversaries who do not feel so bound and who often regard the adherence by others to IHL and LOAC as an advantage to be ruthlessly exploited.

Contemporary hostilities led by non-state actors also are frequently 'internationalised' in that they benefit from support by foreign governments, whether by means of arms, intelligence, finance or refuge. Thus, they are trans-national conflicts that are networked across several countries but do not occur directly between countries. Debate over the meaning of Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions, which applies to armed conflict of a 'non-international character', has centred on whether it properly applies only to internal or also to trans-national conflicts. A plurality of the United States Supreme Court considered it to be broad enough to cover the circumstances of trans-national armed conflict with private organisations (*Hamdan v Rumsfeld*). However, Common Article 3 is articulated in highly generalised terms and provides scant legal guidance for state conduct in addressing the wide variety of circumstances that need to be covered. Common Article 3 may be supplemented by Article 75 of Additional Protocol I and by Additional Protocol II, to the extent that those provisions have become customary international law, which is uncertain, or to the extent that those instruments have been ratified (eg. Australia has ratified both, the USA has not).

Just as the times change and history moves on, so must the law. We need to review aspects of the Geneva conventions and their Protocols, discomfiting a task as it may be, so as to enable and enforce the rule of law in armed conflict. To address contemporary battlefield reality, new questions need to be elaborated in international law. These primarily concern the respective status, rights and responsibilities of state powers vis-à-vis private actors that are not conventional armed forces, such as insurgents and security corporations.

## Keeping up with national laws

National legal systems have been far more quick and agile in confronting the new challenges posed by networked insurgents using terrorist tactics. Australia, for example, like Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the USA, has instituted new laws that define and criminalise terrorist networks, redefine and modernise the definition of sedition, extend the extraterritorial application of these crimes, expand intelligence gathering powers and protect intelligence from disclosure, enable emergency preventative detention, create control orders to restrict liberty of movement, restrain some usual privileges in court cases, and facilitate the mobilisation of military forces to assist the police with domestic law enforcement.

These new national security laws are forging a new legal space between the domestic laws governing criminal procedure and those governing international armed

conflict. Complementary innovation is needed in the more cumbersome international legal system.

Some have suggested that human rights treaties provide guidance for IHL and LOAC. On the one hand, it is arguable that the Geneva Conventions form a special law (*lex specialis*) that displaces the application of human rights norms, such as the right to life, in the circumstances of armed conflict. On the other hand, the position articulated by United Nations bodies, including the bench of the International Court of Justice, opine for the complementary application of human rights norms but do not prescribe which or how these are to be implemented during hostilities. Further, it is uncertain which human rights norms might be considered customary international law and not all states are bound by all the relevant provisions.

Significantly, in December 2007 the UK House of Lords decided that a person's human rights may be infringed lawfully in legitimate military operations where it is necessary for imperative reasons of security, but that the human rights concerned are merely qualified to the extent necessary, not displaced. (The case was decided in relation to military operations by the United Kingdom in Iraq authorised by the United Nations Security Council, and human rights norms binding on the United Kingdom under the European Convention on Human Rights (*Al-Jedda v Secretary of Defence*)). However, the extent to which it is necessary to qualify the application of human rights norms during armed conflict remains unclear. There remains an immediate need to elaborate adequate legal standards applicable to non-state actors engaged in hostilities.

## New protocol for a new age of warfare

A Fourth Protocol to the Geneva Conventions would be useful. It could fill troubling gaps in the Conventions, and fix some of the problems of the First Protocol. In particular, it might clarify in what circumstances targeted attacks on insurgents who use terrorist tactics are to be characterised as combat measures in an armed conflict or as extrajudicial assassinations within state jurisdiction.

A Fourth Protocol might also address some particularly vexing dilemmas arising from recent international armed conflicts:

- What is the legal significance of trans-national circumstances in a conflict with private (non-state) actors?
- When captured alive, how are private actors to be treated, especially if long-term detention of terrorist belligerents is involved to prevent them renewing their belligerency (as it is for prisoners-of-war under the Third Geneva Convention)?
- When and how are such detained non-state actors to be released?
- What is the consequence of their non-enemy nationality, particularly if the armed conflict in question is a trans-national but not an inter-state one?

- What is the proper method of trial for their crimes against IHL?
- Which of the obligations of a state power are unilateral and which reciprocal?
- In what circumstances are the personnel of a contracted private security company entitled to civilian protections or to be treated as combatants?
- What obligations do they owe to whom?
- In cases of negligence or of criminal conduct, to whom are they liable?
- By what process should they be held accountable?

The USA has been the main country to begin formulating a set of internationally applicable rules that respond to the new circumstances of armed conflict. Its efforts to devise a trial system by military commission have fumbled through a thicket of domestic and international objections. Actions of the USA in the Middle East, and in Guantanamo Bay, as well as the practice of extraordinary rendition in Central Europe and Central Asia, have caused controversy. Allegations concerning war crimes by the USA and its allies thrive in the current uncertainty concerning the application of the laws of armed conflict to trans-national terrorism and insurgency. That the US's terrorist adversaries resolutely refuse to comply with IHL in their execution of attacks is too often ignored or glossed over in international discussions of the legal frameworks involved. Highly politicised war crimes indictments against other political figures and military personnel also have been launched in countries including Belgium, France, New Zealand and the UK.

Measures taken by the United States administration and courts include:

- defining a class of combatants not entitled to the protections of the Third Geneva Convention;
- defining the responsibilities of the detaining power under Common Article 3 of all four Geneva Conventions;
- defining armed conflict by them, where it involves terrorism, as a crime; and
- devising a trial system by military commission for those to be charged with war crimes, crimes against the laws of war or serious criminal offences.

## Moral as well as legal obligation

In December 2007, the Legal Adviser to the US Secretary of State, John B. Bellinger III, in an address at Oxford University, called for scholarly debate to clarify and elaborate the rule of law in relation to detentions of private persons engaged in trans-national terrorist activities. Similarly, the Foreign Affairs Committee of the House of Commons in the United Kingdom has called for updating of the Geneva Conventions. Further research and conceptual work is also needed to elaborate rules for the civil and criminal liability of private security corporations that a state contracts to provide services in the field. The process of international law formation is diffuse and the time is ripe to deepen and widen the discourse on this topic.

Unfortunately, there has been little discourse yet in academia on how new legal initiatives might clarify and elaborate the status of non-state actors. While the political sensitivity of these issues might be expected to inhibit governmental leadership in a divisive global debate over innovative standards, it is concerning that academic debate has also been sparse. Of course, the same political sensibilities and reticence predominate in academe but it is remarkable that, over seven years after the 11 September 2001 attacks and the launch of the 'war on terrorism', the issues remain to be systematically explored.

Australia has much to contribute in this field and a timely opportunity to do so. It is appropriate that Australia, as a member of the 'coalition of the willing' in Iraq, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan and the International Security Force in East Timor, consider its direct and regional interests in the development of norms related to insurgents and private military companies. Throughout Asia, state military and police forces are also both being engaged to combat the overlapping phenomena of networked insurgency and transnational crime.

Although the USA has gone it alone to create a legal system to address its trans-national armed conflict with private parties, other insurgents or terrorists and other states are engaged in comparable conflicts. The examples of armed conflicts with insurgent groups in India, Indonesia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Sri Lanka and Thailand come readily to mind. The time has come for international lawyers in government and academia to update the international laws of armed conflict. Although it is easier to sit back and watch the USA shoulder the responsibility of legal innovation, and the risk of opprobrium for blaspheming apparent holy canon, that path will not lead to an optimal outcome for Australian and other national interests.

It will instead result in the much slower development of new customary legal practices, greater uncertainty as to what they are, and a lesser role for other interested countries in crafting outcomes that are appropriate to their specific needs and capabilities. And it is cowardly to leave such matters up to the Americans.

If Australian forces in Afghanistan capture in battle a private combatant who is a citizen of a friendly country, say Noordin Mohammed Top, how should we treat him and under what law? Next time an Australian ally captures a new David Hicks on a new battlefield, what should we expect? Unless we are willing to devise a clearer international law for such situations, we can have no fair expectations. ♦

*Associate Professor Gregory Rose teaches international criminal law in the Faculty of Law at the University of Wollongong. This article has been peer-reviewed before publication.*

# Unintended consequences

## haunt the United States at war

Ian Bickerton and Kenneth Hagan

It is now clear to all Americans and their allies that the war in Iraq has not gone as the administration of George W. Bush originally intended. Rather than fighting a short war with a clear-cut victory and few US casualties, the US has found itself bogged down in ways increasingly reminiscent of the war in Vietnam. Instead of eradicating the stigma of the loss in Vietnam once and for all, Iraq has revived unpalatable memories. As was the case with President Lyndon Johnson in Vietnam in 1968, the Bush administration is no longer in control of what happens in Iraq. At least until the mid-2007 'surge' – the long-term success or not of which will remain unclear for some time – the so-called 'turning points' heralding a change of course in the war, such as the capture, trial, and execution of Saddam Hussein, have subsequently been described as merely 'different configurations' in the ongoing struggle against what President Bush initially identified as the 'axis of evil'.

George Bush has discovered the truth of Machiavelli's maxim that 'wars begin when you will but they do not end when you please'. Americans who know their history should not be surprised by this. Iraq is only the latest example of an American war whose unintended consequences dwarf the original justification and expectations of the leaders who drew the nation into belligerency. Every major war fought by the United States produced unintended consequences that outweighed the intended consequences. The inevitable 'fog' and 'friction' of warfare caused such unanticipated changes that it was impossible for those US leaders who entered wars to realise their original ambitions.

### Clausewitz – wrong or misapplied?

The fighting of wars radically alters foreign policy, military strategy, and domestic life. The magnitude and universality of the unintended consequences of wars show the danger of embracing the proposition put forward by 19<sup>th</sup>-century Prussian soldier and military theorist Carl von Clausewitz that 'war was nothing but the continuation of policy by other means'. US war strategists have embraced

this notion, especially in the past thirty years—ironically, as an unintended consequence of the Vietnam War. Yet an examination of the outcomes of wars fought by the United States reveals that Clausewitz's assertion that war is a rational continuation of politics by other means is dangerously wrong.

A closer reading of Clausewitz would have alerted US strategists to the perils of a too-enthusiastic adoption of the military option as a means of achieving national goals. The Prussian was well aware that a major characteristic of war was uncertainty — both in the course of combat and in predicting its outcome. He was aware that states sometimes act foolishly or recklessly, and he solemnly advised: 'No one starts a war — or rather, no one in his senses should do so — without first being clear in his mind what he intends to achieve by that war and how he intends to conduct it'. US strategists planning for Iraq apparently overlooked this salient passage in their master's work.

### A realm of unintended consequences

The phrase 'unintended consequences' refers to unforeseen or unpredicted events that were the consequences of war, as opposed to foreseen events or consequences. Hannah Arendt observed that politics is the realm of unintended consequences. She was drawing attention to the distinction between the predictable world of science and the chaotic, unpredictable world of politicians. If this is true of politics, it is even truer of war, which is why the notion that war is merely the execution of policy by other means is nonsense. Because of the intensity, death and destruction intrinsic to warfare, the outcomes of wars, regardless of the intentions and motives of those who enter them and the creative military genius of those who fight them, are far more unpredictable than non-violent political actions.

It may appear that not all the unintended consequences of the United States' wars have been undesirable. From the first war of 1775-1783, America's wars have been engines of economic growth. Wars have broken down class, ethnic, and

gender barriers (at least briefly) and have caused the greatest demographic shifts in the nation's history. The abolition of slavery was clearly an unintended but positive consequence of the American Civil War. Since the Great Depression wars have repeatedly revitalised the role of the federal government as the planner and shaper of American society and life. The Marshall Plan greatly assisted the reconstruction of Europe in the aftermath of World War II. The tragedy is that it has taken wars to bring about these changes. It is one of the great ironies of modern history that a nation that sees itself as a beacon for all mankind, a nation that contains within itself the genius, the creativity, the drive to capture the imagination of peoples around the world for the past two centuries, has not always been able to harness that energy without resort to war.

