



Submission No 30

Review of Australia's Relationship with the Countries of Africa

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Organisation: Department of Defence

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Australian Government
Department of Defence

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Dr Margot Kerley
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on
Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Submission No:.....	30
Date Received:.....	21/12/09
Secretary:.....	

Dear Dr Kerley

Thank you for the letters of invitation to the Minister for Defence and the Secretary of Defence regarding the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade's inquiry into Australia's relationship with the countries of Africa.

I am pleased to enclose for you the Defence submission on its relationship with the countries of Africa, cleared by the Minister for Defence.

I trust you will find the Defence submission of interest to the inquiry.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'B Burdon', with a horizontal line extending to the right.

Ben Burdon
A/First Assistant Secretary
International Policy Division

21 December 2009

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**DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE SUBMISSION TO THE JOINT STANDING
COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE**

**INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COUNTRIES OF
AFRICA**

Introduction

1. This submission focuses on those aspects of the Inquiry's Terms of Reference that are relevant to the Department of Defence, specifically defence cooperation, regional security and strategic issues. It outlines the policy basis for Australia's defence relationship with Africa, as well as Australia's current and planned bilateral and multilateral defence engagement with African countries.

Policy basis for the defence relationship with African countries

2. The 2009 Defence White Paper states: "it will remain in Australia's interests to encourage peace and stability in Africa as part of our contribution to global security, through targeted defence cooperation and capacity building in areas such as peacekeeping. These efforts will contribute to Africa's capacity to manage its security".

3. Defence engagement with Africa is primarily based on our commitment to Africa-based UN peace operations, engagement with select African nations, provision of training to select African Forces and African Union personnel, and shared strategic priorities including the Indian Ocean Region.

4. Defence has bilateral relations with select African countries including Botswana, Kenya, South Africa and Uganda, based on senior level contact and training and education opportunities offered under our Defence Cooperation Program.

5. Defence's multilateral relationship with the countries of Africa is conducted through the African Union. Planning is underway to establish a new Defence Attaché to the African Union and, as noted in the White Paper, this position will strengthen Australia's defence engagement with Africa in areas of mutual interest. Defence also contributes to United Nations peacekeeping missions in Africa.

Current bilateral relationships and engagement with the countries of Africa

Botswana

6. Australia has a modest defence relationship with Botswana aimed at fostering links with this strategically located country. In February 2009, the Commander of the Botswana Defence Force visited Australia for a counterpart dialogue and we have explored bilateral training and education opportunities.

Kenya

7. Australia has a modest defence relationship with Kenya aimed at fostering links with this strategically located country in coastal Africa. A visit to Australia in October 2009 by the Kenyan National Defence College provided an opportunity to discuss security issues such as our respective experiences in counter-insurgency and peacekeeping operations.

Somalia

8. While Australia does not have a bilateral defence relationship with Somalia, Defence contributes to international efforts to combat piracy off the coast of Somalia. Defence currently cross-tasks a frigate and a portion of our AP-3C maritime patrol aircraft in the

Middle East Area of Operations to counter piracy. Defence recently deployed an officer to the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations (DPKO) as a maritime counter-piracy planner. Defence participates in the UN Contact Group on Piracy off the Coast of Somalia, which aims to address legal issues, coordinate operational commitments and promote regional capability development. Defence has also provided minor equipment support to the African Union Mission in Somalia (AMISOM).

South Africa

9. Australia's defence engagement with South Africa aims to support the broader bilateral relationship and fostering links with this strategically significant southern African country. Defence engagement with South Africa is currently conducted via our Defence Attaché in New Delhi, who is cross-accredited to South Africa. Defence support focuses on areas of mutual interests, such as the recruitment and retention of personnel, health, maritime domain awareness and military aviation safety.

Uganda

10. Australia has a modest defence relationship with Uganda, aimed at fostering the broader bilateral relationship. During the former Minister for Defence's visit to Ethiopia in February 2009, he met the Uganda Defence Minister to convey Australia's commitment to deepened engagement with Africa and the African Union. A delegation from the Ugandan People's Defence Force is expected to visit Australia in early 2010, providing an opportunity to discuss security matters such as our respective peacekeeping experiences, including in the Sudan and Darfur.

Current multilateral relationship with Africa

11. Australia has a long history of involvement in peacekeeping operations in Africa, having participated in 13 African peacekeeping missions since 1960. Defence has committed to contributing 15 personnel to the UN Mission in the Sudan and nine personnel to the UN and African Union Mission in Darfur. Defence also currently has four personnel seconded to the UN DPKO, including the lead planner for operations in Africa and an officer supporting maritime counter-piracy planning off the Horn of Africa.

12. In February 2009, the former Minister for Defence announced a number of initiatives for enhancing Australia's modest Defence engagement with Africa. These included: establishing an Africa-based Defence Attaché accredited to the African Union; inviting five personnel nominated by the African Union to participate in peace operations-related courses in Australia; and co-sponsoring a peacekeeping symposium with the African Union to be held in Ethiopia in March 2010. In addition to these initiatives, Defence is exploring options to provide modest training assistance to the African Union's Eastern Africa Standby Brigade, one of five regional units being established as a standby peacekeeping capacity.

13. The peacekeeping symposium with the African Union to be held in March 2010 is being organised by the Asia-Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence (APCMCOE). The symposium aims to enhance the African Union's capability to conduct peacekeeping operations. Planning for the symposium has already included a series of senior level discussions between APCMCOE and African Union officials in Addis Ababa and APCMCOE's Queanbeyan office.

14. In 2009, Defence sponsored the attendance of a number of African participants on the United Nations Military Observers Course and the Civil Military Interaction Seminar. Furthermore Defence, together with the Australian Federal Police, co-hosted the International Association of Peacekeeping Training Centre Annual Conference in Sydney in November, which several African representatives attended. The Conference provided a key opportunity

for global practitioners in the area of peacekeeping education, training and operations to discuss key issues relevant to the sector, including an update from the UN.

15. Defence has also provided financial support to the E-Learning for African Peacekeepers program since 2007. The program, run by the Peace Operations Training Institute, provides distance training at no cost to specific categories of peacekeepers from African nations. The program specifically targets members of military, police and gendarmerie of the African continent. Defence's contribution to the program displays our continued involvement in the African peacekeeping agenda.

Benefit of the defence relationship with Africa

16. Australia values our bilateral defence relationships with African nations and our increasing multilateral engagement with Africa, through both the African Union and the United Nations. Through our focused and targeted contributions to peacekeeping operations and capacity building, Australia is supporting global efforts to encourage peace, stability and security on the African continent.

Outlook for the defence relationship

17. Defence will continue to focus on building African peacekeeping capability through the African Union and the United Nations and on fostering defence relationships with select African Nations. The accreditation of a resident Defence Attaché in Africa will help identify areas for cooperation and identify scope for further Defence engagement and support in niche areas to help promote peace and stability in Africa.

Department of Defence
21 December 2009