

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Defence Sub-Committee

Private Briefing – 20 June 2017

ANSWER TO REQUEST FOR INFORMATION

Department of Defence

Question: Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP) – Provide an overview of the three elements of the Pacific Maritime Security Program, patrol boats, surveillance, and technical support; including how surveillance information is/will be shared.

Response:

- The follow-on Pacific Maritime Security Program (PMSP) at a cost of AUD 2 billion over 30 years, builds on the success of the Pacific Patrol Boat (PPB) Program, and consists of three components:
 - Replacement patrol boats;
 - Integrated aerial surveillance; and
 - Enhancements to regional cooperation.
- The PMSP is being developed to incorporate lessons from the current PPB Program, and will:
 - Assist Pacific Island Countries to combat a wider range of maritime security threats (including transnational crime, illegal fishing, and irregular people movements);
 - Improve on existing maritime surveillance surface patrols with new integrated aerial surveillance; and
 - Promote a more coordinated and cooperative approach to maritime security, through support to regional coordination centres and improved coordination of support provided by our regional partners such as New Zealand, France and the United States.
- The PMSP will also include greater coordination of the existing maritime security support provided by a range of Australian Government agencies.
 - To date, 12 countries have agreed to participate in the PMSP and receive replacement vessels, including Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu.
 - Timor-Leste has also been invited to participate in the PMSP and receive two vessels as a new member, although Defence has yet to receive a formal response from the Government of Timor-Leste.
- Australia will continue to provide participating states with enduring advisory, training, and maintenance support.

- A network of Royal Australian Navy advisers (and two Royal New Zealand Navy personnel in the Cook Islands) will continue to be resident in the participating Pacific Island Countries (PICs) to provide operational and technical advice.

Replacement Patrol Boats

- The project will involve the construction of up to 21 steel all-purpose patrol vessels built by Austal Pty Ltd.
 - 19 Guardian-class Patrol Boat (GPBs) will replace the current patrol boat fleet between 2018-2023 and two boats have been offered to Timor-Leste.
 - The replacement GPB is a 39.5 metre steel-hull design, based on the Bay-class Patrol Boat operated by the Australian Border Force.
 - The replacement vessels will have greater range and sea keeping ability, with improved accommodation for mixed gender crewing and updated satellite communications systems.
 - The vessel includes a 1500kg deck crane for movement of stores and equipment, as well as a 16m² cargo deck to support Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief (HADR) and engineering taskings.
 - There is a significantly larger eight-person seaboat for boarding operations, with a safer launch and recovery ramp at the rear of the vessel, and allowances have been made for weapons systems to be installed.
 - The replacement vessels will be built to contemporary Australian commercial standards, and will be ‘purpose-designed’ for our Pacific Island partners.
 - The design specifications for the replacement vessels were developed in close consultation with the 12 countries and Timor-Leste, to ensure the replacement vessels will meet the region’s requirements over the next 25 years of their service life.
 - Based on the ship builder Austal Pty Ltd’s proposed build schedule, the construction of the first replacement vessel commenced in April 2017 with delivery to PNG in October 2018.
 - Crew, collective and transition training are part of the funded replacement project (Project SEA3036) and/or standard training arrangements with the Systems Project Office (SPO). Additional training is also being considered within International Policy Division and Navy.

PMSP Aerial Surveillance

- As part of the PMSP, Australia will provide contracted civilian manned, fixed-wing aerial surveillance platform from late 2017. This is in addition to current military aerial surveillance support offered through the Quadrilateral Defence Coordinating Group (QUADS)
 - PMSP aerial surveillance will support targeted, intelligence-driven maritime patrols and enhance the capacity of PICs to locate and apprehend illegal activity occurring within their Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZs), and adjacent high seas.
 - The provision of a contracted civilian fixed wing, manned aerial surveillance platform will be in addition to Australia's aerial surveillance offered under Operation Solania and assist PICs to enhance the effectiveness of their patrol boats to protect their national sovereignty and resources. It will also enable a more comprehensive and coordinated regional approach to addressing a broad range of regional maritime security issues.

