Reshaping the Australian Army: Challenges for the 1990s

David Horner Editor
RESHAPING
THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY:
CHALLENGES FOR THE 1990s

David Horner
Editor

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Commander of the 1st Brigade, Brigadier Frank
Hickling, discusses the earthquake relief operation in
Newcastle with Police rescue squad members and Local
Member, Mr George Keegan. More than 120 1st Brigade
soldiers travelled from their Holsworthy base to
Newcastle to join with Police and State Emergency
Service workers in rescue and clean-up operations.
ABSTRACT

This monograph contains a collection of papers prepared by academic defence experts for the Directorate of Army Studies, Department of Defence, with an Introduction by Lieutenant General H.J. Coates, Chief of the General Staff. Written against the background of current Defence policy, the first paper reviews the relevance of land forces in the defence of Australia in the 1990s, develops operational concepts, and makes recommendations on the structure and capabilities the Army will require to undertake its primary roles. The second paper provides an alternative approach to structuring the Army. It examines Australia’s defence posture, its strategic circumstances, and its capacity to support current strategic guidance, and concludes with a defence posture involving new ground force structure and roles. The final paper assesses Australian public perceptions of its Army, and examines how these perceptions arose and how they might change (or be changed) in the future.
Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence are a series of monograph publications which arise out of the work of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, The Australian National University. Previous Canberra Papers have covered topics such as the relationship of the superpowers, arms control at both the superpower and South-east Asian regional level, regional strategic relationships and major aspects of Australian defence policy. For a list of those still available refer to the last pages of this volume.

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The views expressed in this publication are those of the authors, and not necessarily those of either the Minister for Defence or the Department of Defence.
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Dr Stewart Woodman is a Senior Research Fellow in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC), Australian National University. Before joining SDSC, he had served for ten years in the strategic and international policy areas of the Department of Defence, acting as the Assistant Secretary, Strategic Policy and Planning for extended periods. His work involved analysing Australia’s strategic environment and providing policy advice on Defence Force capabilities and operational concepts, major exercises and Australia’s strategic relationship with other countries. He prepared a wide range of Ministerial and Defence presentations, including to Parliamentary committees, and in 1989 was detached as a member of a small team drafting the new Defence strategic review. Dr Woodman’s current research interests include Australia’s defence strategy, the nature of lower level conflicts, and regional security in the post-Cold War era.
INTRODUCTION

Lieutenant General H.J. Coates, AO, MBE
Chief of the General Staff

The Directorate of Army Studies provides corporate level
decision support to me as Chief of the General Staff (CGS) through the
conduct of analytical studies of complex or long term issues which are
beyond the scope of functional branches or staff divisions of the Army.

The Directorate canvasses a very wide range of views by doing
its own research, seeking help from other Government Departments
and by using external academic and research agencies. Its charter
includes the following tasks:

- to develop strategies for advancing and fostering
  awareness in the wider community regarding the roles
  and functions of the Army in national security;

- to undertake long range forecasting and planning by
  examining trends across a wide range of societal and
  other relevant issues and analysing their future effect
  on the Army; and

- to examine current processes and procedures within
  the Army and recommend improvements where
  appropriate.

In line with the first of these tasks, we in Army have noted the
increased public questioning of the relevance of armed forces and a
corresponding rise in demands for greater public accountability of
defence expenditure, which have become a feature of most Western
societies over the last decade. At the same time there appears to be a
decreasing level of public understanding of the roles and tasks of
defence forces, particularly where the level of perceived threat is low.
Similar public attitudes are present in Australia.

The establishment and maintenance of a well-informed,
interested and committed public is an essential prerequisite to the
development of robust Australian defence forces, particularly land
forces, appropriate to the perceived needs of the country. Without this
public involvement, the risk of decisions based on short term
2 Reshaping the Australian Army

considerations is greatly increased, especially in a climate of economic restraint. In contemporary society the ADF has a clear responsibility to facilitate public awareness where possible.

Army accepts its responsibility to make a positive contribution to inform the public. And, it is developing a long term information strategy aimed at improving the public’s knowledge of the Army, its roles and methods of operation.

A necessary precursor to this strategy has been the development of a basic understanding of:

- the likely structure and methods of operation of the Army in the future, and
- the current external and internal perceptions of the Army.

Only then can judgements be made as to how best to align perceptions to the Army of the future, and prepare an information strategy to maintain public awareness of any changes and their effects.

The first objective - the Army of the future - is largely judgemental and a wide range of opinion has been sought in order to develop an objective view of the Army Australia will need well into the next century. The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at the Australian National University (ANU) was asked to prepare a paper on the relevance of land forces in light of the defence strategy detailed in the Government White Paper, The Defence of Australia 1987. The Peace Research Centre at the ANU was tasked to examine future tasking of the land forces, with the caveat that it could include strategies other than those detailed in DOA 87. These two ‘opposite end’ views from academic strategists will be compared with views extant within the Department of Defence to develop a vision of the Army.

The second objective - an examination of perceptions - is largely factual, being based on polls and questionnaires. It has sought to examine the nature and basis of current public perceptions of the Army. External perceptions of the Army are detailed in a paper commissioned by Army and prepared by the Australian Defence Studies Centre at the Australian Defence Force Academy. This paper provides an historical context for public perceptions, details the
dominant perceptions within the nation and provides guidance on which perceptions seem immutable or, which might, where appropriate, be modified through an information strategy. The perceptions of Army’s own workforce have been gained by an analysis of the soldier opinion and attitude surveys conducted by Army.

The third part of the examination is the matching of perceptions to the Army as it is now and as it will be in the future. In this process, misconceptions can be identified and, where practicable, strategies developed for their correction.

The three papers in this volume are those prepared outside the Department of Defence in support of the first and second parts of this task. They are published in the interest of informed defence debate. In particular, the reader should note that the papers represent the views of their authors; not of the Army nor, more especially, of the Australian Government. This is much more than a ritual disclaimer. One has only to compare the prognostications of so-called experts as to the likely course of the recent Gulf War to realise that strategic and defence analysis is anything but an exact science. Nevertheless, there is strength and value in the concentrations of insights which independent and diverse analysts, like the group represented here, bring to this complex subject.
PART 1
LAND FORCES IN THE DEFENCE
OF AUSTRALIA

Stewart Woodman and
David Horner
The aim of this paper is to review the relevance of land forces in the defence of Australia and its interests in the 1990s and to make recommendations on the structure and capabilities they would require to undertake their primary roles.

The review takes as its starting point the Government's defence and wider security policies laid down in *The Defence of Australia 1987* policy information paper and Senator Evans' ministerial statement on *Australia's Regional Security*. It does not, however, accept either those policies or the present structure and capabilities of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) land force as in any way immutable. The study reviews the origins of, and rationale for, those policies and capabilities and the range of factors which will affect these in the coming decade. These include the changing strategic environment, the nature of possible contingencies both within Australia and overseas, the relationship between land and maritime forces, resource pressures and the impact of other recent reviews of defence planning. As background to this examination it compares the ADF's role and size to that of land forces in other countries, and discusses the role, development and capability of the Australian Army.

Where the review is different from other recent studies of defence capabilities is that it not only examines in detail the roles which land forces may be required to undertake but also seeks to develop operational concepts which the ADF might employ in pursuing these. The need for this type of planning was identified by Paul Dibb in his *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities* and has been receiving considerable attention within the Defence organisation. The advantage of this approach is that judgements about the nature and level of land forces' capabilities are made against strategies which exploit the strengths and weaknesses of our own strategic situation rather than concepts adopted from other tactical environments.

The review also seeks to be realistic in terms of the current and prospective resources likely to be available to Army. While it does not consider itself constrained to make recommendations which can be achieved within the level of resources currently devoted to defence, a key objective has been to ensure that ADF land forces are in a position to make the most effective and cost efficient use of available resources. In part at least, this has been achieved by giving the ADF far greater
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flexibility in the time scales within which, and the levels at which, various force elements need to be readied and deployed.

The conclusions do not, except in two specific areas, recommend substantial enhancement of the Land Force’s existing capabilities. They do suggest that there is a need to rethink significantly the ways in which certain force elements and capabilities are used and the linkages between them. They also seek to maximise the effectiveness of available manpower — long considered the Achilles’ heel of effective land force operations — and to give the ADF (rather than the adversary) greater control over the conduct of operations.

THE ROLE OF AUSTRALIAN LAND FORCES

It is a curious fact of Australian history that, although the country is an island, land forces have always figured prominently in its defence plans, and have played the largest and most influential role in the wars in which it has been involved. In part this reflects the fact that Australia itself, as an island continent, enjoys a significant degree of natural protection due to its isolation and extensive maritime surrounds and that most military campaigns for the Australian defence force have been fought in areas distant from our shores. It also reflects, however, the way in which Australia has perceived both its own security requirements and its obligations to allies. The role which defence planners saw for land forces, and their importance relatively to the other services, has in fact varied considerably over the past 90 years. Not least this has been because Australia did not have, until quite recently, a strategy for independent defence and relied upon others to meet at least some of its defence needs. In the period before the First World War the government realised the need for Australia to have its own navy, and defence was to be assured by a balance of relying on Britain’s extensive maritime power, providing a small local navy, and developing the capacity to raise a large part-time army for self-defence.

Although Australia sent a large volunteer army overseas to fight in the First World War, the defence of Australia was still seen to be provided by the same balance of Empire, Navy and militia. Japan
was nominally an ally, but a potential enemy, and hence Australian naval and military forces were sent to secure German territories in New Guinea, as much to forestall the Japanese as to eliminate possible danger from the small German forces there. But Australia obtained its chief security through its role in the Empire, and this was paid for by the contribution made by its Navy and Army. Because the war in Europe was overwhelmingly a land war, and Australia could more easily raise large land forces than naval forces, it was through the Army that Australia made its prominent contribution.

After the First World War, Australian defence policy still revolved around the balance of Empire, Navy and militia. The newly-formed Air Force rarely figured in the equation, although by the 1930s some politicians were claiming that Australia could be defended by a capable air force. There were insufficient funds for any service to be developed properly. A small compact Navy was maintained, but the Army was still based on the militia (Citizen Military Forces — CMF). The Army doubted the wisdom of relying on Empire and wanted to prepare for the land defence of Australia. The government relied on Empire, and on the outbreak of the Second World War Australia again paid for imperial defence by contributing forces for action overseas. Australia did not have the industrial capacity to produce larger numbers of ships or aircraft within a short time frame and it proved easier to raise large land forces. These played a prominent role in the Middle East fighting.

The war in the Pacific changed the equation. The loss of Singapore and the decline in British naval power revealed the fragility of continuing to rely on imperial defence. Ultimately, Australia would receive help from the United States, but until this help materialised, for the first time Australia contemplated a direct threat to its shores. Force of circumstance gave the emphasis to the Army. In part this reflected the need to defend an extensive coastline against rapidly approaching ground forces, but it was also the only service that could be expanded rapidly. When the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) lost a number of major ships in action they could not easily be replaced, and the expansion of the Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was hindered by the difficulty of obtaining modern planes from USA. The counter-offensive against the Japanese conducted by General MacArthur was an impressive orchestration of the power of the three services, but
again the major Australia role was carried by the Army. The naval and air forces were mainly provided by the USA.

The lessons of the Second World War were not lost on the post-war planners. Whereas previously the equation had been Empire, Navy and militia, now it became the US alliance, Navy, Regular Army, CMF and Air Force. In the past Australia had paid for imperial defence with large land forces; it was now realised that Australia’s defence and its ability to support allies would depend on a more balanced force. If time and circumstances allowed, it was still considered that the Army contribution would be built up by mobilising the CMF. But the post-war conflicts did not warrant this mobilisation and Australia’s contribution to its alliance commitments was carried by the permanent forces. Even among the regular forces, however, the nature of the wars in which Australia became involved in the 1950s and 1960s — Korea, Malaya, Confrontation and Vietnam — meant that the Army played the most prominent role. In the case of Vietnam, the Army contribution was maintained by conscription. Despite the fact that the Australian Regular Army carried the chief burden of these alliance commitments, throughout the period it did not comprise an unusually large proportion of the armed services.

Australia’s contribution to these overseas wars was driven, in part at least, by the belief that Australia could not defend itself and that it was necessary to contribute in other theatres to ensure future help from its alliance partners. Parallel to this was the policy often described as ‘forward defence’, in which an enemy, who might in due course threaten Australia, was best dealt with as far away from Australia as possible. It was not expected that enemies like Germany in both world wars, North Korea, North Vietnam or the Malayan Communists would directly threaten Australia, but it was assessed at the time that their ultimate success would lessen Australian security. In 1942 the Japanese directly threatened Australia, and troops were deployed forward to Malaya, Timor, Ambon, New Guinea and New Caledonia to preserve forward bases and keep the enemy as far from Australian soil as possible.

The end of the Vietnam War, Britain’s withdrawal from East of Suez and President Nixon’s Guam statement led in due course to Australia’s policy of self-reliance in an alliance framework. The Vietnam experience made ‘forward defence’ an unpopular policy, but
as the 1970s progressed it became clear that the end of European colonies in Australia’s region and the improving strategic situation also made ‘forward defence’ less necessary. But when the new defence policy was spelt out in the 1976 White Paper it did not allocate clear roles to each service; generally the relative strengths of the three services remained unchanged. The following table shows the ratio of the strengths of the three services since the forces were re-structured after the Second World War.

Table 1: Ratios of the Strengths of the
Three Australian Services, 1947-1990

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Year</th>
<th>RAN</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>RAAAF</th>
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<td></td>
<td>Reg</td>
<td>Reg+Res</td>
<td>Reg</td>
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<td>1947 Defence</td>
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<tr>
<td>policy plans</td>
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<td>—</td>
<td>1.8</td>
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<tr>
<td>1950</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1951</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
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<td>1960</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>1965</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.3</td>
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<td>1</td>
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<td>1975</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1980</td>
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<tr>
<td>1985</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
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* Figures in brackets if national servicemen are not included.
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Despite some fundamental changes in Australia's strategic outlook the balance has changed little over a period of forty years. The only major change is that the CMF or Army Reserve is somewhat smaller than was contemplated in 1947. In total size, the regular forces have almost doubled since 1950— from 34237 to 67841 in 1990. There has been, however, and continues to be, debate on the size of the Army both in absolute terms and in relation to the size and capability requirements of the other services.

THE ROLE AND STRUCTURE OF LAND FORCES

Before attempting to examine the validity of Army's current strength and capabilities, it will be useful to examine the role that land forces have traditionally played around the world. If we can determine the conditions which have guided the role of land forces in the strategic concepts of a range of countries we will be better equipped to determine the role of land forces in Australia in the present and future.

Land forces (and indeed naval and air forces) are determined by a nation's strategy. It has been argued that strategy can be viewed from the point of view of five schools of strategic thought: continental, maritime, aerospace, revolutionary and nuclear. Viewing strategy from this perspective presents the danger of seeing each school in isolation, whereas in reality the theories do not stand alone. Nevertheless, the advantage of the approach is that it reflects the historical development of strategic theory; the theories provide the *raison d'être* of the various branches of the military forces, and the underlying assumptions of the five schools of strategic thought can be

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1 These statistics are based on various editions of the *Defence Report*, produced annually by the Department of Defence. The statistics are not meant to indicate that the Army is, for example, twice as important as the Navy. Rather, the statistics show that in 1985 the Army was considered to be as important *vis a vis* the Navy as in 1975 or 1960.

found in actual strategies pursued around the world. While few nations may have consciously followed one or other of these schools of strategic thought in developing their armed forces, they will frequently have drawn upon the same precedents and applied them to their own particular circumstances. The comparison is particularly important in Australia's context because, while Australia is an island, it also has a very large land mass and its defence forces have most often fought in distant locations with armies and in environments influenced by different strategic factors.

Continental School

There are few actual definitions of the continental school. Although it is deliberately oversimplified, John Collins' definition in his book Grand Strategy is useful:

Land power proponents, the direct strategic descendants of Clausewitz, tend to compartmentalize the globe into separate theatres. They are committed to the conviction that the destruction of enemies' armies is the ultimate object of war. Navies and air forces exist primarily to transport troops to the scene of the action and support them after they get there. Land power will force a decision leading to lasting control, by physical occupation of enemy territory, if necessary.3

Land forces have always had the central role in warfare, and it is not surprising that the continental school was the first to be articulated. Although war is almost as ancient as mankind, modern national war as we know it owes its origins to the wars of the late eighteenth century and the early nineteenth century. From this era patterns developed which have persisted to the present day, and the requirements of continental strategy have been the driving force behind the development of most of the world's armies.

A nation does not usually decide to pursue a continental strategy; it is forced into it by its geographic situation. Thus if a nation has a long, exposed land border with a potential foe it has little option but to find ways to mass sufficient soldiers on its border to deal with the threat. Although the over-riding factor in continental strategy is geography, the force structure derived from that strategy is also determined by demographic and politico-strategic factors.

Continental strategy is marked by four main characteristics. Firstly, big wars; there is something more irrevocable about sending an army across a frontier than conducting an isolated air raid or sinking a ship. Continental strategy involves a large number of men and the resources of the entire nation. And when troops are lodged on a foreign territory the war is difficult to terminate short of one side crushing the other.

The second characteristic is that continental strategy is manpower intensive — it usually involves mass armies. Maritime countries might be able to afford the luxury of a small, highly trained, well-paid volunteer army. But continental countries usually require some form of national service or conscription to provide the large numbers of men necessary to defend their borders or to wage offensive warfare. In this respect, most continental armies use three concepts: conscription, mobilisation of reserves, and home guards.

Even these conscript armies are generally not large enough, and most continental armies rely on reserves either to supplement their regular forces or to form the bulk of their army on mobilisation. Conscription is designed not only to bolster the standing army, but to provide the trained manpower for the reserves. Mobilisation schemes are vital to the prosecution of continental war, and even when there is no conscription, reserves are necessary to bolster the regular army. In addition to these forces, most continental armies make use of home guards or regional forces with an integral role in their concept of operations.

The third characteristic of continental strategy is offensive action. Germany determined that the key to success was to conduct

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4 The characteristics have been described in detail in D.M. Horner, ‘The Continental School of Strategic Thought’, in Defence Force Journal, (No.82), May/June 1990.
rapid offensives to prevent a long-drawn-out war of attrition, and as a consequence developed the concept of the blitzkrieg. This idea has been taken up by almost all continental countries that have waged war against their neighbour.

It is interesting to speculate as to whether there is any offensive concept for continental warfare that is not based on the blitzkrieg. One possibility is a slow war of attrition, aimed at wearing down the morale and resources of the enemy. There are few, if any, examples of this strategy being employed successfully by the initiator of a war in modern times. Another possibility is if two neighbouring countries had people of the same ethnic group, one country might encourage an insurrection against the neighbouring government in the hope that it could detach part of the neighbour’s territory. Alternatively, it might aim to overthrow the neighbouring country’s government and replace it with one more amenable to its wishes.

The fourth characteristic of continental strategy is the importance of alliances or coalitions. Nations enter alliances to off-set perceived weaknesses.

Taking into account these four broad characteristics of continental strategy, it is necessary to consider some of the concepts which might be applied in continental warfare, and outline some forces structure implications. A blitzkrieg strategy depends on effective offensive operations, and the key to successful offensive operations is manoeuvre. Countries which intend to conduct offensive operations usually structure their forces to include large numbers of tanks, armoured personnel carriers, self-propelled guns, helicopters and ground attack aircraft. There has been a gradual tendency to try to give the complete combat team the same mobility and protection as the tank. There are some analysts who consider that the main battle helicopter will become the armoured vehicle of the future. While armoured fighting vehicles are the traditional means of achieving manoeuvre within a theatre, other means include helicopters, fixed-wing aircraft, parachutes and amphibious warfare ships.

Although the continental school is built around offensive land operations, countries threatened by the possibility of a powerful land attack have been forced to undertake a range of defensive measures. Historically these have included pre-emptive strike, mobile defence, guerilla warfare, deep area defence, forward defence (of which the Maginot Line was an extreme example) and containment followed by a counter-offensive. One feature of continental strategy is that many smaller countries simply do not have the capacity to defend themselves against a large continental neighbour.

Defensive measures might sometimes hold a continental aggressor at bay, but they rarely win the war if one breaks out. In the long run the defender has to mount his own counter-offensive, or in other words mount his own version of a blitzkrieg.

In summary, in its historical context, the continental school of strategic thought was concerned with the preparation for and the waging of an offensive war to defeat the neighbouring country's army and thus its ability to wage war. In more recent times it has involved not only the waging of war by land forces across a land frontier, but the deployment of forces to prevent such wars. Short of a nuclear attack, invasion by ground forces is the greatest threat faced by any country. In most countries that threat is the driving force in the structuring of their defence forces. The resulting force structures are marked by conscription, mobilisation plans, reserves and home guards, all aimed at producing large numbers of soldiers in a relatively short time. In considering some of the concepts that might be used it was noted that blitzkrieg is the dominant offensive strategy relying on well-planned offensive operations, while there are a variety of defensive strategies and concepts.

Most countries structure their armed forces for a continental type war. Table 2 compares the numbers of personnel in each service of a selection of countries and shows the relative importance placed on the respective services.6

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### Table 2: Ratios of the Strengths of the Services in Selected Countries Employing a Continental-type Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Navy</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>SRF*</th>
<th>Air Def</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.5</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>.86</td>
<td>.84</td>
<td>1.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany (FRG 1990)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.6</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17.6</td>
<td>3.6</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.5</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>59.8</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>16.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>24.0</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* Strategic Rocket Force.

Two important trends are obvious. Firstly, the regular land forces are very much larger than the regular naval forces; and secondly, once reserves are included the land forces are larger still. The ratios of regular to conscript within the armed forces of each country are: USSR, 1:62; France, 1:51; Germany, 1:4; Israel, 1:78; Egypt, 1:56, and India does not need conscripts.
Maritime Strategy

Although most land forces are structured according to the requirements of continental strategy, some land forces have been strongly influenced by the maritime school of strategic thought. Modern maritime strategy was first articulated by Alfred Thayer Mahan, who argued that nations like Britain and the United States relied on commerce for their wealth. To protect their trade the nations needed to ‘control the seas’. By way of evidence Mahan looked to the role of the Royal Navy in the maintenance of the British Empire.

In the British Empire the army had two roles: maintenance of order in the colonies, and securing naval bases around the world. Traditionally a maritime state has been defined as ‘a nation whose interests are centred on overseas trade, possessions, and dependencies and not on any continental land mass’. Potential conflicts are generally limited in size and scale and tend to be about specific issues rather than the survival of the nation. There is a free enterprise ethic, democratic government and a relatively small, volunteer army. The nation depends on its navy to control the surrounding home waters and to protect its oceanic trade routes. Britain and the United States are modern examples. By contrast, the traditional continental power has an authoritarian government and a large conscript army. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union are modern examples. But in reality many democratic countries follow a continental strategy.

Even the great maritime powers, Britain and the United States, have found it impossible to apply a strictly maritime strategy. During the First World War Britain found that it had to send a land force to continental Europe if it was to defeat Germany, and both Britain and the United States found that the situation applied again in the Second World War. In subsequent years the United States has had the option of following either a maritime or a continental strategy. Despite its huge navy, the United States has usually employed a continental strategy. In the early 1980s a considerable debate developed in defence circles in the United States over the most appropriate strategy for the coming decade. Essentially there were two schools of strategic thought, the maritime and the continental. The Reagan

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Administration tried to pursue both strategies, but only a country with the immense resources of the United States could afford to do so. An island country like Britain, with overseas commitments and responsibilities, may retain many of the characteristics of a maritime-oriented defence force, but most of its army is structured for continental war in Europe.

Japan is another country that during this century has had the option of pursuing a maritime or a continental strategy. Since the end of the Second World War, the Japanese constitution has banned the deployment of forces overseas, and the Japanese strategy to counter direct aggression is based on three concepts: air defence operations, measures to combat a landing, and steps to secure the safety of maritime traffic. Emphasis is given to maritime and airspace surveillance, air defence and sea denial. A land force is maintained to deter airborne or seaborne assaults and to cope with landing forces.8

According to the criteria for a maritime power described earlier, Australia falls in the category of a maritime power. Throughout its history, however, Australia has frequently defined its strategic interests in terms other than the direct defence of the nation and, even when facing a specific threat the maritime force has been largely provided by its allies. When there has been a maritime threat, such as the one posed by Japan from 1905 to 1945, Australia followed a maritime approach to its defence. However, in the 1930s the Australian Army doubted the reliability of maritime defence and pushed for a larger army to allow for the continental defence of Australia. And where Australia considered that its own broader security interests and those of its allies were threatened by a continental power, it joined with its allies in their efforts to defeat those enemies in their own land. Thus substantial forces were sent to fight Germany in France in the First World War. Land and air forces confronted the Axis continental forces in Europe and the Middle East in the Second World War. Land forces were deployed to Southeast Asia to help stem the 'downward thrust of communism', in the 1950s and 1960s.

Historically, the Australian Army has had many of the characteristics of a continental army. By 1918 the Australian Corps was a highly effective contributor to the Allies’ continental forces. But in the Middle East in the Second World War Australia’s capable infantry divisions needed the support of British armoured formations, British logistics and the Royal Air Force. When Australia faced the threat of invasion in 1942 and lacked the support of large and capable maritime forces it raised over 12 divisions for continental defence. Some of these forces, such as armoured and motorised divisions, were not suitable for use in MacArthur’s operations against Japan. However, by 1943 Australia has three infantry divisions in action simultaneously in New Guinea in support of MacArthur’s essentially maritime strategy.

The experience of the Second World War brought about a change in outlook. Since that time, the Australian services have had a typical maritime-type structure in that the Army has been small in size and, except for a short period, comprised of volunteers. The table shown earlier demonstrates that since the Regular Army was formed in 1948 it has usually has had only twice the numbers of the Navy and, even during the conscription period, it never reached three times the strength of the Navy. If the ratios of the three services are considered, it can be seen that Australia has maintained a well-balanced force — not one that is suitable for large continental-type wars.

Nevertheless, it might be argued that for most of its existence the Australian Army has demonstrated, and in some respects continues to demonstrate, a continental strategy ethos. Throughout the inter-war period the Army’s leaders, both regular and militia, were guided by the memory of the First World War, and these attitudes persisted in the early part of the Second World War when plans were afoot to raise an Anzac Army in the Middle East. Despite the fact that MacArthur’s strategy was maritime in nature, Australia provided such a large land force that the maritime character of the war was masked.

The composition of Australia’s post-war services shows that the need for a more balanced force was recognised, but when Australia was committed yet again to a different and distant strategic context in

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the Korean War the continental ethos resurfaced in the Army. During the war it took part in large-scale conventional operations. Meanwhile back in Australia defence plans envisaged that in the event of a full-scale war Australia would provide several divisions to operate with allied land forces.\(^{10}\) Similarly, our naval and air forces would operate with the sister services of our allies. It was not envisaged that the Australian services would operate as a small, compact joint force.

These attitudes were reinforced by the commitments to Malaya, Malaysia and Vietnam where, in each case, the Australian services usually operated apart from each other and within the framework of the larger allied forces. The result of this experience was that while the services as a whole had the characteristics of a maritime force, the Army maintained the ethos of a continental force.

Table 3: Ratios of the Strengths of the Services in Selected Countries Employing a Maritime-type Strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Navy, incl. Coast Guard</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Marines</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USA: Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>.94</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United Kingdom:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.7</td>
<td>1.6</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.6</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.4</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>1.7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canada:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.5</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{10}\) See next section; p.36.
22 Reshaping the Australian Army

Table 3 shows the relative importance placed on the respective services by selected maritime-type countries. In every case the land forces are proportionally smaller than those in the table of continental countries. Only the USA and Canada have, proportionally, a smaller land force than Australia, and the land force figure for Canada is artificially low as Canada’s unified structure means that traditionally large army units such as logistics and communications are not listed as land forces. It should also be noticed that not one of the countries listed uses conscripts.

Revolutionary School

The other school of strategic thought with possible relevance to Australia is the revolutionary school. Many countries in the Third World have armed forces that owe their origins to the school of revolutionary warfare, or wars of national liberation. Countries with armed forces that originated as liberation armies include the People’s Republic of China, Vietnam, Indonesia and Zimbabwe (partly). There are also liberation armies that have not yet achieved their aim, such as the forces of the Palestine Liberation Organisation and the Irish Republican Army. Numerous countries have structured their armed forces specifically to maintain internal order and to counter possible revolutions. Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Papua New Guinea are nearby countries that are primarily concerned with internal security, while many countries, such as Vietnam, China and Israel, are required to balance external and internal threats.

In this context, Indonesia deserves particular mention. At first glance it might be assumed that Indonesia would pursue a maritime strategy. It is a large archipelago, it sits astride key international sea routes and depends on the export of oil and petroleum products by sea. However, while it is true that the Indonesian Armed Forces do have the capability to deploy land forces effectively by sea, they tend to see the scattered islands of the archipelago as a single entity. Within this, the main purpose of the Indonesian military is to counter domestic uprising, sedition and revolution, and it has a substantial role in all aspects of government and administration. Its role in nation-building is enshrined in the strategy of ‘national resilience’. If any Indonesian territory were to be invaded the Indonesian army would
Table 4: Ratios of the Strengths of the Services in Selected Countries Concerned with Internal Security

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Navy incl. Coast Guard</th>
<th>Army</th>
<th>Air Force</th>
<th>Marines</th>
<th>Para-Military</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.9</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>32.0</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.4</td>
<td>48.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>69.2</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>238.0</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>2.1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10.3</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>.47</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.3</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>5.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9.0</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13.7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>53.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regular</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8.1</td>
<td>.96</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reg+Reserves</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11.1</td>
<td>.93</td>
<td></td>
<td>17.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 4 shows the relative importance placed on the respective services by selected countries whose forces either grew out of liberation armies, are concerned with internal security, or retain a revolutionary flavour.

These statistics show a wide variation but nonetheless, and not surprisingly, they reveal a heavy emphasis on land forces. The other
notable feature is the use of para-military forces for internal security functions. These para-military forces do not include coast guard units, which throughout have been included as part of the Navy. None of the countries listed earlier as maritime-type countries have land para-military forces, although Japan and the USA have coast guards which by comparison with their navies are relatively small.

Relevance to Australia

Australia probably has more to learn from the continental and maritime experience than from the revolutionary. Unlike the practitioners of continental strategy, Australia does not have a land frontier and has a relatively unique strategic environment. From a study of the continental school we learn how land warfare has developed, why modern armies are structured the way they are, and we gain insight into the imperatives behind the strategic plans of the world’s major powers. We also need to recognise that the Australian Army has been shaped by the lessons of continental strategy. Like it or not, it is part of the heritage of the Australian Army. We might ask ourselves: what is the driving ethos of the Army today? Is it the ability to raise a large, balanced, armour-oriented army capable of fighting a continental war? Or is it a smaller, hard-hitting, easily deployable army capable of supporting maritime strategy? If it is the latter, do we have the maritime resources to support such a strategy? And the essence of traditional maritime strategy has not just been to patrol the home waters, but to hold, defend and, if necessary, seize vital points beyond the home shores.

At first glance Australia’s military strategy would seem to need the characteristics of both the maritime and the continental schools. Inasmuch as Australia is an island and is separated from the Asian mainland by a series of archipelagos, a maritime strategy would appear to be logical. However, Australia is also a continent, and if an enemy were to land in Australia it might be necessary to apply the ideas of continental strategy described earlier. But even in this case the continental approach needs to be tempered by the fact that in many ways the vital points across the north of Australia are like another archipelago, with the small, underpopulated islands surrounded on three sides by difficult terrain and on the fourth by the sea. In the
Land Forces in the Defence of Australia 25

traditional maritime strategy, these islands either need to be garrisoned, or at least picketed, with a capability to reinforce them rapidly.

While the emphasis of this review is on land operations there is no suggestion that they should be considered in isolation from other services. Indeed, this review argues that Australia's military strategy should be essentially maritime. Within that framework, operations will generally be joint in nature.

Australian Army commanders have traditionally viewed their operations from a single-service perspective, in which they are supported by the Navy and Air Force. For example, if an Army officer were commanding a Joint Force with the mission of protecting vital assets across northern Australia, he would see his task as one primarily involving land forces supported by air and possibly naval assets. From an operational-level perspective this would be a justified approach. However, from the perspective of the strategic-level commander, vital assets such as the port of Darwin or the airfield at Tindal would have to be protected so that he could carry out a maritime-type strategy.

Except where an enemy had overcome Australia's maritime defences and had lodged a large force on the Australian mainland, most Australian operations would be conducted as part of a maritime-type strategy. That maritime strategy might involve maritime, air and land oriented campaigns, and it would be difficult to argue that a land-oriented campaign would be either the first to be conducted or even the most likely. But the maritime or air orientation of likely campaigns does not mean that there would not be a role for the army. Nor does it mean that the army contribution would be small in size.

The possible size of land forces involved in supporting maritime and air campaigns can be deduced from history. During the Second World War, MacArthur's campaign in the South West Pacific Area involved the systematic destruction of Japanese naval and air forces while generally allowing the Japanese land forces to wither on the vine. In pursuit of this policy his land force had to seize forward air and naval operating bases. In the latter months of 1943 and early 1944, General Kenney's air forces took the main fight to the Japanese from a complex of air bases in the Markham and Ramu valleys in New Guinea. To protect these air bases the 7th Australian Division was
deployed in the Ramu Valley and saw substantial action in the Shaggy Ridge area.

Situations in which land forces might operate in support of maritime or air campaigns might include:

- seizure and/or destruction by land forces of enemy airfields as part of an offensive counter air campaign;
- insertion to seize, protect and repair airfields for use by the RAAF;
- seizure and/or protection of RAN forward operating bases;
- the land force component of RAN or RAAF efforts to rescue or evacuate Australian nationals.

These land operations might take place either overseas or within Australia.

The lesson from this consideration is that the Army needs to view its concepts, force structure and doctrine in terms of joint operations. It needs to identify where its operations fit in the overall military strategy and argue for a force structure to fulfil the roles expected of it in that strategy.

The lessons of the revolutionary school should not be ignored. The ADF was not built upon a liberation army, nor it is likely to face an insurgency in Australia. But the problem of countering low-level incursions across the vast distances of the sparsely populated north might require elements in the force structure similar to that which other countries have used against home-grown insurgeries. The force structure lesson from these lower level hostilities like insurgencies is that they can quickly become manpower intensive. Traditionally, there is a need for large numbers of infantry soldiers and there is a role for para-military organisations or police field forces or both. In these circumstances the army plays a much larger role than navies or air forces, which are used mainly in supporting roles. It should be acknowledged that there are some analysts who consider that Australia might be best defended by reducing its offensive capacity and looking more to passive defence or guerilla warfare. The implication of this strategy is proportionately a larger army.
Finally, the composition of armies varies according to their roles. By way of comparison, Table 5 shows the number of main battle tanks held by each country per 1,000 regular soldiers.11

Table 5: Comparison of the Numbers of Main Battle Tanks in Selected Armed Forces

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Continental School</th>
<th>Maritime School</th>
<th>Revolutionary School</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>41.7</td>
<td>USA</td>
<td>20.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>France</td>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>UK</td>
<td>8.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>16.3</td>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>7.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Israel</td>
<td>41.2</td>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>10.0</td>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>Canada</td>
<td>4.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is appreciated that these statistics are open to misinterpretation, but they are designed merely to show broad trends. It can be seen that when a country intends to fight a continental-type war it ensures that it has a substantial number of heavy weapons, of which the main battle tank is the most obvious. Although USA and Britain are listed as maritime-type countries they both have large armies deployed in Europe to conduct continental-type operations.12 By contrast, maritime-type countries with a low risk of having to fight a continental war have fewer heavy weapons. Countries with internal security priorities rely primarily on large numbers of personnel, not sophisticated technology, and have few heavy weapons.

11 Statistics are from Military Balance 1990-91.
12 At least they did until the advent of the Gulf War — itself a largely continental-type war.
Another way of considering the shape of defence forces has recently received some prominence in Mr Wrigley's report, *The Defence Force and the Community*. Wrigley quotes an American writer as follows:

In the broadest sense, there are only two kinds of national force. A territorial defense force does precisely that: it operates on and around its national borders in order to deter or defeat such threats as may approach. It usually knows where and against whom it will fight. Its troops are, more often than not, recruited by conscription, and its regular forces are, more often than not, buttressed by sizable reserves. Such massive augmentation is militarily possible because territorial defense forces normally have the benefit of interior lines of communication and, in most cases, do not have to travel very far to fight. The massive use of reserves is politically possible because territorial defense forces exist to fulfil an unambiguous, even sacrosanct mission: the preservation of territorial sovereignty. Israel, Switzerland, The Federal Republic of Germany, France, and Sweden provide examples of the efficacy of such forces.

Alternatively, a force may be expeditionary in nature: that is designed to fight away from home. Such forces are usually designed for many contingencies in widely different areas. Since an expeditionary force must travel in order to fight, it requires great investments in strategic lift, and in air and sea control assets. Its logistical problems tend to be far greater, its manpower constraints more severe — especially in all the short-to-no-notice contingencies exemplified by the Falklands, Grenada, and some UN peace-keeping missions. For these reasons, expeditionary forces tend to rely upon professional, highly trained, long-service manpower. They are forces-in-being, designed to be
deployed as instruments of national policy under circumstances with potentially ambiguous public support.\textsuperscript{13}

Wrigley acknowledges that Australia does not require a force that identifies with either end of this spectrum, but he argues that the ultimate task of the defence forces is sovereignty defence. He accepts that 'Australia’s full-time forces may be required to carry out some tasks of an expeditionary nature in what we might call their peacetime "constabulary" role', but sees the defence of Australia as being conducted by forces designed for sovereignty defence.\textsuperscript{14}

There are a number of difficulties with this approach. First, most countries that apply sovereignty defence are relatively compact, have land borders with a potential enemy, and usually have no requirement for, or potential to use, an expeditionary force. But not all countries which apply a continental strategy, and at first glance rely on sovereignty defence, deny themselves the advantages of meeting the enemy away from their own soil. Thus as part of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO), Britain, Belgium and the Netherlands deploy, or plan to deploy, forces forward into Germany or Norway. Israel, a prime example of a country applying sovereignty defence, was willing to move forward into Lebanon when it thought that it could get away with it.

To use expeditionary forces beyond a nation’s borders runs the risk that such use might not have the full backing of the population, but countries pursue that option because they perceive that it is in their security interests to do so. Australia is in the unique situation that its geography might require expeditionary forces to be despatched within the nation’s borders.

Wrigley claims that the ADF’s substantial base and support infrastructure was established to support an expeditionary force mentality. In fact the reverse is the case. The infrastructure was first established in the Second World War, when Australia was under threat of invasion and could not rely on support from allies. After the


\textsuperscript{14} \textit{Ibid.}, p. 58.
30 *Reshaping the Australian Army*

Second World War much of the infrastructure was allowed to wither and was not developed until the Vietnam War, when it had to support the expansion of the Regular Army to a nine-battalion division. For example, in the late 1960s a task force was moved to new barracks at Townsville — a move which had more to do with defending Australia than with launching an expeditionary force. In the 1970s, when the Army had to consider operations in the more remote areas of Australia, it found that it had to develop a logistic capability that Australia had not possessed since the Second World War.

Conclusion

None of the above templates of continental, maritime or revolutionary, or sovereignty defence versus expeditionary force, can be applied to Australia without substantial modification. Nevertheless, the discussion would seem to indicate that Australia would require a maritime-type military strategy in which the land forces would have a key role of securing and defending forward bases, whether they be within or outside Australia’s borders. The alternative might be described as the Brisbane Line mentality of the Second World War, in which the heartland is defended by a large militia force and the forward areas are abandoned to the enemy. Such an approach could be contemplated only in an extreme situation. In dealing with low-level threats consideration might be given to learning from the revolutionary school, in which force structures include large numbers of infantry and para-military forces — areas in which Australia remains strategically weak due to its relatively limited population and lack of development in the north.

Before considering the specific roles that and forces should play in Australia’s particular circumstances, it is important to consider the background to the structure of the Australian Army.
Land Forces in the Defence of Australia 31

THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY

In examining the development of the Australian Army the key question is whether current force structures and doctrine are shaped primarily by current strategic perceptions, or whether they are still heavily shaped by historical precedent. In other words, is the Army preparing for the last war or a future one? Although the Australian Regular Army (ARA) was not formed until soon after the Second World War, the Australian Army dates back to 1901, and the new force reflected many of the attitudes developed over the preceding fifty years.

While some writers have described many of Australia’s defence planners since the commitment to Sudan in 1885 as possessing an expeditionary force mentality, the truth is that the Army before the First World War was developed to provide for home defence. The Army was almost completely comprised of militia and an expeditionary force had to be raised specially for the war. As a result of the war experience, in the 1920s the Army was re-organised into divisions but retained its militia structure. During the inter-war period Army planners were concerned mainly with the defence of Australia against invasion while the government wanted an army that firstly could handle an enemy raiding force, and secondly could send a small expeditionary force overseas. Since insufficient resources were provided for the home defence of Australia, on the outbreak of the Second World War there seemed little alternative other than to raise an expeditionary force to provide for defence in an imperial framework.

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15 For example, see Jeffrey Grey, A Military History of Australia, (Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1990), pp. 43-4; Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community, p.59.


17 Report on Military Defence of Australia 1920, dated 6 February 1920, Pearce Papers MS 1827, item 14, National Library of
32 Reshaping the Australian Army

The Pacific War brought great changes in attitude about the Army's force structure and role. First, it was the regular officers who bore the burden of planning the defence of Australia. By the end of the war many senior command positions were held by regular officers, and they believed that they were better trained and prepared both to advise the government on military matters and to command the Army. Second, the Army was forced to raise a full range of logistic service units to support in combat units in the field. Third, the Army had to raise many of the combat support units that had previously been supplied by the British. Fourth, the Pacific War caused the Army to develop organisations which were not just copies of British organisations, but were tailored for the area of Australian operations. Fifth, the Pacific War reinforced the belief that Australia was best defended by deploying troops to the islands to the north of Australia rather than by waiting for the enemy to land in Australia. Sixth, the Pacific War provided rough guidance as to the size of army needed to defend Australia against invasion, and the size of the army that could be maintained. This last point was most important. It provided a mental picture of the objective force to be aimed at in any future expansion.

Since the regular forces that were established in 1947-8 formed the base for the ADF as we know it today, their development should be described in a little detail. Although it took the government almost two years from the end of the war to determine a defence policy, the pressure of events meant that a number of force structure decisions were made without reference to any agreed defence policy. Perhaps the most important force structure decision was to provide an infantry brigade to the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. Thus for the first time Australia had a full-time infantry force in peacetime.

The post-war assessments of Australia's strategic position concluded that the nation's security was derived principally from its geographic isolation, but because of its limited industrial and economic capacity, Australia had to rely on allied support. Thus Australia's defence forces had to be structured so that they could cooperate with British Commonwealth forces, particularly in the Pacific.

Land Forces in the Defence of Australia 33

On 4 June 1947 the Minister for Defence announced Australia’s first post-war Defence policy and stated that the defence forces had to provide capabilities for:

- The Forces to be placed at the disposal of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security, including regional arrangements in the Pacific;
- The Forces to be maintained under arrangements for co-operation in British Commonwealth defence; and
- The Forces to be maintained to provide for the inherent right of individual self-defence.18

Since the United Nations concept was undefined, and the US was reluctant to commit itself in the Pacific, the latter two requirements were the chief determinants of our force structure. Despite these high ideals, the over-riding determinant was finance; the government simply decided that Defence would be allocated a specific sum of money over the next five years and the services had to do the best they could with that money. The financial allocation provided for a force structure shown in Table 6.

Generally speaking, the Navy was composed of ships left over from the Second World War, but a significant development was the decision to acquire a Fleet Air Arm of two aircraft carriers to enable the navy to play its role in co-operating with allied navies and in keeping open sea lines of communication. Like the Navy, the Airforce relied on Second World War aircraft, while planning to obtain the Lincoln bomber and the Vampire fighter.

The Defence policy allowed for two significant Army developments. Firstly, the formation of a regular brigade group was confirmed, based on the brigade in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force. The brigade was to be the core force for expansion for high level operations. It took some time to raise the armoured regiment. There were vague plans that in the event of war the Australian Army would provide forces for the Middle East where armoured units would be required.