The unintended and radical consequences of wars create policymaking problems as difficult to resolve as the disagreements that led to hostilities. Even so-called 'victory' comes at a price. This reality has been true for every major US war since the American War of Independence. Paradoxically, often the most immediate unintended consequences are domestic, and the brunt of these are borne by the incumbent president. Governments of democratic republics like the United States depend upon the support of public opinion if they are to truly function as democracies. Yet throughout US history, as the duration of combat increased and US casualties mounted, presidents have been unable to maintain a public consensus for their wars.

The most dramatic example of this is the assassination of President Abraham Lincoln immediately following the Union victory over the Confederacy in the American Civil War. In World War II, generally regarded as widely endorsed by the American people, dwindling public support for the fight against Japan in 1945 was a contributing factor to President Harry Truman's decision to drop the atomic bombs on Japan in order to induce an immediate surrender. The fall in approval rating of President George W. Bush since 2005 to a low of around 30 per cent, following his stunning 90 per cent approval rating in the aftermath of the 9/11 attacks, is just another example of the inability of administrations that go to war to maintain public endorsement for the war. In all cases, as political exhaustion set in, wars led to a corrosion of the presidency, public hostility, and the domestic rejection of presidents who took the nation to war or were seen to be prolonging them unnecessarily. Lyndon Johnson and George H.W. Bush were both defeated in presidential elections in which the conduct of the US at war featured as a major campaign issue: Johnson because the war was going badly in Vietnam, and Bush after what appeared to be a triumphant victory in liberating Kuwait from the aggression of Saddam Hussein.

## Intended and unintended outcomes

Most historians, when assessing the efficacy of wars, assume that the outcomes or results were intended, expected or planned. Thus it is accepted that the 1775-1783 war with Great Britain was initially fought for American

independence, the 1848 war with Mexico for the acquisition of the Southwest, and so on. Very little attention is given to the question as to what outcomes of wars were intended and what ones were not. Examined from this perspective, it soon becomes apparent that the independence of the thirteen colonies and the establishment of the United States were unintended consequences of a war begun in 1775 by loyal subjects of the King of England to redress colonial grievances over taxes imposed by the mother country. The fighting soon hardened the resolve of the colonists who then determined to seek complete separation and independence from the supposed English 'tyrant'. Similarly, it can be seen that the War of 1812, by removing European resistance to US westward expansion, led inexorably to war with Mexico (1846-1848). In turn, an unsought, destructive Civil War was an unintended consequence of tensions exacerbated over the expansion of slavery in the territories gained in the Mexican War. War bred further war.

Major US wars invariably led to further entanglements. The Spanish-American War of 1898, for example, led to the protracted and violent war to suppress Filipino nationalists. It also led to expeditions against the Chinese 'Boxers' in 1900 and to a series of 'Banana Wars' in the Western Hemisphere. Fought in Cuba, the Dominican Republic, Haiti and Nicaragua these neo-colonial police actions plagued the United States throughout the twentieth century. Their vestiges can be found today in US relations with the countries of Central America and the Caribbean.

World War I did not make the world safe for democracy, the proclaimed reason for US entry, rather it unleashed ethnic rivalries in Europe, and created the political resentments and economic instability that led to World War II. At home it produced a period of intolerance and repression of minorities perceived to be radicals. And while World War II catapulted the United States to economic and military pre-eminence, it also unexpectedly ushered in a half-century of unprecedented fear and armed preparedness known as the Cold War. Sixty years after peace was achieved in East Asia, more than 35,000 US troops and their dependants remain stationed in Japan. A half-century after the Korean War—itself an unintended consequence of World War II in Asia—30,000 US troops are deployed in South Korea. In some kind of bizarre twist of the contemporary policymakers' minds a perpetually divided Korea is now being touted by the Bush administration as a model for an acceptable outcome for Iraq.

## Unintended and ignored patterns?

Two other wars more closely resemble the patterns emerging in Iraq today: the Spanish-American War (1898-1902) and the Vietnam War (1964-1973). In both of these wars, when seeking congressional support and appropriations for a resort to arms, the president deliberately misled Congress, lied to the American public about prior events, exaggerated the dangers of not going to war, and played down anticipated casualties (US and foreign). The two wars were fought by administrations self-righteously proclaiming the moral superiority of their cause and ostensibly seeking

to bring democracy to oppressed foreign peoples. In both the Spanish-American and Vietnam wars, the US employed its overwhelming technological superiority against what it regarded as avowedly inferior indigenous forces. The Americans expected a quick victory over enemies whose history, culture and goals they knew little about. In both wars, following apparent initial military successes, US forces soon faced long, costly and ultimately successful insurgencies determined to expel American troops from their land. Furthermore, in both of these wars, as in Iraq, suspicion and fear of the United States increased among friend and foe around the world. The consequences were far from those intended.

The predominant official reason given by President William McKinley for the War against Spain in 1898 was the liberation of the Cuban people from historic Spanish oppression. The US Navy's decision to fight for Cuba in the Pacific altered the strategy of the war and led to the acquisition of a United States empire in the Pacific. In addition to extensive Pacific possessions, the unintended consequences of the Spanish-American War included a very bloody and savage suppression of a popular uprising against United States occupation in the Philippines. More than 120,000 American soldiers served in the brutal repression of the 'insurrection' which more or less came to an end by July 1902, although sporadic fighting continued until 1907. Over 4300 US soldiers were killed and at least 16,000 Filipino soldiers perished in brutal fighting in which torture was routinely used by American forces. Mass murders of civilians and incarcerations of whole towns and villages took place. Estimates of the number of Filipino civilians killed range from 250,000 to one million.

The unforeseen consequences of the Vietnam War were equally far reaching. Democracy was damaged at home and discredited abroad. The war unexpectedly brought down President Lyndon Johnson and put an end to Johnson's 'War on Poverty' and to his dream of the 'Great Society'. The cost of the war and the resulting inflation, the abuse of executive power that took place during the war, and the violations of civil liberties led to divisiveness, violent protest and unrest across the country in the late 1960s and early 1970s. In addition, the brutality of the war and the atrocities committed by US forces in Vietnam alienated many developing countries.

The nation was deeply divided over the conduct and policy of the military during the Vietnam War. To redeem themselves in the public eye and to preclude another disastrous limited war, US war planners turned to the strategies of Carl von Clausewitz, who had extolled Napoleon's use of huge armies and thunderous firepower. Henceforth, the United States must fight only when its vital national interests were threatened, and it must employ overwhelming force. One of the principal architects of the new Clausewitzian strategy was General Colin Powell, who was appointed chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff by President George H. W. Bush in 1989. Powell's version of Clausewitzian strategy governed the US conduct of the Gulf War of 1991. It was reprised as 'shock and awe' in the first days of the current war in Iraq. However, in Iraq—as in the Philippines initially and in Vietnam ultimately—massive force did not achieve the desired US political goals. An Iraqi regime was indeed

toppled, but the subsequent anti-American insurgency has so far proved impossible to suppress and it has brought worldwide disgrace upon the United States.

## Intending alternatives

It is essential that the United States find alternatives to war, for its own sake and for the future survival of democracy as a political system at home and abroad. George W. Bush has repeatedly told the American people that the United States is waging a world-wide war on terrorism 'over there' so that it does not have to be fought 'over here'. In the next decade and beyond the United States, in its efforts to win the so-called 'war on terrorism' will most likely attempt to increase its military power further and further beyond its borders. This is a futile course of action. Military actions—especially in the Middle East—have generated widespread antagonism toward the United States and increased the likelihood of an attack on US soil by giving life, even legitimacy, to radical Islam. Rather than calling for an expanded and greater use of military force—as was the case in Vietnam when faced with a similar failure to change a culture it did not understand—the United States should content itself with looking for ways to encourage the gradual evolution of democracy through restraint and patience.

'Negotiation' rather than 'war' should become the United States' byword in its relations with all regimes, hostile as well as friendly ones. A realistic US foreign policy would engage with nations whose regimes are inimical to its own. A continuation of massive arms sales to 'allies' as a means of deterring potential enemies, as in the recent decision to transfer to Saudi Arabia and the Gulf States tens of billions of dollars of technologically advanced military equipment, simply exacerbates tensions and leads to a greater likelihood of war. It seems as if Machiavelli rather than Clausewitz has had the last word about the irrepressibility of wars. ♦

*Associate Professor Ian J. Bickerton has been a member of the School of History at the University of New South Wales for the past thirty-nine years. He has also taught at the University of California at Santa Barbara, the University of Missouri at Kansas City, and lectured in the United States, the United Kingdom, Europe and Israel. His publications include 'A History of the Arab-Israeli Conflict', 'Forty-Three Days: The Gulf War', and 'Contested Spaces: The Historiography of the Arab-Israeli Conflict'.*

*Professor Kenneth J. Hagan taught for twenty years at the US Naval Academy in Annapolis and for the past eight years has taught a course on US military strategy for the US Naval War College at Monterey. He is the Author of 'American Gunboat Diplomacy and the Old Navy, 1877-1887' and 'This People's Navy: The Making of American Sea Power'. He has also edited two collections of original essays: 'Against All Enemies' and 'In Peace and War: Interpretations of American Naval History', a revised and updated edition of which will be published in May 2008.*

*Their jointly-authored book, 'Unintended Consequences: The United States at War' was published by Reaktion Books in May 2007 and reviewed in the Winter 2007 'Defender'.*

# Fixing Defence's most

# expensive mis-step

Robert Marlow

The Rudd Government has a rather delicate political and Defence-oversight issue to resolve. The cost of replacing our F-18A/B and F-111 aircraft is massively over-budget, some \$A7.6bn so far but with further increases anticipated. At present, the new Government can shift the blame to the previous government's acquiescence with Department of Defence advice to acquire the unproven F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter (JSF) and to retire our F-111 force prematurely. However, in now undertaking a 'Review of Australia's Air Combat Capability' the new Government will take over responsibility for fixing this largest ever Defence procurement calamity.

The Department's Review team members may be inclined to stay with the status quo. The composition of the review's steering group will no doubt encourage this. In many respects it is almost expecting too much for some of the people involved, having been deeply implicated in the original unfortunate JSF and F-111 decisions, to change their minds suddenly as significant personal honor and professional pride is at stake. Moreover, in common with all bureaucracies, the Department of Defence has a natural tendency not to be self-critical. However, the Rudd government has an incentive to get it right, both for Australia and itself, for at best the first JSF will not arrive until 2014 — after two more elections. In that regard, those interested in avoiding a repeat of this unprecedented procurement crisis should read the award-winning article *Buying Paper Planes* by Cameron Stewart in *The Australian* of 26 October 2002.

What options are there? The crux of the matter is the factors the Government wishes to emphasise. Does it wish to save money for higher priority tasks? Does it wish to have the highest cost program? Does it wish to have the most capable air combat capability in the region? Does it wish to get the best deal for Australia as a nation? In examining these alternatives the considerations that may influence the Government can be more readily appreciated.

## The low-cost option

The F-18F Super Hornet, as part of a wider air combat system, gives an operational capability at least comparable to the JSF over the medium term, but is already in squadron service with the USN and can be bought off-the-shelf quickly and efficiently. After further development though, the JSF will become operationally superior to the Super Hornet beyond 2023. The present Super Hornet contract includes buying the necessary aircraft support and sustainment infrastructure, thus allowing any extra funds to be mainly used for buying more aircraft. An expanded Super Hornet option is the lowest cost one by virtue of money already having been spent.

The combination of a very limited air defence threat to Australia, and the significant air defence improvements gained in acquiring the Jindalee Over-the-Horizon radar, the Wedgetail early warning aircraft, new ground-based radars, advanced air-refueling tankers, and the AEGIS-equipped air warfare destroyers, suggest that fewer air defence fighters may be needed than in the 1980s.

By comparison with the period when the 75 F-18A/B Hornets were first purchased (1985-90), fighter aircraft can now be more precisely directed, low-altitude attackers can be detected at long range allowing interception using ground alert fighters, and naval ships at sea can be largely self-defending or protected by air-refueled fighters. These expensive improvements mean that fewer fighter aircraft can now be more effective than the larger numbers of earlier times could be, otherwise the overall air defence capability improvements would not have made sense to acquire. Network-centric warfare does mean more can be done with less just as the RAAF has consistently argued. This is probably doubly fortunate as perennial pilot shortages mean that buying aircraft is actually easier than crewing them.

