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- Could Super Hornets be the right answer but for a different problem?
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Defence is a trust not a cash cow

Since Kevin Rudd assumed the federal leadership of the Labor Party at the end of 2006 we have seen a pronounced move to fresh thinking on defence issues within Labor circles. Coincidentally, or probably not, there has also been increased bipartisan agreement on strategic policy and defence capability development generally.

In an election year, of course, both sides of politics are prone to deny such convergence when seeking to differentiate their product electorally, but many partisan disagreements on defence are really more apparent than real.

Labor's new leadership seems to have absorbed significant lessons from the Mark Latham debacle. The 2004 election was largely lost because the electorate looked beyond the hype and sensed things it distrusted in a potential prime-minister. Not least of these concerned national defence, where most voters of all hues disagreed with Latham's old-fashioned, virulent anti-Americanism, his boorish contempt for those undertaking military service, and his shoot-from-the-hip style of decision-making on military-strategic issues.

More recently, continuing strategic uncertainty, the necessary rebuilding of the ADF after decades of comparative neglect, and the generational move from Beazley to Rudd have all contributed to defence policy reform within Labor. In particular, the ALP has been able to shed the personal history, shibboleths and outmoded theories of the late Cold-War era that kept Kim Beazley in thrall long after the international strategic situation had moved on.

While there is little doubt Kevin Rudd has modern, balanced and shrewd general instincts where defence strategy is concerned, some unease persists about others in Labor's leadership group. Fears remain that some Labor parliamentarians are still infected with the simplistic defence-of-Australia dogma or harbour fantasies about renewing rampant bureaucratic managerialism at Russell Offices.

Well, we will know soon enough if or when Labor wins this year's election – an event likely to be decided anyway on social and economic issues alone. Defence issues will sway even fewer votes, either way, this time around, due in part to Labor's fresh thinking.

But whichever side of politics assumes government, Australia will still face one serious and long-term threat to effective defence planning and adequate resourcing. Governments of both political persuasions are now addicted electorally to the ever-greater diversion of federal resources to areas of social and infrastructure spending that are the constitutional responsibility of the states and territories.

But the defence of Australia, its people and its interests will always be a wholly federal responsibility – and one needing long-term and diligent attention. The ever-increasing diversion of federal revenues to areas of spending formerly the exclusive or primary responsibility of the states (and to middle-class welfare) is inevitably affecting the funds considered politically available to ensure our common defence. This short-sighted policy must change.

To many voters (and indeed many politicians) defence is an issue that barely enters their day-to-day consciousness. When it does, the instinctive reaction of many is to try and avoid thinking about it because it might be unpleasant, difficult or require complex moral and intellectual choices.

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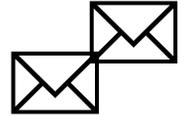
Reconstruction Task Force troops construct an Afghan National Police post in Oruzgan Province despite two Taliban attacks during the six-day task.

Photo courtesy of the ADF

A related phenomenon is the commonplace assumption that *someone else* is no doubt worrying about it so why bother.

Labor's promise to quarantine defence spending from any post-election razor gang is a realistic admission that Australia cannot repeat the prolonged neglect of defence investment during the 1980s and 1990s under governments of both political persuasions. Indeed the current boost to defence spending is mainly to cancel out those decades of sustained under-investment.

No matter which party forms the next government, they must make sure the Australian people realise that any cutting back on needed defence spending to satisfy short-term social desires, or arrange political fixes, means the current generation is selfishly gambling with the security of their children and grandchildren. ♦



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: A recent Newspoll published in the *Australian* concerning our involvement in Iraq found that 31 per cent support the Government's position of staying, 40 per cent agree to a 'definite date' or mid-2008 pullout and only 23 per cent want the troops home immediately.

But the polling questions were narrow and did not permit more informed or nuanced responses. They could, for example, have included a balancing question about increasing troop levels based on an explanatory statement. Australia's current contribution is modest, particularly when compared to our wars of the 1914-1972 period. On a per-capita basis the US has one soldier in Iraq for every 2000 citizens, and is running a public deficit of over three per cent. In comparison Australia's contribution is one digger for every 40,000 Aussies with the federal budget in surplus.

If we matched the American rate of effort we would be deploying 10,000 troops. Ignoring that this would require 30,000 troops overall to sustain such a deployment cycle and we do not have them, it seems doubtful that there would be sufficient public support for such a contribution; with an estimated 50-100 war dead each year and a very large dent in the budget surplus.

It seems that the Coalition Government and Labour Opposition have an essentially bipartisan 'little bit more, little bit less policy' with both choosing to avoid the hard issues. Australia's military commitment in Iraq is therefore tailored as much to match the Newspoll result as it is to wider national strategic calculations.

This is one way to fight a war I guess. But is it the way to win it? Should we be fighting any war without the aim to win and investing the effort required to do so? Moreover, can we expect our troops to risk their lives on our behalf when the rest of us are not prepared to match the effort, share some of the national risk, or even bother to research the issues enough to provide considered questions or answers in opinion polls.

**Russell Miles
Victoria**

Sir: Whilst I must be starting to sound like a broken record player on this subject, the upgrade of our mid-1960s era armoured personnel carrier fleet really is becoming a farce. At best estimate it is now a decade behind schedule. This is not acceptable. In fact this is starting to make the Seasprite project look well conceived and well run. It is time to start thinking about tough decisions.

While the first handful of refurbished M113AS4 APCs will soon reach a mechanised infantry unit, by the time the

numbers are sufficient to allow the operational deployment of a tactically useable sub-unit, or the whole unit, the effective operational life of these vehicles will be very short. Not because the refurbished vehicles will wear out quickly but because they will simply not be capable of tactical use in modern battle against any moderately-equipped adversary.

Under-gunned and with no secondary weapon system, we might still be able to use them to bluff rioters in East Timor and in the South Pacific but not for much else. I cannot see us ever deploying them to Iraq or Afghanistan, or similar-intensity wars for example, because they are still not proper infantry fighting or cavalry vehicles. Even for South Pacific contingencies, apart from their tracked-propulsion and off-road mobility, the Bushmaster armoured truck is probably just as good.

I am curious that the Dutch, Turks, Israelis, Germans and the Americans all have variously upgraded M113s in service. Are there any lessons that perhaps we could learn from them? I note that all these countries also have proper infantry fighting vehicles (IFV) and do not use their M113 variants in this role.

We will soon have a second mechanised infantry battalion operational among our future eight infantry battalions, but it will still not be able to deploy with its organic armoured vehicles to any serious conflict. We need to buy an IFV and scrapping the M113AS4 vehicles, or moving them into the Army Reserve, looks like a sensible preliminary step.

**Adrian Quilty
New South Wales**

Sir: Regarding the accusation that the ADA and *Defender* are biased against air forces you may be interested in an article on the Winograd Commission's interim report into the failures of the IDF in the 2006 Lebanon War. Haninah Levine, a science fellow at the World Institute's Center for Defense Information, translated the interim report which at the time, May 2007, was not available in English. In her analysis of the conclusions of the interim report she noted that they were relevant to the US situation. In my view they also serve as a warning to strategic analysts in Australia.

The first lesson drawn was '...that wishful thinking concerning the capabilities of precision weapon systems overpowered the (IDF) General Staff's analytical abilities.'

The second lesson was that the IDF from the top down had been overstretched during five years of operations; had failed to revise operational plans in the light of changed regional circumstances; and had cut back investment in the training

and equipping of reserve ground combat units which were essential to the success of contingency plans.

The third lesson was the need to avoid over-confidence in the ability of the IDF to respond militarily to the probability that Hezbollah would use kidnapping of soldiers as a tactic. The Commission found that the Chief of Staff of the IDF had made false statements to Prime Minister Olmert because he had '...excessive faith in the ability of the Air Force'.

Some of my best friends have been fighter pilots but I believe that the members of the Winograd Commission might smile sympathetically at your summary of the debate in Israel as deciding that fighter pilots are not best fitted to be Chiefs of Staff of the IDF. I hope that by now you are no longer distracted by the unfair criticism of your excellent publications.

Peter Day
Australian Capital Territory

Sir: The ADA has been accused of harbouring anti-air force biases. I do not see this but I can understand how such a perception might occasionally arise.

At a superficial glance, both now and over past decades, the Association's board of directors has perhaps included more former members of the RAN and the Army than the RAAF. Furthermore, no former RAAF officer has been executive director. But does this matter? The structure of the ADA and the checks and balances instituted from its earliest days mean the personal career backgrounds of its leaders surely have little effect because individual expertise (objective or subjective) is necessarily balanced by collective assessments and decision-making.

A longer look at the Association's leaders is also reassuring. Two of the three founders of the ADA were former RAAF officers (one a retired Chief of the Air Staff). The civilian directors have often leavened the ex-military ones. Former directors with an air force background, such as Air Commodore John Macneil, were not exactly shrinking violets either. But it may be that it is the perception that counts for some, particularly if you want to believe it.

A bigger contributor to perceptions of bias may well be the ADA's laudable advocacy of a joint-Service approach to command and control, capability development and strategic planning. This will tend to be misunderstood by those who served in the navy, army or air force before the three Services became a properly teamed defence force relatively recently. If you are uncomfortable with the modern, integrated ADF, or are just simply used to a single-Service way of thinking and doing things, it can be hard to update the conscious and unconscious attitudes of a lifetime. This particularly applies when the joint-Service way of doing things rightly confronts sacred cows long sheltered by individual single-Service cultures.

Finally, there is the current context of considerable public controversy over the retirement of the F-111 and the introduction of the joint strike fighter. Both the public debate, and the professional debate within air force circles, have been acrimonious and, sadly, often unduly personal. There have also been splits between serving and former RAAF officers, between different generations of serving officer, and between fighter pilots and other specialisations. All against

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a technological background of profound change in how air forces have to fight, and a strategic background of having to envisage fighting wars where our control of the air might be seriously challenged for the first time since early in the Korean War.

My observation is that the ADA has trod gently through this disputation and tried to facilitate open and honest debate. Some holding firm views one way or the other may see otherwise, especially where *Defender* or *Defence Brief* have featured articles arguing or explaining the other side's case. I, for one, do not think the ADA is biased against the air force or against or in favour of any Service.

**Keith Scales
Queensland**

Sir: Recently, Don Middleton (*Defender*, Summer 2006/07) and Garry Bates (*Defender*, Autumn 2007) gave a comprehensive, if a very depressing, picture of how the capacity of Australia's defence industry to support the RAAF is being allowed to run down to a mere shell of its former capabilities. What is most depressing is that this situation, which will result in a loss of national strategic capability, has resulted from decisions taken both by the RAAF and the Department of Defence, but their importance does not seem to have been recognised or acknowledged by many within the RAAF and none within Defence.

If Labor wins office, an early review of the decisions that have been taken has been promised, and this would at least signal a determined effort to get to the facts. Of the six pre-requisites set in 2004 to be met before the retirement of the F-111 fleet, none have been achieved. One (JDAM on the F/A-18A/B) may be completed shortly, and two more (the A330 Tanker and the Wedgetail AEW&C) may come into service in the next three years or so, many years late. Of the remaining three pre-requisites, the Hornet Upgrade Program, JASSM on the F/A-18A/B, and JASSM on the P3C, the last has been scrapped and the other two appear problematic.

Meanwhile, the inflexible decision to retire the F-111 in 2010, and the contentious, 'interim' Super Hornet purchase (without supporting tankers and AEW&C support) do not meet Australia's stated requirements. In addition, the Joint Strike Fighter project continues to face serious delays, with the potential for cuts in numbers and the probability of cost over-runs, even assuming that it will meet our technical and operational requirements eventually.

On current plans (or what passes for planning), we are risking the loss of a large part of our current aerospace industry support capability and threatening its future viability, while at the same time reducing the RAAF's organic force sustainment capabilities. As a result, we will be sacrificing Australia's future air combat capability edge; a damning indictment of both current strategic planning and the capability development decision processes within the Department of Defence. We need open and professional debate within the ADF officer corps if we are to correct the present situation and prevent future failures in decisions on force structure and force composition.

**Ted Bushell
Victoria**

Editor's Note: Defender's coverage of the air combat capability debate is continued on page 32.

Sir: Grant Sanderson is to be commended for the candour, logic and humour of his account of policy development failings and policy oversight failure concerning our assistance to East Timor [*Defender*, Autumn 2007]. Even more impressively, he not only described the problem but analysed its many and nuanced causes and suggested eminently practical solutions.

Clearly there are fundamental and ongoing problems within the Department of Defence and particularly within its International Policy Division. But there was little mention of the contribution, or not, of other agencies involved such as the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

Our future relationship with East Timor is proving to be a considerable strategic millstone with around five per cent of our deployable ground forces marooned there in seeming perpetuity. Yet it could have turned out so differently with some consistent policy, adequate resourcing, focused attention to the matter and, as Grant so ably argues, an actual plan.

Obviously some determined whole-of-government efforts are required to transform this strategic benefactor – mendicant relationship into a symbiotic one. But first it seems there is significant reform effort required in Defence so the left-hand-right-hand debacle described by Grant Sanderson does not reoccur.

Finally, I have to ask, have there been any explanations or denials received from International Policy Division concerning the obvious deep-seated problems within that organisation detailed in Grant's article?

**Pauline Walker
New South Wales**

Editor's Note: No.

Sir: I would like to take issue with two points set out in the comment *Understanding our strategic history, not perpetuating it* in the Autumn 2007 *Defender*.

The first point relates to the criticism of the 'Fortress Singapore strategy' and the drawing of a parallel with the 'discredited defence-of-Australia dogma'. That the Singapore strategy failed in early 1942 is obvious. But, did it fail because the strategy itself was flawed, or because of a failure to provide the forces needed to put it into effect? And, what was the alternative – Fortress Australia? With such a strategy Malaya and the Netherlands East Indies would still have fallen, and the course of the war would not have been changed one iota! (Except admittedly for the tragic loss of the 8th Division).

Likewise, what strategy would you suggest as an alternative to the 'discredited defence-of-Australia dogma' for the protection of Australian territory against military attack? Or is such a threat so remote that we can completely disregard it?

The second point relates to Curtin's reliance for strategic advice on General Douglas MacArthur. As the allied Commander-in-Chief South West Pacific Area, MacArthur was responsible for the conduct of military operations in his

area, not to the Australian Government, but to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington. And, it was MacArthur who had operational control of all RAN, Army and RAAF fighting units in his area of responsibility, not the Australian Service Chiefs. Hence, what would have been the point of Curtin accepting their strategic advice, as against that of MacArthur?

Norman Ashworth Western Australia

Editor's Note: The point actually made was that all our defence resources were committed to a single strategy based on a single point of failure and that such failure had been predicted in detail by every Army, and most RAAF, chiefs of the interwar era. Moreover, between the wars the ADF was not configured as a balanced force, capable of defending the Singapore 'fortress', the direct defence of mainland Australia or executing any other option. The bulk of defence spending went to the Navy and even this was insufficient to sustain the RAN properly. A balanced ADF might have been able to help defend Singapore more successfully but without a balanced British Empire force (and priorities) overall the same fundamental weaknesses in the Singapore strategy would have remained. The bottom line is that the complete reliance on only the Singapore strategy resulted in a very unbalanced ADF. Consequently there was no range of strategic options available to the Australian government when such a choice was most needed in 1941-42. We had thousands of casualties as one direct result and had to be fortuitously rescued by the Americans as an indirect one.

As to Norman's second point, the comment stressed the gross impropriety and ineffectiveness of Curtin relying solely on MacArthur (and Shedden) for the Australian Government's strategic advice. This compromised our national sovereignty, enshrined insufficient contestability and, last but not least, meant the Australian Government improperly excluded independent, relatively unbiased and indisputably expert strategic advice from those Australians whose duty it was to provide it and who were best equipped professionally to do so. No-one seriously doubts, for example, the superb quality of the advice provided directly by Squires (a British officer), Brudenell White and Sturdee when each was CGS during the preceding 1940-1942 period. Finally, Norman's point that MacArthur's responsibility was to the Combined Chiefs of Staff in Washington surely strengthens, not weakens, the case that independent Australian strategic advice was needed to balance MacArthur's opinions and motivations.

Sir: With regard to the ADA's comments regarding comparatively high PTSD claims and rates from recent overseas deployments, I note that you have been quoted selectively and often out of context by those with particular barrows to push.

While the ADF and DVA are much better with the recognition and treatment of psychiatric casualties than they were in the past, the tragic problem of suicides by veterans needs further sustained attention.

The problem is not a simple one. In some cases the casualty refuses to accept his or her condition or is unable to recognise it or cope with the treatment needed. In other cases, the psychiatric conditions do not develop, or do not become chronic, until long after the period of military service that caused or exacerbated them.

In at least some cases, it also seems clear that no matter what the proximate cause of the suicide actually was or appeared to be, the individual's military service is going to be blamed by many because it is the most recognisable or socially acceptable common denominator. The actual cause can be a lot of things, including alcohol and drug addiction, chronic physical or mental illness, breakdown of family relationships, business failures, bankruptcy and so on.

Psychiatric casualties continue to present a complex issue in terms of both treatment and in maximising the operational effectiveness of the ADF. It is hard to get past the fact that anyone in the Services who reports in sick with a serious psychiatric problem is going to be in the same boat as someone with a long-term physical injury which precludes them from being fit for active service.

But the real issue is that there needs to be a much more co-ordinated approach to treating depression, PTSD and other psychiatric illnesses suffered by both serving and former ADF personnel, and particularly in the transition phase between the two. Too many serious problems and suicides are occurring in the first few years after discharge from the ADF.

On the separate issue of bogus claims by veterans, there are instances where individuals have been prosecuted for making false claims but they do not attract a lot of publicity. Evidence about a false claim was delivered to DVA recently under circumstances which arose when the Ex-Service Organisation advocate concerned realised that he had been given forged medical documents. The Training Information Program – Veterans Indemnity and Training Association link establishes ethical standards which should (and sometimes does) result in veteran representatives and advocates refusing exaggerated claims. Many though are loath to take the extra step and report suspected fraud.

There have also been occasions when exaggerated claims were systemically and systematically created from a single source. I am aware of at least two occasions in the last 15 years when this was reported to DVA together with somewhat limited evidence. Sadly, the lack of evidence meant that the activity was never tested in court.

Like the rest of Australia the veteran community is not without its crooks, although I think that the numbers are very low. At the same time, however, genuine cases are rejected because of the intricacy of DVA processes. The two problems are unfortunately inter-related to some extent because fraudulent claims just make it harder to get genuine ones accepted. Hopefully a balance will be established.

**Clive Mitchell-Taylor
New South Wales**

Snap shots

This issue of *Defender* includes a thoughtful article by Dr Mark Thomson on the future of defence resourcing, a theme pursued regularly in this journal over many years. We should never forget that the principal driver of increased defence investment over the last nine years is not just the result of a much more challenging strategic situation. It is also the inevitable catch-up phase needed after three decades of sustained neglect and a snowballing back-log of problems with insufficient numbers of personnel, limited mobility and sustainment capabilities, old or ageing weapons and equipment, and weapons-platform procurements that generally replaced existing capabilities in much smaller numbers and/or with less of a capability edge.

The article by Kevin Rudd outlines the philosophical base for Labor's new thinking on defence and wider national security matters. As our editorial notes, the new approach signals an intellectual and practical renewal in this regard after Labor's long and disastrous embrace of the narrow and exclusivist defence-of-Australia dogma. Any backtracking from these policy reforms would be particularly disappointing after the effort and honesty invested in the renewal.

In a provocative article, Dr Paul Monk dissects some recent criticism of the post-DOA reforms to strategic policy making and capability development, and laments the legacy-protection imperatives rather than logic that appear to motivate so much of it.

Dr Norman Friedman brings his usual commonsense approach to the discussion of sea power. His central thesis is that continents and countries are united not divided by the sea and this is what makes the US-led alliance of maritime democracies so enduring.

In a tightly written article, Michael Richardson summarises Australia's increasing vulnerability to disruption of its oil supplies and the economic effects and strategic constraints resulting.

Major General Tim Ford (Retd) notes the importance of commemorating Australia's peacekeeping record by the erection of a memorial in the avenue of such military monuments along Anzac Parade in Canberra.

In a short but informative *Sharp End* article, Andrew Erskine summarises some key lessons from Iraq and Afghanistan about operating M1 Abrams tanks during operations in complex terrain. He also touches on the importance, next time, of upgrading our armoured vehicle fleets well before they are committed to battle.

Finally, another *Sharp End* article by Robert Marlow discusses the causes and implications of the Super Hornet procurement, and some lessons for our future strategic planning and decision-making processes. ♦

Updated thinking needed

The 2007 Defence Update, *Australia's National Security*, is a somewhat leadenly expressed but nevertheless workmanlike summary of our current defence policy posture. By any measure it is a vast improvement on the intellectually and literally thin 2003 version, and a logical progression from the 2005 one.

At some stage soon, however, a new defence white paper will be necessary to provide a more detailed basis for our future strategic posture and the planning and capability development needed to execute it.

The history of defence white papers in Australia is a mixed one. The investment commitments of the 1976, 1987 and 1994 versions were abandoned almost before the ink was dry. The deficiency between the levels of investment they noted was needed, and that subsequently provided, was over \$A100 billion in Year-2000 dollars by that year. This investment continuity failure did not happen with the 2000 white paper, but only because of the sharp lessons of the close-run operations in East Timor the year before and the shock of the 9/11 attacks the year after.

Labor has declared the intention to prepare a defence white paper within 12 months of winning office. There are two obvious problems with this plan. The first is that 2008 is an election year in the United States and the shape and world view of any new US administration will not clearly emerge until well into 2009 at least. This uncertainty would obviously impact on our ability to prepare a white paper with much confidence in its policy consistency or longevity.

The second aspect is that, based on previous experience, the preparation of a white paper results in significant policy and decision-making paralysis for a year or so. Many decisions are postponed pending finalisation and endorsement of the paper. Furthermore, the next white paper will be written during wartime and during a period of strategic fluidity, not the relatively settled strategic circumstances of 1986-87, 1993-94 and 1999-2000. The preparation of the next defence white paper must not be misused as an excuse to do nothing in the lengthy period it is being written.

The processes that prepared previous white papers, especially in 1994 and 2000, were seriously flawed. There were no formal strategic intelligence estimates or strategic appreciations done as the basis for proper policy analysis or policy development in response. Whole-of-government consultations or input were also uneven. The white papers were instead written in isolation by cliques of civilian bureaucrats with professional input from the ADF deliberately minimised or excluded. As a result, the papers were, in military parlance, flawed exercises in 'situating the appreciation' rather than appreciating the situation.