18 Hansard, (Senate and House of Representatives), Vol.192, p.3336.
Table 6: The Australian Services' Force Structures Planned for 1947

**Royal Australian Navy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ships in Commission:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 light fleet carriers</td>
<td>3 survey ships and tenders</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 cruisers</td>
<td>6 training ships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 destroyers</td>
<td>4 auxiliary vessels</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ships in Reserve:</th>
<th></th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 cruiser</td>
<td>6 minesweepers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 destroyers</td>
<td>37 miscellaneous</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel:
- 10,450 in 1947-48 rising to 14,753 in 1951-52
- The first aircraft carrier was to be acquired (but not commissioned) in 1947-8

**Australian Army**

**Permanent Military Forces (PMF):**

<p>| | |</p>
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 independent brigade group</td>
<td>4,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(3 battalions and 1 armoured regiment)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fixed establishments</td>
<td>13,380</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citizen Military Forces cadres</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Permanent Military Forces</td>
<td>19,000</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Citizen Military Forces (CMF):**

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<thead>
<tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2 divisions, 1 armoured brigade and corps troops</td>
<td>48,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>fixed defences</td>
<td>1,150</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Citizen Military Forces</td>
<td>50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Army</td>
<td>69,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Royal Australian Air Force**

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3 heavy bomber squadrons</td>
<td>1 search and rescue squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 long-range fighter squadrons</td>
<td>1 target towing squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 heavy bomber reconnaissance squadron</td>
<td>2 transport squadrons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 tactical reconnaissance squadron</td>
<td>1 survey squadron</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 interceptor fighter squadrons</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Citizen Air Force)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Personnel:
- Approximately 13,922

Figure 1: The Strength of the Australian Army, 1950-1990
The second significant development was the raising of the Citizen Military Forces (CMF) which began recruitment on 1 July 1948. As it was to be filled by volunteers the Order of Battle (ORBAT) was rather ambitious, even if it was to be smaller than the pre-war militia. Equipment was available as it was left over from the Second World War.

The Army that was formed in the post-war period combined new and old characteristics. For the first time Australia had a small regular force (only three under-strength battalions) that could be deployed overseas at relatively short notice for service with Allied or United Nations forces. There was a substantial pool of experienced junior and middle rank regular officers, and the army possessed a support infrastructure that it had never previously had. However, many of the old characteristics continued. The CMF still comprised the largest part of the army, and the CMF had experienced, battle-tested officers who expected to play a leading role in the Army. Training, equipment and doctrine was left over from the Second World War and provided the ability to work with British forces. The old dilemma between home defence or an expeditionary force still persisted. While there were definite plans for mobilising the CMF to provide an expeditionary force for service in the Middle East or Southeast Asia, the members of the CMF were still prevented by law from serving overseas. During this period the CMF was bolstered by a national service training scheme which drained resources from the Regular Army. The important role of the CMF is shown by Figure 1, although in 1953 the CMF comprised 60,000 national servicemen and 15,000 voluntary enlistees.

By the late 1950s the possibility of a global war had declined and the main threat was considered to come from communist expansion in Southeast Asia. Australia needed to be able to provide land forces for deployment to this area, and in 1957 for the first time the Army formed a viable regular infantry brigade within Australia.

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20 Hansard, (House of Representatives), 1 October 1953, p. 877.

21 For an outline of the changes in defence policy see T.B. Millar,
The pentropic organisation, introduced in 1960, was aimed at providing self-contained battle groups that could operate in Southeast Asia. A little later, for the first time, a regular divisional headquarters was formed. The battalions rotating through service in Malaya retained the smaller jungle warfare establishment and trained for jungle warfare. The larger pentropic battalions still tended to train for conventional warfare in the more open areas of Australia. One of the effects of the pentropic experiment, and the more obvious commitment to forward defence, was to lessen the role of the CMF and reduce the influence of senior CMF officers.

The deteriorating strategic situation in Vietnam and Indonesia’s confrontation with Malaysia resulted during 1964 and 1965 in far reaching changes to the role and structure of the Australian Army. The Army started to train for counter-insurgency operations in Southeast Asia, and in early 1964 another regular infantry battalion was raised to relieve that battalion in Malaysia. Then in November 1964 the Prime Minister announced that the pentropic organisation was to be abolished, the Army was to double the number of its Regular battalions from four to eight (it later expanded to nine), the Pacific Islands Regiment was to be doubled from one to two battalions, and the Special Air Service (SAS) Company was to expand to form an SAS Regiment. A selective National Service scheme was to be introduced.22 At about the same time the armoured corps was reorganised into Regular armoured, cavalry and Armoured Personnel Carrier (APC) regiments and the Army Aviation Corps was formed.

The commitments to Confrontation and Vietnam had a number of longer term implications for the Army’s force structure.

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First, if troops were to be deployed outside Australia they could not come from the CMF unless the Defence Act were to be amended. Second, if troops were to be deployed at short notice the Army had to have forces at a relatively high state of readiness. Third, the forces deployed overseas could not rely completely on combat or logistic support from Allies and any shortfalls in this support had to be provided from Australia. Fourth, both Confrontation and Vietnam confirmed the value of possessing a range of capabilities, such as tanks, SAS, civil affairs, psychological operations and signals intelligence, beyond those of the traditional infantry force.

The end of Australian and American involvement in Vietnam, Britain's withdrawal from East of Suez, and the election of the Whitlam Government in December 1972 provided the opportunity for wide-ranging changes in organisation, and in 1973 the Army changed from its geographically based system to the functional system with Field Force, Logistic and Training Commands. This brought the Army into line with the other two services, which had had functional organisations for some time. It was the first step in providing an organisation suitable for the defence of Australia.

The Millar Committee was established to investigate the organisation of the CMF, and as a result the Australian Army Reserve was formed with the intention that there would be closer integration with the Regular Army. The main role of the Reserve was to provide a base for expansion in time of war. As shown by Figure 1, by 1974 the Reserve had reached its lowest strength since the CMF was formed in 1948, underlining the dominant role that the Regular Army had assumed in the defence of Australia.

The end of National Service meant that the Army could no longer sustain nine battalions and the future structure of the Army


was considered by the Farrands-Hassett Review. The review assumed that the Army would have to expand to a force of a million men to defend Australia against a major attack, and to do this the Army needed to retain its divisional structure and expand from 29000 to 34000 by mid 1976. Under this new structure six of the nine regular battalions were linked to produce six regular battalions in three task forces. However, the battalion organisations themselves remained largely unchanged, even if they now had to train for operations in Australia rather than Southeast Asia.

When Papua New Guinea (PNG) became independent in 1975 the local units were removed from the Australian ORBAT and became part of the PNG Defence Force.

There was a marked decline in expenditure on new equipment, the most important equipment decision in this period being to acquire 87 Leopard tanks to replace the aging Centurions, now over 20 years old. Tanks had proved of great use in Vietnam and the decision to replace the Centurion would appear to have been made without a close examination as to the role that armour would play in any concept for the defence of Australia.

In the meantime the Army began preparing for conventional operations in continental Australia, and towards the end of the 1970s the Army had acquired greater versatility, and was well on the way to mastering the skills and developing the capabilities needed to fight over open spaces and vast distances. But there was little correlation between defence policy, strategic concepts and Army force structure and training.

The government’s White Paper, Australian Defence, presented to parliament by the Minister for Defence in November 1976, provided some direction, even though it did not spell out a detailed strategy. The White Paper emphasised a policy of self-reliance, in which it was no longer expected that Australian forces would be sent abroad to fight as part of some other nation’s force, supported by it. The government did not rule out an Australian contribution to operations elsewhere if the requirement arose, so long as Australia’s presence would be effective and forces could be spared from their national

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25 For a description of these changes see David Horner (ed.), Duty First: The Royal Australian Regiment in War and Peace, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990), Chapter 12.
tasks. But it believed that operations were ‘more likely to be in our own neighbourhood than in some distant or forward theatre’, and that they would be conducted as joint operations by the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

This policy posed difficult problems for Army planners. The White Paper stated that the first element of the government’s policy was ‘the maintenance of a substantial force-in-being, which is also capable of timely expansion to deal with any unfavourable development’. But what was the shape to which the Army had to expand? What was the threat for which the Army had to prepare? And what were the tasks that the Army might need to undertake in peacetime?

Over the next eight years the Army received little guidance as to the joint operational concepts in which it would be operating and therefore struggled to produce a force structure to meet the requirements of the government’s White Paper. Headquarters ADF had not yet been formed and the existing joint staff was limited in size and had not produced a military strategy. Nonetheless the Army underwent a period of substantial restructuring.

One important initiative grew out of the efforts of the SAS Regiment to find a role in the defence of Australia and resulted in the formation of three regional force surveillance units (RFSUs) across the north. In response to an increased threat from international terrorism the SAS also formed a counter-terrorist assault capability.

The most important change, however, took place within the Army’s main combat formation, the 1st Division. In 1977 the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant-General Dunstan, concluded that despite the fact that the 1st Division had been restructured at the end of the Vietnam War to remedy deficiencies in the Army’s capability to operate within Australia, it needed further modification. First, the organisation was too heavy in both manpower and equipment; it

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27 For detail on the establishment of RFSUs see David Horner, SAS: Phantoms of the Jungle, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1989), Chapter 22.
numbered 18116 personnel and needed to be trimmed down. Second, the Army was losing the expertise to operate on light scales; the 1st Division was becoming tied to trucks and APCs and Dunstan believed that at least part of the Army had to be capable of moving quickly and without heavy equipment. And third, the Army was losing its expertise in operating in tropical terrain. There had been no progress in developing close country warfare techniques beyond those used in Vietnam, and new technology had not been exploited. Furthermore, the Australian Army might need to operate in northern Australia in the wet season, which posed particular difficulties with mobility.

Dunstan explained later that the big problem during the 1970s was the distribution of limited resources between the expansion base and the requirements for contingency deployments. After Vietnam the Army had been kept broadly based, spreading resources evenly, in the expectation that it could regroup for a task as it arose. But the reaction time was too slow.

Expertise in specialised areas was being lost, or was at best static. We expected too many people to be jack-of-all-trades. We would disrupt units and people at the worst time, just before their deployment into a contingency. The worst part, however, was the level of operational readiness we could achieve. There was so much regrouping of men and equipment which had to be done. The result was that I could not guarantee to provide a task force of two battalions in less than about three months, or a battalion group in less than a month.  

After a considerable period of study and planning the Army proposed that the 3rd Task Force in Townsville, comprising two battalions, become the nucleus of an Operational Deployment Force (ODF) that would be on short notice to move. One battalion was to be the vanguard to move ahead of the rest of the ODF. The Task Force was to be placed on a war establishment and was to train for tropical warfare. It had to develop a particular capacity to operate on light scales and be air portable in medium range transport (C-130 Hercules aircraft).

28 CGS Address to Army Staff College, 1980.
42 Reshaping the Australian Army

The 6th Task Force in Brisbane was to specialise in open country warfare, establish a limited parachute capability, and also train for operations in built-up areas. It was to be prepared to provide a battalion to the 3rd Task Force on the same degree of notice as the rest of the ODF.

The 1st Task Force at Holsworthy near Sydney was to develop the capability for armoured and mechanised infantry operations. This would involve the eventual mechanisation of 5/7 RAR at Holsworthy, and exercises with the 1st Armoured Regiment, based at Puckapunyal, north of Melbourne. Meanwhile 3 RAR, then located at Woodside, South Australia, was to move to Holsworthy, eventually to become part of a mechanised brigade.29

The Army's proposal was approved, and on 21 February 1980 the government issued a press release outlining the reorganisation of the 1st Division, which was to be reduced to 13,833 personnel. The government had decided to provide resources for a further 850 men, thus bringing the 3rd Task Force, with its two battalions, up to their war establishment of four rifle companies. Priority was to be given to the development of the ODF brigade, based in Townsville. In 1982 the term 'brigade' replaced the term 'task force', that had originally been introduced following the demise of the pentropic organisation in 1965.

An important development following the acceptance of the ODF concept was the formation of a Logistic Support Group (LSG). Such a force had earlier been necessary to support the Task Force in Vietnam. It has been argued by Wrigley that Army planners have had an expeditionary force mentality and have therefore produced elaborate force structures to support possible expeditions. The experience of the period since Vietnam shows, however, that once Army planners began to consider operations in the north and north west of Australia they found that they would need to take even more logistic and combat support elements than they had previously needed when serving overseas with allies.

It took longer to provide the resources for the mechanised battalion. The Army argued that while a mechanised capability would

be necessary only in higher levels of conflict, the expertise required would take a long time to develop and the Australian Army needed to gain and maintain this 'state-of-the-art' expertise. The smallest force necessary to develop the tactics and techniques of mechanised warfare was a tank regiment and one mechanised infantry battalion plus some headquarters and supporting arms and services elements. The mechanised capability was approved in early 1983.

When the reorganisation of the 1st Division had first been put forward in 1979 it had been proposed to develop a limited parachute capability in the 6th Task Force, as it was realised that there was a need for a force to secure remote airstrips, such as on Christmas Island, if the government wished to move a larger force there. But with the development of the ODF and the mechanisation of 5/7 RAR the time did not seem right also to request a parachute capability. In 1980 Dunstan explained the need for a parachute battalion:

There is a company in 6 Task Force but I believe this is not sufficient. Only a battalion group can be considered viable in our circumstances and it's around such a structure that the current studies are being made.

There could be a number of contingencies where we might need to use an airborne force, the most likely being to secure an airfield through which to deploy the ODF. There are airfields where we could conceivably deploy, say to evacuate Australian nationals, which could be barred quite easily to our aircraft. A few chaps just lying on the tarmac will be sufficient to do it ... I believe it to be a move which we should make and the sooner the better. It would be a sensible, realistic and relevant step which would be seen as such by the Government and I feel sure that it deserves and would get the Government's support. I see no reason why we should not aspire in the longer term to a reserve battalion group as well as part of an airborne formation.30
In 1983 3 RAR was directed to develop a parachute capability, and in 1986 the CGS Advisory Committee agreed that there was a 'need to provide a parachute deployable force, capable of providing point of entry security for an ADF group operationally deployed in response to shorter term contingencies as well as the need to provide a third battalion for augmentation of the ODF brigade'. The battalion group was to be on 28 days notice to move with a company on shorter notice.31

The Army's philosophy during this period was summed up in a widely distributed publication, The Army in the 1980s.32 The publication stated that the Army's function was to conduct operations on land and its principal roles were:

- to organise, train, equip and maintain forces for the conduct of timely and sustained combat operations on land;
- to develop and maintain Reserve forces to supplement or expand the Regular Army.
- to provide a sound base for expansion; and
- to maintain reserves of equipment and supplies.

The Army was 'structured principally to engage in limited conventional war in defence of Australia and its interests'. The publication continued:

In broad terms the Australian Army is structured on the core force concept. It is a force which retains the essential skills and capabilities as a 'core' on which expansion can be based. It has significant operational and deterrence capabilities but is full deterrent value lies in its potential for expansion.

The Regular Army must provide the initial reaction force and also develop, test and practise tactical and logistic doctrine and techniques which will be used by

31 CGSAC Minute 32/86, 4 July 1986.
32 Australian Army, The Army in the 1980s, (Army Office, Canberra, 1982).
the expanded Army. The Reserve is required to provide the first step in expansion and will be the key element in this process.33

The Dunstan changes of the early 1980s were a highly successful attempt to achieve two aims. First, the Army was seen to be responding to the changing strategic environment in which it might have to deal with a range of contingencies arriving at short notice. Second, the Army supposedly retained its base for expansion.

The Army has always had expansion on its mind. This is evidenced by a number of factors. In the 1950s there were expansion plans. After the Army expanded to nine battalions during the Vietnam war a new series of doctrinal pamphlets was produced, called the Division in Battle. These pamphlets described how the division would fight, even though the reality at the time was that only one task force was in action in Vietnam and there was no thought of further increasing the force there. After the withdrawal from Vietnam and Singapore, planning documents such as the Army Development Model of the late 1970s and the Army Development Guide of the early 1980s were aimed at producing an objective force for future expansion. This objective force also provided the ORBAT for training officers in tactics at various army schools. Even before the production of these planning documents, officers had been trained in the tactics of large formations. In comparison with other armies, the Army sends a relatively large number of officers to Staff College. In the Regular Army there are a number of units, such as the Armoured Regiment and the mechanised battalion, which are retained primarily to maintain the ‘state of the art’. In the Reserve there are many more units. Philosophically, Australian Army officers have tended to look at the British and American armies as models of what an army should be and, with modifications, have tried to produce a scaled-down version in Australia. This tendency has been reinforced by the American, British, Canadian and Australian (ABCA) standardisation program, in which the Australian Army wants to be seen to be pulling its weight.

These efforts to provide for expansion were not necessarily misguided. Successive governments have required the Army to maintain an expansion base. But the lack of guidance during the late
1970s as to the way that the ADF would defend Australia caused the Army to think in terms of large-scale conventional operations in Australia. It was automatically assumed that if the Australian Army were involved in operations then some form of expansion would have taken place.

The Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities presented to the government by Mr Paul Dibb in March 1986 and the government's White Paper, The Defence of Australia, 1987, brought substantial changes to this philosophy. The Defence Report for 1989-90 stated that the objective of the Army was to:

provide ground forces for:

- credible land contingencies in the defence of Australia, its territories and interests, generally as part of a joint force, using both regulars and reserve forces; and

- longer term expansion should this be required.\(^34\)

While the philosophy had changed and the Army was given more specific tasks, the 1987 White Paper largely confirmed the Army's existing force structure, even though there were a number of important developments. The 1st Division became more readily deployable with a task being to provide the tactical headquarters, formations and units required for credible contingencies. To support the 1st Division if deployed, a Logistic Support Force was formed.

Plans for the integration of Army Reserve and Regular units were continued, with the 7th Brigade becoming part of the manoeuvre force in the 1st Division and 49 RQR joining the two regular battalions of an integrated Regular-Reserve 6th Brigade. Whereas in the past Army was inclined to look upon the Reserves as the base for expansion in emergency, from about this period the Reserves were also required to contribute to operations which might arise in the shorter term. Accordingly, the 2nd Division (a Reserve formation in NSW) became the follow-on force to round out the manoeuvre force and for subsequent deployment when required. Four other Reserve brigades were given the tasks of vital asset protection in the north and west. In

\(^{34}\) Defence Report 1989-90, p.36.
June 1987 legislation was introduced to provide for the restricted call-up of Reserves.

It was decided that the 2nd Cavalry Regiment would move to Darwin in 1992. The battlefield helicopters were to be transferred from the RAAF to the Army, which formed the 5th Aviation Regiment. The level of mechanisation in the 1st Brigade was to be restricted to battalion group level, but approval was given for the continuing development of the parachute capability to provide a parachute battalion group. 3 RAR therefore became an ODF augmentation unit.

From this outline of the development of the Army, it can be seen that the Army today has made a serious endeavour to adjust key elements in its force structure to the requirements of the direct defence of Australia, albeit at a time when important aspects of defence policy were still being developed. Its present complement of six regular infantry battalions was determined by the Farrands-Hassett Review of 1972 and confirmed by the Dibb Review of 1986. The Army has also shown a capacity to use existing capabilities, which were acquired for different purposes, to contribute to the defence of the north in low-level conflict. For example, Leopard tanks in the 1st Armoured Regiment proved valuable in providing direct fire support in Exercise Kangaroo 89, held across the north of Australia in August 1989.

Before considering how the Army might need to adjust further during the next decade, it will be useful to summarise the present force structure. According to the Defence Report 1989-90 the Army currently numbers 55,469, of which 30,333 are regulars. The Army comprises five sub-programs, the executive, combat forces, base logistics, individual training and support. The key sub-program is Combat Forces, which numbers 30,538 personnel and includes 'highly mobile forces capable of rapid deployment anywhere within Australia and its area of direct military interest. These forces must be capable of conducting protracted and dispersed operations in harsh terrain where existing infrastructure and resources are sparse'. The Army combat force structure provides:

- elements for the command and control of land operations;
- ground force surveillance and reconnaissance capabilities;
forces capable of deploying to defend vital defence installations and national infrastructure;

- a largely air deployable force, including an airborne (parachute) element, capable of rapid deployment within Australia and its territories;

- limited tactical battlefield mobility;

- forces capable of greater combat power to support deployed formations if necessary; and

- forces capable of sustaining the forces with third line logistic support.

The Combat Forces comprise eight Force Element Groups as follows:

- **Command and Control.** Land Headquarters, Headquarters NORCOM, and supporting units.

- **Ready Deployment Force (RDF).** Based largely on 3 Brigade and includes 1 RAR, 2/4 RAR, 3 RAR (Para) and combat and logistic support, including a Logistic Support Group. The force is structured to provide a largely air portable force, on light scales, capable of rapid deployment on short degrees of notice.

- **Ready Deployment Force Augmentation (RDFA).** Forces of greater combat power, such as a squadron of APCs and an air defence battery (light), capable of deploying at short notice to support the lighter elements of the RDF as required.\(^{35}\)

- **Surveillance Force.** 2 Cavalry Regiment, NORFORCE, 51 FNQR and the Pilbara Regiment, provide land surveillance in northern Australia.

- **Manoeuvre Force.** Formations and units for the conduct of land operations. It is based on the 1st Division and comprises the 1st Brigade (1 Armoured Regiment, 5/7

\(^{35}\) It should be noted that the ODF is slightly different from the RDF. The ODF is the force to be deployed; the RDF is the overall term for the forces that are ready to be deployed.
RAR, 8/12 Medium Regiment), 6th Brigade (2/14 QMI, 6 RAR, 8/9 RAR, 49 RQR), 7th Brigade (two Reserve battalions) and a range of support units.

- **Follow-On Force.** Forces for round out of understrength units in the manoeuvre force and for subsequent deployment when required. It is based on 2nd Division and comprises two Reserve brigades, each with two battalions.

- **Protective Force.** Forces structured to provide vital asset protection in northern Australia. It comprises the 4th, 9th, 11th and 13 Brigades, based in Melbourne, Adelaide, Perth and Townsville respectively.

- **Logistic Force.** The third line logistic support for the deployed forces. It comprises the ODF Logistic Support Force and units to augment the LSG.

The only other major combat elements in the Army are the Special Forces, which are commanded by HQ ADF through HQ Special Forces. These forces comprise the SAS Regiment and the Commando Regiment, primarily a Reserve unit.

The operational readiness of these Force Element Groups may be discerned from Table 7:

**Table 7: Operational Readiness of the Australian Army’s Force Element Groups, 1990**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Force Element Group</th>
<th>Personnel</th>
<th>Equipment Preparedness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Authorised</td>
<td>Actual at 30 June 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Command &amp; Control</td>
<td>1,272</td>
<td>964</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDF</td>
<td>3,944</td>
<td>3,684</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RDFA</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>555</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Surveillance</td>
<td>1,432</td>
<td>1,358</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manoeuvre</td>
<td>12,034</td>
<td>10,108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Follow-on</td>
<td>5,892</td>
<td>4,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Protective</td>
<td>8,672</td>
<td>6,479</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistic</td>
<td>3,414</td>
<td>2,722</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>37,239</td>
<td>30,538</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
In a more traditional form, the ORBAT of the Army's combat forces includes:

Land Headquarters
Headquarters Northern Command
2 divisional headquarters (1 Reserve)
10 brigade headquarters (7 Reserve)
1 armoured regiment (integrated)
3 reconnaissance regiments (2 Reserve)
2 APC regiments (1 integrated, 2 Reserve)
1 independent reconnaissance squadron (Reserve)
3 APC squadrons (2 Reserve)
21 infantry battalions (15 Reserve)
1 SAS regiment
1 commando regiment
3 regional force surveillance units (all Reserve)
2 aviation regiments
plus an appropriate slice of combat support logistic units

This outline of the current land force structure itself raises two important issues. First, while it appears to be a relatively substantial force, in practice it is numerically much smaller. When it is recalled that the war establishment of an infantry division is about 14,000, it is clear that the present Army is merely a skeleton of its paper organisation. And even if the statistics suggest that the total Army could muster 1 1/2 divisions, that force could not be sustained in the field beyond a very short period.

Second, there is no well-developed rationale for the current Army structure. As noted previously, the figure of six battalions was derived in the early 1970s when the Army was seen primarily as an expansion base, and six battalions were considered to be the smallest number that could justify the retention of the 1st Division. The Dibb Report accepted the number of six battalions but provided no convincing argument one way or the other; it merely urged the study of overall ground-force needs as a matter of priority.

Similarly, the total Army of 21 battalions (6 regular and 15 reserve) does not appear to have been derived from any logical study of the requirement. Dibb assessed that 6 regular battalions and a further 4 reserve battalions would be required for security tasks in the
But elsewhere he argues for 6 regular battalions and a Reserve Force of at least 10 battalions. It will be an objective of this study to develop a clear justification for the size and structure of the force it recommends.

AUSTRALIA’S STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT IN THE FUTURE

The factor most likely to give rise to change in a nation’s defence policy would be a notable shift in the strategic environment. Such developments are kept constantly under review within the Australian Defence organisation through regular assessments of Australia’s security outlook and the implications of these for defence planning. Generally, these have been undertaken on a triennial basis and their judgements underpin the emphasis currently being given to the direct defence of Australia.

The strategic environment, both globally and at the regional level is, however, presently undergoing considerable change and it is important in looking at the future of the Army to review how this may affect Australia’s security prospects in the short or longer term. It is not just a question of whether or not a direct threat is likely to emerge but how changes will affect the longer term adequacy of our defence planning and capabilities, the confidence which the Government has in its judgements about warning time, and the range of other tasks which the ADF may need to undertake in the shorter term.

The Global Balance

The most dramatic change in the global strategic environment has undoubtedly been the new detente between the Soviet Union and the United States. The signing of the agreement on intermediate-range nuclear missiles has been followed by substantial progress in other

37 Ibid., p.89.
areas of nuclear and conventional arms control, including the difficult issue of verifying compliance. At the same time, the political transformation taking place in Eastern Europe has broken down the long-standing military confrontation between NATO forces and the Warsaw Pact. While both superpowers continue to possess very substantial and modern nuclear arsenals, strategic concerns about both the danger of pre-emptive first strike in Europe and continual escalation in the level of potential nuclear conflict have begun to abate. The prospect of such a conflict has been significantly reduced.

The other strategic consequences of these changes are, however, rather less certain. Concern has been expressed that more advanced weapons systems may become cheaper and more readily available as existing levels are reduced and arms manufacturers seek to develop alternative markets. More fundamentally, the Gulf War is seen as evidence that medium powers may be more prepared to resort to military force to solve disputes without the restraining hand of superpower involvement. The international reaction to that crisis has raised the possibility of more effective collective security arrangements under the auspices of the United Nations but much will depend on a successful outcome to the enforcement operation and on continued Soviet cooperation.

Neither, however, is assured. Several factors including Iraq’s intransigence and the role of Israel could, in the longer term at least, undermine the cohesion of the Gulf coalition. Gorbachev continues to face significant domestic opposition to his program of political and economic reform and conservative elements within the Soviet military forces remain committed to the use of the military to maintain control within Soviet bloc countries and to strategic competition with the United States. Even if Gorbachev were replaced, Soviet economic difficulties and the changes in Eastern Europe make it likely that Soviet policy concerns would be primarily internal and unlikely that Soviet-US strategic rivalry would resume at its previous level. Without Soviet participation, the effectiveness of the United Nations in enforcing its security resolutions would be much reduced.

The other global security trend with the potential to affect Australia’s strategic interests is that of arms proliferation. With respect to nuclear weapons, the regime established by the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty continues to be quite effective. India and
Pakistan have continued their brinkmanship in relation to both nuclear explosive devices and delivery vehicles. Israel is reported to have developed nuclear weapons — although this remains unconfirmed — and both North Korea and Iraq have been assessed at different times to be well down this path. None of these countries yet has nuclear weapons as an integral part of their inventory and there is little evidence of a more widespread proliferation of the necessary technology.

Iraq’s use of chemical weapons during its eight-year war with Iran raised the possibility that, despite international condemnation, chemical and biological weapons would be seen as the poorer nation’s alternative to nuclear weapons. This has not occurred and the recent agreement of the United States and the Soviet Union to the Chemical Weapons Convention, including destruction of a large part of their existing stocks of these agents, will reinforce Australia’s own efforts to ensure that such weapons are not introduced into the region.

The one area which does need to be monitored closely is the spread of more advanced, conventional weapons systems. While these are unlikely to change a strategic situation significantly, unless acquired in relatively large numbers, they do have the potential to undermine Australia’s capability margins in key areas or at least require the development of appropriate and frequently expensive countermeasures. Potential sources for this type of proliferation in our own region include aggressive marketing by European arms manufacturers, US preparedness to bolster the capabilities of friendly countries to counterbalance a draw down in its own force levels, and Chinese military exports. The latter are seldom based on the most modern technologies but are being sold by China relatively cheaply while it develops its own more advanced equipments.

Asia/Pacific Security

In contrast to the situation in Europe, global detente has led to a much more fluid and increasingly complex strategic equation in the Asia/Pacific region. While Soviet maritime forces have withdrawn from Cam Ranh Bay to the North Pacific, significant naval capabilities remain concentrated in the Sea of Okhotsk to protect the eastern Soviet Union and the Soviets’ submarine-launched strategic nuclear strike
capability against the continental United States. The US Navy’s Maritime Strategy continues to envisage the containment of Soviet naval strength in that area as one of its primary missions. The scope for arms control is complicated by the need to accommodate the national security interests of Japan and South Korea, both of whom currently rely for key aspects of their defence on forward-deployed US forces. Tensions remain high between North and South Korea, particularly as the former has begun to fall significantly behind in terms of economic development, and Japan is wrestling with the disparity between its economic power and the limited self-defence capabilities prescribed in its constitution.

At the same time, current and prospective changes to the strategies and forward deployments of the superpowers have focussed attention on the emergence of several major regional powers with substantial political or economic interests in the balance of power within the Indian and Pacific Oceans. In recent years, India has devoted large resources to developing a significant 'blue water' maritime capability to complement its formidable land and air forces. Key acquisitions have included a second aircraft carrier, additional submarines and destroyers and long-range maritime patrol aircraft, providing the ability to project limited maritime power throughout the northern Indian Ocean and, with upgraded facilities in the Andaman and Nicobar Islands, into Southeast Asian waters. India, however, remains preoccupied strategically with its land borders with China and Pakistan and the defence of its immediate maritime approaches. In this context, India’s enhanced capabilities appear to relate more to its concern to be recognised as the dominant power within its own region than any specific territorial objectives.

In the Pacific, China has been undertaking the modernisation of its defence capabilities as part of its overall program of economic reform. While its maritime strength does not compare to India, its forces remain formidable in regional terms, and in the Spratly Islands it has demonstrated a preparedness to use them to support its political objectives and influence. US pressures for Japan to assume a greater share of the North Pacific defence commitment has similarly highlighted the substantial naval forces that country has already developed for its immediate defence to protect its sea lines of communication out to 1000 nm. While there are major domestic and regional sensitivities about any further expansion of Japanese naval
power, its substantial economic interests in Southeast Asia and the trade routes which pass through there would lead to concern should another major power attempt to establish a dominant influence in that area.

That is not currently in prospect. At the same time, the existence of the capability in several external powers to intervene within a quite short time frame should they consider their interests to be threatened does place additional pressure on the security planning of regional countries. Not only must they seek to avoid sources of instability or tension that might give rise to intervention but they must also consider the adequacy of their own force structures to defend their territory and interests in such circumstances. That emphasis is quite different to traditional Southeast Asian concerns about internal security and a substantial land force threat from the north.

Southeast Asia

In many respects, the strategic prospects of the countries of Southeast Asia are encouraging. The problem of internal insurgency has been significantly diminished in the ASEAN nations, apart from the Philippines, the intimidating Soviet naval presence has been withdrawn from Cam Ranh Bay, and Vietnam is slowly returning to political respectability. The ASEAN nations have experienced sustained economic growth and both they and the countries of Indo-China look set to prosper from the new economic dynamism predicted for Northeast Asia. Although not designed for security purposes, the ASEAN organisation itself has proved a valuable mechanism for ensuring broad consensus in the handling of strategic issues. There has also been a gradual development in the level and frequency of bilateral defence activity.

There are, however, a number of uncertainties which could, if not carefully managed, undermine this favourable position in the future. The debate over continuing US use of the Philippines bases, and the pressure to reduce the level of US forces deployed overseas, has raised the prospect of a strategic ‘power vacuum’ occurring — an issue made particularly sensitive by the emergence of China and India (and to a certain extent Japan) as nations on the periphery of the region with the capability, if not the intent, to exploit that situation. At the
same time, Singapore's proposal to provide alternative facilities to support US deployments has been seen by some of its neighbours as a challenge to ASEAN's non-aligned status.

In Cambodia, the peace process has become bogged down despite considerable diplomatic effort by a range of countries, including both Australia and the ASEAN nations. Unless the United Nations (UN) proposals are successful or an alternative formula can be developed to accommodate the conflicting interests of the various Khmer factions, the prospect is that Cambodia will continue to be a source of long-term instability, spilling over the border into neighbouring countries and creating opportunities for external power involvement. Similarly, China's competition with Vietnam for possession of the Spratly Islands and its preparedness to use military force to support its claims raises wider questions of the capacity of the Southeast Asian nations to work together to resist aggression and the potential for competition between them in relation to overlapping maritime resource claims. In the Philippines, the activities of the Communist New People's Army continue to challenge the legitimacy of central government authority and in Burma the military rulers have proved reluctant to transfer authority to the recently elected civilian governments.

None of these changes currently presents a direct threat to the security of Southeast Asia, but they do suggest that the strategic cohesion of the region is likely to be increasingly under challenge at a time when the capacity of external powers to intervene is growing. For Australia, the challenge is to use the significant access which it enjoys through the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Malaysia and Singapore and its other bilateral security contacts to foster ongoing strategic consensus and stability. This is likely to involve a range of cooperative activities including maritime surveillance, training and exercises which enhance the capacity of individual nations to provide for their own defence, and participation in the Cambodian peacekeeping process.

The one issue which is of direct strategic relevance to the defence of Australia is the changes taking place in regional inventories in response to these developments. The ASEAN countries in particular are moving away from their original emphasis on ground forces capable of combatting internal insurgencies towards more
balanced force structures able to respond also to contingencies arising in the maritime environment. They have also made important steps forward in the level of technology they are able to operate and maintain. The new capabilities include F-16 combat aircraft, surface combatants equipped with Harpoon missiles, airborne early warning and maritime surveillance aircraft, and air-to-air refuelling. Malaysia is also weighing the costs of acquiring submarines, a capability currently only possessed by Indonesia.

The number of platforms being acquired is small and will not increase the capacity of regional countries to project substantial land forces against Australia. In different strategic circumstances they may, however, give an adversary greater flexibility in the way in which lower levels of force could be projected against Australia. Paradoxically, these new maritime capabilities also provide Australia with greater opportunities for cooperative defence activities, including training and combined exercises, with regional countries by drawing on the ADF’s own maritime assets.

Indonesia and Papua New Guinea

Australia’s strategic relationship with Indonesia, its most populous and militarily capable neighbour, remains generally sound. Despite good relations in the early years after Indonesian independence, it has been punctuated more recently by periods of considerable political sensitivity and coolness. Currently, political contacts are developing, senior-level military visits have occurred, and there has been a resumption of small-scale defence cooperation activities and some combined exercises. The agreement to establish a joint development zone to exploit seabed resources in the Timor Sea where the maritime claims of both countries overlap has removed a potential source of friction.

Economically, Indonesia’s prospects for the next decade appear favourable but it continues to face the problems of a large and disparate population and of internal unrest in specific areas. In addition to the continuing resistance to the takeover of East Timor and Organisasi Papua Merdeka (OPM) activities in Irian Jaya, recent disturbances in the province of Aceh have required the commitment of significant forces. More important still in the next decade will be the
issue of President Soeharto’s succession. Speculation on this has already led to some tensions between the Indonesian Armed Forces (Angkatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia - ABRI) and the ruling Sekber Golongan Karya (GOLKAR) party. Without an obvious successor, it is difficult to determine how smoothly the transition can be accomplished and the impact this might have on Indonesia’s attitudes towards Australia in the longer term.

In the immediate future, however, it would appear likely that Indonesia’s security concerns will remain preoccupied with maintaining internal stability and, externally, with the role that Indonesia might play in the new strategic environment in Southeast Asia. Former Foreign Minister, Dr Mochtar, recently proposed that a new security arrangement might be developed linking Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore. Bilateral misunderstandings may still arise over PNG’s control of its border with Irian Jaya and Australian media criticism of the Indonesian political establishment, but both parties would have an interest in ensuring that these did not degenerate into military tension.

Indonesia’s military capabilities remain formidable in regional terms and have been enhanced by the acquisition of twelve F-16 fighter aircraft and four Van Speijk class frigates equipped with Harpoon missiles. Indonesian defence industry has also developed a greater capacity to support these advanced equipments and builds both helicopters and light transport aircraft under licence. Its surveillance capabilities and defence infrastructure remain directed primarily against the possibility of a threat emerging from the Southeast Asian mainland. While Indonesia does have the capacity to deploy several battalions by air or sea within the archipelago at short notice, these are structured primarily for the defence of national territory and the suppression of insurgency. They lack the comprehensive logistic support and protective joint force firepower necessary for effective power projection.

By contrast, Papua New Guinea is presently facing major security challenges. Despite substantial assistance from Australia in terms of budget support, aid programs and defence cooperation activities, PNG’s political system and economy remain fragile. Successive governments have failed to realise the transition from a traditional subsistence to a development-based economy. There has
emerged a significant pool of disenchanted urban youth, people who have moved away from their traditional village cultures but have been unable to find opportunities in Port Moresby or other centres. Tribal fighting continues to be a problem in some provinces and, as well illustrated by the Bougainville uprising and complaints about the Ok Tedi mining venture in the Western Highlands, considerable tension exist about the impact of development on traditional lifestyles, the environment and the distribution of wealth. Considerable financial restructuring has taken place under the guidance of the World Bank but this does not appear to have addressed the underlying social tensions. Central political authority is extremely weak.

PNG’s present malaise is compounded by the ineffectiveness of its security forces. While both the PNG Defence Force (PNGDF) and the Royal PNG Constabulary have received substantial financial and training support from Australia, their recent performance on Bougainville demonstrated not only a lack of clear and sensitive political direction but also major deficiencies in the areas of discipline, tactics, equipment and logistic support. Despite the localisation program, the PNGDF remains dependent on ADF personnel as advisers in key areas and recent experience suggests that it is unable to deploy more than three companies at any one time and only for a limited period. The performance of both the police and the PNGDF has also been affected by dissatisfaction with conditions of service. The new programs of Australian training assistance to both forces may improve the situation, but only in the longer term.

PNG’s difficulties in maintaining domestic security are also of concern because of the impact that they may have on its capacity to exercise control on the PNG/Irian Jaya border and the effect of this on Indonesia’s perception of PNG’s capability and willingness to tackle the OPM problem seriously. Despite the introduction of improved border management arrangements, including regular consultations and improved communications with Indonesia and the relocation of refugee camps, reports of cross-border incursions by Indonesian troops in hot pursuit of the OPM have continued. Not only is there the possibility of an inadvertent clash arising between PNG and Indonesian border patrols but, faced with a more serious threat from the OPM and an ineffective or unwilling PNG, Indonesia may seek to take more comprehensive, unilateral action against the OPM. In these
circumstances, a request for Australian assistance could not be ruled out.

Apart from the potential for PNG’s actions to complicate Australia’s own relations with Indonesia, several key factors emerge which are important to Australia’s own political and operational planning. PNG clearly wishes to handle its security problems independently but may turn to Australia at short notice should circumstances become particularly difficult. Even after ADF assistance was provided, PNG would seek to retain overall political control; but the success or failure of operations, and the way they were conducted, would have implications for Australia’s wider regional security standing. Most neighbouring countries, including Indonesia, believe that Australia can, or should, exercise significant influence over PNG policy. In situations of civil unrest, Australia may have its own direct security interests, particularly the protection of Australian nationals and property, which are independent from PNG’s own security concerns or Australia’s more general commitment to PNG’s security and stability.

The South Pacific

In the South Pacific, the strategic agenda has changed fundamentally. For many years the focus was on preventing politically destabilising penetration by external powers, notably the Soviet Union, as much in the interests of our Western alliance partners as of Australia’s direct security. The island governments were relatively stable, they depended on substantial economic and security assistance from Australia and New Zealand and were broadly aligned with Western interests.

During the 1970s, many island states began to assert their new independence, establishing more diverse political and economic linkages with external powers, including the Soviet Union and Libya, and increasingly criticising the United States for its insensitivity to regional interests in relation to both commercial activities and military deployments. However, they continued to look to Australia and New Zealand for assistance in developing their nascent security forces; the South Pacific Forum provided a mechanism for regional cooperation; and Australia’s support in assisting them to protect and manage the
new economic resource zones in maritime areas under the Law of the Sea Convention was well received.

The coups in Fiji and civil unrest in Vanuatu, the Solomon Islands and Tonga signal, however, a less certain future. They reflect competition for power and influence between traditional native political elites and values and the scope for more populous reform possible in the parliamentary governments left behind by the colonial powers. They also reflect frustration at the failure of governments to realise the promised economic benefits from new resource opportunities and to manage development in a manner which complements rather than competes with traditional island lifestyles. Disenchantment is particularly pronounced among young people denied employment appropriate to their higher educational qualifications, and frequently denied an effective political voice by the power of tribal elders. Regionalism remains strong in many areas.

For Australia, this focus on internal order has created several strategic dilemmas. Australia maintains a fundamental concern to promote the stability and strategic cohesion of the island nations but, despite its size, has limited capacity to become involved in overall development strategies without impinging on the independence of the island governments. Australia’s past involvement in security cooperation has led to high expectations of its involvement, if required, to help suppress internal unrest, but such involvement may necessitate siding with one particular faction and potentially jeopardise longer term strategic areas. There are significant direct Australian interests at stake, most notably Australian nationals, property and commercial ventures, but it is not practical for Australia to attempt to take responsibility for the protection of these, or for aspects of law and order more generally, for more than a brief period. While the prospect of some military involvement by Australian forces has certainly increased, this is likely to occur only in the most selective and serious circumstances.

Strategic Outlook

Australia’s strategic outlook is thus becoming increasingly complex. The prospect of a direct threat to Australia continues to be unlikely, but changes to regional capabilities may allow somewhat
greater flexibility for conducting lower level hostilities against us
should a cause for dispute emerge. There are, however, a range of
other tasks which the ADF may be asked to undertake in the shorter
term in PNG or the South Pacific. These may be either to protect
Australia’s interests or assist in the maintenance of law and order.
Conflict emerging on the PNG/Irian Jaya border would have serious
implications for Australia’s strategic relationship with Indonesia and
any tensions in that area would need to be approached with the
utmost political sensitivity. Beyond Australia’s immediate
neighbourhood there are few circumstances that would appear to
justify military involvement in support of our direct interests.
Preparedness to participate in cooperative activities to strengthen
regional stability and security more generally and in any cooperative
security arrangements, possibly under UN auspices, developed at the
global level would be important.

AUSTRALIA’S DEFENCE AND SECURITY POLICIES

During the past two decades, Australian defence policy has
undergone a significant transformation. It has moved away from
earlier concepts of forward defence in concert with allies to focus on
the self-reliant defence of Australia and its direct interests. The
elements of this new policy were most clearly articulated in The Defence

More recently, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade,
Senator Gareth Evans, has published the first comprehensive
statement of Australia’s regional security objectives and policies.
Australia’s Regional Security assesses, inter alia, the role of Australia’s
military and politico-military capabilities in contributing to the
nation’s broader security interests. It also examines at least some of
the circumstances in which the ADF might be deployed overseas to
support those interests.

In the context of reviewing the role of the Australian Army in
the 1990s, it is important to evaluate not only the principles and
priorities which those documents establish but also their adaptability
and longevity in the light of possible strategic developments.
The Defence of Australia 1987

The 1987 White Paper drew together the various principles about the defence of Australia which had been the focus of Defence Department planning since the early 1970s and the detailed capability analysis undertaken in Paul Dibb’s Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities. On this basis, it concluded that defence self-reliance was a realistic objective for Australia and laid down not only the concepts and strategies that should guide our planning but also a quite specific blueprint for capability development.

Importantly, the judgements in the White Paper do not relate to any specific threat scenario or possible adversary. Rather, they are drawn from more objective and enduring measures — Australia’s geography and environment, particularly in the north, and the broad levels of regional military capability that could be deployed. The aim was to provide a consistent and ongoing basis for defence planning and expenditure in a ‘no threat’ environment. At the same time, by tying the levels of conflict to which the ADF may need to respond to the limits of regional capability, it ensured that the ADF should be continually adjusting (albeit gradually) to any changes that could disadvantage it operationally.

It is, therefore, most unlikely that there will be a major revision of these fundamental tenets of defence policies in the near future. Having set aside earlier perceptions that Australia did not have the population, industrial strength or armed forces to defend itself and having identified the key elements in our strategic geography, there would need to be a major shift in our strategic outlook for the focus to change from priority to the direct defence of Australia. Such a shift is not in prospect. It may be that additional, possibly time-limited, roles are required of the ADF but these could be expected to be an adjunct to, rather than a substitute for, defence of Australia responsibilities.

The primary planning elements which The Defence of Australia 1987 established, relevant to the development of the Army, are that:

- The force-in-being must be able to undertake current and foreseeable tasks, deal with those contingencies assessed as credible in the shorter term, and provide a
suitable basis for expansion should strategic circumstances deteriorate significantly.

- While Australia’s present strategic circumstances are favourable and its natural strategic advantages make the prospect of major attack unlikely, except in the longer term, lower levels of hostilities could arise with relatively limited warning.

- Defence planning should take into account both:

  (i) low-level conflict situations where the adversary’s aims are primarily political and direct engagement with the ADF would generally be avoided; and

  (ii) escalated low-level conflict situations in which the adversary would be prepared to engage the ADF directly up to the limit of available capabilities that could be realistically projected against Australia.

