



Supplementary Submission No 36

Inquiry into Australia's Maritime Strategy

Organisation: The Australian Centre for Maritime Studies

Contact Person: Commodore H J P Adams, AM, RAN (Ret'd)
Chairman of the Board

Address: PO BOX 55
RED HILL ACT 2603

Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

**INQUIRY INTO
AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME STRATEGY**

supplementary submission by



THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR MARITIME STUDIES

25 February 2003

**JOINT STANDING COMMITTEE ON
FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE
INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME STRATEGY
SUPPLEMENTARY SUBMISSION BY
THE AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR MARITIME STUDIES**

Summary Recommendations

1. Australia's national maritime strategy must address the totality of our maritime interest which embraces not only our offshore areas (AEZZ) but our wider oceanic interests – maritime strategy therefore is a component of economic, industrial, defence and environmental policies (recognised by the Dutch as far back as the 17th century).
2. Marine industries contribute \$30 million to the national economy and are projected to rise to \$50 million within the next decade.
3. In terms of national security, the maritime element is seen as being of increasing importance. This is because the defence paradigm has shifted significantly since 1989. However in the fourteen year period since then we find ourselves still locked into the century-old concept of a defence of Australia, counter-invasion concept of operations. This paradigm shift recognises that the strategic environment will now be one of considerable turbulence. 'For Western nations, including Australia, the great danger is no longer the threat of military invasion but assaults on the complexities of our society.'¹ The real challenge facing Australia is how to create a benign strategic environment. Our paper suggests a number of ways in which Australia's expertise in its national marine capacity across the board can be marshalled as an element in achieving this desirable outcome.
4. Our recommendation therefore is for the Government to initiate action to study and synthesise the implications of this paradigm shift on our national security outlook. Until this is done, I suggest, it is not practical to develop a new Defence White Paper.

¹ Hart-Rudman Commission on National Security (Sept 1999).

-
5. Our paper goes into some detail as to Australia's dependence on shipping and its importance in sustaining our economy. In the post 1989 world the potential threat to international shipping needs to be addressed. Our recommendation therefore is to recognise the need for Australia to take the lead in developing collaborative protection measures with our major trading partners – basically the ASEAN states.
 6. Our paper also notes the decline in Australian shipping and the impact this has on our balance of payments and our lack of strategic sea lift. Our recommendation is the need as a priority government initiative to establish a task force of stakeholders to determine how Australia can get back into the shipping business. (We note that a strategic study of road and rail transport has recently been initiated but shipping has been ignored.)
 7. Our paper goes into some detail as to how Australia can connect with Indian and Pacific Ocean nations across the whole range of maritime affairs. To give effect to these many opportunities for regional engagement our recommendation is for the Government establish a review cum task force to study how second level diplomacy across the maritime spectrum could be advanced.
 8. In the area of Defence, the Centre is not a 'Defence think-tank' as such but we have stressed a number of longstanding and abiding principles of national sea power which have stood the test of time and are relevant to Australia's geographic circumstances. These include:
 - deterrence
 - the capacity for manoeuvre
 - the ability to operate in international waters
 - maritime naval and air units as vehicles for regional engagement
 9. In the field of ship building, significant achievements have been realised in both the naval and civilian field. To sustain these achievements our recommendation is the establishment of a task force to determine opportunities for selling Australian products into the wider region, drawing on the fact that Australia is neither an ex-colonial power, nor a nuclear power.