One accidental success of the 2000 process, however, was the preceding community consultation exercise, based on a quasi-green paper, and led by a bipartisan group of eminent former parliamentarians and ADF officers. This process should be used again.

Finally, no matter whether a future defence white paper is to be prepared as part of a wider national security strategy, or before such a strategy is developed, the preparation of any defence white paper should be steered collectively by the Chiefs of Service Committee (including the Secretary of the Department of Defence) on behalf of the National Security Committee of Cabinet. This will enable appropriate preliminary estimates and appreciations to be undertaken. It will also ensure that balanced professional inputs from across the ADF, the Department of Defence and other departments are sought and included consistently before seeking Government endorsement. ♦

Surging back and forth

Opinions as to whether the US troop 'surge' in Iraq is achieving its military objectives are now surging back and forth more turbulently than the operational situation in Iraq itself. Moreover, it is not the increase in troop numbers resulting from the surge that is important, but what it allows US commanders to achieve on the ground with different operational concepts.

Given that the deployment of the last brigade in the surge did not occur until mid-year it is, of course, too early to tell if the new tactics are working. However, at the very least, the gloomy forecasts of inevitable failure have not been realised, early progress has tended to be better than anticipated and there are more reasons to be optimistic than the opposite. While US casualty rates rose sharply in April, May and June they have declined more steeply since then and to lower levels than before the surge. Communal bloodletting among Iraqis has generally followed similar trend-lines with the overall death toll declining by 65 per cent, particularly in those areas where it has been at its worst in recent years, such as Baghdad where deaths have declined by 75 per cent.

In military terms this was to be expected from the change in operational style whereby US units are dispersed to live in the communities they are trying to help pacify and/or protect. This tactical dispersion at battalion and company level is obviously more dangerous in the short term but, if tactically successful, not the long. The initial increased casualty rates have often been misunderstood by many critics of the surge, especially the armchair naysayers. They have wrongly interpreted the additional casualties as a sign of failure rather than, as is more likely, the painful price of eventual operational success and the reduced military and civilian casualties overall this should bring.

Such dispersion is a tried and tested counter-insurgency technique, albeit one perhaps more culturally attuned to traditional British-style than American methods. Since the 1983 barracks bombings in Beirut the Americans have tended to emphasise force protection measures through physical isolation from potential threats. The generally lower levels of cross-cultural awareness among US troops also tend to result in an operational culture that can be uncomfortable with dispersing forces at a low level within foreign communities. The compensating advantages, however, can be profound. With effort, such boots-on-the-ground dispersion allows better co-operation with local Iraqi security forces, improves intelligence flows, builds confidence in the local community generally, and enables better community relations through some degree of mutual identification (or at least reduced

hostility). It has much better prospects of success than sallying forth, as virtual aliens, for short-term missions often based on questionable intelligence, in vehicle-based tactical convoys sent out from a much smaller number of larger, well-protected but isolated bases.

One measure of success so far is a noticeable improvement in the morale of US troops, and from a base that was already at reasonable levels. Another is the growing defection of tribal-based forces from the insurgency to neutrality or to a willingness to negotiate political settlements with their rivals and/or the Iraqi government. A further indication of hope is the increasing normality, at least by Iraqi standards, of community life in areas subject to the new tactics and policies. Whether these latter trends can be sustained or not is problematic, but still worth trying even as a last throw of the dice.

As in all counter-insurgency wars, however, military measures are only a means to an end – buying enough time, security and community confidence and commitment to facilitate an effective political settlement. Current US force levels in Iraq (around 160,000) are unsustainable beyond early to mid 2008. The enemy knows this as well as the Americans and those Iraqis striving for a political settlement (and denominational reconciliation between Shiites and Sunnis). The objective is to tip the balance in favour of the Iraqi security forces, and internal reconciliation, before US force levels must decline again.

The current period may be one where the US-led coalition is just going through a phase of despair that the Iraq war can still be won (as happens in many wars), before a renewed decision to see the war out until it is won emerges. Or the war may already be lost through a collapse of allied will. But it is simply too early to tell and even a war that might be lost, or which cannot be 'won' in terms of its original objectives, does not alter the fact that the United States will be remaining in Iraq for some years yet. What is dawning on even those US presidential candidates actually or nominally opposed to continuing the war is that there will be no American strategic withdrawal from Iraq for several years. The overall strategic balance in the Middle East, especially the need to buffer the ancient Arab-Persian cultural fault-line, will dictate some US military presence irrespective of the speed or success (or otherwise) of any internal political settlement within Iraq itself. ♦

Rationales, rationalising and rationed compassion

All wars are contest of will and end when one side gives up. Public opinion polls tell us that a majority of Australians seem to believe that our troops in Iraq should be withdrawn 'unconditionally'. We can assume that the reasons are many and varied but the pollsters do not ask why or otherwise check that the responses are informed ones.

The most obvious reason is that many, perhaps most, people advocating unconditional withdrawal regard the conflict in Iraq as unwinnable. This begs the question of how to define victory; especially as such an attitude probably means condemning the people of Iraq to further bloody civil war.

Much of the hostility to continued Australian participation results from an increasingly bitter antagonism towards the

Bush Administration in the United States and, perhaps, a visceral and traditional anti-Americanism on the part of a segment of the Australian population. This has not mutated more widely, as it did during the Vietnam War, principally because it is not underpinned by opposition to conscription.

Many of those hostile to our Iraq commitment claim that they are concerned for the welfare of the Iraqi people. But the real oppressors of the Iraqi people are exclusively Iraqi insurgents and militias who target the helpless and innocent. Removing Coalition forces is much more likely to increase the death toll in Iraq than decrease it.

Somewhat surprisingly, there is less hostility to our involvement in Afghanistan although that war is probably as winnable or unwinnable as the conflict in Iraq. Perhaps this is because this war is perceived to lack wider entanglement with the problems of the Middle East. But it is also true that the Afghan venture has been less clouded by misleading or inconsistent official justifications for the commitment. Moreover, while both our commitments to Iraq and Afghanistan are underwritten by UN Security Council Resolutions (UNSCR), some still prefer to regard Iraq as an 'illegal war' because the initial intervention was undertaken without a specific UNSCR. Many also call for UN or NGO action in Iraq instead of US-led operations, but forget that UN and the Red Cross were aggressively targeted by the insurgents and deliberately bombed out of that country.

The history of public responses to the Iraq venture is instructive. At the outset, only a hard core of those who oppose any war expressed opposition to the commitment. That opposition expanded as the public justification for the venture appeared, superficially, to have been exaggerated. There was, however, a sense of relief, even joy, when the bloodstained Ba'athist regime of Saddam Hussein was overthrown. In effect, that was the end of that war but few appear to realise this.

What we have seen since is a totally different conflict, a civil war in a country which is not and never has been a real nation. The Americans can hardly be blamed for that although they were slow to recognise it and spectacularly unprepared to cope with it. The principal blame lies with the Iraqis themselves, aided and abetted by a range of outsiders, notably from Iran, who supply many of the resources for sectarian conflict.

There can be little doubt that many Australians see the conflicts in the Middle East and Central Asia as disconnected from Australia. As with the ever-present isolationist elements in the United States, there is always a view in the community that what happens outside our continent is irrelevant to us and can be ignored. This 'little Australia' view ignores the reality that for the whole of our existence, Australia has been a world citizen if only because our prosperity depends utterly upon engagement with the world – and the scale of that prosperity will depend upon contributing to peace in the world.

For Australia, the compelling reasons for our continued but minimal commitment to Iraq are complex and varied. They include helping fix what we helped break, helping to sustain American self-confidence and patience in a difficult dilemma, and minimising any American regression to isolationism or progression to hubris. Last but not least, it involves helping sustain US power which is fundamental to

global stability generally, Asia-Pacific stability regionally and, through the Australia-US alliance, Australia's security specifically. The cost is comparatively small, the benefits considerable and the moral arguments compelling. These motives may seem somewhat cynical to some but those opposed to our involvement might be described as something even worse – thoughtless and uncompassionate. ♦

Protecting from calumny those who protect us from the enemy

In the ADA submissions to the 2004 Military Justice Inquiry, the Association pointed to abuses occurring whereby some senior defence force officers unfairly and improperly took administrative action against subordinates for alleged offences, because disciplinary action would mean the senior officer's own actions in the matter concerned could be publicly examined in court. The ADA recommended that in serious matters affecting the continued service, promotion or professional reputation of an ADF member subject to administrative action, he or she should have the right to insist on being charged under the DFDA instead, in order to have the alleged offence heard and determined in a conclusive, fair and just manner to all involved. Sadly the Senate Inquiry did not adopt the recommendation and abuses of administrative law continue.

A similar problem has now arisen from another quarter concerning further inadequate protections being available against unfair, mistaken or malicious assaults on the professional reputation of defence force individuals. This relates to the Commonwealth's reluctance to fund defamation actions, even when the subject of the action was only performing their duty as a Commonwealth officer. It seems particularly unfair that ADF officers who are defamed for doing their duty or, conversely, mischievously sued for defamation for doing so, have to meet the legal expenses involved out of their own pocket.

In one recent case, a relatively senior ADF officer was subject to prominent allegations during a long-running media campaign by a disgruntled junior officer who had once been his subordinate. As the complaints involved were never tested by a court for reasons outside his control, including actions and the lack of them by the apparent plaintiff, the officer accused of mistreating the subordinate was denied any opportunity to prove his innocence. Even worse, during the ensuing barrages of ill-informed public comment from 'interest groups' and the media, the officer was clearly defamed by several newspaper reports and opinion columns. He had to mortgage his house in order to fund a successful legal action to restore his public and professional reputation. Even then, and after a public statement agreed by the plaintiff whereby Defence apologised to him and his family, there are continuing ill-researched or polemical references to the plaintiff's case in the media, and in public, that continue to defame him. When he was subsequently promoted on merit and posted to a responsible position, further snide and defamatory attacks occurred in the media. His financial resources are necessarily limited and the effects on his family have been beyond what the family of any ADF member

should suffer. He and his family continue to be punished because he did his duty. This situation is a disgrace.

In another prominent case, a reserve legal officer was tasked with a sensitive investigation into a matter of some public and political controversy. He later found himself sued when he was publicly attacked about a particular finding of that investigation. All he had done was quoted that finding verbatim in public when defending his professional reputation from unfair and erroneous media speculation. He too has had to fund his own defence because his comment was classified as being in public and allegedly not covered by his appointment as an Investigating Officer under the Defence Act and its regulations. Again this officer and his family suffer financial expense and stress because he did his duty. This too is a disgrace.

We now live in an era, of course, when even the most ludicrously implausible allegations about the defence force, or individual Servicemen and women, seem to be published or broadcast in the media. In the past this occurred rarely, not least because there was sufficient understanding of military matters among journalists, columnists and commentators, and among the general public, to prevent erroneous, context-free or silly stories from wrongly taking root in the first place.

Ministerial and Department of Defence public affairs policies and practices since the late 1990s have also contributed to the problem. They discourage, not encourage, free flows of information and mutual trust-building between the ADF and the media.

There is also a wider issue here. If membership of our defence force and the nature of the profession of arms is not understood it cannot be respected to the extent it should be. If disrespect is encouraged, or permitted to fester, on questionable grounds this inevitably affects the morale and then the operational effectiveness of the ADF. If officers who are professionally and morally willing to take hard decisions on behalf of their Service or their country are punished for it, rather than rewarded, then the calibre of the leaders needed will also inevitably decline. Finally, recruiting and retention for our defence force depends in part on the maintenance of social contracts between the men and women of the defence force on the one hand and the rest of Australian society on the other.

It is therefore time for the Commonwealth to start funding defamation actions and defences in circumstances where the professional, or personal, reputations of ADF personnel suffer because they are defamed or sued for defamation for doing their duty. ♦

Gone missing, believed dread

The report by Andrew Podger and his team from the 'independent review' into military superannuation (commissioned in late February 2007) was apparently handed to the Minister for Defence at the end of July. It has yet to be released. Some believe it may have gone to find the 2002 Kipping report into military superannuation.

The obvious deduction being drawn by many in the ADF is that the report recommends something that is politically unpalatable for the Government in an election year. Their suspicion is that the problem involves further detriment to ADF conditions of service rather than other forms of political

embarrassment. The longer the report's release is delayed, and without explanation, the stronger the suspicions grow about the probability and severity of the detriment. On the other hand, the delay might be good news. It might be the result of needing to stitch together complex funding and taxation requirements for an improved scheme. It might also stem in part, from the need to make sure that there is no-one disadvantaged by any changes that advantage most. For the members of the defence force, it would be good to know one way or the other what is happening.

In its discussions with the review team the ADA stressed that military superannuation was much more than a retirement income support measure. A flexible and innovative new scheme had the potential, as the DFRB and DFRDB schemes did in their respective eras, to be a significant recruiting and retention tool for the ADF and consequently an important defence capability sustainment measure. It also provided a means for the government and people of Australia to acknowledge the special nature of military service, and compensate its unique hazards and sacrifices, by clearly differentiating a new military scheme from civilian norms and standards through the earning of additional benefits. In particular, the return of a capacity to access some or all benefits earned, before the minimum age set for the civilian population, was a major factor in the success of DFRB and DFRDB and should be seriously considered in any new scheme.

The sooner the results of the Podger review are announced the better. ♦

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Major Furphy

Splits, kilts, understudies and the Hindu Kush

As I forecast under a single handful of columns ago when the VCDF first became CJOPS as well, they have had to split the job in half so he is just Vice Chief again. Barney (my boss, Air Marshal Barney Stoush, the VCDF) has adapted with aplomb as he does to all the many ups and downs of life, bureaucratic death and organisational resurrection at Russell Offices.

I have mixed feelings about the change. My workload has dropped markedly but at the price of the variety narrowing considerably too. Now a much greater portion of the interminable meetings I have to sit through with him are much less interesting, even allowing for the rarified atmosphere and intrigues of the fifth floor.

Barney, being a fighter pilot and a natural leader of men (and women), soon noticed my change of mood. He subtly floated whether a posting for me might now be in order. 'After all', he remarked a bit too comfortably, 'I can't monopolise your many talents up here with me forever'. As he spoke a shiver ran up my spine as I imagined having to move into R2, or even worse, somewhere in Fyshwick, Fern Hill or Bungendore. Then thoughts of a regimental job struck home and I happily daydreamed momentarily about serving with diggers full-time again. 'Go home and think about it', the VCDF commanded, 'and let me know by the end of the week'.

It was no go domestically as I suspected. Now the eldest has his name down for Grammar and the youngest has started at Telopea Park, Pandora was not keen to leave the nation's capital just yet. Not that she is a Kingston foreshores yuppie by any means, but eight moves since we married 12 years ago have had some inertial effect. She doesn't mind me deploying operationally somewhere of course, so this gave me the best professional escape route.

I waited for my moment. It came when Barney was distracted trying to decipher Defgram 493/2007, the *Enterprise Application Roadmap* promulgated by the Directorate of Application Design (whoever they are, whatever they do and whatever an *application taxonomy category* might be). Ever so carefully I raised the subject that the latest reorganisation of the VCDF's responsibilities probably meant continuity in his staff support structures was even more important than usual. 'Perhaps next year, boss', I ventured, 'you could release me to go back to the Hindu Kush'. Barney chewed on this option for a while, but now he thinks it was his idea he has embraced it wholeheartedly. 'There's no great hurry, I suppose', he mused later, 'you young fellows are going to be needed up there for a long time yet'.

Having hived off his responsibilities as the Chief of Joint Operations, the VCDF can now concentrate on his strategic-level responsibilities understudying the CDF and relieving him of some high-level and time-consuming



duties. Being a helpful team-player at heart in the (again) new ADHQ, Barney also offered to understudy his fellow occupant of the power suite. His kind gesture to the Deputy Secretary, Strategy, Co-ordination and Governance was based on the ever-lengthening, and dissonantly diverse, functional responsibilities listed in the latter's title. The offer was politely declined, no doubt because of the interesting precedent it might set, but also because some sensitivity still lingers about this role.

Fifth-floor rumour has it that when the need to split the VCDF and CJOPS positions became obvious, and various options were being considered, the Minister himself had wondered aloud at one meeting whether DEPSEC SC&G might not provide a suitable compensator for the extra military three-star needed. Stunned silence followed by prolonged gurgling noises had greeted the idea. The eruptions apparently stemmed from vigorously suppressed mirth on the part of the uniformed members within earshot, bubbling-up horror on the part of the senior public servants present, and even considerable surprise among the ministerial staffers – not least because one of them had suggested the idea the week before half in jest. Luckily the bells rang. The Minister was called away for a division before the idea could take firmer root or anyone suffer injury from choking.

An important strategic-level priority is national protocol. As an aside, Barney had been most impressed by the CDF's new ceremonial kilt and wondered whether he should get one too. I gently broached the subject that unlike the Chief's moniker, Stoush did not sound particularly Scottish. Being orphaned quite young, the VCDF is unaware of his family's earliest origins in Australia. As a proud Furphy from County Armagh, via Shepparton, I suggested that his family name perhaps denoted an origin on the other side of the Irish Sea, as with the likes of Hooligan, Skiddy or O'Brawl. But he was not to be put off lightly and dispatched me to the library to see if there was a Stoush clan tartan. Being a younger generation than the VCDF, a quick web search served even better to dash his hopes in detail. But Barney brightened noticeably at my compromise suggestion of the RAAF tartan, in its very fetching dark blues, instead. The CDF is apparently now quite put out as he has discovered his kilt is the Army tartan. Such are the delicate problems of protocol, kilts and splits. ♦

Australian defence spending:

As good as it gets?

Mark Thomson

Eight years after the events in East Timor in 1999, and six after the shock of 9/11, the government's commitment to build a stronger defence force continues undiminished. In a period of less than thirteen months, more than \$41 billion of defence initiatives have been promised across the forthcoming decade. It began with \$16 billion in the 2006 budget, followed by a further \$11 billion mid-year and \$14 billion in the latest budget.

As a result, in 2007-08 the Defence budget will be just under \$22 billion, representing fully 2 per cent of GDP for the first time since 1995-96. Under current plans, this will grow to \$25 billion in 2010 and around \$30 billion in 2016.

The largest share of recent new funding has gone to the Army. Last year's budget committed \$1.5 billion over ten years to build a 'Hardened and Networked Army' including an extra 1500 personnel. Then, in August last year, the government promised another \$10 billion over eleven years to add two more infantry battalions to the land force. The first stage of this 'Enhanced Land Force' initiative was funded in this year's budget to the tune of \$4.1 billion across the decade, it will see the first new battalion in place by 2008 and ready to deploy by 2010. The green light for the second battalion was given in October and is also planned to be operational by 2010. In total, the Enhanced Land Force will add 2600 personnel to the Army, bringing its strength to more than 30,000.

To provide strategic mobility for the ADF and the Army in particular, the 2006 budget provided \$2.2 billion to purchase four C-17 strategic transport aircraft. This budget, a further \$1.3 billion was provided for additional personnel and operating costs for the C-17 out to 2016.

While the Army, and the ability to deploy and sustain it offshore, have received significant boosts recently, the bulk of new investment remains firmly focused on advanced air and maritime assets (67 per cent versus 25 per cent for land and mobility and 8 per cent for command, control and intelligence). The priority for air and maritime strength was further reinforced by the controversial decision to purchase an interim air combat capability. The so-called 'bridging'

air combat capability of 24 F/A-18F Super Hornet aircraft will cost \$6.1 billion over 10 years including facilities and operating expenses. This costly commitment hedges against the possibility that the F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter will be delayed; an eventuality that just about everyone outside of the RAAF and the manufacturer concedes is inevitable.

The government has also committed \$3.1 billion over ten years to improve faltering ADF recruitment and retention; \$1 billion in late 2006 and \$2.1 billion in the latest budget. Given Defence's ongoing struggle to maintain adequate personnel numbers, this money and the priority it implies are long overdue.

Consistent with the increased troop commitments to Afghanistan and Iraq announced in early 2007, this year's budget provided an extra \$1.3 billion in operational supplementation, including \$703 million for Afghanistan, \$389 million for Iraq and \$135 million for East Timor. This brings the total cost of operations in Iraq to just over \$2 billion and Afghanistan to around \$1.7 billion.

Aside from the many recent budget measures, the underlying defence budget continues to grow at 3 per cent per annum thanks to the \$29.4 billion commitment made in the 2000 White Paper – a commitment that was extended to 2016 at a further cost of \$10.7 billion last budget. Baseline defence funding has been further augmented in recent years including through \$1.8 billion for additional logistics and \$950 million for defence housing in the last budget, both over ten years.

More investment will be required

Despite all the investment flowing into Defence, still more money will be required to deliver current plans for the future defence force. Not only are pressures building on acquisition costs, but the additional personnel and operating costs of newly acquired capabilities will result in a demand for more money. On the latter point, at least, the government has conceded that projected funding remains inadequate.

In recent years, the government's preference has been to delay providing funding to meet cost pressures for as long as possible. Such a strategy carries risk. Defence could find itself in the uncomfortable position of briefing an incoming government on a previously undisclosed hole in the budget – hardly an auspicious way to build a new relationship.

It is in the interests of the ADF, and budget honesty more broadly, that the full cost of delivering current defence plans be disclosed before the election. From Defence's point of view, it makes sense to try to lock in the necessary funds before the fiscal surplus evaporates into pre-election sweeteners. From the public's point of view, transparency is necessary so that defence investment can be prioritised alongside alternatives like further health, education and environment spending.

Money is only part of the picture

Putting aside the question of money, two further factors make the build up of the ADF far from certain; the struggle to recruit and retain adequate numbers of personnel, and the challenge of delivering new equipment on time.

Between 2002-03 and 2005-06 the strength of the permanent ADF fell by 929 personnel. What makes that outcome alarming is that the defence force was earnestly trying to grow its numbers over that period. The result for 2006-07 was modest growth of 353 personnel. Despite this encouraging sign, a significant challenge lays ahead. The government's plans call for the defence force to grow by 4224 personnel to 55,700 by 2010 and then by another 2300 to reach 58,000 in 2016.

With \$3.1 billion to improve recruitment and retention, and more than 2.2 million young Australians in the prime recruiting age bracket of 18 to 25, there should be no excuse for failure. Unfortunately, money cannot buy a sense of urgency. That it took this long to start fixing the recruiting system reflects a worrying complacency. The government would do well to push Defence hard in this area.