- In responding to those contingencies, Australia’s strategy would be one of defence-in-depth; that is, the ADF must have a comprehensive array of defensive and offensive capabilities able, as far as possible, to meet an adversary well forward of Australia in the sea and air approaches but also capable, should political or military circumstances dictate, of operating effectively close to Australian territory.

- Despite the high priority being accorded to maritime forces capable of preventing an adversary from substantial operations in the sea and air approaches, the ADF would not be able to prevent him making at least limited use of those areas for operations.

- Land forces would be needed to protect the bases from which our maritime forces operated, to take offensive action against hostile forces that had landed and, with other force elements, to protect other areas of military and civil infrastructure and population.
Beyond the direct defence of Australia itself, the White Paper noted the importance of Australia's defence policies reinforcing the positive aspects of our security environment. The objective was to contribute to regional stability and strategic consensus by assisting regional countries to develop their own self-defence capabilities and to limit the opportunities for external powers to intervene in regional affairs. Key judgements were that:

- the foundation for contributing to regional stability more generally was Australia's own capacity for self-reliant defence;
- the focus of our efforts should be within Australia's region of primary strategic interest, stretching from Southeast Asia south and east across the Indonesian archipelago to the island states of the South Pacific;
- options exist within the force-in-being for contributing to these wider security tasks; and
- generally, there were no grounds for direct defence involvement beyond Australia's region and that any contributions to peacekeeping or in support of wider Western interests could similarly be met from within the current force structure.

The emphasis in the White Paper on regional defence activities was largely on practical, day-to-day cooperative exchanges in peacetime, including consultations, high-level visits, combined training and exercises, and materiel projects. Only in PNG, where concern was expressed about the possibility of a hostile power gaining lodgement or control, and in the South Pacific was there any suggestion that Australian forces might be used in a regional conflict.\(^{38}\) Subsequent statements by the Minister for Defence in 1988 and 1989 elaborated on aspects of Australia's regional role, but it was not until

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Senator Evans’ statement that more definitive guidelines for Australian involvement were spelt out publicly.

**Australia’s Regional Security**

Senator Evans’ Ministerial Statement, presented to Parliament in December 1989, was the first major, public review of Australia’s broader security relationship with its region. It examined the ‘multidimensional’, as distinct from specifically defence, aspects of Australia contributing to a positive security and strategic environment, including through diplomacy, economic links, development assistance, and the exchange of people and ideas. The statement concluded that Australia’s focus must be on Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, not only because of the region’s intrinsic importance but also because of the degree to which we can do something about our interests there.

Importantly, the statement was prepared against the background of a changing strategic environment which had witnessed the coups in Fiji, unrest in Vanuatu and increasing instability in PNG culminating in the Bougainville uprising and calls for secession. Whereas the Defence White Paper had focussed on possible opportunities for exploitation of the South Pacific by external powers, these events brought home only too clearly the potential volatility of the region itself and the ways in which Australia’s interests might be threatened. It was also undertaken at the same time as a new classified strategic review in the Department of Defence. Such reviews have been undertaken on a regular, generally triennial, basis and it can be assumed that the two documents recognised similar strategic problems and that there would be broad consistency where their conclusions overlapped.39

With respect to the role of Australia’s armed forces, Evans’ statement noted that its capabilities were formidable in regional terms. Not only would they deter potential aggressors but they were an

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important foundation of our capacity to contribute to regional security affairs, strengthening both our ability to exercise leverage and our access to a range of military and security deliberations. The statement endorsed the value of joint exercises and other cooperative defence activities and called for a strengthening of links with Indonesia and Thailand to complement those under the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

In support of Australia’s regional security interests, the statement concluded that the ADF could undertake a diverse range of peacetime activities. These extended:

- from those as uncontentious as civil disaster relief, to fisheries and narcotics surveillance, and activities as sensitive as counter-terrorism operations, the protection or rescue of Australian citizens abroad, or the provision of support for a legitimate government in maintaining internal security.\(^\text{40}\)

The latter activities were, however, extremely sensitive and ‘in many situations it may be more appropriate to respond to a request for assistance with a civilian rather than military capability’.\(^\text{41}\)

The most difficult question was to define the circumstances in which Australia should be prepared to use military force to pursue security interests not immediately affecting the defence of Australian territory. Such situations, the statement accepted, would be limited to the South Pacific, ‘where our military power is disproportionately large’. The scope for similar initiatives in Southeast Asia would be very limited.

Even in the South Pacific, Senator Evans cautioned against Australia attempting to become the arbiter of political legitimacy or of moral acceptability. The use of military force would only be appropriate in the most unusual and extreme circumstances. Every situation would need to be treated on a case-by-case basis but certain ‘cumulative criteria’ were suggested. These were:

\(^{40}\) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Australia’s Regional Security*, p.21.

\(^{41}\) Ibid.
the agreement of the recognised domestic authorities (except possibly in cases where an unfriendly government is supporting actions immediately detrimental to Australian nationals, e.g. hostage-taking);

- a manifestly direct threat to major Australian security interests;
- a finite time frame for the military operation;
- a clear and achievable operational objective; and
- consultation with, and if possible the cooperation and participation of, other states in the region.\(^{42}\)

The Government’s acceptance that in certain specific circumstances the ADF could become militarily involved in the region is an important adjunct to the possible contingencies outlined in the Defence White Paper. At the same time, it is hard to see this role extending beyond PNG and the South Pacific. Cooperative defence arrangements with Southeast Asia are focussing increasingly on maritime activities as those countries move towards more balanced force structures. Furthermore, those countries possess sizeable ground forces which, except in certain specialised areas, would make the contribution of Australian ground forces of limited relevance. The key question is whether the force structure, capabilities and priorities accepted for the defence of Australia will continue to offer appropriate ‘options’ for responding to events in the South Pacific.

Resources

While the basic tenets of Australia’s defence and security policies are unlikely to change during the 1990s, Defence’s capacity to give full effect to them is less certain. The level of national resources devoted to defence is currently under considerable pressure due to the current state of the Australian economy and the Government’s policies of restraint in all areas of public expenditure. There have also been calls for a cutback in defence spending in the light of detente between

the superpowers and the subsequent progress in arms control and disarmament at the global level. Irrespective of the differences between the strategic situation in Europe and in the Asia/Pacific region, these changes are affecting perceptions of possible threats within Australia and the political pressure to realise the ‘peace dividend’ is likely to continue.

At the same time, the costs of maintaining an effective defence capability are likely to continue to rise. Not only are regional countries becoming more able to operate and maintain advanced weapons systems, but their sound economic prospects and the likely increased availability of some systems — given the reduced demand among NATO and Warsaw Pact countries — make it possible that they will be acquired in greater numbers. The accuracy and lethality of weapons systems are likely to increase; new capabilities such as precision-guided missiles will pose a greater threat to the survivability of major ADF combat assets; and the use of more sophisticated defensive systems, including electronic warfare, is likely to become more common. The costs of attracting, training, and retaining manpower can also be expected to increase for the ADF given demographic trends, competition from the private sector, and the need to operate and support advanced weapons and sensors.

This does not mean that Australia’s currently favourable strategic position is likely to change rapidly. It does, however, place greater pressure on Australia’s ability to maintain a technological and/or numerical edge in those areas fundamental to our security. It also emphasises the need to ensure the maximum capability return from each defence dollar. In this context, the significant premiums being paid to produce defence equipment within Australia will need to be subject to close scrutiny. Where the premium can be offset against the capacity to maintain a capability subsequently, to ensure its effectiveness in our immediate operational environment, or to support the development of related capabilities, that expenditure may be justified. In other circumstances, a clearer line may need to be drawn between the requirements of self-reliance and defence self-sufficiency or the use of defence resources to support wider economic objectives.

In contrast, defence expenditure has fallen significantly in recent years to only 2.3 per cent of gross domestic product (compared to 2.8 per cent in the early 1980s and over 4 per cent during the
Vietnam War) and there has been no real increase in the Defence budget in the past two years. These figures contrast sharply with Dibb’s estimate that an increase of around 3 per cent per annum would be necessary to give effect to his recommendations and the White Paper’s conclusion that ‘if we are to achieve the levels of defence capability and the priorities reflected in this Paper, there is a need, over the life of the program, for an allocation of resources generally within the order of 2.6 per cent to 3.0 per cent of GDP’.

Some substantial savings have undoubtedly been achieved through the rationalisation of defence industry and facilities and have helped to cushion the impact of this reduced financial guidance. Alan Wrigley’s recent report on ‘The Defence Force and the Community’ has also made some useful recommendations on the civilianisation of certain defence force functions and the contracting out of specific tasks to private industry. While undoubtedly beneficial, these tend only to mask the significant trade-offs which are already being made within the Defence vote to realise the major capital equipment program set out in the White Paper. The increase in expenditure on capital equipment and facilities from 22 per cent to around 30 per cent of the Defence budget has significantly affected the funds available for operating costs and personnel. Extended procurement projects to which Australia is already committed, including the new submarines and ANZAC frigates, will make it difficult to redress this balance in the shorter term.

In Australia’s presently favourable strategic circumstances, some trade-offs between different areas of expenditure can be tolerated. Faced with the prospect of limited financial flexibility in the longer term, however, it is important to identify strategies by which the ADF can more effectively exploit its available resources and be well placed to handle the types of contingencies that could arise within relatively short timeframes. With respect to land forces, these resource considerations place additional pressures not only on how those forces are to be structured and equipped but the ways in which they are to carry out their primary roles in a resource-efficient manner without reliance on subsequent substantial increases in funds.

43 Department of Defence, The Defence of Australia 1987, para. 9.15, p.112.
Areas requiring careful consideration include:

- strategies to ensure the maximum combat effectiveness of the individual soldier (not relying on overwhelming numbers but on superior weaponry, tactics and training);

- enhancing the ‘teeth-to-tail’ ratio of deployed forces, including reliance on joint service support and streamlined logistic arrangements;

- examining the scope for different force elements to undertake a range of related tasks rather than designated for a specific purpose;

- balancing the possession of capabilities by individual units in all circumstances against their rapid availability should they be required; and

- providing greater flexibility as to the level at which, and time scales within which, different force elements may need to be called upon — planning based on ‘worst case’ scenarios in all circumstances being inherently resource inefficient.

It is these types of issues that are taken into account in the following sections.

THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA

Within the broad policy guidelines laid down in The Defence of Australia 1987, there are several key factors which shape the level and nature of ADF land force operations. There are the enduring features of Australia’s geography and environment which suggest the most likely areas of operation and the conditions under which operations would be conducted. The impact of those factors on ground force roles will, however, depend to a significant degree on the ADF’s effective use of the maritime environment and on the ways in which the adversary seeks to exploit our strategic vulnerabilities.
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Enduring Geo-Strategic Factors

Central to judgements about Australia’s substantial natural protection against major attack are its extensive sea and air approaches. Only in the north and northwest do the archipelagos stretching south and east from Southeast Asia offer stepping stones for a major ground force attack. Even there, the distances (160 km to PNG, 250 km to Indonesia at the nearest point) remain significant constraints and there is very little infrastructure in the eastern archipelagos capable of mounting and sustaining more than limited operations against us.

It has been estimated that it would take in the order of ten years and a substantial diversion of resources by a regional country for a major threat to arise. The prospect of another nation being able or prepared to threaten significantly the population, industry and infrastructure in the south of the continent remains very remote.

More limited form of hostilities in the north and northwest would also face major obstacles. These include:

- shallow and largely unchartered coastal waters, together with significant tidal variations, affecting both the insertion and extraction of raiding parties;
- problems of mobility outside a few surfaced coastal roads, compounded in the wet season when many areas are simply inaccessible;
- difficulties of concealment due to the nature of the vegetation in many areas, dust during the dry season, and the capacity of the local population to report unusual happenings;
- the geographic dispersion of targets and the distances between them, tending to confine the operations of hostile ground forces, once landed, to a specific area;
- the lack of available infrastructure to support military operations, placing greater emphasis on the self-sufficiency of hostile forces even for non-military supplies;
the effects of the harsh environment, particularly heat and dust, on combat effectiveness and equipment reliability; and

the vulnerability of raiding parties to detection during resupply and particularly extraction — once their presence was known and Australia’s surveillance and response assets alerted, units attempting to recover those forces would face a significant chance of interception.

In addition, the north of Australia should not be seen as a uniform environment for planning. Many of these problems are compounded in inland areas and in the difficult terrain of Arnhem Land, the Kimberleys, and much of the Gulf of Carpentaria, where the absence of significant targets would be an important disincentive. While very limited hostilities could occur there, an adversary would be more likely to focus on the littoral areas in the vicinity of Darwin, Broome/Derby, and the Pilbara, their adjacent inland corridors, and more isolated resource developments such as Gove and Groote Eylandt, Weipa and the Koolan and Cockatoo islands in King Sound, Western Australia. Where an adversary attempted a raid with a large force (around company strength), it would be difficult to sustain that force for an extended period and early extraction after completing its mission would be important.

For Australia, the northern environment would also have a major impact on operations. Apart from the difficult operating conditions, the sheer size of the north and the extensive coastline will continue to pose problems for a numerically small defence force. Particular operational concerns would be:

- The importance of responding rapidly to reports of incursions while matching as far as possible the size of the force and its capabilities to the specific threat and retaining the flexibility to redeploy those units for other tasks at short notice.

- Ensuring a timely deployment of appropriate force levels to the north, taking into account:

  (i) the capacity of the limited military and civil infrastructure to support them;
the availability and capacity of strategic transport elements to resupply them (noting that the same assets may also be required to provide long-range tactical mobility); and

the need for streamlined logistic support arrangements to minimise additional protective and transport demands.

- Maintaining effective command, control and communication links both between the strategic-level HQ located in southeastern Australia and the north and between dispersed force elements deployed across the north.

- Matching operational imperatives with the interests and responsibilities of the civil authorities and population, including:

the extent to which normal civilian activity would continue (potentially having a significant impact on the definition of an Area of Operations); and

demands for additional protective measures which would not command priority on military grounds alone.

A specific, and rather different, problem for land forces would be the protection of Australia's offshore territories and resources installations. Apart from the North West Shelf, these are at considerable distance from Australia. Cocos and Christmas islands in particular would not fall within the primary surveillance and response umbrella developed for the mainland. Warning of hostilities originating in the archipelago would be limited and the communication and resupply links to deployed ADF units would be vulnerable to interdiction.

Hostilities against the offshore territories or installations would generally not enhance an adversary's ability to threaten the Australian mainland. They could, however, be seen as soft targets appropriate for embarrassing or extending Australian forces. They might also become the focus of disputes over offshore resources or seabed boundaries. The success of defensive operations would
depend on the timeliness of deployment of any ADF protective force and the tailoring of that joint force to respond to specific, local area conditions. Given the isolation of Cocos and Christmas islands from Australia, the complementarity of their defensive arrangements would be important — reducing reaction times, providing ready reinforcement and confronting the adversary with a more complex operational equation.

The Relationship Between Maritime and Land Forces

Australia’s strategy of defence-in-depth places a high premium on the ability of the ADF to deny an adversary significant operational freedom in the sea and air approaches to our continent. This is where the adversary is likely to be most vulnerable during the insertion, resupply and extraction phases. It is also in the areas of maritime strike and air defence that Australia currently enjoys both numerical and technological advantages over other regional inventories. Importantly, it is the effectiveness of those maritime capabilities that makes the ground force threat to Australia more manageable, despite the numerically small size of the Army relative to the area it needs to protect and the size of other regional ground forces.

While regional combat aircraft and Precision-Guided Munition (PGM) equipped surface vessels are moving technologically closer to Australia, their modest numbers, regional budget realities (despite some more ambitious force structure plans) and the enhancements taking place in Australia’s own surveillance capabilities suggest that the ADF’s margin of superiority will not narrow significantly in the next decade. At the same time, Australia’s surveillance coverage is not without weaknesses. The network of Over-the-Horizon Radars (OTHRs) will give genuine broad-area coverage against a range of airborne and surface targets, but the system is still being developed and, it appears, continues to have some limitations in relation to the time of day, ionospheric conditions and the angle and speed of advance. Concerns have also been expressed about the ability of OTHR to control intercepts by combat aircraft, but these relate also to the capabilities of tactical radars and the doctrine for their employment.
More detailed coverage of focal areas can be provided by ground-based radars and P-3C Long-Range Maritime Patrol (LRMP) aircraft. The number of ground-based radars is currently very limited, however, covering only Darwin-Tindal and a deployable Control and Reporting Unit (CRU) and the systems have significant limitations against low-flying aircraft. The P-3Cs are optimised for the ASW role and, without a major expansion of crew numbers, would be unable to realise their potential for sustained, wide-area operations. Major surface vessels could be deployed in the immediate approaches for picket radar tasks but, as with the P-3Cs, this would restrict their flexibility and availability for other primary tasks.

Generally, the combination of surveillance and intelligence-gathering assets available to Australia could be expected to identify the assembling and projecting of larger military forces towards us. They would give less assurance about the ADF's ability to locate and identify individual platforms, particularly if they are smaller, slower and not clearly military targets with identifiable signatures. The fitting of helicopters to major naval units and the development of towed arrays will improve the ADF's chances of detecting surface and subsurface intrusions in specific areas but, at a minimum, the combat surveillance radars of aircraft need upgrading if a more effective level of coverage is to be achieved.

The problems of denying an adversary significant operational freedom in the sea and air approaches are compounded by both the potential breadth of the area of operations and, particularly for intrusions by aircraft, the short reaction time available to respond in areas closer to the archipelagos. The use of feints, saturation of systems by a number of possible targets, electronic countermeasures or the disabling of particular surveillance systems cannot be ruled out. In lower levels of conflict, ADF operations would also be constrained by the need for positive target identification, given both the possibility of concurrent legitimate activity and the capacity of an adversary to exploit international law freedoms.

These capability factors reinforce the likelihood that ground force operations by an adversary would be either small-scale, covert operations or, if a specific military objective were to be achieved, a short, sharp raid by a larger force which was to be extracted immediately after completing its mission. The latter would generally
be inserted by air and, given the importance of a covert approach and the availability of air-to-surface capabilities for more major targets, would be likely to be limited to around company size (one C-130). The possibility of a larger, possibly demonstrative, raid cannot be ruled out and the ADF may wish to take a measure of insurance against this. However, a company-size raid would appear to be a realistic upper limit for planning ADF deployment options.

While the ADF's maritime array will remain vulnerable to covert, smaller scale intrusions, those same maritime and air defence capabilities will be valuable adjuncts to ADF ground force operations, particularly once the presence of a hostile ground force is clearly defined. They would be able to:

- constrain significantly an adversary's ability to resupply or extract a ground force unit, thus affecting the sustainability of hostile operations and allowing the ADF more flexibility in the timing and scale of its ground force response;
- support integrated surveillance coverage of the littoral area and adjacent waters;
- provide, depending on the available assets, a range of alternative firepower options including close air support and, possibly, naval gunfire support in remote locations and offshore; and
- limit the air defence needs of deployed ground forces, except where there is a need for continuous coverage of high-value fixed targets.

It should be noted, however, that these are not currently among the primary roles for the ADF's air and naval assets and both operational concepts and training would need to be revised to maximise their effectiveness.

Land force operations, on the other hand, should not be seen simply as a subsidiary element of the maritime strategy. Apart from the location and engagement of raiding parties, they are essential to the continuation and effectiveness of maritime operations and to shaping the adversary's views on possible military options. In this context, naval and air bases need to be secured, resupply by land
routes assured, and important intelligence supplied to allow air and naval assets to focus their operations. Carefully developed concepts for land force operations can also be exploited to raise the cost for the adversary of pursuing certain strategies and operating in particular areas.

Possible Ground Force Contingencies

Faced with the difficulties of Australia’s northern environment, the ADF’s strength in maritime forces and the balance within his own forces, an adversary would face some difficult choices in the use of military force. Isolated incidents such as exchanges between naval vessels and one-off actions against specific offshore or coastal targets may occur with little warning in a period of tension. A more systematic campaign against mainland targets would not, however, be undertaken lightly. It would require careful planning, particularly in terms of insertion and extraction of forces, and could provoke direct Australian retaliation.

Current defence planning assesses that both low-level and escalated low-level conflicts could arise in the shorter term. They are a useful set of parameters because while they provide for a ‘worst case’ situation — up to the limits of regional capabilities insofar as they can be realistically applied — they allow for both different levels of hostile force and different motivations behind the use of that force. While they are not in any sense predictive, and actual hostilities may well cut across the boundaries between them, an ADF with the capabilities, concepts and flexibility to respond to either should be well placed to handle a range of possible future contingencies.

Low-Level Conflict

What then would these hostilities be like in terms of land force operations? Dibb refers to up to company-size units being deployed onto Australian territory in low-level conflict, primarily for dispersed operations, and to their enhancement, particularly in terms of
firepower and mobility, in escalated low-level conflict.\textsuperscript{44} This would appear to be a realistic planning measure. While regional forces do have the capacity to deploy larger numbers, the importance of covertness, surprise and sustainability or early extraction suggest that special forces units of around that size would be the upper limit of a hostile ground force presence. Much smaller units (e.g. 4-6 man patrols) would be likely away from major infrastructure targets and focal areas.

Raiding parties might be equipped with sophisticated personal weapons (including light machine guns) and have a supply of explosives. Ammunition stocks would, however, be limited and more lethal and longer range weaponry (including anti-armour weapons and medium-range mortars) only deployed when there was a specific target of considerable value to engage. Sustainability would come from mobility and concealment and, even when attacking a defended installation, protracted engagements with the ADF would be avoided.

In low-level conflict, the adversary’s aim would be primarily to put political pressure on Australia through the use of military force. Direct engagements with the ADF would be generally avoided, but acts of sabotage, small-scale raids and even simple evidence of a possible landing would be used by the adversary. Likely targets would include remote small towns and mining ventures, isolated settlements, port facilities, land transport and communication links (e.g. microwave towers) and energy supplies. Direct attacks on important civil and military facilities would be unlikely, but acts of sabotage and damage to vulnerable supporting infrastructure may occur. Attacks could be quite specific to the issue in dispute or spread over a wide geographic area.

The aims of such limited hostilities could be several. The adversary’s possible objectives would include demonstrating the seriousness with which he viewed the dispute, causing or threatening economic disruption, creating apprehension among the local population, and committing Australia to a disproportionate and costly protective response. At this level of hostilities, attacks could be random and infrequent and there would be no need to target important civil and military infrastructures protected by the ADF.

\textsuperscript{44} Dibb, \textit{Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities}, p.79.
Raiding parties would be small and generally inserted and extracted covertly by aircraft, fast motor launches or civilian fishing vessels. Possible targets could be evenly balanced between northern focal areas and the more remote parts of the northern littoral, although sustained operations would only be likely in the vicinity of focal areas where there were more potential targets, more available non-military supplies, and greater activity to assist with concealment.

**Escalated Low-Level Conflict**

In escalated low-level conflict, an adversary would be determined to inflict direct and significant damage on Australia’s civil and military capabilities. This could be accomplished by more frequent and systematic low-level raids or by the conduct of a number of direct attacks employing larger forces. The aim would be to destroy or disable key economic or military assets such as fuel storage or pipelines, airport or port facilities or mining ventures. While some dispersed operations may well occur, the priority targets would be in the key northern focal areas. Attacks are also likely to be far more systematically planned in terms of preliminary reconnaissance, diversionary activities, and possibly small-scale raids to undermine the ADF protective capabilities. At the upper end of the scale, ‘hit-and-run’ raids by company-size forces against coastal towns such as Broome, Wyndham or Nhulunbuy could occur and ground forces defending military or military-related infrastructure (e.g. airfields, ports) could be subject to sporadic air attacks.

At the same time, ground force hostilities would not be open-ended. An adversary would continue to face major difficulties of insertion, resupply and extraction, particularly where ADF surveillance assets were concentrated around key focal areas. Any larger force elements would be both more vulnerable to detection and far more difficult to sustain or make mobile. Even if Australia’s maritime defence capabilities could be overcome in a particular area, this would only be temporary. Attacks by small special forces units and aircraft may extend to key inland targets such as Tindal and the OTHR sites but, beyond this, escalated hostilities would remain limited to focal areas on the northern littoral. Aircraft would be the only practical means of deployment for larger ground force units.
Raiding parties in escalated low-level conflict could be expected to carry a more comprehensive range of weaponry and explosives, including medium-range mortars and direct fire weapons, and a limited anti-armour/bunker-buster capability. Mobility would still be a major difficulty for larger forces and weapons would be primarily man-portable. Ammunition stocks, and hence the force's capacity for self-defence, would be greater but still insufficient for any form of protracted engagement with the ADF.

The greater operational freedom which an adversary's forces would enjoy in the vicinity of the offshore territories would render Cocos and Christmas islands vulnerable to raids and harassments in both levels of conflict. These would be aimed primarily at their limited transport, communications and storage facilities. In escalated low-level conflict, an attempt could also be made to occupy the islands, at least temporarily. This would still, however, demand quite substantial force levels should Australia have already deployed a balanced protective force to the islands. Offshore resource installations relatively distant from Australia (e.g. in the Timor Sea) would also be vulnerable to seizure by water — or heliborne ground forces.

More Substantial Conflict

Should Australia's strategic circumstances deteriorate and an adversary build up forces against us, Australia could face the prospect of more substantial conflict. This would involve the conduct of sustained joint operations on or close to Australian territory and require the adversary to gain significant control of the sea and air approaches to Australia for a time. While regional inventories do possess sizeable ground forces, their maritime and air defense capabilities, logistics, and over-the-water transport are very limited and could not be developed in the short term.

Hostilities relevant to land force operations could include more sustained raids by substantial (company-size or greater) land forces against a wide range of important targets. A major land force lodgement in the north would also be possible. The latter would most likely be directed at gaining control in the vicinity of an airfield, or possibly a port, from which the adversary could conduct more widespread raids and harassments and exercise local air superiority.
Larger land force units might be deployed beyond the littoral area into the Darwin-Tindal corridor, the Pilbara, and possibly down Cape York.

Such a contingency would undoubtedly have very serious consequences and would require a substantial expansion of the ADF. The possibility of future expansion of the ADF has, however, had a rather deceptive impact on defence planning. In particular, it has allowed the wisdom of some important conventional military doctrine and tactics to remain unchallenged or, more importantly, unrelated to Australia’s own strategic environment. The fact remains that even if an adversary was capable of more conventional operations against Australia, how he used those capabilities would still be limited by the paucity of targets, the harsh environment and the difficulties of deploying and sustaining large forces across extensive sea and air approaches. Australia similarly would be concerned to use balanced, joint force concepts to overcome its small numerical size and to exploit the adversary’s problems offshore.

Accordingly, while the scale, intensity and destructiveness of possible hostilities may increase, more conventional force-on-force confrontations would not be to the ADF’s advantage. Speed, mobility, and flexibility would continue to be the operational characteristics that would maximise Australia’s natural advantages. It is not the case that, by giving the ADF the capacity to handle the worst-case, longer term scenarios, it will automatically be equipped to cope with lower level conflicts. Rather, it is the lessons about Australia from lower levels of conflict that should enhance the ADF’s capabilities should circumstances deteriorate.

The other key question is how much planning and resources should be devoted now to future remote possibilities. The Dibb Review, the 1987 White Paper and subsequent defence planning has moved Australia substantially towards the concept of a ‘terminal’ rather than a ‘core’ force. Provided planning does remain sensitive to the changing limits of regional capabilities insofar as they can be realistically applied, there are no grounds to suggest that this should be inadequate in the future. Many of the capabilities being introduced are appropriate to different levels of conflict and there would be substantial warning to adjust structures and tactics and round out units should that possibility become more credible. What is needed is
an enhanced planning effort to recognise the points at which new approaches or capabilities would be required. The devotion of significant resources, beyond those capabilities encompassed in the concept of escalated low-level conflict, would not appear justified.

ROLES FOR THE ARMY IN THE DEFENCE OF AUSTRALIA

Despite the significant measure of control that ADF maritime forces are likely to exercise over the sea and air approaches, the potential for a range of hostile land force incursions remains and the problems of defending Australian territory against those incursions are still daunting. The huge size of the area of possible operations is compounded by the numerically small size of the ADF, while the elements of covertness and surprise that are likely to characterise an adversary's operations will place as much emphasis on the ability to locate and engage hostile forces as on direct force-on-force firepower comparisons. While more major attacks are likely to be limited to a small number of focal areas, lesser hostilities could occur at random.

In addition, the shape of ADF operations will be conditioned by a range of other factors. Foremost among these will be that land forces will be operating on Australian territory, frequently in circumstances where the existence or extent of hostilities is unclear and where civilian activity will be continuing as normally as possible. Not only may the ADF need to consider the need for additional legal power (e.g. for searches, arrests) but operations are likely to be subject to tight rules of engagement in relation to positive identification of targets and discharge of weapons. Civil and military authority would continue in parallel and the definition of an area of operations might be extremely difficult.

Other factors which the ADF will need to take into account, given both the adversary's objectives and the nature of the northern environment, include:

- **Proportionality.** The size of Australia's north means that, without careful planning, it may take only a small number of hostile actions to commit a large part
of the ADF’s land forces to the north. This would place major strains on both manpower and logistic support resources and may, indeed, be the adversary’s objective. While some additional commitment may be difficult to avoid, planning should seek as far as possible to tailor the reaction to the threat. This would require a careful balance between the level of initial commitment (hence insurance) to a particular situation and the capacity to reinforce at short notice.

- **Timeliness.** The short duration of most hostile ground force raids would place great emphasis on the ADF’s ability to deploy to, and within, the north. There would be limited opportunity for carefully planned deployments requiring the mustering of significant transport assets. Land forces would generally be deployed on light scales to an area using wheeled, fixed- or rotary-wing transport. Supporting air and naval assets might be used to deny the extraction of a hostile force and provide additional firepower. Only where a larger (i.e. company-size) force was pinned down would the deployment of the full range of ADF firepower be appropriate.

- **Flexibility.** The likely covertness and unpredictability of lower level hostilities will require the ADF to maintain considerable flexibility in all aspects of its operations. Response forces will require the ability to concentrate or conduct dispersal operations within quite short time frames, planning and deployment phases will frequently be limited, and the ability to adjust quickly the size and composition of forces and their assigned mission will be important. The capacity to relocate forces within a particular area or to deploy rapidly to another area would help counter an adversary’s ability to exploit surprise and ambiguity.

- **Supportability.** Any significant ADF land force deployments to the north will place major demands on both the limited northern infrastructure and on available strategic and tactical transport capabilities.
To alleviate this, close attention needs to be given to maximising the ‘teeth-to-tail’ ratio of deployed forces, structuring forces on light scales with heavier firepower available on an ‘as required’ basis, reliance on common support and maintenance arrangements by joint forces in a particular area, and the effective integration of civil transport, infrastructure and other support services into operational concepts.

- **Sustainability.** Beyond the initial deployment of forces, planning also needs to take into account that, while activity levels for many land force units will be low, even lower level contingencies could be protracted. There will be a requirement not only sustain logistic support and maintain the effectiveness of weapons systems but also to have follow-on forces available within an appropriate time frame. The traditional calculation is that it would take up to two battalions to retain a third continuously on operations.

In addition, the ADF should seek to maintain control as far as possible over the timing and extent of land force deployments rather than simply being reactive to the actions of the adversary. While this would not be easy in circumstances where the adversary is not dependent on the achievement of specific military objectives, there is considerable scope through the timing, level and judicious placement of ADF forces to constrain an adversary’s military options or, at least, his perceptions of the costs and risks attaching to them. To the extent that static concepts of defence and force deployment can be avoided, greater uncertainty can be introduced into an adversary’s planning and difficulties posed for hostile intelligence collection.

Against this background, four key roles emerge for ADF land forces. These are:

- surveillance and reconnaissance;
- protection of important civil and military infrastructure;
- response to incursions onto Australian territory; and
- defence of offshore territories and resource assets.
In recent years, Defence planning has tended to see these roles as the responsibility of discrete force elements. However, the likely nature of credible contingencies in northern Australia suggests that this may not be fully justified and it will be important to establish the boundaries between them.

**Surveillance and Reconnaissance**

One of the most difficult tasks for the ADF, but one of the most critical to a controlled response, will be to locate and identify hostile ground forces operating on Australian territory. While the primary responsibility will fall to those maritime surveillance capabilities appropriate to detecting such forces during the insertion phase, ADF land force units could also expect to have a major role. Systematic surveillance across the northern littoral would not be practical but key tasks would include:

- regular checking of areas (e.g. beaches, remote airfields) considered likely or attractive landing zones;
- following up reports of suspicious but unconfirmed activity; and
- close liaison with the local, including Aboriginal, communities.

In addition, these units would be able to regularly update information on the condition of local infrastructure that might be used to support larger ADF deployments.

Unless hostilities were narrowly focussed, there would be limits as to how comprehensive this coverage could be. The priority of target areas and the regularity of revisit would need to be carefully assessed. Key areas in a situation of widespread hostilities against northern Australia would, however, be the Pilbara coastline, Broome to Yampi Sound, Joseph Bonaparte Gulf (Wyndham) to the Coburg Peninsula (including the approaches to Darwin), and the western side of Cape York from the Torres Strait to the Archer River. This reflects both the density and accessibility of potential targets and the relative proximity of those areas to the northern archipelago. Apart from the
Pilbara, the options for covert insertion would generally be greater and the transit time reduced.

In addition to a close rapport with the local community, the key requirements of surveillance units would be mobility and the size of their surveillance envelope. Organic mobility would generally be provided by four-wheel-drive vehicles or trucks, while helicopters could be used to supplement this in the wet season and where speed of response was considered essential. The selective use of technology might also be exploited through the use of unattended ground sensors and by equipping surveillance patrols with combat surveillance radars. Reliable tactical communications over longer ranges, together with the rapid correlation, verification and transfer of surveillance information, would be essential in managing appropriate follow-up action. Real-time integration of information between different land areas and between the land and maritime environment would also be essential and need to be taken into account in joint command and control arrangements.

Land force surveillance units have tended to be seen as a remote area capability and, in that context, they will undoubtedly be useful in limiting the need for, and chances of, a disproportionate response by large ADF combat units. This is the concept of the Regional Force Surveillance Units which are armed on light scales, primarily for their own protection. The value of those forces in providing the initial trip-wire against attacks on major civil and military infrastructure should not, however, be overlooked. In addition, if the RFSUs were enhanced by the addition of small numbers of troops trained like special force units for long-range reconnaissance missions, this would significantly enhance their capacity to handle small (4-6 man) raiding parties without the need for major reinforcement. Their deployment during the initial stages of hostilities would significantly increase the potential costs for an adversary of resorting to the use of military force and raise the threshold at which he was prepared to do this.

Protection of Important Civil and Military Infrastructure

Unrestricted use of communications facilities including ports and airfields, maintenance of a range of civilian services, and
continued resource production will be important Australian objectives in lower levels of conflict. They are essential not only to the conduct of ADF operations and to the well-being of the northern population but also to minimising the capacity of the adversary to exert political or economic leverage.

Protection of those facilities will be a most difficult and resource-demanding role for ADF land forces. While most key assets are confined to a relatively small number of focal areas — the Pilbara, Broome/Derby, Wyndham/Kununurra, Darwin/Tindal, Gove, Groote Eylandt, Weipa — those areas are physically large, often contain a number of vulnerable assets, and protection may be required for the local population as well as the facilities themselves. Most are also located on or close to the coast, providing an adversary with different approach options, shortening reaction times for ADF response forces, and necessitating a close linkage with maritime forces to provide 'depth' to their defence. Even where facilities are relatively isolated (e.g. RAAF Base Curtin, the Gove bauxite extraction facilities), their sheer size and the number of vulnerable points within them (e.g. fuel supplies, explosive/ammunition stores, conveyor belts) potentially require substantial resources to protect them.

In many contingencies it may not be necessary to provide a high level of protection for all these assets but, at a minimum, deployments will be necessary to the ADF's primary operational and support facilities in the north and considerable political pressure could be expected for a protective presence in the major northern urban centres including Darwin, Broome, Derby, Wyndham, Kununurra and Katherine. Where urban centres are collocated with ADF facilities, or are themselves being protected, the difficulties for the ADF will be compounded by the limits to military authority to control normal civilian movement or activity and to the use of longer range and/or indirect firepower to engage a hostile force even after it has been identified.

Apart from deciding which assets require protection, the major difficulties for the ADF will be deciding what level of threat to plan against and the availability of resources, particularly manpower. Judgements will need to be made on the extent to which protective measures focus on the most likely prospect of small 'special forces' type raids or guard against the possibility of a larger 'hit and run'
attack should the conflict escalate. With respect to resources, such protective tasks are traditionally manpower intensive and Dibb has estimated that Australia might require up to ten battalions to handle the role in addition to those forces required for surveillance, response and other roles.45 Those numbers are presently not available within the ADF and would require considerable expansion and a large injection of resources for training and equipment.

To date, attempts to find a solution to this problem have related primarily to the use of the Reserves. Dibb saw a greater sense of purpose for the Reserves in ear-marking them for the protective role and, by tailoring their training to this end, making them operationally effective within a shorter time frame. Wrigley went even further in proposing a considerable expansion of the Reserves at the expense of Regular forces. His objective was to generate a numerically larger land force within existing resource constraints. Within Defence, considerable attention has already been given to the concept of a Ready Reserve and to the integration of Reserve and Regular force elements to round out existing formations. Langtry has proposed that some traditional 'police' roles, such as traffic control and checking of civilians, be carried out by a part-time para-military force drawn from the civilian community. This, he suggests, would free Army units for the more specific military tasks for which they were trained.46

Providing sufficient trained manpower will always be a difficult problem for Australia and these recent studies offer useful options for improving the current situation. At the same time, what tends to be overlooked are both the importance of proportionality in Australia’s response and the difficulties of either the northern infrastructure or the ADF’s logistic support chain being able to sustain resupply. The impact on morale and combat effectiveness of large numbers of personnel sitting around waiting to respond to generally limited and infrequent hostilities by an adversary not wishing to become involved in a protracted engagement could also be significant.

For these reasons, greater attention needs also to be given to ways of improving the effectiveness of available manpower (whatever its level) by:

- the selective use of technology; and
- the adoption of flexible concepts for providing different levels of protection.

Technology could be exploited in two key areas. Capabilities such as combat surveillance radars, night vision devices and helicopters could be used to increase the effectiveness of tactical warning in the vicinity of major facilities while relieving pressure on manpower. Second, key elements of protective forces could be equipped with enhanced short to medium range direct firepower, capable of effectively engaging the enemy at range without the need for more substantial layered firepower support. Apart from its mechanised forces, Army capabilities in this area are currently very limited.

To be more resource efficient, operational concepts for the defence of vital assets would need to be based more on risk management strategies rather than on guarding against 'worst case' scenarios in all circumstances. Key elements in such an approach would be:

- identification of the most vulnerable points within an asset (i.e. those most likely to render it inoperative or affect its performance for more than a brief period);
- the immediate availability of a mobile, rapid response force with the firepower and protection to engage a small raiding party at close range or to delay a larger force until reinforcements were available; and
- the provision of follow-up forces at short notice either to reinforce the protective force before an anticipated attack or to surround the known hostile force.

This approach would not prevent the ADF from being able to provide comprehensive protection for a number of key assets at an early point in a contingency. This may well be necessary because of the importance of an asset to ADF operations, its direct relationship to the dispute, specific intelligence or political direction. At the same
time, larger scale deployments would not occur as a matter of course without reference to those factors. What it would do is provide at least a minimum level of protection to those important infrastructure assets considered to be possible targets while raising the threshold for, and potential costs of, actions against them. The capacity of the ADF to change the level and nature of a protective presence at quite short notice would significantly complicate an adversary’s intelligence gathering and planning.

An additional advantage of incorporating a mobile response element into protective forces would be the ability of that force either to pursue a withdrawing raiding party or to respond to other small incidents in the immediate vicinity (noting that actions close by which did not risk direct engagement may be an adversary’s preferred strategy, especially in low-level conflict). The force would need to be structured and sized in such a way as to ensure that the asset itself was not left completely vulnerable and its radius of action would need to be limited to 30-50 km to permit rapid regrouping. However, given the possible limits on an adversary’s mobility and his frequent concern to be extracted rapidly once his presence was known, this capability could be valuable in both ensuring a rapid response to cut off the enemy force and in raising the threshold for calling upon larger response elements.

Apart from the technologies noted above, this approach would require the deployment, as part of the protective force, of a careful mix of limited numbers of firepower and tactical mobility assets. These might include helicopter gunships, APCs, medium artillery and mortars. In the longer term, this concept might also be enhanced by designing or modifying defence infrastructure assets in a way that either simplified the protection of vital aspects (e.g. ammunition, fuel) against low-level raids or provided for a degree of redundancy in those areas.

An important question which does arise, however, is whether these more complex operational aspects of the protective role are appropriate for reserve forces. Much would depend on the level of training that could be provided and the specificity of the task. It would, however, appear desirable that the mobile response aspects of the protective tasks be provided by regular forces, at least where
significant damage to a particular asset would undermine Australia’s defence effort.

The other aspect of vital asset protection which should be mentioned briefly is that of air defence. This would primarily be provided as part of the broad area air defence coverage of the F/A-18 combat aircraft. However, where assets were well removed from major airfields (e.g. Gove) or were vital to the ADF’s control over its operational environments (particularly the northern airfields), surface-to-air missile batteries would provide valuable insurance against any failure of surveillance systems to give a timely alert. Primarily, those air defence capabilities should be designed to counter the prospect of ‘hit and run’ raids by only one or two aircraft. The hardening and dispersal of key defence facilities would also increase their survivability.

Response to Raids on Australian Territory

Assessments of the role and structuring of land forces for operations in northern Australia have tended to approach the response task as quite separate to that of protection. The nature of the northern environment, the likely shape and level of hostilities, and the importance of flexibility in the ADF’s operational concepts suggests, however, that so clear a distinction may not be warranted.

Apart from measures to protect important military and civil assets directly, the ADF will need to be able to respond to ground force raids in two quite different circumstances. These are where:

- raids occur against a range of smaller and more isolated targets including towns and settlements, homesteads and infrastructure links (e.g. bridges, microwave towers, telephone lines, pipelines); and
- either specific intelligence or the conduct of a raid indicates that additional response or protective forces are needed in the vicinity of a major asset.

Outside the primary focal areas in northern Australia, an adversary could select targets at random, possibly over a wide geographic area, and would need to deploy only small force elements
for this purpose. Possible objectives for the adversary could be to distract the ADF's attention from other activities, to affect ADF or civil commercial operations (e.g. destroying a bridge, wharf or railway line), to create additional pressure in a geographic area specific to the dispute, or to commit Australia to a disproportionate protective effort more generally. It would be unrealistic to expect that, given the small scale and covertness of such operations, the ADF would in many circumstances receive more than the briefest warning of such hostile activity on Australian territory. Nor could it be assumed that the ADF's ground surveillance forces (even if augmented) would be immediately available or of sufficient size, given their large area of operations and the possibility of competing operational commitments. Specific targets for the adversary would not be easy to identify or anticipate.

The task of providing additional protective or response forces in the vicinity of major assets would be of a different dimension. Except where specific capability enhancements only were required by the protective force (e.g. additional APCs, helicopters), the size of the response force deployed would generally be larger (around battalion size), a wider range of assets may need to be protected, and a larger hostile force may have to be engaged. At the same time, the ADF is likely to have more detailed knowledge of the terrain and of potential targets, would generally have a secure landing zone available, and would often be able to rely upon some short-term supplies (including fuel and ammunition) and military capabilities from the protective force.

Within this diversity of possible tasks, however, there are a number of key characteristics that would be important to the ADF land force response. These are:

- **Speed of reaction.** Tasks will frequently need to be undertaken at very short notice and speed will be essential to protecting vulnerable assets, assisting the rapid engagement of the hostile force and preventing its extraction. Even for forces already deployed to the north, deployment distances could be 300-400 km and there would be little time to assemble additional equipment or transport assets. This places the emphasis on air (fixed-wing or rotary) or ground
mobility, although seaborne assets may be used for resupply or transporting forces to the offshore islands, territories and installations.

- **Manoeuvre.** Once deployed, response forces will in most circumstances require organic mobility to allow them to operate effectively over a wide area, maintain contact with the adversary's force, counter any attempted dispersal of that force, and deny him the means of extraction. This might be provided by APCs, trucks and long-range patrol vehicles, or helicopters. The latter are likely to remain in limited supply but would be particularly valuable in the wet.

- **Extended surveillance.** As with surveillance and protective force elements, ADF response units will depend upon modern sensors to expand their surveillance envelope and ensure early engagement of the adversary. The support of fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters (possibly from nearby local assets) and regional surveillance units will go a long way in that direction. However, upgrading the tactical surveillance capabilities integrated into response forces should attract priority.

- **Flexibility in size.** As the response task could vary considerably in terms of both the area to be covered and the size of force to be engaged, there should be considerable flexibility within ADF response forces. While the capacity to deploy up to a battalion to support a protective force remains a realistic upper limit, independent infantry companies within that force ought to be available to reinforce surveillance units rapidly or to provide protection for smaller assets in remote areas. The concept of being able to deploy an advance company would also be valuable where some doubt remains as to the actual size of the hostile force. It may not provide sufficient firepower to overcome a larger enemy but, if equipped with medium-range firepower, could certainly buy time until reinforcements were made available.
company-level parachute or heliborne capability might be valuable for this initial response task, although the latter would not be viable without a significant increase in the number of helicopters (presently unlikely given the diversity of possible roles for those assets).

