COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

(DEFENCE SUBCOMMITTEE)

Reference: Suitabiity of the Australian Army for peacetime, peacekeeping and war

FRIDAY, 18 FEBRUARY 2000

CANBERRA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE PARLIAMENT

INTERNET

The Proof and Official Hansard transcripts of Senate committee hearings, some House of Representatives committee hearings and some joint committee hearings are available on the Internet. Some House of Representatives committees and some joint committees make available only Official Hansard transcripts.

The Internet address is **http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard**

To search the parliamentary database, go to: **http://search.aph.gov.au**

JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Defence Subcommittee

Friday, 18 February 2000

Members: Senator Ferguson *(Chair)*, Senators Bourne, Brownhill, Calvert, Chapman, Cook, Gibbs, Harradine, O'Brien, Payne, Quirke and Schacht and Fran Bailey, Mr Baird, Mr Brereton, Mrs Crosio, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mr Hawker, Mr Jull, Mrs De-Anne Kelly, Mr Lieberman, Mr Martin, Mrs Moylan, Mr Nugent, Mr O'Keefe, Mr Price, Mr Prosser, Mr Pyne, Mr Snowdon, Dr Southcott and Mr Andrew Thomson

Subcommittee members: Mr Hawker *(Chair)*, Mr Price *(Deputy Chair)*, Senators Brownhill, Calvert, Ferguson, Gibbs, Quirke and Schacht and Fran Bailey, Mrs Crosio, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mr Hollis, Mr Martin, Mr Snowdon, and Dr Southcott

Senators and members in attendance: Senators Gibbs and Schacht and Mrs Crosio, Mr Laurie Ferguson, Mr Hawker, Mr Hollis, Mr Price, Mr Snowdon and Dr Southcott

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To investigate and report on the suitability of the Australian Army for peacetime, peacekeeping and war. The inquiry will review the current and proposed changes to Army to ensure that it provides viable and credible land forces able to meet a range of contingencies. In considering this matter, the Committee shall take into account:

1. *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare* document, released in March 1999;
2. The Restructuring of the Australian Army initiative;
3. The Defence Reform Program;
4. ADF force structure and preparedness;
5. The role and impact on full-time and part-time personnel; and
6. *Australia's Strategic Policy* (1997).

WITNESSES

CUNNINGHAM, Dr John Edward (Private capacity) 124

EMERY, Mr Michael John, Deputy Emergencies Manager, CARE Australia 135

EVANS, Air Marshal Selwyn David (Private capacity) 116

OXLEY, Mr Marcus Crichton, Emergencies Manager, CARE Australia 135

SANDERSON, Lieutenant General John Murray (Private capacity) 146

Subcommittee met at 9.06 a.m.

CHAIR—I declare open this public hearing of the Defence Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade. This hearing is the third in an inquiry presently being conducted by the Defence subcommittee into the suitability of the Australian Army for peacetime, peacekeeping and war. The first public hearing was held in Adelaide on Friday, 12 November last year and the second in Canberra on Friday, 26 November.

The aim of the inquiry is to review the current status and proposed changes to Army to assess whether it provides viable and credible land forces able to meet the necessary range of contingencies. Given the current strategic circumstances, it is important to determine whether the Australian Army is able to effectively contribute to operations that it may be called upon to perform. In the course of the inquiry, the subcommittee will conduct a number of public hearings and receive evidence from government, individuals and various representative groups associated with Defence. The subcommittee hopes to table its report on this reference in the second half of this year.

[9.07 a.m.]

EVANS, Air Marshal Selwyn David, (Private capacity)

CHAIR—On behalf of the subcommittee, I welcome Air Marshal David Evans. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion. The deliberate misleading of the subcommittee is regarded as a serious matter. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to the request. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Would you like to make any additions or corrections to your submission?

Air Marshal Evans—No corrections and no additions, really. I thought this would come out in questions you might ask.

CHAIR—Do you want to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Air Marshal Evans—It might be useful, Mr Chairman. The reason I submitted a paper to you—a very brief paper—was that, with the euphoria that came from Timor, I thought it might lead us into a direction for structuring the Defence Force that really is not in the best interests of the long-term purposes of the Defence Force—that is, the defence of Australia. There was talk and comment about perhaps we should concentrate on being a peacekeeping force. If you were to do with the permanent Defence Force, the regular Defence Force, then the force structure obviously would need to change from what it is now and the strategy on which it is based—and that is again the defence of Australia and protection of the sea-air gap.

However, I am well aware that as a good global citizen we may wish to take part in peacekeeping operations and peacemaking operations from time to time. Indeed, the experience of taking the lead in the Timor episode shows that we are capable of doing it, and it is very acceptable to other nations that Australia takes the lead rather than being a follower. So I see merit in being able to do it but, as I said, not to distort the regular Defence Force. And I would see the ability to do both, and also to enhance the fighting capability of the Defence Force, would be to concentrate very clearly on increasing the numbers in the reserves, particularly the Army Reserve, and its capability for both peacekeeping and combat.

CHAIR—Would you like to just expand a bit on the role the army has played in East Timor and any shortcomings or positives you see from the experiences that we have had there so far?

Air Marshal Evans—I will not go into the shortcomings because I do not know them in detail well enough. Obviously, it has thrown up some shortcomings in logistic support and shortages of various things. Perhaps the suitability of the Caribou light tactical transport is not as good as it should be. But these are minor matters that I am sure Army will pursue. We have shown that we have the capability to lead and to do it very professionally. That does not surprise me in the slightest; I would have been appalled had it turned out that we did not do it well. It goes to show though that an army trained for combat and the defence of Australia can undertake these other tasks. The reverse most certainly would not be true—that, if they trained for peacekeeping and peacemaking, they would not necessarily be equipped mentally, physically or even with equipment for the defence of Australia. This is where we must be careful not to concentrate on peacekeeping. Timor has been a good exercise. It has enhanced our reputation as leaders and we have done it well. Then again, I would expect no less.

CHAIR—Do you want to expand on that point about being trained for combat as opposed to for peacekeeping?

Air Marshal Evans—Peacekeeping people are more like armed policemen. They understand the limitations of what they can do. I suppose this would better come from an army officer than myself, but the skills and depth of experience and capability required for combat are for the use of a whole range of weapons, and an understanding of what to do in defence to shelter and to protect yourself. You may be engaged in or exposed to biological warfare in the future. All these things do not come into the thing in peacekeeping exercises. It is a far less skilled occupation. I am not saying unskilled, but skilled in perhaps a very narrow area of army expertise. In combat, our soldiers may be required to fight in Northern Australia, New Guinea and many different climates and conditions with and without armour, with a range of weapons and exposed to air attack. All these things that come into combat operations do not come into peacekeeping.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In looking at the priorities, you talked about the importance of having a force which can control the sea-air gap. Many of the strategic issues you raised in your submission are consistent with the Australian strategic policy of 1997: the Defence white paper that was released two years ago. What role do you see for Army in defeating incursions in the sea-air gap, because we do have a maritime strategy and, as members of the committee have had pointed out to us, Army is part of the maritime strategy?

Air Marshal Evans—You have referred to a 1997 statement. Personally, I remind you that just a few weeks ago the minister said that the first role of the Australian Defence Force is still the defence of Australia. I think I have said in the paper—and I hope I made it clear—that we could not possibly hope to defend Australia in a total land combat because we are so hopelessly outnumbered by other nations. The huge landmass and our small population could not support it. However, I believe very firmly that the only thing we can do is to stop people getting here, and we have that opportunity because we are an island nation and people must transit the sea-air gap one way or another. However, if we had a weak and small army, incapable of doing anything but peacekeeping, an enemy would not need to bring too much here to wrest control. Really, it would not be a fight.

Having a strong and very professional army, one that can be expanded by reserves to a suitable size, an enemy would have to bring substantial forces here. I think it is generally accepted that attack to defence is about three to one or five to one. It depends on how the military strategists put things, but it is in that order. Indeed, in transit this is where they would be vulnerable. If they looked at it pretty clearly, they would see the chances of doing it against a strong maritime power, naval and air, are remote. But they would have to know that if they got here, there would be a professional and strong army to combat.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I wanted to ask you about the situation in East Timor. You have mentioned peacekeeping, and I think there is a distinction between peacekeeping in, say, Rwanda and Somalia—where the mandate for the peacekeepers was limited under the United Nations Charter, and the mandate for INTERFET in East Timor, where they did have authorisation under chapter 7 of the UN Charter to actually undergo peace enforcement.

Air Marshal Evans—Supporting what I have said, we need an army that is trained for combat. If you had one trained solely for peacekeeping, it could have been in dire straits in the Timor situation. But here we had a fully professional combat force, and the opposition knew it. The professionalism and the capability of the Australian Army that was there on the ground very quickly became apparent to them. So, again, I think it is in line with what I have said. The Canadians years ago went into the peacekeeping business. Their capability across-the-board suffered and went down. It cost them a fortune, and they really were wondering how they could get out of it. Every Canadian I knew and met warned us against ever getting into the situation where we structured our force on peacekeeping.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you think there are any lessons from the mission in East Timor that the committee should take on board?

Air Marshal Evans—I think they would best come from General Cosgrove and the officers that are there because they know it more intimately than I do. But I think the broad one is the one that you have just brought out in questioning. You never know when peacekeeping is going to turn into peacemaking also. Look at the trouble the Americans got into in Somalia. Again, I guess you would have to be direct and say that they were not as well trained for this type of thing as our soldiers.

Senator GIBBS—I notice in your report you were talking about the high separation rates of the Army Reserve personnel because they feel they are inferior to the Regular Army. How do you think we can solve this problem? Is this a morale problem or is this basically due to a lack of training or a lack of funding?

Air Marshal Evans—There are several things, Senator. Firstly, it is over half a century, perhaps more, since we had a philosophy or a culture of reserve service. I will get back to the old militia. Nevertheless, they did very well, as we all know, because the history of the Second World War and the First World War shows us. We have got away from that culture. In fact, we have got so far away from it that it is almost not taken seriously by most of the Australian population.

There have been several schemes to reinvigorate the reserve. I remember some years ago that Jim Killen and Bob Hawke went around trying to enthuse employers to support their staff people joining the reserve and being members. I honestly believe that you cannot have a quick resolution to this. It will take at least a generation, but it should start now. Obviously, we cannot wait a generation, but we should start encouraging things like school cadets. The services really got rid of those, not because they did not think they were good—Army in particular—but because it was costing a lot. The Army was reduced in personnel and resources available, and it was just another drain.

It was during the time that I was Chief of Air Staff that the then army chief wanted to get rid of the reserve because it was costing him money that he saw he could put to better use. We should encourage the reserve. I am glad to see that legislation is coming in to protect people's jobs and encourage employers, but we have got a long way to go. In the past, because of these and other reasons, Army was strapped and needed every man it could get. It felt that it really could not put resources that should be put into the reserve without robbing the Regular Army. That is quite understandable. Because the reserves were ill-equipped—they could not give them enough days training per year again because it was a drain—then the reserve became dissatisfied. A lot of their

time was wasted and they left in droves. I remember that a former army general, General Jeffrey, who was an outstanding soldier, said, ‘The reserve is no use; the wastage rate is about 30 per cent.’ But of course it was. People came along expecting to be trained and treated as soldiers. Instead, they were not getting the training they wanted, nor the attention they wanted, and they were looked upon as third-class soldiers. Many of them felt humiliated and were just fed up and left. So of course the wastage rate was very high for that reason.

Army have got to accept that part-timers can be totally professional. I think I used the example in my submission to you of how people were trained to go to Vietnam. It was not a lengthy period. It was 10 months, and Army were very proud of the product. I think they need to show pride in the reserves and that they are one of them—one army. I think there has been a slight change, from what I have observed, but it is not as big a change as it needs to be. They must be taken into the fold; more money needs to be put into them. So there is a range of things. But again it starts with school cadets, the media supporting it and going on supporting it—not for a burst of a month or three months, but go on encouraging this responsibility of people to contribute something to their country, whether it is in the Army Reserve or military reserve or some other way. But we do not do that really. We get away from it, and everyone that comes up with some scheme—whether it is to work here for some charity or whatever it is—gets knocked for some reason.

We need to try and encourage all Australians, particularly the young and those coming on, that they have a responsibility to the country. One cannot go further than JFK’s statement, ‘... ask not what your country can do for you—ask what you can do for your country .’ We forget that. We ridicule it when it comes up. This is all part of creating the atmosphere, the culture in our society where people want to serve in some way. The Army Reserve is a very honourable way to do it. Everyone has a responsibility, from the media and parliamentarians to the Army itself which, of course, must play a great part and treat them as real soldiers and make real soldiers out of them. The Ready Reserve was a wonderful scheme because people went in and had a year’s training, and they were trained, and they only needed topping up every year. If that could come back, it would be a great start.

Senator GIBBS—What proportion of training do the reservists get as opposed to the Regular Army? How many weeks a year training?

Air Marshal Evans—I think if they were fully trained—and again I would leave the professional answer to come from army people—I would think if they did the 12 months and were fully trained, 30 days a year should be enough. What we tend to forget—and Army forgets and the other services too when they think of reserves as not being totally professional—is that once they get to be a major or above, and I am talking officers, many non-commissioned people serve in their battalions or their squadrons or on ships for a couple of years and then they go on to ground duties for two and three years.

Senator GIBBS—Yes.

Air Marshal Evans—Then they come back to it. Really they are no more with it than the reservists. In fact, some reservists that do their 30 days in their specialist duties and skills are probably more with it continually than many regular officers. I am taking a guess at 30 days a year, but that is contingent on them doing 12 months full-time to start with, as a Ready Reserve. Obviously, the more they can do the better. If it were air force people, I would turn it into flying hours. If fully trained combat pilots flying F18s or F111s did 50 hours a year, which would be very expensive, they would not be combat ready, but they would certainly be within a couple of months of being combat ready.

The reserve battalions do not all need to be at the same readiness. This will depend on what the chief of Army has decided with Defence. What do we want? How many battalions do we want? Do we want 10 battalions of reserves or six? How many do we want at immediate readiness or do we need at any immediate readiness? Would three months do? From that, the training days per year obviously would flow at the state you wanted to keep them at. As a general comment to you, I would say 30 days.

CHAIR—To clarify that, currently the Army wants to build it up to six weeks initial training. Are you saying 30 days initially or 30 days after 12 months?

Air Marshal Evans—No, I am saying if they could do 12 months in the Ready Reserve then 30 days.

Mrs CROSIO—But that 12 months is full time?

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, indeed. That was the Ready Reserve and it was probably the best scheme we have ever had.

Senator GIBBS—Because a fighting force is a young person’s Army, I guess it would be logical to bring back the cadets in the high school system and start there?

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, I think so.

Senator GIBBS—Of course, young women would be involved too. I can remember when I was at high school, they did have the cadets and it was solely a male outfit. So what you are saying is that we bring back the cadet system where young men and women can train and, as they go out into the work force, they become reservists and keep up that training.

Air Marshal Evans—They should join. If they had that background, they would be keen generally to join the reserve and carry on.

Senator GIBBS—And maybe the culture would change because the situation has changed where women are encouraged to participate?

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, that is true. Of course, that has changed. Women are taking part and there is no reason why they should not continue. Hopefully, they will join the reserve in the same proportion as the young men.

Senator GIBBS—Absolutely, women are just as good at this as men.

CHAIR—They do in one of the schools in Hamilton in my electorate.

Mrs CROSIO—Before I go to a couple of questions, I would like to ask you whether you are actually stating to us in your submission that you feel all the services are overprofessionalised?

Air Marshal Evans—Overprofessionalised? No, I certainly did not say that nor did I mean to say it.

Mrs CROSIO—You are suggesting it perhaps when you say that we should be bringing more reservists in and we should have more part time on reserve.

Air Marshal Evans—No; would you repeat that, because I am not quite sure what you are saying?

Mrs CROSIO—I was just listening to your answers to the questions on where the Army, in particular, should be going. What are your comments on whether the three groups are overprofessionalised? In other words, are you saying that they are only depending on their professional men and women and they are not prepared to even give consideration to any outside area?

Air Marshal Evans—No, they are not overprofessionalised. They are at the standard that they should be, but there are not enough of them, so they need a reserve for that reason. You can be as professional as you like and absolutely at the top of the tree, but if there are not enough of you, you just cannot do your job of protecting Australia. Therefore, we need a reserve that is similarly professional. Perhaps they should not be kept at that level the whole time, 365 days a year, but within reach of it within a couple of months. That is what I am meaning to say. If I am inarticulate, I apologise.

Mrs CROSIO—In the 'Conclusions' in your submission, you say that we have started:

> ... to take advantage of our island geography and is optimised to exploit our ability to operate and maintain state-of-the-art–

And then you go on:

> sophisticated weaponry, providing precision, firepower—

and so on. I read that and thought you were contemplating that the Army should be basically just a part-time backup and that the other services could probably protect our island continent. Would you like to comment on that further?

Air Marshal Evans—No. I thought I addressed that in my opening remarks. If an enemy could get here, it would be a walkover if there were no army. They must know that, if they get here, they have got a fight on their hands because of a very professional army. So they have got to bring strong forces here and they will have to get them across the sea-air gap.

This is where they are going to look at it and say, 'With the losses we would suffer, we would not be able to make it.' You have to have the combination of the three. Within that, circumstances will change and the government might well decide that they are going to send a contingent into combat somewhere. They could have sent an Australian battalion perhaps to the Gulf. I am not saying that they should have; it is good that they did not. Nevertheless, there might be occasions where we want to participate in some regional conflict and we want to send our Army there, so we must have a combat army ready to deploy but, basically, based on protecting Australia. As I said earlier, generally the attacker to the defender is in a ratio of three or five to one, so substantial forces would have to come across the sea to face the Australian Army—a professional Australian Army supported by reserves that could be pulled up.

Mrs CROSIO—Would you be able to give us an estimate, in your own opinion, of how you think the structure of the Army and its forces should be, part time or full time?

