



Submission No 29

Inquiry into Australia's Maritime Strategy

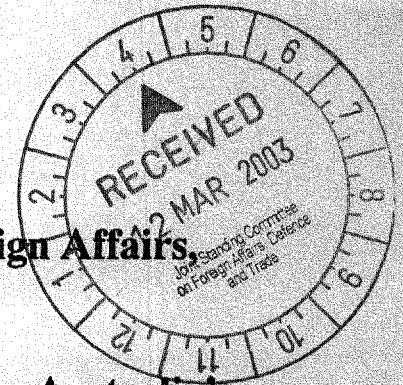
Organisation: Department of Defence

Contact Person:

Address: Russell Offices
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Defence Submission

To the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade



Inquiry into the Role of Maritime Strategy in Australia's Defence Policy

INTRODUCTION

This submission by the Chief of the Defence Force is to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Defence Sub-Committee Inquiry into the role of Maritime Strategy in Australia's Defence Policy.

This submission explains Australia's broader military strategy and how the ADF might be employed in various circumstances. The structure of the strategy is designed to be enduring, but assessments within the structure will evolve to meet changing strategic circumstances. In particular, the implementation of the strategy and the employment of our military capabilities to deal with emerging circumstances may change rapidly – sometimes very substantially – while the underlying principles remain valid.

The starting point of Australia's military strategy is the 2000 Defence White Paper, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*. The White Paper identified strategic tasks for the ADF:

- defending Australia
- contributing to the security of our immediate neighbourhood
- supporting wider interests
- peacetime national tasks.

The first of these reflects the Government's primary commitment to ensuring the defence of Australia and its direct approaches. In strict terms, the concept of maritime strategy as set out in the 2000 Defence White Paper applies only to the first of these tasks. In reality, however, each of the other tasks also has a strong maritime dimension. Defence understands that this Inquiry is looking at maritime strategy in its broadest sense, and for that reason this submission deals with maritime aspects of each of the ADF strategic tasks set out in the White Paper.

The White Paper must also be read subject to the recently released document *Australia's National Security: A Defence Update 2003*. The Defence Update recognises and sets out our responses to the emergence of new and more immediate threats from terrorism and increased concerns about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. It is noteworthy that both Australia's contribution to the war against terrorism and the predeployment of forces to the Middle East for possible operations against Iraq – consistent with the ADF's role in supporting Australia's wider interests – have strong maritime elements.

The Defence Update also addresses our continuing concerns about developments in our immediate region and noted that there may be increased calls on the ADF for operations in Australia's immediate neighbourhood. Again any such operations would have a strong maritime element.

The maritime emphasis of our strategy is highlighted by the fundamental nature of these tasks to successful outcomes in both conflict and in peace. In the latter context the ADF's current border protection operations are significant to our national well-being and security.

We are ensuring that the ADF maintains the range of capabilities needed to cover all these tasks. Projects include the acquisition of Airborne Early Warning and Control (AEW&C) aircraft, new air defence aircraft, a capable air warfare destroyer, and new patrol boats. These capabilities will add significantly to the ADF's ability to perform its tasks effectively in time of peace and conflict.

KEY STRATEGIC DRIVERS

Australia's military strategy is influenced by our strategic environment, key alliance relationships and the ADF's approach to military operations.

Australia has a large landmass, a substantial natural resource base and vast ocean surrounds. Its people, industries and infrastructure are concentrated on the coast, in our eastern, south-eastern and south-western fringes. Australia's direct approaches are dominated by the archipelago to our north, a maritime-littoral environment. The archipelago extends from New Caledonia in the east to Sumatra in the west.

Australia's Strategic Environment

- Australia's sovereign rights are substantial, including a 200nm Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ), and a continental shelf, which can extend out to some 350nm from the coast.
- Our island territories and their EEZ extend from Cocos and Christmas islands in the Indian Ocean, to Lord Howe and Norfolk island in the Pacific Ocean, through to Heard, Macdonald and Macquarie islands and the Australian Antarctic Territory in the Southern Ocean.

Australia is heavily reliant on the maritime environment for its national survival and economic well being.

- Australia is highly dependent on international trade, the majority of which is carried by sea.
- All of Australia's international trade passes through our maritime approaches, most passing through the strategic choke points of Southeast Asia (e.g. Malacca, Singapore, Sunda, Lombok, and Sumba straits).
- The most important trade routes for Australia are those with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, where the overwhelming bulk of our international trade occurs.
- Much of northern Australia, Tasmania and the offshore territories are heavily reliant on coastal shipping for their existence.
- Most of Australia's interstate bulk trade is carried by coastal shipping.

- Australia's offshore reserves of oil and gas are concentrated in the Gippsland, Carnarvon and Bonaparte basins, and the Timor Gap.

