

Dear Secretary,

I know this is too late for your review but hopefully you will pass it on to the members of the review panel.

The US military is having to confront the reality that Four Dimensional Warfare will be the warfare of choice for Americas enemies who cannot possibly hope to match the US in hi-tech military hardware.

Likewise our navy needs to face up to the fact that their big surface combatants and submarines are not what is needed for our new regional security demands as we have no ships that can really operate effectively or safely in the littorals amongst the thousands of islands to our north. The navy's big ship over horizon blue water battle plans are not relevant. Needed in place are heavily armed small fast patrol attack boats such as were used in Vietnam.

Vessels with the ability to patrol near-shore operational areas in green and even brown water to fill the large gap between the customs patrol craft and the Freemantle replacements. Vessels also that will ensure Australias's security by patrolling every inlet, bay, river and mile of Australia's northern coastline for illegal fishing/aliens/smugglers and or more ominously Muslim extremists seeking to export terrorism to our regions shores bringing in bio/chemical weapons or explosives. Also guard against attacks of wind born chemical or bio agents from inshore trawlers or freighters.

Vessels ideal for the defence of those many island nations to our north that will soon again erupt in conflicts from coups and unrest as in East Timor, Fiji the Solomons.

Vessels ideal as "Pathfinders" and landing craft escorts for beach landings (especially as part of Australian/ USMC joint operations).that could also land 100 plus troops and their equipment right on the beach. Also ideal for action raids/agent insertions/ extractions/ demolition teams/pilot rescues, minelaying and shallow water mine recon.and clearance plus search and rescue.

The boats would also be ideal for service in 16,000 islands of Indonesia, the 7,000 islands of the Phillipines where there is a more than a very good chance that we will have to assist those legitimate goverments in their fight for survival.

The Federal Policy Statement 1998-1999 STATEMENT of POLICY by the Navy League of Australia Federal Council (condensed) states.....

"The strategic background to Australia's security has changed in recent decades and in some respects become more uncertain. The League believes it is essential that Australia develops the capability to defend itself, paying particular attention to maritime defence. Australia is, of geographical necessity, a maritime nation whose prosperity, strength and safety depend to a great extent on the security of the surrounding ocean and island areas, and on seaborne trade"

The Navy League

*Advocates a defence capability which is knowledge-based with a prime consideration given to **intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance**.

*Advocates a defence capability with a prime consideration given to **intelligenc and reconnaissance of Australia**, as well as in coastal waters.

* Supports the concept of a strong Air Force and **highly mobile Army, capable of island and jungle warfare as well as the defence of Northern Australia.**

* **Advocates the development of amphibious forces** to ensure the security of our offshore territories and to enable **assistance to be provided by sea as well as by air to friendly states in our area.**

*Advocates the transfer of responsibility, and necessary resources, for **Coastal Surveillance to the defence force and the development of the capability for patrol and surveillance of the ocean areas all around the Australian coast and island territories.**

*Advocates the acquisition at an early date of integrated air power in the fleet to ensure that ADF **deployments can be fully defended and supported from the sea.**

* Supports the development of the **mine-countermeasures force.**

* Advocates the retention in a **Reserve Fleet of naval vessels** of potential value in defence emergency.

* Supports the maintenance of a strong **Royal Australian Naval Reserve** to help crew vessels and aircraft in reserve, or taken up for service, and for specialised tasks in time of defence.

Each and every one of the above requirements advocated by the Navy League and also the cost of border protection could be substantially reduced and our borders made infinitely more secure by implementing the following.

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PROPOSAL

Island & Coastal Defence System.

Complete and relatively inexpensive security for every island, inlet, bay, river and mile of Australia's northern coastline for illegal fishing/aliens/smugglers/terrorists etc with the option of a powerful flexible defence/offence in case of regional conflicts.

We spend billions of dollars on large combatants for our of 'bluewater' navy, yet Australia has no ships that can operate safely in the waters of our northern littoral's, the most important and likely area of conflict for our forces, where they would be operating in shallow waters close to shore and where large surface combatants and large patrol boats become increasingly vulnerable to mines, fast attack boats, submarines, and land-based aircraft and missiles.