The combination of these factors suggest a total of 48 Super Hornets would be sufficient for both the unlikely case of air defence of Australia, and for making the rare commitment, such as the 2003 Iraq war, to American-led coalition operations. However, while the Super Hornets are

well-equipped for maritime strike this proposal does not really address long-range strike. A simple capability could be achieved by fitting long-range missiles onto the Super Hornet, either the 200-mile range JASSM presently being acquired for the F-18s or longer range alternatives from the US or Europe. This capability though would be meagre and should not be considered as completely replacing the F-111 capability, but it would be affordable.

The additional 24 Super Hornets would probably cost some \$A2.9bn extra with long-range missiles adding \$A0.6bn. However, the current F-18A/Bs would not need the \$A1bn plus structural refurbishment program, and the planned \$A15bn plus JSF acquisition would be avoided. The \$A3.5bn additional cost of the extra Super Hornets is offset by the \$A16bn saving allowing some \$A12.5bn to be made available for other high priority projects across the ADF.

## The high-cost option

The F-35 Lightning II JSF remains very much a developmental program with significant risks, as revealed by recent problems with the engine and the four-year slippage in the first flight of the variant the RAAF is interested in purchasing. Lockheed Martin believes that the latest developmental timetable could allow deliveries around 2014 although there are no contractual cost penalties for Lockheed Martin if this does not occur. The most recent aircraft the RAAF acquired from the company, the C-130J, was several years late and took much longer to become operational than the company advised. The Department of Defence plans to commit to the JSF at the most expensive and risky part of its developmental cycle, before any production aircraft have flown and several years before it enters service with the USAF.

In some respects a good deal of this criticism of the JSF is unfair. The aircraft is early in its development and naturally much remains uncertain. The JSF will not reach a similar level of maturity as other alternatives until about 2020. It is just that Australia needs a new air combat aircraft in 2010 — as the 2000 Defence White Paper stated and the 2007 Super Hornet bridging capability purchase demonstrates.

For the JSF to be proven and available with a firm delivery schedule and an affordable cost, Australia should wait until about 2020 to place the first orders. In this regard some alternatives suggest themselves: keep the Super Hornets and the F-111, retire the structurally fatigued F-18A/B fleet, and delay any JSF purchase until the aircraft is low risk and offers clear operational benefits over the Super Hornet.

The stated justification for the JSF selection was its touted unique stealth characteristics, although it now seems from departmental statements the Super Hornet is also somewhat stealthy, suggesting other options may be as well. The JSF is less manoeuvrable than other alternatives and has similar electronic systems to them, making the JSF's stealth key to the aircraft remaining operationally viable. The aircraft's operational life thus depends on no counter-stealth technology being fielded over the next 25 years or so.

As a technology, stealth was originally developed in the 1970s, with the first stealth aircraft shot down being achieved

by a relatively unsophisticated Serbian air defence system in the late 1990s. The JSF in relying so much on an ageing technology has a risk of becoming prematurely obsolete. This is not a major issue for the US or for NATO's JSF partner countries who envisage operating in large mixed aircraft-type packages. But it is an issue for Australia contemplating a self-reliant combat force possibly operating alone. Indeed, the explanation for the Serbians shooting down the F-117 stealth fighter was that the aircraft was operating unsupported and alone.

The Department of Defence's project team is closely watching Lockheed Martin develop the JSF, but has no fixed contractual benchmarks against which to judge acceptance. The JSF was chosen by the Department of Defence at ministerial direction before the operational requirements for a new air combat aircraft were determined so the JSF does not need to meet any firm needs. The needs can be adjusted as the JSF evolves to conform to whatever the JSF offers at the time. The RAAF will simply take what it gets, rather than receive what Australia may require.

The current ADF plan envisages a costly F-18A/B structural refurbishment, purchasing 100 JSF aircraft and retiring the Super Hornet aircraft. It is unlikely the US would buy these Super Hornets back after a decade or so of RAAF use, and even if it did their residual value would be small. The overall plan will cost some \$A23.6bn, although with a strong likelihood of cost increases as the F-18A/B structural refurbishment and the JSF program remain problematic.

## The most capable regional air combat capability option

The dominant fighter aircraft of this era, regardless of any stealth longevity concerns, is the high performance F-22 Raptor. Such a capability would give Australia the regional military edge for the next 20 years and possibly beyond, just as the earlier-generation purchase of the F-111 did. The aircraft is expensive, although how much more expensive than early-built JSFs is unclear. The JSF enthusiasts quote the half-way-through-production costs of around 2023, not the price for early production aircraft ordered in 2010. Purchasing some 40 F-22 aircraft seems a reasonable compromise between cost and requirements for as noted earlier the air threat to Australia is minimal, the RAAF's air defence system has been greatly enhanced, and such numbers would allow a limited commitment to a coalition operation overseas.

The F-22 is a special case though. With it, Australia really does become a top-end alliance partner in fact; not an ally simply capable of providing limited numbers of additional troops or second-tier aircraft only. In a qualitative sense Australia's value to the US, and the Western Alliance more generally, increases dramatically, giving the Australian Government of the day significantly more strategic influence. Moreover, the F-22 is a mythic aircraft in that its quality makes any likely adversary unwilling to fight for air superiority. In that sense the F-22 dominates air combat; it deters others from engaging in air combat because it

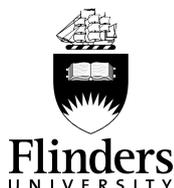
out-classes all alternatives. Moreover, the F-22 makes the absolute most of the limited number of fighter pilots Australia has; it plays the qualitative game to perfection.

The counter is that the F-22 is primarily a fighter not a bomber although it does carry many of the same strike weapons the JSF will, such as GPS-guided bombs. This matter could be addressed by retaining the F-111 as a stand-off missile launcher rather than as a penetrating bomber. Indeed having been fitted with the Harpoon anti-ship missile and the AGM-142 the F-111 is partially there already. In launching long-range missiles, like the 200-mile range JASSM mentioned earlier, the F-111 could operate well outside hostile air defences. With this approach, the large payload carrying F-111 would perform as the USAF plans to operate the even older B-52 and not much younger B-1 bombers well into the future. If needed, the Super Hornet could be a less-capable fallback albeit recognising that the F-111 would provide a much superior high-end regional capability.

A 1997 US Defense budget amendment proposed by Congressman David Obey, now the Democratic Party chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, prevents the sale of the F-22 to foreign governments. Much has changed in the intervening decade with greater American recognition of the value of allies — and that an Australian acquisition would be good for local jobs in a US economy entering recession. The US administration, the USAF and the Senate have not publicly expressed any doubts over

allowing Australia to purchase the F-22. Indeed at the recent AUSMIN talks US Defense Secretary Bob Gates stated that Australia can be trusted with the aircraft and there are no Administration concerns. The Rudd Government's timely decision to request advice on this amendment will allow a gauge to be taken of the American commitment to support key allies and allow these Allies to better share future defence burdens.

Being the regional air combat leader will not be low cost. An F-22 program of 40 aircraft may cost some \$A10.3bn. Adding long-range strike capability to the F-111 and sustaining this capability past 2010 may cost some \$A1bn to start with. It may be possible to offset these costs if the US agrees to buy back the contracted Super Hornets. There are some near-term incentives for the US to do this, especially if a decision is made before our aircraft are delivered. If the US will not refund the Super Hornet cost, it may be preferable to replace the F-111s with the Super Hornets and accept the long-range strike reduction — a move that would disadvantage the US and Australia in an operational sense of burden sharing and in keeping the ADF a top-end allied military force. Under this proposal, the F-18A/B structural rework would be unnecessary. The total cost would vary from \$A11.3bn if the Super Hornets could be resold and the F-111 retained, to \$A16.9bn if they were not.



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## The best deal for Australia option

The JSF purchase has been constructed so far without the competitive pressure of a traditional tendering process. There is no doubt that if there was a fair and open competition Lockheed Martin would strive to offer a better deal in terms of capability offered, price charged and delivery timetable. Moreover, with a tendering process a contract could be negotiated that actually specified these key areas rather than continuing to rely on an open-ended non-binding agreement. Australia originally bought the F-18A/Bs through a tendered contract, and this proved highly advantageous when structural problems arose after delivery as the rectification was covered by the contractual warranty. The JSF buy offers no such buyer protection; a matter of real concern as the aircraft will be in a less developed state than when the F-18A/B fleet was procured.

Moreover, the \$A15bn JSF deal is offering very little Australian industry participation with Lockheed Martin instead striving to maximise American contracts. The third-tier JSF partner nations, such as Australia, have to compete for less than one percent of the overall program. The earlier F-18A/B purchase bought new high technology into Australia, for example the capability to produce composite structures was created. This industry now employs several hundred people, exports 95 per cent of its products, has a turnover of more than \$A300m annually and is steadily expanding.

Unlike earlier Department of Defence purchases the massive JSF expenditure will not support a secondary goal of building a better Australia. The less costly Collins Class Submarine project by comparison bought new skills, expertise and capabilities to Australian industry and the nation as a whole. In such a nation-building sense, the JSF program offers almost nothing. This was not true for the other aircraft alternatives originally proposed where the companies saw a competitive advantage in being able to offer technology transfer and industry development to Australia. A competition would act as an inducement for Lockheed Martin to try harder.

Similarly, as discussed in several recent *Defender* articles and letters, the early run-down of the F-111 capability is having ruinous effects on the ability of Australian industry to support the RAAF (and future development projects) independently.

There may be a perception that returning to a proper competition now would harm the US alliance. However other smaller JSF partner nations within NATO have retained a competitive approach with no difficulties. Moreover, Australia has just purchased the Super Hornet and C-17 aircraft at a combined cost of some \$A9bn; Australia has put real money into the alliance. Moreover, as the history of the recent tightly-fought air refueling competition in the US illustrates, competent governments use the tender process to get the best deal and overcome personal biases. Lastly, the Bush administration is naturally pro-Texas, the state where Australia's JSFs will be manufactured; Secretary of Defense Gates is understandably less enthusiastic about other alternatives. However, with no US Presidential candidates

from Texas such concerns and influences will wane towards the end of 2008.

Having a fair and open competition would get the best deal from a national perspective. The decision on the aircraft type could also be made on fact-based grounds rather than ideological or personality-based ones. These latter methodologies have proven problematic as revealed by the Department of Defence's inability to present a sufficiently compelling justification of the JSF decision to quell the growing concerns of the public, the media and the new Government.

This is again quite at variance with the F-18A/B purchase where the rigorous and transparent selection process negated such disagreements. The mere fact the JSF decision remains contested and a major review is necessary, some six years after the decision, seemingly demonstrates there is no strongly convincing argument. The Department has attempted to argue that the true reasons are classified and cannot be discussed. However, given the planned JSF purchase will cost every taxpayer more than \$A2000 each this approach appears less than satisfactory. Claiming secrecy is of course a normal marketing device intended to prevent debate and, even better for the company claiming them, the 'secrets' cannot be made contractually binding. Such are the marketing advantages of this ploy that every country selling a product lays claim to special secrets.

## Summing Up

These are the issues that the Rudd Government will face and the responsibilities it will accept. The broad air combat alternatives discussed here include a low-cost option of some \$A3.5bn, the best regional capability for \$A11.3bn-\$A16.9bn (depending on circumstances), and continuing with the Department of Defence's plan for \$A23.6bn.

Regardless of which alternative is preferred, it is difficult to argue against a fact-based, competitive and transparent approach, that gets the best deal for Australia and which disarms public opposition rather than feeds it. Such an approach would resolve the increasingly vituperative and unhelpful exchanges between the Department of Defence and their critics over the air combat stumble. Worryingly, in the absence of a compelling rationale, these critics are increasingly including many retired and serving RAAF officers, as the recent ABC Four Corners programme *Flying Blind* revealed. However, the supporters of the JSF should have no fears. If the aircraft is as good as they maintain, a fair and open competition will publicly demonstrate this in a convincing and compelling way to all concerned, as well as getting Australia the best deal.