While our geo-strategic circumstance makes it difficult to attack Australia using conventional military means, there is also a great deal to defend. The ADF would be thinly stretched if it were required to conduct operations over wide areas of the country, our island territories, EEZ and all our maritime approaches. Our geography offers us relatively less protection against international terrorism, or states armed with weapons of mass destruction and long range ballistic missiles.

A key feature of Australia's strategic situation is the archipelago to our north, a littoral environment within which the domains of air, sea and land merge. The littoral is those areas of land subject to influence by military units operating at or from the sea, and those areas at sea subject to influences by forces operating on or from the land. The littoral is a complex environment demanding effective joint operations.

The Asia-Pacific's and Australia's strategic geography are similar.

- Both are dominated by the maritime environment, with extensive littoral areas.
- Main centres of population, industrial and defence infrastructure are located on or close to the coast.
- Economic well being is highly dependent upon trade, the vast bulk of which is carried by sea.
- The Indonesian Archipelago sits astride the vast majority of Asia-Pacific and Australian seaborne trade - some 50% of the world's shipping transits the Indonesian archipelago.
- The strategic fuels from the Persian Gulf which support the Asia Pacific's industries transit strategically important choke points of South East Asia, as do other strategic commodities such as food and raw materials.

Australia's Alliances and other Key Relationships.

Our alliance with the US, involvement in the Five Power Defence Arrangements and our commitment to the UN are significant in our ability to influence and to give effect to both our regional and global interests.

The US adoption of a more proactive approach in dealing with terrorism and weapons of mass destruction proliferation has brought into focus the importance of these aspects of Australia's wider security interests. Australia is adopting a positive and supportive role to US initiatives as a key component of our support to our key alliance relationship. Consequently, Australia is adopting a more active and widespread role in these campaigns than was evident at the time of *Defence 2000*.

Defence's Approach to Operations

Warfighting continues to be the central focus of ADF planning. However, the increasing complexity and diverse range of operations pose additional challenges. Major inter state conflict, though less likely than in the past, cannot be discounted. While a force prepared for warfighting is able to step down to respond to lower level operations, the reverse is not the case. Lower level operations also have the potential

to escalate without notice. ADF elements deployed for low level operations should have sufficient capability and capacity to meet unplanned escalation, should it occur.

The ADF will continue to place an emphasis on selective high technology systems, knowledge superiority and superior training to provide a capability edge over an adversary. Our small population and resource base mean we cannot afford to become engaged in a protracted campaign of attrition.

Armed conflict is becoming more complex. We are seeing conflict evolve from the form it took during much of the 20th Century.

- Contemporary armed struggles are not always between states with clear political or military objectives. Often, there are internal, or 'intra-state' conflicts comprising uprisings, rebellion, and terrorism underpinned by historical grievances, religious differences, factional and territorial disputes, resource competition, and economic friction.
- Conflict may involve paramilitary forces, militias, or terrorists, rather than professional defence forces.

These intra-state disputes have reinforced demands on armed forces for border protection, humanitarian relief, evacuations, peacekeeping and peace enforcement operations.

The Defence Update makes clear that an increasingly uncertain strategic environment means that our emphasis must be on flexibility and adaptability.

- We are seeking to extend the flexibility of all three Services to ensure they can contribute more decisively to the overall campaign. For example, naval capability is not just relevant to the naval component of a campaign. It is capable of contributing to the land as well as the aerospace components of an overall campaign, especially in strike, air defence, and fire support for land force operations.
- We are seeking greater flexibility, mobility and firepower for our land forces which will allow them to contribute to a broader spectrum of Government directed tasks, especially those beyond Australia's shores.
- We are seeking to improve ADF interoperability with US forces, and utilise emerging networking concepts.

By providing greater flexibility, versatility and adaptability within specific areas of capability, preparedness and logistic support we are developing a force which is better able to respond effectively to a range of tasks.

AUSTRALIA'S MILITARY STRATEGY

Defence advances national security through contributions that *shape* the strategic environment and, when our strategic situation deteriorates, *respond* throughout the spectrum of conflict to achieve Government's military objectives. Within this continuum of shaping and responding, Defence also contributes to the *deterrence* of outbreaks of conflict or the further escalation of crises.

The strategy framework in which Defence capability development, activities and operations will be undertaken or committed, is identified as *Shape, Deter and Respond*.

DEFENDING AUSTRALIA

The Defence Update concludes that the threat of direct conventional military attack on Australia has continued to decline since 2000. However, it also notes that certainty and predictability have decreased and that the strategic advantage offered by our geography does not protect Australia against rogue states with WMD and long range missiles, or from terrorism. Defence planning takes account of a range of potential threats, including:

- **Minor attacks:** Minor attacks are assessed as the most credible threat and could take the form of raids, harassment of trade, terrorist action, or attacks on our information systems. With a terrorist campaign within Australia much of the burden of responding would fall on state and federal law enforcement agencies; the ADF's role would be relatively less central, though nonetheless vital.
- **Major attack:** For major attack, three circumstances are postulated: the use of weapons of mass destruction by nations or terrorist groups; attacks on Australia's population or infrastructure; and the seizure of parts of Australia's territory. Major attacks might also include non-conventional threats. In a major attack on Australia, the ADF would play a central role in projecting force to exercise strategic control of our approaches.
- **Full-scale invasion:** Full-scale invasion is assessed to be highly unlikely in the short to medium term. It is expected that there would be sufficient warning to enable the ADF to expand to deal with the circumstance.