Air Marshal Evans—I would not like to because I think it is a job for the chief of the army. He knows more about it than I do. I have organised a seminar for later this year at which the chiefs of defence forces from

Japan and South Africa and the American commander-in-chief for the Pacific and our own top brass will be talking. It is titled, ‘Seeking affordable defence in the 21st century.’ It is a colossal problem. For instance, we are looking at fighter aeroplanes that cost $150 million each. Where do we go? We have this problem of having a defence force that is affordable. It must comprise the three services—of course it would be absurd to try to do away with any service—and they must all be professional. We have to make greater use of reserves to be able to afford what we are doing.

Mrs CROSIO—Can I then come back to the reserves. On reserves—and I know you have mentioned the German, Swiss and American forces with their reserves—due to the fact that the reserves are reviewed by Regular Army and made to feel like second-rate soldiers, their training schedules are not well organised nor are they equipped appropriately, as you say in your submission to us, so do you feel that there is an anomaly—that perhaps we should be on a different approach where we should be saying how Army should conduct training for reserves and how they should go about dealing with the culture of the reserves?

We have just heard from you in your submission and in your evidence that the cadets were a good thing—I thought the cadets were great; my son was in them—but when that was phased out they said it was too costly, they were not getting an advantage out of it, and they did a survey across Australia and said what was ultimately coming from those cadets was not beneficial in the long term because the people did not seem to carry it on. There was no counterargument to that. You are now saying that when we did have reserves, and had a number of reserves, one of the biggest problems we found at government level was the fact that the reservists were not coming forward. You mentioned the fact that we are now going to reintroduce legislation to preserve their rights to their jobs—which we on our side of the House thought should never have been excluded so I am glad to see that you agree with us on that—but how do we overcome the culture in the Army when they are, in your own words, treating the reservists as second-rate soldiers?

Air Marshal Evans—I think we have to look for the reason for that. There is a certain amount of professional arrogance amongst regular defence force people—and I was one. When I was a flight-lieutenant I looked upon our reserve squadrons as amateurs, really. In fact, there is no reason why they were not very good and as good as—

Mrs CROSIO—Are you saying that that culture is still there now?

Air Marshal Evans—There was, I suppose, an understandable arrogance that, ‘We are professionals and you are a solicitor. You come out here on weekends, so obviously you can’t be as good as us.’ But they were. Looking back—

Mrs CROSIO—Yes, but you have the benefit of hindsight.

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, I know. Let me get around to answering your question. Army, of course, have the situation where they do not have enough in the way of resources or people for the regular battalions they have and to have them trained and equipped as they should be. Therefore, it is not unnatural to look upon these reserve people and say, ‘Oh God, we have to do this, but we can’t afford to. We do not have the money to put into it to do it properly. Really, they are just a damned nuisance.’ That is the attitude, but it stems from the fact that there is not enough money.

If we are going to do it properly, the culture has got to change, but government have got to say, ‘All right, Chief of Army, you need to run four reserve battalions, what do you need?’ He will come up and say, ‘This is what it costs, Minister. If the government is serious, we have got to have these resources to do it properly.’ Then I am sure the attitude of Army would change too, because they are not taking from the Regular Army and weakening it to try and train them, or half train them, and half equip them. If they have got the resources, I think most army people now certainly would realise what an asset a good, strong reserve could be; but not if they are draining the Regular Army—there will be resentment always. Have I answered your question?

Mrs CROSIO—Yes, in one way. I do not want to sound facetious either, but when you were talking about F111s before I wondered if we bought one less of those then it would give us the money to train our reserves?

Air Marshal Evans—You are talking to a dedicated ex F111 pilot.

Mrs CROSIO—Yes, I know.

CHAIR—I think Mrs Crosio is bringing up a very important point—

Air Marshal Evans—This is a defence structure thing—

Mrs CROSIO—I was going to lead up to other questions. I am talking about the costings there.

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, I know.

Mrs CROSIO—I have been on the committee for a very limited time, but, as I have been reading, it seems to be about the dividing of that one global dollar, that everybody seems to be putting a stake into it. I am just wondering whether, if we had perhaps a little bit less of that high-tech equipment, it would give us the money

to train our reservists; but then, if we train our reservists, are they going to have the equipment on which to use it? And do we really do a proper assessment over a period of time, particularly long-term, as to whether we need all this particular equipment that ultimately gets scrapped at the end of it when we have not been utilising it?

Air Marshal Evans—I am sure this is for the strategists in Defence to decide. Things are changing every day.

Mrs CROSIO—But if we are talking about costing, surely that has to come into it.

Air Marshal Evans—The first thing that comes into it is: what do we need to defend Australia? How can we defend Australia, a country of 19 million people? Looking at the forces around us, what can we do to make this country secure? I think it has been looked at forever; in my day—42 years of it—we have looked at it, because of our manpower shortages in this country from a population of 19 million and the limited money, in terms of the idea of defending Australia by conventional methods. But people cannot roll across our borders with tanks and divisions, they have got to get here—and that really is about the only way we could even think about defending ourselves. If we had common borders with a country of 200 million people it would not really be a feasible way to go, unless we had some wretched nuclear resource, which we would not want to do anyhow.

We are fortunate we have that island status and the sea-air gap there. It gives us an opportunity to do something we would never be able to do otherwise, so it would be stupid not to exploit that and base our defence strategy on that. Having done that, then you have got to have the equipment and the forces to be able to protect the sea-air gap. That has been the first priority over many years, to develop that force, which we have done; and maintaining it is expensive. To abandon that strategy for the sake of equalising or building up a land force would be irresponsible.

What is the aim? It is to defend the country. If that is the strategy, and it is still studied and people still come to the same conclusions—and as far as I know they have not changed—then we must give that priority. It means the bulk of the money will be spent on those very expensive items and the weapons that go with it, because what we are about is defending the country, not having a nice balanced force that everyone feels happy about.

CHAIR—Mrs Crosio raises one of the critical points. I suppose you could say that what it always comes back to is: there are never enough dollars.

Air Marshal Evans—That is true.

CHAIR—That has probably been the complaint for the last 30 or 40 years, or maybe longer. We are looking at the Army, but there is the question that is raised when, on the one hand, you are saying we should be putting more into the Reserves and you would like to see the school cadets and that sort of thing—

Air Marshal Evans—Yes.

CHAIR—but, on the other hand, you are saying we have still got to maintain these very expensive fighters and submarines that we hope will do what they are meant to do, and all of those things.

Air Marshal Evans—As long as they work, yes.

CHAIR—As someone who has been at the very top, you must have a pretty good feel for what the balance is and what is the best way to get the best out of it.

Air Marshal Evans—I do. I think I do but one always has to ask oneself how much a genuine non-partisan approach is—and I have been asking myself that for 20 years. I usually get to say, ‘If I were an officer in the Indonesian armed forces and I was told to prepare to attack Australia, what would I do? How would I go about it and what would worry me?’ I get back to the same things that have come out from many studies: that we must get across that sea-air gap. It does not look as if we could do it, so this is a deterrent that Australia has. Being, hopefully, fair minded, I can see no other alternative.

What we have to do then is have a reserve. We cannot have a standing army. I do not believe we can afford a standing army of six battalions with all the other things but we certainly can have a good army. I think the present army is four battalions, and I would like to see a large reserve if it is done properly, and the government has to provide the money for it. I know that may sound naive but if we are going to do it properly the Army deserves more than it is getting. I do not see it happening from a Regular Army expansion but I do see it by a greatly enhanced reserve, and the country just has to afford it. It may be that in the overall scheme of things something has to give somewhere else. This has to be done on a strategic basis and a study not on emotion but always getting back to the priority, which must be the defence of the country no matter who is put out by it.

CHAIR—Air Marshal, the government has already announced that the Regular Army is going to be expanded following the Timor experience.

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, I know. But I am saying that Timor has shown me that the Regular Army is the right size because it has been able to react to Timor and go there. If we had decent reserves, the reserves would be ready to take over by now if needed. The Army was able to do what was required of it for the Timor situation. It proves to me that it was the right size. Remember that the white paper is being written now and, on the strategy that comes out of that mid-year, will be decided, I imagine, the size of the Army, what is going to happen to the reserve, the size of the other forces, and what will be bought, what will be the re-equipment of the other forces, how much will be spent on submarines or F18 replacements and weapons. The Army may be expanded. If it is, I am just saying that I believe it could be done with reserves, given the shortage of resources.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In your book published in 1990, *A Fatal Rivalry,* you attribute Paul Dibb as having reported that there is still a lack of agreement on defence concepts and priorities that stem from different civilian and military views on how to interpret our strategic circumstances for the purpose of forced development. Presumably, at the time of writing you shared Professor Dibb's views. Do you feel that the situation has now changed and, if not, how has this affected the development of the Army?

Air Marshal Evans—It has changed dramatically since then, and for the better. There is no doubt about that. The cooperation between the civilians in Defence and the Defence Force, although not perfect, has certainly come a long way and it is wonderful to see. I have not read Dr Hawke's statement this morning but I heard of it on the news and I have a fair idea of what he was going to say. I think this is another great step forward. Yes, things are much better. It was a great pain to go to work in my day knowing it was to be a day of argument and fighting, and every day was like that. It was dreadful but it is much better now.

CHAIR—Could you just expand on the last point? I think the committee would love to hear you expand a bit on that last point.

Air Marshal Evans—We had a number of people in Defence when it was called the FDA. They opposed everything. I cannot think of anything that we were after for the Air Force or for the other services that was supported by the civilians in this organisation. In fact, they used to say, 'But you cannot have that; that is enhancing the Defence Force. The policy is to maintain the Defence Force.' They saw no reason why we should have things like an F111 with a range to get to Indonesia because it might be seen badly by the Indonesians as threatening them—these stupid sorts of things. They were the genuine fights we had every day. I wrote to the minister at the time and said, 'I cannot think of one item of defence equipment that I have asked for that has been supported by the civilians in Defence.' And it was not only Air Force equipment but also Army, torpedoes for the Navy, everything. They were against everything. It was a dreadful situation.

CHAIR—And you say it has improved a lot?

Air Marshal Evans—It has improved greatly. The civilians work with the Defence hierarchy. They are on the same committees, and they decide on the strategy for the defence of Australia—what is needed for the best strategy. Obviously, there is never enough money available to do it all, but they give priorities and they work together. The arguments still go on, of course, because people have differences of opinions and different perceptions, but generally the opposition is not civilian against service people at all. They are working together, trying to find the best way to defend the country, and I think that is commendable.

Mr HOLLIS—I was going to ask you to comment on Dr Hawke's paper but you have already done that, so my question has been a bit pre-empted. I was a little surprised, though, when you said that what was shown in Timor was that the Regular Army was about the right size. From most of the things I have read about Timor, although everyone says what a good job was done there, what is coming out increasingly is that it would have been impossible to replace those forces there. While everyone admits that it has been a tremendous job in Timor, it is also generally assumed that the time the troops served there was about the right time, that it would have been very difficult to replace them once, and God help us if we had had to replace them twice. So maybe it was not quite the right size.

Air Marshal Evans—I thought I had covered that by saying that we need to be able to react quickly, and that is what the Army was able to do. If we have the sort of reserve I am talking about, the reserves could be brought up to that standard if they were not at it. If you did have a battalion or two battalions at immediate readiness, certainly they should be no more than three months away. Then the reserve would replace them; that is exactly what the reserve should be constituted for and able to do. Then the Army would be at the right size to be able to react, do Timor, the reserves would be ready to take over from them and the regulars would come back and the reserves would move in. So you would turn them about.

Mr HOLLIS—But if we were going to be able to call on the reserves to do that—and this is amongst a whole lot of other issues that will be addressed later on today—there would have to be a lot of guarantees to the reserves about their work and when they could come back. That civilian side of it would also have to be addressed, as you have rightly said—with the training side of it as well.

Air Marshal Evans—And also the legislation. The legislation is being prepared now to go through to see that employers are required to guarantee this. That is only half of it. That covers the question you have asked me, but that is only half of it. You can put legislation in but it does not stop the boss thinking, 'Charlie Brown—I never know when he is going to go, so I won't promote him into that essential position.' This is where our culture, education—

Mrs CROSIO—We used to have the same problem with women once upon a time.

Air Marshal Evans—responsibility and all those things have to go, and you cannot legislate for that. But it has to happen. As I say, it may take a generation to get this sort of thing across but we sure as hell must work on it.

Mr HOLLIS—Yes, it is a mind-set change that has to come about.

Air Marshal Evans—Yes, indeed.

Mrs CROSIO—I am sorry to come back again. If I may, Air Marshal, I am very keen to hear your opinion because, looking at your CV, you were certainly around when our conscripts—if I can call them that—were being trained during the Vietnam War. You made a comment that it took something like 10 months to train them and have them ready for combat. In your opinion, how did you find those men? Were they capably trained to go overseas? Did they perhaps need more training? Do you feel that the job was adequate for what they had to do?

Air Marshal Evans—I can go only by my friends in the Army. I was based at Phan Rang, which was some way from them, but when I visited the Army some very close friends I had in the Army during that time and when I was back were very proud of the national servicemen they had trained. I did not hear a dissenting voice; I heard that they were very good. The Army was proud of the job they did and proud of the young national servicemen as soldiers. That is all I can go by.

Mrs CROSIO—I was wondering about age structure, if perhaps some of them were too young at the time and that maybe some of the problems—

Air Marshal Evans—I do not think so. I think 20-year-olds make pretty good soldiers, sailors or airmen. Having been one, I thought I was quite good at that age, and I think my colleagues—

Mrs CROSIO—I think we all thought we were invincible at that age as well.

Air Marshal Evans—That is true.

CHAIR—We have had a very informative discussion here, Air Marshal, and I thank you very much for your attendance. If there is anything that we might like to follow up, the secretary may write to you and I am sure you will be very happy to help with that. You will be sent a copy of the transcript of your evidence. If you see any errors in grammar or fact we would certainly appreciate your views.

Air Marshal Evans—Thank you very much. I have enjoyed the opportunity.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for coming before the committee. We certainly appreciate the time and effort.

Air Marshal Evans—I can only hope that you take my comments as genuine, I hope bipartisan, based only on the defence of the country and not one service in any way prejudiced.

CHAIR—We certainly appreciate that.

Proceedings suspended from 9.51 a.m. to 10.01 a.m.

CUNNINGHAM, Dr John Edward, (Private capacity)

CHAIR—Welcome. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion, and the deliberate misleading of the subcommittee may be regarded as a very serious matter. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public but, should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request. We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Is there any addition or correction you would like to make to it?

Dr Cunningham—No, there is not.

CHAIR—Would you like to make a short opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Dr Cunningham—I wish to begin my submission today with a short introduction about myself. I would then like to expand on what I see as deficiencies within the Australian Army at the moment. I have been a registered medical practitioner in New South Wales for three years. I believe that this country has been very generous to me in providing me with a comfortable and safe lifestyle. I am not ashamed to admit that I am very proud of the country and the people within it. I would like to call myself a patriot. Only two years ago I felt like I wanted to do something for Australia, and the idea of service in the Army Reserve came across as a good idea at the time. I joined the Army Reserve for service to the country, not because I needed a part-time job. I have since then spent my time in the reserves at a unit in Sydney, and I have just returned from active service in East Timor. I left my civilian job to do so. I am currently serving 12 months full-time service with the Australian Army.

There are two issues which I see as a problem with the Army and especially the Army Reserve: one is equipment and the other is manning. This, I am sure, does not come as any surprise. I would like to begin with an analogy. I would like you to imagine that the Australian Federal Parliament is divided into a full-time parliament and a part-time parliament. It begins quite well, and the part-time parliamentarians are paid $60 a day to turn up and run the country. Because of restructuring, however, the full-time politicians are moved up to, say, Darwin. They take Parliament House with them, the computers, the secretaries and the television cameras: it all goes up to Darwin. The part-time politicians are left in Canberra with four tents, three computers and two secretaries.

Because of more restructuring, the Senate and the House of Representatives are then told that they have to share the four tents. A body, whose name contains the word ‘corporate’ somewhere in it, decides to take the tents and to lend them out only when they are actually sitting. The part-time politicians, of course, have to go and get a full-time job. They are only paid when they turn up. So they are running the country, doing their version of national service in a tent that they have to borrow, getting paid next to nothing and taking time off from their full-time job to do this. Did I mention the fact that part-time parliamentarians are also required to take 14 weeks from their full-time job to become a qualified parliamentarian? Love for your country only goes so far. I wonder how many politicians would stay in the part-time parliament? This is not a joke; this is how the Army Reserve is treated.

I do not profess to have any knowledge of how to restructure an army, let alone a brigade or a division. I am employed in the Army as a medical officer. I do know that shuffling the deckchairs on the *Titanic*, though, is next to useless. The fact is that, for the defence of Australia and for peacetime operations, the Army Reserve is required. That also should come as no surprise. Many of the first soldiers in East Timor were reservists with the Forward Surgical Team. Many have only just returned. If another country breached our great sea-air moat, if it got past our very functional submarines and our very modern F111s, the Army Reserve would not even be able to put up a fight. At the moment, most units are barely able to function on a scaled down level to put on an exercise, let alone in a real conflict. If Australia needs the reserves, it needs to bring it up to a capability that is more than just a paper tiger. We need equipment and we need manning and we needed it yesterday.

On the subject of equipment, I do not think anyone would enjoy parliament in a tent. I actually do not mind living in a tent. It is clear, though, that many resources have been pushed north in the last year, but there is a deafening silence behind the promise to resupply our equipment in the next few years. We were short of equipment before they sent it up north; we are now at a critical level. We now barely have the vehicles, tentage and practice ammunition to stage a small exercise. How would we deploy in a war? Are we going to borrow the other tent again from the other unit that is also deploying? Are we going to deploy by train? Are we going to take our own cars?

Equipment also has a lot to do with quality and not just quantity. I personally did not appreciate working in 33 degrees and 99 per cent humidity in a uniform that is made of half polyester. It was unhealthy and it was uncomfortable. I would personally like to get the person who signed off on that contract to go and dig a hole in Timor. I dare say they may have also had something to do with the ordering of submarines. Without the equipment to do their job, the reserves feel like, with all due respect to the movement, the Scouts. It is tantamount to an insult. If you do not have the equipment to do a job, and a professional job at that, then morale goes down and members leave.