Getting a solution to the air combat problem as widely accepted and as cost-effective as the purchase of the previous fighter, the F-18A/B, may however be difficult for the new Government to realise. Instead, the government may find itself paddling upstream against a bureaucracy more content to stay the course, even as the situation steadily worsens. Change is always hard, even for the Department of Defence's 'mandarins'. ♦

*Robert Marlow is a nom de plume.*

# Tracked arguments and soft ground:

## Reflections on public argument about the Abrams tank decision

Paul Monk

***The purchase of these behemoths...has polarised the Australian military and its analysts like no other acquisition. What do we want them for? Where is Australia planning to fight next? Are they a waste of money? How are we going to get them overseas?***

**Paul Daley, *The Bulletin*, 03 October 2006**

On 17 July 2007, the Commonwealth Auditor General, Ian McPhee, presented Audit Report No. 1 of 2007-08, *Acquisition of the Abrams Main Battle Tank* to Parliament. The report, by ANAO Executive Director Colin Cronin and his colleagues Darren Coonan and Andrew Craig, reached the finding that the acquisition had been handled with a high degree of cost effectiveness and that the choice of the Abrams over other candidate vehicles to replace the ageing Leopard AS1s was sound on both technical and financial grounds. This provides a rather good context in which to tell the story of an analysis of the tank decision that Austthink Consulting undertook over six months in 2007.

### Army experimental framework

About five years ago, before the decision to buy the new Abrams tanks for the Army had been announced, my business partner, Tim van Gelder, and I were invited to attend a briefing at the Land Warfare Development Centre at Puckapunyal. It featured research that had been done under the aegis of the Army Experimental Framework (AEF), then headed by Lieutenant Colonel Grant Sanderson. Grant had been saying to us for some time that better thinking was needed for decision making within the Army. He invited us along to witness some of the better thinking that *was* being done in an experimental context.

The research was into how the Army conducted close combat in both open and complex (jungle, urban, etc) terrain. It included simulations and historical analysis of actual operations, most notably in Vietnam. It had led to the judgment that the heavy armoured (tank) capability needed to be maintained and, indeed, upgraded. We came away fascinated by some of the work that had been done, but we had no brief at the time to analyse it. What the briefing provided, however, was sufficient background to the subsequent decision to renew the Army's tank capability that

we were better placed than most non-specialists to understand that decision.

It was with considerable interest, therefore, that we followed the debate over the decision, from the time it was announced in March 2004, through to late 2006. It was especially notable that on 10 July 2006, when launching Paul Dibb's *Essays on Australian Defence*, at the ANU (where he is now Chancellor), former Secretary of the Department of Defence, Allan Hawke, should have declared, that the decision had been 'ridiculous' and had had 'disastrous repercussive effects'. When *The Bulletin* printed a cover story with the subjective caption 'Dud's Army' over a picture of an Abrams, however, we saw an opportunity to contribute to the public debate.

### Mapping arguments

What had got Grant Sanderson interested in having us at Puckapunyal was a new technique we had been developing for laying out complex argument structures, so that they were easier to follow. We called it 'argument mapping'. Grant had done an early version of our Advanced Reasoning and Analysis workshop, in which we used a software program called *Reason!Able* (Tim's brainchild) to construct and evaluate argument maps of a famously complex debate: the contention that there must have been a conspiracy in the assassination of John F. Kennedy. By October 2006, we had a vastly more sophisticated software tool called *Rationale* and we saw in the tank debate an opportunity to apply it. I got on the phone, therefore, to Brigadier Justin Kelly, then Director-General Future Land Warfare, and asked would he support the idea of us argument mapping the debate. He was strongly supportive and the idea was approved by the Deputy Chief of Army within a matter of weeks.

Given the widespread cynicism about consultants writing to more or less explicit instructions, I should make it clear that the proposal in this case was to expose the case for the

new tanks to critical examination, including the enlistment of devil's advocates, in order to establish where the criticisms of the decision were coming from and how much validity they had. The Army might have declined to engage our services, on the perfectly reasonable grounds that the decision had been taken already and did not need critical examination. Instead, however, it welcomed the opportunity to have the case set out clearly; confident that the decision had been sound. Some, including the world-weary director of the Armoured Corps, asked 'Why are we still having this debate?' But all accepted our response: Because the case has not been understood or accepted by the public at large and even by some in the Defence community.

## Mapping the tank argument – grouping and ordering

We faced a set of challenges in trying to reconstruct and analyse the public debate. The first of these, of course, was to get clear what, exactly, had been the case made for buying the new tanks. The second was to ascertain what the full set of objections was. The third was to construct an argument map which would show precisely where the objections impinged on the case. The fourth was to ascertain how valid these objections were. Finally, there would be a need to set out the analysis in such a manner that any reasonable person could see the overall argument, and account explicitly for whether and for what reasons they concurred with or dissented from the decision.

We discovered that there was a mismatch between the case advanced by the Minister and the Army for buying the new tanks and the objections being made by the critics of the decision. There was a great deal of confusion in the public debate, because the two sides were often talking past one another. We discovered, also, that the numerous objections to the decision to buy the tanks did not constitute a coherent or common argument. Rather, they came from all sorts of directions and badly needed to be put in order and thought through more carefully than they seemed to have been. Finally, we discovered that the official case for tanks contained what appeared to be gaps or even errors which called for closer examination, if the case was to be properly evaluated.

The case made publicly, by the Minister (then Senator Robert Hill) and the Chief of Army, for the purchase of the Abrams tanks was that the decision represented clear policy continuity from the 2000 Defence White Paper, that it was aimed at ensuring the Army would have the combat weight necessary for it to achieve its missions without undue risk, and that the tanks were being bought in small numbers so that, at need, we could provide a sustainable squadron of them for deployment where close combat might occur in the context of what are normally referred to as 'low-intensity operations'. The critics often seemed to be asserting, on the other hand, that the tanks were being bought because the Army (or the Coalition Government) wanted to be able to participate in high-intensity, continental-scale warfare

alongside the Americans. This misalignment plainly called for attention.

The assertion that the tanks were only intended for American wars was made, for example, by Hugh White. 'My hunch,' he told the *Bulletin's* Paul Daley, 'is the Army leadership proposed to government that we buy the [Abrams] tank because they wanted to be able to put Australian tanks into American armoured operations... the next time America invaded a country, they wanted Australian tanks flying Australian flags to be driving up the road to Damascus or Tehran, take your pick.' This opinion is plainly not confined to White; but it is a misconception. Had the decision been based on such a plan, it would have made little sense to buy so few tanks – far fewer than we have ever had since World War II. In reality, the decision was demonstrably based on a different desideratum: being able to prevail in lethal fighting on a small scale, should it erupt during stabilisation or counter-insurgency operations. The decision was, as the Chief of Army stipulated in August 2004, much influenced by the Australian experience of the utility of tanks during close combat in Papua New Guinea and Borneo in the 1940s and Vietnam in the 1960s. Recent Canadian experiences in Afghanistan seem to reinforce this line of argument.

The problem with the objections, taken as a whole, is that they were often mutually incompatible. Critics would allege, for instance, both that the tanks had been bought so that they could be sent far away to fight alongside the Americans and, at the same time, that they could not be moved overseas, or even around Australia. They would allege that we should not have bought tanks because they would be seen as threatening by our South East Asian and South West Pacific neighbours, but at the same time that they would be of no use in the soft terrain of South East Asia and the South West Pacific. They would allege that the tanks are an 'over the top' acquisition for an Army that does not need to do serious, conventional fighting, but also that tanks are, in general, now obsolete platforms and therefore not needed for such fighting.

Several attempts were made by David Kilcullen in recent times (see for example the Summer 2006/07 *Defender*) to sort out these various objections. We found his work helpful, but even he did not show how the overall argument fits together. Having sifted through the objections we concluded that there were five fundamental ones which subsumed the others:

- that the Abrams tanks represented an unacceptable opportunity cost;
- that the Abrams tanks will be unusable (because they are supposedly too heavy, impossible to deploy and so on);
- that maintaining the tank capability was an unsound decision, because tanks are an obsolete platform in the 21st century context;
- that regardless of the merits of the Abrams, the tanks were a pointless buy, because we would never use them in our own region, out of deference to the sensitivities of our neighbours; and
- that buying the tanks was an unsound decision, because the 2000 Defence White Paper called for a land force equipped for low-intensity operations in our own region and tanks will not be required for such operations.

The claim that the tanks were bought because the Army wanted to fight alongside the Americans on the road to Damascus is, we think, a consideration that belongs within this last objection – viz., that we should equip our land force only for low-intensity operations within our own region. We call this overall objection ‘the 6:24 problem’, because the relevant passage of the 2000 Defence White Paper is chapter 6, paragraph 24.

## Mapping the tank argument – establishing context

Having thus grouped and ordered the objections, we then placed them in the context of the case actually made for the decision by the Minister and the Chief of Army. To do that, however, we had first to clarify what, precisely, that case had been. The elements of it were in the public domain and were strongly confirmed in interviews. The actual train of reasoning, however, was not immediately clear. We determined that, at the end of the day, the case rested on a single line of argument: that maintaining the tank capability was necessary in order to meet the mandate of the 2000 Defence White Paper (chapter 8, paragraph 12): that the Army should have the combat weight needed to achieve its missions without undue risk. All the fundamental objections, we concluded, impinged at specifiable points on the top levels of the case, once it was seen as consisting primarily of this line of argument.

Laying out this line of argument was taxing, but illuminating work. At a preliminary stage, for example, we discovered a curious oversight in the way the case had been made. It rested, to a considerable extent, on the claim that ‘tanks save lives by a factor of six’; the evidence for which was a study of Australian combat data from the Vietnam War. Actually, the data in the study does not show this at all. It shows that the ratio of friendly to enemy casualties had widened by a factor of (almost) six, but that friendly (Australian) casualties had decreased only marginally. A close reading of Kilcullen’s essay in Volume 3, Number 2 of *The Australian Army Journal* (Summer 2006) showed that, like all others who had cited the study, he had conflated the ratio of casualties with the rate of Australian casualties.

This did not mean, of course, that tanks do not save Australian lives. It meant only that the particular data set analysed from Vietnam War operations did not show that they did so by a factor of six. The impact tanks can have in saving lives has been well enough demonstrated in many theatres of operation and was shown in Vietnam in particular cases. In the last operation in which Centurion tanks were used in Vietnam, in August 1971, they helped take enemy bunkers in jungle terrain for the loss of 1 killed and 5 wounded Australians. Weeks later, after the Centurions had been withdrawn, similar attacks were repeatedly repulsed and finally aborted after the loss of 7 killed and 40 wounded. The interesting thing here, therefore, is only that the difference between rate and ratio eluded so many people for several years, both in the preparation and the dissemination of the study, which was published in July 2003, by the Land

Warfare Studies Centre as a Working Paper, under the title *From Breitenfeld to Baghdad: Perspectives on Combined Arms Warfare*.

As it turned out, the central line of argument did not depend on this much cited (and errant) datum to any significant extent. It rested, rather, on the finding, in Army simulations and studies of recent military operations around the world, that, right across the spectrum of operations to which our land force may be committed in future, there is an increasing danger that benign situations can morph unpredictably into open conflict; that open conflict, particularly in complex terrain (terrain where hostile forces can readily elude detection and dig in to fight) will impose the need to prevail in close combat; and that there is still no substitute for well-protected, highly-mobile, direct-fire support (tanks) if you want to prevail in close combat. The argument holds that it is for this reason that the Army should have at least a modest tank capability; since, otherwise, there is a high risk of hostile elements inflicting significant casualties and even mission failure on Australian forces.