- **Light scales.** While possessing considerably more firepower than surveillance units, response units would need to be deployable (as is the ODF) by C-130-size aircraft or rapidly by road. They would generally require a number of Armoured Fighting Vehicles (AFVs) for closer engagement with the adversary, supplemented by mortars and medium-range direct firepower. These would need to be integral to each company group. Heavier fire support (105 mm) and helicopters (because of their scarcity) might be held on a battalion basis, or even shared between battalions, and only deployed as circumstances and tactical movement capabilities allowed. The use of close air support to provide significant firepower enhancement to response forces at short notice could be particularly valuable while limiting logistic support needs. Ammunition supplies would not need to be very large initially but could be supplemented should a larger enemy force be engaged.

- **Streamlined logistic support.** Where possible, response forces should seek to utilise the local civil infrastructure for support, particularly for non-military supplies. Their deployment concept should recognise that their stay in a particular area will often be brief, that smaller (company-size) units will be able to exploit civil resources and that larger (battalion-size) units would frequently receive assistance from the protective forces with whom they were collocated.

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47 Wheeled AFVs would offer more rapid deployment over longer distances, but this would need to be balanced against the possibly greater strength and reliability of tracked AFVs when manoeuvring in different terrain.
As far as possible, the headquarters and support elements of response forces should not be located in remote areas but in larger centres where supplies are more readily available, targets are likely to be more numerous, and the facilities for rapid deployment by air or land at hand.

These considerations point to ADF land force response units being of battalion size, but consisting of several companies each capable of independent deployment and operations. Each company would have its own organic mobility, medium-range direct firepower, and at least a limited number of APCs. It would, however, be able to call upon heavier firepower or additional mobility assets from or through its parent battalion. There would also be merit in it being able to focus one company in each of the battalions on a high state of readiness for reconnaissance for short time frame or isolated area responses. Once the level of operations was such that several companies had to be inserted into a particular area for a lengthy period, deployment of the battalion-level command structure would be necessary to coordinate operations.

This concept would be similar in important ways to the present ODF arrangements. There would, however, be greater emphasis on the capacity of companies to act as independent units with appropriate surveillance and independent firepower elements. Deployment up to battalion level would not, however, be automatic and the need to deploy a large logistic support group to support response units in many circumstances would be minimised.

Dispersed operations by response forces would raise two important issues of command and control. Firstly, in circumstances where they were deployed at company level to support surveillance units of a similar size, a decision would need to be made as to which chain of operational command they should come under and who would be the commanding officer of the combined unit. Once a battalion was deployed for either direct response or additional protection tasks, the size of the unit and its flexible and mobile concept of operations would suggest that it should retain its own command structure and be responsible through the overall response force chain of command.
Secondly, the need for response units to be deployed quickly into, or move through, different areas at short notice would place a premium on close cooperation with local civil authorities. This would be necessary to facilitate movement, the gathering of information, the provision of supplies and other non-military support capabilities (e.g. construction, repair and maintenance) and to implement any necessary controls over civilian activities. It would require extensive coordination between the northern land commander and state/territory authorities, the training of senior officers in the sensitivities and boundaries of civil-military relations, and possibly the provision of a trained adviser or small cell within each unit for this purpose.

Defence of Offshore Islands, Territories and Installations

The protection of Australia’s offshore islands, territories and resource installations poses a number of specific problems for ADF land forces. Apart from Groote Eylandt, the Torres Strait, and Barrow Island off the Pilbara, none of the islands close to Australia’s north and northwest coastline have sizeable populations or extensive infrastructure. They fall within the surveillance and response umbrella of Australia’s maritime forces and, apart from the need to deploy across water, present very similar problems to the ADF response role on the mainland. It would be unlikely that the ADF would be required to deploy larger than company-size forces to them. That may, however, require a small-scale parachute, helicopter or Logistics Over-the-Shore (LOTS) insertion, particularly where the presence of a hostile raiding party was suspected. Provision of surveillance information by the local community would be essential.

Australia’s maritime superiority would also constrain the nature of hostilities against offshore oil and gas installations. As it would be difficult for an adversary to maintain maritime forces close to Australia, the threat to platforms in coastal waters would arise primarily from brief air or naval attacks, a terrorist-type assault from surface vessels or submarine, or interference with platform operations by civilian fishing craft. In addition to maritime response forces, the ADF may be required to garrison platforms with a small ground force element equipped with an enhanced surveillance radar, surface-to-air
missiles and a water-borne or heliborne capability to investigate suspicious activity in the vicinity. The latter could also be provided by a first or second tier surface combatant stationed there.

Perhaps the most difficult question would be the timing of deployments. Unless offshore resources were a specific source of dispute or a particular platform economically vital to Australia, it would not be practicable to protect them on a continuous basis. Simple measures to reduce the number of access points to a platform, upgrade normal security arrangements and guarding, and install sensors to detect unauthorised activity would, however, help to thwart all but the most determined and capable attackers. Recovery of a platform, once seized, would depend upon the same skills presently possessed by the ADF’s counter-terrorist forces. Where installations were located closer to the archipelago, protection would be extremely difficult without the continuous presence of ADF maritime forces in the area.

Cocos and Christmas islands present particular difficulties because of their remoteness from Australia and the possibility, even in lower levels of conflict, that an adversary would seek to maintain control over their immediate maritime surrounds. Despite their small size and limited infrastructure, they are by no means indefensible. Difficulties of access due to reefs (Cocos) and steep cliffs (Christmas) limit an adversary’s approach options and, together with either deployed combat aircraft or an effective air defence capability, a modest (augmented company) protective force could make their capture a prolonged and difficult task. The force could be similar to that deployed for response/short-term protection tasks in the more remote areas of northern Australia, but would need an organic air defence capability.

Ideally, this force would be part of a joint force, including a small number of combat aircraft and surface combatants, specifically designated to protect the islands. The circumstances in which this amount of ADF capability could be devoted to the islands would, however, have to be carefully weighed. Recovery of the islands, if lost, would be difficult and be likely to require the assertion of maritime superiority in the vicinity of the islands for a short period and the use of commando-type forces inserted either by parachute or LOTS.
THE ARMY'S ROLE IN POSSIBLE OFFSHORE CONTINGENCIES

The shift in Australia's policy in the 1970s away from forward defence to the direct defence of Australia has led to a much more careful definition of the circumstances in which Australian forces might be deployed on combat duties overseas. Strategic planners quickly realised that Australia could not, nor was it appropriate that it should, attempt to step into the military role previously undertaken by the United States. The limitations on Australia's military influence were particularly pronounced in Southeast Asia, where the numerical size and growing competence of regional ground forces dwarfed any potential contribution by Australia. The ADF continued to enjoy a marked advantage in areas of technical expertise and in the capabilities of its air and naval forces. The emphasis in defence cooperation, however, was far more on enhancing the capacity of regional countries to resist external aggression than on any continuing direct military role for Australia.

At the same time, the possibility that Australia may be asked for some form of direct military assistance cannot be ruled out. This is particularly so in relation to Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific, where Australia is by far the largest military power and has close historical and economic links with a number of the island states. In Southeast Asia, Australia's maritime and strike capabilities remain formidable but, apart from surveillance and patrol operations, it is unlikely that they would be exploited short of a major external threat to the region. That prospect currently remains remote. Beyond our region, Australia also has significant political and security interests in promoting a more stable international order, the effectiveness of the United Nations, and the interests of the wider Western strategic community with which we are aligned. At that distance, it would be quite unrealistic to expect that Australia's relatively modest capabilities would have substantial military influence or be critical to the outcome. Our willingness and capacity to play a part would, however, be important to pursuing our wider security interests.

The difficult question raised by these possible offshore commitments is how much they should affect our force structure planning. While relatively unpredictable, they could arise at short
notice and are, in many respects, far more likely than the prospect of direct hostilities against Australia. The range of possible tasks is, however, extremely diverse; there may be little consistency between them; and they do not provide a comprehensive basis for determining the overall balance of capabilities appropriate in either the short or the longer term. Any significant weakness in Australia’s ability to carry them out effectively could impact adversely on the nation’s strategic standing and influence.

Government policy on this issue is, in its wording at least, somewhat ambiguous. *The Defence of Australia 1987* Policy Information Paper stated that:

clearly the possibility of deployments beyond our region should not determine the structure and capabilities of the ADF. Should the Government wish to respond to developments in areas other than our own, the capabilities being developed for our national defence will, subject to national requirements at the time, give a range of practical options.48

What is not clear is how much other contingencies occurring within Australia’s region should be taken into account and whether the assumption that the force-in-being will provide appropriate options remains valid in the light of strategic changes both internationally and closer to Australia. Those potential commitments, and their implications for Australian ground forces, are reviewed in the following sections.

**Papua New Guinea**

Papua New Guinea has traditionally been a major focus of Australian defence planning in relation to possible offshore deployments. This reflects the experiences of the Second World War, the close historical ties between the two countries, and Australia’s close involvement in PNG’s security. With independence in 1975, the Pacific Islands Regiment became the core of the new PNG Defence Force; Australia has provided a substantial proportion of the PNG

48 *The Defence of Australia 1987*, para 1.46.
Defence budget since that time; and in 1988 Australia and PNG reaffirmed their common security interests with the signing of the Joint Declaration of Principles.

From a national perspective, Australia’s interest in PNG’s security has been further reinforced by a concern that Australia would be strategically much more vulnerable if possession of PNG enabled an adversary to strike against the more populous eastern seaboard. In present strategic circumstances, these concerns should not be exaggerated. PNG does not face a major external threat to its security and, as the Japanese experience demonstrated during the Second World War, it is very difficult terrain in which to conduct any larger scale, conventional military operations. Even if an adversary did succeed, there is limited infrastructure in PNG to support operations; the distances to most potential targets in Australia would remain large; and the adversary’s forces would be vulnerable to interdiction by Australia’s air and naval assets. A wider range of low-level harassments, including to shipping, would be possible but Australia’s defence would not be unmanageable.

In the shorter term, there are a number of more specific situations that could give rise to Australian involvement in PNG. These are:

- the development of a direct confrontation between Indonesia and PNG on the Irian Jaya border; and
- a major internal law and order problem beyond the capacity of PNG’s security forces.

(i) PNG/Irian Jaya Border

In recent years, the activities of the rebel OPM movement, opposed to the Indonesian takeover of Irian Jaya, have created considerable tension in relations between Indonesia and PNG. Their use of PNG territory for sanctuary after raids against targets in Irian Jaya and Indonesia’s exercise of the right of hot pursuit have led to diplomatic protests and the deployment of additional troops to each side of the border. Improved communications, high-level discussions and the signing of the Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship, and Cooperation in October 1986, have helped to alleviate the situation.
However, PNG's capability to control the border continues to be limited, pro-Melanesian sentiments remain strong in PNG political circles, and there is always the chance that an accidental clash could escalate the situation into a direct bilateral confrontation.

Australia would be concerned were such a situation to arise. It has an interest in maintaining sound strategic relations with both countries and a request from PNG for assistance could create a difficult dilemma. At the same time, suggestions that a border clash could quickly escalate into a broader military conflict need to be kept in perspective. The terrain along the border is difficult and demanding, mobility is low, infrastructure non-existent in many areas, and operations by ground forces are generally below company level. Were an Indonesian government, frustrated with PNG's intransigence or ineffectiveness, to attempt to apply military pressure more broadly, this would require the assembling of different forces and tend to complicate rather than solve Indonesia's problems of control.

Australia could, however, be asked to assist PNG in providing effective border patrols. This assistance might range from support for the PNGDF in areas such as transport, communications and logistics through to more active involvement in surveillance and possibly some patrolling of key points by small land force units. The latter would almost certainly be in a manner acceptable to, and where possible on conditions agreed by, Indonesia as well as PNG. Were Australia to be concerned about the possibility of attacks against infrastructure that might support the OPM on the PNG side of the border, it is possible that a protective force of up to battalion size might be deployed to the northern coastal area around Vanimo to deter such attacks, but that would be the very upper limit of Australian ground force involvement. Any larger force would be potentially escalatory and inappropriate in the confined border environment.

(ii) Major Civil Disorder

No less demanding would be possible requests from the PNG government for Australian assistance in coping with a major breakdown of domestic law and order. In addition to the recent uprising and calls for secession on Bougainville, tensions exist in relation to other mining developments — most notably Ok Tedi in the
Western Highlands; there is a large pool of unemployed and disenchanted poor in the major towns, including Port Moresby, together with widespread urban violence; and the security forces themselves have on several occasions made clear to the government that they are dissatisfied with their conditions of service. Tribal fighting between PNG’s various regions is a frequent occurrence. As events on Bougainville clearly illustrated, such larger scale civil unrest can quickly tax the capabilities of PNG’s security forces, both police and military.

Australia’s interests in assisting PNG in these circumstances are several. Apart from maintaining PNG’s system of parliamentary government, they include the protection of the several thousand Australian nationals who reside there, the continuation of development programs and commercial ventures in which Australia has a significant economic stake, containing the possible impact of that unrest on regional stability more generally, and demonstrating Australia’s effectiveness (particularly to other regional countries, including Indonesia) in assisting PNG to be a stable and increasingly prosperous nation.

At the same time, there would be considerable sensitivity about Australia becoming directly involved in internal security operations due to:

- the need to ensure that PNG itself retains the primary responsibility for internal security;

- the potential for such a dispute to become protracted and commit Australia to a long-term military presence;

- the danger of being seen to take sides between domestic factions and possibly jeopardise strategic access in the longer term;

- the difficulties of operating a large force, essentially for aid to the civil power tasks, in an unfamiliar domestic environment; and

- the impact on the ADF reputation, both domestically and within the region, if the ADF was too closely
associated with some of the less conventional methods attributed to the PNGDF on Bougainville.

These factors, together with the policy approach adopted by the Australian government during the Bougainville crisis, suggest that Australia’s reaction to a PNG request for substantial law and order assistance would be primarily to provide indirect support (including supplies, training, logistics and possibly transport) to maximise the capacity of the PNGDF and Royal Papua New Guinea Constabulary (RPNGC) to respond. Direct military involvement, if it occurred, would be for quite specific purposes. In particular, ADF land force units might be used for:

- the protection and evacuation of Australian nationals;
- the protection of key facilities, including diplomatic premises, airfields, communications and government buildings for a limited period; and
- specialised recovery operations where Australian citizens, possibly prominent national figures, were being held.

It would be most unlikely, as Senator Evans’ statement made clear, that Australian land forces would be committed to protracted operations either to protect commercial assets or to suppress the unrest directly. A large, ongoing commitment to PNG’s internal security would not be in Australia’s strategic interests.

While a force of around company size may be sufficient for some specific tasks in PNG, the large number of Australian nationals there, their dispersed locations, and the potential volatility and complexity of a situation of civil unrest would suggest that a battalion and associated headquarters element may be necessary to provide an appropriate degree of flexibility and protection. The force would need to be air-mobile, equipped on light scales and available at short notice. It may need to secure and maintain a point of entry against limited opposition, should possess independent logistic support and a degree of tactical mobility (especially trucks and helicopters), and have the capacity to interact directly with the civil authorities. Training in defensive riot control techniques would also be important.
Recovery operations would be undertaken primarily by special forces units — either the SAS or, where a larger unit was required, by a commando company. The latter are currently reserve units and it may be necessary to reconstitute a regular commando unit at that level if this option is to be available to government.

The South Pacific

The coups in Fiji in 1987 and 1988 and the request by Prime Minister Lini for Australian assistance to maintain internal order in Vanuatu in 1988 shattered Australia's previous complacency about the South Pacific as a tranquil lake which was domestically stable, if aid-dependent, and within which attitudes favourable to its own and to broader Western strategic interests could be taken for granted. Strategic concerns had focussed on denying any potential adversary (particularly the Soviet Union and its fishing fleet) significant access to the island states and on protecting the sea lines of communication that Australia would depend upon for trade and military supplies in the event of a major conflict. The latter prospect was, however, assessed as remote.

Australia was now faced with a much more difficult situation. Internal unrest potentially threatened Australian nationals, commercial interests and freedom of movement. There was an increasing likelihood that Australia might need, or be asked, to deploy military force to the South Pacific. However, to do so risked Australia becoming embroiled in internal political disputes, damaging its reputation as a neutral and benevolent strategic partner and potentially jeopardising its longer term strategic access. Among the island states, there were expectations that Australia, due to its size and military capabilities and support for regional security forces, should become involved, but fears that its actions might be overbearing and interventionist. Both action and inaction courted condemnation. Australia was not prepared, nor indeed did it have the capacity, to become the policeman of the region but it needed to protect its own interests (particularly the lives of Australian nationals) and, as far as possible, maintain close security cooperation with South Pacific nations.
The critical questions were to determine the circumstances in which it might be appropriate to deploy military force in support of Australia’s interests and the nature and extent of assistance that might be provided to regional security forces to combat internal unrest. While Senator Evans’ criteria laid down in 1989 were by no means definitive on these issues, when taken together with the Government’s reaction to the crises in Fiji, Vanuatu and most recently Bougainville, they do provide useful guidelines on the likely extent of ADF involvement in the future. These are:

- The principal reason to deploy the ADF would be to protect and evacuate Australian nationals in situations of a serious threat to life and property. This would, however, be only as a last resort when other options (e.g. early diplomatic warnings and civil transport) had been exhausted. Deployments to protect Australian-based commercial ventures would be most unlikely.

- Australia would also be prepared to assist island governments in maintaining law and order, but this would be primarily through non-combat support (e.g. supplies, transport, logistics, communications) to enable South Pacific countries to use their own security forces more effectively.

- Such assistance would still attract considerable sensitivity and would generally not be provided where the unrest was linked to rivalry for national political authority unless the Government’s opponents clearly had no popular legitimacy.

- Military operations would need to have a clearly defined objective and be achievable within a relatively short time frame. Open-ended tasks such as restoring order within a particular area would be unlikely to be contemplated. As in PNG, specific operations such as the short-term protection of key national assets could occur, but only in exceptional circumstances.

- More general military involvement in maintaining law and order within a particular island nation would only
be in cooperation with other regional countries, including New Zealand. The experience of the Jimmy Stevens uprising on Espirito Santo suggests that, in those circumstances, Australia’s contribution would be primarily in terms of logistic support and transport with other nations providing a major part of the deployed infantry.

The most serious of these situations could clearly be tackled by the types of forces that would be appropriate to operations in PNG. In many situations elsewhere in the South Pacific, however, operations would need to be on a much smaller scale. While deploying a large force does allow considerable flexibility, it may also generate unrealistic expectations and unnecessary apprehension about Australian involvement. This was only too well illustrated during the first Fiji coup, when the readying and initial deployment of a major conventional military force (the ODF) provoked widespread speculation. In circumstances of civil unrest in an island nation, matching the size and characteristics of any deployed force as far as possible to Australia’s political objectives would be important.49 Deploying a disproportionately large force to the vicinity of an island may emphasise Australia’s interests and give increased operational flexibility. That presence may, however, provoke resentment and failure to use its capabilities could be seen as a lack of political will.

Following the Fiji coup, questions have been raised about the suitability of the ADF’s capabilities for responding to crises in the South Pacific.50 Suggestions have also been made about the need for a helicopter ship and some form of maritime task force. While there are

49 In Australia’s Regional Security (p.21), Senator Evans noted that: ‘We should bear in mind that in many situations it may be more appropriate to respond to a request for assistance with a civilian rather than military capability. The mere presence abroad of Australian military forces and equipment sends messages, which may be intended to be reassuring but might be seen in fact as threatening’.

50 See, for example, Matthew Gubb, The Australian Military Response to the Fiji Coup: An Assessment, Working Paper No.171, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1988).
some situations in which these capabilities would enhance the ADF's flexibility, the more pressing need is the flexibility to match forces to tasks. To do this, Australia needs the capacity to deploy a range of smaller, task-specific force elements at short notice. Some would clearly have a protective emphasis (e.g. an infantry company to protect an airfield or diplomatic buildings for a short period) but, where there is no specific targeting of Australian nationals, other capabilities such as communicators or transport units may be more appropriate.

At the other end of the spectrum, it would also be valuable if Australia had the capacity for specialised recovery operations in circumstances where law and order had broken down completely or the evacuation of Australians was likely to be opposed. Depending on the number of Australians to be rescued, these operations could be undertaken by the SAS or other Special Force units without the large numbers of troops or secure point of entry required by the ODF. Special Forces would also be important in responding to any hostage-taking situations, similar to those which occurred in New Caledonia.

Defence Cooperation

In the context of possible requests for ADF assistance in maintaining law and order in regional countries, the role of defence cooperation with neighbouring countries in peacetime should not be overlooked. Such activities can take a range of forms from basic training in weapons and tactics, through the maintenance of more specialised equipment, to assistance with national development projects, small-scale combined exercises, and support in situations of natural disaster. They are designed to promote strategic stability by highlighting shared security interests and enhancing the capacity of neighbouring countries to provide for their own defence. They also contribute significantly to Australia's understanding of regional developments.

These tasks are not force structure determinants for the ADF. They are dictated primarily by the needs of others and by different strategic circumstances. They can, however, be important in raising the threshold at which Australia might be called upon to assist a neighbouring country in maintaining law and order. This has been well illustrated by proposals to provide substantial additional training
support for the PNGDF following the problems it experienced on Bougainville. Traditionally, defence cooperation activities have focussed on providing national development assistance and the ability of a country to resist external aggression. This avoided any danger that Australia’s longer term strategic access could be jeopardised by being identified with a particular internal faction. The new tensions, within South Pacific communities in particular, between traditional values and modern development expectations have increased the possibility of internal dissent and forced Australia to decide whether some involvement in the training of security forces that could be used internally is preferable to subsequent requests for direct intervention. Ideally, this aspect should remain only a subsidiary aspect of defence cooperation.

Generally, defence cooperation activities will only involve small teams of specialist personnel such as engineers, mechanics or counter-terrorist experts. At the same time, regional countries do have quite high expectations of Australia’s willingness and capacity to assist them and it is important that the land forces should have sufficient capability to meet these requests without significant detriment to defence of Australia requirements. This does not imply additional numbers across all elements of the force but it does suggest the need to identify those ranks/specialities that might be called upon at short notice and to ensure that the Army is adequately manned in those areas. Such judgements must take into account not only the number of available officers but their level and range of experience. This itself is in large part a function of the overall size of the Army.51

Peacekeeping

The other area in which ADF land forces may be asked to participate increasingly in the future is that of peacekeeping. Changes to the international order, and particularly the new cooperation between the superpowers on security issues, has revitalised the role of the United Nations. At the same time, there appears to be recognition  

51 For example RAE recently could not provide technically qualified engineer captains for 12 CE Works at Mendi in Papua New Guinea.
among a growing number of countries of the advantages of international monitoring arrangements in settling disputes. Within our own region, the settlement proposals for Cambodia and PNG's request for multilateral support in restoring services to Bougainville link those procedures to promoting strategic stability and security close to Australia.

In the past, Australia has consistently supported UN and other multilateral peacekeeping operations in a wide variety of locations. These have generally been at considerable distance from Australia — principally the Middle East and Africa — and reflected a concern as ‘a good international citizen’ to support the United Nations and to contribute to the security interests of the Western alliance. Contributions were modest in size and in the more specialised capability areas which the United Nations has relied on middle-sized, technologically advanced nations to provide. Apart from the Korean War and the current naval commitment to the Gulf, the largest force elements deployed for this purpose were the helicopters attached to the Multinational Force and Observers (MFO) in the Sinai in 1982 and the engineering contingent sent to Namibia in 1989. Infantry forces, for which the UN provides substantial reimbursement, have been drawn primarily from smaller nations with defence forces which emphasise manpower rather than sophisticated equipment.

In the changing international environment, it is likely that requests for Australian contributions to peacekeeping forces will become more frequent. However, particularly in more distant regions, Australia’s value will continue to be in the area of specialist support capabilities including engineers, transport, logistic support and communications. Even in situations like the Gulf, where the emphasis in UN operations was more on enforcement than supervision, it would generally be Australia’s specialist and maritime forces that would be called upon rather than its relatively small (by international standards) if highly competent land forces.52

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Within the region, however, the expectations of Australia are likely to be rather different due to its relative military strength, its active program of defence cooperation with other countries, and our own interests in promoting a stable and secure region. A higher level of participation would be likely, not least to reinforce Australia’s strategic influence and to provide tangible evidence of our commitment to common security interests and willingness to cooperate to that end. The Government has already indicated that Australia will be prepared to make a ‘substantial’ commitment to any peacekeeping force in Cambodia, thus backing up its significant diplomatic initiatives. Suggestions have been made that up to a battalion group might be deployed for that purpose.

While there may be circumstances in which the deployment of an infantry force is appropriate, other factors suggest that it is again more specialised forms of assistance that will be requested and to which the government is most likely to agree. As the current request for transport and engineering assistance on Bougainville confirms, it is in technical and support areas that regional capabilities are relatively deficient and on which Australia bases much of its defence cooperation activity. It is also those areas which are potentially going to open up areas for ongoing strategic access, including infrastructure development and communications. Infantry provide a high profile and clear evidence of the ADF’s professionalism but their impact is more short term, they require substantial logistic support, and there is frequently a risk that they will have to choose between being seen as impotent or becoming directly involved in internal factional warfare should the settlement process break down.

The difficulty with establishing the effect that peacekeeping commitments should have on the structure of ADF land forces is that, apart from the likelihood of requests for support in specialist areas, possible future tasks remain unpredictable and within our own region may not be that frequent. Should it be considered desirable to contribute an infantry force, the capabilities being developed for the defence of Australia — to deploy independent units on light scales over long distances into areas of limited infrastructure support — would be extremely valuable. To sustain a force of around battalion size overseas for a protracted period may, however, involve up to three battalions, given the need to rotate forces and provide alternative units to fulfil the battalion’s exercise and other training requirements.
Depending on the circumstances, this may involve bringing some Reserve units to higher states of readiness to ensure that ADF land forces maintained the numbers and depth to respond simultaneously to other short-term contingencies that may arise, particularly in the South Pacific.

The competition from other nations for the infantry role in peacekeeping forces would suggest that this is a task Australia should only seek selectively and within our own region. Even there, there may be considerable sensitivities about Australia undertaking that role and competing offers from neighbouring countries with far larger ground forces. Its likelihood and frequency would not, therefore, require dedicating specific units for this purpose nor the acquisition of additional capabilities. It may, however, provide some weight to the concept of establishing a Ready Reserve force, available at shorter notice and with higher skill and training levels than normal Reserve units, should that be justifiable in the context of planning for the defence of Australia.

The more difficult question relates to the possible provision of specialist land force units such as engineers, communications, field hospitals, supply teams and tactical transport. These are the areas in which Australia’s help is most likely to be sought and where Australia, should the Government so chose, could more readily establish itself as a regular and valued contributor to the United Nations peacekeeping effort. Generally, the number of troops involved and the amount of specialist equipment is modest, there are relatively few political sensitivities, and continuous large-scale logistic support is not required. The problem is that, within the ADF itself, the number and strength of these units is not large and they are key links in many aspects of land force training and operations.

One solution, should Australia decide to adopt a more substantial peacekeeping role, would be to consider these specialist support capabilities as a pool with different elements being drawn on in rotation. This has in fact been the practice in recent years and helps to maximise the operational experience available to units while minimising the disruption to other land force activities. More frequent commitments would, however, require a policy that the appropriate specialist units always be maintained at full establishment and that additional units be created either within the Regular forces or in
Reserve units. The latter would need to be able to be brought up to full operational readiness within the 6-9 month time frame on which peacekeeping units normally rotate.

The possibility of increased involvement in peacekeeping tasks in the future does not, therefore, suggest any major changes to the ADF’s land force structure or capabilities. It would, however, require greater emphasis to be given to maintaining specialist land force elements, their readiness and equipment; may require these to be expanded where there is little capacity in addition to ADF peacetime requirements, and would give them additional priority in the context of developing Reserve forces. This capability enhancement would also increase the capacity of land forces to contribute to cooperative activities with neighbouring countries, particularly in the South Pacific, in peacetime.

THE SHAPE OF THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY IN THE 1990s

The analysis in this study has sought to highlight several key elements relevant to developing an appropriate structure and capabilities for the Australian Army in the 1990s and beyond. These are:

- the Army’s historical development and existing capabilities;
- the principal elements of the Government’s defence policy and their likely longevity;
- the unique demands of Australia’s northern environment on ground force operations;
- the roles for ground forces in defending Australia against credible, lower level conflicts;
- the impact of possible offshore contingencies on ground force capabilities; and
- alternative models for structuring ground forces and their relevance to Australia.
This section draws together those various elements to propose an overall structure and concept of operations for ADF ground forces and to recommend areas in which specific capability enhancements may be required. While it does propose some significant changes, particularly in the linking of various ground force elements and the way in which they undertake their tasks, it seeks to be realistic in terms of the overall size of the force. It also seeks to preserve the key initiatives already taken by Army and by Government to make the ADF's ground forces more directly relevant to the task of defending Australia.

The study has shown that in general terms the ADF has been shaped according to a maritime-type strategy for a period of some fifty years. But within that maritime strategy the Army has often thought in terms of continental strategy. The study argues that the Army should define its role more clearly within the overall maritime strategy. In terms of its size \textit{vis a vis} the other services, the Army is already too small to meet all its tasks. The Army therefore has to develop means of undertaking these tasks more effectively.

The essence of the proposals is twofold. It is to:

- create more flexibility, mobility and firepower in smaller force elements — thus offsetting the problems of distance, numerically small forces, and logistic support; and
- raise the threshold for the deployment of larger or additional force elements — providing greater control over the scale and timing of deployments and limiting the prospects of the ADF being committed to a disproportionate response.

Rather than attempting to provide comprehensive protection in all circumstances against the full range of possible attacks, the approach is much more clearly based on risk management:

- giving a high priority to the early location and identification of hostile forces; and
- guarding against the most likely (but not the lowest) level of threat, while providing substantial insurance in terms of rapid reinforcement by other ground, air or
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naval forces should a more serious situation arise or appear probable.

This does not imply that the ADF will always be committed to a graduated response. The emphasis is on giving the ADF greater flexibility in its response options and greater capacity to control the timing and level of deployment rather than simply reacting to the adversary’s actions. The options of either pre-emptive deployments or of providing a full response in key areas from the earliest stages of a contingency would be retained, but there would be considerable flexibility to vary the level of deployment, protection and response according to the particular circumstances without creating major gaps in the coverage or effectiveness of ground force operations.

The Overall Concept

Broadly, it is proposed that ADF ground forces be structured as three distinct elements to enable them to respond to those lower level conflicts credible in the short to medium term in a flexible and resource efficient manner. Those elements are:

- An enhanced surveillance capability with the skills and numbers of the existing Regional Force Surveillance Units augmented by infantry companies trained in the long-range reconnaissance techniques presently confined to Special Forces units. This would both enhance the effectiveness of their surveillance coverage and provide a far greater capacity to handle independently the types of small-scale raids most likely to occur in remote areas.

- Core protective forces which emphasise surveillance, tactical mobility and short- to medium-range direct firepower rather than manpower but could quickly be augmented by additional infantry. These would require a limited number of APCs, helicopters and advanced combat surveillance radars and be able to provide a rapid response to incidents occurring within their vicinity. They would help to deny an adversary
the ability to take advantage of more static and resource-intensive protective arrangements.

- Mobile response forces with the flexibility and equipment to deploy either as an integrated battalion or as several independent companies. These units would be structured on light scales and equipped as far as possible at company level with their own mobility (including APCs), direct firepower and surveillance sensors. They should be deployable by air and/or road and be able to call upon a pool of additional firepower (including heavier artillery and, where appropriate, close air support) or sensors at short notice. Their role would frequently be to supplement existing surveillance or protective forces but independent response options may also be required, particularly in remote areas.

This mix of force elements would give the ADF the flexibility to deploy, either individually or in combination, self-contained ground force units from company to battalion level. While they would generally be on light scales, each would possess a high level of surveillance, mobility and firepower relative to its size. Importantly, they would also give the ADF the capacity to handle the range of more specific tasks that could arise in relation to the offshore islands and territories, PNG and the South Pacific.

The one possible addition would be the creation of a regular commando company. Generally the skills of such a unit would be more appropriate to more substantial conflict, where there would be far less constraints on deploying a larger force element on an adversary's own territory. Their capacity for covert insertion over water and for rapid offensive action could, however, be use for responding to incidents on the offshore islands and for the recovery of Cocos and Christmas islands should they be taken. In South Pacific contingencies, it would give the Government an enhanced capability for recovery operations in a potentially hostile environment without the need to prepare and deploy a much larger (i.e. battalion-size) force, which in any case might not have the required amphibious training.
Enhanced Surveillance/Reconnaissance Operations

Apart from raising the threshold for, and reducing the likelihood of, the deployment of larger response forces, a key advantage of the enhanced surveillance units would be the ADF's ability to put effective fighting units in place across the north very early in a contingency without a major deployment of ground forces and heavy demands on logistic support capabilities. It would help to clarify the existence and extent of any hostile ground force action; buy time for the preparation and placement of larger protective and response forces; and increase both the military and political risks for the adversary in terms of the early identification and engagement of his 'covert' raiding parties. Their presence may also lessen concern about vulnerability among the local population.

The core of these units would continue to be regionally based Regional Force Surveillance Units — the Pilbara Regiment, NORFORCE and 51 FNQR — drawing upon the expertise of the local community. During a period of serious tension, or at the outbreak of hostilities, these would each be augmented by a company of Regular infantry trained in Special Forces long-range patrolling. This would require the early designation and equipping of one of the existing Regular battalions to operate as three separate companies. Either 6 RAR or 8/9 RAR currently based in Brisbane would appear appropriate for this task.

These forces could continue to train together for dispersed operations in their home location while deploying on a regular basis to exercise with their RFSUs. In a conflict, however, there would be considerable benefit in all of these surveillance units coming under a single operational commander in the north — the task would be particularly suitable for the Commander, Northern Command (COMNORCOM). Not only would COMNORCOM have primary responsibility for much of the civil-military coordination necessary in those circumstances but it would allow a clear differentiation to be drawn between the forces designated to him and their roles and those of the other joint force commanders.

In addition, COMNORCOM might have responsibility for the fixed- and rotary-wing aircraft assets and patrol boats designated to assist in the surveillance task. The availability of a small number of
aircraft or helicopters to assist with surveillance as required and to support the rapid redeployment of surveillance forces would significantly enhance their effectiveness in many circumstances.

Depending on the availability of resources, it may be desirable in the longer term to deploy these surveillance augmentation forces to the north (Darwin) on a permanent basis. This would enhance both their training opportunities and early availability and allow continuity of command arrangements between peacetime and conflict. Given the breadth of northern Australia, the prospect of dispersed enemy operations including feints over a wide area, and the variety of civil and military sources from which information might be forthcoming, there could be considerable benefit in giving NORCOM responsibility for:

- collecting and correlating all information on hostile surface activity inland from the territorial sea boundary; and
- responding to small-scale raids and incursions not requiring the deployment of larger ground forces.

Protecting Vital Assets

The concept of protective operations which utilise sophisticated surveillance sensors and a mobile response force well equipped with short- to medium-range direct fire weapons recognises the physical size of the major population centres and key civil and military infrastructure in northern Australia and the limitations on available manpower to defend them. It seeks to allow Australia flexibility in the level of protection it provides for particular assets and to enhance the capacity of even relatively small protective forces to counter covert, special forces type raids. The ability to concentrate firepower quickly in a range of locations within, or in the vicinity of, a vital asset and to be able to respond immediately over a radius of around 50 km would significantly complicate an adversary’s planning and endanger the survivability of his forces.

Adopting the concept of a mobile core for protective forces does not, of course, preclude the provision of comprehensive protection for vital assets from the very start of a conflict. Indeed,
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substantial numbers of additional infantry are likely to be deployed to major military and civil infrastructure sites at an early stage. The difference is that where for various reasons — lack of logistic support, lower threat perceptions, reserves being brought to full combat readiness, government concern not to overreact, greater priority to other assets — the desirable levels of manpower are not immediately available, there can still be significant confidence that the asset will not suffer major damage from ground force attacks.

The most complex protective task will be the Darwin region, due to its size and the number of prospective targets. For this reason, the mobile response element within the protective force in this area would need to be larger than in other locations and capable of responding to more than one incident at a time. It could be based on 2 CAV Regiment, which is already being deployed to Darwin, augmented by an APC mounted company and a flight of Black Hawk helicopters. At a minimum, there would also need to be a battalion of infantry with a high ratio of trucks and Perentie-type vehicles to facilitate rapid deployment. This might be a role for the second battalion currently located in Brisbane. It could be supplemented by additional Reserve units as they reach full combat readiness or by any larger response force deployed to Darwin.

The other primary locations in the north which may require substantial protective forces include Tindal, Broome, Derby, Wyndham/Kununurra, the Pilbara and the Weipa area of Cape York. Dibb suggested that a force of at least battalion strength would be necessary for each of these areas. Prior to that level of force being generated from Reserve units, however, significant protection could be provided by an infantry company supported by surveillance sensors, APCs with both troop-carrying and direct fire capabilities, and a small number of helicopters.

An artillery battery (105 mm) might also be provided, particularly in the more remote areas where longer range and indirect firepower could be exploited. The role of these mobile protection forces would be to give priority to those assets (e.g. fuel and ammunition storage) most vulnerable to special force raids, thus limiting the possibility that a facility would become unusable for more than a brief period. Once a supporting battalion was deployed, the Regular company would provide its mobile response capability and
have greater freedom to pursue an adversary at some distance from an installation.

The relatively small size of these initial protection forces, the consequent importance of their survivability when engaging an adversary at close quarters, and the need for mobility, would suggest that the mechanised companies currently constituting 5/7 RAR would be suited to this task. It may not be practical, or indeed appropriate, to deploy similar forces to all important assets and areas at the very start of a contingency but the use of 5/7 RAR for dispersed protective operations would ensure protection for three of the most vital facilities at short notice. Other Reserve units, which are already equipped with APCs, could be utilised to guard less important assets given sufficient warning.

The use of 5/7 RAR and Army helicopters in smaller units for dispersed operations would impact significantly on their capacity for large-scale, integrated operations. In particular, the scope for developing plans, doctrine and operational experience in relation to both a mechanised brigade and a company group helicopter lift would be much less. For these reasons, it is proposed that 5/7 RAR and 5th Aviation Regiment should remain as combined units but give greater emphasis in training and exercises to dispersed operations by, or in support of, independent company groups. The scope and priority for larger scale mechanised operations in the defence of Australia is currently slight. Given the relatively mobile concept of protective operations proposed in this paper, however, it may be that the commanding officer of 5/7 RAR should also have the operational responsibility for training, equipping and deploying vital asset protection forces more generally.

Mobile Response Forces

A key feature of the proposed approach to ground force operations has been to narrow the range of circumstances in which, and the frequency with which, the ADF may need to deploy larger scale, logistically intensive response forces. It is designed to give the ADF greater control over the timing and level of deployments — rather than have this dictated primarily by the actions of the adversary, to maximise the capacity of the ADF to draw on our limited
northern infrastructure without augmentation, and to provide greater flexibility in exploiting our limited logistic support capabilities. To be successful, however, this strategy places much greater emphasis on the ability to reinforce deployed ground forces at short notice while retaining the capacity to deploy a large force (up to brigade size) against the far less likely prospect that a raiding party larger than company size lodge on the Australian mainland.

The concept of a mobile response force able to move at short notice is embodied in the Army's Operational Deployment Force. While developed at a time when the nature of the possible threats to Australia was less clearly defined and a major overseas deployment was considered likely, the ODF is air mobile and equipped on light scales. It has independent logistic support through the Logistic Support Group (LSG) and its combat power can be augmented quickly with other units such as a squadron of APCs and an air defence battery. It is structured to deploy progressively, with a company at 7 days' notice to move, the first battalion at 28 days' notice, and the complete brigade within a further month. The ODF also has close links with the parachute battalion, thus enhancing the force's capacity for insertion into remote areas and securing a point of entry.

Clearly, many of these operational characteristics are directly relevant to the defence of Australia and its offshore islands and territories and need to be maintained. Where the ODF concept is less flexible is that the force is organised and equipped primarily to operate as an integrated brigade — although once deployed in that way it is capable of dispersed operations — and that the LSG concept requires that a significant proportion of the ADF's logistic capabilities be dedicated to that task. While that may be appropriate in peacetime, when the ODF is at a higher state of readiness than other ground force elements, in a conflict situation greater freedom to use those logistic capabilities in support of the force more generally would be an advantage.

It is proposed that the two battalions of the ODF and the parachute battalion should continue to be the ADF primary mobile response forces. To optimise them for this task, however, they should be organised and equipped in such a way that each is deployable independently at both battalion and company group level and with command and control arrangements suitable for joint operations with
other protective or surveillance forces. They would need to be equipped at company level with combat surveillance radars, medium-range direct fire weapons, and organic mobility assets. Logistic requirements might be reduced if some mobility assets (e.g. APCs) were prepositioned with protective forces in the north. Facilities should also exist to predeploy one of these response battalions to Darwin early in a contingency to reduce tactical reaction times.

The concept of dispersed, light-scale operations also raises the questions of how best to support the small packets of helicopters and APCs deployed with the different protective and response forces and to provide a pool of additional equipments and firepower (including heavier artillery) that could be accessed by the different commanders as circumstances required. Traditionally combat support sub-units are supported within the framework of their parent units, and then controlled and supported within the divisional structure. If the combat support sub-units are to operate across wide areas and with different combat units their own support needs to be approached imaginatively. A possible solution would be to establish a Combat Support Command comprising those equipments, their operating personnel, and first- and possibly second-line maintenance staff. This unit would be located in Darwin but, given the potential competition for its resources, would be directly responsible to the Land Commander.

Deployments Offshore

Leaving aside for the moment the possible contingencies that might require a force to be deployed overseas, it would be useful to consider the size of force that could be sustained there. At the beginning of the Korean War Australia had three understrength Regular infantry battalions and could maintain one battalion in Korea only through special enlistments — the K Force. When the force in Korea was increased to two battalions another battalion had to be raised in Australia to support the deployed battalions. In the Vietnam War it was found that it was necessary to have two battalions in Australia or training in Malaysia to sustain each battalion in Vietnam.

Historical evidence indicates that if Australia were required to sustain more than a brigade overseas the Army would have to
undergo even greater expansion than that undertaken during the Vietnam War. Given that most of the Army’s present six Regular battalions are not at full establishment, even to sustain a brigade overseas for low-level operations, including peacekeeping, would be beyond the present capacity of the Army. It would require the remaining three Regular battalions to be brought to a high state of readiness within one year and that could not be undertaken without the government making substantial additional resources available.

It is difficult to envisage a situation in which Australia would contemplate deploying and sustaining more than a brigade group at a relatively short notice. In comparison with the military capabilities of the island states of the southwest Pacific a brigade is a very large force. The more likely situation would be where the government chose to deploy either a battalion or smaller force overseas for a specific purpose and a limited time span. The experience of Korea, Malaya, Borneo and Vietnam was that when Australia deployed one battalion it had to operate as part of an allied formation and Australia gained little influence over the operations in which the battalion was involved. The battalion was too small to be given an independent mission. Even a two-battalion brigade, as was deployed to Vietnam in 1966-7, had difficulty in both protecting itself and conducting operations. Those were, however, very different operations to the more independent and limited operations currently envisaged in either PNG or the South Pacific. Difficulties would still arise in maintaining that battalion continually at a high state of readiness, providing for its replacement in the event of a more protracted commitment, and retaining a capacity, albeit limited, to respond to other tasks that may arise concurrently. For these reasons the present ODF would appear to provide a suitable framework for meeting future offshore commitments.

Turning to the nature of possible offshore contingencies several key conclusions emerged about the nature of possible Australian ground force involvement in PNG or the South Pacific. These were that they could arise at relatively short notice, were unlikely to involve very large and protracted deployments, could pose significant logistic difficulties (particularly if the evacuation of Australian nationals was involved), and would require considerable sensitivity by Australia to ensure that the size and composition of the force accurately reflected its objectives.
The flexibility to deploy independent land force units, augmented as necessary with other specialist capabilities, from company to battalion or brigade size should provide the government with significant response options in many situations. The same capabilities would be relevant to the defence of Australia's own offshore islands and territories. Their principal weakness is that, in situations where the presence of Australian forces may be actively opposed, the procedure for securing and maintaining a point of entry could be extremely demanding and require a disproportionate number of personnel or equipment (e.g. a helicopter carrier). There is, however, merit in retaining the parachute battalion as part of the ODF. It provides a valuable means of securing a point of entry in certain circumstances, it is an air transportable, and can be used as a normal light-scale infantry battalion.

To provide greater flexibility there would be value, as proposed earlier, in establishing a regular commando company deployable by air or sea, specifically charged with the responsibility of offshore recovery operations. In addition to this primary role, it would also provide an excellent foundation for dislodging hostile forces from the offshore territories and islands such as those in the Torres Strait. A further benefit would be that, with this capability available, Australia should feel less constrained in deploying the ODF for the defence of the mainland. It would be extremely unlikely that, faced with the prospect of direct hostilities, Australia would be willing to deploy a force of battalion size or larger overseas.