It's a fact that people, drug smuggling and illegal fishing are major problems along the nations coastline and that shortcomings in our surveillance could be exploited by groups gaining entry along our maritime borders.

For four years I have been proposing a solution to these very problems with an updated version of US/Norwegian vessel class.. "Nasty" PTF (Patrol Torpedo Fast) 90-95 feet, 50 + knots, that will do all of the above and a lot more, and do it all for a mere pittance compared to just the costs overruns on seemingly all our naval projects. These craft would fill the huge gap between the larger Fremantle replacement boats and the smaller Customs boats.

A large fleet (say min 50 - 100) of these proven in war PTF,s could operate from basic patrol boat bases spread along Australia's northern coast and island territories. This would ensure our security by patrolling every inlet, bay, river and mile of Australia's northern coastline for illegal fishing/aliens/smugglers etc. Each base would have overlapping patrol coverage and consist of 3 PTF,s. 2 on patrol and one being serviced. The basic base would be built using inexpensive Quonset type huts with a basic dock ,workshop, and landing strip for Hercules or Caribou supply aircraft.

Optional use in times of need.....

.Wartime fast attack patrol boats. New lightweight target search radar would allow these ships capable in times of need to carry ASMs .These boats could use inshore hide and seek guerilla tactics or be formed into squadrons that could overwhelm any major maritime threat to our north.

As part of an integrated Island & Coastal Defence System. Teamed as a unit with island based Blackhawk helicopters, that along with the RAAF and other Navy ships could direct them for over the horizon missile guidance. PTFs and Blackhawks would make an ideal combination for the type of operations that we will sooner or later be facing from overthrows of governments or social unrest conflicts in these island nations

These inexpensive (made in Australia) modular constructed boats fitted with fast change modular weapons systems with the option of all or any of the following.....

Torpedos-
cannon-
depth charges-
mortars-
rockets-
machine guns
and smoke

Ideal as "Pathfinders" and landing craft escorts for beach landings especially as part of Australian/ USMC joint operations.

Each craft could also land 100 plus troops and their equipment right on the beach.

Action raids/agent insertions, extractions/ demolition teams/pilot rescues.

Shallow water mine recon. and clearance

Search and rescue.

Also as needed for troop ship escorts or freighter escorts in our northern maritime approaches.

Fast response protection and evacuations of our citizens from hot spots such as Guadalcanal, Fiji and East Timor. Remembering how long our citizens were without protection, and how

long it took for our nationals to be rescued from Guadalcanal while the navy had to get a ship there? ...and then there was Fiji, another story.

It is also important especially since Sept. 11 and the possibility of nuclear, bio or chemical weapons being transported in the not too distant future that we inspect all ships offshore that might be even slightly suspicious.

Incredible as it may seem, these PTF,s will do all of the above, yet the navy will not even consider them as I know they believe (although I was never officially told) that they are too small, which is absurd as smaller versions (78') of this class of boat, PT,s were used by the USN in every naval theatre of WW2 and the larger ones (PTF,s) in Vietnam. The smaller WW2 PT carried 4Mk.13 torpedos (6000lbs.) the same size as the smaller ASM,s

So the navy continues with it's expensive to build and expensive to run, large surface combatants to patrol for the illegal immigrants in their rickety fishing boats.

These PTF,s could be the nucleus in a "Fighting Coastguard" or formed as a branch of the navy under a seperate command to lessen the bureaucracy and lessen the inter-service rivalry.

New Zealand could also supply crews for training in a joint Naval Reserve to help crew vessels or specialised tasks in time of defence.

We must do something now because we cannot just drift along in times like these with a patchwork maritime strategy and not use the one weapons platform that is ideally suited for the security of our northern region. A region will have many likely conflicts and flash points and a desperate need for those PTF,s and their incredible flexible multi-purpose capability.

"This need for small, fast, versatile, strongly armed vessels does not wane. In fact it may increase in these troubled times when operations requiring just these capabilities are the most likely of those which may confront us. The widest use of the sea, integrated fully into our national strength, is as important to America in the age of nuclear power and space travel as in those stirring days of the birth of the Republic." -- Foreword by President John F. Kennedy in AT CLOSE QUARTERS: PT Boats in the United States Navy.

"The Australian Defence Force must be flexible, adaptable and sustainable".... Australian Defence Association.