## Mapping the tank argument – sorting the objections

Once the argument was mapped out along these lines, we made several discoveries. Of the five fundamental objections, the only one that had any real force was what we have called the 6:24 problem. The others foundered on



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critical examination, because the tanks did not constitute an opportunity cost, but were a sound investment compared with what else might have been bought with the money; because the tanks can be transported (they have after all been moved to Darwin and many other places), can be deployed (just as we deployed Centurions to Vietnam a generation ago), can be used in soft terrain (since ground pressure, not weight is the key consideration here and the ground pressure of an Abrams is only a quarter that of the wheeled light armoured vehicles we have been using in places like East Timor); because tanks are not obsolete at all, but vital components of combined-arms teams in close combat in low-intensity operations; and because, while we would not lightly deploy tanks in our own region, we would at need, as we have in the past and we should at least have the option, in order to deter potential enemies from contemplating assaults on our (often otherwise outnumbered) land forces.

The 6:24 problem is a little more intractable, because it is, in part, an ideological claim, not a technical one. Should strategic policy be based on the judgment that we should, indeed, only equip our land forces for operations in our (elastically defined) own region; and should it be the case that such operations would not, realistically, require tanks, then the whole argument for maintaining the tank capability would dissolve. It is, surely, in significant measure at least, for this reason that the likes of Allan Hawke and Michael Costello have dismissed the decision as 'ridiculous' and 'ludicrous', respectively. Yet both of these premises must be true for the argument to be undermined and it is not clear that either of them is, at least not in the judgment of the National Security Committee of Cabinet, as made plain in *Strategic Update 2007*. Our own conclusion was that this objection is where further thinking most needs to be directed: to ponder under what circumstances we might actually require and would actually use tanks in our own region.

## Provisional conclusions

Our report was not conceived as a lobbying effort on behalf of the decision. Nor should it be seen as having

'proved' that buying the tanks was a sound decision, though this is its provisional conclusion. Rather, by argument mapping the debate, we hope to have made it much more comprehensible than it has been up to now. What the report does is enable anyone now to see:

- what the core claims in the case are,
- where they sit in relation to one another,
- what the basic objections to the case are,
- where they impinge on the case,
- what their weaknesses are,
- how the claims for and against the decision balance up,
- which considerations are the most important, and
- where the greatest sensitivities in the case are.

This makes it possible to turn down the heat, to comprehend why there have been such passionate and apparently intractable disagreements; and to see where new evidence or a re-evaluation of crucial evidence would make a difference to a reasoned assessment of the matter.

We think this would be a useful set of things to be able to do with public policy decisions more generally; which is why we proposed the tanks case to the Army as a proof-of-concept study. The report we have prepared will have served its purpose just to the extent that it eases the bewilderment and frustration of those engaged on either side of the debate and facilitates a deeper grasp of where they can most fruitfully focus their energies in resolving their differences of opinion. Unsurprisingly, the biggest difference of opinion turns out to be that which divides the proponents of the old Defence-of-Australia doctrine from those who believe we need a joint force capable of amphibious manouvre and close combat across the spectrum of operations, both within the island littoral and more widely. What the report has shown is that debate, if it is to be rational and fruitful, needs to focus on the putative utility of tanks in our own region, since this is the point of greatest sensitivity in the whole case. ♦

*Dr Paul Monk is a founding director of Austhink ([www.austhink.com](http://www.austhink.com)) in Melbourne. His most recent article in Defender was 'Themistocles: Ancient Thinking All at Sea' in the Winter 2007 issue.*

## Conference Calendar

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RACV Club, Melbourne  
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# association update

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## Vale Brigadier James Osmond Furner, AO, CBE, DSM (Retd)

Jim Furner, who died at home in Terrigal, NSW, on 17 September 2007 after a short illness, holds the distinction of being the only career intelligence officer to have been head of two of Australia's intelligence agencies. He was initially Director of the then Joint Intelligence Organisation (JIO) and subsequently Director-General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS). He also holds the distinction of being the longest serving Director-General of ASIS.

Jim was born in Warrigal, Victoria, in 1927, attained a BA at Melbourne University and first joined the workforce as a school teacher. In 1952 he sought a career change and enlisted in the Army as one of the first intake into the Officer Cadet School (OCS) at Portsea. Jim initially joined the infantry and first saw overseas service with the 1st Commonwealth Division in South Korea during 1955-56. On his return from South Korea, Jim transferred to the Australian Intelligence Corps. His subsequent postings as a military intelligence officer included Headquarters Far East Land Forces in Hong Kong (1958-60), an Intelligence staff exchange posting with the US Defence Intelligence Agency in Washington (1963-66), the senior Australian military intelligence appointment in Vietnam as GSO2 (Intelligence) at Headquarters 1st Australian Task Force (1967-68), Commanding Officer and Chief Instructor of the Australian Army Intelligence Centre at Woodside (1969-70), SEATO Headquarters in Bangkok (1973), Headquarters Field Force Command in Sydney (1975-78) and Deputy Director (Military) JIO during 1978-82. Jim filled the latter appointment on promotion to brigadier, the first OCS graduate to reach that rank.

He retired from the Army on age in early 1982. Later that year he was appointed, as a civilian, as Director JIO, later renamed the Defence Intelligence Organisation (DIO). He was the first career intelligence officer to head JIO (and one of only two to ever do so thus far).

When directed by Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, to take over ASIS in early 1984 (he was given just 24 hours to transfer jobs), Jim inherited an organisation, thanks to the Sheraton Hotel affair, that was both dispirited and whose future was very much under the political microscope. Also, at that time ASIS was already undergoing significant disruption, with an accompanying loss of many experienced staff, due to the imminent move of its headquarters from Melbourne to Canberra

Jim served 8½ years at the helm of ASIS, longer than any of his predecessors or successors, retiring in November 1992 just one day prior to his 65th birthday. From a very

challenging beginning, he left an organisation that was organisationally sound and highly respected, both politically and professionally. This he achieved through his many qualities, including his intellect, pragmatism, energy, and commitment to teamwork through a collaborative approach with staff.

Jim's distinguished service with the Army, JIO and ASIS was appropriately recognised by government. He was awarded a DSM for his service in Vietnam, a CBE in 1980 for his service to Defence intelligence, and an AO in 1993 for his service to international relations.

As a person, Jim was unassuming, very direct in his dealings, always approachable, and had a good sense of humour. For those who had the privilege to serve with him, he will be remembered with respect and affection. ♦

## Vale Major General Paul Cullen, AC, CBE, DSO\*, ED, FCA (Retd)

Australia lost one of its most distinguished citizen soldiers when Major General Paul Cullen passed away on the 19 September 2007. Born at Newcastle on 13 February 1909, throughout his 98 years he made an outstanding contribution to soldiering, commerce and humanitarian causes.

Paul's lifetime of Army service commenced as one of the last conscripts in 1927 and then as a member of the Militia. The outbreak of World War II saw him as a very early volunteer (NX163) for the 2nd AIF. Leaving Australia in February 1940 he saw service in the Western Desert, Syria, Greece, Crete (where he commanded a battalion comprised of elements from various escaping units), and New Guinea – where he commanded with distinction and bravery the 2nd/1st Infantry Battalion.

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He joined the Citizen Military Forces (now Army Reserve) in 1948 retiring in 1966 having risen to the rank of major general and Citizen Force Member of the Military Board. Paul is remembered for the way he used his outstanding wartime service to make a major contribution to the CMF. He was instrumental in the introduction of Officer Cadet Training Units, developed the concept of special conditions battalions (Bushman's Rifles) for those unable to undertake conventional part-time training obligations, and developed and championed the scheme whereby some 500 CMF officers undertook short operational tours to 1ATF in South Vietnam.

In his civil career, Paul demonstrated motivation, determination and a willingness to try new activities and new ways of undertaking old ones, characteristics that were features of all three strands of his life. A qualified accountant he established Australia's first Fixed-Unit Trust, early versions of today's supermarkets and project housing, and extensive pastoral enterprises.

His wartime experiences honed his concern for those less fortunate and the last forty years of his life saw an extensive involvement in humanitarian causes. He helped establish the Australian Jewish Welfare Society, AUSTCARE (Australians Caring for Refugees), the Refugee Council of Australia, Cumberland Industries, Foresight, the Australian Disaster Relief Organisation and the United Nations Association. Paul also served on the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and, having joined the Sydney Industrial Blind Institute pre-war, was its long-serving president after the war when it became the Royal Blind Institute. He was also the National Chairman of the Order of Australia Association in its formative years. His presidencies of many organisations, especially

AUSTCARE and the Royal Blind Society, extended over periods of 20-40 years.

Throughout his life Paul Cullen maintained contact with those that he served with. In 1970 he established the Citizen Military Force Association, which now as the Defence Reserves Association, continues to articulate the valuable contributions that citizens serving as part-time ADF personnel make to our national defence efforts.

Dedicated, enthusiastic and a tireless advocate and champion Paul maintained a keen involvement in all that he had an interest in. His latter years were spent with his wife Eve on their stud property at Wingello Park.

His contribution during his long life had been recognised by many awards and decorations including a DSO and bar for acts of outstanding bravery and leadership, the UNHCR Nansen Medal, the RSL Peace Prize, and being appointed a Companion of the Order of Australia and a Commander of the British Empire.

Paul Cullen was accorded a military funeral at Victoria Barracks in Sydney on 26 September 2007. Some 500 people, representing family and all of the organisations with whom he had been involved, paid a fitting tribute and farewell to a long-serving soldier and a great Australian. ♦

Kevin Baker's biography, *Paul Cullen, Citizen and Soldier: The Life and Time of Major General Paul Cullen AC, CBE, DSO\*, ED* was reviewed in the Winter 2005 issue of *Defender*.



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The National Journal of the Australia Defence Association

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## Nemesis: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45

Max Hastings

Reviewed by Dr Peter Stanley

Max Hastings, intrepid British Falklands war correspondent (first into Port Stanley, ahead of the paratroopers), has become an accomplished military historian. *Nemesis*, his version of the final year of the war against Japan, complements his earlier *Armageddon*, explaining the fall of Nazi Germany.

Hastings has the born historian's gift for conveying insightful judgements with strong individual stories, and its worth reading *Nemesis* for both. It is impressively even-handed. He tells his story from the perspective of the Chinese and Japanese as much as the Americans or British.

His accounts of Iwo Jima and Burma, the bombing of Japan and kamikaze defence are especially powerful. He evokes the war of US marines and sailors, British soldiers and Gurkhas with skill. He writes sympathetically of Chinese guerrillas and Japanese suicide pilots, often overlooked or stereotyped.

If you read just one book about how awful the Pacific war was, *Nemesis* should be the one. It is a superb new account, except for one chapter. That exception is chapter 14: *Australians: Bludging and Mopping Up*. Harper Press publicists placed extracts from this chapter in various newspapers. A flurry of letters understandably accused Hastings of insulting dead comrades and of demeaning Australia's contribution to the war.

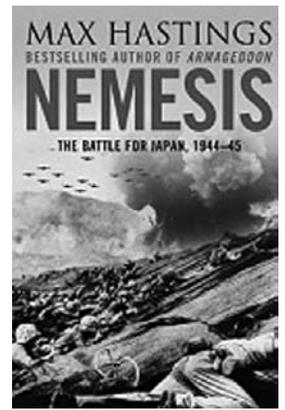
Was this an overreaction? What is so bad about chapter 14? Unlike other chapters, it is based on a few, mostly older books, a handful of primary sources and no interviews. Elsewhere he presents individuals who embody his broader themes, Allied and Japanese. In the Australian chapter, Hastings relies on generalisations and quotes snippets from a handful of men, not even giving their full names.

He has done a cursory chapter on the cheap. He did not visit Australia to consult sources, veterans or historians. It is not just that he makes obvious mistakes: he misplaces, for example, an entire division of what he miscalls the Australian Expeditionary Force. The problem is that he just does not know enough to explain Australia's war in the Pacific theatre.

He has not used either the available evidence or the work of experts as he has for America, Britain, China and Japan. For example, he claims that wharfies harmed Australia's war effort, by refusing to unload cargoes. It is a common allegation. Those who have examined waterside unions (dominated by communists and red-hot to win the war by the time Japan entered it) have found the claim mainly unjustified.

Likewise, Hastings makes a meal of 'mutinies' by militia troops in Bougainville (specialists would call it combat refusal). Again, the experts Hastings did not talk to or quote have made more sense of the subject and the circumstances than him.