Prospects are similarly worrying when it comes to the delivery of new equipment. After what looked like promising improvements to defence procurement following the 2003 Kinnaird reforms, \$2.9 billion of investment has been deferred since late 2006. These delays are due to a combination of slippage in the approval of new projects and continuing problems in existing projects. This will only get harder over the next several years because deferred spending has created a bow wave of future investment. Current plans require investment to grow from \$4.4 billion in 2007-08 to \$6.9 billion in 2010-11. Compounding the problem is the nation-wide skills shortage effecting both local industry and the Defence Materiel Organisation. It may be that to deliver new equipment on schedule, greater recourse to off-the-shelf foreign purchases will be necessary.

Even if the problems with recruitment and retention can be fixed and the Defence Capability Plan can be dragged back onto schedule, a larger and better equipped ADF will still not be a forgone conclusion. Under present optimistic plans, it will take more than a decade to deliver planned extra personnel and new equipment, and a decade is more than

enough time for the most critical ingredient of all – political will – to erode.

The critical ingredient

In many ways, the last seven years have echoed the corresponding period forty years ago when the Menzies government ended the defence malaise of the 1950s and built a force large enough to maintain a brigade-strength deployment in South Vietnam. In doing so, Menzies showed single-minded determination to create a defence force that could meet the security challenges of the day. As the very first Defence Annual Report in 1963 put it at the start of the build up:

The Government has announced a series of measures which will put Australia in a position of greater strength to react promptly, either by ourselves or with allies, to any threatening or aggressive moves.

Yet, eight years later, Menzies was gone, Australia's circumstances had changed profoundly and defence spending declined quickly – to the extent that it took thirteen years to regain the peak reached in the late 1960s. Inevitably, Australia's military and strategic strength atrophied.

A little more than four decades later, following events in East Timor in 1999, the Howard government called an end to the 1990s defence malaise and began building a defence force to 'protect Australia and its interests'. That build-up was given added impetus and expanded goals by the events



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of 9/11 and the ensuing conflicts in Afghanistan and Iraq. Like Menzies before him, Howard's personal leadership underpinned both the rebuilding of the defence force and its employment in coalition operations. Robert Hill was only half joking when he referred to John Howard as the real defence minister.

The question is; will Howard's defence legacy be any more enduring than Menzies'?

While the future will always remain uncertain, there are three factors working to erode the priority presently accorded defence spending. First, public sentiment is at best mixed. While the ADF has been rightly lauded for its professionalism and operational effectiveness, victories have been elusive. The stark fact that Iraq is a humanitarian and strategic disaster erodes the case for armed force as a tool for good in the public eye. Perhaps more seriously, Iraq has undermined public confidence in the judgment of our allies, and indeed ourselves, when it comes to employing military force. For better or worse, some real and perceived lessons of Vietnam are being re-learned by the electorate.

Already, the justification for the defence vote has begun to be questioned. Poorly justified, or at best poorly explained, decisions like the Super Hornet purchase, have done nothing to help the situation, especially with the defence budget breaching 2 per cent of GDP for the first time in over a decade.

Second, the operational tempo of the ADF is likely to decline in the medium term. This is a critical factor. History shows that when the defence force is active, Australian governments are willing to invest in capability for the future. Equally, in the absence of imminent or ongoing conflict, governments tend not to focus (or invest) in defence capabilities to meet future threats and instead allow the defence force to decay through benign neglect.

Unlike Australia's withdrawal from Vietnam in 1971-72, there will be no precipitous military disengagement. Afghanistan will muddle on inconclusively for a while longer, and until we find a way to work with our neighbours to solve the underlying problems in the 'arc of instability' Australians troops will continue to walk the beat.

Nonetheless, with a new US administration due in 2009 and a race among presidential candidates to extricate their forces from Iraq, there is a shift ahead; a shift from the bellicose rush to use armed force post-9/11 to a more cautious post-Iraq epoch. Australia will either leave Iraq at the vanguard of the US drawdown (as we did in Vietnam) or in tandem with British forces who are all but packing their bags already.

In the longer term, even though the Pentagon and our own defence planners on Russell Hill will no doubt busy themselves preparing to fight Iraq-style conflicts for some time yet, policy makers and voters will seek to avoid the folly. Even if the United States is forced to maintain an ongoing garrison in Iraq – as circumstances might demand – that will only further temper their actions in the future.

Thus, apart from the possibility of a redoubled effort in Afghanistan that could keep the ADF busy a little longer, the prospects are for a decline in the operational tempo post-Iraq. And as that decline occurs, the perceived imperative to maintain robust defence spending will likewise decline.

The third factor is the pending change of political leadership sometime in the next couple of years. Prime ministers inevitably bring to the job their own sense of history, a personal vision of Australia's place in the world, and a conception of the role of the defence force as a tool of policy and as a national institution. Howard is no exception. It is impossible to disentangle Howard's leadership on defence from the tumultuous events of the last eight years, except to observe that he has rarely been attacked from the right. Few commentators, for example, have ventured that the government's commitment to defence is inadequate or that our military deployments should be larger, riskier or more unilateral. And it is worth remembering that Howard committed the nation to the invasion of Iraq in the face of significant public opposition. It has been Howard's firm leadership on defence that brought us to where we are today; a position from which there is more political room to step back than to step forward.

Like Howard, the next prime minister will stamp their personal leadership on the defence portfolio. And whoever becomes Australia's next prime minister – be it Peter Costello or Kevin Rudd – they will be a different person to John Howard.

Like Howard, the next prime minister will stamp their personal leadership on the defence portfolio. And whoever becomes Australia's next prime minister... they will be a different person to John Howard.

Howard was educated in the 1950s and began his working life during the latter Menzies years of the 1960s. In contrast, his potential successors attended university in the post-Vietnam era. Neither Rudd nor Costello is likely

to keep a bust of Winston Churchill in their office as Howard does, and neither has Howard's personal link to the ANZAC mystique – Howard's father and grandfather both served in France as members of the 1st AIF. Nor will Costello or Rudd have had the experience of being in Washington on 9/11. Critically, it will be some time, if ever, before a new Australian leader develops as close a working relationship with a US leader as Howard has with Bush.

As the Bush-Blair-Howard partnership passes into history, and Australia's political leadership skips a generation, the ADF will have to work harder to prove its relevance and maintain the expanded slice of the public purse it now commands after decades of sustained under-investment. At best, the unplanned multi-billion dollar purchases of the last couple of years will soon become a thing of the past. At worst, the present momentum to build and sustain a stronger force will stall. Whatever happens, it is certain that the Defence hierarchy will sorely miss John Winston Howard's presence at the cabinet table. ♦

Dr Mark Thomson is a defence analyst at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in Canberra. These are his personal views.

Fresh ideas for future challenges:

National security policy under a Labor government

Kevin Rudd

The first and fundamental responsibility of any Australian government is to provide for the security and safety of the Australian people, the defence of our country and the protection of our interests abroad. Maintenance of national security is sacrosanct, whether it is defending the continent, maintaining stability in our immediate neighbourhood or protecting our interests in the wider region and beyond.

Australia now confronts a more complex threat environment than at any time in our history. Those that wish us harm are no respecters of borders. Labor believes Australia must have a national security policy that is capable of flexibly responding to the multiplicity of challenges we will face in the future. It follows, therefore, that our defence policy must have defence capabilities able to meet a wide range of challenges with parallel flexibility.

One thing is certain in today's security policy environment and that is uncertainty itself. But amidst the uncertainties of our strategic environment, there are certain fundamental principles that should be restated.

- First, we are committed to the forward outlays of the current government and have supported every increase. We are driven not by savings, but by value for money. A strong defence force requires strong funding. The Government is currently spending around \$22 billion annually on our defence needs and we can't afford to waste a cent. Labor is committed to maintaining defence spending, including a minimum annual 3 per cent real growth, but Labor is equally committed to ensuring scarce defence dollars are spent more effectively.
- Second, we understand we are a nation that needs friends and allies. Our alliance with the United States remains central. We understand our friends and allies will not always see things as we do. But they remain central to our ability to advance our security policy interests.
- Third, Australia needs a stable, global, multilateral order because this enhances our wider security and economic interests.
- Fourth, we recognise that our forces must be structured to enable us to provide for our own defence. But they also need to be structured to operate further afield in partnership with our friends, allies and, when appropriate, in support of UN multilateral peacekeeping operations.
- Fifth, any rational defence planning for Australia's future force structure also needs to be mindful of relative regional

capabilities. In technology, equipment and personnel we must continue to have the edge. Without that, we cannot assure ourselves of our primary obligations.

Defending our country

On the defence of our own country, Labor holds firm to the principle of defence self reliance. We believe – Labor has always believed – that the people of Australia should be willing and able to defend our own country. Defending Australia remains the bedrock of Labor defence policy.

In the present environment, the threat of attack by any substantial military force is remote. But we must be able to meet any such contingency and to defeat any such force. Australia's sea-air-land approaches therefore remain a central strategic imperative. However, this is the starting point – not the end point.

The immediate region

Dominating our immediate strategic geography is not enough. In this new century, we need to do more than just defend the continent. We need armed forces that can project power into the immediate region when necessary. The national interest demands we work with our neighbours and friends to foster a positive security environment in Australia's neighbourhood. Our immediate neighbourhood is characterised by many fragile and unstable states, economic under-development and frequent breakdowns in law and order. In pursuit of regional stability and prosperity, Australia must be prepared to participate in coalitions of allies and friends to secure our regional interests.

Beyond the immediate region

Who would have thought in 1999, in the midst of our humanitarian intervention in East Timor, that two years later the ADF would also be fighting in Afghanistan? Globalisation is changing Australia's defence reality. Globalisation gives potential enemies – even small non-state actors – the ability to reach from far beyond our region to threaten Australia's interests.

While there will be a variety of avenues open to us to meet these threats – including intelligence, counter-terrorism, international law enforcement, non-proliferation measures

and more effective middle power diplomacy – the changing nature of the threat environment requires us to have greater defence policy dexterity. We therefore need a defence capability that is able to deploy beyond the arc of instability in partnership with friends and allies, either bilaterally or multilaterally. Of course the core constraint in doing all of this is the size of the defence budget, the size of the ADF and our capacity to deploy our defence assets with dexterity.

Australia-US alliance

Australia's alliance with the United States has long been a central pillar in Labor's foreign and defence policy. The history of the alliance is a history of bipartisanship. It has survived and prospered through twelve American presidents and thirteen Australian Prime Ministers – Democrat and Republican, Labor and Liberal. It has stood the test of time.

Instigated by Labor's John Curtin and Roosevelt, a Democrat, in the darkest days of 1941, it was consummated by the Liberals' Menzies and Truman, another Democrat, in the ANZUS Treaty of 1951. It is an alliance valued equally by Labor and the conservatives. – despite the periodic, juvenile and increasingly hysterical protestations of our political opponents. The alliance has lasted because our common friendship is real, our common values are real and we share significant and continuing common interests. We are, of course, two very different countries and we have very different national stories. But we are among the oldest democracies in the world, and that counts.

For Labor, the US alliance sits squarely in the centre of our strategic vision. Intelligence sharing, access to advanced technologies, systems and equipment, together with combined military exercises and training, all enhance Australia's national security. The alliance also affords Australia a significant opportunity to influence US strategic thinking – the question being whether we use that influence wisely and most particularly within our region.

We believe, however, that Australia's alliance with the United States is strong enough – close enough – to withstand disagreements from time to time. Vietnam was one, Iraq is one and there may be disagreements in the future. But these are the exceptions rather than the rule.

Let me state unequivocally that America remains an overwhelming force for good in the world. Let me state equally unequivocally that America remains an overwhelming force for strategic stability in our region. These are among the reasons why the US alliance remains fundamental for the future – but for us, an alliance has never meant automatic compliance, nor will it ever mean automatic compliance.

New defence white paper

The 2000 Defence White Paper lists as our permanent interests the stability of our immediate neighbourhood; the security of Southeast Asia; a sustainable strategic balance among the great powers of Asia; and the maintenance of a strong global order underpinned by the authority of the United Nations and the stabilising power and influence of the United States.

While much of this remains true, it was seven years ago – which means it was before 9/11, Bali, Afghanistan, Iraq, Solomon Islands and recent renewed implosions in East

Timor. Our strategic circumstances have changed and it is time for a re-evaluation. The current government appears to have forgotten that a defence doctrine must be constantly refined to remain coherent and relevant.

Coherence, however, has been surrendered by a Government whose approach has been to meddle not to manage. Defence policy should be more than an annotated list of current military engagements. Defence policy should be about long-term planning mechanisms. Labor will commission a new Defence White Paper to ensure that our expenditures produce the force structure we need for the future. A core feature of a new Defence White Paper must be Australia's rapidly and radically deteriorating strategic circumstances in the South West Pacific.

A further feature of the White Paper must be the long-term trajectory of militant Islamism. A third feature will be the implications of unrestrained WMD proliferation across the wider Asia-Pacific region. These represent some of the core challenges to our changing strategic environment for the next twenty years.

Terrorism, Iraq and Afghanistan

Australia's participation in the war in Iraq represents the single greatest failure of national security policy since Vietnam. Most importantly, Iraq has diverted Australia's limited military resources from the military action against Osama bin Laden and the Taliban in Afghanistan. The total cost of operations in and around Iraq now stands at around \$A2 billion. The impact on the ADF and Defence budget priorities has been significant.

The ADF, as always, has professionally executed the policy decisions of the government of the day. You don't need me – or any other politician – to tell you that in Iraq and in many other places around the world the ADF has earned a reputation for being, pound for pound, one of the best military forces in the world.

Despite the professionalism of the ADF, the prosecution of the Iraq war has failed all key objectives set for it by the Howard Government. It was intended to eliminate Iraqi WMD. There were none left at the time of the invasion. It was intended to reduce the terrorist threat but it has increased it. It was supposed to become a harbinger of Middle Eastern democracy but it has not. It was supposed to liberate an oppressed people. Now there are 75,000 Iraqi civilians lying dead and, according to the British medical journal *The Lancet*, up to 600,000 dead. According to the UN High Commission for Refugees, more than 2 million Iraqis have fled to neighbouring countries – and another 1 million have been internally displaced through the sectarian violence and civil war that has been unleashed.

Having failed to realise any of the four objectives that the government formally set for this war in the beginning, we then had the recent spectacle of the Defence Minister inventing – or was it confessing – a new reason for our military engagement in Iraq, oil. Although that stated reason for the Iraq war lasted for a considerably shorter period of time than the other stated reasons – less than 24 hours.

There is of course one further strategic consequence of this government's Iraq war debacle and that is the empowerment of Iran. Unfortunately, that does have long-term implications for oil security from the wider Middle East. After two and a half thousand years it takes genuine strategic policy talent

to succeed in rehabilitating the Persian Empire. Iran is now casting a longer shadow over the Persian Gulf and the wider Middle East. Iran's influence in Iraq itself through the Shia majority adds to the overall picture of strategic destabilisation. This emboldened Iran (a state which has long supported terrorist organisations like Hezbollah and Hamas) continues with its nuclear activities.

For these reasons, the Iraq debacle hangs around the head of the Howard Government as a comprehensive failure of national security policy – and the Australian public know it. Should we form the next government of Australia we will inherit this problem. We have already indicated our intention to negotiate a staged withdrawal of Australian combat forces from Southern Iraq – which we would negotiate with the US and Iraqi administrations as a matter of priority.

We will allow our combat forces to remain in Southern Iraq for the completion of their current rotation. We will then provide one further six-month rotation, in consultation with the Americans and the Iraqis, so that there can be appropriate time for any necessary adjustments on the ground.

We will provide other forms of security, economic and humanitarian assistance to Iraq as outlined in our previous policy statements. These policies are in line with the Baker-Hamilton report recommendations which we have long argued represent a credible way forward for us all on Iraq.

We will maintain our continuing commitment to the deployment of Australian forces in Afghanistan where the military destruction of Osama Bin Laden, Al Qa'eda and the Taliban. Those who perpetrated the barbaric attacks on 11 September 2001 against our American ally remain our core business.

Asia-Pacific region

Within the Asia-Pacific region, over the next 20 years Australia faces a great transformation as a result of the rise of China and the rise of India. China's nuclear and conventional force modernisation program will present new challenges for the future. Uncertainties over the Taiwan Straits continue and cool heads will need to prevail between now and the Beijing Olympics and beyond.

Despite recent progress with Pyongyang (as a product of highly effective American diplomacy), the Korean Peninsula remains divided and to this day remains nuclear. The relationship between India and Pakistan remains brittle – and both are nuclear weapons states. It should be of concern to Australia's long-term defence planners that all three of these unresolved territorial disputes within our wider region involve states possessing nuclear weapons.

In South East Asia the rise of militant Islamism and associated terrorist organisations remains of deep concern. These concerns are not restricted to the Indonesian archipelago. Similar problems have emerged in the Philippines, Southern Thailand and elsewhere.

Beyond these long-term security policy drivers across our wider region, our future national security policy will need to be sufficiently nimble to deal with the full array of human security challenges as well – people smuggling, money laundering, drug trafficking as well as communicable diseases such as Avian Influenza.

Our strategic interests in the wider Asia-Pacific region should therefore continue to inform the long-term capability set of the ADF.



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Arc of Instability

Then we come to the arc of instability itself from East Timor to our north across Melanesia including Solomon Islands, Fiji and Tonga to our east. The trajectory of Australian strategic interests across the arc has deteriorated sharply over the last decade. Australia is not uniquely responsible for this deterioration. Many other forces have been at work as well. But Australian policy has often compounded rather than ameliorated the drift.

Our defence and foreign policy planners need to be absolutely clear about the long-term costs to Australia if this deterioration continues.

- If more Pacific-Island states become failed states, the cost to the Australian taxpayer of emergency police or military interventions will become massive. Remember the projected cost of the intervention in Solomon Islands alone is \$A1 billion dollars and that is for a country with a population of only half a million.
- Second, the cost to the Australian taxpayer of emergency humanitarian assistance in the event of a collapse in food and medical supplies would also be massive.
- Third, increasing ethnic and political violence (combined with economic collapse) would produce a wave of refugees to Australia as a country of first asylum.
- Fourth, the explosion of the HIV-AIDS pandemic in PNG presents a growing risk to the public health of Australian communities in the Torres Strait and Northern Australia;
- Fifth, the fragile nature of Australia's diplomatic relationships with many Pacific-Island countries is creating an unprecedented strategic opportunity for other non-regional states to occupy the vacuum and to displace Australian interests further.

In the period ahead, I am particularly concerned about political and security scenarios for East Timor, Solomon Islands and Fiji. Fiji is of major concern given unresolved political tensions, the disposition of the police and the armed forces, and the relative density of the urban population.

That is a core reason why I have already indicated Labor's proposal for a Pacific Partnership for Development and Security – to be funded long-term through our commitment to raise our global overseas development assistance from 0.35 per cent of Gross National Income in 2010/2011 to 0.5 per cent by 2015/2016.

This is a large, long-term commitment, but one designed to rebuild the economic and social infrastructure of Melanesia in particular – because unless we do so, we will be permanently plagued by the need to engage in one-off security interventions.

Nonetheless, we must be equally prepared to engage in such interventions in the future. For these reasons, the future ADF will also need a force structure capable of anticipating and responding to multiple and possibly simultaneous security contingencies – both man-made and natural.

If this country finds itself incapable of acting independently (or in partnership with our close friend and ally New Zealand whose efforts in the South Pacific in partnership with ourselves often goes unreported) then there is a long-term danger that the Island states will increasingly turn elsewhere. That is not in Australia's long-term strategic interests – especially given the importance of our maritime approaches.

Overstretched defence force

The ADF has been badly stretched by the demands that have been made on them by the current Government, without adequate thought about how the Services, and the Army especially, can be adapted to the new and very demanding requirements of expeditionary stabilisation operations.

While they are not at the point of snapping, the geographical scope, the tempo and scale of their current commitments have put the ADF under increased operational pressure. ASPI's Dr Mark Thompson notes that this is compounded by pre-existing problems of personnel shortages and equipment deficiencies.

Under the current government, capability development decisions have been characterised by a lack of coherence, an absence of definitive priorities in ADF strategic guidance and political interference in the capability acquisition process. The Shadow Defence Minister, Joel Fitzgibbon, estimates that at least \$A13 billion worth of recent and current projects have either gone over budget, have been funded but not developed, or now hang in limbo.

This has put at risk the development of capabilities such as cyber warfare, information operations and the ongoing development of network-centric warfare. The problems in our defence capability planning are expressed vividly – and deplorably – in several defence procurements which have experienced cost overruns, unreasonable delays, and most alarmingly, performance shortfalls.

Take the Seasprite helicopters. These were ordered in 1997 and scheduled for delivery in 2000, for around \$A667 million. More than \$A1 billion dollars later, Australia's 11 Seasprite helicopters – with airframes that were in service during the Vietnam War – are still not fully operational and the entire project may now be scrapped. If they are scrapped, an extra \$A1.5 billion and additional time will be required to augment the capability of our Anzac frigates.

It never easy to find this kind of money and it will be so much harder now that the Government has made its impromptu \$A6 billion Super Hornet decision.

The Guided Missile Frigate (FFG) upgrade is a second case in point. The upgrade of these frigates and the integration of their new command and control systems have now been delayed for more than 40 months. The Navy still does not have an operational, upgraded FFG and the target date has been tentatively set at 2008.

Then there is the significant project delivery problems with the 22 Tiger Armed Reconnaissance Helicopters (ARH).

The sheer scale of the problems in the Howard Government's defence budget is staggering. Last budget, the Australian Strategic Policy Institute estimated capital slippage of \$A1.1 billion over the forward estimates. The practical effect is that the government has not delivered to our troops the capabilities promised to them in previous budgets.

The Defence Material Organisation has admitted that 58 out of 204 current projects are late. That's about 30 per cent. Of the delayed projects 28 are over 6 months late. Over the last 6 years, \$A13 billion worth of projects have either been late, suffered cost blowouts or have been scrapped.

In summary, almost one quarter of the annual Defence procurement budget is not performing. In short, the current government has thrown an impressive amount of money at Australia's defence force but an extraordinary amount of it

has failed to reach the target. In Defence, as in any other form of expenditure, a dollar can only be spent once.