Condensed replies of the navy's constructive criticism.

Navy. "I'm not sure how these(updated PTF,s) vessels will achieve all things for all men as they

still suffer from a number of deficiencies inherent in small craft. Things such as short range, limited sea keeping, no significant ammunition stocks (other than what's on the weapon mount), no crew sustainability for long periods, no resistance to battle damage"

I need to point out first that my whole proposal is based on the premise that these PTF's were for use in the littorals of our north and not over horizon blue water. That they were to fill the gap between the harbour patrol boats and the larger patrol boats and that their use with ASM,s was **ONLY in times of need**.

That they would be carrying torpedos depending on where they were operating, but missiles **only in times of crises.** Not all boats would even need to carry them. Some could be configured as missile boat, while others as gunboats and other as minesweepers, all of them can interchange with their modular weapon systems.

In fact the chance of them actually needing to do same is probably next to zero. Yet these PTF,s should still be built with hard points to fit modular weapon sytems in case they are ever needed

I also proposed that these PTF,s were part of a "package deal." An Island and Coastal Defence System or Littoral Defence System along with Blackhawk helos that when a conflict arose in the islands they along with the RAAF could not only give them air cover, but guide their weapons systems. These combined with a (very) ready force of at least a 300 Special Services Force trained for underwater/ amphibious and air attack by helos.

As for limited range. Operations requiring a long haul could be tended by converting an Oberon sub. to a tanker. Ideal for those "Black Ops" and yes it's been done before by a few navies.

Navy; Also, none of our ships (destroyers, frigates) need operate in the shallow/brown water environment. They can do everything the need to well out to sea where the threat from mines and FAC (Fast Attack craft) is substantially diminished. Ships are capable of total freedom of manoeuvre while at sea. They don't need to transit choke points or areas of likely enemy concentrations. They can exert firepower in to an area using stand off precision without having to expose themselves to threat. FACs cannot as their size limits what they can carry.

Now here is where the big problem lays. It's with the navy's "open ocean battle mindset " It's the frigates doing it all "well out to sea" that exactly illustrates and makes my point. The frigates do need to be out at sea, as we have just seen from HMS Northumberland not to mention HMAS Vampire off East Timor (extra bad if under attack!) and that's why we need to have a vessel that has green/brown water capability and can run in shallow water and give very close in support for the following reasons.....

.Australia is in a unique region, unlike Europe and North America .we have many island states (mostly politically unstable) in our shipping lanes and closer to our frontyard. We will be fighting in a one of those island states to our north, because that is where the regional flashpoints will occur, especially if we become involved with revolutions or Muslim guerillas and or pirates in the 16,000 islands of Indonesia or the 7,000 islands of the Phillipines. These island nations are comprised mostly of shallow waters and jungles. As for not fighting inshore or in narrow straights. Remembering Singapore when the British had their fixed guns pointed the wrong way, or the impregnable Maginot line where the Panzers just drove around it? It would be nice if the enemy would oblige and fight where the navy wanted to fight and this is why we need a green/brown water navy. These people will be fighting a guerilla war and believe me they will not have autonomous swarms of intelligent missiles that talk to each other or Lynx helos. Also the new landing craft we are just now obtaining will need close in support .All the way to the beach support.

Precision fire from "well out there"? Are you killing local friendlies or the enemy, or just blowing the hell out of an empty jungle? Where is your intelligence and targeting coming from "well out there"? The only boat suited for this job description is an updated version, made to order, armed to the teeth beachable updated PTF "Nasty." type that can deploy scouts then really lay in some "precision fire".

The RAN is built around blue water, over horizon big ship battles but the chances of that happening are almost nil..The last three engagements directly relating to our regional interests were all shallow water/jungle campaigns.Malaya,Vietnam and East Timor.I can't think of a single potential bluewater threat from any navy where these frigates would be used.against other ships especially where RAAF and or allied aircraft would do the job faster with stand off missile and with probably little if any loss. The only battle scenario involving big ships is China / Taiwan. Most Chinese missiles will come from the shore or their subs and their nearly 900 FAC,s which will mean total annihilation for any fleet in those narrow straights,(and as you say our ships don't go into narrow straights, this should also eliminate the Gulf of Hormuz region) This war will flare up and be over so fast our ships would not get there in time and even if they did ,what difference would the frigates or even our entire navy make?