The next subject is manning. Who wants to take a part-time job where, to be qualified, you have got to take six weeks off from your usual civilian employer. Common induction training in its present form is possibly the biggest deterrent to joining the Army Reserve I have ever heard of. It needs to be modified drastically to enable people to join. At the moment, you must serve six weeks full time. The inflexibility not to be able to do that in two-week blocks or not to have it on weekends, and things like that, stops people from joining. Two years ago it took 30 days of training to train a medic; it now takes 14 weeks.

CHAIR—Can you repeat that?

Dr Cunningham—Two years ago it took 30 days to train a medic; it now takes 14 weeks. Members of the Army Reserve have also found for years that is it difficult to obtain time off from their civilian employers. While I am not someone who only believes something when they see it in writing, the legislation before parliament should help with that. We need the right to take reasonable amounts of time off our civilian employment and not be discriminated against. Most members of the Army Reserve are there because they want to serve their country, not because they like the idea of killing people, and certainly not for the pay. It is for the service. What an insult it is then that we are not paid the gratitude for our service by enacting this legislation.

I have a quote from the then Minister for Defence, Ian McLachlan, on 15 October 1996, stating that:

> There are also shortcomings in the capability and readiness of the Army Reserve. With some exceptions, like the regional force surveillance units, reserve units are understaffed, poorly equipped and have low readiness levels.

I believe that was the beginning of the Restructuring of the Army initiative. That was over three years ago, and I dare say you could say the same thing again.

My comments have been quite negative. I do, however, enjoy my time in the Army Reserve, otherwise I would not be there. I would like to see the best for it. I have a vision of it being an effective and professional force. Australia, for its defence and especially for its peacetime operations, needs the Army Reserve. The Army Reserve in its current state is almost a joke. To be effective, we require appropriate service legislation, which I hope is just around the corner; equipment of both sufficient quality and quantity, and we needed it yesterday; and we also need a realistic and practical training regime. Given the above three points, the recruitment of personnel and the retainment of the same would be a breeze. Morale would be high, we would have the resources to perform a quality, professional job, we would be proud to be in the Army Reserve and, I dare say, our country would be proud of us. Thank you.

CHAIR—Thank you for your candid comments. The committee certainly welcomes people giving that sort of information to us. I know the committee want to ask you about Timor, but we will come to that in a minute. Maybe you could expand a little on this question of equipment. When you say it is four tents and you are getting them part time or something, just how much do you feel is needed to bring the equipment up to a reasonable level for the reserve?

Dr Cunningham—I can only talk in relation to the units that I have been involved in. Relatively speaking, it would not cost a lot of money to repurchase the vehicles that have gone and the tentage that has gone. For a few thousand dollars you can buy a Land Rover—I will stop comparing it to the cost of submarines. Again, that is a logistics problem and that is not my field of expertise. But, honestly, my reserve unit currently has barely enough vehicles to deploy itself, and we are meant to support an entire brigade.

Mrs CROSIO—How many vehicles would you have?

Dr Cunningham—There are different types of vehicles. We are meant to have six ambulances; we have only got one. That is an example.

Senator GIBBS—One ambulance?

Mr PRICE—One in lieu of six.

Dr Cunningham—On our books. If someone invaded our country today and they said to my unit, 'You are off,' we are meant to have six ambulances, and we have got one.

CHAIR—Would you be able to commandeer the other five?

Mr PRICE—I think what the chairman is asking is: would you be able to take over the privatised ambulances?

CHAIR—I am being serious.

Dr Cunningham—Yes and, without joking about it, that is probably what would happen. We would be given a can of green paint and told to go and paint a white ambulance. That is just one small example. The point about equipment reflects back on the problem about manning as well. Could you imagine turning up to a job that you are only doing in your spare time anyway and finding that you do not even have the resources to do it with? It really affects morale to tell people, 'Sorry, we are not going away this weekend, when we had planned to, because we do not have enough training days or we do not have the ammunition, or whatever, to do what we were planning to do.' It is devastating.

CHAIR—I am being serious about this. If you are training on weekends, is it feasible to say, for example, you can come to some arrangement with civilian ambulances for the training purposes?

Mr SNOWDON—You have footie on the weekends, mate.

Dr Cunningham—I am not watching football on the weekends.

Mr SNOWDON—I am talking about the ambulances.

Dr Cunningham—That is true. In all seriousness, no, as the civilian ambulances are two-wheel drive and not equipped in the same way that an army one is.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—With your job as RMO at St George, was there any possibility of taking leave without pay or was it necessary that you resigned to go to East Timor?

Dr Cunningham—It is a matter of definition. I have not actually resigned from there. They have given me leave. In that respect, I am very grateful to them. However, that is partly because it is a government organisation and partly because I get on quite well with the hospital there.

Mrs CROSIO—Because you are a good doctor, obviously.

Senator GIBBS—You are a good doctor, let us face it.

Dr Cunningham—If I was a hospital orderly, say, I doubt there would be a job, or if I was a private carpenter.

Mr PRICE—But, if you had a practice or were practising on your own, you would have been entitled to a practice payment, wouldn't you?

Dr Cunningham—I would.

Mr PRICE—Is the hospital entitled to any financial remuneration to cover the loss? I think you were in East Timor for three days.

Dr Cunningham—Three months.

Mr PRICE—You were there for three months, my apologies. They may have been required to temporarily recruit someone and pay a higher casual rate and all those sorts of things. Are you aware if they are entitled to any of that?

Dr Cunningham—No, I believe they are not.

Mrs CROSIO—I thought it was a very frank submission. Before I begin, there are many people around Australia who think politicians are part-time, whether you were using that as an analogy or not. You were talking about what is happening with training. Previously it was 30 days and it is now 14 weeks or 98 days just to train a medic. But you are a professional person who was already trained before you went in as a reservist, are you not?

Dr Cunningham—Yes, I am.

Mrs CROSIO—So why, if you were coming in now as a reservist, would they require 98 days to train you as a medic?

Dr Cunningham—A medic is not a medical officer; a medic is a soldier. It requires the six weeks of common induction training and then courses until you obtain what is called an ECN, which is basically the piece of paper that says they recognise you as a medic.

Mrs CROSIO—Combat ready, in other words?

Dr Cunningham—Yes.

Mrs CROSIO—We talked about what happened in your particular hospital. In your case, with reservists the call-up was needed. Do you think there are certain people who should be excluded from being called up because it is going to affect the profession and the hospital? I imagine that, if you only had five doctors in that hospital and all four were called up, which left the hospital running with one, the population at large would be suffering because of that. Do you think some people should be excluded if they were trained reservists?

Dr Cunningham—I do not think there are enough reservists anyway. I do not think that the small scale on which we were mobilised for Timor was sufficient for people to be disadvantaged by our absence.

Mrs CROSIO—At this stage, it is a small number. But if we were able to increase our reservists and reserve list and something were to happen, hypothetically do you feel that in the event of something happening that meant we needed to call on our reservists straightaway—and we had a large number of them because we were only running a part-time army, keeping the professional people small, keeping the reservists large—should there be certain professions that should be excluded from being, firstly, trained as reservists or, secondly, only so many being trained because if they were called up the area and community at large and nation as a whole would suffer?

Dr Cunningham—When we serve, we have to sign a form that says we are ready to deploy, given a certain amount of notice. When you sign that form, it is up to each individual member to think about what would happen if they left. If 30 days is enough for you to find a replacement, or if a replacement is not necessary for your job, then you can sign that form and you are deployable. If you cannot sign that form, then you are not AIRN compliant. You are not deployable and you are basically shown the door. It is up to each individual member to look at his or her own employment status. That is how it is now. I had not really thought about mandatory job exclusions before. I think the system works fine at the moment by just leaving it up to each individual member.

Mrs CROSIO—But some of the evidence that has come forward says it does not work fine because there are not enough reservists we should be able to call upon who are trained.

Dr Cunningham—Why aren't they able to call upon them?

Mrs CROSIO—That is the lead-up to my next question. Evidence has been given to us showing that both the reserve and the ADF have suffered a decline in recruiting in recent years. Perhaps you might have a view on what you feel is the cause of that decline.

Dr Cunningham—The decline in recruiting?

Mrs CROSIO—In recruiting.

Dr Cunningham—There are a number of things. Firstly, going back to the previous submission, there is no longer a culture in Australian society where service in the Army Reserve is looked on in a positive manner. That may have changed since Timor, given the publicity that it has received.

Mr PRICE—Is it a fact that reservists, by and large, are not being sent over? I admire the work that people like yourself have done, but the reservist medical officers are the stars of the reserves. They have been sent over to Rwanda and East Timor. The idea is that we use people like you because we could not do it with our regular components. Clearly, you people are being used and are contributing magnificently. But what about the unit that is just a straight infantry unit that knows they are never going to be called up to participate in such an activity?

Dr Cunningham—Never is a long time.

Mr PRICE—Well, they are extraordinary unlikely to be called up. We cannot call to send them overseas, as you know. We have to get them to volunteer. Even if we change the legislation, isn't there a difference in morale? You belong to a unit that is highly likely to be able to participate in overseas peacekeeping operations and peace enforcing operations.

Dr Cunningham—My particular unit is not likely to be ever deployed overseas. I am a medical officer in a battalion that supports a reserve brigade. I was simply taken—

Mr PRICE—Plucked.

Dr Cunningham—out of that unit.

Mr SNOWDON—The point is: you were plucked out; you were able to go.

Dr Cunningham—Yes.

Mr SNOWDON—The rest of your colleagues are sitting pat in Sydney, or wherever they are, knowing they will never be asked to go.

Dr Cunningham—We always hold in the back of our mind the thought that we may be required to go. Otherwise, we would not train as hard as we do.

Mrs CROSIO—But reservists at this stage can only go overseas if they volunteer.

Dr Cunningham—Yes. But you hope that some day you can put the training into action.

Mr PRICE—I could put it in another way. If we were serious about using reservists in overseas peacekeeping operations, we would want to deploy formed units. Because of their state of training, and the fact that you cannot call them out as a whole and you have to rely on volunteers, that becomes exceptionally diffi-

cult. I am just trying to understand as to whether or not there is a morale issue there. The reservists might see that they are not being fully utilised. That may become very frustrated and they may want to be fully utilised.

Dr Cunningham—It is a circular argument. Currently it is said my unit is on a 365-day notice to move. From the word go, we are given a year to get up to speed. I am saying that, if you create a unit and properly support and equip it and have the administrative personnel there to run it, you will attract people to it. If you give them the idea that they are joining a unit that could be given 30 days or even more or less time to move, you will create in that unit a sense of excitement, morale and of, 'I'm here, I'm ready, I'm trained; we can do it.'

Mr SNOWDON—There is a very interesting downside to that. A large number of army personnel in Darwin were trained to go to East Timor and had been on notice for some months. Just prior to Christmas, they were told they were not wanted. The impact on them was that their morale went—poof! There are two sides to this.

Dr Cunningham—Yes. That was a specific mission they were training for. You cannot predict where the next operation might be.

Mr SNOWDON—That is not my point. We have deployed people to a number of overseas areas in the last few years. But, in reality, the number of people who have the opportunity to be deployed overseas is not that large, if you leave Timor out. The common experience over recent history, at least, will be that in all likelihood you will not be asked to go. The point we are trying to get at here is: how do you imbue in people the idea that service is a good thing and that to participate in the reserves and train as a defence force person is to the mutual benefit of yourself and the community? It should be seen as a positive. I was in the reserve and I was a cut-lunch soldier. I did not think of myself as a cut-lunch soldier. I was not a flash soldier.

Mrs CROSIO—That is before you became a part-time politician.

Mr SNOWDON—That is a personal explanation, declaring an interest. I had a great time, but I know a lot of my contemporaries were saying, 'What the hell are you doing that for?' Why is this?

Dr Cunningham—I think it comes back to society's attitudes towards reserves and towards national service and national pride. I am sorry to sound very patriotic and hand on the heart sort of thing, but that is what it comes down to.

Mr PRICE—It is not a sin in this place, by the way.

Dr Cunningham—If society has this attitude that service to your country is good, and to be proud of your country is good, and to want to have the ability to defend it efficiently is good, you will find that people will be turning up. There is a problem: how do we change that? Maybe you start by producing a fine example of it which then attracts people.

Mrs CROSIO—In other words, bring in the role models and train them a lot more.

Dr Cunningham—Yes.

Senator GIBBS—Our previous witness said that we should bring back the cadet system in the schools. Would you agree with that?

Dr Cunningham—I think that undoubtedly would be fantastic. My old school still has a cadet unit and I try to support them as much as I can. You can do these surveys and say that the amount of money that we put in is this and we are only getting this many people out of it so, therefore, it is inefficient. I think that is a very narrow way of looking at cadets.

Cadets exposes people to a military environment at a crucial stage in their lives. They know what the army is; they spend time out bush. Even if they do not join the Army or the Army Reserve following cadets, at least they have got some idea about it. If you are at a school that has cadets or if you have got friends that go to cadets, then for the rest of your life you will be thinking, 'Oh, yes.' And you will meet someone who is in the Army Reserve and you will think, 'That is right; I remember cadets,' or 'I was a cadet once.' And you will say, 'Oh, really; tell me about it. What is it like now in the Army Reserve?' Maybe it is a strong word to use, but people can be indoctrinated to the idea that serving their country is a good thing.

Senator GIBBS—That is what I was going to get to. Don't you think that taking these people at a very young age indoctrinates them to a certain way of thinking?

Mr SNOWDON—Don't they know that?

Senator GIBBS—Let us face it, when you are in high school, you have all sorts of thoughts. When you are a young person, a teenager and then in your early-20s, you follow different patterns, whether it is politics, or whatever, and you can change. Then, of course, as you get older and wiser—

Mr SNOWDON—Or sillier.

Senator GIBBS—you settle in somewhere. You do not think you are actually taking these young minds and indoctrinating them?

Dr Cunningham—I am not proposing national service.

Senator GIBBS—No, but let us face it, I have got friends in the Army and they have served and, quite frankly, they are quite dehumanised. They have got to rejig themselves, get out of that military mode sort of thing.

Dr Cunningham—They must have been infantry.

Senator GIBBS—They do; I tell you.

Dr Cunningham—For a start, cadets and cadet units are voluntary. It is not compulsory. Secondly, if you are going to use the word 'indoctrinate', is it a bad thing to indoctrinate into people pride, discipline, fitness, a sense of self-worth and a sense of national pride?

Senator GIBBS—That is fine.

CHAIR—Okay, we will not debate, but anyway you have made your point.

Mr PRICE—On the cadets, I think one of the tragedies is that the cadet units are really well established in the older and predominantly private schools. So if you come from regions like Janice and I—

Senator GIBBS—And me.

Mr PRICE—It is really hard amongst 1½ million people to spot the cadet unit. Clearly, there would be young men and women in Western Sydney that would love to join a cadet unit. Unfortunately, when we have raised this with the Army, they are not prepared to either fund new units or to cancel out dwindling ones and allow units to be present in dramatically growing regions of Australia. What impact would it have on your civilian employment if you were chosen to, say, go to the Army command and staff college? Have you been there yet?

Dr Cunningham—No, I have not.

Mr PRICE—Let us say that you are chosen to go there: what difficulties would that present to you?

Dr Cunningham—It depends how long for.

Mr PRICE—The staff college is 12 months.

Dr Cunningham—That would be very hard. That is a long time.

Mr PRICE—But wouldn't you agree that, if we are trying to move to this model of being able to deploy whole reservist units and activate them in times of need, it is really important that the professional development of reservist officers corps mirrors that of the Regular Army, that it is not a lesser component?

Dr Cunningham—True. Does that mean that reservists are not promoted above a rank of major?

Mr PRICE—No, it doesn't, but should they be entitled to equal professional development, I guess, is the question.

Dr Cunningham—I think it could only be a good thing to get the opportunity to do that.

CHAIR—In your own case, being a medico, maybe it is not an issue and we should not be looking at it from a personal view. But looking at it from the Reserves generally, from an officer's point of view, what would be the benefit of making sure that the officers in the Reserves can—some do, obviously, but not very many—go, as you say, above a major?

Dr Cunningham—To be able to go to staff college would be quite an honour. To be able to progress and to feel that your army career is progressing well, to learn the skills to be a staff officer, there can only be lots of advantages in it. There are reserve brigadiers at the moment, and I am not sure how they go to staff college.

Mr PRICE—I think places are available but employment becomes difficult and often people have to resign and temporarily go full time to do it.

Mrs CROSIO—Dr Cunningham, do you feel that you have actually, as a reservist, been well trained and well managed and perhaps treated equally?

Dr Cunningham—Well trained, yes. I think I have been well trained. Obviously I was able to deploy well. Well managed, well—

Mrs CROSIO—You can be honest.

Dr Cunningham—In some respects, yes, and in some respects, no.

Mrs CROSIO—Could you elaborate a little bit further?

Dr Cunningham—Administratively, if we are talking paperwork and things like that, to put a reservist on full-time service to go overseas is an absolute nightmare. Pay is not a big issue but I still have not been paid for parts of my service over there.

Mrs CROSIO—How long?

Senator GIBBS—How long?

Mr SNOWDON—It's the trade unionists, is it?

Dr Cunningham—Let us not get distracted by that. Well-respected: being a medical officer you are kind of always regarded a bit differently. People say, 'He's the doc.' It is different being a medical officer reservist because there are so many of us and people are used to seeing us around so it is not that unusual. If I were an infantry officer, then I imagine it would be quite different.

Mrs CROSIO—Can I take you back to one of the statements you made in your submission to us earlier when you talked about the uniforms and how you would like to shoot the person who got that contract. Have professional people like yourself voiced those concerns? Other than grumbling internally, have people collectively said, 'Look, this is not on; the climate here is unsuitable for the dress and everything else.' Has all of that been carried through to—

Dr Cunningham—I have submitted a thing called a RODUM, which is a report on defective or unsatisfactory material. That is the appropriate channel that you go through and I reported on our uniforms, our socks and our boots. They were just awful.