The more serious risk is that in all the waste, mismanagement and ad hoc decision making, the government is foregoing the opportunity to build a balanced force structure on which the ADF and the Australian public can depend into the future. Efficiency in Defence is not just a matter of fiscal rectitude. It is a strategic necessity. Australia can only support the kinds of forces we will need over coming decades if we spend every dollar as wisely as possible. It is strategically reckless to do otherwise.

As this year's ASPI budget brief points out: The current piecemeal cycle of investment, followed by bids for additional personnel and operating costs, is no substitute for coherent long-term planning. Not only does it fail to provide incentives for defence to deliver capability efficiently, but it robs the electorate of the ability to judge the opportunity cost of decisions.

For too long, the Howard Government has let the Department of Defence drift. The people who are let down by these failures are not governments and politicians, they are the people of Australia – first as taxpayers who deserve to have their dollars spent well and wisely, and secondly as citizens in whose interests the defence of the country is undertaken.

The foundation of good defence policy is careful alignment of strategic objectives, capability priorities and funding commitments, and stringent management. Upon assuming Government, Labor will conduct a comprehensive independent national audit of the defence budget to determine the true position of that budget – in particular the capital budget. In response to that audit we will do what is necessary and spend what is necessary to develop a strong, flexible and well equipped Australian Defence Force – to serve Australian interests over the next quarter century.

Force structure and capability planning

The foundation of good defence policy is careful alignment of strategic objectives, capability priorities and funding commitments, and stringent management.

Our army is too small to meet our future security policy requirements. We would struggle if one or more countries in the arc of instability were to require a substantial military commitment. In short, as we currently stand we need additional infantry battalions something now recognised by the Government. We also need to upgrade the army's cross-cultural and linguistic capabilities as they relate to the South West Pacific. Communication is critical to effectiveness.

At the same time, we need to keep building our air and naval forces. These are critical to defending ourselves against conventional threats, and maximising Australia's capacity to participate in coalition operations within the wider region.

We also need to attach priority to the development of our intelligence assets and our special forces. Given the terrorist threat to Australian citizens at home and abroad, these will become increasingly critical capabilities for Australia for the future. Given the intensity of the training involved in these highly specialised disciplines, we also need to be mindful of retention policies.

A feature of the Australian Defence Force's extraordinary operational performance has been the highly cohesive

nature of the joint operations between the three Services. Joint capabilities are the bedrock on which modern military operations are founded, and an area in which the ADF has excelled.

Personnel planning

Within the framework of our overall national security and defence policy, the Australian Defence Force - which gives effect to that policy – must remain the core. And the core of the ADF are our men and women in uniform. No matter how smart and capable our policy making, without the skill, courage and sacrifices of military personnel we cannot defend Australia.

The retention of our defence personnel is a critical challenge for whichever party forms the next government of Australia. The current government's performance on recruitment and retention has been poor. As the alternative government of Australia we must do better. The men and women of the ADF make Australians proud. That's why we must give them what they need to do their jobs and ease the difficult circumstances their families often must endure.

Office of National Security

Terrorism and the multifaceted nature of the security threats we will face in the future require a more integrated policy machinery than we have had hitherto in Australia. The lack of national security policy coordination at present maximises the chance that intelligence, national security policy advice, and integrated national security policy development will be flawed. For example, how can we best develop an integrated security policy response to the challenge of terrorism in Islamic South East Asia, which if it is to be effective, must involve military capabilities, police capabilities, diplomatic capabilities, integrated development assistance programs as well as linguistic, cross-cultural and interfaith capabilities?

Furthermore, how effectively are we currently coordinating our national response capabilities to terrorist incidents involving Australian citizens both within Australia and abroad? Is there appropriate national leadership of our various national counter-disaster capabilities to deal with large scale casualties? Or damage to critical economic or communications infrastructure? Do we have an integrated strategy to prevent the spread of international communicable diseases – or to deal with critical outbreaks if they occur?

In short, the part must relate to the whole if we are to respond coherently to the breadth, depth and density of the emerging security policy environment for Australia in the 21st Century. If elected to office, Labor will establish an Office of National Security. The Office will be under the Prime Minister's portfolio and will be headed by a National Security Advisor. Following a Labor Defence White Paper, we will write a more comprehensive National Security Statement that clearly articulates the strategic rationale and capability requirements for all our security, intelligence and related agencies. ♦

Kevin Rudd is the Leader of the Opposition. This article is based on his address to the Australian Strategic Policy Institute at Parliament House in Canberra on 08 August 2007.

Themistocles:

Ancient thinking all at sea

Paul Monk

The Defence Update, which John Howard launched last week, was a seminal document in the development of Australian strategic policy. This is all the more important to recognize given the desperate and somewhat disgraceful efforts of former defence bureaucrats Hugh White and Paul Dibb to misrepresent it as just a continuation of their fine work when in office.

**Greg Sheridan, 'A whole new ball game, but some don't see it',
The Australian, 12 July 2007, p.14.**

According to some, Hugh White still harbours hopes of being Secretary of the Department of Defence or National Security Advisor to the PM in a Labor government, should Kevin Rudd lead the Opposition to victory at the polls. This prospect makes a good few people on Russell Hill and elsewhere uneasy. That is not because White would restore common sense and sound strategic thinking to the department, as he and his supporters might contend. It is because he simply does not understand weapons, warfare or strategy; is indissolubly wed to a narrow and provincial view of Australia's strategic interests; and misunderstands the realities behind the revolution in Australia's strategic outlook and force structure that has been necessary over the past decade.

These are large claims. After all, one might think that an individual who has been Deputy Secretary of Defence for Strategic Policy, founding Director of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute and Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University cannot, surely, be as deficient in his understanding of his craft as his critics allege. That is a plausible defence, on the face of it. Yet, if Hugh White was truly a master of his craft – by which I mean strategic analysis – one might expect that this mastery would be exhibited, par excellence, in the regular column he writes for the Fairfax press. It doesn't seem to me that it is. Having followed his column for some considerable time, I am puzzled at the regularity with which he writes what seem ill-considered and wrong-headed pieces.

There is an old nostrum which goes, 'Don't believe everything you read in the newspapers'. It might be

paraphrased, 'Don't react with exasperation to everything a columnist writes in the newspapers'. I have tried to adhere to this maxim for some time with regard to Hugh White's periodic remarks about strategic matters and the evolution of Australia's defence force structure; but there comes a time when at least some reaction seems warranted. There was a column, a couple of years ago, for example, in which he wrote that we might soon see the Chinese defeat the United States navy in the Taiwan Strait, in emulation of the Japanese victory of 1905 over the Russians in the Tsushima Strait – and that China might then become Australia's 'new great and powerful friend'. This called for a reaction, but I let it pass. I hoped that this two-pronged howler had simply been the result of over hasty writing on his part.

On 24 May last, however, Hugh White wrote a column, for *The Age* and *The Sydney Morning Herald*, headed *Anzac, our Achilles heel?*, with the sub-title *The nation's defence strategy should be about future threats, not past glories*. This piece was, in its own way, every bit as odd as the piece about China becoming our new great and powerful friend after defeating the American navy in 2005 or 2006; but apart from the historical and strategic superficiality on display in the piece, it included gratuitous remarks about the Australian Army and those who believe in sound, conservative values. From an individual who some believe still aspires to one day being appointed Secretary of the Department of Defence neither of these things should be acceptable and, for that reason, I believe a response in some detail is warranted.

Many readers of *Defender* will not have read White's column. For that reason, I shall cite it at some length, so as

to provide the background to my own remarks and to avoid any possibility of being seen as having misrepresented or misinterpreted his observations. I took some pains, seven years ago, in an essay in *Quadrant* entitled *Twelve Questions for Paul Dibb*, to closely cite a particularly muddled essay Dibb had written, by way of trying to draw him into a debate. He never responded. I shall cite White just as closely, and would welcome a response. The piece in question, after all, was plainly representative of White's commitment to what he calls 'a maritime strategy' for Australia and it would be in the interests of all of us that he make clear exactly what he has in mind.

Let's recap on what he wrote in late May. 'Is there an 'Australian Way of War?', he asked. 'Many people think there is. John Howard is one of them'. What is that way of war? It is 'to send armed forces to support our allies in major land operations anywhere in the world in which our shared interests (often described as our 'values') are threatened'. This idea, he wrote, 'has been promoted over the past few years by some of those in the defence debate who want to move beyond the "Defence of Australia" policy of the 1970s and 1980s by going back to the policy of the 1950s and 1960s'. He quoted the Prime Minister as stating, last year, that the government's strategic policy involved a 'fundamental reassertion of the strategic importance of the army'. And he commented that this was 'the pull of the past'; a kind of 'nostalgia' for ANZAC glories.

All this is contentious enough, since our force structure planners do not see themselves as going back to the 1950s and 1960s, but as upgrading the defence force to cope with the realities of the early to mid-21st century. But White did not limit himself to asserting that current strategic doctrine is merely Forward Defence revisited; he drew an analogy with far more ancient past glories, by way of suggesting that we need a different strategic doctrine entirely. Having set the scene by asking whether the Howard government was looking rather too much to the past in casting an eye back to Australian experience between 1900 and 1972, he observed that, as it happens, 'history itself provides a neat lesson on this issue'. What history? Not Australia's relatively recent past, but the debate in Athens, 2500 years ago, about how to deal with the realities of a Persian invasion of Greece. It was striking that he should find a neat lesson so far in the past, given his cautionary words about looking to the past at all, but it is what he made of the ancient history that calls for close comment.

Let's capture in full White's 'neat lesson' from the ancient world.

In 483 BC a fierce debate arose in Athens about defence policy. Seven years earlier, Persia had been decisively defeated by the Athenian army's phalanxes at Marathon. But Athens was a small city state, while Persia was a mighty empire. It was clear the Persians would return sooner or later, with a much bigger army. One party



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wanted to rely on the phalanxes to defeat the Persians again. The other, led by a remarkable man called Themistocles, concluded that next time Athens could only beat the Persians if it met them at sea, so he wanted to build the navy. His opponents, the 'Men of Marathon' were immensely proud of their military traditions. To them, the Athenian army was more than a mere instrument of policy. It was the essence of Athenian nationhood. In the words of one historian: 'They came to embody every known or remembered conservative virtue: selfless public service, old-fashioned morality, hard work, thrift, respect for one's parents and the gods.' John Howard's kind of people, in other words.

Just pause at this point for a moment. Those who opposed that remarkable man Themistocles, in White's account of the matter, were the Men of Marathon. They were conservative; embodying all the traditional virtues and this made them 'John Howard's kind of people'. The smooth, implicit sneer here is unmistakable. It is one thing to criticise the Prime Minister for allegedly being mendacious or unscrupulous or even 'criminal', as many among the self-styled intelligentsia like to do, it is quite another to airily imply that both Howard and those who defend the country in its actual military campaigns (as distinct from White's imagined Persian wars) are somehow deficient because they believe in selfless public service, old-fashioned morality, hard work, thrift and so on. The sneer is all the more objectionable because the description is *accurate* as regards many of those who do, in fact, serve the country. What are White's virtues, by comparison? Who are *his* kind of people?

But such self-satisfied *obiter dicta* are the least of White's solecisms in this little column. Let's complete the refresher on what he wrote and then dissect it. He went on to remark:

The Men of Marathon saw all this threatened by Themistocles' naval plans, and they saw no reason why the traditional Greek way of war should not keep working in the future as it had in the past. In the end, Themistocles had his way, and he was proved right when the Persians returned a few years later. The mighty Athenian fleet built by Themistocles led the Greeks to victory over the Persians at Salamis in 480 BC. Many see the victory as a foundation of modern Western civilization. The moral for us to day is quite simple. To see the Anzac tradition as fundamental to Australia's identity is one thing; to fashion our defence policy in its image is quite another.

There are two sets of problems with the 'neat lesson' and simple 'moral' White thinks should be learned from his foray into ancient history. The first is that he does not appear to know his Greek history very well. The second is that his use of it as an analogy for the challenges facing Australia in the early 21st century is quite confused and misleading. There are good reasons to study ancient history and, as it happens, a reflection on the debates in Athens about strategic policy, throughout the fifth century BC, are among the most fruitful

periods of ancient history that Australians might usefully study. Not, however, as a direct guide to strategic policy. History does not work that way. In any case, our would-be Themistocles would appear not to have studied it very closely; with the unhappy result that his use of it is simply muddle-headed.

What, at the end of the day, is he actually trying to say? Simply that we should think carefully about the future and not be too wedded to the past in developing our force structure? If so, he did not need to make any mention of Themistocles. Yet he did. It seems reasonable, therefore, to infer that he intended us to see actual parallels between the situation of the Athenians, in the 480s and 470s BC, and that of Australia in the 2000s or 2010s. Since he did not make explicit what he may have had in mind, we are left to guess what those parallels might be. The most evident one would seem to be the notion – for it is wholly notional – that Themistocles so changed Athenian strategic policy as to render its army redundant and *replace* it with a navy. White is, after all, a proponent of what he loosely terms a 'maritime strategy' for Australia, so we are surely not far off the mark if we interpret him in this light.

He declares that Themistocles was vindicated when the new Athenian navy won the battle of Salamis and that this naval victory is seen by 'many' as a 'foundation of modern Western civilisation'. There is no question that the battle of Salamis (480 BC) was of historic importance in fending off Persian conquest of Greece and thus keeping clear the ground on which the first self-consciously

'Western' or 'European' states flourished. It was, in this respect, at least a pre-condition for classical, if not exactly *modern* Western civilisation. Indeed, Herodotus, the best known *classical* chronicler of these matters, in the seventh book of his *Histories*, went so far as to remark that, had there not been a victory at sea, 'it is easy to see what would have been the course of events on land...the Persian conquest of Greece would have been assured'. Heeding the warning of the Priestess Aristonice at Delphi that 'the wooden wall only shall not fall' and guided in their interpretation of this warning by Themistocles, the Athenians determined to reinforce a fleet they had built for another purpose, rally their allies and meet the Persians at sea.

Herodotus makes no mention of the Men of Marathon opposing this decision. Those who opposed it were the professional interpreters of the oracle, who counseled surrender to the Persians. A few dogged souls tried to defend the citadel at Athens when the Persians came, but they were overwhelmed. It was the Peloponnesians, the Spartans and Corinthians in particular, who opted to fight the Persians on land, by barricading the Isthmus of Corinth. But the Athenians, with many allies, fought and won at Salamis before such a land battle could take place. They did not win, however, simply because they had built a navy, but, as Thucydides pointed out many decades later and as modern

There are good reasons to study ancient history... Not, however, as a direct guide to strategic policy.

historians concur, because Xerxes was foolish enough to fight them in the narrows of Salamis – a fine point of history worth bearing in mind. In any case, they followed up, the very next year, by sending 8000 hoplites (heavy infantry) as part of a coalition of the willing from across Greece, to fight the Persian forces at Plataea, not far from Athens. Plataea (479 BC) was one of the most lethal and large-scale land battles in Greek history and the Persians were routed. They then withdrew from Greece. White makes no mention of Plataea, but it is a significant problem for the argument he appears to want to make about the ‘neat lesson’ for Australia.

Moreover, in the classical history White urges us to ponder, Plataea was only the beginning. Having defeated the Persian invasion at sea and on land, the Athenians began to build an empire in the Aegean. This was the era in which Athens flourished, but by becoming an expeditionary power in a manner that Hugh White discontenances in the case of Australia. To maintain this empire, in the island archipelago and the Ionian coastlands of what is now Turkey, Athens required both a navy and an army. It did not, after all, merely sail around the islands; it sent expeditionary forces at need to support allies on land and to subdue invaders or rebels. One of the most famous instances of this, as recorded by Thucydides, was when, in 416 BC, Athens crushed the island people of Melos and then colonised the island. Its naval power did not, however, enable it, in the end, to defeat the land power of Sparta in the Peloponnesian War (431–404 BC). Nor did maritime power enable the Athenians or the other Greeks to defeat the Macedonian armies in the fourth century BC. And it was with land forces that Alexander the Great invaded and conquered the Persian Empire itself, in the 330s BC.

What, therefore, is Hugh White’s ‘neat lesson’ about Themistocles, armies and navies? What pretty clearly concerns him is the idea that we might use the army for purposes of which he disapproves – expeditionary purposes. But if this is so, he chose his lesson badly; since that is exactly what the Athenians were able to do as a result of building their navy and prevailing at Salamis. Does he simply believe we need a bigger navy – and never mind what the Athenians did with theirs after Salamis? Well, we are building a bigger navy, as it happens. Is it possible he has not noticed? We are also building a slightly larger army and, with the exception of equipping it to actually fight, he has approved of this measure, at least in principle. So I ask again, what point is he trying to make in invoking the story of Themistocles? Does he fear that the Persians are coming and that we need a very much bigger fleet to meet them at our own Salamis? Which ‘Persians’? The Chinese are building a blue-water navy, but it is a very long way from threatening to invade our territorial waters and one wonders whether he would suggest we take it on if it was able to do this. Did he not prophesy that China would defeat the US navy and then become Australia’s new great and powerful friend? Who is he, then: Themistocles or one of the old professional interpreters of oracles, who counseled capitulation to Persia’s Great King?

...it is far from clear that we should scale back our small and mostly lightly-armed land force.

The history of the Persian wars is stirring stuff, but it has only the most indirect relevance to Australia’s strategic situation and force structure debate in our time. There are no Persians coming right now, but even if there were, it is not clear that we could build a usefully bigger navy and it is far from clear that we should scale back our small and mostly lightly-armed land force. If over the next ten to fifteen years China does emulate the Japan of a century ago and seek to become a maritime peer competitor of the United States, we shall need to look to our alliances and our defences with great circumspection and energy, but we are surely unlikely to engage in leading an ASEAN armada against the Chinese navy in a regional re-enactment of Salamis – let’s say in the Lombok or Sunda Straits. If the US navy does not hold sway, we are likely to be in serious trouble. For the present, what we need and what we are assembling is a capacity to be able to deploy capable, but small joint forces, generally as part of coalition or in stabilisation operations, to various parts of the archipelagoes to our north and north east, or further abroad. We are not, of course, in the business of empire building, like Athens after Salamis; but we do need a capable and sustainable land force as part of a balanced, deployable ADF capability. There is scope for debating how effectively we are assembling this capability, but in putting on the mask of Themistocles to make the case that we are getting it wrong, Hugh White is truly out to sea.

The column I have singled out here, of course, is only a little piece and attacking it may seem to be overkill. The column was significant, however, because it was symptomatic of the manner in which Hugh White continues to white-ant the revision of strategic policy and the overdue upgrading of the ADF’s force structure to increase its flexibility and versatility. He is especially antipathetic to the army having anything resembling actual combat capability and this is the subtext of his mockery of the ‘Men of Marathon’, his derision of ‘John Howard’s kind of people’ and his muddled invocation of that remarkable man, Themistocles, who took the Athenians to sea. The Themistocles piece is, in fact, part of a marathon campaign, by Paul Dibb, Hugh White and their allies, to reassert control of strategic policy, following the developments of the past decade or so. In a perverse sense, therefore, it is they who are the marathon men. Most professionals in the field, however, see them as having dropped off the pace. It is to be hoped that Kevin Rudd does not succumb to their Delphic pronouncements and help them over the line. Their time has passed. They need to settle down at the university – and perhaps study their ancient history in more depth. ♦

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The Sea-based

Commonwealth

Norman Friedman

On 25 April each year Australians and New Zealanders celebrate Anzac Day. They remember their armed forces, and particularly the day on which combined Australian and New Zealand forces entered combat together for the first time at Gallipoli in 1915. A few wonder why men from the Western Pacific should have been sacrificed to what one New Zealand newspaper columnist recently called ‘a dynastic dispute’ over who would run Europe, hence clearly of no inherent significance to New Zealand. This history matters to us now because the issue is really one that concerns the nature of a sea-based commonwealth, such as the one the United States currently heads.

The short answer to the columnist’s question is that New Zealand enjoyed the freedom and prosperity it did (and has since) because it was part of a successful global commonwealth held together by the sea. If the ‘dynastic dispute’ in Europe had gone Germany’s way, even distant New Zealand would have felt the resulting chill. That might have meant domination by the victorious Germans or even the dissolution of the defensive ties that kept New Zealand out of a developing Japanese sphere of control in the Far East. In either case, life in New Zealand would have changed dramatically.

The larger answer, which certainly matters to us, is that a sea-based view of the world is dramatically different from what a map shows. We commonly talk about how sea-based forces can roam much more freely than their land-based equivalents, but there is more to be said. In a very real sense countries are united, not divided, by the sea. In this sense New York is closer, say, to Europe than to Cincinnati. The closeness is not, obviously, in travel time, but rather in the ease with which heavy weights can move. When the US Navy was being reborn in the 1880s, its advocates often wrote about the possibility of invasion from Europe. Many scoffed at such a possibility; surely the Atlantic was a sufficient barrier. More than half a century later, the United States managed to mount an entirely credible threat to invade Japan across a much wider ocean.

A colleague at a think-tank once remarked that the important thing about American military logistics was that, the greater the distance, the stronger US forces became. It was easier for the United States to maintain half a million troops in Vietnam than for the Soviets to maintain significantly fewer

in Afghanistan, which on the map is a lot closer to Moscow than Vietnam is to the United States.

Because this reality is not at all obvious, and because the United States and its allies have faced no real opposition at sea since 1945, it is easy to forget. Forgetting includes neglecting our respective merchant marines, on the theory that ships can always be hired in an emergency. But what happens if the merchant ships face real threats? What if the governments whose flags they fly oppose what we are doing?

Forgetting can also mean imagining that we can project power without having to deal with opposition anywhere beyond the coast. For example, much of the US Navy’s essential support is now provided by Military Sealift Command ships that have been disarmed so that they can be treated as merchant ships and manned by civilians. That is probably reasonable as long as we face enemies incapable of systematically detecting ships much beyond the horizon. The situation may change as potential enemies realise their limitations, and as they buy longer-range sensors such as high-frequency surface-wave radars (which the Russians have been advertising, and the Chinese apparently buying).

Then there is in the character of the relationship between members of the commonwealth. Many writing about the current US position refer to the old British Empire. They forget that there were actually two empires, one formal (colonies and protectorates, plus self-governing dominions which later became effectively independent) and another informal, tied economically and, to an extent, politically to Britain, but by no means compelled to support the British. When writers argue that economically the British Empire was a loss-maker, they limit themselves to the formal empire, and probably to the colonies.