In fact, these men anticipated his argument that peripheral campaigns cost lives without bringing victory closer. These men were not 'bludgers': they had enlisted to fight the Japanese but they knew that dying in Bougainville was pointless. Elsewhere, Hastings explains that '*in the circumstances then prevailing*' (his italics) the horrendous Pacific battles after mid-1944 were unnecessary, unproductive, and tragically unavoidable. Ignorant of the 'circumstances then prevailing' in Australia, he fails to understand it's war, and withholds a sympathy he applies liberally elsewhere.



Coincidentally, I am writing this review in the pub at Terowie, the former railway town in South Australia's mid-north. The biggest moment in Terowie's history came in March 1942 when General Douglas MacArthur, freshly escaped from the Philippines, told reporters on the platform here: 'I shall return'. A plaque marks the spot.

MacArthur's vow partly explains Australia's limited contribution to the wider war from mid 1944. His obsession with the Philippines led him to limit the role of Australian forces, especially the Army. John Curtin meekly accepted his orders. But in the last major campaign of the war an Australian corps did liberate Borneo in May-July 1945 (though not for its oil; Hastings gets that wrong too). Hastings seems not to grasp the importance of the commitment.

As well and re-occupying it's possessions and liberating it's trust-territories in Papua New Guinea, Australia's used its two best divisions to free Borneo from a cruel Japanese occupation. Indonesians and Malaysians once recalled this gratefully. This was invasion and liberation, not merely 'mopping up'.

MacArthur's egotism and Curtin's supine caution made Australia's war effort dysfunctional. But in 1945 it still had six divisions in action, from Borneo to Bougainville. RAAF squadrons and RAN ships were even more widely spread across the Pacific supporting Allied operations elsewhere. Australia's largest operation, Balikpapan, began after British and American forces finished their fighting. Australia's campaigns did not defeat Japan itself: but what did? Hastings admits that Burma, Iwo Jima and Okinawa were pointless sacrifices.

Had the invasion of Japan proceeded — all right, he thinks that unlikely — an Australian division would have fought on Kyushu. While it withdrew unduly from the European war, Australia took as full a part in the Pacific war as Allied and Australian leaders allowed. No Australian alive today could have altered that fact. Australia's war did end in 'rancour and anticlimax', but it is a pity that in this otherwise outstanding revisionist account Hastings has lent his deserved authority to fomenting a superficial view of it. ♦

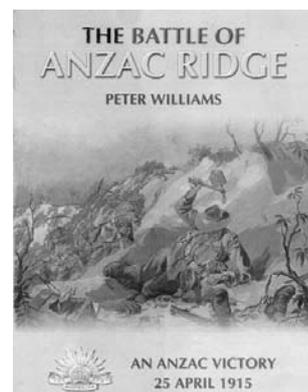
Max Hastings, *Nemesis: The Battle for Japan, 1944-45*, HarperPress, London, 2007, Softback, 674pp., RRP \$439.99.

*This review is a longer version of one published in 'The Australian' and is republished courtesy of that paper.*

# The Battle of ANZAC Ridge: 25 April 1915.

**Peter Williams**

**A review essay by John Donovan**



In *The Battle of ANZAC Ridge* Peter Williams presents a re-interpretation of events on the first Anzac Day. In many ways this re-interpretation rings true, but he might, perhaps, have paid a little more heed to the quote by Sir Ian Hamilton (so beloved by subsequent military historians) that he places at the start of Chapter One:

*On the actual day of battle naked truths may be picked up for the asking: by the following morning, they have already begun to put on their uniforms.*

The author quickly disposes of the issue concerning the incorrect landing place. He dismisses the suggestion that an (unrecorded) last-minute agreement between Birdwood and Admiral Thursby, commanding that part of the naval force, deliberately changed the intended location. He also accepts Tom Frame's argument that an offshore current was not the cause of the error. Williams places the blame on an error in navigation aboard HMS *Triumph*, possibly of as little as 100 metres (less than a ship's length). Such a distance might be considered large by today's standards of satellite navigation, but would have been insignificant by the standards of the day. Williams reminds readers that the history of amphibious landings during World War II is also replete with errors in landing sites, even when the landings took place in daylight.

The intent of the landing is ably clarified. Williams describes how grandiose rhetoric about crossing the Peninsula to Mal Tepe was toned down successively in orders at each level of command, to become a plan to draw the Ottoman reserve onto the ANZACs around Sari Bair and Third Ridges. This was essentially a diversion, to attract the Ottoman reserve against the Australians and New Zealanders to allow the British 29<sup>th</sup> Division to land at Cape Helles, advance to the Kilid Bahr Plateau, take the Ottoman forts from the rear, and clear the way for the Royal Navy to pass through the Dardanelles.

The author thus sees Mustafa Kemal's decision to commit the Ottoman reserve against the Australians and New Zealanders at the Ari Burnu landing as falling into the trap set by the Allies. If, however, the Ottomans had ignored the ANZAC landing and sent their reserve south against the main landing at Helles, then the ANZACs could have advanced across the Peninsula, cut off the Ottoman force and achieved the desired effect indirectly. Ultimately, Kemal's decision

did not have fatal consequences for the Ottoman cause. The 29<sup>th</sup> Division failed in its endeavours at Helles while the commitment of the Ottoman reserve against the ANZACs prevented their advance across the Peninsula.

Williams shows clearly that while the intelligence available to the Allies was not perfect, it was adequate to identify the principal forces likely to oppose the ANZAC landing. One key error was the incorrect identification of a two-regiment sized camp south east of Gaba Tepe. This probably contributed to Sinclair-MacLagan's decisions to divert the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade to the southern flank of the landing, and to halt the advance on the Second Ridge (called ANZAC Ridge by the soldiers of the time, and by Williams) rather than the Third (or Gun) Ridge.

This halt provided time for the ANZACs to prepare, at least a bit, for the first Ottoman counter-attack in the morning, and particularly for the second, late in the afternoon. Diverting the 2<sup>nd</sup> Brigade, however, weakened the left flank. The failure to capture Battleship Hill, or to hold positions further inland than the Nek (after the loss of Baby 700), caused difficulties during the entire ensuing campaign. To this extent, Sinclair-MacLagan's decision was, if not fatal, certainly severely damaging to ANZAC hopes and intentions.

The maps used for the landing are also shown to be adequate by the standards of the time, although major difficulties were caused when it was found that the Razor Edge was impassable, preventing access from Plugge's Plateau to Russell's Top. The broken country of the Ari Burnu area was considered by Birdwood to give the untrained ANZAC troops better opportunities for defence than the more open terrain of Helles, across which it was hoped that the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, with its eleven battalions of regular troops (and one of Royal Scots territorials) could advance.

Williams (probably correctly) focuses on the defensive phase of the first day as the critical period, after a successful landing had been made. Once the Ottoman reserve was committed to a counter-attack against the ANZACs, it could not be disentangled in time to intervene at Helles on the same day. Another important point made by Williams relates to the quality of the opposing sides. The ANZACs were a recently recruited force with limited training. Their Ottoman opponents were regular formations in an army with recent battle experience in the Balkan Wars of 1912 and 1913.

However, while the Anatolian regiments were reliable, those from other parts of the Ottoman Empire were less so, though Anatolian soldiers were perhaps too quick to criticise Arab regiments, some of which performed well. Overall, Williams considers that seven of the Ottoman battalions fighting near Ari Burnu were superior to the Australian and New Zealand infantry, while six others (in two Arab regiments) were not. This superiority, combined with the Ottoman advantage in artillery, proved sufficient to deny ANZAC success, but was not sufficient to drive it back into the sea — although Williams considers that it should have been.

The bombardment of the ANZAC position by Ottoman artillery is discussed in detail. He confirms that 44 Ottoman artillery pieces were involved, not the figure of 24 usually accepted. Williams also concludes that ammunition expenditure, compared to the duration of the bombardment and the length of front, was of similar intensity to attacks on the Western Front at around the same period. Finally, Williams exposes starkly the partial collapse of morale among the ANZACs under this bombardment, suggesting that as many as 2000 men might have ‘straggled’ from the firing line back to the beach and nearby gullies.

After allowing for battle casualties and the stragglers, as few as 6000 rifles might have been available to hold a front of some six kilometres against the main Ottoman counter-attack by some 8500 men supported by around 40 artillery pieces (four having been put out of action by then). Of the 6000 ANZACs available, only about 1000 were on the Sari Bair Ridge and north to the Fisherman’s Hut, while some 5000 held the southern part of the front, along ANZAC and Bolton’s Ridges. Williams concludes that only about 3000 of the ANZACs engaged the counter-attackers. On the left, the ANZAC forces were driven back across the Nek, while on the right Ottoman forces recaptured part of the eastern side of the 400 Plateau (Johnston’s Jolly and Lone Pine).

Williams puts some effort into estimating ANZAC casualties on 25 April, and concludes that they were at least 5000 (about 1200 dead), substantially above the figure of around 2000 used in the British and Australian Official Histories, and about a third of those landed that day. This is close to the losses of the 5<sup>th</sup> Division at Fromelles (also in a single day), but was from a larger force engaged, and not all were Australians. Despite this level of loss, and the failure of some soldiers during the Ottoman bombardment, the ANZAC remained in action and held a line against the second counter-attack.

For comparison and wider context, a chapter is also devoted to briefly describing operations at Cape Helles on 25 April. There, the landings took place after dawn, to allow a naval bombardment and enable clear identification of the landing beaches. In contrast, due to the terrain, naval bombardment was likely to be less effective at Ari Burnu, while Birdwood thought that the cover of darkness was more important for his untrained troops. At Helles a similar

intelligence error as at Ari Burnu inflated a camp near Krithia to regimental size. This might have caused some hesitation about advancing too far inland before this (actually much smaller) reserve was committed. If so, the results were not as fortunate at Helles as at Ari Burnu.

British opportunities at Helles were increased by an Ottoman error when Halil Sami, commanding the Ottoman 9<sup>th</sup> Division, committed two battalions against the isolated bridgehead at Y-Beach, leaving only three battalions available to oppose the remainder of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division elsewhere, principally at W and X-Beaches. Williams considers that by about 1330 hours there were only some 1000 Ottoman defenders in front of W and X-beaches, opposed by seven British battalions, only one of which had suffered very heavy casualties. However, no general advance was attempted.

As well, Williams notes that in response to a request from Hamilton for an appreciation of the task before the attack, Hunter-Weston (GOC of the 29<sup>th</sup> Division) had stated that there was ‘not ... a reasonable chance of success’. This assessment may have weighed on his mind that day, leading him to take a cautious approach. Hunter-Weston did not land on 25 April, and all three of the brigade commanders in the 29<sup>th</sup> Division, who did, were wounded, probably causing some command hesitation.

Williams concludes that the failure by the British to make a general advance at Helles was the worst decision taken that day, eventually costing the Allies the campaign. He notes that of 16 Ottoman battalions that fought on 25 April, three quarters fought against the ANZACs in the Ari Burnu area and only four against the 29<sup>th</sup> Division at Cape Helles. Moreover, 44 artillery pieces were used at Ari Burnu but only 12 engaged the British.

This may be so and the picture of gallant Anzacs engaging the enemy while the British waited on the beaches at Helles may be correct. However, this seems too close for comfort to the popular Australian image of the subsequent British operations at Suvla Bay in August 1915. The best that can probably be said is the Scottish verdict ‘Not Proven’.

There are a few problems with the book. It is particularly annoying that Kum Tepe, mentioned frequently in the text, does not appear on any map, and its location can only be deduced after careful reading of the text (or, more simply, by referring to Bean’s Volume I). There are also some textual or explanatory anomalies concerning people. Harold Elliott is better known by his nickname Pompey, Henry Bennett by his middle name, Gordon; and Joseph Hobbs normally used his third name Talbot and is better known as such.