Making distinctions about the level and nature of threat that might be projected against Australia and its interests enables Defence planning to:

- evaluate various force options and to assess how they might perform in a range of circumstances;
- determine the effectiveness and versatility of individual capabilities;
- determine whether certain capabilities are fundamental to our overall campaign or not; and
- assess the importance and priority of individual capabilities.

ADF operations against a conventional military threat to Australia will generally be similar across the types of situations envisaged. The same type of general operation would be undertaken (e.g. surveillance, forward patrol and response), however, variation will occur in terms of:

- geographic location,
- intensity of conflict,
- concurrency of operations,
- duration, and
- nature of threat.

Strategic Control of Australia's Maritime Approaches

A key feature of Australia's Military Strategy in defending Australia is to achieve strategic control of Australia's maritime approaches.

The concept of strategic control involves:

- A pro-active strategy to maximise our freedom of manoeuvre in the air and sea approaches while denying freedom of action to a potential adversary.
- The ability to assert our will over an adversary in time and space, and deny an adversary's ability to position for, or conduct offensive operations against Australia and its interests.
- The projection of power into the region to support our national interests.

The ADF would obtain knowledge of an adversary through our intelligence and surveillance activities. This data, complemented by our military geospatial information, would provide us with the knowledge to attack hostile forces, including their forward operating bases and, if necessary, the adversary's national support base.

The ADF would aim to seize the initiative and dictate the pace, location and intensity of all operations. The ADF would conduct joint maritime operations to assert control over Australia's approaches beyond our sovereign territory.

Intelligence

The provision of accurate and timely intelligence and Military Geospatial Information (MGI) are vital enablers of ADF combat planning and operations. When provided in a timely and comprehensive form they result in enhanced environmental awareness and battlespace knowledge. This data is critical to ADF operations and our ability to respond quickly and effectively to a broad range of operational tasks, as well as being able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances and emerging threats. Intelligence and MGI support for ADF operations would provide timely data on:

- assessments of adversary military capability;
- assessments of adversary intentions;
- assessments of adversary activities and operations;
- environmental assessments of ADF and potential adversary areas of operations, and
- actual and forecast weather and oceanographic information.

The Defence Intelligence Organisation and other intelligence organisations, including those at Headquarters Australian Theatre, and the single Service MGI organisations are fundamental to the collection, analysis, compilation and timely dissemination of this data.

Command and Control

The ADF manages its contribution to national security through three levels of command: strategic, operational and tactical.

- The strategic level is responsible for the military aspects of planning and direction of conflict.
- The operational level is concerned with planning and conducting campaigns to attain military strategic objectives within a theatre of operations.
- At the tactical level, commanders plan and conduct battles and engagements to support operational level campaign objectives. Tactical activities focus on integrating and applying combat power to defeat the adversary at a particular time and place, and to exploit their success.

Effective command, control, communications and computer systems are fundamental to the timely provision of intelligence, surveillance and other products to the various levels of command.

- It is this overall system which facilitates the direction and management of our operations to achieve strategic control.
- Operational performance is highly dependent on information management, a clear picture of what is occurring and a continual awareness of the commander's intent.
- Within the ADF the volume of information that can be provided and shared is managed by networked systems to keep all levels of command informed.
- This overall system includes communication and liaison links with our allies and other Commonwealth and State authorities.

Surveillance and Reconnaissance

Surveillance and reconnaissance of Australia's approaches underpins timely and resource efficient operations. It would be undertaken on two broad levels:

- continual broad area surveillance to complement intelligence, discern activity patterns and provide early warning of hostile activities; and
- surveillance or reconnaissance of particular areas to permit rapid identification and interception of adversary force projection initiatives.

Our broad area operations could extend from the northern approaches of the archipelago to the Southern Ocean. Other surveillance activity would be more specifically focused. Broad area surveillance of our approaches would be provided by strategic surveillance assets. Surveillance and reconnaissance of specific areas would be undertaken by surveillance aircraft, complemented by ship-borne helicopters to provide additional coverage and to respond to incursions.

Strike

The ability to erode an adversary's motivation and to attack their capacity to mount and sustain operations is fundamental to the ADF's ability to defeat attacks against Australia and its approaches. Australia's strike operations would be employed to:

- force a cessation of conflict;
- allow Australia to seize the initiative;
- increase the cost of conflict to an adversary;
- complicate an adversary's conflict management and planning;
- reduce an adversary's will to persist in conflict; and
- reduce an adversary's means of sustaining conflict.