The informal empire was a very different proposition. It was the world that kept the British economy (with its adverse balance of payments) alive through a combination of trade and returns on British investment. British military power, as manifested in the formal empire, kept the informal empire alive, not least because governments enjoyed important advantages from the degree of protection British power provided.

During the 19th century, the United States was part of the informal British Empire. One reason the United States was able to develop so rapidly was that it did not have to defend its coasts because the Royal Navy, for entirely British reasons, in effect blocked European threats. For example, the Monroe Doctrine was underwritten by the Royal Navy, as the United States had no way, until the end of the 19th century, to prevent even the weakest European powers from seizing new colonies in the Western Hemisphere.

Membership in (and benefits from) the informal empire did not require that the US government support the British; the British blocked European access to the Western Hemisphere for their own reasons, and they invested heavily in the United States for similar reasons. When World War I broke out they discovered, to their discomfort, just how informal the relationship was. The US government took a very long time to decide that it could not afford the consequences of British defeat, and in the process it forced the British to liquidate much of their economic position in the United States.

For their part the British were unable to convince the Americans, particularly those far from the sea, that their war was really ours as well. Just like that current New Zealand columnist, we found it difficult to realise that the ocean, in this case the Atlantic, was a highway rather than a barrier and that what happened in Europe in effect happened across a border, not in another universe. The ocean is a barrier only if it is turned into one by a superior sea power.

The sea power point of view helps explain Winston Churchill's decision to fight on in mid 1940. Historians generally miss the meaning for sea power, so they compare Britain, fighting alone, to the power of Germany dominant in Europe, Churchill, however, understood that Britain headed a global empire as well as an informal one that benefited greatly from its existence. As long as Britain's navy remained dominant, it retained access to the resources of the empire and, for a heavy price, to those of the informal one as well. Churchill understood, moreover, that the United States could not tolerate a Europe united against it.

The United States is now where the British once were. The US has no interest in formal empire, having learned the British lesson that it is much more expensive than it is worth. Informal empire and commonwealth are far more to America's taste, but they require much more in the way of diplomacy, both public and private. Those who have benefited from US protection may well fail to understand that without it their existence could be much more difficult. They are unlikely to feel motivated to sacrifice more for their own defence, or to support the US in what they see as distant ventures of no direct importance. Thus an American history of the Cold War must include Vietnam, but a European one generally will not. To be fair, the Europeans will tend to include the wars that ended their own imperial presence in Asia in the Cold War, whereas the US government of the day wanted to separate these conflicts from the Cold War it was fighting in Europe. European governments that have involved themselves in Iraq have generally suffered at the polls because their populations see no connection between events there and their own concerns. That is surely largely the fault

of the United States, just as it is the US administration's fault that many Americans no longer see a connection between events in Iraq and the threat from Islamist terrorism.

The New Zealander's column is a warning to us. In 1914 the British government simply told Australians and New Zealanders that they had to fight for King and Country, not really understanding that to those living in the self-governing dominions their country was no longer the United Kingdom, but rather Canada, Newfoundland, Australia, New Zealand or South Africa. There was, it seems, little or no attempt to explain the links binding together this commonwealth and even less attempt to explain links to the members of the informal empire. Without explanation, World War I really could look like nothing more than a local European dispute. With the explanation, it is obvious that whatever happened in Europe was of global significance, because at the time Europe was the centre of global power. Sea power made that power truly global.

Because the United States cannot compel its allies to help, it has tried somewhat harder to explain what the American-led commonwealth means to them, but the US must do more. Most of all, this requires the US to explain sea power in its broadest sense, the sense that matters most, the sense in which it binds disparate countries together. ♦

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Australia's Oil Security

Michael Richardson

Oil is critical for the smooth operation of the Australian economy. It is also critical for military mobility, both within the country and abroad. As tensions rise in the Middle East and Australia's dependence on supplies of oil from the Persian Gulf grows, should policymakers in Canberra reconsider the Howard government's opposition to a national oil stockpile?

In the Summer 2005/06 *Defender*, Eriks Velins noted that Australia was the only member of the International Energy Agency (IEA) that did not stockpile the equivalent of 90 days net imports of oil. He added that the strategic fuel stocks held by the Australian Defence Force (ADF) were believed to be minimal. The IEA was established in 1974 as the energy watchdog for leading industrialised democracies in North America, Europe and the Asia-Pacific region. With 27 member-states, one of its aims is to maintain and improve systems for coping with oil supply disruptions.

Since Eriks Velins set out his concerns, Australia's dependency on imported oil has risen further. Indeed, we are becoming increasingly vulnerable to any disruption in the flow of oil from the Persian Gulf, the source of nearly 30 per cent of the world's crude oil production. This flow includes oil shipped direct from the Middle East to Australia. It also includes oil from the Gulf that comes to Australia via Southeast Asia, chiefly as petrol and diesel transport fuel refined largely from Middle East crude oil in Singapore, one of the world's leading oil refining, trading and petrochemical centres.

Australia's dependence on imported oil is rising fast. In 2006, the country consumed approximately 925,000 barrels of oil per day. Nearly 40 per cent of this was imported, mainly from Southeast Asia and the Persian Gulf. By contrast, in the year 2000, Australia's oil imports accounted for only 7 per cent of consumption. A report prepared in 2006 for the Australian Petroleum Production and Exploration Association warned that unless substantial new fields are found soon, Australia's rate of self-sufficiency in oil and condensate production could fall from the current level of around 60 per cent to less than 20 per cent by as early as 2015. In other words, we could be importing at least 80 per cent of our oil within 7-8 years.

Australia's relative isolation, continental size and reliance on transport fuels means oil supply security is vital for its economy and strategic posture. According to the US government's Energy Information Administration, in March 2006 Australia had petroleum stocks of 35 million barrels of oil, all of it in the hands of the private sector, not the government. This was enough for almost 38 days of normal supply.

Yet Australia and the other member states of the IEA that are net oil importers are supposed to hold emergency reserves equivalent to at least 90 days of their oil imports of

the previous year, even though it is expensive to do so. The reserves are designed for use in an oil supply disruption, to cushion the economic impact of any crisis.

Why worry?

The IEA says that the biggest oil shock since 1973 occurred in 1978-79 during the Iranian revolution. This resulted in a supply shortfall in the global market of approximately 5.6 million barrels per day for a period of six months. This was close to 10 per cent of world oil output in 1979. The shortfall doubled oil prices, causing consumption to fall by about 15 per cent and plunging the global economy over the next three years into its longest and deepest recession since World War II.

The IEA says that the other three largest oil supply disruptions since 1973 were also related to the Gulf and Middle East. The 1990-91 crisis following Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, the start of the Iraq-Iran war in 1980-81, and the Arab-Israeli war in 1973-74 each resulted in a supply shortfall in world markets of over 4 million barrels of oil per day that lasted for more than four months. In fact, the last four global recessions are all linked to oil supply restrictions in the periods 1973-74, 1979-81, 1990-91 and 2000-01.

The Gulf region is one of the most politically volatile areas of the world. The interests of many major outside powers, including the US, EU, Russia, China, India and Japan, are deeply engaged in the area – and are often at variance. For the US, Iraq, Iran, and Islamist terrorism are major preoccupations. Iran's rise as a regional power led by a militant Shiite theocracy, and its apparent nuclear ambitions, are posing significant strategic challenges to the primacy of long-established Sunni-Arab regimes in and around the Gulf.

The US and its regional ally, Israel, are determined to try to stop Iran from following North Korea and developing nuclear weapons. US officials are seeking to tighten financial sanctions on Iran and accuse Iranian paramilitary forces of supporting Shiite militia factions in Iraq to attack US troops. In late July and early August 2007, three US aircraft carriers and associated warships were deployed in or close to the Persian Gulf. Although the Pentagon said that one of the carrier task forces would simply replace another in the Gulf region, the deployments are widely seen as a warning to Iran not to underestimate US power and resolve despite its troubles in Iraq.

The Straits of Hormuz, flanked by Iran on their northern side, are the only way by sea into and out of the Persian Gulf. Of all the oil exported from the Gulf, over 90 per cent goes via the strait. Iranian officials have said a number of times

that if the UN Security Council applies the kind of tough financial and trade sanctions being sought by the US and EU, to punish Teheran for refusing to halt uranium enrichment and other sensitive nuclear activities, the stability of the Middle East would be affected.

The US and Israel insist that they will not tolerate a nuclear-armed Iran. However, Teheran has vowed to continue its nuclear technology activities, saying the program is for peaceful purposes. It has warned that any attack on Iran would endanger the region's oil supplies. The Iranian military have held naval manoeuvres and fired torpedoes and missiles near the Straits of Hormuz, evidently to show how easily it could be closed to commercial shipping by Iranian mines, missiles, submarines and other weapons.

Australia's oil security policy

In seeking petroleum supply security, Canberra has so far shied away from establishing a special purpose stockpile under government, commercial or shared control, arguing that it would be prohibitively expensive and not necessarily effective to do so. An official estimate in 2004 suggested that it would cost the federal government at least 2 billion Australian dollars to establish a national strategic oil and/or product stockpile, and another 100 million Australian dollars per year to maintain it. The cost would be much higher today because the price of oil has risen substantially since then.

The government says that in recent years, the Australian petroleum industry's long supply chain has stored on average between 45 and 55 days worth of consumption in both refined products and crude oil stocks. These stocks are held in tankers at sea on their way to Australia from Asia and the Middle East, in crude tanks at Australian refineries while the oil is being processed through the refineries, in product terminal storage facilities, in retail petrol and diesel service stations throughout the country, and by individual motorists who on average have three days supply of fuel in their vehicle tanks.

Only about 40 per cent of Australia's crude oil output goes to local refineries. The rest is sold overseas where it fetches premium prices as a relatively light density, low sulfur product. The government's view is that if this outgoing oil was diverted into the Australian market, as it could be in a crisis, it would provide additional consumption cover for Australia for well over the mandated IEA level of 90 days. In early, 2004, the consumption cover for Australia using this method of calculation was about 178 days.

IEA and supply security

However, Australia's approach to supply security is arguably very different from the intent of the IEA. It is certainly different to the policies of the major IEA members, including the US, European nations and Japan. All of them maintain large physical stockpiles of crude oil, or a combination of crude oil and refined products, in line with IEA recommendations. It is also significant that Asia's two big emerging oil consumers, China and India, both of them large net oil importers, have taken advice from the IEA on setting up strategic oil stocks, although the consumption cover they provide is well below 90 days and likely to remain so for some years.

If Australia's self-sufficiency level for both crude oil and products continues to fall, the Australian Government may well have to think again about establishing a strategic national oil reserve. Another serious global supply disruption would almost certainly hasten this process.

Australia's petroleum product dependency

Australia is becoming an increasingly large importer of refined oil products, especially petrol and diesel, as well as the heavier types of crude oil needed by the seven major domestic refineries to blend with lighter local oil to make the full slate of transport fuels and lubricants essential for the smooth operation of the Australian economy. An official estimate in 2004 indicated that Australian refiners were relying on crude oil from Australia for 40 per cent of their supply, from Asia for 40 per cent and from the Middle East for 20 per cent.

About 25 per cent of Australia's annual petroleum product consumption is imported and the ratio is rising steadily as more big refineries come on stream in Asia that are able to use economies of scale for both domestic and export output. Most of Australia's oil product imports are petrol and diesel and come from Singapore. Australia's imports of refined products from Singapore alone in 2006 were worth about 5.7 billion Australian dollars. They accounted for just over half the value of Singapore's merchandise exports to Australia that year, and were worth substantially more than Australia's total sales of goods to the island-state in 2006.

However, it is important to note that in 2006, Singapore's oil refineries and independent terminals had a capacity to store 88 million barrels of oil, well over twice the level for Australia recorded by the US Department of Energy. In Singapore, new storage capacity on land, underground and in tanks floating offshore are expected to add at least another 65 million barrels of storage space in the next few years. This will include 25 million barrels in huge rock caverns carved beneath one of Singapore's islands by the government-linked Jurong Town Corporation.

This should give Australia and other Asia-Pacific customers of Singapore's refineries some assurance of continuing supplies in any future Persian Gulf crisis, provided it does not last for too long. However in such a crisis, Australia's direct imports of crude oil from the Gulf could be cut off, forcing refineries in Australia to draw on limited local stocks in the existing supply chain and then rely entirely on domestic crude oil for feedstock, even though it is not well suited to the capacity and requirements of Australian refineries.

Australia's growing dependency on foreign oil supplies, and easily disrupted or fractured supply chains, is an increasing and increasingly serious economic and strategic vulnerability. ♦

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Recognising

Australian peacekeeping

Tim Ford

Sixty years of peacekeeping

On 14 September 2007, Australia celebrated the 60th anniversary of the first deployment of four Australian military officers as United Nations peacekeepers to Indonesia as part of the first UN 'Good Offices' Mission. Since then, Australia has contributed over 35,000 Australian military and police personnel to more than fifty peace operations around the world (a list may be found at: <http://www.dva.gov.au/commem/commac/studies/anzacsk/res2.htm>).

A variety of events marked this important anniversary. These included a conference titled *60 Years of Australian Peacekeeping* at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra, and commemorative ceremonies in most Australian state capitals and a number of regional centres. In addition, a 60th Anniversary of Australian Peacekeeping limited edition gold coin was released by the Royal Australian Mint, which will be followed later by a range of other memorabilia including a joint stamp/coin issue.

It is fitting that at this time, the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial has also moved into an exciting stage. In conjunction with the anniversary, the National Capital Authority (NCA) released the design brief for an international competition which will be used to select the final design for the memorial. This project, which has been some years in development, achieved its first major milestone in May of this year when the Prime Minister announced that the Canberra National Memorials Committee had allocated a site for this memorial on Anzac Parade. Finally the significance of Australia's peacekeeping record is to be appropriately recognised.

For many years Australian veterans of peacekeeping missions have felt that such a memorial should be built in Canberra to honour all those who have and will continue to serve on multinational peacekeeping operations. This memorial will represent all those from the defence force, the federal, state and territory police forces and other government agencies who have served, and in some cases died, on peacekeeping operations authorised by the United Nations or sanctioned by the Government of Australia.

Peacekeeping today

Today's peacekeeping activity around the world is more significant than ever before. At the moment, there are some 18 United Nations "blue helmet" peacekeeping operations

active, involving over 105,000 military, police and other international staff from 119 countries.

In addition to the traditional UN-led missions, there are quite a number of other multinational peace operations being conducted. These missions are being co-ordinated by various regional organisations or by 'ad hoc' coalitions of interested nations. Most have been authorised by a UN Security Council resolution and in many cases they operate alongside the UN missions.

The principal role of the military in such peace operations is to provide sufficient basic security to encourage and enable wider peace processes to take hold and/or strengthen. This security allows all the other actors, from a wide range of UN agencies, international financial organisations and various other international and local aid and humanitarian bodies, to effectively co-ordinate their activities and to work with the local communities affected to develop stable environments that lead to a sustainable peace.

While there is usually no specified enemy force operating against the military in such operations, the general situation is often very dangerous and volatile, and peacekeepers are often directly targeted by groups that do not support the peace process. Furthermore, the location of peacekeeping missions is often remote, the local infrastructure and utilities are normally destroyed, the areas to be covered can be vast, the forces available are usually stretched thin, and there can be scattered landmines and other hazards that need to be cleared. In many of these situations crime is rampant, there are serious inter-ethnic tensions and large, distressed populations are in need of urgent humanitarian assistance.

International police elements provide an increasing and critical contribution in modern peace operations. They assist in the establishment of the rule-of-law in areas and societies wracked by armed conflict, and at times are given executive authority for community policing where no other effective policing exists. They also help reconstitute local police forces or support existing ones to regain a position of control and respect in their local community through general confidence-building and improved training, structures and equipment. In some cases, international police provide formed police units that can assist a developing or failing state to counter internal disturbances and rioting.

Australian Peacekeeping

Australia contributes significant efforts to modern peace operations. This includes military and police contingents and civilian specialists in a wide range of supporting roles such as governance, institution building, electoral reform, and border control. Australia is presently supporting UN missions in the Middle East (Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan and Egypt), Sudan, Cyprus, and East Timor, and is a partner in coalition peace operations in the Sinai, Solomon Islands, Afghanistan and Iraq.

Peacekeeping has been a long-standing commitment for the ADF with a variety of smaller contingents and individuals deployed across a wide range of missions over the years. This increased in the 1980s and 1990s with some significant unit-sized contributions to peace operations in Africa and Asia. More recently this has been followed by our major contributions in our immediate region in Bougainville, East Timor and Solomon Islands.

Australian police also have an excellent and long-term record in international peacekeeping, with a contingent in Cyprus continually since 1964, and more recently with much larger contingents deployed in Cambodia, East Timor, Bougainville and Solomon Islands. To respond to this surge, the Australian Federal Police has now created an International Deployment Group, comprising police from federal, state and territory police forces, who are specifically trained and prepared for offshore peacekeeping and stabilisation deployments.

Australian peacekeeping memorial

The proposed Australian Peacekeeping Memorial will commemorate these activities. The courage, sacrifice, service and valour of Australians in such operations will be honoured in the same spirit of service as do the other cenotaphs and memorials across Australia and, more particularly, on Anzac Parade in Canberra. The memorial will note and celebrate Australia's long and distinguished contribution to multinational peacekeeping over the past 60 years.

Multinational peacekeeping is a difficult and often dangerous activity. The record of Australian contingents in this regard, be they military, police or civilian, has been long, impressive and tragically not casualty-free. As with other memorials on Anzac Parade, those killed, wounded, injured or traumatised in such operations can now be honoured and remembered, as they should be, by the wider Australian community.

The site allocated on Anzac Parade for the memorial is the one nearest to Constitution Avenue (and the lake) on the Campbell side. The brief for the memorial's design describes the form of the memorial and the two-stage process that will be used to review submissions. This will involve a jury of peacekeepers, artists and architects who will initially select a short list for further consideration, and then in a second stage recommend a winner to the Canberra National Memorials Committee.

Entries for the design of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial have been requested to ensure that the proposed memorial portrays appropriate messages about Australian

peacekeeping. The memorial should record with pride the achievement of our peacekeepers, it should recognise the difficult and often dangerous nature of peace operations, it should acknowledge the sacrifices those peacekeepers and their families have made and suffered, and it should help educate the community about the noble and positive impact of peace operations around the world.

The proposal for the memorial can be found on the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Project (APMP) website at www.peacekeepingmemorial.org.au. Veterans of Australian peace operations are encouraged to join the APMP to provide support and offer their comments on the development of the memorial.

The cost of constructing the memorial is estimated at over three million dollars. The Government has contributed an initial grant of \$200,000 and hopefully will provide further financial support. Donations are now being sought from corporate Australia, particularly those companies with a close association with our military and police contributions overseas. Support is also sought from across the Australian community and all donations are tax deductible. Peacekeeping veterans and their organisations are particularly encouraged to consider contributing a donation to the construction of this important national memorial.

The opening of the memorial is planned for September 2009. The activities recognising the sixty years that Australians have been contributing to international peacekeeping in September 2007 have provided an appropriate forerunner to this significant event. ♦

Major General Tim Ford retired from the ADF in 2003 after a 40-year career including command of 1st Division, command of the UN Truce Supervision Organisation in the Middle East, and duty at UN Headquarters in New York as the Military Adviser to the Secretary-General. He remains active as a mentor and adviser on peace operations and the Chairman of the Australian Peacekeeping Memorial Committee.



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

Tank operations in modern counter-insurgency warfare

Andrew Erskine

When you need a tank, you need a tank!

**Lieutenant Colonel Greg Reilly
3rd Armoured Cavalry Regiment**

Allied experiences in Iraq and Afghanistan continue to prove the wisdom of renewing the Australian Army's heavy armour capabilities. In particular, the recent expedited re-equipment of the Canadian Army tank fleet has once again emphasised the old lesson that battlefield requirements remain the ultimate driver of effective capability development. And indeed of disproving ivory-tower academic nostrums about the supposed nature of future battle and the alleged obsolescence of main battle tanks. The M1 Abrams, Leopard-2 and Challenger have all performed well in both theatres but US experiences with the Abrams are obviously the most relevant for Australia.

The M1 Abrams began life as a tank primarily designed to kill enemy tanks at long range, and lots of them. This bias for tank-on-tank engagements shaped the development of the Abrams and is apparent in its design. Key features include its thick frontal armour, low silhouette and long smooth-bore gun. In this role its design approaches perfection and it is amongst the finest tanks in the world.

The American-led intervention in Iraq in 2003 saw the Abrams employed in its purest sense, as a tank killer, but only for only a matter of weeks in what is now a multi-year deployment. Since the cessation of conventional force-on-force combat, the role of the Abrams has changed but remains just as vital. Instead of killing enemy tanks in high-intensity combat, the Abrams is now used as a cornerstone of the combined-arms teams needed for mid-intensity combat in complex urban terrain. Few new lessons have been learnt about the importance of balanced combined-arms teams and tactics but many old ones have been re-emphasised.

Adapting firepower

In such terrain, especially where insurgents mount attacks in areas containing large and vulnerable populations of non-combatants, the open-country firepower and target detection advantages of the Abrams' 120mm M256 smooth-bore gun system are much reduced. This is chiefly because the types

of ammunition available are more suited to conventional battle. Time and again, American tankers have found the gun so powerful in urban environments that potential levels of collateral damage simply preclude its use. One result of this has been much greater reliance on the turret-mounted 12.7mm machine gun and the 7.62mm coaxial machine-gun. The three weapon systems together, however, provide tactical commanders with considerable discretion in responding to a threat (overcoming something of a limitation, for example, with Australia's old Leopard tanks).

When the main gun can be used, Armour-Piercing Fin-Stabilised Discarding-Sabot (APFSDS), Multi-Purpose Anti-Tank (MPAT) and High-Explosive Anti-Tank (HEAT) form the main M256 munitions used. Most engagements have been conducted using HEAT and MPAT because of their effectiveness in eliminating bunkers and neutralising buildings being used by insurgents. As an example of the versatility of the tank during combat in complex terrain, the Americans are introducing a new programmable munition, the Line-Of-Sight Multi-Purpose (LOSMP) round. An important design feature of the LOSMP is that the fuse can be set to suit the specific type of target being engaged, whether it is a bunker, vehicle or enemy personnel deployed in buildings. It is anticipated that the LOSMP will replace up to four other rounds including HEAT, MPAT and the newly developed Canister Anti-Personnel (CAP) round.