Overall, this book proposes a thought-provoking thesis. It is well worth reading but not alone when studying the first day of the Gallipoli campaign. ♦

*Peter Williams, ‘The Battle of ANZAC Ridge: 25 April 1915’, Australian Military History Publications, Loftus NSW, 2007, Casebound and jacketed, 221pp., RRP \$A45.00 (free postage if purchased from the publisher).*

# Battle Order 204: A Bomber Pilot's Story

Christobel Mattingley

Reviewed by Dr John McCarthy

Christobel Mattingley's book is both a love story and a war story. *Battle Order 204* recounts her husband's experience as a *Lancaster* pilot from enlistment into the Royal Australian Air Force under the Empire Air Training Scheme, to his subsequent training both in Australia and the United Kingdom, and his operational career which ended violently when he was wounded in the head, arm and thigh during an attack on Dortmund on 29 November 1944. After bringing his badly damaged aircraft and crew back safely David Mattingley was awarded an immediate Distinguished Flying Cross.

This book is therefore not an academic examination of the strategic air offensive against Germany. For that it is still difficult to go past Sir Charles Webster's and Noble Frankland's four-volume official history. Nor is it a study of the part played by Australians as a whole in that campaign along the lines of Hank Nelson's superb *Chased by the Sun: The Australians in Bomber Command in World War II*. (reviewed in the Summer 2006/07 *Defender*). It is more a highly personal account of one young man's war with its attendant horror, humanity and inhumanity, of relationships and the loss of friends. *Battle Order 204* is largely based on diaries, log books, service records and letters home interspersed with reconstructed dialogues.

These elements give the book strength but also a weakness. Strength in the sense of immediacy, weakness in the tendency to take David Mattingley's contemporary personal record at face value or to allow it to be reproduced seemingly verbatim or simply paraphrased. Two examples make the point. We are told David was 'chuffed' in 1944 to see a *Fairey Firefly*, an aircraft still on the 'secret list'. The *Firefly* in fact was being delivered to squadrons from March 1943. Then we read 'On a dull day, with the aid of the Beam, he climbed through low cloud ceiling to a wizard new world of sun shining brilliantly on the fleecy cloud below'.

*Battle Order 204* is thus a little over scattered with 1939-45 Royal Air Force aircrew slang. 'Wizard' is but one example, 'pukka', 'duff gen', 'stooging about', among others appear frequently. Fortunately Christobel Mattingley provides a glossary of such terms. Readers unaware of this war-time culture might find their meaning obscure.

David Mattingley joined 1 RAAF Initial Training School in June 1942. After passing no fewer than ten theoretical and practical flying courses he was posted to an operational squadron in September 1944. Aircrew must have been the most highly trained personnel ever to enter combat. Some 56,000 aircrew were lost while serving with Bomber Command. Christobel Mattingley writes with feeling of these young men. And bomber crews were composed of the very young. Christobel Mattingley's future husband was 22, one

member of his crew was just 18, another 19. If they survived they would perhaps have to prove little about themselves for the rest of their lives.

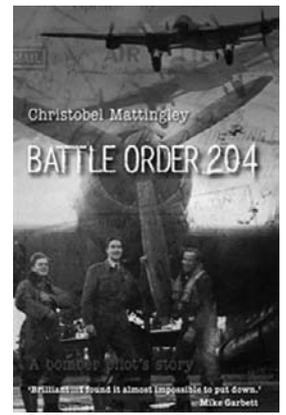
Survival though was often a matter of chance. Two instances are cited in this book of a relative and then a friend killed on their first operation. At the other end of the spectrum, Guy Gibson VC, DSO and Bar, DFC and Bar, leader of the Ruhr dams raid, survived three Bomber Command tours and a period on night-fighters, only to be killed after acting as Master Bomber for a main force raid and flying one of the safest aircraft on the RAF's Order-of-Battle, the *Mosquito*.

A point this book demonstrates is the evolving nature of the strategic air offensive. When David Mattingley began operating in late September 1944 the Bomber Command aircrew experience was markedly different than it had been a year before. In 1943 it would take on average some nine months to complete the 30 operations which constituted the standard Bomber Command first tour. Chances of completing it were not good. On German targets the loss rate averaged 5.4 per cent. The odds of any individual crew completing 30 trips were thus one in four. The chance of surviving two tours totalling 50 trips was virtually nil.

With shorter distances to fly over enemy-held territory, a large surplus of aircrew to requirements, the re-introduction of daylight raids and the resultant loss rate down to one per cent, David Mattingley and his crew operated in more favourable, though still deadly, conditions. After being on the squadron less than two months, Mattingley's crew was credited with eighteen operations. Their last was their 23<sup>rd</sup> (and the squadron's 204<sup>th</sup> hence the book's title). On 29 November 1944, 294 *Lancasters* and 17 *Mosquitoes* attacked Dortmund in bad weather. Marking of the target and thus bombing was scattered. Six *Lancasters* were lost. It was remarkable that David Mattingley was able to bring his aircraft back to base.

Christobel Mattingley's narrative of her husband's long and recurrent hospitalisation and subsequent recovery is deeply moving. It may remind us that courage is required long after a conflict is ended and that the ripples of combat extend to many others besides the combatant. Christobel Mattingley is donating her royalties from the sales of *Battle Order 204* to the Association of the Friends of Lincoln Cathedral. Many surviving members of Bomber Command recall its spire with affection and a sensation of relief. Many more saw it for the last time as they passed over to the North Sea to the enemy coast ahead. ♦

Christobel Mattingley, *'Battle order 204: A Bomber Pilot's Story'*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney 2007, Softback, 308pp., RRP \$A17.95.



# Going Back: Australian Veterans Return to Viet Nam

Gary McKay

Reviewed by Dr Michael McKernan

Is there any point in reviewing this book? It is written specifically for those Australian Vietnam veterans who may be contemplating a trip to the battlefields of their earlier lives. In the introduction Gary McKay describes *Going Back* as a 'niche book' and thanks his publishers for having the interest to publish for a limited audience.

Strangely I think the author is underselling his book. When planning commenced for the remarkable 1990 return of Gallipoli veterans to Anzac for the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Landing, the word 'pilgrimage' began to be bandied about by the organisers. It struck me then as an odd use of an ancient word. By the time today's Special Minister of State, but then Minister for Veterans' Affairs, John Faulkner, was to lead a visit by Western Front veterans to their battlefields, pilgrimage was the settled description used to describe the event.

A dear and ageing friend, slimming down his library, recently passed on to me the *Shorter Oxford Dictionary* that he had bought in the early 1950s. To some extent its definitions are in a time warp and 'pilgrimage' is explained simply as 'a journey made by a pilgrim'. 'Pilgrim' is described as 'one who travels from place to place; a wanderer' and, secondly, 'one who journeys to some sacred place'. Were the ancient veterans of the 1990s wanderers or journeying to 'a sacred place'?

Gary McKay's book uses 'pilgrimage' quite comfortably and quite consistently in writing about the visits of Australian veterans to Vietnam. The veterans, he realised, were approaching retirement age, with their kids off their hands. They were taking to the roads, he surmised, as 'grey nomads' and might be thinking of putting Vietnam on their travel itineraries. Should they do that or perhaps better 'stay at home and buy the Winnebago instead'? This book was written to help them to decide.

The trouble is, in what sense is Vietnam, for Australian veterans, a sacred place? Those who accompanied our veterans to Gallipoli, to France, overwhelmingly to Crete, were astonished by the warmth of the welcome from the local people. The veterans were honoured by the reception and deeply moved to be among the graves of men alongside whom they had fought. I will remember forever, I suspect, the agony of an Australian survivor of the Greek campaign coming to the grave of his closest mate at Phaleron war cemetery in Athens. It was the main, perhaps the only, point of the pilgrimage for him.

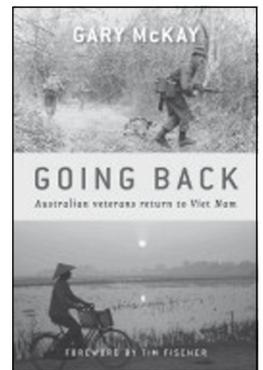
Vietnam veterans have no graves to honour in the country where their mates fell, the overwhelming majority of whom were returned to Australia for burial (with some earlier deaths buried in the Commonwealth War Cemetery in Malaysia). Nor can they be confident of the mood of the people among whom they will wander, for many of whom the 'American war' is 'ancient history', but for a large minority who lived

through it, the horror of the war is still deeply painful. A plaque explaining the Long Tan Cross to the Vietnamese people, which has only recently been removed, described the Australian soldiers the Cross commemorates as 'Imperialist puppets'.

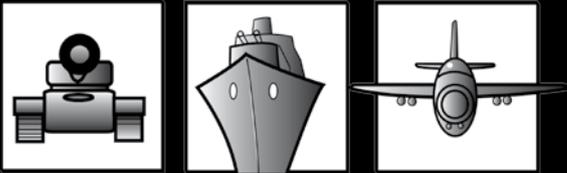
The general reader with an interest in military history will find, therefore, much to think about in comparing and contrasting the various 'pilgrimages' to the places where Australians have fought. Readers might also learn something about the traumas our Vietnam veterans still experience, and the impact the war, in its enduring way, has had on the families of the veterans. So perhaps this is not just a 'niche book' as its author thinks.

Though as a book for its primary audience I am sure that it would work very well. It is a gentle book, caring and sensible, arising from the multiple visits that Gary McKay has made to Vietnam. Too often when we think of war or go on battlefield tours we want to know 'what it must have been like'. We cannot know that. It is good, though, that the veterans themselves can be well prepared to revisit their past in such a sensitive way. ♦

Gary McKay, *Going Back: Australian Veterans Return to Viet Nam*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2007, Softback, xxiii+222pp., \$A24.95. This review is republished courtesy of *The Canberra Times*.



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# The President, the Pope and the Prime Minister

John O'Sullivan

A review essay by Michael O'Connor

This most interesting book is about the coincidence in time of the US presidency of Ronald Reagan, the pontificate of Pope John Paul II, and the government of British prime minister, Margaret Thatcher. All three were seen initially as outsiders; all three became towering figures who, each in their own way, gave the leadership that forced the collapse of the Soviet empire and of Communism.

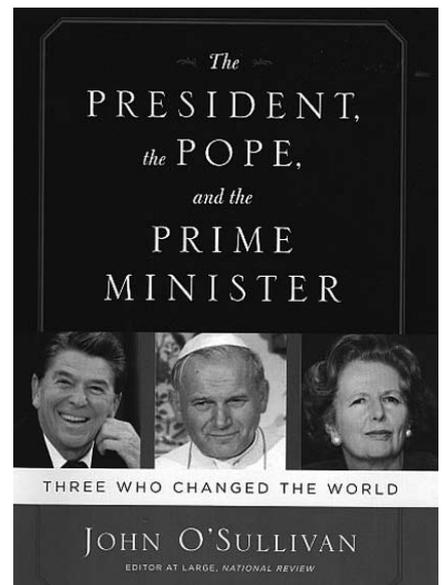
John O'Sullivan is an editor-at-large of the *National Review* and covered the Reagan presidency as a senior British journalist in Washington. He has also been a special adviser to Margaret Thatcher and wrote regularly about Pope John Paul.

O'Sullivan notes that by the late 1970s, Ronald Reagan was regarded as too old and too conservative to be considered presidential material. Thatcher was not only too conservative but, as a woman, was hardly considered at all for the leadership of Britain's Conservative Party. Poland's Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was not only that country's second-ranking cardinal but was regarded as too uncompromisingly anti-communist and theologically conservative to be considered papal material in a church dominated by Italians, by liberalism and *Ostpolitik*.

By the mid-1970s, the West was experiencing a period of economic, cultural and political near despair. A combination of the 1960s cultural revolution (the West's rather than the Chinese version), a fourfold increase in oil prices and stubborn stagflation combining high inflation and high unemployment seemed to have generated a loss of confidence in Western culture and values. The Cold War seemed never-ending with a seeming stability underpinned only by the nuclear warfare strategy of Mutual Assured Destruction among the superpowers. A seriously flawed anti-communist crusade in Vietnam had resulted in the loss of all three Indo-Chinese countries to a particularly unpleasant group of communist regimes.

For many in the West, the choice seemed to lie between an anarchic libertarianism on the one hand and Marxist authoritarianism on the other. The traditional democratic alternative lay with what appeared to be an ageing Hollywood actor and a rather harsh woman. The Roman Catholic Church, of course, was considered to be irrelevant in a Western culture that was increasingly irreligious.