ADF strike operations could be aimed at:

- diverting military effort;
- destroying or degrading capabilities to sustain military operations against Australia; and
- defeating force projection capability through the destruction of force projection assets, forward operating bases, forces on route and interdicting lines of communication.

The ADF's primary strike assets are strike and fighter aircraft. Submarines and special forces also possess this capability. Frigates and embarked helicopters and maritime patrol aircraft have an ability to strike maritime targets. Conventional land forces also perform land strike.

Forward Patrol and Response

Forward patrol and response is essential for intercepting hostile forces in the sea and air approaches, thereby providing the ADF with the ability to: protect offshore territory and interests; influence the type, level and location of hostilities; and keep hostile forces away from the Australian mainland. Denying an adversary operational freedom near Australian territory will be a major restraint on hostilities, and will make the defence of Australia more manageable.

The objectives of forward patrol and response operations would be to:

- counter adversary information gathering activities in Australia's maritime environment;
- intercept and inspect shipping in defined areas within the maritime approaches, and if necessary escort that shipping to another location;
- prevent adversary's land, sea and air forces from entering defined areas within our maritime approaches, and if necessary defeat that adversary;
- prevent, and if necessary defeat adversary harassment in Australia's maritime environment;
- prevent and if necessary defeat adversary interdiction and strike operations in our maritime approaches; and
- prevent the insertion, extraction and resupply of adversary forces through the maritime approaches onto Australian territory.

In the vast majority of situations the main focus of ADF patrol and response operations would be in the north and would be commensurate with the assessed level of threat.

- In the event of full scale invasion or major attack, we could employ submarines to patrol the more distant areas such as the major archipelagic straits.
- More proximate approach routes would be patrolled by surveillance aircraft and frigates, with strike, fighter and maritime patrol aircraft, and frigates forming the response elements.

Air defence of our forces operating on the Australian mainland, offshore territories or those in the maritime environment would be provided by an integrated system comprising air surveillance assets, air defence aircraft, frigates and land based air defence systems. Air defence aircraft would be employed in conjunction with in-flight refuelling assets.

ADF operations to counter adversary submarine activities, aside from striking at their operating bases, would be focussed on the approaches to submarine bases and major passages likely to be used by hostile forces to approach Australia.

- Forward ASW operations would be undertaken by submarines, in adversary choke points and the approaches to his operating bases.
- To counter submarines that reach their patrol area, we would employ maritime patrol aircraft, frigates with ASW helicopters to cover our major port approaches and choke points.

In countering an adversary's initiatives using surface shipping, we would seek to engage his ships as far from our shores as possible.

- Our preferred means of achieving this would be by utilising the ADF's maritime strike assets, especially strike, air defence and maritime patrol aircraft, submarines and frigates.
- As with ASW our approach would be layered: that is, our forces would be employed well forward and to cover the approaches to our major choke points and port infrastructure.

Mine countermeasures forces would be employed in route surveillance operations to determine whether mining had occurred and to ensure the safe passage, through port approaches and choke points, of ships employed in exerting strategic control.

Offensive Manoeuvre

Offensive manoeuvre comprises a range of operations aimed at defeating an adversary's land, sea and air forces in the theatre of operations. This requires the ability to detect, isolate and defeat the adversary force. Operations may need to be sustained over an extended period and could include land and maritime strike as well as amphibious and airborne operations.

Amphibious and/or airborne operations would seek to lodge our forces in areas where little or no opposition would be encountered. The protection of our forces would extend beyond direct escort during the transport phase, to include the protection of forces from adversary attack during the landing and consolidation phases, when the transport force and the units being landed are at their most vulnerable. Protection for the operation must be continuous and be able to counter any threat from the air, surface, land or sub-surface, at immediate notice. Assigned maritime forces will also contribute to air defence and offensive fire support for the land forces ashore.

Because of the maritime-littoral nature of Australia's approaches, ADF operations in defending Australia are likely to place a heavy reliance on amphibious and strategic air, and sea transport capabilities to deploy and sustain forces.

Offensive manoeuvre operations would be supported by the ADF's amphibious and airlift capability. If required ADF assets could be significantly supplemented by chartered sealift and airlift, as occurred during the East Timor operation.

Ship to shore movement, if not through an established port, would be achieved typically via Army and Navy helicopters and landing craft.

Direct escort of the amphibious force would be provided by frigates and Air Force aircraft as appropriate. Our strategic surveillance assets would provide vital support to these operations.

- Mine countermeasures forces, especially clearance divers could play an important role in ensuring the landing area and its approaches were clear of mines and other underwater obstacles.
- Special forces could be employed to undertake surveillance, reconnaissance or diversionary operations and to assess the suitability of the proposed landing area and the potential level of adversary threat.
- Maritime MGI forces may undertake rapid environmental assessment using aircraft based or surface ship based acoustic systems to provide environmental information to assist in planning approach routes and landing areas, and evaluating environmental and other risks.