Survivability and vulnerability balance

The protection provided by the M1 across its frontal arc is excellent and crews are safe under the equivalent of around 1000mm of rolled homogeneous armour. Many M1s have sustained multiple, close-range RPG strikes and continued to operate. Some areas of weakness lie in the flank armour of the track shrouds, rear armour especially near the engine exhaust, and the roof and belly armour. This is a result of the original design emphasis on tank-on-tank engagements

where the armour was designed for protection against direct-fire kinetic and chemical energy weapons across the frontal arc. The armour is still effective, but in the 360-degree threat environment of operations in complex terrain, attacks can come from any direction: in front, above, below, behind or flanking.

Situational awareness also requires careful planning. Once closed down behind the protection of armour, the ability to observe and identify threats is obviously reduced. One lesson long experienced by the Israelis, and re-learned by the Americans in Iraq, is that crew survivability is compromised by the natural desire to gain situational awareness by popping up outside the armour to look around the tank. Close co-operation with accompanying infantry remains a time-tested solution here.

Finally, the stowage of crew personal equipment externally on the turret has proved hazardous. On numerous occasions it has caught fire when struck by fire or blast and most units have now removed such external stowage.

Several of these firepower, protection and situational awareness problems have been addressed by the Tank Urban Survival Kit (TUSK). Modifications include a night-sight for the 12.7mm machine gun on the commander's remote weapons station (CWS), a thermal night-sight and armoured gunshield for the loader's machine gun (LAGS), bar armour for the rear engine exhaust, and Abrams reactive armour tiles (ARAT) for the flank-track shrouds.

Mobility and reliability equation

The mobility and reliability of the M1 on sustained operations has been a highpoint in the vehicle's service. The external auxiliary power unit (APU) allows for reduced fuel consumption, by providing power when the engine is switched off. This is a big advantage as the AGT1500 gas turbine uses the same amount of fuel at idle as at full power. In addition, the APU reduces the engine hours of the turbine, in turn reducing maintenance requirements and further improving reliability. The turbine power plant has proven to be extremely reliable, given the extremely dusty conditions the Americans have experienced in Iraq. This bodes well for Australia, given the dusty nature of many of our domestic training areas. Mobility concerns caused by the vehicles 62-tonne combat weight when crossing bridges have been largely negated by routine route planning.

Some lessons for Australia

The M1 Abrams is a survivable, powerful, battle-proven tank. In Iraq in particular it has proven its value during combined-arms team fighting in complex environments. In the Australian and regional contexts these are exactly the types of task our new M1 Abrams tanks are primarily intended to undertake – as close-support weapons systems to protect combined-arms teams. The experiences of the Americans operating the M1 in Iraq are therefore directly applicable and in detail. Their hard-won lessons about

adaptive firepower, survivability and mobility need to be implemented now – before, not after, our Abrams might be committed to action.

Given the very small size of the Australian tank fleet, it is necessarily but disproportionately resource-intensive logistically compared with our other vehicle fleets. A similar situation applies with engineering maintenance. The need to maximise economies of scale, and the need to simplify ammunition demands both tactically and logistically, therefore indicates that the early introduction of flexible ammunition types such as LOSMP would make considerable sense.

Given Australia's traditional low tolerance for casualties, the operational flexibility and survivability of our M1s would clearly be enhanced with TUSK. Another lesson re-learned from American experience is the importance of a bulldozer blade capability and we need to reintroduce this on some of our M1s without delay.

Finally, despite the vehemence of certain armchair prognostications over the last decade or so about the supposed demise of the tank, a simple truth has again emerged from the complexity of operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. No matter whether a modern battlefield is urban or rural in location, low, middle or high in intensity, or conventional, counter-insurgency or three-block war in nature, nothing can replace a main battle tank for the versatile, responsive and intimate combination of firepower, protection, mobility and communications they add to the combined-arms team.

But the overall lesson is even broader than that. Our Vietnam-era M113 armoured personnel carriers, even when some are upgraded, will still be limited in where they can be safely and effectively deployed. They are now, in effect, only a regional peacekeeping capability. Our ASLAVs needed considerable modernisation before they could be committed to operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. They are also now nearing the end of their second decade in harness. Our new Bushmaster armoured trucks are proving capable but they are not armoured *fighting* vehicles and were never intended to be. They were essentially the result of a money-driven compromise that again postponed the necessary replacement of the M113 and the ASLAV by a proper infantry fighting vehicle.

There are some clear lessons here. And they stand in stark contrast to the flawed strategic policy 'guidance' and resultant bungled capability development that has so foolishly constrained our armoured capabilities over the last two decades. We have, at last, a modern tank, albeit in very small numbers, and still subject to incorrect and often hysterical claims about its supposed unsuitability. No effort should be spared in keeping our tanks modern. We need to ensure that every possible modification is undertaken so they are immediately available, without further upgrading being required, the next time we have to deploy ADF ground forces to further or protect our national interests ♦

Andrew Erskine is a nom de plume.

The Super Hornet Purchase:

A good save to a poor plan?

Robert Marlow

One of the more contentious ADF projects in recent years is the \$A6.6bn acquisition of 24 Boeing F-18F Super Hornets, with much press speculation that the Minister acted against the advice of the senior leadership in the ADF and the Department of Defence. The Super Hornets are to fill the gap between the F-111 and F-18A going out of service and the new F-35 Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter fully entering service. The senior ADF leadership had previously steadfastly denied any gap existed and thus this sudden purchase has surprised many. A senior RAAF officer was quoted in *The Age* in August 2007 observing that the Service's senior leadership: 'always had the view that we could get through without an interim, or what we now call a bridging, capability'.

Of more concern the project to replace the F-111 and F-18A was originally funded at around \$A12-15bn, the largest single project ever in Australian defence history. The new Super Hornet purchase, combined with the further F-18 life-extension projects required will add an extra \$A7.6bn to this. This 50-60 per cent increase is the largest defence equipment cost over-run for several decades, very substantially more than the Collins Class submarine cost increases. This unexpected over-run not only imposes a significant opportunity cost on the ADF in diverting money from other potential and perhaps more important uses, but also calls sharply into question all the Department of Defence management reforms of the last decade.

Sound strategic planning?

Originally the F-18A was to be replaced between 2010 and 2015 and the F-111 between 2015 and 2020. In mid-2002 the Department dropped plans to have a traditional tendering approach to buying the replacement aircraft and decided to acquire the F-35 JSF off the drawing board, sight unseen. Competitive pressures were deemed unnecessary to getting the best deal for, as Minster Hill noted in June 2002, RAAF advice was that the JSF was the cheapest option of the seven to eight potential alternatives available.

In mid-2003 another sudden decision saw the F-111 withdrawal date accelerated to 2010 and a new plan hurriedly

adopted to operate just the F-18A fighters supported by new tankers, new airborne early-warning aircraft and new long-range missiles until the JSF became available from 2012. The rationale for the precipitate F-111 withdrawal proved controversial and after some debate about a suitable basis, the reason eventually settled on was the potential for the aircraft to have structural problems beyond 2010.

Perhaps surprisingly, the new plan now called for an aircraft type with known serious structural problems, the F-18A, to be relied upon instead. However, in mid-2006 just six months before the initial airborne early-warning aircraft were to be delivered it was suddenly discovered that the project, previously deemed by the Department of Defence as exemplary, was now running three years late. With this shock and delays in the other supporting tanker, missile and F-18A upgrade projects it became rather improbable that the F-18A could replace the F-111 in 2010 as originally planned. Moreover, by now the F-35 JSF project was also suffering setbacks.

Defence originally advised in mid-2002 that the JSF would be in service in Australia from 2012 however, almost immediately, the project hit problems. The aircraft's estimated weight was determined to be excessive leading to the first flight of a production-representative aircraft being delayed from mid-2005 to May 2008. The project was then completely re-baselined in late 2003 with cost increases and schedule slippages incorporated. In 2003 the JSF version Australia is buying was expected to be initially operational with the US Air Force in mid-2011, but by mid-2006 this had slipped to mid-2013.

Worse, the US Government Audit Office has released several worrying reports. The most recent, in March 2007, focused on the numerous technical risks remaining, the significant cost over-runs, a steadily slipping flight test program, major software development uncertainties, and the generally immature nature of the program. This report further noted that internal Pentagon organisations were also worried about cost growth and anticipated further program delays. The Australian Government, having excellent political networks in Washington, will have a more complete picture but given the F-18F Super Hornet purchase this insider

perspective can be assumed to be no better than the public face. The JSF is now the second most expensive aircraft option (after the F-22 Raptor) to replace the F-111 and F-18A, the highest risk alternative, and the aircraft type with the most uncertain delivery date.

The result has been that the RAAF is under pressure at both ends: the complex plan for the F-18A to replace the F-111 has proven unachievable and the JSF is expected to be delayed further. If the USAF is at best planning to have its first operational aircraft in mid-2013, it does not seem likely that the RAAF would reach a similar stage until 2015 at the earliest – and this appears high risk. The Department of Defence's original plan would have led to five or more years when the nation would have relied completely on a steadily diminishing number of F-18A aircraft.

From Australia having about 100 fighter and strike aircraft in 2010, the fleet would have rapidly fallen away. Indeed without the recently decided F-18A life-extension program the F-18A fleet may have needed to be retired in 2015 as planned leaving the nation with no fighter or strike aircraft at all. According to a recent Commonwealth Auditor-General report the F-18A life-extension program will cost some \$A1bn and will mean that F-18As will be undergoing structural repairs right up until being replaced by the JSF. This is not a particularly cost-effective approach, but necessary in the face of the original poor strategic plan.

A sound recovery from a bad situation?

Given the high risks in sustaining the RAAF's fighter and strike fleets, and the uncertain quality of departmental advice as exemplified by the sudden early-warning aircraft surprise, it is not unreasonable for the Government to seek alternatives. The Government as customer and owner of the ADF is obviously sufficiently concerned to expend considerable money and some political capital to make sure Australia sustains an adequate fighter and strike force through the next decade. In this regard, the Government seems to have less than full-confidence in departmental advice and there appears a crisis of sorts in Australian civil-military relations.

The Department of Defence appears to have chosen to disregard rising concern in the Government and the wider Australian community and not adjusted their 2003 strategic plan to accommodate the new realities. Long-range plans need constant monitoring and adjustment to reflect new developments, but in this case this seemingly was not done. Traditional risk management processes would have suggested a different approach to that followed by Defence. The plan has demonstrably failed in not addressing the concerns of the Government of the day who, by their actions, are absolutely convinced of serious impending troubles.

The deficiencies of Defence's original strategic plan are, however, mostly addressed by the purchase of the Super Hornet. A recent study by the American Center for Strategic and Budgetary Analysis found that the Super Hornet offered comparable performance to the JSF until about 2020, after which intended upgrades to the JSF may make it superior. The Super Hornet is also noticeably cheaper. Moreover, the Super Hornet is fitted with the Harpoon anti-ship missile; by contrast the JSF has no anti-ship missile capability as well as not having two engines – an undesirable feature for long

over-water flights. There are also some extra financial and risk benefits. Buying the Super Hornet today allows later more properly developed models of the JSF to be acquired later, including the superior beyond-2020 models. The first aircraft off the production line will be both the most expensive and the least proven. Being able to wait will mean a better product with fewer problems is eventually delivered, and less expensive rectifications are needed later.

Doomed to repeat all this again?

The fundamental cause of the \$A7.6bn cost blowout is the poor strategic planning undertaken by the Department of Defence. Blaming the Minister for departmental failings that happened before his watch is somewhat mischievous and misleading. The early retirement of the F-111 when combined with the risky JSF purchase has had an unfortunate cumulative effect. If the F-111 was still kept in service until the second half of the next decade then the ADF may have got away with a JSF purchase that remained within budget. Conversely, if a less risky platform than the JSF had been chosen by the RAAF then problems would probably not have arisen as well. The combination of the F-111's undoubtedly premature retirement and the decision to procure the JSF has proven very expensive for the taxpayer, increasing costs by some \$A7.6bn. Is the JSF now the most expensive option rather than the most cost effective?

This unplanned expenditure, and the JSF purchase generally, are often touted as being somehow validated by the experience of the F-111 and Collins Class submarine acquisitions of earlier eras. These acquisitions were also late and over budget but eventually proved first-rate platforms. This argument is also a little disingenuous. The F-111 was the best strike aircraft of its day and the Collins Class the best long-range diesel-electric submarine of the time. The JSF by comparison is a second-level aircraft meant to replace the second-level F-16 and F-18 aircraft; the first-level fighter aircraft of their time were the F-15 and F-14. Today's best fighter aircraft, the F-22, may arguably have been a better purchase than the Super Hornet, but the US has not yet been asked to release them to Australia, and so the next-best option that can be acquired in time is the Super Hornet. The F-111 and Collins class were high-risk, high-payoff projects; the JSF project is in some respects the converse: high-risk, low-payoff.

Where does this leave the ADF? Fixing this demonstrably poor strategic plan is very costly in dollars and lost opportunities. Fortunately the Government does not expect the defence force to bear the cost and will fund the Department of Defence an additional \$A7.6bn. This entire episode throws considerable doubt upon departmental long-term strategic planning and higher management capabilities. If even significant errors like this carry no penalties then why should Defence bother doing long-term planning? Indeed arguably doing none will not be any worse than doing it so poorly. A poor plan can be more misleading and dangerous than no plan at all.

From a public administration perspective though the whole matter is particularly problematic. Over the last decade the intent of numerous reforms to the Department of Defence has been to make senior managers accountable

and responsible with the aim being to improve public sector performance. In the case of our new air combat capability, the most expensive test of this philosophy so far, this principle of sound administration appears to have been disregarded. Not addressing this issue by holding the senior departmental leadership responsible and accountable means similar problems will probably reoccur in future, for problems not fixed rarely disappear.

The recent Defence Management Review found that accountability in the Department of Defence was absent, confused and afforded a low priority, there was an indifference to efficiency, and that the senior leadership was less focused on long-term strategic issues. Because of their tight terms of reference, the Review's recommendations did not really address the strategic management issues arising from the poorly handled new air combat capability. Moreover, in this specific case the traditional rejoinder that no one in Defence can be held accountable because accountability is confused

is simply not true. The Australian Government has gone to considerable trouble over the last several years to designate who in Defence is specifically responsible for creating long-term equipment plans and managing projects of this kind.

If the principles of responsibility and accountability are now being abandoned as unworkable (for presumably good reasons) then new principles to govern and guide sound management need to be developed. If not, then hopefully for the Department of Defence future governments (and taxpayers) will be equally generous and lenient, and for the nation future strategic circumstances so benign. Next time the consequences of such demonstrably poor Defence strategic planning could be more expensive than just billions of dollars. ♦

Robert Marlow is a nom de plume.

Conference Calendar

ADA members and other Defender readers may be interested in the following public conferences and activities:

- **Australian War Memorial Peacekeeping Conference**
Force for Good? 60 Years of Australian Peacekeeping, 1947-2007
13-14 September 2007
Telstra Theatre, Australian War Memorial, Canberra
Enquiries: (02) 6243-4345 or Peter.Londey@awm.gov.au
- **UNSW@ADFA Conference 2007**
Defining the 21st Century Warrior: Myth, Reality, Relevance
24-25 September 2007
Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra
Enquiries: (02) 6268-8871 or k.spurling@adfa.edu.au
- **Safeguarding Australia 2007 6th Homeland Security Summit & Exposition**
Predicting Trends, Identifying Implications and Anticipating Responses
04-05 October 2007
Hotel Realm, National Circuit, Canberra
Enquiries: (02) 6161-5143 or www.safeguardingaustraliasummit.org.au
- **Australian Institute of Professional Intelligence Officers Conference 2007**
The Umbrella of Intelligence
16-18 October 2007
Grand Chancellor Hotel, Hobart
Enquiries: www.aipio.asn.au
- **Defence Science and Technology Organisation Land Warfare Conference 2007**
Pervasive, Persistent, Proportionate: Landforce and Urban Warfare
22-26 October 2007
Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide
Enquiries: (08) 8259-5455 or www.dsto.defence.gov.au/corporate/conferences/landwarfare
- **Chief of Army History Conference 2007**
1917: Training, Tactics and Technology
01-02 November 2007
National Convention Centre, Canberra
Enquiries: (02) 6266-4248 or http://www.defence.gov.au/army/ahu/EVENTS/events-index.htm
- **Australian Homeland Security Research Centre, National Capability Development Symposium**
27-28 November 2007
Alastair Swain Theatre, Brindabella Park, Canberra International Airport
Enquiries: (02) 6161-5143 or www.capabilitydevelopment.org.au
- **Kokoda Foundation Seminar-Dinner**
Strategy for Winning the Long Struggle: Key Factors for Success
7:00PM, Thursday, 29 November 2007
Dining Room, Old Parliament House, Canberra
Enquiries: (02) 6161-9000 or http://www.kokodafoundation.org/Dinner.html
- **United States Studies Centre (University of Sydney), National Summit 2007**
21st Century America: Reflections, Aspirations and Challenges
09-11 December 2007
NSW Trade and Investment Centre, Level 47, MLC Centre, 19 Martin Place, Sydney
Enquiries: (02) 9351-7249 or http://www.sydney.edu.au/us-studies
- **Kokoda Foundation, Young Strategic Leaders' Forum, Congress 2007**
Strategy for Winning the Long Struggle: Key Factors for Success
7:00PM Friday 14 December to 2:30PM Sunday 16 December 2007
ANU Coastal Campus, Kialoa (near Bawley Point), NSW
Enquiries: (02) 6161-9000 or http://www.kokodafoundation.org/YSLFCongress.html
- **RAN Seapower Conference 2008 (at the Pacific 2008 Maritime Exposition)**
Australia and its Maritime Interests: At Home and in the Region
29-31 January 2008
Sydney Convention Centre, Darling Harbour, Sydney
Enquiries: www.seapower2008.com

Vale Major Leonard Oswald Hansen, OAM (Retd)

Major Len Hansen, believed to have been the third-last surviving 'Rat of Tobruk' from North Queensland's 2nd/15th Battalion, died on 02 July 2007, aged nearly 90. Born in Mackay in late December 1917, Len lived in the same house in Byron Street all his life with three exceptions: when it was washed into the middle of the street by the cyclone and tidal wave that hit Mackay in 1918 (when he was a month old), when he was away with the 2nd AIF for five years in World War II, and in the last year or so where he spent time in hospital and a local nursing home. Len was educated at Victoria Park State School (where the Hansen brothers were among its first students in 1926), and Mackay Technical College, where he studied accountancy part-time in the late 1930s, finally completing his qualifications on returning from the war in late 1945.

In April 1939 Len joined his local militia battalion and transferred to the 2nd AIF's 2nd/15th Battalion the day it was raised in May 1940. He served with the battalion during the siege of Tobruk and then in the Syrian campaign, Al Alamein, New Guinea (Lae, Finschhafen and Sio) and finally in Borneo (Brunei and Labuan). In the battle at Bumi River in New Guinea Len, by then company sergeant major of B Company, took temporary command when his company commander was killed. Mackay's well-known 'Rats of Tobruk' memorial in Queen's Park (adjacent to Victoria Park school), which features prominently on the North Queensland tourist trail, owed its erection solely to Len's persistent efforts to honour his mates.

When the CMF was formed in 1948, Len re-enlisted and served with the 31st and 42nd Battalions. He was commissioned in September 1950. After commanding the Mackay-based B Company of the 42nd Battalion, in the early to mid 1950s, his final military posting in 1958-59 was as commander of the battalion's administration company.

After the war Len became a prominent businessman in Mackay for twenty years in partnership with his brother Lester (another 2nd AIF 'Desert Rat'). Later he served in the management of the Mackay Gas Company (later a branch of Boral) until his retirement from paid employment in 1983. He was also a Justice of the Peace for many years. In nominal retirement Len devoted even more time and determined efforts to a wide variety of voluntary causes and local organisations. This included the West Mackay Rotary Club (founding member, Paul Harris Fellow, 48 years membership), the Australian Institute of Management, the Red Cross, Freemasons, the Australian Flag Association and numerous local charities and community activities.

Len also founded the ADA's Mackay Chapter in 1981 and led it for 22 years. His initiative, leadership and sheer damn persistence were enduring factors in Mackay now having the ADA's largest local chapter outside the state capital cities. Over recent decades numerous Australians from all walks of life (many now in quite senior appointments) responded to his insistent invitations to address quarterly chapter dinners, several more than once at various stages of their military, diplomatic, political or other careers. Ambassadors from a range of countries also accepted Len's invitations to speak

during visits to north Queensland. Some speakers even came all the way from Canberra solely to keep faith with Len's belief that they had something useful to say, and that the Mackay region's importance as a major commodity exporter was worth seeing first hand. All enjoyed Len's sincere, hospitable but at times somewhat eccentric approach to hosting their Mackay visit.

When later elected as a Queensland representative to the ADA National Council Len always made a point of travelling to Melbourne, at his own expense, for national council and subsequently ADA board of directors meetings. Len served on the board from mid 1998 to early 2003 and at his last board meeting in late 2002 was honoured with a special plaque recording his service on the council and then the board. A special motion of thanks at the 2003 AGM also honoured his long and distinguished service to the ADA at national level and with the Mackay chapter.

One word sums up Len Hansen, persistence. In mid 2003 a well-attended public testimonial dinner was held to honour Len's long service to the Mackay community. Chaired by retired federal MP, Ray Braithwaite, it was attended by current and former mayors of Mackay, senior representatives from numerous local organisations and many citizens of the Mackay area. Current federal MP for the Mackay area, De-Anne Kelly, also spoke warmly of Len when recording his many services to his community and nation in a June 2003 speech to the House of Representatives. In the Australia Day honours list in 2004 Len was awarded the medal of the Order of Australia for his services to the community.

The eulogies at Len's funeral on 06 July 2007 were given by the Mayor of Mackay, and by Ray Braithwaite, former ADA executive director Mike O'Connor, and Judy Stewart, a teacher at Victoria Park School. It says much for Len that Ray and Judy are also ADA members. The ADA was also represented at the funeral by Chapter Chairman, Eric Eastment, and another 30 ADA members. The Association thanks Len's brother Lester, sister Joan, his five nieces and their children for the long and dutiful service given to the cause of Australia's defence by this extraordinary old soldier. ♦

BEQUESTS TO THE ADA

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

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

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

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

25 April 1915: The Day the Anzac Legend Was Born

David Cameron

Reviewed by Glenn Wahlert



Leading up to Anzac Day each year numerous publishers push a variety of new titles on the Gallipoli campaign, many of which are simply dressing up old information as new. Occasionally, however, one stands out as particularly noteworthy and David Cameron's *25 April 1915* is such a book. He does not pretend to cover the entire campaign, or to address the higher command decisions and processes. It is simply an account of those first, critical 24 hours from both the Anzac and Turkish perspectives. Most forget that the mistakes made on that first day set the course for the rest of the campaign, and the positions both sides occupied on the morning of 26 April remained largely unchanged until the Anzac withdrawal in December. This book gives the reader a good understanding of why this was the case.