The slaughter of innocent civilians as in East Timor will someday most likely occur again and fairly soon. There are many such flash points beside Indonesia and the Phillipines. Guadalcanal, PNG, Fiji and any of the other states in the region. Most of these island nations larger towns and cities are next to the sea. These PTF,s could quickly provide close in firepower and protection for the majority of residents while awaiting reinforcements. They could also quickly evacuate Australian citizens or troops and others, or deploy medical aid teams.They also have the ability to patrol the near-shore operational areas.

In other words these little ships would fill a role where the large single purpose surface combatants are for the most part impotent (except for those excellent communications) in this type of situation that we will face again one day. Someday hopefully we will have PTF,s Blackhawks and a ready battalion of quick strike force to move in immediately and not wait weeks to organise a rescue.

For any of our regional neighbours that would like the protection of these bases we could make them Mutual Participation Defence Bases , (also could train and use local sailors) larger with more boats and with Blackhawks and their facilities and even portable OHR units to give better overall regional coverage. These bases would give our friends and us some real security and enable a quick time response for us and let a hostile Indonesia or other belligerent know that there will be no more excursions into another helpless "Timor". These bases would also be insurance for the legally elected governments against possible coups or insurrections, as any sort of of situation like this would be from poorly armed and trained (if at all) mobs. The goodwill forged would also help keep an aggressive expanding China or once again an aggressive urepentant Japan from a regional naval port.

This would be similar to **USN,USMC"TENCAP"**

The specific missions of the Navy and Marine Corps in dealing with regional conflicts which are:

To maintain a forward presence and friendly engagement with local forces, to deter conflict and be ready for rapid response to crises requiring military action;

To be a transition force when a crisis erupts, to engage rapidly and settle it, or otherwise to establish conditions and a lodgement for a successful and effective entry of Army and Air Force reinforcements if they have no prior basing:

To continue participation in joint and combined operations until the military action is successfully concluded.

Re the insurrection in Fiji. Under ANZ leadership, a PTF / Blackhawk/Strike force could have moved immediately on the rebels, blocked off all roads and communications to the media from parliament house, secured the airport and protected and even evacuated government members and foreign nationals to a nearby safe zone by PTF. (pretty much the same scenario in any of these island states attempted coups) As this coup went on it gained momentum and picked up support from the populace. The ANZ force would have provided the backbone and logic to the local military bungling and ensured a quick result.

Democracy is dead in Fiji. There will not in the foreseeable future be another stable government in Fiji without a UN or ANZ force on or near these islands and these insurrections will occur again and again throughout these island nations and Australia and New Zealand are not going to help solve this very serious chain of events, by building more large naval combatants.

The Sydney Telegraph March, 4 states in "Vulnerable from the sea" "that people, drug smuggling and illegal fishing are major problems along the nations coastline".

Defence forces short of resources.

"The navy could not provide enough ships or sailors to patrol Australia's shores."

.....*Sunday Telegraph Nov.25 2001*

"The collapse of order in PNG is having a devastating effect on Torres Strait Islanders. The movement of guns, drugs and people in the Top End may soon bring dire consequences for other Australians, too.

Authorities warn of grave threats facing all Australians from contagious diseases, compromised quarantine protection and cross-border criminal activity.

Desperate villagers make canoe trips across the short stretch of water to Saibai, Boigu and other Australian island outposts for help. Immigration Department figures show that movements of people across the Torres Strait border separating Australia from PNG have doubled over six years to almost 40,000 in 2000-01"Greg Roberts Fairfax Press

Navy;FAC,s are being abandoned by the world's navies..

Fast Attack missile craft are in the surface forces in the navies of Norway, Denmark, Greece, Turkey, Israel, Egypt, Iran, Bangladesh, Pakistan, South Korea, Taiwan. former Warsaw Pact countries, as well as in over 40 countries of Asia, Africa and South America. In peace time, these ships are used for patrol missions and sometimes called fast patrol missile craft....China also has nearly 900 (gun, missile, or torpedo) in it's navy and more under construction.