The Move to the North

Army is presently in the process of relocating 2 CAV Regiment to the north and studies are presently being undertaken on the possibility of also basing a brigade in the Darwin area.53 The focus of most attention has been on moving the 1st Brigade, comprising 5/7 RAR and the 1st Armoured Regiment, to the north. Such a move would, however, involve substantial resources and it is important that it should be justifiable in terms not only of an enhanced presence but

also of the role which those forces would play during both tension and conflict. The move of the 1st Brigade to the north would not have high priority considering the credible threats to be faced, and the likely need to restructure the mechanised force as the Leopard tank approaches the end of its life in the next fifteen years.

Under the revised strategy for ground force operations put forward in this paper, an alternative approach would be to:

- supplement 2 CAV Regiment with a mechanised infantry company and a flight of Black Hawk helicopters;
- establish a training facility for the conduct of dispersed ground force operations; and/or
- depending upon resources, transfer the three surveillance support companies from Brisbane to Darwin.

This approach would have the advantage of situating the ADF's initial response forces in the north, lessening the political sensitivities of attempting to deploy forces forward during a period of tension but immediately raising the consequences for the adversary of any resort to the use of military force. Even while resources constrained the permanent basing option, regular exercising by the enhanced surveillance forces would enhance both familiarity and presence.

**Command and Control**

It is not within the scope of this report to examine higher command and control aspects concerning the ADF as a whole. It is accepted that Land Headquarters and Headquarters Northern Command will be retained, with the latter headquarters assuming responsibility for army units located in its area of responsibility.

The concept outlined earlier in this report for operations in the north of Australia emphasises dispersed operations, in which in the first instance operations might be commanded by battalion commanders, reporting directly to Headquarters NORCOM or possibly Land Headquarters directly. Similarly, it is unlikely that an
overseas deployment would be in brigade strength. Nevertheless, in circumstances where a substantial proportion of the ADF's land forces were deployed to the north, both protective and response operations would, in effect, be at brigade level, albeit dispersed over a wide area. For these reasons and to facilitate peacetime training and administration it would therefore seem desirable to retain a number of brigade headquarters. These would be responsible for:

- command of the ODF comprising up to three battalions and supporting elements, including higher command of a battalion of the ODF if it were to be deployed as part of an army-oriented joint force;
- command of 2 Cavalry Regiment and a response force battalion once it was deployed to the Darwin-Tindal area (it will be recalled that it was also contemplated that the battalion with the RFSU support companies might be based in the Darwin area);
- command of 5/7 RAR and 1st Armoured Regiment for mechanised training, and for training 5/7 RAR for protective force tasks in a dispersed mode.

Several Army Reserve headquarters may also be required at brigade level to organise and command the follow-on forces which would supplement or replace those Regular units during a contingency. Judgements on the exact number of these would have to take into account the dispersed nature of operations, the importance of streamlining the size of northern deployments and peacetime needs. One might be justified for the follow-on response forces and two for the additional protective forces, but beyond this it would be primarily peacetime organisational and training needs that would dictate the final numbers. Those latter aspects are beyond the scope of this review.

Considering the dispersed nature of operations in northern Australia, the existence of NORCOM, and a concept of operations that envisages a rapid response by relatively small, highly mobile forces, the need for a divisional headquarters to control operations in the north will be greatly reduced. The range of possible tasks for such a headquarters would include:
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- higher command of the ODF if it were to be deployed in brigade size overseas or within Australia;
- higher command of a brigade or group of brigades operating in a discrete area of Australia not already commanded by NORCOM;
- peacetime command of Army Reserve brigades;
- maintaining expertise and training staff in the command of operations at divisional level; and
- command of the combat and logistic support units not allocated to brigades.

A number of these functions may, however, be better carried out by Headquarters Land Command or HQ NORCOM while others relate more to the longer term requirements of the expansion base. In the current circumstances of considerable resource constraint, the need for retention of a Regular divisional land headquarters needs to be carefully assessed. The principal advantage which Headquarters 1 Division currently provides is that it is a deployable joint force headquarters and the potential to move a significant command and control element to remote areas should not be discarded lightly.

Additional Capabilities and Resources

The proposed changes to the structure and operational concepts of ADF ground forces focus on maximising resource efficiency and effectiveness in combat, but they will not be inexpensive to introduce and may need to be phased in over a period of 5 to 10 years. Apart from the commando company, no higher states of readiness are proposed; there is a much more effective use of available manpower; and logistic support and heavier firepower assets are controlled centrally to enhance their availability and flexibility without additional numbers.

The costs will lie in equipping and exercising an essentially mobile force which, while operating on light scales, relies on relatively sophisticated sensors and weapons systems for its effectiveness. While a careful study will need to be made of mobility requirements to determine the optimum numbers, the present numbers of APCs
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(wheeled and tracked), Perentie-type vehicles and Black Hawk and UH-1H helicopters would generally appear sufficient to introduce the proposed concept within a short time frame. Consideration should, however, be given to upgrading or fitting combat surveillance sensors to a proportion of those vehicles and to equipping current helicopters with more potent air-to-surface weapons.

The more immediate need would appear to be to equip both protective and response forces with sufficient numbers of medium range direct fire weapons, either vehicle-mounted or able to be handled by one or two infantrymen, and to introduce numbers of surveillance sensors at company level and below. An attempt was made in the early 1980s to equip the ODF with Milan anti-tank missile launchers, but the system was not acquired in sufficient numbers nor was it fully integrated into the force's operational concepts. Small numbers of combat surveillance radars, thermal imagers and unattended ground sensors have recently been acquired under Defence's major capital equipment program.

The requirement is for systems which are effective, rugged, and affordable in larger numbers. Weapons systems would need to be accurate over distances of 500-750 metres and perhaps up to 2000 metres and suitable for engaging personnel, soft-skinned vehicles and light masonry or stone fortifications. Ideally, surveillance sensors should have a high probability of detecting groups of four to six personnel and single vehicles at ranges of 8-10 kilometres. Comprehensiveness of close area coverage must, however, take priority over extended range, particularly if the concept of mobile protection forces is to be effective. Precise numbers of units would depend on concepts for the tactical deployment of the forces but an indicative benchmark might be on a scale of 4 medium-range direct fire weapons per company and between one and three surveillance radars (with the greater number going to protective forces) per company.

Civil Support for Operations

The other area of possible capability enhancement that has received considerable attention in recent years has been the use of wider national resources to contribute to the defence effort. To
overcome its limited manpower and to lessen logistic support needs, it has been variously suggested: that land forces should make greater use of the available civil infrastructure in northern Australia both for supplies and support facilities (including repair and maintenance); that the local population should be used to provide surveillance networks and possibly a para-military force for policing tasks, thus reducing the burden on the defence force; and that other assets (particularly transport and engineering) might be pressed into military service. Some consideration has been given to the legal arrangements necessary to make these proposals effective, while Wrigley provided a comprehensive review of the types of non-combat roles that might be given to civilians — thus enhancing resource efficiency and freeing additional troops for combat.

Many of these proposals undoubtedly have considerable merit and should be pursued further. Our defence effort should be able to draw upon the full range of available national resources. In examining the role of land forces themselves, however, the criticism has quite validly been raised that these options may offer little advantage. There is only very limited infrastructure in the north and northwest of Australia capable of supporting operations and only a limited pool of additional personnel that may be called upon beyond that already participating in RFSUs or other Reserve activities. Furthermore, to the extent that many civilian activities continue as normally as possible, this pool of available resources will be further reduced.

This paper has not sought to assess the potential value or credibility of these options. In developing the concept for land force operations, however, the paper has taken into account that logistic supply and resupply will be one of the most resource-demanding tasks for the ADF and that this could be exploited by an adversary to commit Australia to a disproportionate response or to undermine the effectiveness of land forces during a protracted conflict. The proposed approach is designed to minimise those difficulties, giving the ADF rather than the adversary control over the level of deployment — particularly in remote areas — and the time scales over which land force elements may need to be deployed. Except in the most serious of lower level conflicts, or where specific intelligence or an incident demanded otherwise, there would be no need to deploy large land forces to remote areas devoid of infrastructure. The smaller force elements deployed for surveillance and initial response tasks should in
many areas be able to draw non-military supplies and some supporting services from the local civil community.

REGULARS, RESERVES AND THE EXPANSION BASE

Having developed a concept of how the Australian Army might operate, its structure and capabilities, the final question is just what size the Army should be and the desirable balance between Regular and Reserve forces.

The Defence of Australia 1987 generally confirmed that the current Regular force of six battalions should be retained, but placed a new emphasis on the role of the Reserves as follow-on forces to take over the protection of vital assets. It also gave priority to the basing of key response units in the north, including 2CAV Regiment and possibly a brigade, to improve both operational readiness and training opportunities in the harsh northern environment. The level of future financial guidance envisaged by the White Paper has not, however, been maintained.

Wrigley took a different view. His concern was that Australia should be able to expand its land forces quickly should strategic circumstances change but he also recognised that resources would continue to be constrained. To overcome this problem he envisaged the greater use of civil resources to support the defence effort, an improved teeth-to-tail ratio within the available Regular forces, but a reduction in the size of those Regular forces to finance and equip a larger Reserve force. He considered that there would be sufficient warning of a defence contingency to bring those Reserve units up to full operational readiness.

Warning

The important difference between the two approaches relates to ‘warning’. The White Paper considered that, while Australia presently faced no threat to its security, the force-in-being should be able to handle those lower level conflicts credible in the shorter term.
Wrigley, on the other hand, considered that Australia would have significant warning of any conflict and that it was thus possible to trade off the current size of the Regular force against the potential availability of a greater number of Reserves. Both are, of course, legitimate approaches to providing for the defence of Australia. The choice between them will hinge ultimately on the confidence which the government has in its intelligence and in the ability of the ADF to expand at short notice into an effective fighting force.

The approach proposed in this paper does not offer substantial resource savings in the short term. What it does seek to do, however, is to give the ADF much greater flexibility to manage the timing and extent of its commitment in situations of tension and conflict without the need for high, resource-demanding states of readiness across the entire force. While it is based upon a Regular land force of the same order as proposed in *The Defence of Australia* 1987, it seeks to exploit those forces in a different way to ensure that the ADF has the capability to:

- meet those more immediate tasks that could arise at short notice, particularly offshore;
- guard against those isolated incidents (or opportunism) that may occur with little warning during a period of tension; and
- fill out additional forces and deploy them progressively during a period of tension and the early stage of conflict without creating significant gaps in our defensive effort or overburdening logistic or training resources.

In practice, this strategy of threshold management should — by progressively raising the costs for the adversary — reduce the likelihood that large Reserve forces will need to be brought to a high state of readiness in many lower level contingencies but, should that be necessary, also create additional time in which to do it.
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Regulars and Reserves: Roles and Readiness

How then do these principles translate into the status of different elements in the force structure, which units need to be retained at higher states of readiness, and the balance between the Regulars and the Reserves?

Traditionally, there has been a clear distinction drawn between Regular and Reserve forces in terms not only of operational readiness but also manning and equipment. The ADF has already introduced considerable flexibility in this regard through its Operational Readiness Directive under which different force elements are held at higher or lower states of readiness according to their intended roles. Even within the Reserve forces, units such as the RFSUs are maintained at a relatively high level of preparedness for operations. Defence is also examining the concept of a Ready Reserve Force to provide further flexibility. Without attempting to weigh the advantages of that concept, it is proposed that to meet the flexible strategies outlined in this paper three broad levels of readiness or preparedness be adopted. The middle level has been designated the Ready Reserve Force.

Broadly, the principal elements in the proposed force structure would be:

- 3-4 expanded regional surveillance/response units;
- 3 response battalions comprising the ODF and the parachute battalion;
- a Regular commando company;
- the Darwin mobile protective force (an augmented 2CAV Regiment);
- an additional infantry battalion for the Darwin area;
- 3 vital asset protection forces (based on 5/7 RAR); and
- additional battalions to round out the protective forces and to provide follow-on capabilities should the conflict be sustained.

Apart from the commando company and the additional protective and follow-on forces, these units are available (if in a
somewhat different form) within the Regular Army and it is desirable that they should continue to be in the future.

The need to enhance the surveillance and firepower capabilities available to these units will, however, create additional resource pressures and, if overall Defence funding continues to be constrained, some further adjustments may be necessary to facilitate early re-equipment. (The overall concept depends upon a balance of manpower and equipment for its effectiveness.) This could be achieved by reconstituting the Darwin infantry battalion and possibly one of the response battalions as a Ready Reserve force available within six months at full operational readiness. Such a judgement would, however, have to be made by the government on the basis of a detailed assessment of current strategic circumstances and regularly reviewed. The six months’ time frame is proposed as realistic given the likely rotation periods for forces deployed overseas and the additional time which the ADF’s initial response forces would be able to provide in the event of an unexpected contingency. Among the Regular Forces, the remaining ODF response battalions and the commando company would need to be maintained at the highest state of readiness to undertake current tasks.

While the proposed approach does not rely on a large number of additional forces being available at a very early stage in a contingency, further expansion of the land force would clearly be important for sustained operations and in situations of more major threat (e.g. where intelligence provided evidence of the assembling of larger raiding parties). Ideally, Australia would have a significant number of land force battalions available for this purpose. The priority would, however, clearly have to be the three infantry battalions to round out the vital asset protection forces and possibly an additional battalion for the Darwin/Tindal area, due to its particular strategic significance and importance to effective ADF operations. In circumstances of more substantial resources and greater strategic uncertainty, the former would justify inclusion in any Ready Reserve force that was established.

In many lower level conflict situations, hostilities would be relatively narrowly focussed in geographic terms and activity rates would be low. The flexibility provided by the forces described above should be more than adequate for responding. However, where
Australia faced the prospect of larger and more widespread raids over a lengthy period (which would take the adversary himself considerable time to prepare for), some further expansion of the ADF to allow rotation of forces and protect additional assets might be required. In present strategic circumstances, such forces would be unlikely to need to reach operational readiness in a period less than twelve months, but they should still be given clear roles which reinforce the operational concepts of the Regular forces.

To achieve this, the structure of these additional Reserve units should be as follows:

- a commando battalion to reinforce both the commando company and the regional surveillance/response units;
- 3 follow-on response battalions to support the ODF (the Regular forces currently dedicated to this now being given other roles);
- 4 protective battalions comprising an APC mobile infantry company and two infantry companies.

The latter could be used to protect additional important infrastructure as well as to replace existing protective forces.

In summary, this paper concludes that the size of the ADF’s land forces, and the balance between Regular and Reserve elements, is basically correct although the roles for a number of those units need to be redefined. The concept of a Ready Reserve force element does give some scope for adjusting these, depending upon the available level of resources. There is, however, a quite pressing need for some re-equipment of land forces in the areas of surveillance sensors and medium-range direct fire weapons. Any reductions in the status of the current Regular forces should be primarily to support these acquisitions and hence maximise the balance between manpower and equipment. Once this is achieved any lessening of readiness states in the longer term would be more soundly based, since the ADF would be able to exercise greater control over the rate of escalation of any conflict that arose in the shorter term.

In comparison with the Army’s current combat force structure this report does not propose that any Regular units be disbanded,
although some roles might change. It does propose forming a Regular commando company and identifies two Regular battalions that might be converted to Ready Reserve battalions. With respect to the Reserves, the report has identified an immediate need for eleven ARes battalions for roles in the proposed concept of operations. A decision on the future of the remaining four ARes battalions should depend upon the time frames adopted for implementing this new approach to land force operations and the availability of the recommended equipments to other force elements. In this context, consideration would have to be given to whether retaining those additional forces diverted significant funds away from the reorganisation and re-equipping of the land force more generally, the role of those battalions in the peacetime recruiting and administration of land forces, and their potential to contribute to further expansion in the longer term.

Planning for Expansion

The requirement for the ADF to ‘provide a suitable basis for timely expansion to meet higher levels of threat if our strategic circumstances deteriorate over the longer term’\(^{54}\) has been a central tenet of Australia’s defence policy for the past two decades and was restated in *The Defence of Australia 1987*, even though the prospect of more substantial conflict arising continued to be assessed as remote. It reflects a concern that, should such a situation arise in the future, the costs for Australia would be high and hence we need confidence in the lead times necessary to adjust and expand our military capabilities. For Army, the problem was particularly difficult because such expansion envisaged not only a very large increase in the number of soldiers but the adoption of different doctrines and tactics to those applicable in lower levels of conflict. In particular, the lodgement of a substantial land force on Australian territory would require the adoption of more conventional concepts of firepower and manoeuvre and maintaining a structure capable of absorbing far greater numerical strength. The Navy and Air Force faced the need for larger numbers of major equipments and more trained personnel, albeit in much smaller numbers, but many of their capabilities and tactics were applicable across the different levels of conflict.

\(^{54}\) *Ibid.*, para. 3.51, p.32.
The adoption of self-reliance as the Government's defence objective has, however, brought about a significant change. Much greater emphasis is being given to maximising the nation's capacity to handle lower levels of conflict independently and the concept of the Army as a 'core force' has been largely set aside. Whereas the Army Reserve had previously provided the expansion base for the Army, it was now required also to contribute to operations which might arise in the shorter term. According to the Defence White Paper, in addition to the forces which would be required for low-level and escalated low-level conflict, the expansion base was to be provided primarily by maintaining a limited mechanised capability.

While the prospect of more substantial threats arising against Australia remains remote, and resources continue to be constrained, planning and equipping the ADF for higher levels of conflict will not be accorded priority. Indeed, the traditional concepts of 'mobilisation' and 'expansion' have come to be used as much in relation to filling out existing units and maximising the contribution of wider national resources in support of the defence effort. To expand to meet a more substantial threat might require national mobilisation and an expansion of the Army to a force of several corps.

There are several important reasons why the ADF should continue to examine the implications of more substantial conflict for our defence planning. These are that:

- The ADF needs to monitor continually what capability changes and enhancements would be necessary for responding and the likely time frames attaching to these. Without that knowledge, it is difficult to be confident in the adequacy of our intelligence and the ADF's capacity to expand in a timely fashion.

- A number of major ADF capabilities will also be appropriate to higher levels of conflict and it would be valuable to identify, given extended lives of type, just what capability or performance increments might be justified.

- As the boundaries of escalated low-level conflict change over time (with regional capability enhancements), it will be valuable to identify the point
at which different strategies and concepts from higher levels of conflict become more relevant.

- The principal advances in military technologies are taking place in the area of larger scale, conventional conflict. The ADF’s reliance on technology (including, under this paper’s proposals, for ground forces) and its adaption to Australia’s unique strategic circumstances means that we must stay abreast of these developments and their possible application or adoption.

- Australia’s relations with its major allies provide substantial benefits in terms of training and exercises, exchanges of information and technology and scientific and industrial cooperation. The ADF’s competence and expertise in key areas will help to underpin our continuing access.

At the same time, we must take care not to assume that more substantial conflict simply means reverting to the lessons and doctrine of larger scale conventional conflict, particularly if drawn from forces which are primarily ‘continental’ in their approach. As noted previously, many of the strengths and weaknesses of our strategic circumstances will continue to shape how the ADF approaches operations, even in more substantial conflict. It is important that the ADF recognises this, and its implications for our tactics and capabilities, well in advance of the time we may need to consider readjusting and re-equipping the ADF for higher levels of conflict.

Over the past fifteen years a number of commentators have advocated the establishment of machinery to facilitate mobilisation planning at a national level. However, no progress appears to have been made in this area apart from some planning to determine what

size army might be raised should mobilisation be ordered. In the recent reorganisation of Headquarters ADF a small planning area was established with responsibility for mobilisation planning and it is important that Army planning staff should work closely with this area. It is proposed that Army establish a small, dedicated planning staff to:

- determine what size army could be raised during various time scales;

- examine training policies to determine how much of current individual training is devoted to providing an expansion base. For example are officers and NCOs trained merely for their next job or for two ranks ahead?

- examine current doctrine to determine how much it is concerned with preparing for likely contingencies and how much is it directed towards the sort of large-scale operations that would only be possible after substantial expansion;

- examine personnel and manning policies to determine what allowance should be made for an expansion base; and

- examine the collective training program to ensure that periodical exercises are held to maintain the state of the art in expertise that would be needed in an expanded army. For example, a Land Command Tactical Exercise Without Troops (TEWT) might be necessary to exercise officers in the conduct of operations involving several divisions. Or larger scale conventional exercises (e.g. mechanised brigade manoeuvres) could be held to test doctrine and command and control procedures.

The aim of these studies should be to identify the points at which the doctrine and capabilities being developed for lower levels of conflict become inappropriate, the ways in which transition might be managed in deteriorating strategic circumstances, and the types of wider national strategies that might be adopted to support such a mobilisation. It would serve as a valuable check on the adequacy and direction of current operational planning and resource expenditure.
Without this, our understanding of the lead times for responding to more substantial conflict will be incomplete. Publication of at least some of these studies could be used to stimulate wider national interest in the area.

For two decades, indecision about the role of land forces as a core force suitable for expansion and the balance between that and the demands of lower levels of conflict has complicated Army planning priorities. Changes in government policy, a more actual articulation of credible threats, and resource pressures now give a very clear priority to structuring and equipping the ADF for the defence of Australia in lower levels of conflict. This paper has sought to offer some solutions as to how the task might be carried out most effectively in the future.
PART 2
AN ALTERNATIVE APPROACH TO STRUCTURING THE ARMY

Graeme Cheeseman
It is difficult and probably inadvisable to examine the Australian Army or the ground force component of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) in isolation. Under most future circumstances, elements of the three services will be required to operate together, and Australia's defence strategy and its operational command structure is being changed to reflect this fact. A discussion of the likely roles and uses of Australia's ground forces must also take into account a range of other factors including our changing strategic circumstances, the availability of resources, and the changing policy preferences of our political and military leaders.

The paper, then, seeks to approach the question of what should be the future role and shape of Australia's ground forces from this overall perspective. It begins by critically analysing Australia's current defence posture and concludes that it is fundamentally flawed in certain key respects and needs to be modified or changed. The Government and its advisers have chosen a strategy which is beyond the capacity of the ADF in its present form to carry out fully and effectively and which could still leave Australia vulnerable to certain forms of low- and high-level threats. They are seeking to put in place a high-technology military structure which is extremely expensive and will not be able to be sustained without increasing assistance from the United States. They have seriously overestimated the availability and capacity of Australia's military workforce. And they are pursuing a defence industry policy which is not feasible over the longer term.

After commenting briefly on the causes of these deficiencies, the paper then discusses what could be done to ensure that Australia has a more coherent, viable, cost-effective and reasonably self-reliant defence posture by the turn of the century. Included here is a revised strategy for the defence of Australian sovereignty and Australian interests, an alternative command structure for the ADF, and some thoughts on how Australia's ground forces may best be structured and deployed in the future. The paper borrows from, and extends in a number of areas, the arguments of two of my earlier works. As in

1 Graeme Cheeseman, ‘An Alternative Defence Posture for Australia’ in Desmond Ball (ed.), Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.69, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1990), pp.367-92; and Greeme Cheeseman,
those cases, I have generally limited my considerations to broad roles and frameworks rather than delve into unit establishments or numbers and characteristics of individual weapons systems. The primary purpose of the paper is not to champion particular solutions but to encourage us to think more critically about what we have and whether and how it could be improved or changed.

AUSTRALIA’S CURRENT DEFENCE POSTURE

The paper assumes that Australia’s basic defence policy interests and objectives remain those that were first detailed in the Hawke Government’s Policy Information Paper, The Defence of Australia 1987 (DOA87), and were recently confirmed by the Department of Defence in The Defence Corporate Plan 90-94, which was released in August 1990. According to these documents, the fundamental goals of Australia’s defence policy of ‘self-reliance’ are ‘to seek to reinforce the positive aspects of Australia’s strategic environment and to provide an appropriate measure of insurance against future uncertainty’. This requires us, in turn,

- to develop and maintain capabilities for the independent defence of Australia and its interests;
- to promote strategic stability and security in our region; and
- as a member of the Western strategic community to work for a reduction in the level of tension between the superpowers and to limit the spread of influences in our region inimical to Western interests.2


An Alternative Approach to Structuring the Army

Australia is seeking to achieve the first of these fundamental goals by pursuing a strategy of 'defence-in-depth' of an 'area of direct military interest' which is centred on the Australian mainland and extends outwards from our coastline by some 1500 nautical miles. The strategy involves the deployment of conventional military forces with priority being given to those needed to defend the outermost layers of this area — especially to the north and northwest of the country which is considered the most likely direction from which future threats will emerge — against so-called 'credible' threats (those involving existing or extant regional capabilities). In its current formulation, then, Australia's defence strategy can more aptly be described as an extended barrier or frontier defence extending outwards from our northern coastline. It is characterised by:

- A preference for long-range air and naval forces needed to surveil Australia's air and sea approaches and, if necessary, to intercept and destroy unwanted or hostile forces located there. These same capabilities can also be used to attack the home or forward operating bases of prospective adversaries in order either to gain the strategic initiative or to deter or control any escalation of the conflict.3 Australia's ground forces play very much a support role in the strategy: ground surveillance and reconnaissance in the north and northwest of the country, protection of vital assets including Australia's forward air and naval bases, and containment and mopping up of enemy forces that are able to penetrate the outer layers of our protective barrier and land on the Australian mainland or its offshore territories.

- A reliance on advanced weapons and support systems to overcome the perceived limitations imposed by

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3 This has led Ross Babbage, for one, to argue that Australia's defence posture is based on a strategy of denial and escalation. See his Looking Beyond the Dibb Report, Working Paper No.110, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1986), pp.18-19; and A Coast Too Long: Defending Australia in the 1990s, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1990).
Australia's geography and its small population base, and to provide us with a technological edge over prospective regional adversaries.

- An emphasis on regular forces and traditional military structures. While reserve forces form part of Australia's military force structure, they are to play a largely support role in all but the highest contingencies.

- An expressed need to be able to defend ourselves from within our resources which, in turn, requires the establishment of an expanded and largely self-reliant indigenous defence industry capable of supporting the ADF in peace and war. To this end, the Government is providing local firms with details of its own projected defence acquisitions, directing that the ADF make more use of locally made products and services, and encouraging Australian defence industries to seek increased markets overseas to help them become more competitive and less dependent on government support. The Government has also recently stated that defence 'self-reliance' is only possible within the context of Australia's alliance arrangements with the United States and its friends and neighbours in the region.

It is worth noting that the role of the ADF in meeting Australia's second defence objective — to promote strategic stability and security in our region (incorporating Southeast Asia, Indo-China, the eastern Indian Ocean and the southwest Pacific) is being steadily increased by the Hawke Government. DOA 87 stated that Australia would focus its defence efforts solely on sovereignty defence although it did note that the capabilities being acquired for this task would provide the Government with 'practical options' for the use of elements of the defence force in operations beyond our area of direct military interest.4

Subsequent government statements have made it clear that the ADF will be expected to play a greater and more direct role in the

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region in the future, and that our military planning and force structure is to be amended accordingly. While the ADF's responsibilities in this regard have not been described officially, they are likely to include the following:

- the continued provision of military assistance or support under the Defence Cooperation Program;
- the deployment of military forces into Southeast Asia for joint training or other cooperative defence activities;
- the provision of limited military assistance to the government of an ASEAN or South Pacific country to help maintain and/or to restore law and order;
- the deployment of military advisers or military forces to a South Pacific country (including Papua New Guinea) to help deter or deal with various forms of armed insurrection or external military threat;
- the deployment of military forces into the South Pacific to help protect Australian interests there or to protect and/or rescue Australian nationals; and
- the deployment of military forces or the projection of military power onto Australian off-shore territories or

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other nearby island states to secure them against the threat of military attack.

This shift in policy appears to have been confirmed by the Government’s latest Strategic Basis document, *Australia’s Strategic Planning in the 1990s* (ASP 90), which was approved by Cabinet in the beginning of 1990. It is yet to be reflected in Australia’s defence force structure which is continuing to be developed in accordance with the priorities contained in DOA 87, but this will change with the finalisation, in April or May 1991, of the Defence Department’s Force Structure Review.7

Australia’s military contribution to its third strategic goal, the reduction in tensions between the superpowers and the avoidance of global conflict, appears likely also to increase in the future. Our present commitment includes the hosting of the US-Australian joint defence facilities in Australia, continuing joint exercises and operations with allied (principally American) forces well away from our area of direct military interest, and various peacekeeping commitments.8 The Government has indicated that it is prepared to provide sizeable ground forces in support of any future UN peacekeeping role in Cambodia and, if we can take the Prime Minister’s recent rhetoric on the Gulf at face value, appears also to be establishing the grounds to contribute to similar deployments elsewhere as the need dictates. In a Ministerial Statement to Parliament on 21 August 1990, for example, Mr Hawke argued that it was not inconceivable that the conditions pertaining to the Gulf:

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7 The Force Structure Review was appointed jointly by the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) in May 1990 to review the ADF’s current force structure (including approved enhancements) and to recommend priorities for adjustment to it up to the year 2000. In addition to the strategic guidance given in ASP 90, the review is to take account of the impact of financial guidance and other resource pressures on maintaining present ADF capabilities and achieving those that are, or might be, planned.

8 These are described in Hugh Smith (ed.), *Australia and Peacekeeping*, (Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1990).
... could emerge in the Asia Pacific region in the coming years. We need therefore to work out how to manage those dangers wherever they may arise ... [and] ... As a self-reliant country, in the years ahead we may need to depend more and more on the principals of the United Nations Charter to protect our interests. We are not sending our ships to the Gulf region to serve our allies: we are going to protect the international rule of law which will be vital to our security however our alliances may develop in the future.

It is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from these changes at this stage other than to say that they will compound the problems and dilemmas currently confronting Australia's defence planners, largely because they require more resources and give rise to rather different (albeit overlapping) military structures and capabilities. It is possible too that the changes represent the beginning of a new direction in Australia's defence thinking — a renunciation of the current policy of 'self-reliance' in favour of one which gives priority to our ability to contribute to allied forces involved in policing the 'new world order' in areas well beyond our 'area of direct military interest'. In short, a return to forward defence.

THE PROBLEMS AND DILEMMAS ASSOCIATED WITH AUSTRALIA'S CURRENT FORCE POSTURE

The Strategy Is Very Expensive and Will Become Increasingly Difficult to Sustain

Under the Government's new strategy of 'defence-in-depth', the ADF is required to defend from within its own resources and against all-comers an area equivalent to around 10 per cent of the Earth's surface, an enormous undertaking in any circumstances. Recognising this, the Government has directed that priority be given to defending the sea and air gap to the north and northwest of the Australian mainland against so-called 'credible' levels of threat —
those that could be launched with existing or extant regional forces and capabilities.

Even with these qualifications in place, the implementation of the White Paper strategy will continue to be an expensive and difficult exercise, in part because even the more restricted area of operations of the ADF remains very large, but also, and more importantly, because of Australia’s continuing preference for state-of-the-art weapons and support systems. While, as argued by the Department of Defence, the selective use of modern weapons and support technologies may provide ‘the only real solution to many aspects of defending our vast continent and our interests in surrounding maritime areas’,9 overseas experience has shown that the cost of seeking to remain close to the leading edge of military technology is increasing and can be prohibitive even for first-rank states.10

The difficulty of financing Australia’s new strategy is already becoming apparent. While the White Paper was not forthcoming on either the cost of its proposals or anticipated budget outlays for the period of its implementation, it is generally acknowledged that they were very similar to those contained in the Dibb Review. That document assumed a 3 per cent real growth in defence spending for each successive year of the 1986-91 Five Year Defence Plan (FYDP), and additional expenditure of at least $1300 million on capital equipment alone over the five years immediately beyond the FYDP. To date the budget outlays for defence have fallen well short of this guidance: by 2 per cent in 1986-87, 4 per cent in 1987-88, 2.5 per cent in 1988-89 and 1989-90 and 3 per cent in 1990-91 or around $3 billion (in

9 Department of Defence, Defence of Australia 1987, p.31.
10 See, for example, Franklin C. Spinney, Defense Facts of Life: The Plans/Reality Mismatch, (Westview Press, Boulder CA, 1985). Australia has already had some forewarning of this with its minehunter inshore (MHI) project. Conceived in the early 1970s and expected to be in use during the first half of the 1980s, the RAN still does not have a fully operational prototype of the Bay Class catamaran despite a total expenditure to date of more than $60 million. See Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, The Priorities for Australia’s Minecountermeasure Needs, (Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1989), pp.91-5.
1985 prices) overall. If the same pattern continues, the difference between anticipated and actual expenditure will reach the $10 billion mark by the end of the financial year 1993-94. The problem is being compounded by the fact that the cost of the Government’s program is also increasing. In the time that has passed since the preparation of the Dibb Review, the estimated cost of a number of major projects, such as the Jindalee over-the-horizon-radar system, the light patrol frigate, Army’s Project Parakeet, and the submarine project, has either increased or is under review and will probably be increased. These cost pressures on the Defence budget are likely to grow in the future as we continue to upgrade our weapons platforms and support systems.

The Minister for Defence and his Department have sought to reduce the expanding gap between the cost of the program and the money available for defence by selling off unwanted assets, transferring certain functions currently belonging to Defence to the private sector, and rationalising and making more efficient the remainder of the organisation. The Government is also encouraging Australia’s defence firms to sell more of their products overseas in order to reduce the cost to the public of expanding our industrial infrastructure, and to offset our continuing high levels of defence expenditure in the United States and Europe. These initiatives have yielded some savings and extra revenue which has been helpful but nowhere near enough. To proceed with its modernisation program, then, the Department has been forced to defer or cancel certain lower priority projects, to reduce the scope of others or extend their lead-times, and to cut into recurrent expenditure on personnel and operating costs. As a result, the implementation time for the program


as a whole is being increased, personnel numbers within the defence establishment are being reduced, training activities are being scaled down, operating and essential war stocks are becoming depleted, and the maintenance of existing assets is falling behind schedule.

These changes are, in turn, serving to reduce the operational readiness and combat sustainability of the ADF at a time when the Government is starting to express concern over the increasing uncertainties in Australia’s strategic circumstances, and is countenancing the need to be able to deploy a range of forces into the region at relatively short notice. They are contributing to the exodus of skilled personnel from the armed forces and to the decline in morale among those remaining. As evidenced by the establishment of the Force Structure Review, they are serving, over time, to threaten to undermine the coherence and future viability of the Government’s White Paper strategy. And they are making us more rather than less reliant on the United States.

The Strategy Is Making Us Too Reliant on the United States

In a speech to the Washington Centre of the Asia Society in June 1988, the then Minister for Defence, Kim C. Beazley, informed his audience that continuing assistance from the United States, in the form of intelligence, technology, resupply and training,

... gives Australia the technological edge we need to enable less than 1% of the Earth’s population to guard 12% of its surface. Without that help, Australia cannot sustain a self-reliant defence posture. In this fundamental way, our alliance is literally essential to our self-reliance.

Mr Beazley added that the benefits that are derived from the agreements with the United States:

... are vital to Australia but they are not costly to the United States. They can be delivered with little financial cost in peacetime and at little political cost in war. Because of this we believe we can rely on intelligence, resupply and other help under virtually
any circumstances, and our defence policy is based on that belief.14

Australia’s growing reliance on the United States is most evident in the area of logistics support. Under a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on Logistic Support between the two countries, which was first signed in 1980 and was renegotiated in 1985 and again in 1989, the United States has agreed to provide Australia with a range of goods and services, including weapons, ammunition, spare parts and explosives, in both peace and times of conflict. These agreements enable the Defence Department to reduce its expenditure on a range of munitions and other consumables without (in theory) undermining the operational capacity or the combat sustainability of the ADF. In the event that Australia finds itself engaged in military operations, it would simply utilise American stocks and supply pipelines. In practice, the assumption that Australia will be able automatically to obtain access to American military supplies ‘under virtually any circumstances’ may be unwarranted. In his recent monograph Breaking the American Alliance, Gary Brown has noted that the United States’ commitments under the MoU are, like its obligations under the ANZUS Treaty, ‘subject to its laws and regulations and the exigencies of war’. Brown concluded that contrary to the official position of the Minister and his advisers:

... the alliance’s MoU structure does not guarantee US supply. When all is said and done, it will remain at the absolute discretion of the US Administration (assuming it can secure Congressional acquiescence) whether or not Australia receives supply and under what terms and conditions supply might be granted.15

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15 Gary Brown, Breaking the American Alliance: An Independent National Security Policy for Australia, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.54, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989), p.69. Brown’s view appears to be confirmed by the Defence Department. Two of the proposed outcomes for the Department’s logistics sub-
The growing reliance on the United States leaves Australia open to American influence or coercion in peacetime and to possible military defeat in war. It underlies the continuing close relationship between the military establishments of the two countries which, in turn, serves to divert our attention and resources away from the defence of Australia. Of the 166 major exercises conducted by the ADF between June 1985 and December 1988, for example, 142 were with foreign (mainly US) defence forces and 63 were held outside Australia’s area of direct military interest. The continuing close links between the two defence establishments also encourages our preference for traditional military force structures, expensive high-technology weapons and support systems, and outmoded and/or irrelevant military standards and operational concepts. As the Wrigley Review noted:

Australia’s military men have gone first to Britain and later the United States for their doctrine and their military organisations and procedures. Our officers have attended their military colleges, we still acquire their weapons, and adopt the military-oriented maintenance support procedures that go with the weapons, and we have fought and exercised with them and so grown to see their logistics arrangements as normal.

program for 1989-90 are to ‘finalise negotiation of a new Cooperative Logistics Support Agreement with the USA’ and ‘obtain legally binding assurances of continued logistics support from overseas governments’ (Budget Related Paper No.8.5, Explanatory Notes 1989-90: Defence Portfolio, p.238).


17 An example directly affecting the Army was the introduction, in 1960, of the abortive pentropic divisional structure which was modelled on the American pentomic division. See J. C. Blaxland, Organising the Army: The Australian Experience 1957-1965, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.50, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989), Chapter 4.

18 Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community, p.150.
In Wrigley’s view, these arrangements and the ‘expeditionary force’ mentality that continues to characterise Australia’s military planning and force structure are no longer appropriate for our changed strategic circumstances.

The Strategy Overestimates the Availability and Capacity of Australia’s Military Work Force

One area of resource policy completely neglected by both Dibb and DOA 87 is personnel. The two guidance documents simply assumed that there would be sufficient personnel available and on call to carry out the tasks and functions allotted to the ADF. The findings of a number of subsequent inquiries and reports on personnel-related issues suggest that this assumption may be unwarranted. The ADF is already experiencing significant difficulties filling its current establishment and fulfilling its peacetime and likely contingent roles. These difficulties are likely to increase rather than decrease in the future as Australia continues to modernise its armed forces and adds to their current tasks and functions.

In its 1988 report on Personnel Wastage in the Australian Defence Force, the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade warned that disproportionately high numbers of personnel were continuing to leave the services. These included many of the ADF’s most experienced and highly valued people: Army corporals and senior NCOs, Army and Navy officers of middle rank and below, Navy and Air force engineers, Navy submariners and principal warfare officers, Air Force pilots, and specialist technicians and operators from all three services. In the Committee’s view, ‘the extent and magnitude of wastage in some of those areas is such that it will adversely affect the ADF for at least the next decade’. It also concluded that:

... the prevailing excessive level of personnel wastage is damaging the organisational health of the ADF. Wastage is undermining the experience and competence levels of [ADF] personnel. It is impacting on the capacity of the training and personnel management systems to maintain the Forces’ integrity.
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The financial cost arising from the abnormal loss of skilled staff and the increased training effort is enormous. At the psychological level, morale has fallen and the potential has been created for institutional and community polarisation.19

Personnel shortages are also constraining the capacity of the ADF to carry out its principal contingent roles. In his recent inquiry into The Defence Force and the Community, Alan Wrigley conducted a detailed examination of existing ADF contingency plans for dealing with a range of peacetime and so-called ‘credible’ low-level conflict situations, and found that the ADF’s capacity to deal with the demands imposed by these requirements was significantly constrained by a lack of skilled personnel:

In the main, major equipment is not an early or substantial constraint to operations at the levels of intensity strategic assessments suggest should get most attention in the next few years. Quite often, the ADF’s ability to maximise the latent capacity of the major equipment it has will be limited by the availability of enough of the right people to operate it and to keep it operating.20

The review further concluded that the people the armed forces needed most — skilled tradespersons, technicians and operators — are also in great demand in the wider community. It was considered unlikely, then, that the services would be able to make up their existing and projected shortfalls in skilled personnel without significant changes to their current work practices and policies. Even then, Wrigley was uncertain that this was the best policy for Australia since the diversion of a major component of Australia’s skilled workforce into the armed forces in peacetime represented ‘an opportunity cost to national economic growth and industrial competitiveness’.


20 Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community, p.140.
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The problem is not restricted to skilled personnel. In his recent analysis of Australia's defence presence in the Northern Territory, Des Ball noted that '[i]t is quite clear that there is insufficient organised manpower to protect simultaneously all prospective targets in low-level harassment contingencies across the length and breadth of the Australian continent and offshore territories — let alone to actually engage the adversary or bring hostilities to a rapid conclusion'. Ball called for new approaches for defending the north, including the possible creation of para-military forces and the deployment of police as well as military forces from southern states to help protect the local infrastructure.

These concerns appear to have been confirmed by the recent Kangaroo 89 exercise (K89) which was specifically designed to test the strategic and defence planning concepts contained in the 1987 defence White Paper. While the Department's glossy, 30-page public report on the exercise branded it 'an outstanding success' in all regards, press and other subsequent reports indicate that this was not entirely true and that Army in particular experienced considerable problems and difficulties in a number of key areas. The recent report of the Auditor-General into the Army Reserve (ARes) noted, for example, that ARes units responsible for important logistics functions during the exercise had to be supplemented with ARA personnel in order to meet their responsibilities, and that K89 simply tested the principles of vital asset protection rather than 'the ability of specific, dedicated ARes units to defend previously defined vital assets within their designated areas of responsibility'.

More generally, the Auditor-General's report found that ARes units responsible for logistics support functions have low posted

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21 Desmond Ball, 'The Defence Presence in the Northern Territory', in Desmond Ball and J.O. Langtry (eds), The Northern Territory in the Defence of Australia: Geography, History, Economy, Infrastructure and Defence Presence, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.63, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1990), p.269. A similar conclusion was reached by Ross Babbage in A Coast Too Long.

strengths relative to combat units and that they are continuing to experience difficulties in attracting and retaining technically skilled personnel. It concluded that '[i]n terms of the organisation, allocation and disposition of resources, the ANAO [Australian National Audit Office] does not believe that, overall, the ARes will be able to provide logistics support at the levels inherent in defence policy', and that 'ARes Divisions are unable to be self-supporting without substantial logistical assistance from ARA units'. The Report was also highly critical of the capacity of the ARes to carry out its vital asset protection (VAP) role, arguing that the '[t]otal assets allocated to the Army in general (and the ARes in particular) nationally would be insufficient to defend those assets identified by one State alone', and that manpower shortages and confusion over policy guidelines meant that the 'brigades responsible for VAP have been unable to exercise as brigades within their areas of allotted responsibility for the past three years'.

The problem of recruiting and retaining sufficient personnel to meet the needs of the ADF in peace and war is likely to increase rather than decrease in the future. As Australia continues to modernise its armed forces, the demand for specialist operators and technicians will increase. This is evidenced by the experience of our major allies. In the American case, for example, Martin Binkin has shown that the ratio of defence personnel requiring specialist 'civilian' skills to those having general military skills has increased from around 28 per cent in 1945 to 47 per cent in 1985. According to the author, the most conspicuous change in this period has been in the electronics-related occupations, which now account for more than 20 per cent of enlisted jobs compared with less than 5 per cent at the end of the Second World War.

Binkin went on to show that not only has the proportion of technical jobs increased, but the technical complexity of many of the jobs themselves — as well as the aptitude and educational standards required of their occupants — has also grown. He concluded that technological change will continue to shape the United States' armed forces and its work force and that, contrary to the predictions of the technologists, there will be an increasing demand for skilled workers in the future:

The weight of the [historical] evidence is that both new and replacement weapons systems will demand
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evers-more-skilful operators and maintainers, especially if the capabilities of new systems are to be fully exploited. Thus prudent planners should anticipate that the services' requirements for bright, technologically literate individuals are unlikely to diminish in the years ahead, and it is more than likely, given the present course, that the need for such people will grow commensurate with the complexity of the systems being fielded.23

But the competition for the kind of highly skilled workers needed by the ADF will also increase as Australia’s population ages and its civil industry is restructured. This was acknowledged by the Defence Department in a recent report on the implications of the baby boom for ADF recruiting. The report stated that the number of 17-20-year-olds in Australia — who are currently the ADF’s principal source of recruits — will actually decline over the period 1990 to 1997 and perhaps beyond. Even allowing for optimistic projections of Australia’s population growth over the first quarter of the next century, the departmental report concluded that:

... there will be no easing of the recruiting situation, no respite for Defence planners, trainers and recruiters. The ADF will have to compete much more effectively in a very, possibly increasingly, competitive market place. The presentation of the Defence employment package may have to improve in real terms if the ADF is to get a reasonable share of a finite resource.24

As noted by the Department, the competition for this declining work base will intensify because Australian industry is also being modernised and will require greater numbers of skilled personnel in the future. Indeed, it is ironical that one of the greatest competitors for skilled personnel is likely to be the high-technology defence industries

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that are being established in Australia as part of the Government’s plan to develop a more self-reliant defence posture.