Dr Cameron is an unlikely author of a book of this type. A biological anthropologist and Research Fellow in the Department of Anatomy and Histology at the University of Sydney, he is recognised as a world authority on hominid evolution, with his area of specialisation being the evolution of hominid facial morphologies through time. His last published work, in 2004, was titled *Hominid Adaptions and Extinctions*. He has conducted extensive fossil surveys and excavations around the world and it was during a site survey at Gallipoli in 2003 that he first became interested in the landing. His background and scientific discipline are evident in this book. Dr Cameron's research is thorough and well supported by evidence. His writing style, while easy to read, is detached and matter of fact – steering away from offering opinions and allowing the facts to speak for themselves.

As would be expected from any serious study of this subject, Cameron relies heavily on the works of the Australian Official Historian, Charles Bean. However, his use of primary sources, official histories, manuscripts and published works is extensive and well balanced. This book has clearly been well researched. A particular strength of this research is Dr Cameron's largely successful attempt to balance the Anzac's story with a detailed view from the Turkish side. To this end he draws extensively on the records of Lieutenant Colonel Zeki Bey, commander of the Turkish 27th Regiment.

Many readers of the Gallipoli campaign will be aware of the role played by the Turkish 57th Regiment, and in particular the part played by its commander, Mustafa Kemal. Few, however, would be aware of the central role played by the 27th Regiment's three battalions in attempting to hold back the tide of Australian and New Zealand troops on 25

April. Indeed, it was a battalion from the 27th Regiment, the 2nd Battalion, that manned the trenches and lookouts along the Anzac landing sites, opposed the Australian landing parties and inflicted so many casualties. Kemal's 57th Regiment, while playing a critical role in stopping the Anzacs exploiting beyond the Second Ridge, did not come into play until later on the first day.

Another aspect of balance in this book is the part played by the New Zealanders. Many Australians forget to acknowledge that New Zealand was even present on the first day, if at all, and many Australian publications underplay the role played by the New Zealand battalions. The excellent work of New Zealand historian Christopher Pugsley is used by Cameron to help fill this gap, and the author has gone out of his way to find New Zealand diaries and other records not previously available. To quote Dr Cameron, this was designed to put 'New Zealand back into the word Anzac'.

The book follows a strict chronology from the time of the landing until daybreak on the 26 April. Its key parts detail the landing, the battle for the ridges, the Turkish counter-attacks and the Anzac's first night on Turkish soil. Overall each of these parts is well handled, although at times it is difficult to follow the narrative as it attempts to describe the various, disparate and uncoordinated activities over the entire battlefield from both the Anzac and Turkish perspectives. The author's attempts to describe the chaos of that first day are not aided by his maps and diagrams. These are rather basic and, at times, do not show the key features and areas being described in the narrative. While the absence of coloured maps was most likely a decision of the publisher based on cost, it is a shame that more attention was not given to this aspect as it would have greatly aided the reader's ability to follow the story. I found myself having to constantly flick from map to map and, in the end, simply used a good map of the Gallipoli battlefield that I had in my library.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, *25 April 1915* is a well researched and well written book that is also a good read. It adds to our already vast knowledge of the Gallipoli campaign by providing a detailed account of that first day of battle. A day that set the course for the entire campaign. ♦

David Cameron, *'25 April 1915: The Day the Anzac Legend was Born'*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2007, Softback, 324pp., RRP \$A29.95.

Backs to the Wall: A Larrikin on the Western Front

G.D. Mitchell

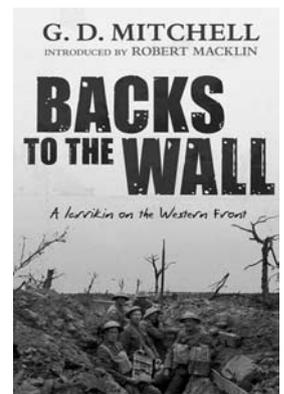
Reviewed by Dr Michael Tyquin

Backs to the Wall, based on George Mitchell's World War I diaries, originally appeared in 1937 but apparently sank without making much of an impression. It has been resurrected by Robert Macklin, biographer of Albert Jacka VC, who provides the introduction and afterword to this work. Macklin's claim that Mitchell, a Military Cross winner, 'kept one of the most remarkable diaries in military history' is overstating things, but there is no doubt it is a wonderful example of the genre as an Australian perspective on that war.

Curiously, given Macklin's meticulous research of Jacka, a contemporary of Mitchell, little is revealed of the latter's early years, family or formative influences. A 16-page but very sketchy forward gives the barest outline of the man's earlier life and character. The reader is instead led straight to the opening of Mitchell's original book, with his departure from Australia in 1914. Macklin's contribution ends with an afterword which outlines Mitchell's fascinating World War II exploits in and around New Guinea as CO of No. 43 Landing Craft Company. The man himself also published two other books, was a regular contributor to soldiers' newspapers and journals and successfully stood for State Parliament in New South Wales.

Mitchell's book begins in 1916 with a brief reference to having been invalided from Gallipoli in October the previous year. His prose is matter of fact but elegantly written with a poetic turn of phrase. He refers in one place to a massed artillery bombardment as 'a debauchery of sound.' The diary extracts are seamlessly blended with the larger narrative as a means to highlight a point or to let his experiences recorded at the time speak for themselves – without reflection or self censorship. Despite the bloodshed and horrors there is nothing maudlin about the author's work. Each scene, rather than becoming part of a repetitive theme, is painted afresh from a lively angle which brings to life what otherwise might have become banal in the telling.

With luck and cunning on his side he is awarded a DCM at Bullecourt for some very cool work with a Lewis Gun and later, near Amiens, a Military Cross for single-handedly capturing 31 Germans. From 1916 to 1918 he chronicles his sometimes tenuous hold on sanity as he and his mates are subjected to relentless artillery barrages, death and boredom, together with his own personal demon – being buried alive. *Backs to the Wall* is full of both black humour and wit as Mitchell keeps one step ahead of his superiors while fighting an ongoing battle to be accepted into the Royal Flying Corps. He has a beautiful sense of scene, as in this one on the Somme: 'The dags were there, the wild men, the conscientious soldiers, the lean hungry ones and odd nerve-racked men who soldiered on in spite of themselves.'



Liberally peppered with the mild expletives born of battlefield frustration and fatigue, the book also includes metaphors lost on many today: 'trapped like flies on a paper.'

Macklin is extremely economic in his use of notes either to expand on personalities, specific battles, or to explain slang or technical terms, such as 'five one nines', 'Toc Emmas', 'Bradburys' and so on. While Macklin has resited the urge to swamp his subject's narrative, this reviewer felt that explanations, particularly for the non-military reader, are sparse indeed.

In one episode at the front Mitchell describes his one and only war-time meeting with Captain Jacka VC. While he could write insightful paragraphs about girls he spent only a few hours with, or mates or passers by, his only observation on this Aussie icon was that he was 'coldly efficient.' He describes an encounter with his opposite number – a German junior officer – during an unofficial two-hour Armistice on his patch of the front in May 1918 near Monument Wood. By that year he and his men experienced many 'anxious days'. However the Anzac men who were still alive were relieved that there was 'none of the slimy horror of the winter of 1916-1917, nor the fever and starvation of Gallipoli.'

There is throughout the book a sense of expectancy and excitement, even about the most mundane aspects of life at the front. For Mitchell gives a louse's eye view of the war with little reference to generals (apart from unabashed admiration for Monash), grand strategy or even major tactics. He writes about survival and is genuinely and constantly aggrieved that he never receives a 'Blighty' wound that would remove him from his nightmare. Repeated applications to join the Flying Corps were rejected or frustrated by superiors too canny to throw away such a skilled fighter. Success of a kind comes in 1918 when he received both a summons to join the Corps and the chance to take '1914 Leave' to return home for six weeks. But his conundrum was solved almost immediately with the Armistice. 'There was little cheering. Our known world had slipped from us.'

Mitchell certainly has the stamp of the text book hero, but there is much of the cheeky, irreverent larrikin about him which sets him apart perhaps from other, better known heroes such as Jacka. ♦

George Dean Mitchell (with commentary by Robert Macklin), 'Backs to the Wall: A Larrikin on the Western Front', Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2007. Softback, 341pp. with endnotes and index, RRP A\$29.95.

The Torch and the Sword: A History of the Army Cadet Movement in Australia

Craig Stockings

Reviewed by Dr Jean Bou

Army cadets have been part of the military and educational experience of Australian boys, and more latterly girls, since the mid-1860s. Thus it is all the more amazing that this book is the first serious attempt to write a history of an institution that has played a part in the lives of what must surely be hundreds of thousands of people. A few discrete elements of it, such as the so-called 'boy conscription' before World War I, have been examined, a few educationists have done related PhDs, and a number of the more prosperous tradition-minded private schools have produced unit histories (of which this reviewer authored one), but until now no one has tackled the subject in its entirety. For this reason alone Craig Stockings's book is a welcome addition and, one might hope, also a catalyst for more research.

Dr Stockings, a lecturer at the Australian Defence Force Academy, based this book on the extensive PhD research he did there and he can lay claim to considerable expertise on the matter. His book examines the movement from its beginnings in school-based 'drill' in the 1850s, through its evolution into cadet corps proper in the mid-1860s, and then tracks the institution through the vicissitudes of its existence until 2006.

Central is Stockings's view that four key 'pillars' have affected, and continue to affect, the vitality of the movement: first, the military's attitude and degree of support; second, the views and contributions of educators and schools; third, community and social attitudes; and fourth, the effects of finance. These pillars, Stockings contends, support the whole edifice, and an imbalance between them consequently threatens the organisation. 'Four-way tug-of-war' may well have been as suitable an analogy as 'four pillars', however, and the way that military and educational interests, in particular, have competed and worked at cross purposes is remarkable. The periods of genuine harmony have been rare.

In examining these pillars the author's approach is more organisational than institutional. This is a book about policy, military decision-making, educational interests, structures, restructuring, administration and resources. The author makes it clear that this 'a' history not 'the' history and he skirts the multitude of social and cultural matters that a study of cadets might readily lend itself to. No book can be everything to all readers, but this approach does have its limitations, particularly when the book itself repeatedly returns to social topics that seem fundamental to the movement. If, as the author regularly points out, cadets have been presented as

a way to cure youth degeneracy was there ever any meaningful evidence produced to support the idea? Similarly have the charges of youth militarism, which the movement's opponents have made from time to time, been sustainable or not? The book touches on these and other questions but does not address them systematically.

In addition to the four 'pillars', Stockings also identifies two key recurring themes in the movement's history. The first, the identification of a persistent division between private and state school units within the broader organisation, is fascinating. It is clear that whilst boys in state schools have often made up much of the raw numbers, it has been the more organised and generally larger private school units that have dominated the movement. Often possessing the oldest units, tradition-minded and with the resources to keep going during lean periods, the private schools made a contribution that was considerable and perhaps defining.

The second theme is that there has been a noticeably complementary relationship between conservative politics and the cadet movement. That cadets suit the mindset of conservatives seems an unremarkable idea, particularly to those of us born on this side of the Whitlam government's 1975 decision to abolish cadets, but the evidence produced here does not sit comfortably with this broad assertion. Clearly Labor was very interested in cadets as part of a compulsory service scheme before 1914, while conservative governments of the 1920s do not seem to deserve any particular kudos for supporting cadets. When the Scullin Labor government abolished compulsory cadets in 1929 it also, as the author notes, moved quickly to introduce a replacement voluntary system and supported it as well as the Great Depression probably allowed. That the conservative Lyons ministry gets particular congratulations for expanding the scheme in the late 1930s with a better economy, and in a more threatening world, seems incongruous. Similarly Stockings warmly notes a 25 per cent increase in cadet numbers under Menzies during the period 1950-57, but criticises the previous Chifley ministry for allowing stagnation when it had largely overseen a similar-sized expansion in the period 1946-50. Cadets and conservatives may well go together, but this notion needs more evidence, investigation and argument than is produced here.

That aside, this is a book that deserves to find place on the bookshelf of those interested in Australia's military history, as well as on those of educators and other interested readers. I hope it acts as a catalyst for further investigation. ♦

Craig A.J. Stockings, 'The Torch and the Sword: A history of the Army Cadet Movement in Australia', University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2007, casebound and jacketed, 326pp., RRP \$A49.95.



A Critical Vulnerability: The Impact of the Submarine Threat on Australia's Maritime Defence 1915-1954

David Stevens

Reviewed by Richard Pelvin

Given the decline in Australian anti-submarine warfare (ASW) capabilities over the last two decades, and recent acknowledgement that this has probably gone too far, *A Critical Vulnerability* provides most useful background to the original development and later dominance of ASW capabilities in the RAN.

Dr David Stevens is the Director of Strategic and Historical Studies at the Navy's think-tank, the Sea Power Centre – Australia. He is concerned that, despite Australia's ultimate economic dependence on seaborne trade, there has been little or no critical assessment of Australia's efforts at local maritime defence. He notes that while there have been studies of the RAN's campaigns and battles, and academic studies examining social and controversial issues, there is 'no study of the RAN that has yet drawn together the environmental limits that are increasingly considered fundamental to a functional understanding of modern navies'.

Although much defence thinking and debate for over a century has related to potential invasions of Australia, no enemy has seriously considered this. Yet in both world wars enemy forces threatened Australia's maritime trade, especially by submarine attack. The Australian experience of ASW was unique and at its height in World War II involved 'more than a third of the RAN's resources in men and tonnage, yet it has 'never received more than a cursory official study'. Moreover, Australia's response to the submarine was the first 'new capability that the RAN sought to introduce as an independent Service', distinct from its adoption of the traditional fleet and operational concepts of the Royal Navy.

Dr Stevens approaches his subject from a wide perspective, believing that naval policy and naval operations should be seen within a political, economic and technological framework and the constraints this places on naval planners. He describes how ASW challenged the RAN's intellectual development, combining as it does 'the integration of tactical, operational and strategic thought in a manner far in advance of any other area of naval warfare.' It also required integration of inter-Service doctrine and the co-ordination of scientific and industrial effort. The author notes that too little integration was achieved before 1945, demonstrating 'how difficult this was for a small defence force, and [providing] further insights into the domestic and international context of the times.'

ASW required specialised ships, weapons and sensors. Their operation required a high level of specialist training which had to be maintained or effectiveness declined. Shore establishments had to be built to give that training. Others were needed to develop and extend the scientific and technical expertise required to hunt an unseen vessel in three

dimensions. The idiosyncrasies of local waters had to be identified so that equipment could be used with maximum efficiency. Tactics had to be developed, refined and changed as submarine capabilities were extended, especially in the post-war era. The problems of routing and convoying of shipping had to be grappled with, as did the protection of harbours with physical barriers and detection devices. This complex infrastructure required the selection and training of sufficient men in a fleet with many competing requirements, and in a political environment which usually emphasised parsimony.

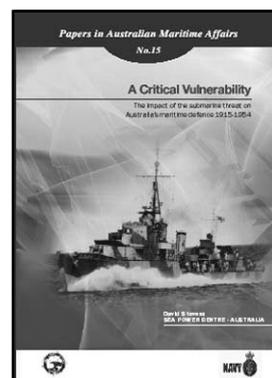
After outlining the first faltering steps taken during World War I, Dr Stevens describes the slow development of ASW expertise in the RAN during the inter-war period. The fledgling anti-submarine branch was not popular and had to compete for scarce resources with the rest of the fleet. Expansion was slow as specialist personnel and equipment (such as Asdic) were hard to come by and expert advice was often contradictory and slow in coming. Submarines were rarely available to use as targets during training and exercises. This vital requirement in training ASW personnel bedevilled the RAN until after World War II when a RN submarine squadron was based in Sydney until 1969. However, as the international strategic situation worsened in the 1930s, the ASW situation slowly improved as more and better equipment became available.

World War II brought rapid expansion of ASW capabilities. Dr Stevens describes the limited nature of early operations and outlines the development of the ASW force and the infrastructure that supported it. He highlights its strengths and weaknesses, especially the deficiencies in inter-Service co-operation caused by differing operational concepts. He provides an excellent critical overview of the Japanese submarine offensives of 1942 and 1943, including the political, economic and operational implications stemming from the introduction of convoying.

Finally, he tells how the lessons of World War II were absorbed and the steady development in ASW until, by 1954, it had become the dominant focus of RAN policy.

A Critical Vulnerability tackles the complexities and nuances of Australian ASW capabilities with insight and expertise. The reader is assisted by the author's clarity of expression, especially his ability to explain technical matters simply so they can be easily comprehended by the layman. The author's assessments of performance, while often critical, are well considered and balanced. The book is supported by many valuable charts and maps as well as ten useful appendices. *A Critical Vulnerability* is a most important addition to recording the RAN's history and is highly recommended. ♦

David Stevens, 'A Critical Vulnerability. The Impact of the Submarine Threat on Australia's Maritime Defence 1915-1954', Sea Power Centre – Australia, Canberra, 2005, Softback, 379pp., Complimentary copies available from the Centre at seapower.centre@defence.gov.au.



Detainee 002: The Case of David Hicks

Leigh Sales

Reviewed by Neil James

Few controversies in Australia in recent years have excited as much argument as the case of David Hicks. But it was not always so. As late as 2004, for example, one editor rejected an ADA opinion article on the unprecedented legal complexities of the Hicks case because 'no-one is interested in David Hicks'. In *Detainee 002* Leigh Sales, the national security correspondent of the ABC since 2006, ably explores why Hicks eventually became such a cause celebre in Australia after such initial public indifference, and even hostility, concerning his fate.

Detainee 002 covers many but not all aspects of a complex story. It overwhelmingly focuses on the human aspects, his potential and then actual trial by a US military tribunal, and whether this was fair or indeed legal. As with most of the public argument about Hicks, on either side, the book tends to obscure or ignore that his detention was an entirely separate legal and practical issue. As a combatant captured in a war Hicks was detained under the laws of armed conflict (LOAC), based on the Hague and Geneva conventions, and was never 'held pending trial' or 'imprisoned without trial'.

Serving and former members of the defence force generally express considerable puzzlement as to why some fellow Australians think that David Hicks should have been treated differently to numerous prisoners-of-war in previous conflicts or, indeed, ADF personnel who might be captured in our current wars. This aspect too is largely uncovered.

Detainee 002 misses that public confusion on this issue largely stemmed from the fact that of the dozen or so Australian lawyers with a good understanding of LOAC, all but two or three wore an ADF uniform (as regulars or reservists) and were largely absent from public debate. Into this vacuum rushed a torrent of well-meaning but usually uninformed civilian human rights lawyers and activists. Almost all had little or no knowledge of, and too often contempt for, the body of specialist international law actually applying to Hicks' detention. They naturally fixated on the unfairness of any separate criminal trial because this was their comfort zone.

Hicks also became an emotional rallying point, especially for those ideologically opposed to the Bush administration and Australia's participation in the Iraq war. Uncomfortable facts were just ignored if they contradicted what people wanted to believe. *Detainee 002* is quite deft at treading around these prejudices and biases, so deft in fact that some commentators unfairly criticised Leigh Sales for being 'too even-handed' in her account. One particularly uncomfortable aspect for some was her telling of the consistent pressure the Howard Government had apparently applied to the Americans to sort the Hicks matter out. Her coverage of American policy

confusion and its bungled execution is also informative and balanced.

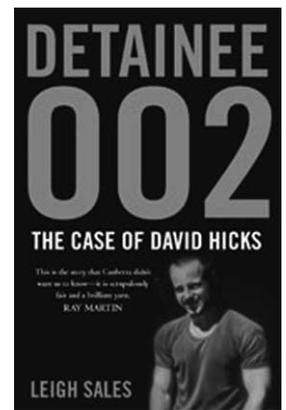
But *Detainee 002* occasionally misses or skates over key points. Sales' discussion of the seminal Hamdan judgement by the US Supreme Court in June 2006 is a good example. In a single, throwaway, introductory line she accurately records that the Court found that the US was engaged in a war and could detain those captured in that war, but that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions consequently applied to them. But the bulk of her discussion then dwells on the Court striking down the original military commissions as unlawful and the results of this, without discussing why it occurred and the full implications really involved. The commissions were principally struck down because they contravened the detainee's protections under the Geneva Conventions. This completely invalidated the common but mistaken cry that those captured were 'illegally detained' and should be freed because this was somehow a type of habeas corpus matter under international civil law.

Detainee 002 was apparently written under some marked handicaps, especially the absence of much input from the Hicks camp. This probably resulted from fears that a detailed and objective story risked undermining their public relations campaign to depict Hicks merely as an innocent naif. Commercial motives regarding future book sales also no doubt played a part. While Sales appears to have spoken to Hicks' first civilian lawyer, Stephen Kenny, there is also little or no first-hand input from his successor, David McLeod, and Hicks' US military lawyer, Major Dan Mori.

Somewhat oddly, there is also no mention at all of the minor role played by the ADA. After Mori first advised that he thought the analysis of the Hicks case on the ADA website was the most substantial public comment he had seen in Australia – although he did not necessarily agree with aspects of it – the Association emphasised that he needed to broaden his client's popular support base outside the traditional Left, including in the legal profession. Others seem to have conveyed the same advice. Kenny was replaced by McLeod (a RAAF reservist) and this helped to take much of the politics out of the legal issues. A well-publicised article in the Summer 2006/07 *Defender*, advocating the release of Hicks on captured combatant parole before the war in Afghanistan ended, also helped neutralise the issue in public debate, as well as helping clear some perceived and actual logjams at political and bureaucratic levels.

Detainee 002 is essential reading for anyone who professes to hold an informed opinion on the case of David Hicks. It is a particularly good account of the human dilemmas involved and the flawed principles and processes applying to his criminal trial by a US military commission. But it is not a definitive stand-alone reference that covers all the legal, political, strategic and moral dilemmas of Hicks' predicament. Its limited understanding and sparse discussion of the separate international law actually applying to Hicks' detention as a captured combatant is particularly disappointing. ♦

Leigh Sales, *'Detainee 002: The Case of David Hicks'*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 2007, Softback, 322pp., RRP \$A32.95.