Taiwan's has 48 HAI OU fast attack craft armed with Hsing Feng anti-ship missiles These to be operated in close coordination with shore defense batteries, providing time for the Taiwanese Army get into position to throw off the Communist invaders.

"Fast Patrol Boats. The modern fast patrol boat (or patrol craft, missile boat, fast attack craft, or whatever other name might be used) is among the weapon platforms least understood by the blue-water navies. Even today it is quite common to meet naval officers who still believe that these vessels are similar to the motor torpedo boats (MTBs) of World War II. Nothing could be further from the truth.

The fast patrol boat (FPB) of today is a very capable unit. Most of them are built specifically for surface warfare, but variants are also capable of anti-submarine warfare and mine warfare. The modern FPB is armed with exactly the same types of weapons as are carried by frigates and destroyers; therefore it has fundamentally the same destructive power as these much larger ships. FPBs also have sophisticated sensors, comprising radars, low-light-level television, infrared, electronic support measures (ESM), laser systems, etc. They have modern data links and communication systems. The FPB is, of course, fast, and the newest types have stealth features.

The FPB of today and of the future is and will be a versatile and economical platform capable of performing many different tasks, including patrolling in peacetime, minelaying, combat, and in some cases even mine countermeasure operations".....(condensed)

Cmdr. Tim Sloth Joergensen, Denmark

Navy;....the Iraqi Lynx attack sounded the death knell for FAC,s

The Iraqi surface threat consisted of nine aging Osa I/II Patrol boats armed with the SSN-2A/B (STYX) missile; the missile has a range 25 nm. These boats were poorly maintained, and the number of mission-capable units was unknown at the outset of the Gulf War. Iraqi Osa's did not train for any type of tactical scenario and had not fired a styx missile since the early 1980's. Their ability to close and successfully engage US warships was suspect. Even if Iraq had acquired the more advanced Styx, the navy had never practiced

29th January: A flotilla of 17 landing craft, part of an attempted Iraqi amphibious assault on the town of Khafji, is spotted. Flights from Brazen and Gloucester attack and sink one vessel while Lynx 335 from Cardiff sinks another. The remainder are damaged, destroyed or dispersed by American carrier based aircraft and Royal Navy Sea King helicopters.

This is hardly a ringing edorsement for the Lynx helo over FAC,s or a reason for the world's navies to cancell their FAC,s in fact the opposite seems to be true as per above.It seems that the worlds navies would have had more reason to cancelled their cruisers and destroyers after Guadalcanal or the Brits after their ships were sunk and damaged in the Faulklands. The Argentines only had 6 Exocets. Imagine if they would have had a dozen.And during the Gulf war, almost half of all US planes were hunting for those Exocet missiles. The USN would not move it's ships in close until they were found.

On the other hand we have the frigates, described by the USN as "a single mission ship, they lack the multi-mission capability necessary for modern surface combatants faced with multiple, high-technology threats.and there are no more plans to build them in the Navy's five-year shipbuilding plan"

Navy. The Irqui FAC blew up. There is no denying that yes, patrol boats can be hit and that they would surely lose the crew, but they have to be hit first. And that particular Iraqi craft was bigger and much slower than the PTF,s and did it really have any anti-missile defence?

Frigates are big fat targets, not nearly as fast or nimble with a much greater radar signature . The PTF,s have an extremely low signature, can manoeuvre in a flash presenting a very small target and with their speed, use of chaff and flares etc. a very tough target. As mines are cheap and not very hi-tech they are in great favour with third world forces. If a PTF was hit by a mine or missile a crew of say 14 would be lost. If a frigate was hit carrying a crew of 160 plus, there would possibly be a much greater loss of life especially if it blasted the magazine. Also bear in mind that missiles are constantly getting smaller with more punch and range and that would definitely favour the PTF,s.

Navy A5" gun from the frigate could even sink the PTF

This gun has a range of about 13 n.miles. Why would the PTF let the frigate get so close when the PTF is much faster and would be armed with ASM,s with a much longer range than the 5"? Also in combat situations the PTF,s usually travel in pairs or more, making it highly unlikely for this close encounter to even take place.

