



OFFICE OF THE FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL POLICY

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DEPARTMENT OF DEFENCE

CANBERRA ACT 2600

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Mr Grant Harrison
Secretary
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Mr Harrison

As I noted in my letter to you of 26 July 2002, a number of questions were taken on notice during evidence given at the hearing on 2 July 2002. A consolidated Departmental response to those questions has been developed and is included as an Annex to this letter.

One response that remains outstanding is an update of the table requested by the Committee. Unfortunately, completing the table has proven more difficult than had been anticipated initially. I now expect the table to be available by 16 August 2002.

Should you need clarification of any points, my contact officer is Group Captain Garry Dunbar on phone (02) 62653036.

Yours sincerely

M. ROWLING
First Assistant Secretary
Strategic and International Policy



ANNEX A: Responses to Questions taken on notice JSCFAD&T Hearing 2 July 2002

**RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS TAKEN ON NOTICE
JSCFAD&T HEARING 2 JULY 2002-08-09**

EXIT STRATEGIES FOR EAST TIMOR

The military end-state and national end-state for INTERFET were defined in the OP WARDEN Warning Order released on 08 Sep 99. These end-states were subsequently updated in the OP TANAGER Warning Order for support to UNTAET and the OP CITADEL Warning Order for UNMISSET. The ADF exit strategy developed from these end-states was dealt with in three stages, one for each of the operations.

The **INTERFET** exit strategy was based on the successful and timely handover of responsibility for East Timor operations to a UN PKO. In support of this exit strategy Australia provided planning assistance to DPKO to ensure the timely development of UN plans for the follow-on mission; implemented a progressive handover plan in East Timor from INTERFET to the UNTAET PKF HQ, allowing the UNTAET HQ to gradually take responsibility for areas of operations, key functions and transitioning forces; and, provided a transition force logistics support capability to allow the UNTAET PKF to commence operations while appropriate commercial support sources were being identified.

The **OP TANAGER** exit strategy was focussed on supporting UNTAET in its role of transitioning East Timor to independence. In this sense it was not an exit strategy as such, because it was always probable that UNTAET would be followed by a post-independence mission and that Australia would be seeking to provide a contribution to that mission. The UNTAET component of the exit strategy therefore focussed on maintaining the ADF contribution to the UNTAET PKF at a reasonable proportion of the overall force. As adjustments were made to the UNTAET PKF, Australia sought to retain its contribution at not more than 25% of the PKF.

The transition to **OP CITADEL** has allowed Australia to refine its exit strategy further. Again, the underlying principles are that Australia will wish to continue to contribute to the establishment of East Timor as a secure and potentially viable country and that Australia would wish to maintain a contribution at an appropriate proportion of the overall force. Australia has also been a strong advocate of the draw down and eventual exit of the PKF from East Timor being based on the security environment at the time and the achievement of agreed milestones.

The UN has developed a draw down plan for the UNMISSET PKF that sees the force draw down progressively over four phases and withdraw completely in Jun 04. While subject to Ministerial consideration, it is likely that Australia will acknowledge this draw down and exit plan as being an appropriate response to the developing security situation. The ADF draw down plan and exit strategy will be based on the agreed UNMISSET plan. The agreed milestones are as follows:

- Civil police assumption of responsibility for the eastern sectors of East Timor will allow the withdrawal of PKF elements from these sectors and support Phase 1 of the PKF draw down.

- Developments during Phase 2 of draw down will allow the PKF to pull back from the immediate vicinity of the border and remove its posts from junction points; establish a single area of operations along the north-south border; and reduce the PKF presence at the Oecussi border. The milestones that will support this draw down are:
 - The effective delimitation of the land border between East Timor and Indonesia.
 - The transfer of border management to civil authorities, including an operational border police and customs service.
 - A continuing reduction in the militia threat.
- Phase 3 of PKF draw down will be supported by indicators that the militia no longer represents a major external threat. Removing the capacity of the militia to continue to pose an external threat, in turn, relies significantly on resolution of the displaced persons issue through repatriation to East Timor, or permanent resettlement of East Timorese refugees in West Timor or elsewhere in Indonesia.
- Finally, the withdrawal of the PKF is based on the development of the East Timor Defence Force (ETDF) to a level of capability that will allow them to assume full responsibility for meeting external military threats.

Government is currently considering an ADF draw down plan that is designed to be complementary to the UNMISSET plan.

BATTALION AND BRIGADE SIZES

Army confirmed the answer provided to the Committee by COL Nagy that there is no definitive answer for a Battalion or Brigade group. Army Headquarters staff use a Battalion group planning figure of 1,000 but note that the actual figure deployed will depend on the situation and task. The planning figure enables consideration of deployment of the Battalion and support troops but the number and type of support troops will be determined by the nature of the operation. A Brigade has no fixed structure and the allocation of units to a Brigade group is similarly dependent on the situation and task.

REQUEST FROM THE PRIME MINISTER OF THE SOLOMON ISLANDS FOR AN AUSTRALIAN BATTALION

Various options for Australian assistance to the Solomon Islands have been discussed with the Solomon Islands Government since the crisis commenced in 1999. On several occasions, the Solomon Islands' Government registered strong interest in obtaining direct Australian assistance, including from the Australian Defence Force. This interest was registered by both Prime Minister Ulafa'lu and Sogavare, and was the subject of discussions between the Australian and Solomon Islands' Governments at the ministerial level.

The Townsville Peace Agreement, which was signed by the warring ethnic factions and the Solomon Islands Government in October 2000, provided for an indigenous Peace Monitoring Council to be formed to oversee the implementation of the peace agreement. An unarmed Australian-led International Peace Monitoring Team (which reported to the Peace Monitoring Council) provided an international presence to monitor the implementation of the peace agreement. The ADF provided logistical and other limited support to the International Peace Monitoring Team under Operation Trek.

COORDINATION BETWEEN THE US-LED COALITION AGAINST TERROR AND THE ISAF

Standard military combat control measures are applied between the ISAF area of operation, which is centred on Kabul and covers the immediate environs, and that of the coalition which has its operational focus on the Eastern Border region. These control measures ensure that there are no cross-boundary incidents between forces operating in their separate areas. Additionally, there are rules for coalition convoys entering the ISAF area of operation, for example crew served weapons are covered. Coalition troops are briefed on the ISAF composition and are familiar with their equipment, weapons and uniforms. ISAF vehicles are clearly identified with "ISAF" signs in white on either side. ISAF troops visit the coalition headquarters in Bagram everyday and are a familiar sight here.