- Australia intends for aerial surveillance to be available for Cook Islands, Fiji, Federated States of Micronesia, Kiribati, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.
- Australia does not intend for aerial surveillance to be available for members of the QUAD alliance (quadrilateral agreement between Australia, France, New Zealand and the United States) and their non-Forum Fisheries Agency (FFA) territories, as these are included under separate national surveillance efforts.
- PMSP Aerial Surveillance will be implemented under a phased approach to build familiarity and interoperability with the platform.
 - Australia has proposed the FFA be given operational control of the aerial surveillance platform.
 - The Forum Fisheries Council Ministers Meeting (FFCMIN) in July 2016 agreed that FFA and Australia continue to develop the proposal in consultation with members.
 - Australia is proposing to focus aerial surveillance efforts on Illegal, Unreported, and Unregulated (IUU) fishing in the initial period, with opportunities to broaden the scope of surveillance to other transnational criminal activity over time.
 - Towards the conclusion of the first stage, Australia and the FFA Secretariat will conduct a review of the outcomes in consultation, with the findings to be presented to FFA Members to inform the next stage of the contractual arrangements to reflect the needs, requirements and capacity of the region.
 - Consideration could then be given to expanding to scope of aerial surveillance to also detect other transnational criminal activity.
- Contracted aerial surveillance over the Pacific has never been attempted previously.
 - Defence will be flexible in how we implement the program and expect to learn valuable lessons in the first few years that be incorporated into the contract.
 - The initial phase will develop arrangements for tasking and planning priorities, and the long term capacity requirements for operational control.
 - Limited bilateral aerial surveillance contracts are currently funded by Australia. These bilateral arrangements will continue to support

some PIC during FFA Operations (eg Palau and Kiribati). These bilateral arrangements will continue in the initial phases under PMSP aerial surveillance.
- Defence is in the process of procuring the services of a suitable aerial surveillance provider and has finalised a detailed concept of operations that describes the end-state vision for this program.
 - A Concept of Operations was agreed by all stakeholders (Australian Government agencies and FFA) and is a working document designed to inform the tendering process.
 - An Invitation to Register Interest was conducted first quarter 2017 and identified a shortlist of suitable providers. A Request for Tender was issued in April 2017 and closed on 9 June 2017. Defence conducted contract negotiations in third quarter 2017.
- The process by which countries will request aerial services is being developed through the FFA.

- The FFA has engaged a consultant (a former RAAF logistician) to develop the processes and procedures to manage aerial tasking requests.
- It is envisaged that FFA member nations will submit Air Tasking Requests which will be prioritised through the annual Monitoring Control and Surveillance Working Group. Urgent requests will be managed under agreed processes.
- Information collected by the aerial surveillance platform would be held by the FFA Secretariat and available under processes to be agreed by Members.
 - The information could be used to increase the effectiveness of the Pacific Patrol Boats and their replacements through a ‘detect and queue’ approach.

PMSP Regional Coordination

- The PMSP aims to foster greater regional cooperation on maritime security issues, as well as increased interagency coordination within participating countries.
- As part of the PMSP, the Government agreed to enhance regional coordination and cooperation on maritime security issues. An interagency Regional Coordination Working Group agreed that the following initiatives may be funded under the PMSP Regional Coordination funding line:
 - additional fuel for the Pacific Patrol Boats (PPB) undertaking cooperative patrols
 - satellite communications equipment and expenses for PPBs;
 - refurbishment and updated equipment in the PPB coordination centres; and
 - analysis of training needs for boardings, law enforcement, etc

Question: Patrol Boat Program – Provide the performance of the Program by country.

Response:

The PPBs provide PICs with a sovereign capability to conduct maritime surveillance and enforcement of their extensive EEZs, as well as search and rescue, disaster relief, election support, immigration and customs, and official government transport.

Reporting Sea Days is not necessarily the most effective way of measuring the performance of the PPBs. Some PICs achieved a high rate of sea days in 2016, while some countries recorded a lower rate of sea days due to a variety of factors including PPBs having major defects, undergoing Third Refits (26 weeks duration) or biennial slippings (12 weeks duration), or may have only conducted ‘national taskings’.

The PPBs are actively involved in the Forum Fisheries Agency-led maritime surveillance operations, KURU KURU, TUI MOANA, ISLAND CHIEF, and RAI BALANG. The PPBs also participate in sub-regional operations such as IKA MOANA, ISLAND STRONG, and REITAKI. We are aware of a number of successful boardings and interceptions conducted by PPBs during recent FFA-led regional operations. For example, during Operation KURU KURU in September 2016, 11 participating PPBs achieved a total of 1193 detections and 177 boardings.

In response to natural disasters, PICs support regional Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Relief efforts utilising PPBs funded by Australia. In the wake of Tropical Cyclone Winston in

March 2016, Tonga deployed the Landing Craft Medium (LCM) VOEA LATE and the PPB VOEA NEIAFU to Fiji to assist with relief efforts. In response to Tropical Cyclone Pam in March 2015, Tonga's PPB VOEA NEIAFU and Solomon Islands' PPB RSIPF AUKI were deployed to Vanuatu to assist with relief efforts and Samoa's PPB MV NAFANUA to Tuvalu.

Question: PNGDF – Provide PNGDF numbers, including women in the force.

Response:

We understand there are approximately 120 women currently in the PNGDF, out of a total of approximately 3,700 PNGDF members.