Mr SNOWDON—I think it is very important that you should. This issue was raised. I just wanted to pursue that point because when we were in East Timor, at Oecussi, we had a meeting with the troops and they made it very clear then that clothing was a real issue. The issue of clothing was raised at this committee before Christmas and I was told it was not an issue. When we got over there we found it was an issue. I would be very interested to know—and I think this committee should formally seek advice from Army—why the clothing issue was not addressed in an expeditious way. We were advised that people were actually buying their own webbing and their own clothes and boots.

CHAIR—What is the question?

Mr SNOWDON—Do my observations confirm your experience?

Dr Cunningham—Yes. A soldier is a person holding a rifle, manning the barricade. If you do not have a happy soldier, you do not have a happy unit. Yes, I bought my own webbing. I have purchased many items, none of which are tax deductible because my Army Reserve pay is not taxed. I have bought my own boots.

Senator GIBBS—You bought your own boots? What was wrong with the issue?

Mrs CROSIO—What was wrong with the issue?

Dr Cunningham—They have got a heel on them that is as hard as anything. They are unsupportive. They leak. The list goes on.

Senator GIBBS—This is disgraceful.

Dr Cunningham—There are new boots in the system and they are getting issued; they are being rolled out.

Mr SNOWDON—Mate, if you are in the Army, you are in Timor and you want your boots and you have not got them, rolling them out next month does not help you.

Senator GIBBS—I would imagine that polyester, even in Australia, is unbearable. I come from Queensland, and Canberra is the only place that I can actually wear polyester, if I ever do.

CHAIR—You are going well. As someone who represents a wool growing area, keep talking.

Senator GIBBS—Surely this whole clothing thing, even for the troops here who are just working in the offices, would be an unhealthy situation. What is wrong with the socks?

Mrs CROSIO—It is all cotton, is it not?

Dr Cunningham—They are commonly known as the 'pollies' for their polyester—

Senator GIBBS—What about the socks? What is wrong with the socks? Aren't they cotton socks?

Dr Cunningham—It is the same. The socks are a minor point. In humid weather, it takes about three days to dry them.

Senator GIBBS—It is not really a minor point—not when you are in boots for two weeks running before you have a shower.

Dr Cunningham—Yes. If you would like me to go on about the uniforms and the socks and all the other equipment, I could go on for hours.

CHAIR—I do not think that is central to this inquiry.

Dr Cunningham—It is an issue of morale and it is an issue of health.

CHAIR—You have registered that you are unhappy with the kit. Everyone has that message.

Dr Cunningham—Yes.

Mr SNOWDON—I think this committee should seek formal advice from the Army as to why the kit was not upgraded.

CHAIR—Yes, I will defer that to the next meeting, but this is a hearing.

Mr SNOWDON—I will put it on notice.

CHAIR—Yes, I have taken it on notice.

Mr SNOWDON—We need a decent explanation.

Mr PRICE—We could do it at the end of the hearing.

Senator GIBBS—As a reservist, where exactly are you trained?

Dr Cunningham—Most units from Sydney go to Singleton for training. We also do a lot of training on our home training nights, which are every Tuesday night, and on the weekends when we are together. It is one weekend a month.

Senator GIBBS—On weekends do you go out bush or whatever?

Dr Cunningham—Different weekends are different activities. On some weekends we might go bush overnight. Other weekends might be spent at the base doing other sorts of training.

Senator GIBBS—You are trained obviously by officers of the Regular Army?

Dr Cunningham—The other medical officers and I train the medics. We train ourselves. As far as officer training is concerned, we get that from the full-time members of the unit.

Senator GIBBS—What about those reservists who are not medics but just regular type soldiers, such as the infantry? Are they trained up to full combat capability and ready to go out there?

Dr Cunningham—That is the plan.

Mr PRICE—Could I just talk about the 365-day readiness for reservists? How realistic do you think that is in today’s world? Isn’t that state of readiness one of the major impediments to a practical consideration of deploying reservists?

Dr Cunningham—Yes. If you find a country that wants to breach our shores that will be happy enough to give us a year’s notice that they are going to, yes, it is very efficient.

Mr PRICE—I suppose I am putting words into your mouth, but isn’t this a legacy of the idea that, when we need to blow up the Army to half a million people, 365 days for reservists is going to fit neatly into that?

Dr Cunningham—Yes, it probably would.

Mr PRICE—I guess it involves a lot more training, but what would you think should be the outer limit of preparedness? In other words, we have both agreed that 365 days these days is outdated. Where do you see reservist readiness being at?

Dr Cunningham—If units were formed, manned and given the money to be on notice, at the most three months would be the longest period of time. I think it is quite realistic to expect that. It is possible that you could do it in a shorter time frame than that. If you look at what has happened in Timor, three months into it you are starting to want to rotate people.

Mr PRICE—How would you see the reservists reacting, given that we have so many battalions of reservists, if we staggered it? In other words, the most ready of those reservists were on a three-month state of preparedness and maybe others would be on six months. Would that cause problems, do you think?

Dr Cunningham—No, I think it would probably be more realistic, which could actually be a good idea. I think that would work well, and that would also give people the idea that it is not the reserves and the full-time; you actually have a progression between it. Then people who are in the six-month or 12-month units would obviously be happy to be there. The people who wanted to be at a higher state of readiness would go to a different unit.

Mr PRICE—Captain, you and I could agree on that but I guess, if that is proposed, it would cost a lot of money. How receptive do you think the community and the reservists would be if, in making those changes, we actually diminish the number of people. We have 23,000 reservists whom some have described as a phantom army, I am sorry to say. But what if we roll back those numbers to achieve that heightened state of readiness?

Dr Cunningham—I thought the idea was to increase numbers—and I know we have only a certain amount of money in the world, in Australia even, to go around. I guess what I am talking about is the ideal situation. If you made smaller units that were then fully manned, that would serve as a good example for other units to be formed. It is no good having a unit that is only 10 per cent manned.

CHAIR—Captain, in your opening remarks you made comments on the problems with equipment and with manning. One of the suggestions that has been made is that part of the problem with recruiting is that it has centralised, and if we go back to local recruiting, particularly in some of the regional areas, it will be a lot easier to keep the units up to strength. Do you have anything to say about that?

Dr Cunningham—I think the best sort of recruiting is that which is done through friends at places where people gather—dare I say at schools, universities and shopping centres. In small towns and small areas especially, people can identify with it and say, 'This is our unit; this is the Bathurst unit and it is what I would like to belong to.' Ads on television are all very exciting and, personally, I would like to join that army as well, because they do a lot of exciting things.

CHAIR—In 20 seconds.

Dr Cunningham—Local recruiting is a great idea, and we still do it, albeit in a very non-formal way. It still goes on, because that is the way you get people.

CHAIR—I think there is a temptation to get on to the question of your Timor experience, but maybe people want to ask something else first.

Mr SNOWDON—I have just one question: what is your observation about the separation rates within your reserve experience?

Dr Cunningham—Separation rates as in people leaving?

Mr SNOWDON—Yes. Is there a very high turnover?

Dr Cunningham—In my particular unit, we are at a steady state at the moment. Having said that, there are very few leaving and very few coming in. We do not have a turnover. We have a core of people who are there almost because we enjoy hitting our heads against a brick wall. We have all banded together and we are it. We are a small unit but we are a very tight unit, so separation is not as big a problem as it was maybe 12 months ago. That is just my unit.

Mr PRICE—I suppose the committee is as handicapped as you are in that we have not had our final report on the restructuring of the Army. Given that its aim was to look at getting away from the divisional structure—having smaller battle groups that were complete units with embedded specialist things in them—if the full-time Army in fact goes down this path, won't that present some difficulties for reserve units mirroring that organisational structure in that you are going to have a much wider spread of skills within the one unit?

Dr Cunningham—We have already gone down that path. I believe my unit was established as part of that program. We mirror the Regular Army now. We have before and we probably will still do it again. You have got to have the same structure across the Army. You cannot have one part of it doing one thing and one part functioning in the other. It would be just impractical.

Mr PRICE—Pardon my ignorance, but could you just explain to me how your unit reflects that battle group structure?

Dr Cunningham—My unit came together: we were a field ambulance, we were a workshop company, we were a supply company and we were a transport company, and we came together to form an administrative support battalion—BASB. I cannot remember what the previous units were, but my previous—

Mr PRICE—They were all separate.

Dr Cunningham—They were separate units. 5 Field Ambulance, which has a very long history both in the Second World War and Vietnam, is now Med. Company 5 BASB.

Mr PRICE—Would you say that the reservists would be better able to provide that support than the Regular Army? Is this an area where reservists might have a special and a meaningful role?

Dr Cunningham—To have a Regular Army unit being supported by a reserve BASB I think would be a recipe for a nightmare because the Regular Army is going to want to go off and do a two-month exercise somewhere, and they are going to have to leave behind their support, so I do not think that would work.

Mr PRICE—Thank you.

CHAIR—Dr Cunningham, one of the things I think the committee would really like to hear from you is a bit of your first-hand experience in East Timor—how you saw the performance, how you felt you were equipped as someone coming from the reserves going straight over there and anything else you would like to tell us, so maybe we could open up that discussion.

Dr Cunningham—Timor is still very fresh in my mind. I have not had a great deal of time to really sit down and chew over it. As a reservist going on full-time service and going overseas it was quite daunting. If you can imagine leaving your job at the moment, putting on a uniform and carrying around a rifle 24 hours a day, seven days a week, it is quite a culture shock for a start. On equipment: I have mentioned my opinion of the personal equipment that was issued. As far as the equipment—the infrastructure, for want of a better word—was concerned, communications and things like that, I think from what I saw it was outstanding and I can see a lot of projects that are coming to fruition. I am happy to say it looks like they have gone for the quality purchase rather than the cheaper purchase.

My time in East Timor was spent doing a number of things. I was not part of the field hospital; I was one doctor in Dili in a unit supporting Headquarters INTERFET. I spent a lot of time exhuming bodies and doing that sort of thing. That was quite a culture shock as well, and that was not something I was quite prepared for. They just kind of told me, 'Oh, by the way, the military police are going off to do an investigation and they need a doctor,' so that is what I did. It was also very rewarding. There was a convent up the road and I would go every Sunday and see about 200 children, pat them on the head and say, 'You are all right. I would love to give you thongs, clean water, food, shelter and some clothes, but I can't.' It is a different world, East Timor. I am a changed person after seeing the things I have seen. I say that humbly. I have never appreciated turning on a tap and getting clean water as I do now. I appreciate the safety that we have in this country and the sanctity in which we hold human life.

Mr SNOWDON—Except in the Northern Territory.

Dr Cunningham—Let's not get into that.

Mr SNOWDON—It is a relevant argument.

Dr Cunningham—Culturally, it was quite an experience. I think I was prepared for it; I think I was trained enough to go to Darwin and spend about a week getting up to speed and then heading over there. It was quite an experience.

CHAIR—What are the other areas? We have CARE coming next in the hearing. Quite a few members of the committee have been over there to visit the troops and so on. It was pointed out that there were something like 58 non-governmental organisations there and the coordination between the military and the non-governmental organisations was quite a big challenge. Did you have any experience with that?

Dr Cunningham—Yes. I did not realise they actually counted up to 58 but it does not surprise me. The non-governmental organisations were there very quickly in large numbers. I was not incredibly impressed with the way they worked. I found that coordination between the defence forces there and the non-governmental organisations, as a group, was quite good but the way they organised things between themselves left a fair bit to be desired. I do not want to say too much on that because I feel quite strongly about it. I probably have not given enough thought to put my views into words that are appropriate.

Mr HOLLIS—I do not wish to push you on that issue, but it is an issue that we have been interested in. There are 58 organisations. Maybe all of them, with the best of intentions, are doing a little work. Would it be better if there were four or five major aid organisations there having an expanded role rather than 58? I was there for a day. I have discussed this with various people in various aid organisations. The thing that has come across to me is that it seems many are there with only very few personnel. There is a lot of duplication instead of having four or five organisations with clearly defined areas of responsibility coordinating and working in with the authorities there.

Dr Cunningham—That would be ideal. I do not know how you would accomplish that though. Your points were the impression that I had as well. There are a lot of organisations there that are very small. One often got the impression that they were there so that they could put their flag up on their accommodation, take a photo and send it in to their latest newsletter to ask for money. That is a very cynical attitude. It is probably not the correct attitude, but that is the impression I got. Logistically and administratively, it is always going to be easier to have a larger group doing a larger job than many small groups doing small jobs.

Mr SNOWDON—You made an observation about the aid organisations. Do you have any observations to make about the United Nation's administration?

Dr Cunningham—I have many observations on the United Nation's administration.

Mr SNOWDON—Would you like to make some general comments about how you saw that? Another subcommittee is doing an inquiry on the United Nations. I have visited East Timor twice briefly. I have discussed it with a lot of people coming in and out as I live in Darwin. In terms of the military, my observation was that there was a great deal of respect from the United Nation's personnel for the INTERFET forces, but I did notice that the administrative structures of the United Nations were byzantine. Do you have an observation about that? If you do, how did it impact upon the way in which INTERFET operated?

Dr Cunningham—I think your observations are the same observations I had. It was the first time I had ever come across the United Nations. I was left with the impression that the United Nations had never done before what they were doing over there, which, of course, is incorrect. They appear to bend over backwards to be seen to be doing the politically correct thing. They try to get many people from many different countries involved in decision making and administration, to the point where they are bending over backwards to look like they are doing a good job.

They would set up a committee for something that one person could do, just so the decision was made as a group. The personnel and the combination of personnel that they employed were incredible. As an example, because I was involved in that area, the two personnel who were in charge of investigating atrocities against humanity in one particular area were a highway patrolman and a person who works at the airport trying to find drugs. That is a long way from investigating a murder. We found that we were training them as we were going along.

Mr SNOWDON—I would like to pursue that. You have talked about the exhumation of bodies, as I understand. Two issues arise. One, were you given forensic training?

Dr Cunningham—No, I was not.

Mr SNOWDON—How was the evidence collected? Who did the investigations and what sort of forensic work was done? That is one aspect. I expect that that was well under control within the context of INTERFET. What was your experience of the training of these other people? I am aware, for example, that training was offered to some United Nations workers in Darwin on investigating. But, as you say, if you have a person who is working as a traffic control officer, or whatever it was, then doing this sort of crime investigation is a very different exercise. In your work, did you come in contact with these people? If you did, how did it impact upon your ability to do your work?

Dr Cunningham—I will answer the first part first. The investigations were being run by the military police of my unit. They picked up the job simply because when we got there there were bodies lying around that had to be buried. They needed some sort of paperwork, they needed some sort of process to look at these bodies and say, 'They did not die of natural causes.' So that job was handed to the military police. The military police who were there, who I am indebted to and who have the most absurd sense of humour at the most absurd points in time, fortunately had training in that because many of them were the same ones who had done it in Rwanda. Personally, I have no forensic training; I was filling in a gap until forensic pathologists got there. I am now grateful that they are there, and they are doing a great job; I am sure they are doing a better job than I could do. The second part of your question was to do with—

Mr SNOWDON—The relationship between your work and the work of the United Nations equivalents.

Dr Cunningham—The way the handover went was that the United Nations investigators would begin doing the actual investigation and we would be employed just to do the scene of the crime material. For all the effort that it took us—and I am talking about emotional and physical effort—to exhume a body, to examine it, to give it back to a family to bury it again, you were often left with the idea that this was just going to be written down on a piece of paper and put in a drawer and nothing was going to happen. I met one UN investigator who left me with the confidence that it would go further. I am afraid to say most of the time I was left with the idea that our work there was really quite futile. If they had been given any investigative training it certainly did not show.

CHAIR—On behalf of the committee, I thank you very much. It has been very interesting and very informative and we certainly appreciate the frank approach that you have taken in coming before the committee. If there are any matters we might need to follow up, the secretary will contact you. I again thank you very much indeed for coming before the committee and sharing with us your knowledge and experience.

Proceedings suspended from 11.06 a.m. to 11.16 a.m.

EMERY, Mr Michael John, Deputy Emergencies Manager, CARE Australia

OXLEY, Mr Marcus Crichton, Emergencies Manager, CARE Australia

CHAIR—Welcome. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence under oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion and the deliberate misleading of the subcommittee may be seen as a very serious matter. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public, but should you wish at any stage to give evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to that request. We have received the CARE Australia submission and it has been authorised for publication. Are there any additions or corrections that you would like to make to that submission?

Mr Oxley—No.

CHAIR—Would you like to make an opening statement before we proceed to questions?

Mr Emery—We have just put a few thoughts down on paper and we thought we would like to just read those out to get things cracking along. When my colleague and I agreed to provide input into this inquiry back in November, we had little idea how topical the present debate surrounding the interaction between aid agencies and the military working on the ground in complex humanitarian emergencies would be, particularly for CARE. This morning we would like to initiate our input by outlining some of the actual and perceived advantages and disadvantages of the interaction between the military and humanitarian organisations. While we do not claim to be speaking on behalf of the Australian aid community, much of our input is certainly consistent with the recent views articulated in the media by many of our colleagues working in the aid and development field.

Our views today derive from our personal 20-year collective field experience in Cambodia, Somalia, Angola, Kenya, Thailand, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea, Bosnia, Croatia, Yugoslavia, Kosovo, Macedonia and more recently, East Timor, as well as headquarters experience with the United Nations in New York, Irish Concern and with CARE Australia. In nine of the above-mentioned disasters, there was one form of peacekeeping or peace enforcement military force. Additionally, the organisation we represent today has played a major role in alleviating human suffering in every major complex humanitarian emergency over the last decade.

The background reading to the inquiry outlines some of the issues that the Australian Army is trying to come to terms with as it enters the 21st century in a world that is categorised by increasing intrastate, rather than interstate, conflict and where the nature and complexity of international intervention is continually being redefined. We should make it very clear here that CARE Australia, or any humanitarian organisation for that matter, has no role or interest in dictating to the Australian government how, when and where to utilise Australian's defence assets. This very much remains the prerogative of the Australian government acting, as the Australian Army mission states, to provide the security of Australia and to protect its people and interests.

However, as a humanitarian organisation, CARE and many other aid agencies often find themselves working in an emergency situation where, like it or not, we are having to operate in an environment where there is also an international military intervention. In these circumstances, all aid agencies need to examine very carefully the extent to which, if at all, we engage in interaction with the military forces involved.