Protective and Security Operations

Securing strategic control has both offensive and defensive components. The preceding discussion of surveillance and reconnaissance, forward patrol and response, strike and offensive manoeuvre, comprise the offensive elements. To enable these operations to be undertaken, defensive operations to protect ADF operating bases and strategically important infrastructure, assets and activities are necessary.

Land forces are envisaged to take the lead in the following protective and security operations tasks:

- surveillance of the landward component of the littoral where our own forces are deployed;
- contributing to the defeat of military incursions onto Australian territory;
- protection of ADF operating bases; and
- protection of population centres, industry and key infrastructure.

Maritime forces are envisaged to take the lead in protecting maritime interests, which include: offshore territories, marine resources, shipping and the seaward approaches to ports.

Offshore Resources. Australia's offshore oil and gas industry is important to our national defence effort and our economic well being.

- In a period of tension or minor attack, a protective presence may be necessary in the vicinity of our oil and gas extraction facilities, depending upon their relevance and proximity to the dispute. As circumstances deteriorated we may need to consider the provision of direct protective measures.

While Australian fisheries are increasing in value, both in domestic and export terms, it is unlikely, other than in peacetime, periods of tension, or minor attack, that ADF resources would be specifically dedicated to their protection.

Shipping. Shipping is vital to Australia's economy. ADF operations in the northern Australian littoral will be heavily dependent upon support provided by both defence and commercial shipping resources.

- The employment of ADF maritime assets in the protection of shipping would be quite selective. Our effort would likely be devoted to the protection of strategically important cargoes.

The primary ADF elements employed in direct escort of shipping would be frigates.

- Other ADF elements would complement these ships, including Air Force aircraft for integrated air defence operations, for mid and deep field support against submarine and surface threats, and for strike against surface ships.
- Mine countermeasures forces would also be employed to ensure the safe passage of shipping through or around potentially mined areas.
- Clearance diving forces could be employed in protection of shipping from underwater attack whilst in port.
- Maritime MGI forces could be employed in data gathering to assist in evaluating risk on certain shipping routes and in defining areas where ship sensor performance is enhanced, or degraded.
- Land forces would be employed in the protection of wharves, cargo handling and storage facilities and associated shore based port infrastructure, and patrol and response forces in choke points.

CONTRIBUTING TO THE SECURITY OF THE IMMEDIATE NEIGHBOURHOOD

Our immediate neighbourhood includes the countries of Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, and the island states of the South West Pacific. The Defence Update notes that these countries continue to face major economic, political, governance and social challenges, and that some of them have made little progress since 2000.

By contributing to the security of the immediate neighbourhood we reduce the risk of a direct military threat emerging to Australia, or, if it were to emerge, we would be better positioned to meet it well forward in the approaches to the archipelago. Our strategy is implemented through concepts of *strategic influence and protection*. Current ADF operations in East Timor and Bougainville fall into this category.

In the unlikely event of unprovoked, armed aggression against any of our immediate neighbours, Australia would want to be in a position, if asked, to help our neighbours defend themselves.

Australia may also be invited to help its neighbours in situations where their stability was challenged. The flow-on effects of instability and failed states foster non-military threats like transnational crime and terrorism.

These situations could arise at short notice, and in each case there would be a strong maritime element to our strategy. The ADF must pay particular attention to readiness and sustainability of elements likely to be employed in such situations. ADF stockholding levels of equipment and ammunition will need to take account of the requirements for surge in consumption driven by ADF operations in the immediate neighbourhood.

Resisting or Defeating Aggression

Were a significant threat to emerge to one of our neighbours, it is likely that the Government would view such a circumstance with concern. The Government might consider the commitment of ADF elements if asked.

The nature and contribution of the ADF could vary significantly and be influenced by whether the contingency involved a nation in the eastern or western reaches of the archipelago.

- In the east, with the possible exception of French Polynesia and New Caledonia, the ADF would likely be the major military force in any coalition and hence would play a very significant role in deterring or defeating an adversary's initiatives.
- In the west, where there are large military forces, the ADF's role might be less dominant.
- Our capability edge in important areas of command and control, strike, maritime warfare and highly skilled land forces could ensure a major role in achieving an outcome in line with our national interests.
- The ADF's contribution could take several forms, ranging from non-warfighting options to direct combat assistance and strike/offensive manoeuvre operations.
- Some situations may arise with little warning, so selected forces will need to be at high states of readiness - the higher inherent mobility of air, naval, special forces and selected land force assets means that they may be selected for timeliness, appropriateness and ease of response.
- Military airlift and sea-lift assets would be needed to deploy and sustain forces, as well as to evacuate civilian personnel, if required.

Before the commencement of direct offensive operations by an adversary, Australia might seek to demonstrate commitment and to contribute directly to coalition efforts to deter, and if necessary, to defeat an adversary.