The problems facing the ADF in peacetime are further compounded by the fact that Australian businesses will be reluctant to release skilled workers for any length of time for military service and that, in the north and northwest of the country in particular, the services will be competing with police and other emergency and community services for new recruits. Underlying these specific problems is the prevailing attitude of a community which tends to be indifferent to defence issues and generally critical of Australia’s current forces. The Wrigley Review, for example, found that some 60 per cent of Australians do not think that we can defend ourselves from attack, and less than 25 per cent think that defence is either well managed or that it is cost-effective. This led Wrigley to conclude that:

... a community so lacking in conviction about the soundness of our present defence preparations in the face of a military threat of any substance, yet so apparently unconcerned about their deficiencies, is unlikely to feel moved easily or soon to greater involvement.

The Strategy Will Be Difficult to Implement and May Be Vulnerable to Certain High- and Low-Level Threats

It is not at all certain that the present posture provides a fully effective means of dealing with all forms of aggression or threat. Our continuing preference for high technology solutions to our defence problems together with the increasing cost of modern weapons and support systems means that we can only afford to purchase a small number of each type of item. The relatively small size of our defence inventory, together with our limited combat sustainability and a highly centralised communications, command and control system

26 Wrigley, *The Defence Force and the Community*, p.481.
makes Australia's defence structure vulnerable to a pre-emptive strike, coercion by a nuclear-armed adversary, and defeat in detail by a similarly armed but better prepared adversary.

Some of these problems were alluded to in the 1988 Baker Report, 'Report of the Study into ADF Command Arrangements', which detailed the ADF's evolving concepts of operations for both low and higher level contingencies. In the latter case, the report stated that the initial phases of any major conflict (which might be preceded by a period of low-level operations designed to disperse Australian forces even further) were likely to involve firstly, an air battle in which the enemy attempts to gain sufficient control of the air to be able to launch a lodgement force. This would be followed by an approach battle for sea control and continued air control sufficient to permit passage of the lodgement force to points of entry and the reinforcement and sustenance of forces once ashore. There then would be a lodgement battle to secure the forces ashore, followed by a breakout battle to secure the objectives of the lodgement.

The report considered that in all these phases, the load on Australia's air and maritime operations would be extremely high. It warned against committing too many assets to any one phase of the conflict, saying that 'Australia cannot afford to exhaust its air capability in the air battle, for then the approach battle would probably fail also. Similarly if the approach battle decimates the maritime capability, the enemy will have greater freedom of action within Australia'.

But the deployment of smaller numbers of assets in each phase — assuming that is possible in the heat of battle — will reduce the prospects of successfully conducting that phase and simultaneously increase the risk to the forces that are used. Either approach is likely to see the destruction of much of Australia's air and maritime forces by the end of the early phases of the conflict. The basic problem is that Australia has only a limited number of strike aircraft and maritime surface combatants. It needs to manage these assets carefully and avoid subjecting them to circumstances that are likely to incur high attrition rates.

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28 In recognition of this, the RAAF's recently released Air Power
and concept of operations spreads our forces out, commits them to set battles on a piecemeal basis, and requires them to operate at long distances from their support bases and under conditions which, in the initial stages of the conflict at least, are likely to favour the adversary.

In the case of low-level conflict, Ross Babbage has argued, with some justification, that the layered defences that constitute Australia's proposed defensive barrier would not be able to prevent infiltration by a determined adversary and, more importantly, attempts to do so could be self-defeating. According to Babbage, 'a campaign of low-level harassments and raids against northern and offshore Australia (and possibly PNG) would compel the Defence Force to operate around the clock to detect, intercept, identify and possibly arrest or attack potential intruders across the vast expanses of northern Australia and its approaches'. Over time, the effectiveness of Australia's defence forces would decline and the physical and political costs of seeking to counter the threat would rise. This would lead to sections of the community questioning the desirability of remaining firm over the issues in dispute and placing increasing pressure on the Australian Government to negotiate with the adversary. Babbage further argued, again with justification, that a strategy of denial and escalation (which he claimed Dibb was actually advocating, and which characterises the White Paper's revised defence strategy) would suffer similar problems.

If used in response to low level contingencies ... [heavy bomber and submarine attacks on an adversary's home bases and supply lines] could encourage the large scale involvement of a hostile major power in our immediate region and raise the prospect of the opponent's unity and resilience being strengthened and low level raids and harassments continuing regardless for an indeterminate period.29


Babbage's solution to these problems was to incorporate into Australia's defence posture a 'series of flexible response options that have strong potential for forcing an opponent to sue for peace quickly but which would not seriously risk an escalation of the conflict nor provide strong incentives for hostile powers to rush to our opponent's assistance'. These options could include the mining of ports and harbours, the provision of military assistance to dissident groups within the adversary's own country, and the use of special forces to conduct clandestine operations against the adversary's armed forces, ruling elites and civilian infrastructure. Apart from the fact that no Australian government would be able to admit publicly that it was countenancing such responses, it is difficult to see why an adversary would view them any differently from those advocated by the White Paper. In this sense at least, the strategy of leverage is simply a milder form of the strategy of escalation and so would be subject to the same kinds of problems and restraints.

The difficulties of responding to a range of low-level pressures applied across the breadth of Australia's area of direct military interest is also clear from the findings and observations of the aforementioned Baker Report, which stated that Australia's military forces could be involved in a number of concurrent security operations including:

- the maintenance of an air defence identification zone or zones across the north and northwestern approaches to the Australian mainland;
- the control of maritime approaches and the protection of shipping lanes and focal points in the area under threat as well as protection of coastal shipping routes to and from that area;
- the protection of an assigned land area of operations which could stretch from the Pilbara in the west to north Queensland in the east. Within this area, the ADF in concert with civil authorities would be responsible for detecting intrusions, following up reports of unusual activities and protecting vital assets;
- the security of offshore territories and installations; and
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- rear area security largely against terrorist attacks.

The report acknowledged that time and space considerations make each of these tasks extremely difficult to accomplish. The requirement to control the air space in Australia's approaches, for example, was seen as a 'demanding' task 'because of the likely size of the area involved'. In the case of maritime control and protection of shipping, the report stated that a 'fundamental problem is the size of the area to be controlled requiring the constant and careful reallocation of resources between tasks to ensure effectiveness in a range of circumstances. Indeed it may prove impracticable to achieve anything like an impenetrable barrier'. Similar problems were forecast for Australia's ground forces where, in order to provide the necessary response times, it was argued that a balance would have to be struck 'between the dispersion of forces, the concentration of mobility assets and the transport demands of logistic support to deployed elements'.

In addition to these operational problems, many of which were borne out by Kangaroo 89, the present strategy of defence-in-depth has the potential to pose the Government a number of acute political dilemmas. Australia's declared area of direct military interest incorporates a range of independent nation states and territories as well as large tracts of international waterways. Any attempt to exercise military control over these areas in peacetime or, more particularly, in times of tension or undeclared hostilities, will involve a host of political, legal and practical difficulties which will serve to complicate our response options and undermine the deterrent effect of our defence posture.

A more general concern is that Australia's new strategy, or at least those elements of it concerned with projecting military power into our region of interest, may serve eventually to undermine rather than maintain or enhance our presently stable and relatively benign strategic environment. Although largely defensive in outlook, Australia's evolving defence posture will contain an increasing number and range of force elements which could be used to attack or threaten to attack the homelands of countries in Australia's area of

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31 Ibid., p.5.24.
direct military interest or even, as the 1987 White Paper makes clear, beyond. While such capabilities may make sense from a purely military point of view — although this has been the subject of some debate — they could also raise suspicions and fears within our region over Australia’s longer term military objectives, and so stimulate or reinforce the build-up of similar military capabilities by other states, or encourage them to seek assistance from extra-regional powers. In times of crisis, our possession of long-range strategic strike assets could even provoke others into attacking Australia first either to gain the strategic initiative or to lessen the impact of (from the opponent’s perspective) impending military conflict. These broader political and security implications tend to be ignored by our defence planners, and yet they can have a profound effect on our strategic circumstances and on the task of ensuring Australia’s security. This is particularly so given the way we plan and structure our forces not on the basis of the motivations and intentions of prospective adversaries, but rather on the enduring features of our geostrategic environment and the broad range of capabilities that either exist or are likely to exist within the region.

The Strategy and its Response
Options Are Divorced from Reality

When examining Australia’s current defence posture, one is struck by the mismatch between our existing military capabilities and our threat environment. Australia’s defence capabilities are already very significant by regional standards, and they are currently being enhanced. Yet both the White Paper and the earlier Dibb Review made it clear that Australia is one of the most secure countries in the world. It faces no identifiable direct military threat, nor is it likely to for at least the foreseeable future, and it would take at least 10 years


33 This point has been well made by W.B.Pritchett in a paper entitled ‘The Dibb Report: Strategy and Force Structure’, presented to the Australian Fabian Society Conference on Australia’s Defence, Melbourne, 2-3 August 1986.
and massive external support for a regional power to develop the capacity to pose a significant military threat to Australia (the exception to this rules lies in the area of ballistic missile and chemical and nuclear weapons technology, to which Australia's current defence force structure is particularly vulnerable). These judgements are consistent with the findings and conclusions of official strategic guidance documents for at least the past 15 years, and were again confirmed in the recent Wrigley Review.

The discrepancy between Australia's threat environment and its military capacity is also evident when we compare Australia's prospective defence force structure with the types of threats we are judged most likely to be confronted by. Official guidance states on the one hand, that future military threats to our security — if they occur at all — will probably be carried out by irregular forces using unconventional tactics such as sabotage, armed harassment and guerilla warfare. On the other hand, Australia's defence forces are being equipped with modern weapons platforms and associated support systems, such as the FA-18 combat aircraft and guided missile destroyers, and are being organised and trained to conduct conventional military operations against similarly armed adversaries. Many of these force elements are inappropriate for combatting saboteurs and other political or quasi-military threats. Indeed, their use could serve to inflame or escalate some future political crisis or low-level military conflict. It could be argued that the high-technology elements of Australia's defence force structure provide a measure of escalation control, since their presence would deter a prospective adversary escalating or threatening to escalate a conflict in order to achieve his political objectives. Yet there is currently no country in the region presently capable of carrying out such a threat. Australia is better armed than and spends more on defence than all of its ASEAN neighbours combined. In the absence of these capabilities in the

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region, the possession by Australia of offensive strike weapons combined with the bellicose rhetoric emanating from Canberra in recent times, will simply remind our near neighbours of their vulnerability to an Australian attack or threat of attack and, as described earlier, lead them to respond in kind.

Some continuing mismatch between Australia's defence capabilities and its threat environment is inevitable and probably necessary given that we need military forces to cover future and unforeseen exigencies. As noted in DOA 87 and other policy guidance documents, Australia's strategic circumstances are characterised by change and uncertainty, and it is prudent for us to have in place defence policies and capabilities which insure us against the possible military consequences of such developments. It can also be argued, however, that rather too much is being made of these uncertainties. The defence establishment seems to be engaged in a search for threats — both real and imagined — which will justify its present and projected structure and strategies, and whose appearance will forestall the prospect of future cuts to the defence budget following the 'end of the Cold War' and the reduction in military tension and conflict in our region.

The continuing differences are also caused by the reluctance of our leaders to relinquish or change long-standing and cherished values, strategies, structures and weapons systems. Thus military and politico-military solutions continue to be given pride of place in Australia's revised regional security policies. Australia's military structures and forces are little changed from those of the 1950s and 1960s, despite the wholesale and fundamental changes in our strategic circumstances. Although the ADF's operational command structure is now based on three separate joint force commands — Maritime Command, Land Command and Air Command — these differ largely in name only from their single-service predecessors. And, in spite of their formal removal from the operational chain of command, the

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service Chiefs and their staffs continue to exert considerable authority over military policy, including operational policy.37

Beyond this, there are still too many headquarters — arising in large part from the fact that the ADF command structure continues to comprise an admixture of functional and regional organisations — yet, paradoxically, military planning continues to be too highly centralised. Considerable confusion and conflict remains over what the roles and responsibilities of the respective joint force commands should be in operations and especially in relation to the deployment and control of air assets. At a lower level, Army continues to base the organisation of Australia’s ground forces around the divisional structure even though there is mounting evidence that the division and its basic building blocks may be inappropriate for meeting many of the current and contingent tasks of Australia’s ground forces. This is clear from the establishment of Norforce and its parent headquarters in Northern Australia and from the difficulties associated with vital asset protection.

Further evidence that Army’s basic structures may need to be changed or modified can be found in both the Wrigley Review and the 1990 report of the Auditor-General into the Army Reserve. This second report noted that the structure of the ARes closely mirrors the ARA organisational structure from the divisional level down. Yet it found that ‘the low level of ARes membership, particularly in terms of "effective" and "efficient" members ... is insufficient to justify [this] divisional status’. Moreover,

... the heavily layered system of control (ranging from the Army Office through to the Command, Divisional and MD organisations) has resulted in little incentive

or scope for command administration to innovate and the duplication of activity at each level.38

It can be argued, then, that the Hawke Government and its advisers have chosen a defence posture which is probably too expensive to implement fully, is beyond the capacity of the ADF in its current form to carry out effectively, is making us more rather than less reliant on the United States and, in spite of the huge annual outlays on defence, may still leave us vulnerable to certain low- and high-level threats to our security. The Government’s strategy of defence-in-depth is too removed from strategic reality, focusing almost entirely on phantom threats and improbable contingencies, and emphasising traditional military structures and weapons systems which are both costly and inappropriate. The emphasis on developing and maintaining a high-technology military structure is diverting our attention and resources away from our real security needs. It is also leading us to pursue a defence industry policy which is neither advisable nor feasible over the longer term.

Some of these problems and deficiencies are probably an inevitable consequence of the enduring factors in our national security equation. These include the absence of an identifiable threat, our unique and in many respects difficult geostrategic circumstances, and our relatively limited population and financial base. But they are compounded by certain other features of Australia’s defence posture which are largely self-imposed and can be altered or changed to either remove or ameliorate the difficulties they cause. These latter features include our determination to control our surrounding environment by military means, to engage prospective adversaries well forward of the Australian mainland and to retain the capacity to strike at their homelands and forward bases, to maintain our traditional and quite extensive links with our principal allies, and to continue to advocate traditional conventional military structures and state-of-the-art weapons and technologies. In searching for more effective ways of providing for Australia’s future defence requirements, we need to go beyond the external factors that tend to dominate departmental thinking on the subject and critically examine these underlying assumptions and issues as well.

38 The Auditor-General, *Department of Defence: Australia’s Army Reserve*, p.31.
ESTABLISHING A MORE COHERENT, Viable AND COST-EFFECTIVE DEFENCE POSTURE

The basic task of the government and its policy advisers should be to revise or replace Australia’s current defence posture with one which:

- reduces the planned task to asset ratio of the ADF;
- increases our capacity to deal with existing and real threats to our security while retaining a residual capacity to meet remote but potentially more serious contingencies should they arise;
- better matches our defence structures and capabilities to existing and projected resources; and
- reduces our reliance on the United States for the continuing supply of crucial components and services.

For their part, the services must be prepared critically to review their existing structures and operational concepts, to relinquish or revise certain long-held and cherished values and beliefs, and to consider alternative approaches to the present orthodoxy.

Step 1. Reduce the Size of Australia’s Area of Direct Military Interest

A first step towards achieving these objectives would be to restrict the ADF’s future military operations to a much smaller geographic area covering, say, the Australian mainland and our territorial waters, and rely primarily on non-military means to meet our broader objectives of enhancing both global and regional security and promoting a sense of strategic community between us and our immediate neighbours. Examples of these latter measures would include increased economic aid and other assistance to countries in Southeast Asia and the South Pacific, the establishment of a regional peacekeeping force which would operate under the auspices of the United Nations, the extension of the current South Pacific Nuclear Free
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Zone to cover ASEAN, the Indian Ocean or Southeast Asia, specific arms control measures such as bans on chemical weapons and the introduction of long-range ballistic missiles, and regional or bilateral confidence-building measures or cooperative agreements (military transparency agreements, notification of exercises, exchange of military observers, establishment of conflict resolution procedures, and so on).39

A more focused defence posture would reduce the ADF’s mission to more manageable proportions. Since Australia’s defence forces would be concerned only with the defence of our mainland and interests, the task of planning for and conducting future military conflicts would be less complicated than at present. We would have a simple and legitimate test of aggression and ill-intent: the transgression of Australia’s sovereign air and sea space. Military operations would not be hampered by political considerations flowing from the need to operate within international waterways or across the territories of other nation states. A military strategy that was limited to the Australian mainland and surrounding maritime zone would rule out the need for a range of high-technology weapons systems and capabilities such as aircraft carriers, missile-carrying destroyers and frigates, and long-range submarines. As the Wrigley Review has argued, it would enable us to plan our logistics support systems around the existing civilian infrastructure. And it would serve to limit the diversion of our attention and military resources away from the defence of Australia itself.

Step 2. Adopt a Non-Provocative or Non-Offensive Defence Posture

These advantages could be extended if Australia were to utilise the concept of non-provocative or non-offensive defence (NOD), which re-emerged as part of the strategic debate in Europe in the mid-1980s, and is seen by its advocates as providing a means of

39 Possible initiatives in some of these areas are described in the recent statement by Australia’s Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade, Senator Gareth Evans, on Australia’s Regional Security. For a critique of the Evans statement, see Greg Fry (ed.), Australia’s Regional Security, (Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1991).
overcoming the dilemmas and dangers posed by the strategies of conventional or extended deterrence.\footnote{See, for example, Barry Buzan, An Introduction to Strategic Studies, Military Technology and International Relations, (Macmillan Press/International Institute for Strategic Studies, London, 1987), Chapter 17; Geoffrey Wiseman, Common Security and Non-Provocative Defence: Alternative Approaches to the Security Dilemma, Monograph No.7, (Peace Research Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989); and Dietrich Fischer, Preventing War in the Nuclear Age, (Rowman and Allanheld, New Jersey, 1984).}

Non-offensive defence systems exhibit two basic features. First, as the name itself implies, they are defensive in nature. This means that non-offensive defence postures do not contain the means to attack or threaten to attack other states. Force structures are made purely defensive by restricting the range and strategic mobility of individual force elements, deliberately omitting offensive military components — such as long-range missiles, bombers or aircraft carriers — from the overall structure, or by linking mobile units to stationary networks, thereby effectively immobilising the whole force structure.\footnote{See Dieter S. Lutz, On the Theory of Structural Inability to Launch an Attack,( Institut fur Friedensforschung und Sicherheitspolitik, University of Hamburg, 1988). Some preliminary ideas on how such a policy would be applied in Australia’s case are given in Derek Woolner, Force Structure Options for the Australian Defence Force Under a Policy of Defensive Defence, Legislative Research Services Monograph, (Department of the Parliamentary Library, Canberra, 1988).} These kinds of constraints can be applied voluntarily, or they could be implemented as part of a series of formal cooperative security arrangements between adversaries or potential adversaries.\footnote{Stan Windass and Eric Grove, The Crucible of Peace: Common Security in Europe, (Brassey’s Defence Publishers, London, 1988), pp.10-11.} Faced by purely defensive forces, the rational opponent who has no aggressive intentions of his own need make no military response at all. Non-offensive defence strategies therefore reduce the grounds for arms races and provide the basis for establishing a stable balance of power at a much lower level of arms. Because they are non-
threatening, non-offensive strategies also reduce the risk of unintended or inadvertent war by reducing the incentives for a preemptive attack.43

The second basic feature of non-offensive defence postures is that they seek to provide an effective and credible defence against blatant aggression or an unpremeditated attack. The proponents of the concept recognise that there are situations where a state may be confronted by an irrational or aggressive adversary. It therefore seeks to provide an effective means of deterring and, if necessary, defeating such an adversary. This generally means making the forces of the defence hard to attack and difficult to defeat, and the defender's own territory expensive to invade or occupy. In satisfying these objectives, non-offensive defence strategies seek to exploit new defensive technologies and the advantages of local terrain, and they give emphasis to such notions as defence-in-depth, sustainability and endurance in defence, decentralised and dispersed deployments, delay and denial tactics, and self-reliance.44

The formal adoption of a non-offensive defence posture would provide a clearer and less ambiguous signal to other countries in the region that Australia has no aggressive intentions towards them. This would serve to reduce the grounds for mutual suspicion and fear and remove or at least reduce the action-reaction component of any regional arms dynamic. By eschewing the ability to launch a surprise attack against a potential adversary and reducing the vulnerability of our own military forces to a preemptive attack, a non-offensive defence posture — especially if reciprocated by other states in the region — also lessens the chances of a future political or low-level military conflict from escalating out of control. If combined with the

43 Marlies ter Borg and Wim A.Smit (eds), Non-Provocative Defence as a Principle of Arms Control and its Implications for Assessing Defence Technologies, (Free University Press, Amsterdam, 1989), Chapter 1.
kind of regional and/or bilateral cooperative security measures and agreements described earlier, an Australian non-offensive defence posture would provide the basis for a stable balance of power within the region at existing or even reduced levels of armaments. Thus, in contrast to our present open-ended approach, NOD provides a possible means of reducing both the scale of Australia's security problems and our expenditure on military solutions to these problems. In addition to these largely political and strategic benefits, an appropriate non-offensive defence posture could provide a more effective and ultimately less expensive system of defence. The elimination of high-technology offensive weapons systems, such as the F-111 aircraft, and their support facilities, would enable us to buy more for the same or less, to redistribute the skilled personnel released into other areas of the defence force, and to reduce our reliance on overseas sources of supply and logistic support.

A more focused and fully non-offensive defence posture is not without its disadvantages and problems, however. It would be vulnerable to an enemy who attacks or threatens to attack the system with missiles or other offensive weapons launched from his own country. It would allow an aggressor to concentrate his forces and launch his initial and followup attacks with impunity. It would limit our own strategic response options, reduce our capacity to defend remote interests such as overseas possessions or shipping routes, and ensure that military conflict, should it occur, would take place on or near our own territory. And, since a non-offensive defence posture would limit our capacity to provide direct assistance to a remote country in times of emergency or war, rule out certain joint activities and exercises, and rule out the stationing of allied bases or offensive forces on Australian territory, it could call into question, or at least complicate, our continuing alliance relationships.45

These disadvantages and problems represent important constraints and should not be ignored in any consideration of whether or not to adopt a non-offensive defence posture. But nor should they be used to dismiss the concept out of hand. To begin with, many of the disadvantages cited begin to apply only after military conflict, and high-level conflict at that, has broken out. The principal benefit of a non-offensive defence posture is that, if successful, it would prevent or at least reduce the prospects of such a conflict occurring in the first place. In the case of a potential missile or chemical weapons threat, it is far more sensible to seek to prevent the threat from emerging than to put in place expensive and precarious cures. And, although the formal adoption of a non-offensive defence posture would complicate Australia’s alliance relationships, it should not have to terminate them. The advocates of a non-offensive defence posture for NATO forces in Europe had no difficulty envisaging a coordinated approach to their continued defence. Australia could continue to exchange intelligence and other information with its allies. It presumably would not be prevented from continuing to purchase weapons and equipments from the United States or other members of the Western community. The Australian Government could continue to justify the retention of the joint defence facilities at Pine Gap and Nurrunga in terms of their contribution to the verification of existing arms control agreements. And we could continue to provide assistance to UN peacekeeping and other operations intended to help others defend themselves against aggression. It could also be argued that any improvement in Australia’s self-defence capacity would be consistent with the basic tenets of the 1969 Guam Doctrine and subsequent elaborations of United States policy on the responsibilities of its friends and allies in the region.


The defence of even this reduced area of operations against all levels of threat remains a formidable task, however, requiring more assets than we either possess now or are likely to have in the future. We need therefore to re-examine our present strategy and concept of operations for defending the Australian mainland and surrounding
maritime zone against aggression or threat of aggression. A range of military and non-military non-offensive defence strategies has been proposed in the literature; the most common categories are shown in Table 1.

**Table 1: Military and Non-Military Non-Offensive Defence Strategies**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Military Strategies</th>
<th>Frontier Defence</th>
<th>Meet and destroy enemy forces in approaches or at the border of own territory</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Territorial Defence</td>
<td>Fight enemy forces on own territory.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Military Strategies</td>
<td>Para-military or Guerilla Warfare</td>
<td>Use conventional or unconventional armed forces to harass invading or occupying forces.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Civilian or Social Defence</td>
<td>Use non-violent resistance (strikes, boycotts, go-slows, mass non-cooperation, etc.) to harass occupying forces and/or their puppet regimes in order to undermine their authority and to maintain the morale of the local population.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As noted at the beginning of this paper, Australia’s defence planners have chosen to adopt a conventional military posture which combines the concepts of a barrier and frontier defence. The more ‘extreme’, non-military options have been dismissed out of hand as they ‘were not considered appropriate to Australia’s strategic circumstances or the inclinations of the people’. Yet both guerilla warfare and civilian or social defence may be the most effective and ultimately the only means available to Australia for defending itself against certain forms of (mainly high-level) threats. A study of the strategy and tactics of guerilla or revolutionary warfare may also

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provide us with insights into how we should structure and deploy our forces to deal with very low-level threats to Australia’s security in peacetime.47

Para-military or Guerilla Warfare

Guerilla warfare can be conducted by regular or militia forces operating behind enemy lines with the task of harassing the invading forces and destroying their lines of communications. It is more usually conceived as a strategy which is put into effect only after the occupation of the country and the cessation of military hostilities (hence its lack of favour with the permanent defence establishment). As described in the report of the Alternative Defence Commission,48 there are three main forms of guerilla warfare: partisan warfare, which has as its principal objective the destruction of the opponent’s military forces; and urban guerilla warfare and political terrorism, which are essentially para-military strategies that seek to undermine the political, economic and psychological basis of military occupation and thus bring about either the collapse of the local puppet regime or the voluntary withdrawal of the invader.

Guerilla warfare could serve as an appropriate strategy for a small and militarily weak country which is confronted by an overwhelmingly superior opponent, or one that is armed with nuclear weapons. If used in conjunction with other conventional military defence strategies it can enhance the overall deterrent effect of the defence posture, but by itself has only limited deterrent value since its threatened response is both delayed and diffuse. It does not have the same destructive potential as a nuclear or major conventional war although it is not without violence. Its principal drawbacks are:

47 This point has been made in passing with respect to the Malayan Emergency by Jol Langtry in The Northern Territory in the Defence of Australia: The Civil-Military Nexus, pp.13-16. See also Stewart Woodman and David Horner’s paper, above.
it tends to blur the distinction between combatants and non-combatants and so invites reprisals against the civilian population and the repression of society in general;

- it can be socially divisive and can give rise to indiscriminate acts of terrorism, criminal violence and armed conflict between rival guerilla groups or underground political organisations;

- it cannot directly prevent invasion or an armed attack against specific targets; and

- it would probably require outside assistance to have a significant military impact or to achieve military victory.\(^49\)

These deficiencies apply mainly to urban guerilla warfare and political terrorism and are most severe within the context of a largely urbanised society that has been completely subjugated by an invader. The strategy of partisan warfare would have considerable appeal where an invader had occupied, say, the northern half of Australia and was still engaged in a campaign against the ADF in the southeastern or western corner of the country.

**Non-military Resistance or Civilian Defence**

Non-military or civilian resistance is resistance by the civilian population in the form of strikes, boycotts, civil disobedience, mass non-cooperation, and so on.\(^50\) Civilian defence rests on the fact that


\(^{50}\) See Alternative Defence Commission, _Defence Without the Bomb_, Chapter 7; Gene Sharp, _Making Europe Unconquerable: The Potential of Civilian-based Deterrence and Defence_, (Taylor and Francis,
rulers depend on the cooperation, or at least compliance of the population at large if they are to function properly. Its basic aim is to deprive the occupying power or its client regime of this social power by making the government of the country as difficult as possible, maintaining the values, institutions and general culture of the occupied country, sowing dissent or disaffection among the occupying forces, mobilising support or sympathy among the aggressor’s own population or ruling elites or those of its supporters and allies, and mobilising international opinion or sanctions against the attacker.

Civilian defence is in many ways the political equivalent to partisan guerilla warfare, and as such, is characterised by many of the same virtues and limitations of that strategy. Like guerilla warfare, it may be an effective strategy for a country which is faced by an overwhelmingly superior opponent or by one which would have no qualms about using nuclear weapons. Civilian defence is a viable strategy against internal threats or the overthrow of an elected government by the armed forces. It is unlikely to visit massive destruction on society. It has some deterrent value, especially when used as a backup to conventional military strategies, but because it is a strategy of protracted struggle against an occupying army, an opponent may be prepared to risk future problems in order to gain an immediate advantage. The reactive nature of civilian defence means that it is not a good strategy for defending specific targets or for recovering them quickly. It cannot be used to protect remote locations or interests or to ensure continuing supplies of raw materials where

these have to come from external or remote sources. Nor does the pure strategy of civilian defence lend itself to bilateral or multilateral defence arrangements and so it provides less scope than military defence for collective security arrangements. Civilian defence is a difficult concept to implement. It may also be susceptible to coercion and repression (although it is less likely to attract the same kind of armed responses as a strategy of guerrilla warfare).

As indicated by these two examples, and the problems associated with Australia’s current military strategy, the various strategies for non-offensive defence have different strengths and weaknesses. As a rule, conventional military strategies are effective against conventional military threats, but can be inappropriate for dealing with non-military pressures or internal threats. Their effectiveness ultimately depends on the size and capacity of the national economy and on the determination and will of the people. Conventional defences of any size are expensive to develop and maintain and, confronted by a large enough adversary, can eventually be defeated or overrun. They are also vulnerable to attack or threat of attack by nuclear and chemical weapons. Guerrilla warfare and civilian defence, on the other hand, are essentially strategies against occupation. They are less suitable for deterring or defeating military attacks on, or incursions into, remote or unpopulated regions. But the former can be used to great effect to harass and destroy an invader’s combat forces, lines of communications and base support areas while the latter can, overtime, undermine his willingness to remain. Properly organised, they require an adversary to deploy disproportionate forces to contain them, they are difficult to defeat, and they can be sustained for long periods of time with no or only limited resources.

The growing consensus among most writers on the subject is that an effective non-offensive defence posture should comprise a mixture of conventional military, para-military and non-military strategies, all aimed at denying the aggressor an easy victory or the anticipated gains of his actions.\(^{51}\) The relative importance of each

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strategy and its role within the overall posture would vary from country to country in accordance with its particular political and geo-strategic circumstances. Such broadly based, non-offensive defence postures have been adopted by a number of European neutrals such as Sweden, Switzerland, Austria and Eire. Australia would do well to follow their example more closely and adopt a defence posture of interlocking military and non-military strategies rather than continue to pursue its current single (and flawed) strategy of military defence-in-depth.

Step 4. Make Greater Use of Existing Civilian Technologies and Assets

A fourth step towards improving the effectiveness and self-reliance of our current posture is to move down the technology ladder. Although Australia clearly needs to utilise selected advanced technologies to overcome the constraints imposed by its geography and limited population, there is no reason why these have to be military technologies. At the lower end of the threat spectrum in particular, Australia should be able to make much greater use of existing civilian resources and assets than it does at present. Although the Minister for Defence has recently directed that his Department move in this direction, the focus to date has been on civilianising existing support structures. Little consideration is being given to Australia’s operational assets, yet clearly there is scope to replace a number of existing or forecast equipments used in low-level contingencies — such as surveillance and transport aircraft and communications systems — with cheaper civilian equivalents, and to make much greater use of existing Federal and State agencies to

(Vol.25, No.1), 1988, pp.69-80.

protect Australian assets and infrastructure against a range of low-
level threats.\footnote{For some useful observations on this latter possibility, see
J.O.Langtry, \textit{The Defence Para-military Manpower Dilemma: Militia or
Constabulary?}, Working Paper No. 131, (Strategic and Defence
Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1987). Langtry
argues that a number of the tasks currently given to Australia’s military
forces in lower level contingencies would be more effectively carried out
either by various State Emergency Services, by State or Federal police, or by
special para-military or auxiliary police forces which would be formed at
the times of emergency. In his view, these latter forces ‘... could apply
whatever police powers where necessary better than any military or
militia force, especially in those "grey" areas or circumstances between
peace and war when the government may not wish to declare a defence
emergency and would prefer to "conduct business as usual"[p.10]’.

As argued by the Wrigley Review, some of the advantages of
making greater use of the existing civilian infrastructure and assets are
that it would reduce existing training and operating costs, reduce
duplication of equivalent military and civilian services, lessen the
conflicts and tensions that currently arise in mixed military and
civilian establishments, and increase productivity. The replacement of
a range of military equipments with comparable civilian items would
also provide a better basis for establishing a more self-reliant system of
logistics support, it would help defray research and development
costs, and ease the task of establishing and maintaining a competitive,
indigenous defence industry.

Step 5. Institute a New and Streamlined
Functional Command Structure

A further step towards a more effective defence posture would
be to simplify Australia’s existing command structure and
reorganise it along purely functional lines with planning, resource
management and operational responsibilities being delegated as far as
possible down the chain of command. A number of different options
could be pursued, including those described in the 1984 and 1987 Cross reports and the 1985 VCDF Report. One option that could be considered would be to reorganise Australia’s defence forces into two basic components: one responsible for dealing with existing and foreseen problems and threats to our security, the other tasked with preparing for more remote yet potentially more serious contingencies (Figure 1). The first basic task could be given to a reorganised Maritime Command which would have under it the present Northern Command and would be made responsible for:

- the surveillance of Australia’s air and maritime approaches;
- tracking and intercepting, where necessary, incursions into Australia’s airspace and its Exclusive Economic Zone;
- liaising with, and providing support to, civilian and para-military organisations — such as Customs, Transport and Communications, Natural Disasters Organisation, and the various State police and emergency services — charged with protecting us against low-level threats; and
- providing a centralised command, control, communications and intelligence facility to support these activities.

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55 A similar, albeit more limited, revised Maritime Command has been suggested by Stanley S. Schaetzel in *The Coastal Exposure of Australia*, Working Paper No.199, (Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1989). Schaetzel argues that a separate Coastal Protection Command, whose task
Maritime Command would be allocated Australia's present surveillance assets (including OTHR, LRMP aircraft and special land forces), a range of interception capabilities (patrol boats, light aircraft and mobile ground forces), and other assets required to carry out its tasks (these could include the hydrographic survey ships, some air transport aircraft, and engineer construction units from the Army). The force would employ fulltime military and civilian personnel and would be commanded by a permanent officer (either military or civilian). It would make extensive use of commercial assets and support structures although it would continue to utilise existing military capabilities and facilities where this was necessary or expedient (in the case of existing airfields, specialised maintenance and support facilities, and the P-3C Orions, for example).

Headquarters Maritime Command would have its own planning and support staff and would be responsible, within overall parameters set by the Defence Department, for controlling the day-to-day activities of the organisation, acquiring its own assets and establishing and maintaining logistics support for its operations. In peacetime, the forces under the control of Maritime Command would be responsible for conducting a range of assigned tasks — such as coastal and air surveillance, mapping and surveying, and establishing an infrastructure directory — as well as assisting the various Federal and State agencies in combatting poaching, smuggling, drug-running, unauthorised landings, and other illegal or harmful activities. The Command would coordinate search and rescue or disaster relief activities in cases where resources from more than one state or territory were required. It would conduct contingency planning and, in times of emergency, would assume command of the various civilian and para-military forces in the area concerned and provide the initial responses to more serious intrusions or threats.

would be to provide coastal protection during peace and war, should be established as part of the Royal Australian Navy.

An excellent discussion of the civil-military interface at both national and state levels is contained in Langtry, The Northern Territory in the Defence of Australia: The Civil-Military Nexus.
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Figure 1: Alternative Command Structure, Option 1

CDF    HQADF

HOME DEFENCE COMMAND

CONTESTENCY FORCES

SUPPORT COMMAND

MARITIME COMMAND
The second basic task would be given to a newly formed command entitled Home Defence Command which would comprise the old Land Command, Air Command and those elements of Maritime Command that are no longer required to meet its revised role. Home Defence Command would be made responsible for:

- the defence of Australia’s vital assets and territory against military attack or invasion;
- supplementing Maritime Command as required;
- providing forces for special operations and tasks such as peacekeeping and rescue of Australian nationals overseas; and
- providing basic training for all of Australia’s military personnel.

The initial task of the Commander Home Defence Command and his joint staff would be to devise a new strategy and concept of operations for the principal task of defending Australia’s vital assets against military attack. The Command’s area of operations would nominally be Australia’s revised area of direct military interest (comprising the Australian mainland and its surrounding maritime zone) although this could be divided into zones of primary and secondary military importance. The first of these would be required to be defended by a combination of military and non-military means. The zone(s) of secondary military importance would either be left undefended or would be covered by para-military or guerilla forces. The size and location of the different zones would be determined by the assets at stake, the chosen concept of operations, and forces that are likely to be available.

During this preliminary phase, which could last several years, the role of Home Defence Command would be to provide a training and support base for Maritime Command together with those forces and capabilities needed to meet a range of foreseeable low-level contingencies. Some of these forces — those required for certain peacekeeping missions, or for counter-terrorist or mine-countermeasures operations for example — would be purpose-built and would be maintained separately and at appropriate readiness states. Others, such as air and sea transport, would be able to be extracted from training or reserve pools. The bulk of the ADF’s
remaining assets would be either placed in store or allocated to a newly formed joint service Support Command which would be restructured and equipped to provide a training and expansion base for Australia’s existing and projected forces.

Support Command would replace the existing single-service commands. It would be responsible for individual training and for logistic support not conducted by Maritime Command. The individual training establishments would be rationalised as far as possible along functional and joint service lines with apprentice and other specialist training activities being transferred to the civilian sector, and they would be completely streamlined. Navy and Air Force would concentrate their primary training activities around one or two major facilities located near major population centres. The remainder would either be closed down or maintained as bare bases. Thus Air Force might locate a mixed squadron of aircraft at Williamtown and Edinburgh which would be used to train regular aircrew as well as a large pool of ex-service and other reservists in the necessary range of basic flying skills. All other aircraft would be maintained in store by civilian contractors and would be allocated to operational squadrons as the need arose. All of Army’s regional and higher command structures would be disbanded and a voluntary latent force concept would be put in place until the new concepts of operations and structures for the defence of Australia had been developed.57

Once these had been agreed, the forces of Home Defence Command would be restructured and expanded as appropriate and equipped with existing or new assets. Depending on the strategic circumstances, the bulk of the force would comprise reserve units supported by regular cadres and support structures with maximum use made of civilian assets and services. The staff on HQ Home Defence Command would comprise both civilian and military personnel but would be commanded by a Reserve Forces officer. The principal operational commanders and many of the senior staff officers on HQ Home Defence Command would also be Reserve officers in

57 A discussion of various latent force concepts is contained in Ross Babbage, Rethinking Australia’s Defence, (University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1980), Chapter 9.
Figure 2: Alternative Command Structure, Option 2
order to ensure that the broadest possible expertise is brought to bear on the issues at hand.

A variation to this proposal is shown in Figure 2. In this case, the overall responsibility for the defence of Australia and its maritime zone would be vested in Headquarters Home Defence Command, which would be located in Sydney or Canberra. Home Defence Command would have under it in peacetime the four operational and one functional joint service commands shown. Each joint operational command would be responsible for conducting certain peacetime and contingent tasks within an assigned area of operations and for planning for the defence of these areas in times of emergency or war, and would be allocated resources accordingly. Thus Maritime Command's role in peacetime would be the surveillance of Australia's air and sea approaches using OTHR, LRMP surveillance aircraft and other related assets. In higher contingent circumstances, its peacetime roles would be extended to include interdiction of hostile forces entering Australia's maritime zone, limited protection of key choke points, and the defence of Australian or allied shipping passing through or operating within our maritime zone. For these purposes, it would be allocated a range of maritime strike and interdiction capabilities including Australia's F/A-18 and F-111 aircraft and the ANZAC frigates. Western and Eastern Commands would have a similar role and structure in peacetime to that of NORCOM, although the CDF may wish to add additional roles and capabilities. Western Command, for example, could be required to have in place an active air defence system while Eastern Command (which would be based in Brisbane or Townsville) could have under command the ODF and its support units. Support Command would be the same as for the first option.

Ground Force Roles and Structures

The ground forces belonging to Western, Northern and Eastern Commands (or Maritime Command in Option 1) would be responsible in peacetime for:

- the reconnaissance and surveillance of their respective areas of operations;
the collection of intelligence and the establishment of an appropriate infrastructure directory; and

- supporting the state police and other agencies and services in tracking and apprehending illegal intrusions into these areas.

In times of emergency and war, the ground forces would continue their peacetime roles at increased activity levels. They would also be required to provide the initial response to, and preferably deal with, more substantial threats ranging from armed harassment to a direct attack against a coastal town or city. Depending on the nature of these threats, the regional force commander would be allocated additional forces which, in peacetime, would be located in Eastern Command. These forces would be used to augment the existing regional forces and to provide a limited capacity to defend vital assets. In the main, however, the role of vital asset protection would be carried out by existing or specially raised civilian and para-military organisations. In the case where Australia was invaded or a significant lodgement of enemy forces occurred, the regional forces in the area(s) affected would be required to provide intelligence on his whereabouts and movements, and to harass his forward troops and lines of communication.

The type of forces needed for these roles would vary from region to region but would generally be 'purpose-built' for the tasks at hand. They would draw on the experience of the independent companies that were deployed in those areas during the Second World War, and would be modelled on both the Regional Force Surveillance Units currently operating within NORCOM and existing Special Air Service structures rather than conventional infantry battalions. The regional surveillance and response forces would be supported by specially designed logistics and combat support units (encompassing such functions as intelligence, transport, combat engineering, and communications). They would be highly mobile, lightly armed and capable of operating independently of each other and from Australia’s mainstream military operational and logistics structures for extended periods of time. They would be made up of both regular and reserve personnel with a higher than normal proportion of officers and NCOs.

The augmentation forces, on the other hand, should probably comprise mainly regular units and personnel who could be deployed
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at short notice and with little preparation. Their structures and assets would duplicate but extend beyond those of the regional surveillance and response units. They would be organised along ‘task force’ rather than brigade or battalion lines. They could be used to train the regional forces (by acting as enemy infiltrators for example) and for certain contingencies requiring their specialist expertise (such as counter-insurgency or peacekeeping operations).

The role of the ground forces within Southern Command (or Home Defence Command in the first option) in peacetime would be firstly, to provide forces for the various peacetime and contingent tasks not covered by Maritime or the other regional commands. These would include:

- countering terrorist acts against Australia’s off-shore energy resources or those which cannot be handled by Australia’s civil authorities;
- the provision of specialist military assistance to the government of a regional country;
- the repatriation of Australian nationals from areas affected by natural disaster or war;
- the support of police or para-military forces involved in helping the legitimately elected government of a regional country restore or maintain law and order; and
- the provision of individuals and forces for United Nations peacekeeping or other internationally sanctioned military operations.

Their second role would be to defend Australia’s vital assets and territory against a military attack or threat of an attack and to provide the expansion base for forces needed to defeat and/or expel an invader from Australia’s sovereign territory. The forces required for peacetime and contingent tasks would be made up almost exclusively of regular personnel and would either be maintained as separate entities (the SAS Regiment for counter-terrorist operations, for example, or other specialist units that are designed specifically for the tasks in hand) or they would be drawn from the ADF’s training base. The remainder of the force would be made up of reserves. It may
be structured along traditional lines, using the existing divisional structures, or along less conventional lines. Two possibilities here would be a territorial army similar to that used in the United Kingdom, or a variation of the 'spider and web' concept that has been proposed by some of the European proponents of non-offensive defence.

Step 6. Revise our National Security and Defence Policy-making Structures

Of course, it is insufficient simply to revise our existing military structures and hope that this will produce new solutions and approaches. We need also to:

- adjust and streamline our higher defence decision-making structures;
- extend the concept of national security beyond the relatively narrow military and foreign policy focus which has characterised Australia's experience to date, to embrace broader economic, social, environmental and resource considerations; and

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establish analytical and advisory structures for formulating and implementing our national security policies.

I will not go into details here, but we could begin by creating some form of national security policy-making apparatus centred around an existing or revised committee of Cabinet and supported either by an independent agency or a policy division located within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet. It would also require further reforms within the defence establishment itself. These could profitably include:

- greater devolution of power and responsibilities from the centre to the joint service commands;
- disbandment of the three Service Offices, elements of both HQADF and the Capital Procurement Organisation, and much of the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and the transfer of their functions and assets either to the two new joint service commands or to the CSIRO, which would take over the responsibility for defence-related research and development;
- amalgamation of the remainder of the Department of Defence and HQADF into a single, fully integrated higher defence establishment responsible for providing policy advice to the Minister, issuing guidance to the two functional commands, managing the resources of the defence establishment as a whole, and liaising with other Federal government departments and agencies; and

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open the defence decision-making process to a much broader range of opinions and views.
PART 3
THE PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS
OF THE ARMY

Anthony Bergin and
Hugh Smith
This paper sets out to examine current perceptions of the Army in Australia, to explain how they came about and to assess the extent to which such perceptions might change or be changed in the future. It makes no judgement on whether the current situation is desirable as far as Army is concerned, nor on whether deliberate efforts ought to be made to alter public perceptions. Policy options that may be indicated are a matter for Army and/or Government to determine.