Several quite obvious considerations need to be taken into account in determining this interaction. First and foremost, we need to look at the guiding principles of the organisation and the various ethical codes of conduct that guide the activities of aid agencies like CARE and ensure that they are not compromised and not perceived to be compromised by the constituents that we serve, and by the sometimes ill-informed media that report on our activities. Indeed, CARE Australia's vision, mission and core values state that we value the operational freedom which stems from being a not-for-profit agency which is independent of any religious or political affiliations and which does not discriminate on the basis of race, gender, ethnicity, religion or political affiliation.

Secondly, and probably of more interest to this inquiry, is the consideration of the actual advantages of interacting in the humanitarian sphere with the international forces on the ground. In many situations where there is an acute humanitarian disaster unfolding, it is the military alone who have the standby logistical capacity to rapidly address basic humanitarian needs. A recent example of this was the building of refugee camps by military forces in Macedonia and Albania during the Kosovo crisis. There is no golden rule for the application of this consideration, and all agencies working on the ground experience a blurring of the lines at times. However, where there is a clear compatibility of the humanitarian goals between the humanitarian agencies and the military forces, there is scope for interaction in the pursuit of the most important task—that of saving lives and alleviating human suffering.

Thirdly, in many of the environments where aid agencies are operating, there is increasing risk to the personal security of aid personnel. In some situations it is in the clear interest of aid organisations to utilise the security mechanisms that military forces can provide. I for one was extremely grateful for the assistance afforded to CARE staff and many other aid and UN organisations in the evacuation of East Timor in September last year. In a dangerous environment it is in the security interests of aid personnel to interact with the military on a number of issues, including, for example, threat assessment or mines information pertinent to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Fourthly, in many conflict zones, peacekeeping forces have a mandate to protect delivery of humanitarian aid. Notably, the initial unperformed mandate in the former Yugoslavia and the Somalia intervention are good examples of an enforced protection mandate. In this situation, aid agencies need to interact with the military in order to ensure achievement of common mandated responsibilities and humanitarian goals. However, there are also some disadvantages, and I think Marcus would like to outline some of those.

Mr Oxley—The main problem that a lot of the humanitarian agencies have when they are operational in the field is that, if they do not have a very clear mandate and an understanding of how they implement that mandate, they can be accused of being in alliance with a military operation. The perception of that can actually damage their neutrality and impartiality as a humanitarian aid organisation. I think we have seen some examples of that quite recently in the media, where our own organisation has been accused of working in collaboration with the military in Somalia. In the public's eyes, that can damage our organisation being perceived as a neutral organisation and that can damage the integrity of our organisation.

So I think it is very important in the field that all parties involved clearly understand what their mandates, responsibilities and roles are. Although there is obviously compatibility between the humanitarian and the peacekeeping mandates and many operational incidents where there is cooperation between the two organisations, it is important that that clear difference in mandate is understood and articulated. That is perceived to be so because perception is very important to the non-government organisations, to the aid agencies. In the public's eyes it is the perception that we are an impartial and neutral organisation that enables us to raise public donations. That is one of the advantages that we bring into these situations in that usually the demand for humanitarian assistance is far greater than the ability to supply it, whether that is through government funding or our own private funding.

The mandate issue is at the core of trying to split the difference between who works where and how we cooperate together. But there is always cooperation on the ground in most humanitarian agencies. In most interventions that I have worked in there has been some very good cooperation on the ground, and there are a lot of advantages that the military bring to this. The military would be one of the only organisations in the world that has a stand-by capacity, a logistical capacity to rapidly respond. No aid organisation in the world would be able to afford to do that. We cannot afford to keep staff and equipment on permanent stand-by. So when we go into an emergency intervention, timeliness of intervention is one of the keys to success. Whilst we have to rapidly build up our logistics capacity, it tends to be the military, in the first instance, who actually has that logistics capacity. So, particularly at the beginning of a humanitarian intervention, there is very close cooperation with the military to enable the organisations to implement humanitarian assistance.

There is also the issue of security of personnel. A lot of the UN mandated interventions have a political, military and humanitarian objective. The military objective would be to create a secure environment for humanitarian assistance, rehabilitation, recovery and longer-term development. We have a very close compatibility with the military objective. We have to have a stable, secure environment in which we can provide aid. The political objective for the UN would be things like reconciliation and peace building between the warring factions. At the end of the day, our objective is to provide just aid; it is not to bring about reconciliation between the two parties. Obviously, if there is not a political objective there to bring about some reconciliation between the two groups, then we just have a protracted conflict with a constant need for aid. In fact, that is one of the issues that we are now facing in many parts of the world. We have a protracted nature of conflict, whether this is in South Sudan, Somalia or Angola. There is not the political meeting of minds there, so there is a constant demand for aid. That again can bring about donor fatigue. It is difficult to keep mobilising resources, both for the UN and for the private aid organisations on the ground. It is a very complex picture as to how we work together. But we do work together, and obviously there are ways to improve that cooperation on the ground. Hopefully, over the course of this inquiry, that will enable some of those things to happen.

CHAIR—Thank you very much for that. First up, since you have raised it, maybe we ought to get back to this question of monitoring activities. There have been some suggestions that there is pressure there to do that. Is that the situation and how do you handle it if there is?

Mr Emery—Pressure to be involved in monitoring situations?

CHAIR—Yes.

Mr Emery—From a CARE Australia point of view, there is not. There is a lot of international debate at the moment about the broadening of the work of aid agencies on the ground. That derived from Boutros-Ghali's *Agenda for peace* document which looked at a more comprehensive approach to addressing conflict situations where you are looking at all aspects of society, including the judicial system, human rights and employment as well security and aid. That is a debate that is going on at the moment. In terms of the Australian aid agencies, there does not seem to be that pressure on us. That tends to be on some of the other agencies overseas. Certainly, an organisation like CARE Australia has stuck to its traditional mandate of development and humanitarian aid. We are not under that pressure at the moment.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do CARE Australia staff get any training in terms of how they deal with the military when they are in humanitarian crises which involve some military presence?

Mr Oxley—Yes, we do. We are bound by a series of codes that guard and protect the way that we work on the ground. It is our responsibility to make sure that our staff are aware of those codes and practise those codes on the ground. There is one code that might be quite relevant to something that has just been said. This is a code of practice for non-governmental organisations and the International Red Cross in disaster relief. CARE is a signatory to this code. Clause 4 says:

> **We shall endeavour not to act as instruments of government foreign policy** ... We will never knowingly—or through negligence—allow ourselves, or our employees, to be used to gather information of a political, military or economically sensitive nature for governments or other bodies that may serve purposes other than those that are strictly humanitarian ...

We are guided by these codes and that has to be made explicit to our staff on the ground.

Senator SCHACHT—But what does that mean?

Mr PRICE—Does it mean that, if your workers are in a situation where there is a build-up of opposing or threatening forces, you do not report that to the military organisation there who are seeking to establishment a secure environment? Is that what you are saying?

Mr Oxley—Yes, this is where we get into the grey issue. If we are operational in a conflict zone, we have to have an understanding of the cause and the context of the conflict where we are operating. That requires that our field staff do have to do some of their own analysis of what the risks are because that can directly threaten our personnel on the ground. It can directly affect the way that we implement our humanitarian assistance on the ground. We have to do a certain amount of analysis ourselves. For example, we often get involved in landmine programs now. We would have to gather some idea of what the danger from landmines is, where the landmines are, what the numbers of landmines are, and who has been injured by the landmines. That could possibly be construed as hard military intelligence. In terms of preparing a proposal that we present to a donor, it is part of quantifying the risk from landmines.

We have to be very clear as to why we are gathering that information and who we are passing that information on to. Most of the information is for our own internal use. It is to guide our operations and protect our personnel. But we are in the business of risk management and we do have to assess what the risk is. In many of the areas where we are working, there is a military risk in our operations. This is where we get into the grey area.

Mr PRICE—Okay. What was it that you actually objected to in your Canadian counterpart's activities?

Mr Oxley—CARE Australia's humanitarian mandate is to save lives and to reduce suffering. What CARE Canada would believe is that, within that humanitarian mandate, there are also issues of peace building and peace monitoring. I think the arguments stem from the basic belief that sometimes aid can actually contribute towards the conflict. There has been a lot of criticism that sometimes we are feeding the warring factions and actually prolonging the conflict, so what happened was that a lot of organisations felt that if we could do harm in a conflict, then we could also do good in a conflict. They turned the argument on its head and started to get involved in things like reconciliation issues, peace monitoring, peace building issues—issues which were much more preventative—trying to address the causes of the conflict, rather than dealing with just the effects of the conflict. Within the CARE federation, there are some CARE members that believe that the preventative rather than the curative is an important issue to get involved in. It is not for CARE Australia. Our mandate is to go in there and be reactive, provide humanitarian assistance to save lives and reduce suffering, but CARE Canada would believe that there is also ground for doing some of the preventative work to try to prevent the situation before it deteriorates to the stage where the reactive-type, prescriptive humanitarian work is needed. This is a debate which a lot of the agencies are going through now, and we have the same debate.

Mr Emery—Perhaps I can give an example of that. Last year, through ACFOA, CARE was one of a number of organisations that was invited to provide monitors for the election in East Timor. We declined that offer because even though the whole idea of democratic elections was a very noble cause and a very honourable

cause, there is the risk that the perception that we are involved in the political process might damage the integrity of the organisation. So we elected not to be involved in that.

Mr PRICE—I just want to understand Marcus's point. Could you give me an example—you have given me one in East Timor which is fair enough—of an activity or a couple of activities that your Canadian colleagues were involved in, rather than the generality, that CARE Australia would not?

Mr Oxley—From my understanding of the CARE Canada contract, they were contracted by the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe who wanted to recruit some peace monitors and felt that it would be to their advantage to recruit peace monitors who had an understanding of the cultural sensitivities that NGOs are felt to have. That is one of our advantages. We are meant to be a grassroots organisation, a people-to-people organisation, and the people that we have are sensitive to some of the social and cultural issues when they are working in an overseas country—perhaps more sensitive than military personnel would be. So OSCE felt that CARE Canada would be an organisation which would help bring some of those types of skills on board into their peace monitoring program. So that is why they were given a contract for recruiting personnel who would work for OSCE. Essentially, it was a personnel recruiting exercise.

The problem perhaps arose because OSCE was perceived to be a pro-NATO organisation, and that alliance with NATO, and CARE supporting that, allegedly could compromise CARE Australia's neutrality and impartiality on the ground. We as an organisation, as I am sure you know, believe that it did not compromise our impartiality and neutrality on the ground. At no point in the trial of Steve and Peter were any of these allegations used as evidence against the people in jail. Our programs on the ground were programs that supported the Serbian as well as the Kosovo Albanian people. Our impartiality was demonstrated through our program on the ground, but there is the danger that if you provide peace monitors or assist an organisation, if your organisation provides peace monitors to OSCE which is deemed to be a NATO organisation or a pro-NATO organisation, then that could compromise your own neutrality.

Mr PRICE—What you are saying to me is that the real problem is being susceptible to a suspicion of bias as opposed to actually spying or gathering military intelligence.

Mr Oxley—Yes. There is a perception that your organisation is biased.

Mr PRICE—There is no current problem in the aid agencies about being pressured to spy. Is that what you are saying to me?

Mr Oxley—No, not at all. The majority of the people that CARE Canada recruited were civilian personnel. They were not recruiting military personnel. It is how things can be perceived. This is where you have to have an acute sensitivity and understanding of the issues. It is where it can be very clearly misconstrued if people want to try to do that.

Senator SCHACHT—In the last three years, how many people have been employed permanently or on a contract basis to do work for CARE in any overseas situation who have a previous military background with the Australian armed forces?

Mr Emery—That is a difficult question for us to answer because both of us have only been working for CARE for the last 10 months.

Senator SCHACHT—Can you take it on notice and come back to the committee with that information?

Mr Oxley—Yes.

Senator SCHACHT—When you do recruit somebody with a military background, do you give them any extra special briefing about the fact that they are not in a military context and that there is quite a different culture in which the NGO is operating that has to be their main aim, rather than the connections and the culture they have previously come from?

Mr Oxley—No. It is not specific for military personnel. We find that for many people, whether it be from the corporate sector or the military sector, coming into an NGO environment is a very different culture. There is a general induction within the organisation to try to get people to understand the culture of the organisation and the ethos of the organisation, our objectives and our values. It is not specifically sensitised to military personnel. What we usually find is that when we do recruit military personnel—

Mr Emery—Former military personnel.

Mr Oxley—Former military personnel, they tend to go into logistic support jobs where their skills in the military are very useful in our operations.

Senator SCHACHT—Do you have a policy that there must be a separation time between someone leaving the military before they can be employed by CARE?

Mr Emery—No, we do not because that would be discriminatory. When we recruit people we recruit people on merit rather than on those sorts of things.

Senator SCHACHT—There is the example which has had extraordinary publicity about Mr Pratt, et cetera. I have no time for Mr Milosevic, his regime and his abuse of human rights, which are awful. None of us do here. But suppose you were a Serbian and you found that an aid worker for CARE employed by the Australian military that was proactive in supporting the NATO position in the Balkans and the Kosovo crisis, an intelligence officer, maybe moving around the country, and because of his own cultural background showing an interest in what he was seeing and commenting on it, reporting things, writing things, remembering things, et cetera. Do you suppose that in the end that might lead a paranoid authoritarian regime to believe that this person is a perfect case to be a spy?

Mr Emery—I think we are talking in hypotheticals here and moving away from the real issue.

Senator SCHACHT—I will put it around the other way. I have to put on the record that I visited your CARE camps in April of last year in Macedonia and I congratulate the CARE staff on the refugee work that was being done. It was magnificent. Others are on the record about that so I have no criticism of the work at the humanitarian level. I was there when Mr Pratt and others were arrested by the Serbians. But I have to say that some of the comments Mr Pratt has subsequently made, and even made at the time, would lead a paranoid authoritarian to think, 'Why wouldn't this bloke be a spy? Isn't he collecting information? Is he going to pass it on to our enemies?'

Mr Oxley—I think that is more of an individual case-by-case question actually. Ironically, within the CARE federation it was felt that CARE Australia in Kosovo as a non-NATO country was actually in a better position to provide humanitarian aid than CARE US, CARE Canada, CARE UK, France, Germany—all the NATO countries. Actually by bringing CARE Australia into the equation in the Balkans we felt we were strengthening our stance within an organisation of neutrality and impartiality.

Mr Emery—It is also a very dangerous thing to look at one particular circumstance at one particular time during the bombing campaign. Having been in Yugoslavia recently—I resumed our operations there last year—I can say that we have a very good relationship and cooperation with the Yugoslav authorities. They are being very supportive in our relief and humanitarian operations there because they see there is a real need for an organisation like CARE Australia on the ground there. I think this whole debate about one particular instance does not help the broader issue here, which is the inquiry into—

CHAIR—I do not think we ought to get too—

Senator SCHACHT—It comes back to my question about recruitment and training, which was the first question I asked. What are the procedures if you do not have a distinct period of separation and a particular effort, say, when former Defence personnel who have been trained and have been 20 years doing one thing then swap? How do you stop somebody who might think he has missed out on a *Boys Own* adventure in the Army believing that the next best thing to do is to get into an aid agency which is going to be involved in adventurous work, to say the least. He might even be able to observe some military activity. Those are the things I am more concerned about—your own procedures?

Mr Emery—As I said, and as Marcus mentioned, when people are recruited they go through an induction period with the organisation where they look at CARE Australia's vision statement and our core values and we go through our codes of conduct with them. With every person that is recruited by CARE there is a three-month probationary period. If a person is deemed not to be performing, or performing in an inappropriate way, then that person is terminated.

Senator SCHACHT—From your knowledge—and you might want to take it on notice as well—has any staff member of CARE, not necessarily military or with an ex-military background, ever been dismissed or disciplined by the organisation in its history because he was passing information on to non-NGO sources? You have never had to discipline anybody?

Mr Oxley—Not to my knowledge

Mr Emery—And not to my knowledge.

CHAIR—I think we are losing our track here.

Senator SCHACHT—I would appreciate it if you could just take that on notice and check in the history—you have only been with the organisation recently—whether any of that had occurred.

Mr Oxley—Yes.

Mr SNOWDON—I am interested in the interface between the aid organisations and the military. What has been your experience most recently in East Timor in terms of the relationship between INTERFET and the aid organisations?

Mr Oxley—There was good cooperation between the Australian military, INTERFET and CARE Australia in Timor. As we were opening up access into the outlying provinces outside of Dili, we very much had to rely on the military information to let us know which areas were deemed to be secure for us to start implementing humanitarian operations. That required a need for very good communications. That is a very important personnel safety issue. We often had the support of the Australian logistics providing trucks and escorts for us when we were doing distributions in the outlying areas. They provided that support for us. There was a civilian military liaison unit there whereby, if there were any security incidents that we became aware of, we could report those through so that this information was collated and analysed at a central level. It was so that people could understand where the security threat was coming from and the military could then take action to stabilise those areas. It was often the military who, because of their helicopters, had access into the interior of the country. Therefore, it was through access to those military helicopters that aid personnel were able to get on to the ground quickly to evaluate what the humanitarian needs were and thereby design programs to address those needs. There are a few examples there of how we have to cooperate with the military—and did cooperate successfully—to fulfil our mandate.

Mr PRICE—You said that that relationship was really good. My understanding is that there are only three officers in the Australian Army who are trained in civilian and military affairs. Do you think the Army could do with more? Before you went to East Timor, to what extent were there briefings and information passed on about how the humanitarian assistance mission would run with the military mission of securing the environment? Would you describe it as extensive, very brief, adequate or inadequate?

Mr Emery—I will answer the first part of your question, when you said that there were only three people trained in civilian and military affairs. I am aware that the peacekeeping training centre at Williamstown, where a lot of the Australian officers are trained in peacekeeping operations, often included in that agenda—it is a two-week program—the views of the International Red Cross and Australian aid agencies. So the peacekeeping personnel in the ADF that are being trained can begin to understand the cultural differences between different humanitarian players in a complex emergency. I believe that is quite successful. Although there are only three as you say—I am not sure if that is the case or not—the Australian Defence Force, I am aware, places a heavy emphasis on trying to understand aid agency culture. I think that is quite commendable.