- Maritime forces, especially FFG, FFH, P-3, F/A-18 and F-111 aircraft, could be deployed to establish a maritime presence and in support of precautionary deployments of other ADF elements. These forces would be supported by ADF strategic surveillance assets.
- These deployments would be aimed at deterring an adversary and signifying Australian resolve to support the threatened nation.

In situations where an adversary has already militarily engaged the threatened nation, on direction of the government of Australia we could seek to contribute to the successful defeat of the adversary. Our aim would be to make a decisive contribution to operations to ensure that our strategic interests were sustained and protected. We would also seek to ensure that the situation did not evolve into a direct threat to Australia.

The complex terrain and environment of the archipelago to our north mean that the considerations that need to be taken into account during the force development process include:

- the littoral nature of the neighbourhood environment;
- the complex terrain and land clutter;
- the high shipping and aircraft density in the western archipelago;
- the confined shallow tropical waters;
- the complex land and sea lines of communication;
- the limited infrastructure to support military operations; and
- incomplete geospatial information.

Australia's contribution might be focussed on strengthening coalition defensive capability, although, selective offensive options could be contemplated.

Australia cooperates with Southeast Asian nations and major external powers, such as the United States and Japan, to preserve stability and cooperation in Southeast Asia. The composition and nature of an ADF contribution to future coalition operations in the region would vary according to the nature of the operation.

The range of operations ADF elements could be involved in is extensive, from the protection of Australian nationals and designated foreigners, through provision of non-combat assets, such as logistic and technical support, to participation in high intensity combat operations.

Forces employed in higher intensity operations would typically be drawn from: elements of the strike, special forces, tactical fighter, maritime patrol and response, AEW&C (when available), air-to-air refuellers, submarine, surface combatant, mine warfare, afloat support, and strategic airlift and sea-lift forces. The strategic surveillance, strike, maritime patrol and surface combatant forces provide capabilities that are either not available within Southeast Asia, or exist at a lower capability level.

We would, depending upon the composition of the coalition, seek to provide intelligence and command and control elements of a combined headquarters. The ADF has shipborne facilities to provide operational level command and control, a facility that is generally not available, or well developed, in Southeast Asian regional forces.

Land forces could also be employed in coalition operations. Key functions of land force elements would be:

- contributing to the defeat of adversary military incursions;
- protection of forward operating bases;
- contributing to strike and offensive manoeuvre operations; and
- gathering of intelligence.

In all coalition operations, major considerations of compatibility and interoperability will exist. Our regular exercise program and frequent contact with Five Power Defence Arrangements partners mean that these issues are likely to be least complex were the coalition confined to them. Beyond this grouping more complex demands

would flow from operations with a combination of US and Southeast Asian nations.

Low Level Operations

In the event of instability or a natural disaster occurring within a neighbouring country, Australia may be invited by the host Government to assist in re-establishing law and order, evacuation of personnel, or disaster relief.

Australia has practical limits to its ability to influence and help in crises. Crisis situations can require very high levels of resources to manage and control. A recent example is the ADF's involvement in East Timor since 1999. Australia could not have undertaken to restore peace and security in East Timor under INTERFET except with the help of a large number of coalition partners and the cooperation of the Indonesian Government.

These situations are likely to involve primarily a land force presence, with its associated mobility, deployment, protection and support requirements. The extent of support will be influenced by the location of the operation.

- Operations in Pacific Island Countries could involve more extended lines of communication into areas with only limited infrastructure than would be the case for operations in the northern and western areas of the archipelago.
- The police and military forces in Indonesia have significantly better capacity to deal with a crisis than those forces in the Pacific Island Countries.
- Disturbances in the western and northern areas of the archipelago could be on a significantly larger scale and be more complex to manage.

Success in pacifying an unstable situation often depends on a demonstrated ability and willingness to use preponderant force swiftly in response to any violence, so forces need to have ample firepower to remain safe and credible.

- Such operations typically involve lightly armed adversaries, but there remains potential for escalation by intervention of well armed conventional forces.
- Capabilities to deter or, if need be, to respond to such escalation would provide insurance against unplanned escalation - this would often involve both land force capabilities and air and naval forces to protect force elements during deployment, lodgement and operations.
- ADF air and naval forces employed in support of restoring stability and order in a neighbouring country would comprise mainly airlift and sea-lift assets, to deploy and sustain land force elements. FFG and FFH could be employed to provide a protective presence or direct escort to sea-lift operations where a threat existed. In addition, FFG, FFH, patrol boats and P-3 aircraft could be employed in patrol and response operations to counter infiltration by adversary forces.