O'Sullivan traces the road to power for each of his principal characters. Reagan had been a highly successful two-term governor of California. He had not sought the



Republican presidential nomination in 1976 out of loyalty to the incumbent, the bland and ineffectual Gerald Ford. But in the intervening years before his election in November 1980 and assuming the presidency in January 1981, Reagan was constantly in the public eye through newspaper columns and radio broadcasts. Later nicknamed 'the Great Communicator' Reagan's folksy and cheerful manner conveyed optimism and hope.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla was elected Pope in October 1978 when John Paul I, successor to Paul VI, died after only 33 days in office. He was the first non-Italian pope in some 400 years and his Polish colleague, the powerful anti-communist Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński, thought he was too young for the job. An orthodox philosopher, the new John Paul II faced serious internal challenges not only from the church's liberals but also from the Marxist-leaning liberation theology movement in Latin America. More significantly, as a Pole who had lived under the totalitarian rule of both the Nazis and Communists for almost 40 years — the whole of his adult life — he had little sympathy for the *Ostpolitik* policy of Paul VI, although he made one of the leading Vatican diplomats of that era, Cardinal Agostino Casaroli, his Secretary of State.

Margaret Thatcher became British opposition leader in February 1975 and was elected prime minister after the collapse of the Callaghan Labour government in May 1979. She had been in contact with Reagan for some years and the seeds of their eventual partnership were well sown.

All three leaders were to experience assassination attempts, Reagan and John Paul in 1981, Thatcher in 1984. All are analysed in some detail and O'Sullivan concludes that, on balance, the attempt on John Paul was orchestrated by the Soviet Union, alarmed by the Polish reaction to his first visit in 1979. The attempt was almost successful and the pope was gravely wounded.

Although Reagan was attacked by a crackpot, that attempt too was nearly successful. At the time, Reagan was at pains (no pun) to treat his injuries lightly but in fact he lost a great amount of blood and doctors struggled to find the cause.

Thatcher was the target of an IRA bomb, which failed only because of the peculiar structure of the building attacked.

Both Reagan and Thatcher attacked their nations' economic woes by abandoning what they regarded as the failed Keynesian policies of stimulating demand by government. Instead, by using control of the money supply to limit inflation and by stimulating production by massive tax cuts, they generated rapid economic growth with reduced inflation and lower unemployment. Thatcher also confronted what she regarded as the abuse of power by extremist trade unions, most notably the Marxist-led coal miners union.

Reagan also consciously set out to build an American strategic superiority — and to use it. When asked his view of how the Cold War might be affected, his famous one line response was “We won, they lost”. This kind of confrontational approach was anathema to many academic theorists and ‘clever people’ but inspirational to the broader community.

Thatcher's first and critically important strategic challenge came from the Argentine invasion of the Falklands. O'Sullivan is naturally more concerned with the politics, both domestic and international, of the challenge but does not underestimate its importance. For one, it cemented the Anglo-American alliance that had undergone not a few stresses over the past two decades. Reagan who might have been seriously concerned at the effect on US relations with Latin America did not hesitate to support Britain politically, logistically and with intelligence. He understood that aggression such as Argentina's had to be resisted as a matter of fundamental principle. As an aside, the Fraser government's pusillanimous — and benefit-free-response in withdrawing all Australian exchange officers from British units deploying to the Falklands offered a sharp contrast.

In the famous words of Josef Stalin, John Paul had no divisions to deploy against the dictators in Poland. He had no political power with which to confront them. His strategy, which he had pursued against the Nazis and the Communists in Poland, was simply to bypass them. This was not merely a matter of ignoring the authorities; rather the church generated an alternative rather than oppositionist culture that drew the loyalty of the populace.

If few understood what he was up to, the Soviet leadership were not among them. Their alarm — and that of the Polish leadership — was palpable but they could do nothing in the face of a largely united population with powerful and fearless leadership.

All too soon — for the Soviets, the Polish counter-culture led to the formation of Solidarity, an alliance of free trade unions, intellectuals and others that simply neutralised the Polish government. Repression, manifested eventually by

the imposition of martial law, simply did not work in the face of the Pope's leadership, and with material support provided from the West, especially from the United States through organised labour in that country. Ultimately, the government conceded free elections and the communists were destroyed.

Strategically, Reagan sought to outspend the Soviet Union into bankruptcy. At the same time, he also set out to end the nuclear confrontation by abolishing all American and Soviet nuclear weapons. His tool was to be the Strategic Defense Initiative which experts dismissed as unrealistic but which certainly alarmed the Soviets.

It also alarmed Thatcher who was concerned that total nuclear disarmament would leave Europe vulnerable to Soviet conventional superiority. But Reagan knew what he was doing. The new Soviet leader, Mikhail Gorbachev, admitted to Reagan that the Soviet Union was spending 25 per cent of GDP on the military (his Foreign Minister Eduard Shevardnadze was to admit to 28 per cent and rising) and that this was crippling. Increasingly all but the ‘clever people’ realised that the Soviet Union and its empire was a facade, a Potemkin village. And so it proved in those memorable weeks in 1989.

The book only superficially touches on the question of Gorbachev's contribution to the collapse. It suggests that he was a prisoner of events beyond his control but this assessment is not convincing. All three of the central figures regarded Gorbachev as, to use Thatcher's words, 'someone we can do business with'. Reagan certainly thought so — and did so. History is yet to give an unqualified verdict.

This is a fascinating book, well written and, despite the title, focused on policy and outcomes rather than personalities. Yet the personalities are crucial because of the conviction and leadership they offered. At the time, the criticisms were many, superficial and ignorant. Many of the critics are now honest enough to admit that they were wrong. It would be the height of intellectual dishonesty to do otherwise.

Reagan left office by constitutional fiat, after two consecutive terms, at the beginning of 1989. Thatcher was to be dumped by her own party in November 1990 but John Paul remained in his office until his death in April 2005. Of the three, probably only the pope enjoyed complete authority but all three had offered not only exceptional leadership but had pursued strategies that were driven by genuine conviction. They not only offered hope to their own communities and far beyond but were faithful to the pope's official motto — Be Not Afraid. ♦

*John O'Sullivan, 'The President, the Pope and the Prime-Minister', Regnery Publishing, Washington DC, 2006, Casebound and jacketed, 360pp., \$A39.99.*

*Michael O'Connor retired as executive director of the Australia Defence Association at the end of April 2003.*

# Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in the West's War with Militant Islam

Mark Bowden

Reviewed by Neil James

When the US Embassy in Tehran was seized by radical Muslim university students on 04 November 1979, 66 Americans were taken hostage in major and eventually prolonged breaches of international law and diplomatic propriety. 13 women and African-Americans (regarded by the hostage-takers as victims of the US ruling class) were released on 19-20 November. One further hostage suffering severe multiple sclerosis was subsequently released on 11 July 1980. Six more Americans had been courageously smuggled out by the Canadian and Swedish embassies in late January 1980. The remaining 50 male and two female hostages, including three detained in the Iranian Foreign Ministry, were held hostage for 444 days, being released the day after Ronald Reagan was first inaugurated as president on 20 January 1981. To this day, nearly 30 years on, the US and Iran have not renewed normal diplomatic relations.

About a dozen of the 52 have written personal accounts of their ordeal. The two best are probably Chargé d'affaires Bruce Laingen's *Yellow Ribbon: The Secret Journal of Bruce Laingen* (1992) and William J. Daugherty's *In the Shadow of the Ayatollah: A CIA Hostage in Iran* (2001). Numerous other books have discussed the whole crisis, including nearly a dozen concentrating on the failure of the American military rescue attempt (at the cost of eight dead) on 24/25 April 1980.

*Guests of the Ayatollah* is a well-researched and very well-written account of this US-Iran confrontation. Bowden brings to it the same eye for detail, inter-connection and nuance, and the same gift for flowing narrative, that he used for his 1999 bestseller *Black Hawk Down* — about the US military's flawed October 1993 operation against Somali warlord Mohamed Farrah Aidid.

Bowden ably explores the broad historical and cultural background to the crisis. He misses some of the explanatory historical detail to US-Iran relations covered by Daugherty, but *Guests of the Ayatollah* is generally a highly readable one-stop account of what caused such a deep estrangement between the two countries.

Bowden's extensive use of first-hand interviews with those involved, on both sides, is a particular strength. Especially fascinating are the comparisons between what participants thought or believed at the time and what they think now with the advantage of hindsight. Many of the hostage-takers, for example, now realise that their youthful idealism and actions were ruthlessly manipulated and exploited. Those of this belief consider that they were used by clerical hardliners to destroy the liberal democrats forming the intellectual and practical backbone of the revolution that overthrew the Shah. Those Iranians who still adhere to the hard-line claims of 1979 are largely the ones who have prospered under the authoritarian regime that was built on the embassy seizure.

The picture of Khomeini that emerges is not flattering. There is much testimony by Iranians close to him at that time of his vacillation, simplistic thinking and tendency to agree with the last person who spoke to him. President Jimmy Carter, on the other hand, emerges with his reputation enhanced. He exercised composed restraint in the face of severe Iranian provocations, continued UN failures, half-hearted support from many allies and increasing domestic American frustration. Carter was also a lot more decisive, in a measured and morally-principled fashion, than widely thought at the time.

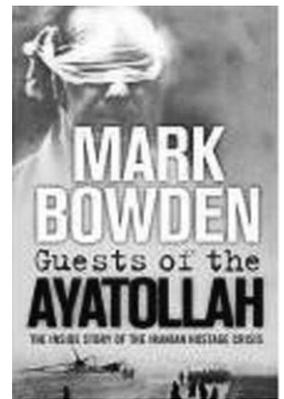
The chaos of the period is also well explained. The seizure of the embassy caused the collapse of the Iranian provisional government that followed the fall of the Shah. This meant the Americans, and intermediaries, had no-one in authority, and more importantly no-one in control, who they could even try to negotiate with effectively until the second half of 1980. This situation was a big contributor to Carter's eventual decision to order a military rescue operation after nearly six months of fruitless negotiations, outrageous Iranian demands and sheer irrational intransigence — often based on ignorance about the outside world and/or fiercely sectarian religious beliefs.

From an Australian defence perspective, *Guests of the Ayatollah* also provides much food for thought in lessons learned the hard way. US operational deficiencies included insufficient linguists, poor intelligence collection steerage, unclear command chains, inter-Service rivalry, limited means to mount long-range Special Forces operations, and no specialist rotary-wing units which regularly train and operate with the commandos they carry. The crisis also highlighted the dangerous tendencies to hubris, and to intellectual and professional introversion, in Special Forces units the longer, and the more, those in them are isolated from the professional mainstreams of their parent defence force.

The term *Islamist*, to denote Muslim extremists misusing Islam as a violent political ideology, was not in use in 1979-80. Neither was the more controversial term *Islamofascist*. Some may therefore baulk somewhat at Bowden's conclusions that:

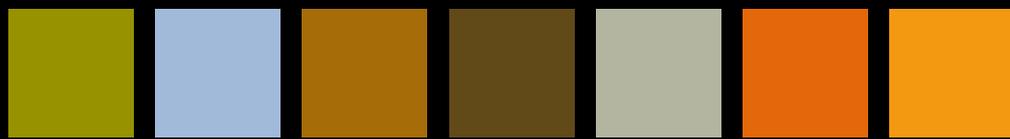
*The Iran hostage crisis was for most Americans [and indeed most Westerners] their first encounter with Islamofascism and, as such, can be seen as the first battle in that ongoing world conflict. Iran's hatred of the United States was in part a consequence of heavy-handed, arrogant and sometimes criminal twentieth-century American foreign policy, but it was also rooted in ... anger over the erosion of tradition. .... The murderous terrorism that has become a fact of modern life is part of the death throes of an ancient way of life. ♦*

Mark Bowden, 'Guests of the Ayatollah: The First Battle in the West's War with Militant Islam', Atlantic Books, London, 2007, Softback, 680pp., RRP \$A26.95 (Dirt Cheap Books price is \$A5.00).





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