

Snap Shots

In line with its charter, this issue of *Defender* addresses topics across the spectrum of strategic policy, capability development and military operations. In the second of two articles, Rear Admiral Peter Briggs (Retd) further develops the case for building on the pedigree of the Collins class submarines in order to design and build the ADF's next-generation submarines here in Australia. He outlines the main R&D, design and intellectual property issues involved and then summarises the key industry and personnel challenges.

A Canadian contributor, Major General Terry Liston (Retd), analyses the NATO-led counter-insurgency effort in Afghanistan on a troops-to-task basis. His assessment is that the combined Afghan and NATO strengths constitute only one third of the forces required, can thus only really control around one third of the country, and therefore a change in both the political and military strategies is required.

ASIO head, Paul O'Sullivan, addresses the difficult challenges facing those tasked with providing intelligence support to Government and the wider Australian community. These include increasing globalisation, long-term and perhaps growing uncertainty in many fields, and difficulties in determining normalcy patterns so vulnerabilities and potentially threatening changes can be predicted, monitored or analysed effectively.

Dr Rod Lyon from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute updates discussion on whether our current counter-terrorism effort is a war or not, just a law enforcement problem or a mix of both. He notes how the war in Iraq has polarised the electorate, unfortunately leaving little room for sensible discussion about the longer-term conflict with international Islamist terrorism and how governments should tackle it. One of his conclusions is that the global response to terrorist activity and rogue states will remain a politically contentious and strategically difficult issue for the foreseeable future.

In the *Sharp End*, two contributors tackle different aspects of modern, close-quarter battle in complex terrain and the men we expect to fight and prevail in it. Dr Paul Monk discusses the USMC pacification of Fallujah in November 2004, as seen through the eyes of journalist and now author, Patrick O'Donnell's *We Were One: Shoulder to Shoulder with the Marines Who Took Fallujah*.

Finally, in a cry from the professional heart, Major Jim Hammett legitimately and ably raises an important matter of military professional debate by questioning how our infantry are currently being tasked in Iraq and Afghanistan. He fears that limiting the infantry to only part of their historical role is causing professional embarrassment, particularly when working with close allies, and risks the long-term viability of the Infantry Corps. He also questions the recent practice of using Special Forces, almost exclusively, for tasks traditionally undertaken by line infantry. ♦

Common sense on common security

Recent renewed discussion about the need for an overarching common security mechanism for the Asia-Pacific region has generally been somewhat confused to say the least. Much of this domestic and diplomatic confusion, and any ensuing diplomatic embarrassment for Australia, could probably have been avoided by clearer thinking and would certainly have been avoided by the deployment of clearer terminology.

As the ADA has advocated for decades, what the strategic architecture of our region needs is a *common security* mechanism using the excellent model of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE) which grew out of the 1981 Helsinki Accords. Now the OSCE is not a European economic grouping as those regional mechanisms include the European Union (EU), the European Free Trade Association (EFTA) and similar arrangements among some former Soviet bloc states. Nor is the OSCE the wider political umbrella for political discussions among EU and non-EU countries as that function is undertaken by the Council of Europe. The OSCE is also definitely not a collective defence pact or organisation, such as the NATO alliance of most western and central European states.

The OSCE is instead the *common security* forum whereby all the European states come together to discuss strategic security and related matters in a manner that assists transparency, trust and stability – and which provides mutually respected verification measures to achieve such strategic endstates.

Understanding the important and fundamental differences between the concepts of *collective security*, *collective defence* and *common security*, and indeed between security and economic or political groupings among nation-states, is an essential professional and intellectual pre-requisite for any worthwhile discussion of strategic or diplomatic matters. Unfortunately, the initial statements emanating from Government circles, and virtually all the media coverage, of recent Australian initiatives have failed to make these vital distinctions. The result was that the undoubted worth of the common security proposal was lost among widespread and logical scepticism about the viability or likelihood of an 'Asian Union'-type economic grouping, or 'security pact', some wrongly but understandably thought was being suggested.

As the six-party talks on North Korean nuclear issues among China, Japan, Russia the US and the two Koreas show, there are incipient mechanisms that might one day form the basis for developing a region-wide *Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Asia*. But the creation and maturing of such an Asian common security organisation can be achieved only if all parties can be assured that it would only be a common security mechanism and not a Trojan horse, or utopian or long-term objective, for any other type of regional grouping. ♦