SUPPORTING WIDER INTERESTS

Two of the key trends identified in the Defence Update, the strategic reach and effect of terrorism and the threat of proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, are global issues with profound direct implications for Australia's security and that of our region. The Defence Update notes that, compared to 2000, the significance of the global strategic and security environment for Australia has become much more evident, and that ADF involvement in coalition operations further afield is somewhat

more likely than in the recent past. The Government's contribution of forces to the war against terrorism and its decision to forward deploy forces to the Middle East in relation to Iraq should be seen in this context. We have made clear that this support is not an alternative to defending Australia or contributing to regional security but fundamental to our ability to meet those other strategic tasks.

Therefore our strategy seeks to *promote stability and cooperation closer to home and support strategic stability and security more widely.*

Our alliance with the United States and our involvement in the Five Power Defence Arrangements with Singapore, Malaysia, New Zealand and the UK, as well as our commitment to the UN, are significant in our ability to influence and shape our wider interests.

Australia would want the ADF to be structured with sufficient flexibility to make selected niche capabilities available to international coalitions of forces to meet crises beyond our immediate neighbourhood, where our wider interests are engaged. Such coalitions might involve operations ranging from peacekeeping and disaster relief to relatively high intensity conflict. As the Defence Update notes, this calls for an increased emphasis on readiness and mobility, on interoperability, on the development and enhancement of important new capabilities and, where prudent, a reduced emphasis on capabilities of less importance.

Australia contributes to maintaining strategic stability in the wider Asia-Pacific region. Australia has significant strategic interests in North Asia, including extensive trade relations with Japan, South Korea and China. The potential for state on state conflict in this area is higher than in our immediate neighbourhood or Southeast Asia.

We support the central role the US plays in maintaining stability in the Asia-Pacific. We aim to avoid the emergence of a security environment dominated by powers whose strategic interests might conflict with Australia's. We seek to preserve a security environment in which the region's economic development can proceed unhindered by threats to trade and which preserves our access to our major trading partners.

Defeating Military Aggression Globally

Australia contributes to the efforts of the international community, especially the UN, to uphold global security. We also continue to support the US in the major role it plays in maintaining and strengthening the global security order.

Developments in the Middle East and Africa have potential to disrupt global security, especially in relation to the War on Terror and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Serious instability in South and Central Asia could have implications for the security of the Asia-Pacific and add to the complexity of the war on terror and spread of weapons of mass destruction.

Australia's contribution would be strongly influenced by the diverse geo-strategic environments that the ADF might be called upon to operate in. Operations would not be confined to conventional military operations. Our wider interests include ADF operations aimed at countering international terrorism and proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.

The ADF needs to retain capabilities that will enable it to interoperate effectively with the US on coalition operations. The scale and composition of an ADF contribution to operations outside of our immediate neighbourhood will be shaped by our national interests, and would usually be limited to the provision of specialised high value niche capabilities.

The range of operating environments likely to be encountered in supporting global security means that our planning and resources will not be able to foresee, or be able to provide for, every circumstance specifically within the existing force structure. Nor could such diverse capabilities be justified within our finite Defence resource base.

- Our forces may often need to be provided with supplementary equipment, or capabilities, if they are to operate in environments that differ significantly from those found in Australia and its immediate neighbourhood.
- These implications apply to both operations in time of conflict as well as during peacekeeping operations - in the latter circumstances the capability implications are likely to be less extensive.
- In many instances we will be able to provide rapid modification to our capabilities to better suit them for operations in support of our wider interests.

As found during ADF involvement in the 1990-91 war with Iraq and current participation in the War on Terror, operations supporting wider interests are making interoperability and compatibility most complex for the ADF. This flows from the wider range of forces we are operating with, as well as the more diverse range of environments being encountered.

PEACETIME NATIONAL TASKS

The ADF undertakes a number of regular or occasional tasks in support of national interests and contributes within a "whole of Government approach" towards the efforts of other Government departments and agencies to accomplish these tasks.

While PNT tasks will normally be undertaken in peacetime, their nature demands that they will still be required when Australia is involved in warfighting operations.

PNT encompass a broad range of tasks, from regular surveillance and patrol of Australia's coastal and offshore maritime zones, to hydrographic survey, search and rescue (SAR), humanitarian assistance operations and providing Defence aid to the civil authority and community. The strategic concepts are *protection and domestic support*.

The ADF conducts surveillance, patrol and response operations in support of Australia's border and sovereignty protection. These patrols are conducted to support Coastwatch's client agencies.

- Navy's patrol boat force contributes some 1800 patrol and response days' effort per annum.
- Air Force contributes some 250 hours per annum of P-3 maritime aerial surveillance.
- Patrols in the Southern Ocean or in the vicinity of Christmas Island, can also

warrant additional effort or assets with greater range, endurance or capacity than patrol boats typically provide.

ADF operations are also undertaken in support of *Australia's Oceans Policy*. The RAN contributes to the development of Australia's National Marine Data Base, through the activities of the Hydrographic Service and the Australian Oceanographic Data Centre. The Hydrographer has both defence and national responsibilities for the provision of marine charts for Australia's area of charting responsibility.