Far seeing naval men have long predicted that the most terrible danger threatening the ironclads in any future naval warfare will be when they are assaulted on several sides at once by a series of agile gunboats, difficult to hit.....Geoffrey Till

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THE COSTS

The obstacles to any simplification may seem insurmountable, and the reasons for more complexity are many and powerful. But if we permit this Frankenstein of complexity to continue to work at its current plodding, insidious rate, it will slowly overwhelm us to impotency"..... -E. E. Heinemann, Famed Designer of the B-26 Invader, A-1 SkyRaider and A-4 SkyHawk, Douglas Aircraft Company

The boats.

The boats are inexpensive weapons platforms (with hi-tech weapons systems) that could be built from fiberglass/mahogany or if money was not a problem, exotics such as PVC core with a carbon fiber/vinyl laminate. As for seakeeping. There is a vast difference in the hulls of 40 years ago and those of today. Even the WWII PT boats operated in about the worst place on the planet, the Aleutians. Norway and Chile also operate in very rough seas. But then again this would not be the PTF,s normal day job.

The bases and airstrips.

The majority of the bases would be KISS bases with simple low cost Quonsett style huts. There is no need to build expensive facilities with large docks and large buildings to store vast quantities of supplies and munitions .

A supply ship would routinely supply the bases and in any likelyhood of a stepped up alert they could be supplied by C-130 or DHC-4 Caribou which were designed to operate from/to rough dirt strips and would only be used if needed in emergency situations.

As for the cost of land. These bases are in our far north where the land is mostly owned by the federal or state government. The rest by the huge cattle stations nearly the size of Tasmania and where it takes about 10 acres to feed a cow for the day. It is not prime residential real estate and as it will only be a base for 3 boats. 100 acres plus the dirt strip will do it. The land could be bought for a few thousand dollars or leased.

Navy. "A Huge amount of missiles would be needed"

The boats will probably be used 99.9% of the time as patrol boats, They will not have to carry any missiles until needed. No major force is going to approach our region without us knowing well in advance If boats in areas under treat needed missiles they can be flown in from the nearest navy munitions depot.

Navy. "For this money I could buy another four Collins class submarines."

Why would you want to? This sub has been troubled since day one and still is. It is without doubt the biggest waste of taxpayers money in the whole history of this country.

We need to put things in perspective. The torpedo project alone was initially expected to cost \$210 million to \$260 million in its entirety, but the modifications required for the submarines means additional spending of at least \$200 million will be required to purchase a full war stock of the weapons and the sub may very well be adversely affected... stability etc. etc. etc. Add this to the aprox. 1 billion dollars each sub will have cost, total \$6 billion and counting ? (I have lost track.) not to mention the further costly maintenace etc. and what have we got? A ship, that can not contribute in any worthwhile way to the problems on our front door from these island states that we will be facing as mentioned above. Hardly a cost effective solution but it seems par for the course from our "expert defence planners".

Subs are absolutely the last thing we need. Aside from the PTFs it would make a lot more sense to put those billions into the army for gunships, more SAS troops and buy the equipment the army had to borrow from the US on departure to East Timor, not to mention more aircraft for the RAAF.

"The Collins class submarine

represents the state of the art in conventional attack submarine capabilities. Due to its slow transit time and limited payload, it is an inferior sea control asset to tanker supported tactical jets. The submarine can however play a vital role in supporting air strikes, by driving shipping into kill zones, mopping up stragglers, carrying out Bomb Damage Assessment and by providing Combat Search and Rescue if needed. (whoa! a billion dollars for that?)

Costs have and continue to favour air power across all three categories.

A Collins class submarine at \$500M (double that now!) plus apiece is worth almost the cost of a squadron of state of the art tactical jets, new. Losing a single submarine is a similar loss to that of a whole squadron of tactical fighters, with a greater loss of life. In terms of bang for buck, aircraft are therefore much better value as a sea control asset.".....

**SEA CONTROL: Submarines or Air Power ? by John Steinhoff (C) 1996
(C)1996, Australian Aviation(condensed..km)**

Hardly worth anything like those many billions of dollars. So here we have the battle proven PTF,s that are made to order for all the above situations not to mention their day job of protecting our northern littorals from illegal immigrants and smugglers etc. versus in particular a sub. that really can't do that much and may still turn out to be a turkey.