Mr PRICE—In Australia, were there briefings? And how would you describe those briefings from the military before you landed in East Timor?

Mr Oxley—Before we actually became operational in Timor, the coordination and the logistics bridgehead was established in Darwin, and there were regular daily meetings between military, UN and NGO aid agency personnel. To go back more generally to your first point, for the Army, the first time they interface with the aid agencies is a new experience for them. I do not think people really are familiar with the NGO type jargons that we use. We are very much used to the operationality of providing humanitarian work on the ground, and I do not think that a lot of soldiers have had that sort of experience of seeing how the aid agencies work. We appear to be a very disparate, very uncoordinated group of people, perhaps not very well organised, all with different missions and mandates and from lots of different countries. To somebody from a non-aid background it must seem a whole new revelation of how not to operate when you come from the very closely line managed structure of a military type culture. There is a lot of rapid learning that the military personnel on the ground have to go through.

CHAIR—Is that an unfair description that you used?

Mr Oxley—Of ourselves?

CHAIR—Yes.

Mr Oxley—I remember when I first came into the business more than 10 years ago that just getting to know the acronyms of the aid agencies was a full-time lesson. It is very different from the corporate sector, my background—for example, just getting to understand where the NGO-UN interface is and where the GO-intergovernment interface is. These are very complex issues that we are working in. The military personnel, the foot soldiers, have not been exposed to that, and I think there is a training issue there. There are a lot of training issues, both for the aid agencies interfacing with the military and for the military interfacing with aid personnel.

Mr Emery—Getting back to that question, depending on the humanitarian emergency that you are in, the cooperation and coordination between NGOs ranges from not bad to excellent. What you will tend to find is that with UN agency leads, such as the World Food Program coordinating all NGOs working in the food sector and the World Health Organisation coordinating NGOs working in the health sector, there is actually a great deal of cooperation and not that much overlap that happens in the field.

Mrs CROSIO—If the cooperation is there, who actually decides, say, for CARE, whether you are going to get involved or not? Do you wait to be asked or do you actually put yourself forward?

Mr Emery—It depends. Sometimes we are asked. For example, in my recent experience in Yugoslavia, ECHO—the European Community Humanitarian Organisation—approached us to do a big winter heating fuel and fresh food provision to specialised institutions.

Mrs CROSIO—When you are asked as an organisation, if I can take you literally, do you have to then come back and check with your—

Mr Emery—Absolutely. We give the proposal to headquarters, headquarters look at it, and they judge it against the philosophy of the organisation as to whether it fits in or not.

Mr Oxley—Core competencies.

Mr Emery—And our core competencies and our capacity to do that. On other occasions we identify a niche and we approach donors, and this is more likely the case. We say, 'We have got a really good niche, say, in water and sanitation, and we have the institutional capacity to address an issue like that on the ground.' Therefore, we approach a donor with that and they assess our ability to implement that project.

Mrs CROSIO—Is there any one body that speaks for the NGOs?

Mr Emery—No. There are several bodies that speak for—

Mrs CROSIO—I am just asking this for my own mind and probably for the record here in this inquiry: how, then, do you avoid duplication from aid agencies? If they are all going in, doing an excellent job, how do you stop duplication? Do you go to another NGO and say, 'Hey, we are doing this better than you, you had better butt out'?

Mr Emery—There are formalised coordination mechanisms. For example, in East Timor, before the—

Mrs CROSIO—Who formalises it?

Mr Emery—Normally it is a UN agency lead. In the case of East Timor it was the Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, or OCHA, which was part funded by the Australian government. In other situations it can be a specialised UN mission that was set up. My experience in Liberia was that it was done by the United Nations Special Coordinators Office for Liberia. That was a special section of the UN that was set up for that. In Yugoslavia at the moment it is done by UNHCR. It just depends on which lead UN agency wants to take that particular responsibility on.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you find that generally works well and that before, with the UN food program, there was no duplication?

Mr Emery—I did not say there was no duplication.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—There is rarely duplication?

Mr Emery—It depends on the emergency. I have seen it work incredibly well where there have been a number of players involved. I have also seen it where an NGO will come in and not really want to be involved in the whole process because of a particular organisational culture that they might have and there might be a little bit of duplication there. But on the whole, in my experience, the duplication is quite minimal.

Mrs CROSIO—Just following this questioning, as an aid agency, do you have to look realistically at how you can fund it?

Mr Emery—Absolutely. If we do not have funding we cannot do it. If you look at the way an operation is funded, generally speaking you have a significant component of a particular project that is funded by a major donor or several donors. Often that has to be topped up by the agency's own funds, which can be raised by public donations or whatever.

Mr SNOWDON—I am interested in the observation you make about the military. I can make some observations of my own about NGOs. I am now not referring to CARE Australia or the big organisations which are well managed, well structured and all the rest of it. I was in Darwin and attended a number of those meetings, about half-a-dozen of them. Initially, the first NGO meetings which the Northern Territory government was coordinating—

Mr Oxley—Yes, on the fifth floor.

Mr SNOWDON—What amazed me was what I thought was the lack of professionalism of some of these organisations, or at least some of the people that were in them. I would like to put back to you that perhaps one of the issues is quality control or standards in NGOs. Whilst we have got a military which we can be assured of—we know their standards of training—we have got no idea at all about the standard of training across 48 organisations. Whilst it is reasonable to argue from CARE Australia's point of view, which is a professionally

managed organisation, that your objectives can be productive, I wonder if the same can be said for a lot of other NGOs.

Mr Oxley—How do we ensure the professionalism of NGOs? This is an issue which we struggle with ourselves and were trying to address ourselves because we are aware that having incompetent NGOs on the ground can damage our integrity as an organisation. What the aid community has been trying to do over the last few years is to get agencies to adopt a code of best practice. These are our codes. It is a humanitarian charter, minimum standards.

Mr SNOWDON—I have read it, actually.

Mr Oxley—Those various other codes which are related to this govern our management practice, the way we implement on the ground, our relationship with international humanitarian law. So I would say that codes of practice are the way that we are trying to address that. I would have to say the downside of that is that they are voluntary codes. If for whatever reason an organisation does not want to sign up to them, then they are totally at liberty to do that. There are many smaller NGOs who are fly-by-night agencies who come on the scene and will perhaps not be as professional as some of the more long-established agencies. The other way of course that we are monitored is that the donor government who provide funding for us are quite stringent in the criteria that they use to assess our capability and capacity to deliver aid on the ground.

For example, before we get money from the Australian government, we have to go through quite a rigorous capability analysis from AusAID to make sure that we have the structures and the competencies and the monitoring systems that enable us to implement quality projects. My own personal thinking is that, at the end of the day, our reputation as an organisation is directly related to our ability to deliver quality work on the ground. I think we will succeed as an organisation if we can deliver quality and that means that we will get funding from the public and government.

Mr SNOWDON—I go back to the interface issue. How do we make judgments about the priorities set by military, as opposed to the priorities being set by the humanitarian organisations? It may not be a meeting of minds.

Mr Emery—That may well be the case. If there is a dichotomy there, then there is clear scope for that interaction to be quite separate. I think many aid agencies in many situations have taken the decision to take very minimal interaction with the military forces on the ground. I will give you an example of that. While in Liberia, I was working alongside the West African peacekeeping force, ECOMOG, who had a very interesting way of interpreting their mandate that would not necessarily be construed as being impartial. Most of the aid agencies working on the ground at that time had as little to do with ECOMOG as possible.

Mr SNOWDON—One of the issues which has been raised previously with us is that the Australian military could do more in terms of humanitarian assistance. Whilst there was a very clear mandate for INTERFET and the Australian forces in East Timor, there have been other scenarios which have been different—for example, the drought relief in Papua New Guinea. Do you think we should be looking at the possibility of deploying our forces more proactively in humanitarian relief? If so, where and when?

Mr Emery—Firstly, whether or not the Australian government decides to use Australian forces in that context, that is the decision for the Australian government. It is not for aid agencies to say. There have been several examples of a humanitarian crisis unfolding which the aid agencies collectively have not had a capacity to respond to—Goma, East Timor, the Kosovo crisis in Macedonia and Albania and Somalia. If there is such a situation, where there is compatibility in the humanitarian objectives, there is clear scope to interact with aid agencies. However, if it is purely in order to use excess capacity, and if the aid agencies do have a capacity to respond to the emergency themselves, I feel that there is probably not the scope for the military to help out in those situations.

Mr Oxley—I have just one further point on that. Just before everybody was going to go back into Kosovo, the NATO military were very clear that, if they were to be successful in their military objectives, they had to do everything to make sure that the humanitarian agencies could become operational on the ground as soon as possible. The simple reason was that they were worried that their military objectives would get bogged down by requests for humanitarian support from civilians. When they went in there to stabilise the place, they were worried that communities would come up to them and say, 'We've no food, we've no water, we want support', and they would get embroiled in those humanitarian issues. There is always 'compatibility'—the word that Michael used. There is always good commonsense reasons on the ground why humanitarian organisations work closely with the military organisations, both in terms of achieving our own objectives of security and accessibility logistics capacity and also facilitating some of the military objectives which would be very difficult when civilians are running around starving and asking for support all the time. I think there is recognition on both sides that the two are intertwined.

Mr Emery—I will just say one quick thing here. It is a very complex debate in which there are no golden rules. It really is horses for courses in many situations, and I think the challenge for most aid agencies is to look at each situation on a case-by-case scenario and look at its own core values and say, 'Right, are we compromising our own core values? Are we compromising the potential integrity of our organisation by having an interface with the military in a particular situation?' It is a complex issue which needs to be debated further.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In your submission, you said that the resolution of humanitarian situations is an important security consideration. Have you made a submission, for example, to the up-coming Defence white paper? Do you think that Australian strategic policy at the moment is too narrowly defined and, if so, how should it be modified?

Mr Oxley—We are looking at this now. We have not made a submission yet, but we are in the process of it.

Mr Emery—It is interesting. You are talking to two people here who have, collectively in the last 10 months, spent four weeks together, because it has been a very busy time in the emergencies unit in CARE Australia. Although we have a lot of very strong views on those sorts of things, we do not really have the time to sit down and articulate our views, and that is why we welcome the opportunity to come forward today.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Thank you. I want to clarify something about the code of conduct. You said earlier that it is very much horses for courses, but if a CARE worker reports to the CARE agency on something like troop movements, armour movements or so on, would that fall within the code of conduct?

Mr Oxley—If it were for humanitarian purposes. If we were trying to decide the best place to do a general distribution to a civilian population, it would not be wise to put that distribution point where there is a build-up of military personnel or where we felt there was going to be a military attack. So, in those situations, we would have to think where the best place is to actually locate our distribution points, and that requires a bit of analysis as to what is happening militarily and what the risk is on the ground to those civilians. There is a humanitarian justification in some instances for collecting that type of information. The degree to which we do that, I think, is perhaps a more debatable issue.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I understand it would be a very grey area, that there would be a very good rationale based on the reasons that you have given. But I think Senator Schacht touched on it—that it could easily be interpreted in another way, especially with 20:20 hindsight.

Mr Oxley—Yes.

Senator SCHACHT—Not 20:20 hindsight. I might say 10 out of 20 hindsight. Following on my previous question, in your own protocols, if somebody employed by CARE was being planted in your organisation, unbeknown to you, by either a friendly or an unfriendly security intelligence agency, and it came to light, I presume that would mean automatic dismissal?

Mr Oxley—Yes.

Senator SCHACHT—Thank you. The other question I want to raise is that we talked here about where you have been operating directly with Australian military forces, the UN forces or a NATO force—

Mr Oxley—Interacting.

Senator SCHACHT—Interacting, right. What I want to raise is the example in Cambodia prior to 1991-92 before we had diplomatic relations with the state of Cambodia. All through the eighties, the Australian government provided humanitarian aid to Cambodia via NGOs to get around the problem that we did not actually recognise the Vietnam-backed government. I met, on a number of occasions, your staff and other staff on my visits to Cambodia. You have been provided with money by AusAID, as it is now called, to provide that humanitarian aid.

When those people came back out of Cambodia—after being there for six months, three weeks, a year, whatever—what laws did you have about their briefing AusAID officials, who are part of the department of foreign affairs, or anybody else about what they saw and their experiences in Cambodia beyond the humanitarian—for example, about the political situation, the security situation, how strong the Khmer Rouge were, how effective the government and its operations based in Phnom Penh were? What were the rules in that area? Do you have protocols on what is relevant to tell a body like AusAID, the department of foreign affairs, or, when they are back here in Australia, does someone quietly turn up from an intelligence agency and say, 'Can we have a chat with you about what you saw for the last 12 months'?

Mr Oxley—While those people are still in the employ of CARE, any—

Senator SCHACHT—Yes, I am talking about when they have come back to Australia and they are still employed in one form or another.

Mr Oxley—Any communications with external parties, whether it be the media or whoever, has to go through either the country director when they are in the field or their operations manager when they are back here in Canberra. It is within the contract of employment that people cannot speak—

Senator SCHACHT—It is in the contract of employment?

Mr Oxley—Yes. They cannot speak in the field to the media; it has to be directed to the country director. But when people leave the organisation, we do not have a secrecy act—

Senator SCHACHT—That is right, you do not have a Crimes Act. Do you mind providing us with a copy of a generic contract with those clauses in it?

Mr Oxley—I will get that.

Mr PRICE—In terms of these global hotspots, I guess the quicker you can get humanitarian aid flowing the better. Are there any ways you can suggest that perhaps it could have worked better in East Timor, or in any of the other trouble spots, and that we can learn a lesson from, in terms of this report?

Mr Emery—If we had additional funding from our major donors it would give us additional logistical support, but that is probably not the answer that you are after.

Mr PRICE—In answer to a question you mentioned that the Army has surplus logistical capacity, but, in a sense, I would have thought that in planning the mission they are really planning it for the security operation, then NGOs take advantage of things that may not be being particularly utilised at the time to get that humanitarian aid—and that is fair enough. But should there be, for example, greater planning to put in a greater logistical capacity to perhaps, in those early times, aid that humanitarian operation? The sooner you can get the aid in and on full stream the better, but that is not the mission of our Australian Army in East Timor; it is strictly security, isn't it?

Mr Oxley—Yes, their priority will be a military objective. I guess if they have a logistics capacity, their first priority will be to achieve that military objective. If there is any slack in the system or if equipment can be utilised outside of that, then it often does get taken up by the humanitarian assistance. But whether or not you can have some kind of standby capacity solely dedicated towards humanitarian tasks, I am not so sure.

Mr Emery—Take, for example, the *Jervis Bay* ferry. The last time I went into Timor I went on the *Jervis Bay* ferry. It holds 500 people. I think there were 400 Kenyans going in at that time and there was enough room left over so UN agencies and aid personnel were allowed to go in on that ferry, to get a lift over there. That is what we mean by a bit of surplus capacity. It is happening there anyway.

Mrs CROSIO—Did you ask or were you invited?

Mr Emery—That is a standing arrangement that they have with the UN agencies and the aid agencies, but we get bumped off first if there is no surplus capacity. What was the crux of the question?

Mr PRICE—My understanding of the planning—and I guess it is a good question to ask the military later—is to plan for securing the environment militarily. But I presume that there would be a benefit if they were able to over dimension the logistic support because this would facilitate your humanitarian efforts. We are having an inquiry into the Army and I think they have done pretty well in all of the hotspots you have mentioned but we are interested in trying to make it better. Do you have any suggestions?

Mr Emery—Certainly, as I mentioned before, there is the Williamstown course and the fact that the Australian Army are putting a heavy emphasis on trying to understand how a complex humanitarian emergency is structured. The aid organisations are part of that complex humanitarian emergency, as are our military interventions. I commend the ADF for doing that, but there is always more they can do in terms of preparing their soldiers before they get deployed. I think that if the Army decide to get involved in humanitarian work, because of the compatibility of mandated responsibilities, they need to also be aware that they have to have an articulated transitional withdrawal strategy so that they do not leave the beneficiaries that the aid agencies are trying to work with high and dry.

I will give you an example of that which is not the ADF. During the Kosovo crisis the military forces that were going to go into Kosovo were building refugee camps and they suddenly announced they were leaving in two days. They pulled the plug on everything. They had done a very good job and left the camp with the ability to keep running. However, it did leave a few agencies and some beneficiaries high and dry. You need to have an articulated withdrawal strategy from that humanitarian aid. My understanding of the Australian Army is that its primary objective is military and not humanitarian. They might well get a political directive suddenly to change course and then that can leave people high and dry.

Finally, it is important that the ADF, as well as the broader aid community and UN agencies, participate in this dialogue and this debate over what the interaction and the relationship should be and what their role should be in humanitarian disasters. I think there is certainly scope, given the professionalism, the flexibility and the

resourcing of the ADF, to have a part to play in humanitarian disasters, but that needs to be very clearly defined and articulated.

Mr PRICE—What is this emphasis on clearly defined and articulated?

Mr Emery—If they are not sure about what their particular role is going to be in response to a humanitarian crisis, they are worried. This is certainly the case, not necessarily with the Australians, but with the American forces. They are worried about what they call ‘mission creep’ and having resources tied up for too long and having people relying on them when their mandates might change very quickly.

Mr PRICE—Isn’t it the reality that it is only the last two missions we have been involved in that have been open-ended? All the others have been very finite.

Mr Emery—In terms of the ADF, are you talking about Bougainville and East Timor?

Mr PRICE—Yes.

Mr Emery—Yes, but I am talking from the broader global perspective. We have operations, say, in Bosnia and Kosovo which might well be around for many years to come. There is an open-ended problem there. That is actually an increasing trend which the ADF has to be aware of.

CHAIR—Thank you both very much for your attendance here today. If there are any matters of additional information which you have said you will provide to us could you send them back to the secretary? Again, thank you both very much for the effort you have put into your submission and the work you are doing generally.

Mr Emery—Thank you.

Mr Oxley—Thank you.

Proceedings suspended from 12.24 p.m. to 1.30 p.m.