This analysis is based on the limited amount of data on public opinion in Australia. Only since 1980 have there been detailed polls specifically looking at attitudes toward the armed forces; prior to that date the relatively few opinion polls that were conducted focused on general defence questions. Even these polls go back only to the 1940s at the earliest. A number of suggestions are made concerning additional areas in which community opinion might usefully be surveyed. These include attitudes toward the Defence Force and the environment, and toward the various peacetime tasks of the Defence Force such as emergency relief and international peacekeeping.

It must also be stressed that opinion polls are far from perfect sources of data since many internal and extraneous factors can affect the results obtained. Opinions given in response to a handful of questions, moreover, do not always reflect more deep-seated attitudes and values in the population at large. Nor do opinions necessarily translate into action — whether voting at the polls, lobbying politicians or volunteering to enlist. Closer examination of community attitudes and values relating to the armed forces is suggested, particularly through the use of survey questionnaires. The provision of survey and personnel data collected by Army to academic and other researchers is also proposed as a way of expanding the information base about Army and the community.

In the absence of detailed and specific in-depth surveys of public attitudes and values towards defence in general and Army in particular, the limitations of available information must always be borne in mind. A hopefully intelligent reading of Australian history and understanding of contemporary society must make up for the deficiencies in hard data.
ARMED FORCES IN A CHANGING ENVIRONMENT

In most of the Western countries that have all-volunteer forces the armed forces are facing difficulties with public perceptions and attitudes:

- The value of armed force in world politics is being questioned. Widespread doubts about the utility of force in international politics have existed since the first atomic bomb and multiplied as nuclear arsenals accumulated and atomic weapons were acquired by at least half a dozen states. Fear that even low-level conflict might escalate to very destructive levels — perhaps involving nuclear, chemical or biological weapons — has been a persistent feature of international politics since 1945. In more recent times the end of the Cold War has lessened tension between the nuclear superpowers and brought expectations of major reductions in military forces by both North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and Warsaw Pact.

The conflict in the Persian Gulf in 1990-91 has not reversed these trends. Throughout the conflict the Western allies remained concerned about the possibility of high casualties. The fear was that public support would fall away rapidly if large numbers of soldiers were killed and wounded; this fear was present despite the fact that public endorsement of the use of force was high in all of the Western states. Even a war that is approved by the United Nations and accepted by all of the major powers, by Israel and most Arab states, cannot — it seems — guarantee continuing public support once major losses begin to be sustained. Moreover, the extraordinarily favourable circumstances which made for widespread public support seem unlikely to occur again.
Social change in democratic states in particular has meant that citizens have become more concerned with personal rewards and satisfaction. This is not to say that the work ethic has disappeared but rather that willingness to devote one's career to a single organisation has diminished. This is the result not only of changes in individuals themselves, who are looking for greater satisfaction from their work, but also of the increasing pace of economic change as new industries rise (and others fall) in a short time span, new technologies emerge and new skills have to be learned.

At the same time attitudes and behaviour in areas such as female equality, individual rights, drug use and homosexuality have become more liberal and are continuing to change. Armed forces, no less than other organisations, have to come to terms with these changes which impact amongst other things on recruiting, training, procurement, management practices, personnel policies and retention. It is worth noting, however, that the war in the Gulf did not deter potential recruits in most Western countries and that enlistments tended to increase. It does not necessarily follow that the war itself stimulated recruiting, since several factors were probably at work, including depressed economic circumstances and vigorous recruiting drives. But the point can be made, at least, that wars do not necessarily discourage volunteers from joining the military.

Related to both of these factors is the financial pressure on most armed forces. The ending of the Cold War has raised hopes for payment of a 'peace dividend' not only in the superpowers themselves but in many of their allies, including Australia. Military budgets are being squeezed both to make way for spending in other areas such as health, education and welfare and to assist governments to balance their budgets. The war in the Gulf does not appear to have had a major impact on such thinking in the West;
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equipment lost or used up may not be replaced while the cost of the war may well serve as a stimulus to make additional savings.

At the same time demands for fiscal responsibility, accountability and program management are also being increasingly directed towards the armed forces. In the past such criteria for judging the military's performance were often regarded as inappropriate, if not dangerous and irrelevant.

Public attitudes towards the armed forces will be strongly influenced by these developments. Their overall thrust is to raise questions about the purpose of armed forces, about their adjustment to modern society and about their consumption of limited national resources. Community perceptions, moreover, will be shaped in part by the skill and rapidity with which armed forces respond — or fail to respond — to these challenges.

It is another question whether such problems are particularly acute for armies compared with the other two services. With many qualifications this does appear to be the case. In the first place armies have many peacetime uses but their commitment to actual combat usually signifies a major step in hostilities; force can be applied by navies and air forces in a much more limited way and can be halted much more easily. Secondly, since armies usually have the most personnel (including a large body of relatively unskilled infantry) and offer the widest range of employment, they tend to be more exposed to the social change occurring in Western societies. This is most evident when conscription is introduced; the burden or the benefit falls most heavily on armies. Finally, though armies may not be the most costly arm — the other two absorb large sums on major items of equipment — they are usually the most vulnerable to rapid and inconspicuous cost-cutting. Governments can cancel or defer purchases of aircraft or ships but this is likely to carry the political cost of appearing less committed to defence; reducing the number of Army personnel or eliminating smaller units is less liable to provoke political reaction.

Defence policy, defence planning and defence structures, it is apparent, cannot be seen in a social or political vacuum. While everyone is aware of financial constraints, the need to take into account values, attitudes and opinions in the community at large is not
always understood. More than the other two services, Army must be aware of and responsive to the society around it.

THE HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF PUBLIC PERCEPTIONS

There are many factors shaping public perceptions of armed forces in the contemporary world and of the Army in particular. 'Public opinion' and 'public perceptions' are themselves complex notions. At best they stand for very approximate generalisations about what people think when asked their views on particular issues; they do not necessarily form a basis for action or guarantee support for a policy in some future circumstances. Thus a majority of the population may endorse the idea of conscription for military service but vote against any particular scheme. Public opinion polls, in particular, are less likely to reveal the actual value systems and beliefs of individuals than are in-depth surveys with multiple questions and cross-checking.

At the end of his study of Australia's military history Grey concludes that 'public attitudes remain a puzzle', observing that while there has often been general support for defence the services enjoy only a low social status. A first step to resolving this puzzle is to clarify precisely what kind of perceptions and attitudes are under discussion. It is possible to identify four levels of perception in the Australian community: perceptions of defence and national security in general, perceptions of the Army, perceptions of the individual serviceman and perceptions of the Defence Force as a whole. These are treated in broadly chronological order as they appeared in Australia and are taken up to about 1980. More detailed analysis of current perceptions will follow in succeeding sections.

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Under this heading fall people's attitudes and deepseated beliefs about such matters as whether Australia is secure or insecure, whether it can be defended or is simply undefendable, whether Australia can or should attempt to defend itself from its own resources, whether trust can be placed in alliances and regional associations. This is not the place to explore such attitudes in depth. It can be noted, however, that a sense of insecurity has long been a feature of Australian society. It began with fear of the hostile and dangerous land itself, with concern about the ambitions of European colonial powers such as France, Russia and Germany, and with anxiety about the immigration of Asian and non-European settlers. In the twentieth century fears have been directed — often with justification — towards an expansionist Japan, towards the global ambitions of communism and towards some of our regional neighbours. Even at a time when government policy is to proclaim the absence of major threats to Australia for the foreseeable future, it is unlikely that this long-standing, if underlying, sense of insecurity has disappeared from Australian society.

Partly because of this sense of insecurity Australians have been extraordinarily willing to fight in other people's wars and at great distances from Australia's shores. Volunteers have come forward in large numbers to fight in Europe, the Middle East and Asia to an extent not found in other countries. Another reason for this willingness to fight overseas, of course, can be found in the sentimental and historical ties with Britain which ensured our participation in the Boer War, the First and Second World Wars. After 1945, apart from the involvements in Malaya and Borneo as a result of the Commonwealth connection, it was the more calculated and more formal relationship with the United States which came to the fore. Australia's participation in both the Korean and Vietnam wars can be seen in the light of promoting and maintaining the ANZUS alliance. But there was also a real concern in Australia about the threat of communism. If it was not stopped in Asia — through 'forward defence' pursued in cooperation with great and powerful friends — it would ultimately overwhelm this small, isolated, Western nation.

Nonetheless, Australians are not a warlike or militaristic people. They are willing to go to war — voluntarily and in large
numbers — when a threat is evident and they have a reputation for being good fighters in battle. They still are prepared to fight for their country, according to an international poll conducted in 1989; 80% of Australians said they were willing to fight for their country, rather more than the citizens of countries such as New Zealand (69%) or Britain (66%), though a little less than the United States (84%). But Australia has never initiated an international conflict and it would portend a major change in national outlook were it to resort to force on a major scale on the international scene.

Some critics of current policies, of course, fear precisely this development, charging that the so-called 'new militarism' indicates that Australia is more than ready to contemplate the use of armed force in response to political problems in its region. If true, such an approach would represent a major shift in Australian attitudes and practice, although it may signify no more than the arrival at a foreign policy outlook that European societies have been accustomed to for several centuries. To the extent that Army would be the service most likely to be employed in military operations overseas, its policies and capabilities will be subject to particularly close scrutiny.

Perceptions of the Army

It is important to note the pre-eminent role played by the Army in the history of Australian military involvements. In all of the conflicts mentioned Australia’s armies constituted its prime commitment. The Royal Australian Navy (RAN) and Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) played very minor roles; in their one significant contribution, the Empire Air Training Scheme in the Second World War, Australian servicemen were dispersed through the Royal Air Force (RAF) and few individuals reached positions of high command. Combat in all these conflicts took place overwhelmingly

4 John McCarthy, A Last Call of Empire, (Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1988).
on land, and for control of land although significant battles occurred at times in the air and at sea. Australia's involvement was embodied above all in large formations of troops, particularly infantry. The Army recruited significant proportions of the population, suffered the greatest number of casualties and returned the largest numbers of servicemen back into the community.

The reputation of the Australian fighting man derives first and foremost from the infantry in the First World War at Gallipoli and on the Western Front, though the Boer War and the lighthorsemen in the Middle East in the First World War should not be forgotten (and recent films have revived interest in these campaigns). The point is that the fighting qualities of the Australian warrior are identified above all with the Army. There is no great naval tradition that incorporates national heroes such as Horatio Nelson (Trafalgar day is still celebrated in Britain), nor is there any heroic feat in the air such as that of 'the few' in the Battle of Britain. In Australia the Army could expect to have the market cornered in terms of the nation's military traditions and history.

Another aspect of Australia's military history, however, may set limits on the community's enthusiasm for the Army. This refers to the role the Army has played in internal affairs and to its place in Australian political thinking. The first soldiers to set foot in Australia were, of course, also jailers and in the absence of a regular constabulary they soon became policemen. In the nineteenth century, moreover, soldiers came to be used by the states to suppress insurrection and to defeat industrial action. This practice diminished after Federation, although the Labor government used mainly Army personnel to defeat the miners' strike in 1949. It is difficult to assess how much this background affects attitudes towards Army in particular. Certainly, the suspicion evident in the community towards the use of the armed forces in industrial disputes is long-standing and deep-seated; as early as 1914 the militia were specifically prohibited by Act of Parliament from being called out in connection with

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6 B.D. Beddie and S. Moss, *Some Aspects of Aid to the Civil Power in Australia*, (Department of Government, RMC Dunroon, Canberra, 1982).
industrial disputes. The Army may be the object of greatest concern simply because it is the service which in the past, and for obvious practical reasons, has generally had the greatest level of involvement; and when it has been involved, the image has on occasions been the potentially disturbing one of armed soldiers on the streets. (The role of the RAAF in the pilots’ strike of 1989 will be considered later.)

Similarly, the history of political attitudes in Australia towards the armed forces has influenced the Army much more than the other two services. For many reasons Australian society has been marked by anti-authoritarian attitudes and by a strong egalitarian ethic. This led to a concern at the time of Federation that the armed forces which the new Commonwealth was establishing might become elitist and undemocratic. If Australia had to have a military force in peacetime, it should be one without a military caste, without pretensions, without undue authority which might be abused. The new Federation should avoid the evils of militarism which Australians perceived in Europe. Thus Australia became the first country to legislate for conscientious objection to military service in 1903; officer cadets at the Royal Military College, which was founded in 1911, were exempt from fees since family income was not to determine the make-up of the staff corps; and minimal funding was provided to the peacetime forces in the decades after Federation, when the nation placed its reliance on the citizen-soldier.

It has been argued that the social and political agenda before and after Federation was set largely by the left.7 It is certainly true that there was much concern about the possible misuse of military forces and about the possible abuse of power by those forces. Permanent forces were a necessary evil; their role was above all to provide support for citizen armies when the need arose. Consistent with the idea of the citizen-soldier, compulsory but part-time military training in peacetime was introduced in 1911 and maintained — though suspended in the First World War and much reduced in the 1920s — until 1929. Wars, however, were to be fought by volunteers not by conscripts, as the two referendums in the First World War confirmed. All in all, social and political attitudes in Australia ensured that soldiers and officers in the permanent forces enjoyed low status,

minimal pay and poor career prospects; little respect was engendered for the profession of arms — and this meant particularly the Army — at least until the early 1960s and the Vietnam war. The citizen forces, by contrast, rated highly in social esteem until the late 1940s, but little benefit rubbed off on the regular Army, which was established in 1947-48.

The experiences of the 1950s and 1960s did little to help. The National Service Scheme of 1951-60 saw many reluctant soldiers serving time in the Citizens' Military Force (CMF), which became ponderous and inefficient; some also joined the CMF in order to escape full-time military service. The Vietnam war saw the conscription of Australian youth for overseas service for the first time (with the minor exception of 1943-45). It fell to Army to induct, train and manage the conscripts for a war which became increasingly unpopular in the community. Protests focused on draft resisters and on the Army's treatment of recalcitrant soldiers. Even amongst those who did serve in Vietnam, there was dissatisfaction with authoritarian attitudes, with inefficiency and with incompetence.8

This did not, however, reduce public support for conscription as such (it was conscription for service in Vietnam that proved contentious). The public continued to believe in the value of a period of full-time military training for young people. The polls have been remarkably consistent on this score. Between 1943 and 1983 public support did not drop below 61%, or nearly two to one in favour.9 It has fallen away a little in recent years but still remains a little over 50%. To an extent this reflects to the merit of Army, which has always taken in the vast majority of conscripts. Army must be doing something right — despite the complaints and concerns mentioned above — to convince a majority of citizens that it can be entrusted with their offspring and can be counted to instil such desirable qualities as discipline and responsibility, in short to make men out of boys.

But in Australia’s history there are entries on the negative side of the ledger as far as Army is concerned. Army is the original target of popular fears about militarism and abuse of authority. Australians mistrust ‘bull, brass and bastardisation’ and, we would argue, tend to associate these much more with Army than with the other two services. Far more than Navy or Air Force, Army has to carry the burden of history.

Perceptions of Service Personnel as Individuals

The individual Australian serviceman has been dominant in popular thinking about the armed forces. The Gallipoli campaign not only marked the coming of age of the Australian nation but also epitomised the true Australian soldier. Heroism, endurance, initiative, resourcefulness, concern for mates were established as the hallmarks of the ordinary soldier. Gallipoli created the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) tradition. Australian military history, official and unofficial, henceforth focused on the individual. C.E.W. Bean deliberately set out to write a ‘democratic’ history of the First World War. This was partly, of course, because Australia has provided few senior military leaders in these wars but mainly, it seems, because of an essentially egalitarian approach to war which has appealed (and still appeals) to the Australian population. The ‘myth of the digger’ was securely established early in Australia’s history. The nation does not erect statues to generals.

The focus on individual servicemen was reinforced after the First World War, when financial and other benefits for returned servicemen were first provided by the government on a major scale. The Returned Servicemen’s League (RSL) was founded to support servicemen returning from overseas and to lobby federal and state politicians for repatriation benefits. In time the RSL became a major

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pressure group, seeking to influence defence policy and broader social issues while retaining its concern for individuals. It has been one of the staunchest upholders of the ANZAC tradition and has helped ensure maintenance of public respect for the individual soldier. This has been so even though the organisation itself has at times appeared reactionary and backward-looking.

Against this background, it is easy to see how public opinion can think highly of individual soldiers — and of the benefits of the military experience for individuals — while having little regard for the institution of which they are members. Even throughout the Vietnam war, opponents of Australia’s involvement were always careful to avoid criticism of the individual soldiers in uniform. Opposition ALP leaders, for example, repeatedly stressed their admiration for the efforts of the soldiers in Vietnam. It was government policy they were attacking — or on occasions the failings of senior officers — not the ordinary soldier. Even today, when the defence force is much questioned, the great majority of the population (86%) regard the average member of the Army, Navy or Air Force as being capable and worthy of respect.13

Perceptions of the Australian Defence Force (ADF)

Perceptions of the ADF as a whole are of relatively recent origin, dating perhaps from the mid-1970s. Until then Navy and Air Force had been subsumed in allied operations and planning, much more so than Army which had been able to contribute large formed units. By the mid-1970s, too, the Army-dominated Vietnam commitment had come to an end and Sir Arthur Tange’s centralising reforms were being put into place. A Chief of Defence Force (CDF) Staff replaced the Chairman, Chiefs of Staff Committee and a sustained process of centralisation in the ADF got under way. The more prominent role of the CDF, the creation of a HQADF, and the focus on defence of Australia through a single Australian Defence Force have continued to enhance the notion of a single defence establishment in the public mind.

Ideas about the ADF as a whole are those which have to do with matters such as the size of the armed forces in general (are they too big or too small? should more money or less be spent on the armed forces?), on their capabilities (are they able to defend Australia?) or on their functions (do they deter attack? do they enhance Australia’s prestige or influence? what is their value in peacetime?). In addition, there are popular views about the services in general — whether they are efficient, modern, progressive, enlightened in their treatment of personnel or whether they are incompetent, backward, conservative and insensitive, even brutal, in managing people.

There is very widespread acceptance of the need for armed forces. At least 95% of the community are of the view that it is important to have a permanent Defence Force. In qualitative research, too, the Defence Force emerges as a legitimate social institution whose legitimacy has very little to do with its actual size, efficiency, or capability:

It is important to Australians to know that the Services are there: it is an integral part of the Australian tradition that Defence Forces be raised and maintained ... Australians believe that it is right for Defence Forces to exist, and that, conversely, it would be wrong for them to 'fall into disrepair'.

The Defence Force, in short, is 'a reassuring institution' — reassuring against both external uncertainties and against changing values at home. And it is accepted by all sections of the community. There is no foundation for the belief, for example, that migrants of non-English-speaking background as a whole are less well-disposed towards the ADF than people of non-migrant background.

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14 Ibid., p.39.
15 'A Study of Community Attitudes: The Defence Forces', conducted by Mackay Research Pty Ltd, June 1989, p. 7 (emphasis in original).
16 Ibid., pp. 7-8.
17 Michael Morrissey and Colleen Mitchell, 'Females and Ethnic Minorities: Attitudes to Defence', Report for Department of Defence, (Centre for Multicultural Studies, University of...
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care concern that migrant groups would prove hostile to service personnel over Australia’s commitment to the Persian Gulf similarly proved unfounded; greater hostility probably came from home-grown anti-war activists.

Perceptions of the Defence Force as a whole are in some ways mixed. On the one hand, the community believes in the value of armed forces and regards the ADF as an effective organisation. On the other hand, most people perceive no major peacetime role for the Defence Force other than waiting for the next war, a perception which ‘contributes to the vague overall image of the Force’.19 Mackay reinforces this view in concluding that ‘the community’s lack of awareness of the Defence Forces has a distinctly negative effect on perceptions and impressions of what they do’.20

Conclusion: Interdependence of Levels of Perception

Clearly, there are strong interconnections between these four levels of perception. Views of the Defence Force as an organisation, for example, will reflect attitudes to the defence of Australia and perceptions of threat and in turn will influence attitudes toward individual personnel. Again, respect for individual servicemen and women may encourage people to take a more positive view of the armed forces in general. In all this Army has played a pivotal role. Because of its dominance in past wars, in establishing the ANZAC legend, in conscription and military training, and in sheer numbers of personnel, Army has shaped the Defence Force image more than its sister services. To a majority of people, the Defence Force is the Army. An Australian National Opinion Polls (ANOP) survey in 1980 reported 60% of the respondents saying they first thought of Army when the

Wollongong, September 1988).


term 'defence force' was mentioned (compared with Air Force at 24% and Navy at 13%).\textsuperscript{21} Polls in 1984 and 1989 also found that Army dominated the three services in terms of immediate awareness.\textsuperscript{22} As the 1980 ANOP poll argued, 'the image of the Defence Force will be governed to a large extent by the image of the Army'.\textsuperscript{23}

Army thus remains the front-of-the-mind service for a majority in all sections of the community; and the digger remains the archetypal military man. The important question for Army is whether this will remain the case. There are reasons to think that Navy and Air Force will come to greater prominence and that the unified image of the ADF will also detract from Army's traditional pre-eminence. The following sections will look at these issues in greater detail in the light of changes in Australia's region, changes in Australian society and of continuing financial constraints.

\section*{EXTERNAL CHANGE AND CURRENT PERCEPTIONS}

This section looks at changes in Australia's international environment, both regional and global, and the challenges they present to the armed forces. These challenges will influence perceptions of the Australian Defence Force and of the Army in particular. They are challenges which need to be met if the public is not to perceive a growing disparity between the existence of a Defence Force and the tasks required of it by Australia's international circumstances.

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{21} ANOP Research Services Pty Ltd, 'Community Attitudes Towards Australia's Defence Force', p. 23.
\item \textsuperscript{22} Mackay Research Pty Ltd, 'A Study of Community Attitudes', p.45.
\item \textsuperscript{23} ANOP Research Services Pty Ltd, 'Community Attitudes Towards Australia's Defence Force', p.25.
\end{itemize}
International Change in Australia’s Environment

The changes in world politics that are happening at the present time are profound. The new context of superpower relations will allow both the US and USSR and their European allies to make massive cuts in defence spending. This is already happening, not just in Europe but also in the Asia/Pacific region, with the Soviet Union reducing its naval presence at Cam Ranh Bay and the US committing itself to the withdrawal of some 15,000 personnel over the next three years, mainly from Korea, Japan and Philippines. This is about 10% of the total US military presence in the Asia/Pacific. There is a distinct possibility that the US will considerably reduce its forces in the Philippines or even be asked to leave its bases there.

Though the US may feel a greater sense of security in this part of the world, this does not mean that Australian defence planners face a predictable and benign security environment. For a reduction of superpower tensions in the region could lead to a greater likelihood of local conflicts spilling over into military clashes. Such conflicts, moreover, could be both destructive and costly, since many countries in the region have undertaken significant arms modernisation programs over the last decade, including acquisition of advanced fighter aircraft, complex weapons systems and intermediate-range missiles. The region, too, is marked by a host of uncertainties: continuing instability in Cambodia, tensions in the Korean peninsula, sovereignty disputes in the South China Sea, nagging insurgency in the Philippines, threats to the internal security of South Pacific island states such as Papua New Guinea and New Caledonia, and the persistence of regimes in Vietnam, Burma and North Korea that deny basic human and political rights.

The impact of developing trade and economic relations in Australia’s region is problematic. In 1989 Australia inaugurated the Asia/Pacific Economic Cooperation process, which is aimed at promoting trade liberalisation and practical regional cooperation. This is likely to see greater economic cooperation and interdependence and the development of new areas of political cooperation. This sort of process might be expected to lead to the emergence of a greater sense of community in the region, with fewer incentives for states to resort to conflict. The more Australia is caught up in trade arrangements the lower will appear prospects for military conflicts with regional states.
But the reality may be different. Trade does not necessarily prevent war — Britain and Germany provided each other’s largest markets in 1914 — but can promote a greater sense of shared interests. In these circumstances it is likely to become increasingly difficult to ‘sell’ the notion that Australia faces an uncertain security environment.

Public Perceptions

Overall knowledge of defence issues has been found to be low, even among those who are well educated. ANOP reported in 1980 that the community ‘appears to possess little factual information about Australia’s Defence Force and to have but a very broad view of its purpose’. In 1987 ANOP reported that the strategy and directions for Australia’s Defence Force, as outlined in the White Paper, would be well received by the community but that ‘the story is yet to be told to the public’. Of those interviewed about 85% said they knew either not much at all (39%) or only a small amount (46%) about Australia’s defence.

This is not to say, however, that most Australians are anxious to know more about defence. It is a subject that can be safely ignored for the present time. Since there is no major threat, the thinking appears to go, there is little reason to bother about the Defence Force — other than to know that it is there and manned by competent people. Essentially the reason for such attitudes is that ‘Australians regard the country as being devoid of any threat to its peace and security’ and that people believe ‘the world is in a remarkably peaceful state at present’. Similarly, quantitative research shows that the broad trend is steadily downwards in terms of Australians considering

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27 Ibid. p. 15.
that an external threat to this country was likely in the coming 15 years. In the early 1980s between 5 and 6 in every 10 believed in the probability of an external threat; polls in the second half of the 1980s typically report between 3 and 4 people in every 10 as believing that other countries pose threats. The trend is most marked among those in the 15-24-year-old age group. The chief determining factor seems to be the more relaxed superpower relationship and the declining communist threat. By July 1988 concern over the Soviet Union had fallen to an unprecedented low of 6% and over China to an equally unprecedented 2%.

The more worrying feature from a defence point of view is that a sizeable proportion of the population (59%) do not believe that Australia could defend itself. A qualitative study reports similar views:

The more Australians discuss Defence issues, the more dispirited they become. The symbolic significance of the Defence Forces is undoubtedly tarnished by the sense that the actual defence task is 'a bit hopeless', and that, without a massive injection of funds, we are unlikely to close the gap between the ideal and the reality.

As Marshall concludes after reviewing the polls, '[t]he public's confidence in Australia's ability to defend itself is generally low'.

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31 Andrew Mack, 'Denuclearisation in Australia and New Zealand: Issues and Prospects', Australian Outlook, (Vol.43, No.3), December 1989, p.34.
32 Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community.
33 Mackay Research Pty Ltd, 'A Study of Community Attitudes', p.27.
The reasons why a majority of Australians believe the country cannot be defended have not been much investigated by the polls. ANOP polls suggest that the length of the coastline and the sheer size of the country — rather than the size or competence of the armed forces and rather than the existence of a major threat — are important in the minds of those who doubt Australia’s capacity to defend itself. Mackay also found that ‘the coastline’ was generally regarded as Australia’s greatest problem when it comes to defence.35 The title of Ross Babbage’s recent book — A Coast Too Long? — echoes this theme.36 From Army’s point of view it would be important to stake a claim to defence of the coastal region. It seems likely that the natural assumption of the general public at present is that coasts are for the Navy to defend.

**Australia’s Response**

The challenge for government — if it so chooses — is to convince the community that while the retreat of communism and winning the Cold War is worth celebrating this does not mean that we should make any moves to lower the level of security we had before these changes. The community will expect to be told why rapid changes to the defence forces would not be a sensible move given the enormous geopolitical changes that have occurred. The burden of defending current establishments falls on the government and to an extent on the Army in particular.

Army’s role here would be to argue why major changes in its size and structure should not proceed despite the magnitude of the current changes and to explain the implications for its own structure and doctrines. The following points might be made in the public arena:

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- the US is cutting back its military presence in the Asia/Pacific region and this will create something of a power vacuum;
- many states in the Asia/Pacific area have been embarking on significant defence modernisation programs;
- conflicts among regional states continue to be likely, e.g. disputes over Cambodia, in the South China Sea and over maritime issues; and
- instability within regional states will continue, e.g. insurgency in the Philippines, Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, the coups in Fiji and disorder in Vanuatu and New Caledonia.

If anything, Australia can be said to face greater uncertainty in a situation where our major ally is reducing its presence and where regional military capabilities are expanding. This does not translate directly into a role or roles for the Army save in particular, limited contingencies. What it does mean is that a case can be made for a capable Defence Force; and in that force Army will need to establish its proper and most effective function.

SOCIAL CHANGE IN AUSTRALIA

The wide range of major social changes under way in Australia and most Western nations have been mentioned earlier. They are likely to continue and will influence the relationship between Army and Australian society. A number of recent studies have
examined these broad trends. It is not necessary to rehearse these at length but the following points can be highlighted.

Work

The average Australian, it can be assumed, acts in accord with self-interest where employment is concerned and his or her orientation to work is essentially 'instrumental'. Nonetheless, many do seek a balance between extrinsic rewards and satisfaction with the job being done. Young people in particular tend to be less tolerant of poor job conditions than in the past, due in part to the greater range of choice available — or, at least, potentially available. Greater mobility within an occupation and between occupations is also emerging, while choice of careers is tending to be made later in life than previously.

Average hours of work per week have fallen from about 40 in 1954 to 38.5 in 1986 for those in full-time employment. Over the same period part-time work has become more common, especially among working women. Nearly 40% of working women are part-time compared with less than 10% among working males.

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At the end of the working life a trend towards early retirement has been evident this decade and is expected to continue. One result has been that the percentage of males aged 60 or more in the workforce has decreased from just under 55% in 1979 to 49% in 1985; for the 55-59 age group, the decline in the same period has been from 82% to 74%. There is, however, some political pressure to abolish compulsory retirement ages, for example in New South Wales. Nonetheless, it seems unlikely that the nation will see a trend to reverse early retirement.

Education

The retention rate — the proportion of students staying at school until the end of year 12 — has risen through the 1980s, growing from 35% in 1978 to 60% in 1989. For the future, the year 12 retention rate is projected to keep rising to between 68% and 75% by the year 2001. Families, it seems, are placing higher priority on children’s education.

There has also been major growth in tertiary education. More than one-third of Australians in the late teenage group participate in tertiary education and women comprise over half of this group. The proportion of the workforce holding post-school qualifications has increased steadily in recent years and in 1989 stood at 48% for males and 42% for females. In public administration and defence the figure stands at 50% (compared with 46% in 1983).

In universities and colleges of advanced education, the full-time student population has grown by a third between 1985 and 1989, resulting in the production of some 80,000 graduates each year. On some projections this will rise to 115,000 in 1993. By 2001 nearly 15% of the workforce are likely to hold a degree qualification compared with about 10% in 1988.

Role of Women

By 1987 half of the Australian workforce was female; this proportion has edged upwards since then and may well continue to grow. There is also greater acceptance of equality of opportunity for women and of the need to offer them career employment. The
interests of women, particularly in the employment area, will become increasingly important for family goal-setting.

At the same time women are bearing fewer children. The fertility rate has steadily declined from 3.0 children per female in 1947 to 1.87 children in 1986 and appears set to decline even further.

Family Patterns

A majority of married women work in paid employment. Two-income couples comprise 43% of all couples. Economic pressures have made dual-income families the norm. One-fifth of all households are single person households.

Demographic Trends

The average age of the population is increasing — the 'greying' of Australia. In part this is due to increased life expectancy. In 1970 new-born males could expect to live 67.7 years and new-born females to 74.6 years; by 1986 the figure for males had risen to 72.9 years and for females to 79.2 years.

Concomitant with this trend the proportion of young people in the population has been steadily falling and — on middle of the road assumptions regarding fertility, mortality and migration — will continue to do so. Thus the 15-24-year-old group will decline from 16% of the total population in 1989 to an estimated 14% in 2001 and 13% in 2011. Since the total population will be growing, however, absolute numbers in this age bracket are expected to fall only marginally in the early 1990s and then to increase over the rest of the decade.

Immigration and Multiculturalism

Australia is now a multicultural society. In 1947, 90% of Australians were of United Kingdom, Irish or New Zealand origin; in 1989 this had fallen to 75%. This is projected to fall further in the next 20 years by 6 percentage points. The Asian proportion of the population is expected to increase to about 8% by the beginning of the
next century. Other sectors of the population are expected to remain roughly constant.

The Asian group is also becoming more important in migration. In 1971 Asians constituted some 5% of all migrants; by 1987 they formed 40% of all migrants, including those under the business migration scheme.

Some Implications for Army

In terms of how these developments will impact on community perceptions of Army and what they mean for Army the following general points can be made.

- Army will need to demonstrate that it is committed to equal opportunity for women in all its activities. It should be noted here that the University of Wollongong study found that in terms of attitudes towards and level of interest in defence there was virtually no difference between women and men. Unless major reductions are made in the support areas of the Defence Force, the proportion of recruits who are female seems likely to be maintained or perhaps increased; in the third quarter of 1990, for example, some 21% of new recruits were female (compared with about 12% in the present ADF).

- Clearly the issue of allowing women into more positions than the 56% currently available to them in the Army — and particularly into combat roles — will persist and public perceptions will be influenced by the way Army handles this issue.38 The difficulties for Army will be all the greater given that Navy and Air Force have opened up around 95% of their positions. (One tongue-in-cheek suggestion from the United

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States is that Air Force be reserved for women and Army for men with Navy open to both.)

- Army will need to demonstrate that it has high skill requirements to attract respect from an increasingly educated workforce and that it is raising Australia’s skilled workforce through its training systems. Army cannot afford to be left behind in the move toward a ‘clever country’ (even if the move is not as great in reality as in rhetoric).

- The demographic shift will mean increased competition for graduates and others with post-school qualifications. This takes us into the recruiting area, which is beyond our brief, but the general point can be made that for Army to be recognised as a worthwhile institution it will not only need to attract some of the best students in the community but also be seen to attract them.

- For Army to be seen as a worthwhile institution it will have to develop exemplary personnel practices. It will have to consider the interests of individual service members, of minority groups, of spouses who work, of spouses who do not work and of the children of its members, particularly as regards education. It will need to deal with problems of discrimination and issues such as gay rights.

- The shrinking youth population and the overall ‘greying’ of the population will impact on the amount of effort devoted to particular age-groups in communicating Army’s message over the coming years. At present only 5% of Defence Force recruits come from the 25-49 age group. Different messages concerning Army may also be more appropriate for the growing number of people in retirement or the near-retirement age bracket and also the increasing numbers in the early-retirement group.

- Australia’s multi-cultural society will mean that Army will need to consider how it reflects that society
through the make-up of its members. What needs to be borne in mind here, and what emerges clearly from the Wollongong study, is that different races have different cultural attitudes towards the military; continued assessment will be necessary to determine how to get Army’s message across to particular groups. Certainly there can be no automatic assumption that what is appropriate for one group will be for another and that what works in the tabloids will necessarily be understood in the ethnic press. Army will need to liaise on a regular basis with ethnic organisations.

**DEFENCE SPENDING IN AUSTRALIA**

The level of defence spending in Australia is an indicator both of perceptions of the international environment and of changing attitudes towards defence. Both point in the direction of declining willingness to spend money on defence. At the same time demands for accountability are growing. In one survey 68% of respondents desired a greater degree of public accountability from the ADF with only 7% completely satisfied with the existing level of accountability.39 One of the points hammered home in the Wrigley report was that defence spends many billions of dollars each year — equal to many hundreds of dollars per head of population — and that this expenditure ought to be fully justified.

There is clear evidence that public opinion is hardening against defence spending. The poll figures available since 1979 are as follows:

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Although there are changes in question wording and codes used there is a clear trend here: after a peak in 1980 — the time of the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan — there has been a drastic decline in support for increased defence spending, including 15 percentage points in the last three years.40

A study of attitudes in the 1990 federal election asked people to rank their priorities for increased spending; defence came second from the bottom with only unemployment benefits being a more popular area for financial cuts. Conversely only 4% of those asked saw defence as a top priority for increased spending (out of 10 nominated areas); again defence was in the company of unemployment benefits which scored 0.5%.41 Similar attitudes were apparent among the candidates in the 1990 election. Asked to nominate which area of government spending should be reduced, some 47% ranked defence as top priority for a cut (only 2% saw it a first priority for an increase). Significantly, no great differences emerged between the parties, with Liberal-National candidates scoring 46% and Labor candidates 55%. By contrast, among federal parliamentary candidates in the 1987 election some 46% supported increased spending on defence and only 18% wanted to spend less.42

Actual government spending has reflected these attitudes. Four of the past five budgets have seen negative or zero growth for defence spending and defence expenditure projected for 1990-91 is slightly below the forecast inflation rate. Defence outlays, moreover, will have very little capability to absorb cost increases as a result of the


41 Ian McAllister, 1990 Australian Election Survey Codebook, (Department of Politics, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1990).

planned capital equipment acquisitions. The political pressure to reduce spending on defence is likely to increase as expectations grow for a ‘peace-dividend’ in Australia as a result of the political changes in Europe. The traditional threat of communism now appears much less credible and politicians may seek to cash in on this fact by deploying defence funds into areas that have more popular appeal. This weakening of support for increases in defence expenditure represents a significant and probably long-term shift; it reverses the pattern of support among the population that has been evident over several decades.

It is unlikely that Army can have anything but a minor impact on budgetary policy. As suggested earlier, it represents a politically inconspicuous target for financial trimming; manpower has already been allowed to fall away and one engineer unit has been disestablished. Two broad strategies might help to hold the line. One is to emphasise the large manpower requirements for defence of the north. This need is obvious to any soldier who contemplates the immensity of the problem but the public would have to be convinced of at least some of the following points: (a) the vulnerability of the area to realistic threats; (b) the high level of manpower (plus transport, communications and logistics) required to protect vital assets in the north; (c) the desirability of some kind of presence in the area, perhaps associated with development of the infrastructure and economic growth. The latter two arguments might find the public more receptive than suggestions that threats of some kind are imminent or even likely.

The second broad strategy would be for Army to stress the amount of money it spends in various localities in Australia. CDF has pointed out that 75-80% of the current 15-year investment program in equipment is being spent in Australia, a message that could bear repeating and could be coupled with more details on the number of jobs created and the impetus for technological advances that military

45 Sun, 6 November 1990.
spending is producing. At the other end of the scale, little research appears to have been done on, for example, how much an Army base contributes to the local economy. 'Army money' is spent in many ways such as the spending of pay, employment of local civilians and the contracting out of services; the last two in particular may become more significant in future years. Some studies dealing with the impact of new barracks in Townsville in the 1960s were conducted but nothing more recent appears to be available; the Air Force also conducted studies of the impact of the new base at Tindal on the town of Katherine. Army might consider undertaking studies of the steady-state contribution of Army establishments to local economies or encouraging academic economists to do so. Clearly, there is no question of military spending on a scale that occurs in the United States but it could be of growing significance to a number of local communities in Australia.

CURRENT PERCEPTIONS OF ARMY

This section looks at the dominant perceptions of Army. It finds that Army enjoys the poorest image of the three services in a number of respects and that it is seen as playing the least important role in the defence of Australia. Nonetheless Army does enjoy certain positive attitudes and may have some prospect of changing the more adverse perceptions.

Army Is Seen as the Least Modern and Least Efficient of the Services

In 1980 ANOP found that Army was regarded as the least modern service and the least efficient by around one-third of the community. In the 1984 ANOP study of young people's attitudes there was no real change in the standing of the Army in terms of perceived modernity. Only 20% saw Army as the most modern with Air Force again regarded most highly. In 1987 ANOP asked people not which of the three services was the most modern and up-to-date but how modern and up-to-date each of the three services was. Here
Army did somewhat better: 76% said Air Force was modern (including 'very modern' and 'quite modern') while 64% said Army was modern and 61% said Navy was modern.

The reasons given for this focus on outdated and insufficient equipment — factors which also apply to those who consider the Air Force or Navy as inefficient or less modern. Significantly, however, '[t]he Army's perceived inefficiency is also attributed to its lack of relevance to modern warfare and insufficient manpower. In other words, the main questions about the efficiency of the Navy and Air Force are in terms of how well equipped they are whereas the additional considerations of relevance and manpower also enter the community's assessment of the Army'.

For these reasons one would expect continuing difficulty for Army since both Navy and Air Force are engaged in major re-equipment programs that have attracted a great deal of public attention. Whether or not the new ships and aircraft are valuable to the defence of Australia, Army must still demonstrate its own relevance to the defence of the country.

Another explanatory factor can be found in Mackay's 1989 study, which reported that Army had the lowest status of the three forces. There it was concluded that Army 'is viewed as being 'basic', rather pedestrian, and most likely to produce boredom in its members. Compared with RAAF or Navy, life in the Army is thought to be generally unexciting, 'dirty', and demanding fewer technical skills: 'such prejudices inevitably lead to the view that Army personnel are likely to be less educated and perhaps less highly trained than members of the other two services'.

The relatively low status accorded to the Army, moreover, is related to the idea that ... that Service is associated with mass recruitment, whereas the other two services are thought to be more highly selective, and more focussed on the skills and aptitudes which they seek in their recruits the perception that the Army is potentially "for anyone". This, of course, has been the practice in the two

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47 Mackay Research Pty Ltd, 'A Study of Community Attitudes', p.46.
48 Ibid.
national service schemes since 1945. The 1980 ANOP study also found that Army is regarded as being the easiest service to join and Air Force the hardest.49

On the other hand there is a set of positive perceptions about the nature of Army activities. The first relates to the discipline which is associated with the Defence Force, and particularly the Army, and which is favourably perceived by many survey respondents. 'Its positive components are that it teaches self-discipline, responsibility and generally improves people — it helps young people "get their act together"'.50 This ties in with the persistent popular support for military service that was mentioned earlier.

A second positive factor relates to the benefits which Army is perceived to provide for employment in civilian life. In 1984 ANOP reported that: '[v]aluable work experience and training, job security and opportunities for career advancement, continue to be key positives associated with Defence Force employment in general and with the Army in particular'.51 Such things as a desire to learn valuable skills, the ambition for personal improvement, or the prospect of a secure and worthwhile occupation are key elements in attracting people to join the Army.52 Asked which service provided training and experience most likely to improve civilian employment prospects, 44% of respondents nominated Army with about 25% naming each of the other two services. As the 1984 ANOP survey of young people's attitudes found, work in the Army is seen as most similar to civilian work. This factor helps explain why Army life is seen at one and the same time as ordinary and unexciting but also as useful for civilian life.

Overall, Army suffers because it is seen as the least modern of the services. Such attitudes will be difficult to change although some

50 Ibid., p.77.
52 ANOP Research Services Pty Ltd, 'Public Attitudes to Defence', p.153.
strategies are available. What needs to be borne in mind, however, is that updating the Army image could be a two-edged sword. The more Army becomes a 'high-tech' service, the less relevant and useful it might seem to the ordinary man in the street or potential recruit.

Army Is Thought of as Playing the Least Important Role in the Defence of Australia

Although Army has the greatest prominence in the community's mind, it is generally regarded as the service which would play the least important role in defending Australia. A majority of the public nominate the Air Force as playing the most important role (55%) — largely because it is seen as fast, mobile and well-equipped and because it is believed that 'the initial defence of Australia will occur in the air'. Some 23% gave Navy second place while only 15% put Army first. The main reason that Army was seen as most important service by its supporters was a conviction regarding the importance of land warfare in any invasion.

It would not be easy to convince the community that Army has a major role to play in defending Australia and that it should therefore be supported at least at current levels. The fact that the image of the Army is closely linked with warfighting is something of a handicap in this respect. To contemplate fighting in Australia is to assume an actual invasion or lodgement on Australian territory; and this in turn assumes that the Air Force and Navy will have failed to prevent hostile forces reaching Australian shores. In other words, for Army to have a major fighting role requires making the uncomfortable assumption that, contrary to the image put forward by the government, the sea-air gap will have been seriously breached.

Nonetheless, the public might accept certain points about the role of Army:

- A situation of increased uncertainty exists in our area of strategic interest. It would therefore be risky to

make wholesale changes and a consolidation of existing capabilities would be safer.

- It is easy to reduce Army capabilities but this loses valuable investment in personnel and skills which cannot easily be restored. Training personnel and exercising skills is a long-term asset and should not be lightly liquidated.

- The Army consists of a force of skilled and disciplined people who can perform a wide range of tasks for the community. These tasks include deterrence but also peacetime roles which have military relevance. (This issue is discussed further in the following chapter.)

- The insurance analogy may be the most appealing to the public. Qualitative research suggests that in peacetime the maintenance of well-equipped and well-trained forces is seen as essential insurance.\(^\text{54}\) The insurance concept implies that the unwanted contingency is in any case fairly remote — like a house being burned down; the prudent householder keeps up his insurance policy even though he considers the chance of disaster very improbable.

Against that broad canvas Army could seek to demonstrate how it contributes to the 'insurance' premium for the defence of Australia. Little research has been done, however, on public expectations of Army's (least important) role in defending Australia. Indications from ANOP's poll in 1980 suggest that the importance of land warfare is accepted by some though it may be difficult to increase this perception. By contrast, the idea of sea power — patrolling Australia's waters, guarding fisheries and so on — is clearly understandable; air power, too, conjures up images of fast and decisive interception of an enemy, especially given that over-the-horizon radar will see him coming (and intelligence has predicted events well in advance). Another factor here no doubt is the common belief that Australia's coastline is the prime source of its vulnerability and the probably associated assumption that Navy should play the

\(^{54}\) Mackay Research Pty Ltd, 'A Study of Community Attitudes', p.50.
main role in defending coasts. From Army’s point of view, therefore, it would be important to stake a claim to defence of the coastal region.