If those "defence planners" pushing for two more Collins class subs. can look me in the eye and tell me that these two subs. (with the \$2 billion cost) would be more advantageous for our country's regional defence than this proposed "Littoral Defence" then I respectfully suggest that what we really need are new "defence planners".

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"For the U.S. Navy, the end of the Cold War signaled a major shift in strategy. The likelihood of engaging an open-ocean, "big war" force such as the former Soviet Fleet has receded as the focus of operations, replaced by littoral warfare and the requirement to respond to a variety of low-intensity regional conflicts and crises. "...From the Sea" and "Forward ...from the Sea." the two post-Cold War naval strategy documents, articulate the need for ready U.S. naval forces in the littorals of the world. By Rear Admiral Rodney P. Rempt, U.S. Navy.

Mine Countermeasures is the key to success in littoral warfare.

Navy and Marine Corps commitment to full support and timely funding of mine countermeasures programs and systems is required. Mine countermeasures investments especially in the areas of mine surveillance, reconnaissance, and clearance of very shallow, shallow, and beach zones

(... read PTF,s) ...are as important as Command, Control, Communications, Computers, and Intelligence capabilities, and are complementary in the areas of surveillance and reconnaissance. Without an ability to conduct mine surveillance and clear at the time and place of our choosing, maneuver warfare is in jeopardy. Mine countermeasures affects peacekeeping and presence operations as well as combat operations.

Flexible and sustainable logistics is key to supporting our expeditionary forces.

. While our Navy is hell-bent on buying more big surface combatants and subs. Does it not make more sense for the RAN to support and complement the USN with their shift from blue-water operations to littoral operations, with something they don't have. A large fleet of small specialised ships (teamed with a quick strike force of SAS and Blackhawks) that are ideal for amphibious operations including

- *Troop landings. These PTF,s can run right up to the beach.
- * Action raids
- *Shore bombardment,
- *Pathfinders,
- *Shallow water mine recon and clearance,
- *Landing craft escorts

*Ability to patrol near -shore operational areas.

*The smaller crew size and the ability to maintain a high state of readiness with less complex machinery plus the speed of the PTFs means they can sprint to targets of interest.

It would seem that the RAAF thinks pretty much about the navy's big ships as the navy does re the PTF,s. And just as they will argue that big ships have a place in our country's defence, I will argue that even more so do the PTF,s, and they can do a hell of a lot more in our region and cost a hell of a lot less money.

Even without airpower, with missiles getting smarter (those talking missiles again) more powerful and with a longer range. The days of all naval combatants including diesel subs, (even US carriers) are numbered.

On the other hand unlike large naval combatants designed to fight the big blue water battles against sophisticated countries with hi-tech weapons. The PTF,s battles will be against those who will not have these hi-tech weapons making an even stronger case for their addition to our navy.

I know that these flexible, multi-task vessels are the right ones for what is needed in our littorals, and as I see events unfold in our northern neighbours real estate it just makes me even more convinced that we need them as quick as we can get them. Maybe if the navy looked at their potential from the viewpoint of close in regional conflict and not open ocean engagement they may see their true worth.

In this proposal I have prefaced subject amounts with "say" because nothing is cast in stone and I welcome constructive criticism and input .

Ken Murray

I first wrote this proposal in 1998. Events since this proposal was written include East Timor, Fiji,

Guadalcanal, the tourist bar bombings in Bali and the knowlege that extremist terrorist groups intend to create an Islamic "Superstate" consisting of Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore to parts of the Philippines, Thailand and Myanmar. This would mean Australia would be only approx. 100 .n.miles from this nearest "Superstate" territory.

As of now the Australian public fed by ongoing newspaper articles has lost confidence in our current border protection plan . A dozen replacement patrol boats to patrol the massive area of our maritime approaches and especially our northern littorals is not going to do much to inspire new confidence.

The new patrol boats should patrol the deeper water approaches and the PTF,s the northern littorals.

With 4DW in now in our region it is imperative that our borders be made as secure as possible as while terrorists do use airplanes and passports, chemical and bio agents prone to detection can be routed so easily through our northern coastline especially from Papua New

Guinea making it essential that we have bases for constant close in patrols of every island, river and bay along our northern shores.

KM