SANDERSON, Lieutenant General John Murray, (Private capacity)

CHAIR—Welcome. Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I retired from Army in 1998. I am here in a private capacity.

CHAIR—I am sure you are well aware that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings in the respective houses of parliament demand. Although the subcommittee does not require you to give evidence on oath, you should be aware that this does not alter the importance of the occasion. The deliberate misleading of the subcommittee may be regarded as contempt of the parliament. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence be given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give any evidence in private, you may ask to do so and the subcommittee will give consideration to your request.

We appreciate your acceptance of the invitation to appear before the subcommittee. As a previous Chief of Army, the subcommittee is interested to know your views on the suitability of Army for both peacekeeping and war. Before we begin questioning, would you like to make any comments or opening remarks?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Thank you very much, Mr Chairman. If I may, I would like to make an opening statement.

CHAIR—Please proceed.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Let me begin by welcoming this important and timely study into the suitability of the Army for its likely future employment by the governments of Australia. I emphasise the word 'timely' here because I believe that the events to Australia's north of the last 12 months foreshadow an era of increased turbulence in our nation's area of strategic interest and, therefore, new responsibilities for our armed forces. In making this observation, I do not wish to be seen as invoking more immediate threats to our national interests, except to suggest that an inability to properly manage the military aspects of our relationships and responses could promote the intrusion of influences we would not welcome in the region, and create problems with our neighbours of an enduring nature.

I realise also that we are now confronted with the crunch of having had a defence program that has been significantly bigger than the Defence forward estimates for many years. This is a political problem rather than a departmental problem. Unless more resources are made available, the nation is going to have to find more imaginative ways of generating defence capabilities for future strategies. The sense of disorientation and disempowerment that is now suggested exists in the defence department revolves around confusion over this issue. The leadership must come from the political level, in my view, in the form of solid strategic thought and hard decisions rather than simply pressing for efficiencies of the popular form such as structural rationalisation and contracting out. Defence, in the ultimate, is a people business and, if those responsible begin to lose sight of this in defence planning, the people you need will simply walk away.

I put it to the subcommittee that, when the 1997 strategic policy was being developed, there was little anticipation outside Army that it would begin the year 2000 with a more or less permanent presence in Bougainville or an operational land boundary with Indonesia. The Army's structure and presence in northern Australia had not been developed with these eventualities in mind. It was rather to protect the operational platforms of the Navy and the Air Force so that they could strike out from secure bases against invading or troublemaking raiders from the north.

While I have always had sympathy with the deterrent aspects of this ultimate relationship of the Australian Defence Force roles, it did not require deep analysis to conclude that, unless the Americans lost interest completely, no-one was likely to challenge the United States in either the maritime or aerospace environments for much of the next century. Invasion was most unlikely. What was more likely, of course, was that Australia would either join the Americans in coalition operations to enforce the mandate of the Security Council of the United Nations or to provide forces for the United Nations peacekeeping operations wherever and whenever the government decided it was in the national interest to do so. It was simply a matter of priority. Because it did not exist, the infrastructure and doctrine for the defence of the northern approaches strategy had to be put in place, while the diminishing Regular Army had to be ready at the same time to do coalition operations at short notice. This conflict of priorities is both confusing and widely misunderstood, and I think that is reflected in some of the submissions this inquiry has already received.

At this point I would like to remind the committee that peace enforcement operations mandated under Chapter 7 of the United Nations Charter, or under the edict of a politico-military alliance such as NATO and the OSCE have done in Bosnia and Kosovo, have to be approached as one would war. You enter the operational area prepared to fight to achieve the objectives of the mandate. To do anything less is extremely dangerous and is most likely to worsen the situation you were sent to control. Somalia is a prime, and I believe a

shameful, example of this, although the mandate in this case was made up as the mission proceeded, an even worse mistake. Bosnia and Kosovo may turn out the same way unless the OSCE is more forceful in delivering outcomes.

I raise this point to suggest that, while it may be satisfactory for Australia to lead or participate in an enforcement operation against a confused and lightly armed rabble like the East Timorese militia or even the Somali clans, it would require considerable development of the Army before it could contemplate playing a part in land operations against a well and heavily armed military force. The Australian Army is a very light force in contemporary terms and always has been since its foundation in 1948. This is the Australian Regular Army. It is quite mobile but it lacks the firepower and protection to manoeuvre against well-equipped modern forces. It could not, for example, have played a useful role in the Gulf War at that time except to add numbers to the coalition, which is essentially what we achieved with the Navy. Both the Australian Navy and the Air Force can play limited roles in these operations provided they have heavy operational and logistic support from the United States. Fortunately, there does not appear to be any imperative for the immediate future for Australia to contribute to such operations, but these sorts of requirements have proved very difficult to forecast in the past and, more often than not, come into the category of strategic surprise. Quite clearly, they are a regular feature of the contemporary European scene, but there seems no good reason why a European conflict should attract peace enforcement contributions from Australia.

Peacekeeping operations, on the other hand, are essentially about helping protagonists to implement an agreement they have made to have a cease-fire and proceed towards some political objective like the election of a legislature and the formation of a government. Because of the need to finesse the operational environment, they are essentially hands on land operations. If it were not for requirements for military skills and organisations in these often highly dangerous environments, there is no reason why trained and experienced civilians could not do much of it. Unfortunately, civilians of this nature are proving to be in short supply, and the UN is using the military to perform more and more civilian functions rather than the reverse.

The essence of peacekeeping operations is impartiality, because to take sides automatically makes you party to the conflict, which can prove to be very dangerous, particularly for unarmed civil police and administrators. Normally this involves withdrawing from a conflict area where the cease-fire breaks down until new arrangements can be negotiated. But in recent times there has been much confusion about the role of peacekeepers and an expectation that they will stay and defend civilians against breaches of international humanitarian and human rights law.

The armies of many nations have been shamed by their inability to do this. Many peacekeepers have died in places like Somalia, Rwanda and Bosnia, for example, as a result of this confusion. Peacekeeping forces now have to display stronger discipline and greater military skills than they would have under the more clearly defined conditions of combat. Unfortunately, many do not come up to the mark in this environment.

The Australian Army is very good in these difficult circumstances—the best I have seen—and we need to ask ourselves why this is so. Are Australians natural peacekeepers by dint of the environment they are brought up in? I think we would all like to think so. But, firstly, I put it to the committee that the types of operations that the Army has been preparing for for many years, that is a combination of widely dispersed control operations on its own territory, and emergency operations to secure the safety of Australian nationals in the event of disturbed situations in our own regions, create the ideal outcome of junior leadership and initiative for peacekeeping. Secondly, the Regular Army, which is essentially what has been engaged in these operations, is a very professional force capable of high levels of discrimination in the application of force. This is an outcome of deep and objective training at all levels, individual and collective.

I now come to my assessment of the Army's suitability for peacetime, peacekeeping and war. Let me say at the beginning that I find the question quite strange. While the Army plays an important role in promoting national interest and deterring potential adversaries in peacetime, it does so by a confident display of its ability to wage war within effective time frames. Its professional abilities are on display throughout the region as a consequence of the bilateral, individual and collective training exchanges that have been a feature of our strategy for the last decade. Certainly its ability to conduct peacekeeping operations contributes to this perception but it would not necessarily show true war fighting skills. Waging war is, therefore, its raison d'etre. Its capacity to mobilise sufficient strength to do this successfully is the reason the Army exists. Nations that can rely on other nations to defend them and their national interests at all times can have armies for ceremonial and peacekeeping duties alone. If we are talking about the Australian Army's suitability for peace, however, it seems to me that we must be talking about its capacity to sustain the qualities needed for future conflict, and I emphasise that—for future conflict—and its capacity to generate sufficient numbers of capabilities to match the needs of national strategy.

As the committee will know, to keep a force of an independent task force with logistic support in the field in South Vietnam for a prolonged period of time we had an army of about 44,000 with nine infantry battalions. Everyone worked very hard to do this and by 1972 the Army was exhausted even at this level of manning. We did not mobilise the reserve for this but relied instead on a selective national service scheme, with a birthday ballot, which I think most people would agree was a nationally divisive process that impacted severely on Army when taken in the context of the growing unpopularity of a war. I quote these figures to bring into focus the contention that we now have two brigades ready for operations at short notice out of a Regular Army of 24,000. Ready for what and for how long is the question that needs to be asked?

Certainly the tempo and scale of the recent INTERFET operation could not be sustained for very long as a purely regular force operation, let alone a serious conflict of the tempo and intensity of Vietnam. The same problem would apply to the conduct of sustained operations in northern Australia. We would either have to introduce a national service scheme, which would take a considerable time, or we would have to mobilise the Army Reserve, something which I understand has been attempted on a voluntary basis for East Timor without marked success.

This brings me to the vital question of just how mobilisible—if I can use that word—is the Army Reserve. I put it to the committee that while there might be individual reservists who could be mobilised in a reasonable period, they would represent only a small minority of the dwindling total of this component of the Army. The Army Reserve is simply not trained enough, fit enough, nor of sufficient strength to make a worthwhile contribution to Australian defence. This has been recognised for a long time. While there is no denying that many reservists bring exceptional skills from the workplace to the operational environment, they are not, in the main, soldierly skills. These take time to develop and hone. Collective skills on which military capability is based can be developed in reasonable time frames, provided the individuals have the military skills and physical fitness to begin early training as teams. In recent times three schemes have been attempted to overcome this serious deficiency: the Ready Reserve Scheme, Army Individual Readiness Notice and Continuous Individual Recruit and Initial Employment Training.

The Ready Reserve Scheme was essentially a scholarship scheme whereby young Australians gave one year's full-time and four years part-time service in exchange for assistance with their education and employment. There were signs of considerable success with this scheme, even though it never got past the pilot stage before it was cancelled or concluded. The scheme brought young people of considerable talent into the service to the nation before they were encumbered by commitments to full-time employment. It also gave them a solid year of full-time training. It contributed to the development of the national skills and knowledge pool and added to the national commitment to defence objectives. It is difficult to see how Defence will ever meet its regular recruiting objectives, let alone its reserve numbers, without such a scheme.

Army Individual Readiness Notice applied across the total Army, regular and reserve, and was designed to establish an individual responsibility to achieve and maintain the most basic soldierly skills and levels of fitness. It was done in response to two needs, one being the need to have all trained personnel to a standard where they could commence collective and team training after 30 days notice for callout, not, as some seemed to think, to go to war in 30 days, which would have been ridiculous for the Army Reserve in its current state. The second need was to affirm in every soldier's mind that being in the Army requires him or her to be ready to serve the nation. This was to counter a growing perception that the Army was just a normal job where you could make your own choices about standards and readiness, unencumbered by any restraints on your personal needs. To be fair to those who reacted adversely to these demands—and they were a small minority in the Regular Army—recruiting advertising had and still does emphasise the normality of military life. While this might have countered the extreme views of military endeavour favoured by the movies and other media, it creates an entirely false impression of those who must provide the nation's response to the application of organised armed force against its citizens and property. The Army is a very serious and dangerous business, and to portray it as just a job is entirely wrong.

The other objective of AIRN was to set the same fundamental basic standards for the regular and reserve components, so that something more than lip-service was paid to the concept of a total force and the reserve's availability for callout. I might add that many serious reservists were happy at being challenged in this way. They were fed up with being in units where there was no serious commitment to readiness standards, but concerned at the same time that the resources would not be provided to allow even this level of training and readiness. I suggest to the committee that their concern has proved to be justified as the reserve has been deprived of basic resources and training cadre to raise the raise the readiness of the two northern brigades. It would be useful for the committee to consider the long-term damage done to the reserve by this shift in resources.

The third issue was that of continuous training periods for reserve basic and initial employment training. In the absence of the Ready Reserve, something had to be done to get individual reservists to the situation where

their standard of training allowed them to effectively perform their role in collective training with safety. Many units were filled with soldiers who had no military trade qualification at all. Reservists often ran out of patience and left before they were able to be effective members of the unit. Much work was done to streamline training packages so that recruit and IET training for both regulars and reserves could be conducted to useful and recognisable levels in six-week periods, the assessed period that could be made available by tertiary students and school leavers.

There was a strong aversion to this approach by ex-reservists, many of whom seemed to forget that a lot of them were the product of a national service scheme which gave at least 90 days continuous training—that is, two six-week training periods—for exactly the same reason. There has been a strong resistance to recruiting for this form of training, many reservists asserting that the regimental esprit is best served by doing the training in two-week periods and night parades over a long period of time. I put it to the committee that this form of recruiting and training may have produced soldiers for simpler times when army depots were social centres of communities deprived of the range of entertainment and transport options available today, but it is a system of the past. It certainly does not meet the needs of the educated and qualification conscious young person of today, and it does not meet the needs for either trained individuals or trained units. It is better not to have reservists at all than to have untrained and disillusioned young Australians who quickly give up on the Army and take their newly acquired prejudices back into the civil community.

It has long been the contention of many senior reservists that many of the problems outlined above would be solved if there were legislation that allowed call-out of reserves for emergencies but also gave protection to their employment when they were serving. The legislation to provide for the same sort of medical support and indemnity which covers regular soldiers in their preparation for and conduct of operations would also be needed. There is much substance in these claims, but it does not take much analysis to conclude that the Army Reserve would have to move to a totally different level of commitment to justify these measures. It would have to be a very different reserve to that which has existed in times of peace in the past. Training standards would have to be more strictly applied, for example, and there would have to be much stronger basis in law for dealing with problems such as failure to attend training and failure to turn out when called for training or operational service.

The idea that you can get combat effective soldiers in a short time and with comparatively little resource outlay died with the cannon fodder concepts of the First World War. Placing high technology armies in the field today and supporting them is an expensive and time-consuming business calling for very innovative systems. Much of Army's expeditionary capability, for example, was represented by its logistic capabilities, including those in the reserve, which have in the main been dismantled over the last decade to allow the reallocation of resources to other defence capabilities. This dismantling was justified on the grounds that Army's main role was to stay at home and defend northern Australia, where civil industry would provide the logistics on contract. Army has therefore been more embarrassed in East Timor by its deficiency in technical and support strength than it has by the limited numbers of combat units. Quite clearly, if Army is to deploy regularly for operations of this nature, something will have to be done to restore its support capacity. Once again, I put it to the committee that some policy which both trains in technology and binds intelligent young Australians to the nation's defence will have to be introduced for the future. I believe that the scheme, when it comes, will look very much like the Ready Reserves scheme of the 1990s.

In conclusion, it is my contention that the growing strategic responsibilities of Australia mean that we are nearing the time as a nation when we have to have more mature processes in place for the generation of capabilities from the civilian community. By this I do not mean mobilisation in the early 20th century European terms and with universal national service as a foundation, but a proper contractual relationship between the nation and well-trained volunteers who are engaged in the pursuit of both a military and a civilian career. We have never done this properly in the past. Much of what we have done has been a waste of the taxpayers' money and has produced little capability for national defence. I believe it is time for us to grow up.

CHAIR—General Sanderson, thank you for the frank and fulsome comments that you put in there. You have obviously given it a lot of thought. I think the committee really appreciates your efforts. Before moving to questions, I just want to clarify something. In your earlier comments, you made some reference to the review in either 1996 or 1997 of little anticipation outside of Army that Army would be where it is today. I was wondering what anticipation was inside Army that was not heard by anyone else.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—The arguments in Defence have been that the maritime strategy really should have included a concept of manoeuvre of the land force. This was very slow to be accepted within the defence organisation. There was anticipation within Army that the most likely employment of the Army was manoeuvre in the maritime environment to the north of Australia. I would suggest that, given the events of today, that is pretty well justified.

CHAIR—You have made some fairly disparaging remarks about lots of things, but about the reserve in particular. I think people recognise that the Ready Reserve had a lot of merits and it was not cheap but, as you have pointed out, the current reserve is lacking basic resources. It has been deprived of a lot of them. Do I take it that you, therefore, do not see the value in restocking those resources so that the current reserves can be built upon?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I think what we need in the reserve is trained individuals. That is what all of these schemes have been about. It is about making sure that those who are in the reserve can be mobilised on the basis of their training to operate in the modern military environment. There is fairly conclusive evidence that you cannot do this on a two-week night parade training basis which we have inherited from the good old days when everybody could shoot and ride. Those illusions were part of the Australian tradition. These days this is a highly technical business. To operate in the environments of either peacekeeping, peace enforcement or war that we have been describing requires high quality junior leadership at low levels and very high skills on the part of soldiers. Unless the reserve is trained for these things, then there is little chance of it being able to be mobilised to be employed.

CHAIR—But how are you going to mesh the competing needs of the individuals who, because of employment et cetera, are going to have great difficulties in undertaking that sort of level of skills upgrade or training or whatever? You cannot put them all into a Ready Reserve because a lot of them either will not be eligible for other reasons.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I made the point in my statement that the Ready Reserve scheme was essentially based on taking people into one year full-time training before they were committed to full-time employment. That was the essential part of the scheme. Then, as a consequence of that, the contractual arrangement was that the Commonwealth made a contribution to their education and employment. In fact, we were not the only organisation in the world to attempt this. I would suggest that the United States Marine Corps manning is almost entirely based on this philosophy. Most of their soldiers are recruited for two years full-time service and seven years part-time service. It is a reserve organisation where young Americans trade their military service for education. Many of them end up in the Congress of the United States, I might add. This is not without successful precedent.

CHAIR—I am just trying to get a picture. Are you saying you have effectively phased the current reserves out or are they just going to be people who have been through a Ready Reserve training and, therefore, will still have some involvement wherever they are employed?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I do not want to in any way denigrate the effort of the current reserves. I know that there are some outstanding people in the current reserves who have made, in some cases, a lifelong contribution to national security. The fact of the matter is that the reserves should be manned by trained people. The question is: how do you get them trained for the sorts of operations which would make them a useful tool for mobilisation?

I have made the point that invasion of Australia is most unlikely in the short term. What is likely is employment of coalition operations. We could not employ the reserve in its current untrained state on any of those coalition operations just as we really could not have employed them in Vietnam. The point I am making is that while the reserve is an acceptable concept—indeed there is a need for the nation to have a reserve because it cannot afford the cost of keeping all of the required manpower in full-time service—the reserve must be trained.