The authors suspect that the common view of Army is as a last line of defence in the event that an enemy gets through the sea-air gap. Navy and Air Force are commonly pictured as the first line of defence and the implication is easily drawn that Army defenders are not really necessary if the other players do their job. The analogy that comes to mind in the population at large may be that of 'long-stop' in cricket — a field placing which implies that the wicket-keeper cannot be relied upon, an unthinkable assumption in a first-class game, and which is therefore not strictly necessary. The idea of the last line of defence also tends to have negative connotations, suggesting static and passive rather than dynamic and mobile operations. Army may prefer to avoid these associations. It may find a more secure role by presenting itself as part of an overall defence team and identifying specific roles within that task.

**PEACETIME ROLES**

Public perceptions of the role of the armed forces in general wax and wane in large measure as a result of the international environment, and in particular the level of threat perceived. In time of low or no threat the problem arises of how to convince the public that armed forces are necessary and that they are getting value for money. It is easy to believe that, since there is no fighting to be done, the armed forces are having an easy time. The Mackay Report found that there appears to be widespread uncertainty in the community about what the forces actually spend their time doing when there is no war to fight: ‘although Australians very widely accept and support the need — especially the symbolic need — for strong Defence Forces, it is not always easy for them to visualise what the peace time responsibilities of those Forces might be’.

This is all the more important because there are expectations in the community that the armed forces should be more useful and

more visible. 'Since Australians are so confused about their real Defence requirements, it is hardly surprising that they place particular value on the symbolic value of the services. To them, it is worth money to have a 'visible' Defence Force'. Moreover, 'civilians regard the Services as being generally invisible ... They would be reassured by a more overt presence of Service personnel and their confidence in our defence capability would be enhanced simply by knowing more and having more direct experiences of Service people, Service activities and more insight into Service life'. Mackay also found that Australians want the Defence Force to be more visible, more active in its symbolic/ceremonial role in the community and more obviously helpful in such areas as coastal surveillance and safety and rescue activities.

One reaction may be to expand peacetime functions such as aid to the civil community, perhaps through undertaking major public works or increased involvement in disaster relief and emergency rescue. The idea would be to create an impression of continuous usefulness in peace as well as war. Yet we would suggest that this be approached with great caution. The most important argument for maintaining armed forces must remain that of providing for the potential defence of the nation against attack. If this aim is lost sight of, the central justification for armed forces is undermined and will lose credibility in the community. This will be the case even though the community welcomes the Defence Force's peaceful activities; an underlying dissonance is likely to develop between having an armed force and the carrying out of tasks that could be performed by unarmed workers. The symbolic presence of the Defence Force and of Army in particular should always be that of armed force. This is reinforced by Mackay's finding that the 'most significant theme in Australians' discussion of the activities of the Defence Forces concerned the maintenance of a defence structure which would be sufficiently well-trained and well-equipped to react to any military threat and, of equal importance, to provide the structure for a rapid

56 Ibid., p.21.
57 Ibid., p.34.
58 Ibid., p.52.
build-up of our defence capability. ANOP found the same attitude.

In this connection Army has one important asset and one important disadvantage compared with the other two services. On the positive side Army above all is associated with a warfighting image. The 1980 ANOP poll reported that: '[t]he main distinguishing features which characterise the Army are "foot soldiers" and their weaponry such as guns, artillery, tanks, jeeps — in effect armed combat'. Providing that these images are kept in mind, the perception will remain that Army is a fighting force. If, by contrast, the emphasis were to be on communications technology or engineering equipment, there is a chance that Army would come to be seen primarily as a body of workers, skilled and disciplined certainly, but not necessarily fitted for war. This is a point that does not always seem to come through in recruiting advertisements, which sometimes present Army as just another job which happens to involve wearing uniform.

While the image of the Army is characterised by armed combat, the image of the Navy and Air Force is rather different. While rifles and field guns are necessarily associated with war, the primary equipment of the other two services has civilian counterparts. Ships and aircraft are part of civilian life in a way that infantry and artillery are not. And it is not surprising to report that the top of the mind features associated with the Navy are 'boats and ships' and for the Air Force 'aircraft'. This allows the other two services to carry out peacetime activities using their equipment without necessarily creating the suspicion that they are losing their true nature. It would thus not be inconsistent for Navy to become more heavily involved in, say, coastal surveillance or fisheries protection; similarly, Air Force could greatly expand its aerial surveillance tasks without losing its essential image.

These considerations suggest caution in how Army attempts to strengthen its overall image in the community. Any expansion of

59 Ibid., p.49.
61 Ibid., p.25.
62 Ibid.
Army’s peacetime role would have to be associated with military qualities in order not to detract from Army’s perceived function of defending the nation. Not all publicity is good publicity — in the long run. From Army’s point of view there should always be a concern that an expanded role in the community will contribute positively to its military capabilities. This might be emphasised, for example, by rewording the current criteria for aid to the civil community. At present, one principle is that such aid not detract from the military role; this could be turned around to emphasise the potential value of such aid in developing skills or providing training of military relevance.

There is little survey evidence on public attitudes to peacetime tasks performed by the Defence Force and none dealing specifically with Army. We would be surprised, however, if survey evidence did not demonstrate community support for a more active role by Army in the community. Yet, as was argued earlier, such expectations on the part of the public must be treated with great care. Army would have to calculate both its own gains and losses as far as military capabilities are concerned and the long-term and underlying impact on public opinion.

Some of the possible peacetime activities that Army can and does engage in are discussed in the following paragraphs. They are grouped into two categories, one focusing on activities in Australia, the other having an international aspect. While there are exceptions, our argument suggests that those with an international element are more promising as far as establishing Army’s military image is concerned.

Domestic Activities

Disaster and Emergency Assistance

The Army already assists the community in various ways through assistance in disasters, rescues, emergency relief and so on. The Mackay study found that this activity has quite wide support in the community and is thought to be one of the continuing functions of the Defence Forces. In fact Mackay found that many people believe that the Defence Forces should be much more active in the provision of such services to the community. They believe this primarily
because of their faith in the training of Service personnel, but also because they believe that it would be a productive use of the Forces' time and equipment "which we are paying for anyway".63

We have found no research that examines community perceptions of the role of the Armed Forces after they have participated in emergency relief. Obviously, one would expect a considerable measure of gratitude on the part of the people directly assisted and a degree of admiration for a job well done on the part of the community in general. The utterances of politicians and dignitaries would support this. Nonetheless, one might also find other reactions among people who have suffered the distress of a major disaster. These responses would not necessarily be to the benefit of the Defence Force or the Army in particular:

- the military came too late or too slowly — why didn’t they come earlier? why didn’t they respond to requests more rapidly?
- the military could have done more — more men could have been sent, more equipment provided;
- assistance was not fairly distributed — why did the Jones get more help than I did?
- mistakes were made, property was damaged — such events tend to be remembered more than the positive things; or
- the military tried to run the show — the local emergency services, the shire council or welfare organisations may feel that Army is trying to take over operations.

The problem may be that people are looking for someone to blame or feel that their proper role has been challenged. Clearly Defence Force assistance can be done well or done badly — and most would claim it is done very well — but a very high standard has come to be expected. All three services may be on a hiding to nothing as far as assistance to the community is concerned. In the matter of

interfering with civil authorities, too, there will always be a fine line between helping and taking over. The development of good working relations with such organisations seems desirable, for example by an Army exchange program with these agencies.

At the same time, greater Army involvement will generate a community expectation that as a matter of routine Army will assist. In Townsville, for example, the Army, because of previous assistance in disasters and emergencies, was asked in August 1982 for 300 men for 10 days, plus 15 troop company vehicles, to take part in a dengue fever eradication program. The request was refused at ministerial level. The point here is that Army should not be surprised if a greater involvement in disaster prevention work will simply raise the community’s expectations about what Army should be doing as part of their normal tasks.

Whether Army or Air Force or Navy is seen as having a higher profile in search and rescue and disaster relief is not known. Research could be undertaken on this point in order to determine how best to promote Army’s role here. It should be noted that other civil agencies involved in disaster relief will also be conscious of their image in this work and Army would need to be careful that it is not seen as promoting this function purely to improve its public relations image. The public will adopt a cynical attitude if they believe that disaster work is simply an area where various agencies are competing for publicity.

Involvement in disaster relief or search and rescue thus needs to be handled carefully. It could enhance Army’s visibility while carrying some costs; equally, non-participation in these kinds of activities would risk adverse community reaction. It is possible, too, that demands for disaster relief will increase as the so-called ‘greenhouse effect’ causes summer rainfall in northern Australian to increase and creates more intense and more southerly cyclones.

65 Australian and New Zealand Environment Council, Towards a National Greenhouse Strategy for Australia, (Australian and New
Given that the community does appear to support this role for the Defence Force and given that Army wishes to expand its profile in this area, thought might be given to investing resources in preventing disasters — for example by assisting in building levees or clearing areas to minimise bushfire risks and so on — rather than acting only when they have happened. Viewing this pro-active behaviour on the part of the Army may in the long run generate greater community support for Army, but great care would need to be taken to consult communities on what was needed. The last thing Army would want is to be accused of undermining the capacity of the community to help itself. Again this will be a fine line to tread.

**Provision of Essential Services**

Essential services in the community may be disrupted not only through natural disasters but also through human action. In both cases the Defence Force may be called upon as the only organisation capable of restoring such services or providing them in some form. Here the most contentious situation arises when essential services are denied to the community through industrial action. At some point maintaining such services can be seen as tantamount to strike-breaking.

Before 1989 one would have expected great public opposition to the use of the Defence Force to defeat a strike in a sustained and deliberate campaign. Such was not the case, however, with the use of the RAAF to undermine the pilots’ strike. Yet the circumstances were so exceptional as to suggest that this is not a guide for future situations. First, the pilots were widely regarded as over-paid and over-privileged and enjoyed little sympathy. Second, RAAF personnel did not have to confront picket lines as would probably be the case if Army were involved in maintaining essential services. Third, the RAAF was operating its own assets not those of the commercial airlines; its activities therefore did not have the same ‘feel’ of strike-breaking, unlike a situation where Army might physically take over, say, trains or buses. Overall, the Air Force probably gained in public

esteemed as many Australians flew in RAAF planes for the first time and met Air Force personnel.

Thus the pilots' strike may not carry many lessons in terms of judging whether an Army role in maintaining essential services would gain community support in the circumstances of an industrial dispute. We suspect that the normal sensitivities will continue to dictate that governments will be reluctant to use Army in the event of strikes disrupting public services. This is evident in the political reaction to 'Plan Cabriole'. In 1979-82 the Defence Force drew up plans for contingencies in which they might be called upon to restore essential services to the community, whether in connection with an industrial dispute or not. When the Defence Minister learned of the plan in 1985 he promptly ordered its abandonment.66

Army is in a cleft stick as far as maintaining essential services is concerned. It is not an area likely to be publicly acceptable save in unusual circumstances and political sensitivities preclude active planning for such eventualities. Yet it is possible that in the event Army would be called upon to carry out such activities and would have to do so with little or no training. On balance it is probably wise for Army to create the impression that it has no interest and little capacity for running essential services.

Public Works and the Environment

The environment has come of age as a political issue in national politics. In the 1990 Australian election study the environment ranked as fifth most important issue. Three economic issues came at the top of the list — interest rates, inflation and taxation — followed by three quality of life issues — health, environment and education.67 Environmental politics had been on the agenda of


previous elections in Australia but 'never before had it played such a crucial role and been associated so centrally with the final outcome [of the 1990 election]. Indeed, most of the other notable features of the ... election can be linked in one way or another to the rise of environmental concerns among a sizeable proportion of the Australian public'.

The emergence of the environment as an important national issue poses challenges for Army. It seems to be the case that over the years Army has been vulnerable to criticism that it is insensitive to the environment and that it is not readily seen as environmentally responsible. The popular image is that of a tank wreaking havoc as it crashes through the bush or tracts of land barred to the public because of unexploded ordnance. The story alleging that wildlife is routinely slaughtered by soldiers during training in North Queensland no doubt confirms in many people's minds the 'Rambo' image of Army behaviour.

Army has already started a number of projects that express concern for the environment, e.g. tree planting in conjunction with facility redevelopments. It is a positive sign that the Directorate of Army Studies has been tasked with examining the role that Army might play in 'national environmental strategies'. Clearly, there is much scope to convince the community that Army takes seriously its responsibilities for conserving the natural environment. Concern could be demonstrated in a number of ways:

- Land degradation is increasingly recognised as serious national problem; Army's role in preventing land degradation and restoring damaged environments could be developed and publicized.

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68 Ibid., p.xiii.
69 'Soldiers Accused of Slaughter', Sydney Morning Herald, 29 October 1990.
Army could show the public how it is managing its land by more open days specifically designed to inform the public by the use of demonstration sites and equipment showing the results of effective degradation control measures.

Army could demonstrate how it restores exercise areas and actively promotes tree planting on bases and elsewhere.

Army could highlight areas where Army land use management has actually protected flora and fauna.

Army could show that it is energy conscious and that it has a program to educate army personnel in ways in which energy can be conserved — for example, by recycling or purchasing environmentally friendly products for use in Army establishments. In particular, Army could show how it can operate facilities and services in an energy-efficient manner in the hostile environment of the north.

Army could highlight how it has preserved its historic buildings and how Army land holdings have prevented undesirable developments. This would also reinforce the ‘traditional’ image of Army. Liaison with the Australian Heritage Commission could provide advice on the best ways to achieve wider public knowledge of this.

Army could highlight any role it plays in mapping conservation areas and how such information contributes to the national data base on land management information.

Army could also become involved in specific environmental projects. Purely by way of example, the control of mimosa, a voracious weed, might be considered. This introduced plant is doubling in area every year, ‘spreading its seeds across the Top End of Australia and threatening to strangle not only Kakadu but the entire wetlands of the Northern Territory’.71 The only effective way to

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71 Australian Colour Magazine, 6-7 October 1990, p.10.
control mimosa, according to the leader of the clearing program, is to find it early and pull it out by hand. Another relevant example would be mangrove rehabilitation, which has not been attempted on a large scale in Australia.

In suggesting that Army could become more directly involved in such programs, we are not suggesting that Army take on many different tasks. It would seem preferable to target one or two high-profile, achievable projects and, by carefully prepared demonstrations, show Army's role in contributing to the preservation of the environment.

Nonetheless, Army involvement in such tasks would have to be treated with extreme care. There may be opposition in Army itself and the public could easily develop misconceptions about Army's role. What would need to be stressed are the direct military benefits of such work — leadership, testing logistics and equipment, command and control procedures, teamwork, morale, acquisition of local knowledge and so on. Liaison with local communities would also be essential. It would be important to explain how such tasks benefit Army as well as the community; this would also help to convince the individual soldier that these particular tasks are relevant to his or her reason for joining the Army in the first place.

Another reason for caution is that the environmental movement will have its ups and downs in coming years. Extremists among the 'greenies' can and sometimes do tarnish the popular image of environmentalism; and the need for economic growth and development will at times and in some areas come to seem more important than environmental arguments. Army should not therefore jump on the environmental bandwagon — which may keel over — but seek to promote an image of responsibility vis-à-vis the environment which is consistent with military requirements. The population at large, it can reasonably be assumed, is willing to accept some ecological harm provided that it is necessary and for a legitimate purpose.

We are thus suggesting that involvement in environmental programs, where considered appropriate, should be very much on a trial basis. We would stress that any projects should be carefully evaluated by opinion surveys to monitor the extent to which such work is achieving community support or being seen as compromising military effectiveness. No surveys have been carried out on public
attitudes towards the role of the Defence Forces and the environment, and this would be a fruitful area of research.

**Training the ‘Clever Country’**

It was noted earlier that of the three services Army is seen as having the lowest status: it is viewed as ‘low-tech’ and involving rather dirty and unskilled work. This image does not fit well with the demands for Australia to become a ‘clever country’. Army, of course, already invests massive effort in training its personnel but more could perhaps be done to convince the public that it is contributing to national goals by stressing its training and educational role, especially in ‘high-tech’ areas. The Wollongong study found that defence is viewed favourably in terms of ‘putting skills back in the community rather than taking skills from it’. Other polls indicate the potentially favourable public response to the issue of training and development of skills.

One way for Army to develop this image would to tap into the government’s introduction of the Training Guarantee. Under the legislation, from 1 July 1990, employers with a payroll of over $200,000 are required to spend the equivalent of 1% of this on training annually. This will rise to 1.5% from 1 July 1992. The object of the Training Guarantee is to improve the efficiency and competitiveness of Australian industry by increasing the level and quality of skills in the Australian workforce.

Army already offers training courses — for example, to State police forces — but could well meet the needs of private companies by offering courses to civilian employees. The object would not be to get people to learn specific military skills but rather to develop skills relevant to the industry. Some moves are already being made in this direction — such as the ‘Executive Stretch’ program which provides courses for certain categories of ARES personnel — and clearly this is an initiative which could be usefully expanded. Army would need to discuss with industry those Army activities that are appropriate for transferring skills to industry. By way of example, Army might run ‘outward-bound’ type courses for corporate executives to improve...
leadership skills. At the same time such courses would expose more people to areas of expertise in Army and make a contribution to undermining the image of the Army as a pedestrian organisation.

International Activities

There are a number of peacetime activities in which the Army is already involved that have an international component and that may provide a base for developing public support.

The Anti-terrorist Role

It is clear from ANOP polls that of the different kinds of potential threat to Australia terrorism is seen as the most likely — ahead of raids, invasion and nuclear attack. Over 70% of the population believe that terrorist attacks are likely in the next 10 years. The Mackay report also found that this type of threat strikes many Australians as being more plausible and more worrying than the overt military threat. Two forms of terrorism come into question, domestic and international, each of which poses different problems for Army.

Firstly, terrorism or disorder which is purely internal in origin is probably seen by the community as a matter for the police. Army would be well advised to stay out of actions arising from racial tensions, lest it become entangled in extremely sensitive issues. If there is an international element, however, an Army role becomes much more justifiable in the public view. This was the case with the Bowral operation in 1978, when troops were used to protect visiting heads of government; even so there was some criticism to the effect that the government had overreacted in using the armed forces for

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such a task and that governments might become too ready to call out the Army to deal with terrorist incidents.75

The role of Army against terrorism that actually originates outside Australia is likely to receive the highest level of public support and could be more openly addressed. The Special Air Service Regiment (SAS) appears to have a generally good image, but its function may not be clear to most of the community. Mackay found that when Australians think about anti-terrorist activity, they are often confused about the role of various government agencies, including the services, civil defence and 'supercops'.76 Army could meet the widespread sense of concern over external terrorist activity by proclaiming its capabilities in this area more openly. This is also an activity that has the advantage of being essentially military in nature, provided that it is stressed that Army involvement only occurs if the threat is too great for police resources.

**Defence Cooperation**

The role of the Army in the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP) does not appear to be known to the public. The establishment of communications networks, the construction of facilities by Army specialists in the South Pacific, the training of personnel and so on receive little media coverage. One of the principal problems, of course, is that most defence cooperation takes place away from Australia. We believe that Army could, in developing its public information campaigns, pay much greater attention to these aspects of Australia’s peacetime role.

In pointing to these activities Army could stress that such activities not only demonstrate Army’s role in contributing to Australia’s image as a ‘good international citizen’, but that such tasks have tangible benefits for Army in terms of lessons about overseas


deployment, leadership skills, negotiation and liaison skills, testing logistics and so on. This would be important to counter the view that Army should be concentrating its resources on the defence of Australia itself.

DCP is not without risks, of course, since military aid and personnel can become entangled in local disputes — as in Bougainville — or overseas officers trained in Australian Staff Colleges can create political disorder at home. Another problem is that the need for military aid has to be demonstrated to counter the view that more humanitarian or economic aid should be given. It may help if the public works aspect is emphasised, particularly if the point can be made that Army uniquely has the relevant skills and personnel to carry out such tasks.

International Peacekeeping

The Mackay Report found that 'it is generally assumed that Australia makes regular contributions to United Nations Peacekeeping Forces'. But it seems that Australia’s contributions to UNTSO in the Middle East, the UN Military Observer Group along the Iran-Iraq border, and the role of the Australian contingent to Namibia are not widely known or appreciated by the Australian public. Again, distance from Australia and poor coverage by the media give little prominence to such activities.

As with defence cooperation, there are considerable benefits for Army and more publicity could be given to them. It should be noted, too, that Australia’s peacekeeping contributions, despite some Air Force and Navy roles, have been overwhelmingly Army. It is in the nature of peacekeeping operations that they require presence on


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the ground and hence tend to call on Army expertise. International peacekeeping appears to be a persistent and perhaps expanding feature of international politics and this may mean long-term opportunities for Army to play a valuable role in peacetime. As CDF has pointed out, it also offers Army personnel the prospect of overseas service of a kind that has not been available since the 1950s and 1960s. It also helps to counter the traditional assumption that service overseas means service in wars.

At the same time, however, potential drawbacks must be noted. The conduct of peacekeeping operations with the emphasis on minimal violence does not coincide with the traditional military focus on the maximum application of violence against an enemy. The military training benefits of peacekeeping duties would need to be emphasised though this might detract in the eyes of some from the true purpose of such operations. Nor can it be assumed that the Australian public would accept major loss of life among Australian soldiers, even in a UN-sponsored peacekeeping operation. There is also the risk that future Australian governments could lose interest in peacekeeping as the expected 'peacekeeping dividend' proves disappointing and other foreign policy priorities emerge.

Conclusion

All present and potential peacetime roles for Army have one major drawback: they do not focus on the conduct of war. Only the anti-terrorist role has clear connotations of bringing force to bear against an enemy. Peacetime tasks can only contribute indirectly to what remains the central role of the Army and the Defence Force in general, namely to deter and defeat an armed enemy. In contemplating other peacetime roles Army should consider not only the practical diversion of resources from the central task but also the potential for undermining the public's rationale for having armed forces in the first place. In each case a fine and difficult line has to be drawn.

SPREADING THE WORD

This section looks at some of the means by which Army might go about increasing its public prominence and developing a wider understanding of its roles and functions. Some general principles are suggested for conveying Army's message rather than advice on particular marketing techniques. Consideration is given first to the public in general and then to more specific groups.

Mass Media

If it is true that most of the population know little about the Defence Force in general, what they do know comes primarily from the mass media. In the Wollongong study 49% of the sample formed their opinion of the ADF mainly from news and current affairs programmes. Family members were the second most frequently chosen option with 15% followed by ADF promotions and advertising (9%) and workplace and friends (9%). At the same time polls suggest that impressions created by reports in the mass media tend to be negative. As argued earlier, there are popular preconceptions about the nature of Army life in particular which the media — and the public — find newsworthy. In particular, the focus is often on either ceremonial — parades, graduations, awards etc. — or on the supposedly mindless aspects of military life — bull, brass and (in a good year) bastardisation. None of these, of course, deals with the central and defining role of the Army, namely the deployment of military force.

One possible response would be for Army to explore the possibility of a drama-documentary series along the lines of Patrol Boat, which apparently produced a positive image for Navy. The program might focus on Army operations in Northern Australia, e.g. search and rescue themes, emergency work, liaising with Aboriginal communities and civilian authorities, problems of adaptation by

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80 Morrissey and Mitchell, 'Females and Ethnic Minorities', p.69; Mackay Research Pty Ltd, 'A Study of Community Attitudes', p. 35
families. It would be important to present the Army 'warts and all'. The TV documentary Women in Lines, it would appear, was well received for this very reason, at least when it was shown as a single program rather than in separate episodes. Similarly, the realistic series about police forces, such as The Bill, probably enhance perceptions of the police in the long run. The program would differ from Bush Tucker Man which, though popular, showed a single officer rather than Army operating in its normal role in the north. The parlous state of the Australian television industry may militate against any new Australian drama but extensive Army support could help overcome reluctance.

Another aspect of the mass public in Australia is multiculturalism. In any public information campaign to draw attention to Army's role close attention will need to be paid to distributing material to the ethnic communities via the ethnic press, radio, SBS and so on. The findings of the University of Wollongong study, that people of Polish, Vietnamese and Cantonese descent hold the ADF in higher esteem than the general population, and that the English, Italian, Greek and South Slav groups tend to be sceptical, will clearly have implications for allocating resources to target particular groups.81

In all this, however, it is important to recognise that one reason the public know little about defence and the services is that they may not want to know. If asked, people tend to acknowledge their ignorance and to say that they do want to know more. In a 1990 poll on community attitudes to defence 43% of those polled stated that they 'don't feel very informed' about Australian defence and security issues.82 The implication here is that it is the job of the government or the Defence Force to inform them. While recognising this phenomenon, however, the task is likely to be more difficult than simply making the information available to an eagerly awaiting audience. In the first place, people may say they want to be informed simply because they are reluctant to publicly admit they do not want to know or can't be bothered to find out. Yet in reality, we would suggest, very few people will take active steps to obtain the

81 Morrissey and Mitchell, 'Females and Ethnic Minorities', pp.81-118.
82 Frank Small & Associates, 'Defence Public Relations Strategy'.
information that is available; the most they will do is passively absorb information or images that are thrust in front of them in the mass media.

This leads on to the second problem. The mass media are extraordinarily pervasive in modern life and people are bombarded with countless messages and items of information of all kinds. Army would have to compete in a very competitive environment — contending with professional advertisers, sales people and journalists, and trying to secure some part of the limited attention of the reader, listener or viewer. Good packaging is important but even this may not be enough. Unless Army focuses on simple messages and underlying values the prospects of influencing mass opinion in a favourable way seem slim at best. Again, this points to the need for Army to identify a clear role or roles in the defence of Australia and to stress the military task it has as part of the ADF.

Schools

Schools represent a more selective segment of the population for an education campaign. The attraction of taking the Army message to schoolchildren is that their views are likely to be less formed than those of adults and that in five or ten years time they will be of voting and enlisting age.

Army could, for example, produce its own kit of materials (printed and, most importantly, video) on the role of Army in Australia’s defence. This should not be capable of interpretation as Army propaganda — if so it would be vigorously rejected by teachers and education authorities. Rather, the aim would be to expose students to a basic outline of current Australian defence policy and to explain the difficulties of northern defence. The material could point out some obvious features of Australian defence and Army’s role in it:

- Army prepares for credible low-level contingencies, e.g. terrorist attacks, raids on vital assets in the north, infiltration and sabotage from outside;
the challenge to personnel of defending huge expanses of northern Australia and protecting vital assets with limited resources;

- the geographic and logistic difficulties, e.g. operating in the wet season and the problems of distance, harsh environment and lack of infrastructure.

Students could also undertake their own research on the natural features of the north, e.g. large tidal ranges, offshore reefs, lack of access to hinterland, the lack of infrastructure, harsh climate, and the problems of operating there whether as civilians or military.

Army would need to liaise with Curriculum Development Centres so that the material produced was stimulating and easy to use in the classroom. What would also be critical is the need to educate the educators, i.e. teacher training. Army would need to liaise with Teachers Colleges and so on since teachers called upon to present this material would not necessarily have had any exposure to the basic history and problems of Australian defence (and almost certainly not Army’s role). The material would also have to fit into courses on Australian politics, social studies and, increasingly, peace studies. Army could demonstrate its willingness to assist in various ways, for example by giving guest lectures.

We are not suggesting that presenting this material should take the place of such things as open-days, mobile units and ‘hands-on’ participation at demonstrations and so on. Rather we suggest that a long-term program of education in schools on problems of Australian defence planning could improve understanding of Army’s role for the community over the longer term.

Perhaps the most effective means of influencing schoolchildren would be the expansion of the School Cadet system. This obviously raises many policy and resource issues, but it would certainly provide a recognised and continuing entrée for Army into the school population. Careful thought would have to be given to the

83 Francis West, ‘University Teaching on War and Peace’ in Hugh Smith (ed.), Australians on Peace and War, (Australian Defence Studies Centre, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1987).
kind of cadet force that would be most desirable — from the point of view not only of Army but also parents and the children themselves. Should the primary focus be on military activities, on ceremonial activities (parades, uniforms, bands etc.) or on adventure training activities? There are no polls publicly available on school cadets but if popular opinion on compulsory military service is any guide increased Army support for cadets would be welcomed.

Tertiary Education

We would certainly suggest that more effort be made by Army to develop high-level presentations on Army's role in Australian defence to universities and tertiary institutions, particularly those with courses on defence and strategic studies and peace studies, at centres concerned with regional security issues and at organisations such as the Australian Institute of International Affairs. A series of talks on, say, how Army sees itself as responding to the challenging demands of credible threats to Australia and how it is developing operational concepts to meet these demands would be the kind of thing we have in mind. The tertiary education sector provides an entrée not only to academics but also — through the medium of conferences and seminars — to public servants, diplomats, politicians and other opinion-leaders in the community; there would also be contact with students who will go on to important positions in the community.

Those selected for such a role should be of high intellectual capability and be capable of preparing papers, lectures, briefing documents, etc. that would be heard, seen or read by Australia's élite decision-makers in business, trade unions, universities and professional associations. The person selected would also be able to give lectures to Staff College and at ADFA so that those within Army would be in a better position to understand developments in Army planning, strategic concepts and so on.

Another form of contact with the tertiary education sector would be through revival of the academic-in-residence scheme, whereby a university staff member spent a year or so in the Defence Department to write and research on defence topics. The scheme appears to have fallen into disuse but we would see merit if Army were able to sponsor interested academics to work in the Department
or in an Army environment on areas of interest to Army. The benefit to Army would be a greater understanding of Army's role by those undertaking research and/or teaching courses in strategic studies, defence studies, international relations, military sociology. Economists or behavioural specialists with an interest in defence issues could be another important source of such people.

A more broadly based proposal would be to provide tertiary researchers with access to the extensive survey and personnel data which Army — like the other services — is accumulating on a large scale through its surveys of members. In the United States and some countries of Western Europe the study of military sociology is a major industry that brings together practitioners in uniform, defence civilians and academics. The interchange of information and ideas is beneficial to all of these groups and creates a greater understanding of military interests, attitudes and values amongst the civilians involved. In turn this is spread through tertiary education institutions as academics incorporate relevant material in their courses and their research. Sociological and personnel issues also offer a promising field for doctoral and other research students provided that access to data is made freely available.

It is in tertiary education above all that the most significant gains are likely to be made, if only because relatively little has been done to date. The current expansion of the university sector offers a good opportunity for action in this field.

Influencing Elite Opinion

What may be more important than seeking to influence public opinion in general is to develop a grouping of influential policy-makers and opinion-formers who will understand and perhaps protect Army's interests. Certainly it is clear that CDF wishes to develop a 'dialogue with opinion-makers and leaders'.  

Defence policy is an issue-area which has some natural constituents such as manufacturers and organisations like the RSL. It does not, however, have the level of

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84 Sun, 6 November 1990.
activity and organisation of groups that are active in shaping policy on, say, education or the environment.85

Army might well wish to move in the same direction although it is not particularly well equipped to target élite opinion. There are few sectoral areas which are likely to be receptive to Army interests and concerns. This is in strong contrast to Navy which can mobilise a wide range of organisations connected with Australia's maritime activities — the fishing industry, ports and harbours authorities, customs, offshore energy producers, the shipping industry, recreational boating, marine scientists and so on. By targeting key players within these groups Navy can build up a network of alliances and promote an understanding of the role of sea power in Australian security.

When it comes to Army there do not appear to be any obvious sectoral interests where Army would find a ready and receptive ear to work at promoting Army’s goals. On the contrary, Army tends to be making demands on various groups — on industry to take part in planning for industrial mobilisation or to release workers for Army Reserve training, on landowners for the use of their land or perhaps its compulsory acquisition, or on local authorities to cooperate in exercises and planning for low-level conflict. The most receptive groups would be key business organisations (especially those with defence industry links), trade union leaders, key academics, parliamentarians interested in defence and defence media analysts. Army needs to consider ways in which it can develop links with such groups, possibly making use of those personnel suggested earlier as responsible for liaison with tertiary and other educational institutions. The program of identifying ‘Friends of the Army’ is a good start in this direction.

Another arena for developing contacts is the parliament. The role and importance of the parliament has increased with respect to defence policy in recent years with the issue of a number of significant defence reports by parliamentary committees and a growing number

of defence-related questions. Many of these reports have been critical to the development of defence policy options. Without overtly seeking to influence the defence debate Army could propose a Defence Parliamentary Fellowship. The model here could be the Fellowship awarded to a political scientist to work within the parliament (normally attached to the Legislative Research Service) and to contribute to the work of the service by writing papers on various topics. The Fellow is also required to write a major report on some aspect of parliamentary affairs. An Army officer as a Defence Parliamentary Fellow would be in an excellent position to raise Army’s profile to those parliamentarians interested in defence issues. If such a scheme were introduced it would obviously be critical to select a person who had the intellectual capabilities to contribute to the debate on national security issues within the parliament.

Conclusion

Like the earlier suggestions relating to greater Army visibility in the community the recommendation for Army to target élites is not going to instantly solve the problems of misperceptions and misunderstanding nor produce positive feelings towards Army overnight. The benefits of keeping Army’s role before key decision-makers are likely to be seen only in the longer term. We would, however, recommend that this be a priority target for Army. Defence policy is much more susceptible to influence by élites than via community mobilisation. In that sense it is most important that Army’s needs, interests and roles be understood by such decision-makers in order that Army’s contribution to the defence of Australia be fully and effectively represented.

86 Derek Woolner, ‘Parliamentary Debate on War and Peace’ in Smith (ed.), Australians on Peace and War.
ALIENATION OR ADAPTATION?

Are the Defence Force and the Army alienated from the community? Wrigley in his report argues that the armed forces are seen as separate from their host society and that this is because of the self-image that the ADF projects — and believes in itself — of a small, highly trained, career professional force, strongly focused on tradition and closed to change. Wrigley argues that many people — especially the young and those of non-British origin — are ‘turned off by the ADF’s emphasis on customs, traditions and symbols’.87

The term alienation requires some elaboration, since it is commonly used about the armed forces and carries negative overtones. Several elements can be identified in the concept. The first is the separateness of a group (or individual). Clearly the military are a separate group, in Australian society with their own set of values and practices — in the same way as, say, doctors or dockers. Their uniform makes them more readily identifiable as a distinct group, though since it is not worn all the time the military are less distinguishable than, for example, Aborigines or Asians. The point is, however, that military personnel do of necessity constitute a distinct group and do carry out distinct functions. Separateness of itself, however, does not constitute alienation.

Indeed, there are some who believe that the armed forces may be losing their separateness to such an extent that this could undermine their basic purpose. Downes, for example, has argued that the ‘robust sense of identity’ enjoyed by armed forces has now eroded and that they are acquiring the image of being just another employee group.88 Thus concern with individual rights and conditions of service, the establishment of the Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal and the formation of the Armed Forces Federation of Australia all tend to make the Defence Force resemble the civilian community ever more closely.89 The question is whether such changes do undermine the professionalism and effectiveness of the Defence Force and/or

87 Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community, p.31.
88 Downes, Social, Economic and Political Influences upon the Australian Army of the 1990s.
whether they are inevitable changes as the military reflects the society around it.

A second feature of alienation concerns community attitudes towards the role of the group in question. Here there are some indicators of alienation, which occurs when the role is not understood and perhaps rejected by society at large. As this paper has argued, there is little knowledge of the role and responsibilities of the armed forces and some questioning of the value of having armed forces at all. One reason is the perceived end of the Cold War and declining legitimacy of the use of force; another derives from the very success of a deterrent posture — if potential threats are deterred they remain out of sight and undermine the arguments for a defence capability. The diversion of military effort towards ‘peacetime’ tasks may help win public support in the short term but can in the long run raise more fundamental doubts about the need for armed forces. In both cases the answer must be to convince enough of the public of the central and essential role of the Defence Force, namely the management of violence on behalf of the state. Some reassurance here is to be found in the surveys which report that the community wishes the Defence Force to be more visible in the community.90

A third feature of alienation occurs when the group concerned develops its particular values and practices in a way that is both dysfunctional to its own purposes and unacceptable to society at large. Alienation, in other words, involves a degree of pathological behaviour. In some countries, for example, the armed forces develop the notion that they are the true and only protectors of the nation’s values, intervening in the political system if they believe that civilian leaders have neglected their duty. Another form of pathology occurs when necessary traits such as discipline and tradition are taken to extreme forms. The alienated military may resist change simply because it is change and cling to outmoded and dysfunctional practices. A milder form involves adhering to old strategies — in the way that Wrigley claims the ADF is hung up on the ‘expeditionary mentality’.91 Another mild form is the belief that ‘professionalism is

91 Wrigley, The Defence Force and the Community, p. 59.
enough’, that all that the military needs to do is develop its expertise without regard to the community or the goals of defence policy.92

The condition of dysfunctionality should be distinguished from its causes. In other military forces various causal factors have been identified, e.g. long-term service overseas, recruitment from a narrow social base or very low turnover of personnel.93 Such causes are, of course, not unique to the military and can afflict other organisations such as a Foreign Ministry or a multinational corporation. By and large such causal factors seem minimal in the case of the ADF.

Alienation, in summary, occurs where a social group is marked by significant differences from the larger society but where: (a) those differences are not accepted by the community; (b) society does not understand or support the roles and functions of the group in question; and (c) necessary characteristics of the group become inbred or dysfunctional over time. The manifestation of alienation is to be found both in the organisation as a whole and in the attitudes and behaviour of its individual members. In extreme cases individuals will feel trapped in a role not understood by the community, powerless to do anything to change the situation and resentful towards those who do not accept the necessity or importance of their social role. Again, the ADF manifests such features only in a mild degree.

This is not to say that Army need do nothing to bring itself more into the mainstream of Australian society; and as society changes greater efforts may be needed to overcome some of the historical baggage which Army carries. Image, and perhaps substance as well, need to be closely examined — and not only by Army but the ADF as a whole. Three major concerns spring to mind:

(a) *Army is too traditional* in its focus on the British connection. Inevitably, British practices, structures, uniforms, drill, messes and so on persist in the Australian Army. Loyalty to the Queen, formally Queen of Australia but by all appearances Queen of England, reinforces the British connection. Particularly as Australian society looks less and less towards the 'mother country', the Army may find these traditional links more and more of a burden.

(b) *Army is too backward-looking* — it is identified with past wars and past methods of warfare. Army's dominant role in both World Wars, Korea, Malaya and Vietnam has created the impression of it being about infantry, about being part of larger military formations and about fighting overseas. None of these is particularly relevant to the future defence of Australia. This impression is reinforced by the activities of the largest pressure group in the defence arena, namely the RSL. Inevitably, its members are predominantly Army and most are veterans of past campaigns, and it regularly calls for the reintroduction of conscription. To the extent that the RSL creates a backward-looking image for Army, ways may need to be found to overcome this.

(c) *Army is too dependent* in its reliance on the United States. The ties with the US are strong, often loudly proclaimed and in many ways inevitable. The Australian-American Memorial at the very heart of the Russell Offices symbolises the connection as do the 'joint facilities' and the linking of the Australian and US flags. It goes to more than the purchasing of equipment from the US; it is easy to create a sense in the community that the ADF and Army are too dependent on outside nations to be thoroughly Australian.

The corollary of these points is that Army ought to be more Australian. There are moves already in this direction from the award of distinctively Australian medals to the broad strategic focus on the defence of Australia. But more can be done to create the impression of Army as a nationalist, even patriotic organisation, and in this way reduce the likelihood of more damaging forms of alienation developing.
CONCLUSION

Public perceptions of Army held by the Australian community are difficult to separate out from perceptions of the ADF as a whole, although research suggests that for a clear majority the ADF is Army. The data for making judgements about current perceptions on how Army is perceived is not particularly strong and further work needs to be undertaken both of a quantitative and qualitative kind on how Army's role is perceived.

The evidence does, however, point to some problem areas for Army. Army is perceived as the least modern of the three services and its role in the defence of Australia does not appear to be understood by the public. Qualitative research suggests that the public would like Army, as indeed the ADF as a whole, to be more visible in the community.

Attitudes towards the Defence Force will depend for the most part on the degree to which people feel threatened. In times of crises or impending threat people will respect the role of all the armed services and be prepared to allow them a much freer hand in access to power and resources than in peacetime. There will always be a sizeable proportion of the population in peacetime that views the military, including Army, as pampered and elitist at the top or 'meatheads' and 'Rambos' at the lower levels. No matter how many slick public relations campaigns are introduced or how many worthwhile community activities Army becomes involved in it is unrealistic to expect that where no obvious defence threat looms all people will accord automatic support to the Army.

The analogy with the police is appropriate here. Police have also suffered from a feeling that the public does not understand their role, their difficult working environment and the stresses they are under. They complain that if a policeman is arrested on corruption charges then everyone assumes that all cops are 'bent', or that if a policeman is involved in a shooting incident all cops are condemned as 'trigger happy'. Army suffers from similar stereotyping — after the Hoddle Street massacre in Melbourne, for example, people unreasonably assumed that the Army recruited and encouraged those
with 'Rambo' tendencies at Dunroon (from which the killer had been discharged).

Army thus has to battle against many popular assumptions, some of which are totally unfounded but some of which — for example, that Army is the least modern service or the one easiest to enter — have an element of truth. But ultimately the public will judge the Army on its military role and capabilities: does it contribute in an efficient and effective way to the defence of Australia? This is not to say that Army cannot undertake certain things to raise its profile in the community and generate greater awareness of its role. It is to say that such a message is a long-term one and will not produce immediate change; indeed, it may be a matter of Army marching at the double simply in order to stand still in public esteem. We are not going to see the 'militarisation' of Australia in the way in which we have seen the rapid 'greening' of Australian politics in recent years.

In developing longer term goals we believe that Army must ask not just how people perceive Army but ask 'are we like this?' and 'if we are like this, is this desirable or not?' For example, Army is seen by many as rather 'basic', doing unnecessary and 'dirty' work. Maybe this is true compared to the other services — perhaps a lot of Army work is dirty and boring, but if such non-glamorous work is vital for Army to perform its role then Army should explain why it is essential. Similarly Army is perceived by many as the easiest service to enter and demanding fewer skills than the other services. If this is true and it is considered by Army to be undesirable then changes should be made, rather than Army simply introducing a slick campaign to convince people that it only accepts the best and the brightest.

The critical point here is that just because current perceptions of the Army suggest a certain course of action this should not mean that Army accepts such action as desirable. If such action is considered undesirable by Army then it is up to Army to educate the public on this point. For example, while there would appear to be public support for a greater involvement by Army in community activities, Army may well feel that such activities clash with its primary function of preparing for war. If it is not seen by Army as acceptable to be turned (in the extreme) into the Royal Australian Playground Repair Corps then the public should be told how this role is not appropriate. Army should tell people if its military roles as
opposed to its peacetime roles are in conflict or, if this is not the case, what the military benefits are to Army in expanding its peacetime activities.

Army must clarify what it wants from any longer term campaign to raise community awareness and change public perceptions. Once those goals are decided, then Army should draw up a strategic plan for the next three years or more, set realistic goals and establish the kinds of outcomes it expects. Efforts would need to be made to establish what the current situation is so that change can be measured and the criteria for assessing success and failure should be clearly established before commencing. The resources to be invested in such a program should not be lavish, in order to head off criticism that it is a wasteful exercise. Indeed significant resources for such an exercise do not appear necessary. Needless to say support for such an enterprise would have to be forthcoming from the highest levels, for in lean times these kinds of projects with longer term pay-offs will be the first to be axed.

It would certainly be more productive to set specific targets in all this rather than try to advance on a broad front simultaneously. Too ambitious a goal would stretch resources with no obvious benefit in mind. In some cases Army may have to settle for simply dispensing the most negative impressions and attitudes found in the community. It is also important that Army should not appear overly concerned with its image. This could create the impression that there is little substance behind the public relations front.

Army has been changing in the last decade and needs to convince the community that these changes are relevant and necessary to the future defence of the nation. In devising any strategic plan on how the Army can shape community perceptions, however, it would be well to bear in mind that the emphasis in defence planning is now very much on a unified Defence Force. Army may face difficulties not only in the community it seeks to inform and influence, but also in the context of an ADF which seeks to emphasise the unity of planning among all three services. Army's long-term interest may be best served — at least, in terms of favourable public perceptions and continuing support — by stressing its role within the total defence effort.
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This monograph contains a collection of papers prepared by academic defence experts for the Directorate of Army Studies, Department of Defence, with an Introduction by Lieutenant General H.J. Coates, Chief of the General Staff. Written against the background of current Defence policy, the first paper reviews the relevance of land forces in the defence of Australia in the 1990s, develops operational concepts, and makes recommendations on the structure and capabilities the Army will require to undertake its primary roles. The second paper provides an alternative approach to structuring the Army. It examines Australia’s defence posture, its strategic circumstances, and its capacity to support current strategic guidance, and concludes with a defence posture involving new ground force structure and roles. The final paper assesses Australian public perceptions of its Army, and examines how these perceptions arose and how they might change (or be changed) in the future.