Defence Assistance to the Civil Community involves the provision of assistance to the States to protect the lives and property of their citizens in an emergency.

- The ADF may be called upon to assist with relief operations and support to events of major national significance.
- When natural disasters occur, either in Australia or overseas, consideration may be given to involving the ADF in relief operations.
- In Australia the ADF is most likely to respond to Emergency Management Australia's support to state government authorities.

Australia is a signatory to the *UN Safety of Life at Sea Convention* and the ADF has specific responsibilities in relation to Search And Rescue (SAR) for military vehicles in the Australian Search and Rescue Region.

- The ADF is called upon in circumstances where SAR operations are beyond the resources of civil authorities.
- Distance from mainland Australia and the extent of the emergency are often dominant factors in seeking ADF assistance - the ability of naval and air force assets to cover extended distances and remain on task, in possibly extreme environmental conditions, is often fundamental to successful SAR operations.

SHAPING THE STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENT

In addition to the four key strategic tasks outlined above, the ADF is employed extensively to complement Australia's national policies in shaping and stabilising the strategic environment:

- The main focus of Defence's activities is on engaging the US and supporting its commitment to providing a stabilising influence in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Other initiatives are directed at engaging New Zealand, our Five Power Defence Arrangements partners, Southeast Asian countries, Papua New Guinea and the South Pacific countries.
- We are also progressively expanding our contacts with China, Japan, South Korea and India.

Much of the ADF's diplomatic activity is focussed on developing bilateral relationships and creating a sense of strategic community and dialogue between partners. Several multilateral initiatives have also been progressed, such as the KAKADU series of maritime exercises, the Western Pacific Naval Symposium, and the Regional Air Power Workshop, all of which are Australian initiatives.

The ADF's traditional approaches to shaping the strategic environment are being complemented with additional strategies to support and encourage practical cooperation in counter terrorism.

The ADFs shaping initiatives include:

- The Pacific Patrol Boat program;
- Senior officer visits,
- official talks,
- exercises,
- ship visits,
- aircraft visits,
- personnel exchanges,
- provision of training,
- cooperative research and development projects,
- information exchanges, and
- cooperative patrols or other cooperative ventures.

CONCLUSION

Australia is a maritime nation, and there is a strong maritime dimension to each of the ADF's strategic tasks.

A conventional military attack on Australia is even less likely than it was in 2000, but our geography means that any would-be adversary seeking to undertake conventional military operations against Australia would need to project force through the maritime environment.

Our military strategy seeks to achieve and maintain the initiative and to engage an adversary as far away from our territory as possible, but being able to exert strategic control over our maritime approaches is fundamental to Australia's defence and that of our immediate neighbourhood. Our current strategy for defending Australia and Contributing to the Security of the Immediate Neighbourhood envisages the employment of ADF maritime forces, mostly air and naval as well as special forces, to achieve strategic control of the maritime approaches. Other land forces would secure our power projection bases and respond to and defeat any incursions.

Despite our geographic isolation from the main potential centres of conflict, the impact of globalisation means that we are no longer as insulated from global strategic developments. The strategic advantage offered by our geography does not protect Australia against rogue states armed with weapons of mass destruction and long range ballistic missiles. Nor does it protect Australia from the scourge of terrorism. Our trade and other interests are such that they can be impacted to varying degrees even by the most distant events.

Australian contributions to operations further afield will also have a strong maritime influence. We will need to project, protect and sustain our forces through the maritime environment to participate in any foreign campaign. The outcome of Asia-Pacific military operations is also likely to be determined by forces able to achieve strategic control of the maritime environment, as evidenced by the US campaign in the Pacific in the Second World War.

The ADF's peacetime national tasks also have a strong maritime focus – whether border protection, fisheries surveillance or humanitarian assistance operations.

An increase in commitments in the immediate neighbourhood (both contributing to the security of the immediate neighbourhood, and peacetime national tasks) and the importance of supporting wider interest tasks, such as the war on terror, have broadened the range of circumstances for deployment of the ADF elements concurrently.

The global and regional strategic environment has changed in recent years. The prospect of conventional military attack on Australia has diminished. There may be increased calls on the ADF for operations in the immediate neighbourhood in support of regional states. ADF involvement in coalition operations further afield is somewhat more likely than in the recent past.

The Defence Update notes that, as a result, some rebalancing of capability and expenditure will be necessary to take account of the changes in Australia's strategic environment. This will not fundamentally alter the size, structure and roles of the Defence Force. But it will inevitably result in increased emphasis on readiness and mobility, on interoperability, on the development and enhancement of important new capabilities and, where sensible and prudent, a reduced emphasis on capabilities of less importance. Enhancing amphibious capability is just one example.

While there is a maritime emphasis to our strategy this does not imply any lesser or greater role for any particular element of the ADF. Rather, it accepts that all three Services have a balanced, vital and defined role to fulfil.