Mr LAURIE FERGUSON—Just a variation on the way the chairman has been putting the question: in the absence of a political decision to move back towards Ready Reserve, given your comments that you feel that the current training period is the very least that is necessary, how do we overcome the realities of the workplace and the difficulties experienced? In the absence of going back to that, have you any suggestions on how we essentially tackle the problem we do have?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I think the reality of the workplace is that, firstly, we have high employment at the moment and I think that is going to produce a serious problem for all three services in recruiting at this stage and also in the retention. But the fact of the matter is that the target element of the population for the sorts of training that I am talking about is not in full-time employment. It is in full-time education and increasingly, it seems to me, there is a policy in this nation that that education has to be paid for by the individual. There seems to be a clear logic that we should move to a situation where we have a contractual relationship with those individuals whereby they give us military service and we give them education and training.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Thank you for your opening address which I think clarified a lot of the issues. My question was regarding the mandate for UN operations. It is hard to look too far in the future but do you think, having learnt from the failures in Rwanda, Somalia and Bosnia, that future like situations are more likely to have a much wider UN resolution incorporating peace enforcement under Chapter 7 of the UN charter?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Yes. Obviously the peace enforcement operations are fraught with all sorts of complexities associated with issues of sovereignty, and the current Secretary-General has put the cat amongst the pigeons, if I could say that, by proposing two forms of sovereignty. He has suggested that the international community has the right to intervene either under United Nations mandate or under regional mandate in nations where there are gross breaches of human rights and international humanitarian law.

Senator SCHACHT—Do you think that it is wrong in international law to have that concept now developed?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I personally think it is a sign of our times and the way of the future which means that intervention of an enforcement nature is probably more likely in the future. One of the problems with intervention of that nature is that those nations that do intervene have to be prepared to persevere in a way that has not been considered in the past. In other words, I am suggesting that the OSCE is probably going to be in the Balkans for at least a generation, probably as long as they were on the inner German border, which is more than a generation. Essentially in Europe, with the collapse of the Soviet Union, the responsibilities have moved eastwards and it is likely that they will be kept there for a long time to come. I suspect that there is a possibility that we may be confronted with things like that ourselves in the future. I think that intervention operations of that type are very much an imperative for stabilising the global situation in periods of great change and where weapons of mass destruction are hovering in the background. I am not sure if I am getting to answering your question.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—That is what I wanted to lead on to with regard to the Australian Army, in terms of where we are looking at, what should be the preparedness for peacekeeping operations and so on. But if the Australian Army were more likely to be involved in peace enforcement operations, then their training would be pretty similar to what it would be operating in the littoral region or in coalition operations anyway—is that correct?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Yes, that is correct. The point I made was that peace enforcement operations are really war. You hope that you do not have to actually fight the war but you go prepared to do so, which is exactly what NATO has done in entering the Balkans.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I have a question about the balance of infantry and armoured brigade. On another trip not related to this inquiry, when this subcommittee was up in Darwin, 1st Brigade put it to us that tanks on the corners of streets were very effective in peacekeeping operations in former Yugoslavia. What do you think about the balance between infantry and armoured? Should we have more infantry? Are they likely to be more useful in that sort of peace enforcement operation?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—There is a misunderstanding about the use of tanks in Bosnia and former Yugoslavia. These are enforcement operations, make no mistake about it. NATO arrived heavy in armour, with the backing of a very powerful aerospace capability, to make sure that people got the message. I would suggest that there was even a hint of such a thing with respect to the INTERFET deployment into East Timor.

Senator SCHACHT—You are well known for heading the peacekeeping arrangements in Cambodia with great success. Are some of your ideas that you outline in your very lucid paper part of your experience that those shortcomings were experienced in Cambodia by the Australians? We had quite a sizeable contingent there for two or three years who performed admirably, and many of us saw them personally. Did some of those deficiencies you mention now, in terms of what we would be required to provide in the future, germinate in your experience in Cambodia?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—There is no question in my mind—and this came out of the Cambodian experience—that the best peacekeepers are troops who anybody who is opposed to the mission takes seriously. Those who come along not organised, not with a military endeavour, tend to be unable to implement the peacekeeping mandate; they are not taken seriously and normally they are the ones that suffer the casualties. That is certainly a conclusion that I made out of Cambodia. As I said in my presentation, I am very happy that Australian troops are considered to be leading performers in these environments, and I put it to you that that is because of the professionalism of the organisation.

Senator SCHACHT—You probably, like all of us, saw the press report last night and in the press today about the remarkable speech yesterday by the new Defence secretary, Allan Hawke. I have not seen the full speech, but in the *Australian* today he is quoted as saying that when he took over the job:

> ... he had hoped to find an overarching corporate plan, business plans for each unit, a "plan on a page" for each person, a record of achievement and progress, and an understanding of how the department served government.
>
> "I hoped to find that and I didn't," he said.

You were the head of the Army, as Chief of Army, until about 2½ or three years ago. If you had been there today or if he was there saying that 2½ years ago when you were head of Army, how would you have re-

sponded to those remarks? Would you have said privately, 'You are way off beam, you do not understand,' or, 'Basically, I agree with much of what you are saying and you are right about the need for further administrative, structural reform'?

CHAIR—I will allow that question, but I do not want to get sidetracked. I know it is a major issue.

Senator SCHACHT—It is about the structure of the Army.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I will keep it to the Army.

CHAIR—Yes, just keep it to the Army.

Senator SCHACHT—I asked that of General Sanderson as the head of the Army and how it relates to the Army. Then I will flow to some other questions about Army capability that you raised in your statement.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I suspect that Dr Hawke is right about that. I do not believe that is a consequence of the intentions being wrong within the Department of Defence. It is simply a question of confusion about exactly what was required of them. When I was most recently serving, it was clear that the intention was to develop the sorts of plans, objectives, visions and things that Dr Hawke is talking about. In fact, a lot of work went into that.

One of the difficulties that we found is trying to impart to people in the field a vision and a set of objectives which are not matched by resources. Over a prolonged period of time, they cease to take you seriously when you establish objectives that are not matched by resources. When you are changing those objectives and resources continuously, as I have suggested has happened with the reserve, then you start to lose credibility with the people in the field. I suspect that is what Dr Hawke is talking about. He is saying that the department has lost credibility with the operators in the field. I understand that he has been talking to a lot people out there and that is the sense he has. While I was Commander of the Army, and before, I was very conscious of this problem because we are dealing with a lot of intelligent people who are putting a lot of hard work into achieving those objectives.

Senator SCHACHT—You mentioned that the problem with the army in Timor was that you did not have the transport equipment to provide the service, the backup to the soldiers, and that this had all been outsourced as part of the strategy that we are only going to defend the Australian continent and it would not be required. Can you just give us a bit more detail—or do you want to take it on notice—and exactly specify what those areas of shortages are and what the equipment deficiency is that led you to make that comment?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—This is probably a question that should be asked of Army. I do not pretend to any collusion in this. What I am suggesting to you is that the Army structure was based on a logistic support force of one hit only. So you have sufficient logistic support for us to support one operation and then, if you want to rotate it, there is nothing behind it. What happens is that the elements of the logistic support force have to serve much longer in an operational capacity than the combat elements. Some people might think that is acceptable because they are not actually on combat duties. But they are really in a combat area and are expected to have the same sort of vigilance and so on.

To be fair to the organisation, the idea was that the Army's role was essentially for the defence of northern Australia, with the odd deployment to secure Australian citizens' interests. The ultimate conclusion of that, when based against the rest of the defence program, was that you needed only one logistics support force. The question then is: for how long? If you need only one logistics support force for two-week training exercises, that is okay. If you need only one logistics support force for a three-month deployment, that is okay. But if you need a logistics support force for 12 months or two years deployment, then you have a problem.

CHAIR—The Chief of Army will be appearing again.

Senator SCHACHT—You might be more forthcoming now that you are no longer in the system and head of Army. I have been on this committee on and off now for nearly 12 years. One of the informal comments sometimes in hearings is that Army say that, generally on issues of sophisticated equipment, Army always loses out to the Air Force and the Navy in the debate about who gets the big equipment. I have heard that complaint and it might be partly myth. When you were the head of the Army, did you have a sense when you were around the table that your two other colleagues, the heads of the Navy and the Air Force, were often voting informally and acting together to make sure they got the bigger equipment at the expense of the Army?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I think when I became Chief of Army, my sense was that that was where we were. During the time of my tenure as Chief of Army, I thought we had actually shifted the balance quite significantly, and there was recognition that we had to have a highly mobile, highly lethal but small military force. That essentially was what the *Army in the 21st Century* study was all about. It was a defence study. The interesting thing about the *Army in the 21st Century* study was that it was a defence study which was carried out with us as one of the participants in it. But, at the end of the day, Defence was not happy with the results of the study that had been carried out. Nevertheless, there was an increasing commitment to Army in the five-year

program, particularly in the high technology area, which delighted me. In fact, there was a greater orientation of the Navy and Air Force's resources towards supporting the Army, which delighted me. This is a key component of the whole thing.

So I anticipated that, in the fullness of time, there would be a significant shift in this when it came to fruition. But it has been the case, of course, that the Navy and the Air Force, by and large, have been developed to participate with the Americans in high-technology environments, and they are continually trying to match those environments. I do not think there is a nation in the world that can match them at the moment, but it is very expensive trying to keep up, and that and the intelligence and command and control systems have dominated the program. Army has been very much the poor relation in that process. I could to a large extent live with that in terms of the proportions of the program. But there is no question that we should consider putting high quality young people into these operational environments without the best equipment to enable them to succeed.

Senator SCHACHT—I have one last question on this matter. You mentioned high quality young Australians; this is on the question of women in the service. With education, et cetera, in a high tech environment, they can be just as well trained to handle all of that as men, but we still have restrictions in some areas about combat service, which I think is under review. If you do not provide the same career structure for a woman in this modern day to say that she has the right to aim at being the head of the Army—if she does not serve in a combat unit somewhere in her career—her chances of getting to be near the top of the Army are restricted by obvious lack of experience. This debate has been going on. Do you have any particular view that, subject to adequate generic training and physical and mental capacity, there is any reason why women should not be in combat areas—infantry, tanks, artillery? Even now the backup could easily take casualties, anyway.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—The combat environment is the combat environment, and the combat environment does not change to suit the career needs of people. It is just a reality. The combat environment for the Navy and the Air Force is totally different from the combat environment for the Army, by and large. It is more of a hands-on, face-to-face, live in the field, bloody, dirty business, and it is quite difficult to manage the sorts of relationships that you are talking about. That is not to suggest that there are not women who cannot perform in that environment, or have not performed in those environments in the past. There are, I think, rare instances where that has been the case. But I do not suggest that they might not do so in the future.

In terms of career prospects, I would suggest to you that in Army, the operational experience, the combat experience, is a very important part of selecting people for promotion through the system, because if they have not experienced the environments we are talking about, how indeed can they understand what it is that the people need in those environments? In fact, I am very concerned at the moment that in Canberra there is a developing lack of understanding about that. That may in part be what Dr Hawke is talking about.

Mr SNOWDON—I ask about your comments on the figures of 43,000 to 24,000 and your observation that ready for what and for how long is the question that needs to be asked. What is your view about that?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—The figures are changing at the moment. We were working on the basis of 23,000 in the Army. That came out of the Defence Efficiency Review. That was the upper limit we were given. We were trying to identify a 15,000-strong combat force out of that. The basis of that was that there were 15,000 in the combat force and 8,000 left over for everything else. If the everything else was unhappy about those numbers, then they had to contract things out or do things by other means or the Navy and the Air Force had to pick up the load. The 15,000 number was required to enable us to produce a combat force from which we could provide a deployable brigade.

Mr SNOWDON—One.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—One deployable brigade. That was the 1997 review. The idea was that we could identify capabilities out of the two northern brigades that we could mix and match to do that. The object was to have almost a generic command and control system that enabled these things to be slotted in to those relationships. Even then one understood that was one brigade of 4,000 or 5,000 troops that could be deployed. You could not sustain that for very long unless you started to introduce the sorts of systems that I am talking about by mobilising the reserve or introducing a national service scheme and so on. You could sustain operations of a lesser intensity with smaller forces for a longer period of time.

Mr SNOWDON—Given your observations about the changing strategic environment, where would you be leading us to in a discussion about these things now? Would you be saying that we need that 24,000, 25,000 or 26,000 and two brigades? You have obviously made observations about the deficiencies in some areas that have resulted from that process of people corporatising or contracting out.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—It seems to me that we are faced with the prospect now of needing the two brigades at operational levels of readiness—one for deployment in the maritime environment to our north and one for de-

ployment in other circumstances with one at high readiness for deployment in the event of other emergencies that might spring up while so deployed. It seems to me that we need at least two. Personally, I prefer to call them task forces because they are forces that you put together to meet the needs in this modern environment. I do not think there is a rigid ideal for these operations. I think the force that we sent to Somalia was a task force. It was a force put together specifically for a task. I mean task forces of the size of the independent brigades. If you are going to have that, it seems to me that you are going to need a larger army than you have now or a much more highly trained reserve that is much more deployable. We were trying to do that.

Mr SNOWDON—This morning we had some people here from CARE Australia. Given your participation in East Timor, would you care to make any observations about the interrelationship of the defence INTERFET forces with the NGOs? If their priorities were competing, as they presumably were in some instances, how might those competing priorities or conflicts have been sorted out?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I start by saying that over the last five or six years we had gone to great lengths in the ADF to conduct peacekeeping training across the full spectrum of those engaged. There is a fairly broad participation of NGOs in the peacekeeping training that has been conducted in the ADF Peacekeeping Centre and a lot of people who are operating in East Timor have been through that process. There is a greater commonality of understanding of the needs of these things and I believe that would have helped considerably with the INTERFET deployment which was about providing a secure environment in which the humanitarian operations could proceed. My experience is that the honeymoon never lasts very long in these sorts of things because the NGOs are not a uniform group. They all have different ideas of the relationship. I think that in Cambodia we had 185 NGOs in the field. I am not sure how many were deployed into—

Mr SNOWDON—About 50-plus we are told.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—They were of various sizes and efficiencies and some of them had a firmer relationship with the military than others. Quite clearly, as a result of the discussion that has been going on about CARE's operation in former Bosnia, many NGOs will be very wary about being seen to be too close to the military in the future and that is a bad thing that has come out of that. My experience of this is that there are always NGOs who confuse the military's main mission. They think the NGOs and the military share the same objectives, whereas often it is about creating the security environment. They are very outspoken about it. One of the great problems of this is that they do not have the same inhibitions in talking to the media about it and, secondly, they tend to take sides in the environment. They have great difficulty maintaining neutrality in these environments. They become attached to one side or the other. I predict that it is going to be awkward but whatever we do to have combined training with NGOs will help in the future.

Senator GIBBS—I am actually interested in your idea of education and training. Would there be certain courses or would this education system be open? Would this be a broad spectrum of courses or just certain courses? Who are you actually trying to attract here—doctors, technicians?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—I think it is the full spectrum of skills and learning which are applicable to the military environment in the future, which is just about everything in varying numbers. That is not really the key determinant of this. We have had people do the Ready Reserve scheme who have gone and done medicine. They started off as combat infantrymen in the Ready Reserve—and incidentally they normally maintain their combat infantry orientation even though they are doctors in later life—and have gone on and done medicine or whatever the case may be.

Senator GIBBS—How would this work? Would we actually have to build new universities or would they be trained at certain universities?

Lt Gen. Sanderson—The objective, as I suggested, is that our young people are now very qualifications conscious and they are also—

Senator GIBBS—They have to be.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—in the business of continuous education. Therefore it is important that whatever training and education they are given, both in the military and as part of a reward for their military service, has recognition for employment purposes across the full spectrum. The Army, and I think the Defence Force, has been putting a lot of effort into gaining recognition for training which is done inside the service. In fact, a lot of that is now done in civilian institutions.

Senator GIBBS—That is actually what I am trying to establish. You encourage young people to join the Defence Force for so many years—two years training I think you said—but what about the education part of it? Some degree courses go for four and five years. Are they still in the force for that time and are they training at the same time? When they finish their degree—say, three, four, five years down the track—do they then have to spend another two years in the military as soldiers, or whatever, and then go out into civilian life? I am just trying to work out how this would work.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Under the Ready Reserves scheme, the most common recruit was somebody who came from secondary school, say, at the age of 18, and did a year's full-time training before going off and doing university education. They did their year's full-time training in the military and then did their education in an established university, with assistance from the Commonwealth. During that time they were on an obligation to provide so many days training a year, so that they were kept up to standard and kept efficient, and they were obliged for callout with their unit if the government wanted to call them out. The idea was that they were educated in civilian institutions. The government did not meet all their expenses in that respect, but they were paid salaries when they did full-time service and all of those sorts of things, so the total package was quite a reasonable one for them.

I said that normally it was the one that came out of high school, say, at 18 and did a year of full-time service before they went into full-time education. But we also picked up a large number of people who had missed the education thing first time round, good quality people who said, 'Okay, I want to have a second go at this.' They came back, provided a year's full-time service and then went back into the education system. These people, frankly, make terrific soldiers because they are people who have been on the road to Damascus and they really want to make a good go of it. The point about it is that these people also provide a source for leadership in the normal reserve. Some of them at the end of their education might go off and find that the demands of their full-time employment in the immediate post-tertiary environment are such that they cannot continue their service, but, because of the way in which they have been brought into the service, they can be called up later on anyway. When they get to the situation where their circumstances allow, they can come back into the system. It is a flexible system that involves people across a broad spectrum of our society.

Senator GIBBS—But if—

CHAIR—Time has just about run out. You can put something in writing, if you like.

Senator GIBBS—No, it is all right.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, General Sanderson, for a very valuable contribution to this inquiry. I am sure that if there are any matters that members want to take up with you, we can write to you and you will respond.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Sure.

CHAIR—Again, on behalf of the committee, thank you very much indeed for a valuable contribution.

Lt Gen. Sanderson—Thank you, Mr Chairman, it is a pleasure. Good luck with the inquiry.

Subcommittee adjourned at 2.33 p.m.