The Defence Theory of Relativity

Brian Cooper

Reviewed by Dr Mark Thomson

For eight years now, the Australian Defence Force has been busier than at anytime since the late 1960s. As a result, the long-running debate over the size, shape and employment of the ADF has become more active, and in many ways more concrete, than for several decades. It is an important and complex debate, spanning a range of interplaying factors from geopolitics through to the technical details of the military arts and sciences. Brian Cooper's latest book, *The Defence Theory of Relativity*, is a timely and valuable contribution to this debate. Cooper, a retired brigadier, has long been one of the more original and insightful writers on Australian defence and strategic policy, and this book draws together many of the threads of his previous writing.

The Defence Theory of Relativity is essentially a collection of essays, twenty-seven in all, of which three are actual submissions to recent parliamentary inquiries. Collected into four chapters, the essays range from a discussion of the command styles of great generals including Alexander the Great and Hannibal, through to a close examination of the strengths and weaknesses of plans for developing the ADF. Covering such a breadth of material in only 198 pages inevitably means that the many topics are only explored to a limited depth. But what is missing by way of detail, is more than made up for by some fresh and original ideas.

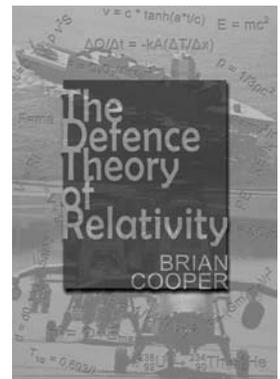
The sheer breadth of material means that individual readers are certain to find something relevant to their interests. I personally found Cooper's discussion of Australia's defence capabilities to be the highlight of the book. Melding together a sound assessment of the emerging strategic demands on the ADF with a concrete understanding of military technology, he delivers a series of arguments that warrant close examination.

On the future Army, Cooper argues for flexibility and adequate firepower to do the job. Usefully, he explores at some length the rationale for, and details of, hardening and networking the land force. Not surprisingly, he also argues for more soldiers. As he says; 'Australian soldiers are great but they are still human – and we need more of them.' On the question of tanks, Cooper is at his best. Using clarity of argument not often encountered in the acrimonious tank debate in Australia, he sets out the case for a purpose-built vehicle equipped with a 35mm cannon that would be lighter than the Abrams main battle tank now entering service.

As a former army aviator, Cooper is well qualified to discuss the development of ADF air capabilities and three essays are devoted to this topic. While all three are worthwhile, two stand out. The first examines, in typically innovative fashion, the potential for transport aircraft to be used as 'transport-bombers' to carry and dispense advanced munitions. Proposed as a complement rather than as a replacement to the currently planned Joint Strike Fighter, transport-bombers would appear to hold the potential to

extend the range and capacity of ADF strike at an affordable cost.

The second deals with the further development of a strategic air-lift capability for the ADF. Although the decision has been taken and the new C-17 strategic airlift aircraft are now entering service, Cooper's analysis of the range of strategic airlift options begs many questions about the rapid decision to acquire the C-17 – a decision that was made behind closed doors with minimal public visibility.



Also included in *The Defence Theory of Relativity* is Cooper's thought provoking submission to the Joint Standing Committee on ADF Regional Air Superiority. Using publicly available information, Cooper succinctly encapsulates the present controversy over the planned purchase of the F-35 Joint Strike Fighter and sets out a series of commonsense questions that are yet to be answered. This is as good an example as any of Cooper's analytic approach. He begins with the strategic basics and then explores the options through an appreciation of the technical characteristics of weapons systems and the practicalities of modern warfare.

In the space available for this review, it is not possible to do justice to each and every one of the topics included in the book. While this review has briefly explored some of the interesting force structure issues that the book covers, it could have equally dwelt on the very original thoughts presented on geopolitics. These include a critical examination of US foreign policy, the consequences of a rising China, and the role of Australia in the regional security order.

There's no escaping the fact that the book adopts an unconventional approach to a number of issues, but that is its strength. While the recent debate on defence and strategic issues in Australian has been active and healthy, it has also been restricted to a limited range of perspectives. Cooper's book opens up the debate and subjects it to some truly original analysis. In doing so, he attacks each issue on its merits and is not afraid to follow arguments to their logical conclusion – even when the endpoint might be an uncomfortable one.

The Defence Theory of Relativity comes well recommended with a foreword by General Peter Cosgrove and chapter introductions by John Essex-Clark, Keith Suter, Jim Wallace and Michael McKinley that set the context for the essays that follow. The book is well set out, tightly edited and illustrated throughout with black and white images.

If you want a book that provides a comforting and tidy explanation of emerging Australian strategic policy and defence planning, this is not the book for you. On the other hand, if you are looking for an original perspective on the challenge of defending Australia in the 21st century, *The Defence Theory of Relativity* would be an excellent place to start. ♦

Brian H. Cooper, *The Defence Theory of Relativity*, Zeus Publications, Burleigh Heads, Australia, 2007, Softback, 198pp., RRP \$433.95.

Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present

Michael B. Oren

A review essay by Ric Smith

If you have ever wondered how and why the United States became so entangled in the Middle East, and why it is that issues so geographically distant from American shores have come to have such an influence on US strategic and foreign policy, then you will surely welcome Michael Oren's *Power, Faith and Fantasy*. And if you have assumed, as Oren says many Americans do, that its been all about the Arab-Israeli conflict and access to oil, and a post World War II phenomena, then this scholarly work will reshape your thinking.

As its subtitle indicates, *Power, Faith and Fantasy* traces the United States' involvement in the Middle East from 1776 to the present. While reminding us that the term "Middle East" was not used until 1902 (and first by that pre-eminent American naval strategist, Admiral Mahan), Oren defines the region as ranging from Morocco to Turkey and Iran. He quickly makes clear that, differences among these countries notwithstanding, from an American point of view the synergies across this broad sweep of geography have always been significant.

From almost the moment when the United States won its independence American merchant ships forfeited the protection of the British navy from attacks by Barbary pirates in the Mediterranean. Oren contends that when delegates met in Philadelphia to draft the US constitution, they were spurred on by the need to confront North Africa. And he notes that when, in 1794, Congress finally voted to create a navy, it was to be one that was "adequate for the protection of the commerce of the United States against Algerian corsairs". Thus the Mediterranean squadron was the new navy's first formation and, now as the Sixth Fleet, is presumably its longest serving.

From there the narrative runs through two centuries in which, it seems, no American President was spared a Middle East crisis of one kind or another. Some sought to be active in the region, others sought to avoid it but had activism forced upon them; few benefited from the experience politically, and several were diminished by it (including in our own times Carter and Bush the younger).

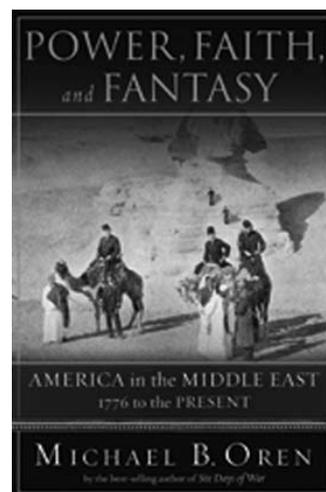
It is to explain this costly fixation that Oren offers the headings 'power', 'faith' and 'fantasy'. The emphasis within the mix varies over time, but the three elements are ever present over the 230 years of his narrative. It was of course with the absence of power – to combat the pirates and their sponsoring kingdoms – that the story began. But the early lessons about the need for a judicious mix of military, diplomatic and financial power were well learned. If power was first used to protect, rescue and evacuate American citizens, it was soon deployed to advance American

commercial interests, and in time of course it came to be used to support the United States' grand global strategies and, eventually, to try to reshape the Middle East in ways friendlier to America.

As to faith, as early as 1819 Protestant missionaries sailed for Palestine with a mix of motives that ranged over time from saving Moslem souls to reasserting a Christian presence in the Holy Land and even to 'restorationism', a project which predated Zionism in aiming to 'promote Jewish colonisation in Palestine'. While remarkably few Moslems were ever converted, the faith imperative nevertheless had a positive legacy in the many American educational institutions that the missionaries established across the Middle East. As late as 1937, Oren tells us, the United States was spending more on education in the Middle East than on drilling or searching for oil. These endeavours in turn supported the grander project of enlightening and democratising the region – a project that endures to this day, with sadly little product.

Under his fantasy rubric, Oren offers a fascinating account of how Americans have for so long been beguiled by romantic notions of the Middle East – tales about the mystical Orient, Arabian nights, the seductive seven veils, Aladdin and his lamps, the colourful *casbahs* and spicy *souks* have persisted in American literature and public perceptions across all but the most recent generations. Travelling writers – Mark Twain, Herman Melville, Lew Wallace (who served as ambassador to Turkey) and Lowell Thomas among them – songsters (*Stranger in Paradise*), exhibitionists and circus performers (*Little Egypt*) all played their parts in developing and sustaining the myths. And of course since the 1930s Hollywood has run a sub-industry in Middle Eastern movies – images of Valentino, Casablanca, Lawrence, and the Biblical blockbusters have been imbued in America's pop culture.

Whether they derive from power, faith or fantasy, it is worth noting here some of the enduring legacies of the American involvement in the Middle East – like the expressions 'manifest destiny' and 'my country right or wrong'. The Statue of Liberty, carved in the likeness of an Egyptian woman, was intended originally to stand at the entrance to the Suez Canal to signify *Egypt Bringing Light*



to Asia, but was brought to New York instead when its Egyptian sponsor was bankrupted. The US Army's Camel Corps, inspired in the Middle East, was shorter-lived, though the American Colony Hotel in Jerusalem has endured, for which many Australians, ADF personnel among them, have had reason to be grateful.

Oren's three explanatory themes apart, several others run through the book. One is what I might call the 'consular theme'. It was, as we have noted, the need to protect Americans abroad that drove much of the early US government involvement in the region, and Oren chronicles just how often over the succeeding two centuries United States power, and especially its military forces, are called on to rescue or evacuate its citizens, albeit often from situations of their own making.

Oren's account reminds us that America's history in the Middle East is replete with incidents of its citizens being seized as hostages or kidnapped. As early as the late 18th Century policy makers were anguishing about whether to pay ransoms: sometimes they did, including with arms that were later used against Americans, sometimes they did not, lives were lost and the Administration duly condemned; sometimes rescues were attempted, though most failed; and often there were demands from an indignant Congress or public for retribution, which was indeed meted out on occasions. The debates on these issues then were not remarkably different from those of today.

If some of the issues of this kind that Oren recounts from the 18th and 19th centuries are redolent of 20th Century experience, so too is the public rhetoric about them in America. The condemnation of North African pirates and their sponsors as 'inhuman' and 'barbaric', and the relating of these characteristics to their Moslem religious beliefs, is almost at one with some of the rhetoric of recent years.

Among the strategic-level themes that weave their way through *Power, Faith and Fantasy* is the continuing Middle Eastern rivalry between the United States and various European powers. For much of the time it is matter of European mercantilism, imperialism and pragmatism being in tension with American idealism, anti-colonialism and support for nationalist movements. We are reminded in this context that, because President Wilson refused to declare war against Turkey in 1917, the United States was excluded from the cynical Anglo-French carve up of the Ottoman Empire that followed the war. Roosevelt took the lesson. In July 1945, he flew directly from Yalta to a meeting with King Saud aboard the *USS Quincy* in the Great Bitter Lake, having told Stalin and (a disquieted) Churchill of his intention only at the last minute. And as late as the early 1950s, Nasser was seen as a friend of Washington, if not its creature, reflecting the different Middle East agendas of the United States on the one hand and the UK and France on the other which culminated in their disastrous split in 1956. Of subsequent trans-Atlantic differences, suffice here to say that they have persisted.

We note also through Oren's account the shifting emphases of American interest. The pursuit of enlightenment which marked the post World War I period and the support

for anti-colonialism and nationalism were still evident in the 1950s, but by the mid 1960s the underlying preoccupation was with the Middle East as a factor in the Cold War (with Israel seen as a Western bulwark against Soviet influence). By the 1980s, and especially following the disaster in Iran in 1979, the perceived conflict between US interests and Islam was emerging as the fixating principle. By the time this view was seemingly validated by the events of 11 September 2001, Arabic – we are told – had replaced Russian as the principal foreign language of the US intelligence agencies.

In all this, we are reminded often that, enmeshing as the Middle East was for US policy makers, there were always many who were ambivalent about aspects of their country's involvement in the Middle East. The State Department's Near East Affairs bureau was notoriously wary, especially about supporting Israel's creation, and many strategists also foresaw the challenges that the creation of Israel would bring. Presidential attitudes have varied too, on this and other issues in the region, but in the end Oren's mix of power faith and fantasy has usually prevailed.

Oren's account of the last 40 years in this intriguing history is necessarily less well supported by official documents, but his chapters on this fraught period remain objective and insightful as well as helpfully succinct. Among other things, he reminds us that for all the United States has invested in plans for a resolution of the Arab-Israeli dispute, in the end the two most productive negotiations – between Sadat and Begin in 1977 and the Oslo process in 1993 – were both undertaken without American involvement until Carter and Clinton, respectively, were called on to provide ceremonial endorsements of their outcomes.

What lessons might Australians take from Oren's impressive work? The first is a sound understanding of what drives American policy makers' preoccupation with the Middle East and an acceptance that, frustrating as that might be for those who would hope to see Washington focus more on other parts of the world, there is a reality that is undeniable – and unlikely to change. The second is that, try as we have at different times over the past fifty years, even we cannot turn our backs on the Middle East. History records how often we have deployed our forces there. And while east of Bombay the guns have been silent for a generation now, the region from Pakistan to the Mediterranean will remain for generations to come a cauldron in which security issues of global import will continue to boil.

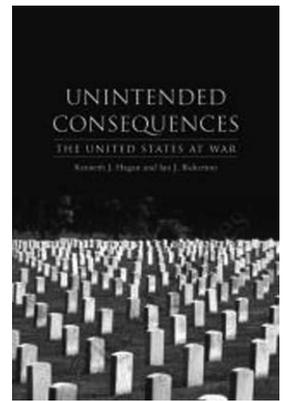
The quality of the Jerusalem-based Oren's research is reflected in his 80 pages of endnotes and his 48-page bibliography. Yet his book, informative and insightful as it is, remains eminently readable, detracted from not at all by his arresting use of arcane words like purlieu, steeve, adipose, irrefragable and ursine. ♦

Michael B. Oren *'Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East 1776 to the Present'*, W.W. Norton & Company, New York, casebound and jacketed, 775pp., RRP \$US35.00.

Unintended Consequences: The United States at War

Kenneth Hagan and Ian Bickerton

Reviewed by Jamie Cullens



With our current engagement in several overseas theatres of operation it is worth reflecting on Thucydides' comment that war 'is the last of all things to go according to programme'. Or Liddell Hart's remark that the 'idea that every war has been different from the last is the delusion of those who know no history'. *Unintended Consequences* pursues these themes. It can be a depressing narrative but once started it is hard to put down.

Kenneth Hagan hails from the US Naval War College and Annapolis, and Ian Bickerton from the Department of History at the University of New South Wales. They are well qualified to tackle this difficult but important subject and they ask challenging questions. Many of their ideas in the book were subsequently tested on students at the US Naval Postgraduate School.

As the current war in Iraq rolled into months and then years it became clear to the authors that the conflict has led to a large number of 'unintended and catastrophic consequences'. The provocative cover picture of the rows of headstones at Arlington National Cemetery, still increasing by the week, unfortunately suggests that things will remain the same for some time to come.

Unintended Consequences is a concise history 'offered as a cautionary tale for those who would rush to arms in order to solve unpleasant problems'. The authors claim that the US has been involved in more than 250 overseas military engagements since 1775 and examine ten American wars ranging from the so-called 'War of Independence' (which initially wasn't) to the continuing war in Iraq.

The book covers the US experience of war over more than 200 years in a compelling and fact-packed manner. It includes chapters on the Mexican war of 1846-1848, the 1898 war with Spain as well as the more familiar Civil War, World Wars, Korea and Vietnam. The authors outline the background to each conflict and then discuss the progress of each war, before finally presenting a section on their assessment of its unintended consequences.

At a time when Clausewitz is back in fashion, particularly in US professional military writing, Hagan and Bickerton develop the thesis 'that every US war transformed the national policies that led into the war'. The authors proceed to tackle Clausewitz's dictum that 'war is merely the continuation of policy by other means,' arguing that war produces new policy and the consequences are long term. They argue that not only was Clausewitz wrong but that he was 'seriously wrong'. The aim is to promote discussion and they focus on the malignant effects of war whilst recognising that war has also transformed the United States in positive ways.

The chapter on the war against Mexico is a fascinating story of the first war fought by the US on foreign soil and

the authors argue that its conduct resonates with the ongoing fight in Iraq. They note that proportionally it was the deadliest war ever fought by the US, with nearly 12,000 casualties at a cumulative mortality rate of 153.5 per thousand troops each year, compared to the US Civil War which had only 98 per thousand.

They argue that the war against Spain, which ranged from Cuba to the Philippines, resembles Iraq more than any other war. It was started to bring about a change in regime and to bring democracy to an oppressed people, and there was a strong moral righteousness in the war rhetoric at presidential level. Many of the operations were joint-Service in nature. The conventional fight was never in doubt but it soon degenerated into a brutal counter-insurgency, with atrocities and torture committed on a large scale by both sides (and some perpetrated by US commanders at the brigadier-general level). Sound familiar? The consequences of the war would manifest themselves for more than a hundred years and one was the acquisition by perpetual lease of Guantanamo Bay by the US.

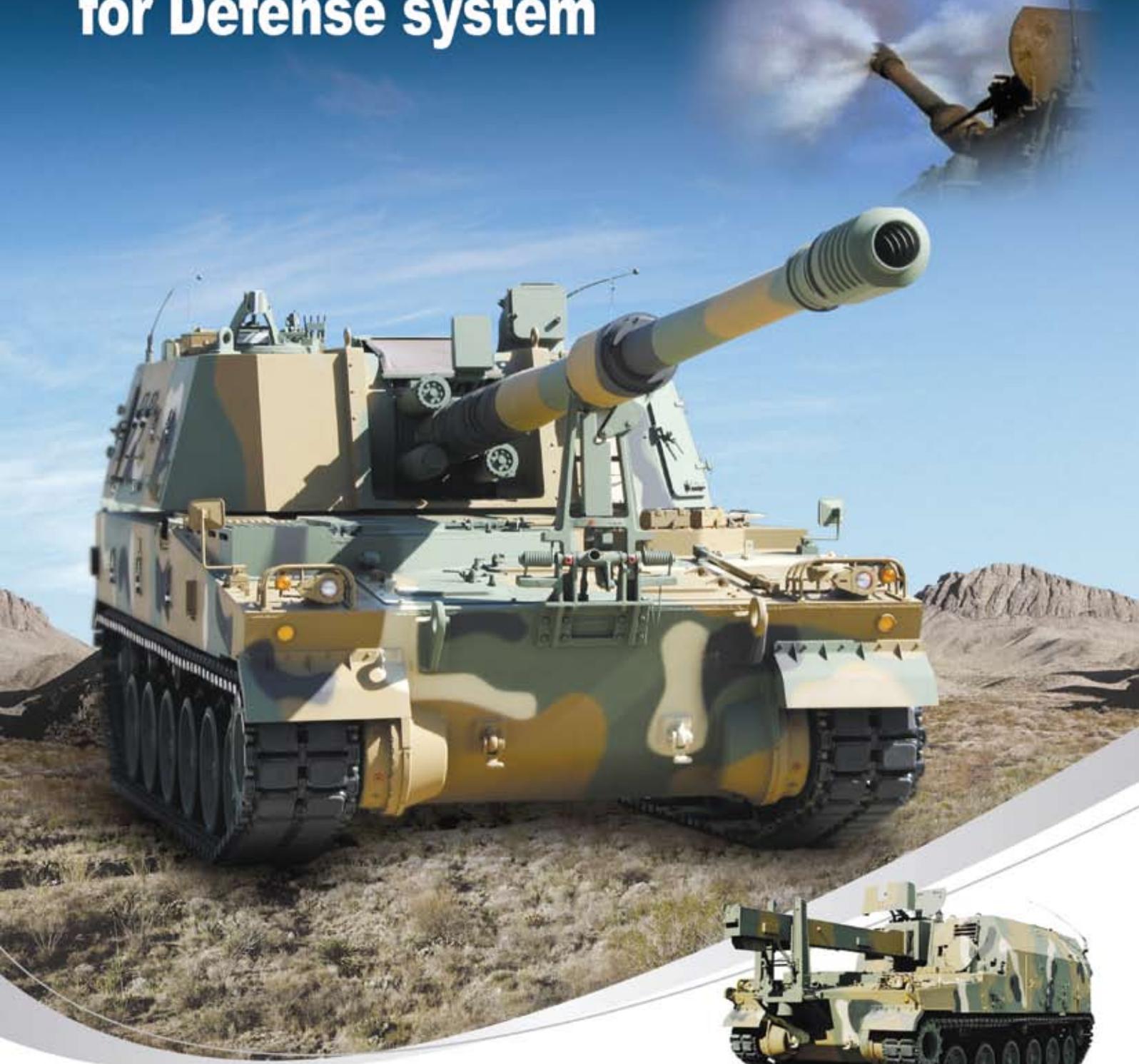
Defence Update 2007 remarks that the 'stakes are high in Iraq and Afghanistan, not only for the peace and stability of those countries, but also because the outcome will influence how the United States uses its power in the future to deal with security challenges' – such as Iran, Pakistan and perhaps China. Australians probably didn't expect to have to go back into East Timor in force in May 2006 or return our Special Forces to Afghanistan, after only a short break, in May 2007. There is little doubt that we too will be dealing with unintended consequences of these actions for years to come.

You may not agree with all of the arguments in the sections on unintended consequences but this does not diminish from the overall impact of the book. *Unintended Consequences* is essential reading for national decision-makers and professional military education courses. It is also very good book for the general reader, being clear, concise, well-written and including good notes and a comprehensive bibliography. It does need some maps, particularly to illustrate some of the lesser known conflicts. ♦

Kenneth J. Hagan and Ian J. Bickerton, 'Unintended Consequences: The United States at War', Reaktion Books, London, 2007, Casebound and jacketed, 224pp., RRP \$A49.05. Distributed in Australia by Footprint Books.

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