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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

(DEFENCE SUBCOMMITTEE)

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

TUESDAY, 22 FEBRUARY 2000

MELBOURNE

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Defence Subcommittee

Tuesday, 22 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 Hollis, 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 Ferguson and Gibbs and Mrs Crosio, Mr Hawker, Mr Hollis, Mr Price 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
6. *Australia's Strategic Policy* (1997).

WITNESSES

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WOOD, Dr Jim, (Private capacity)

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 fourth in an inquiry presently being conducted by the defence subcommittee into the suitability of the Australian Army for peacetime, peacekeeping and war. 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 committee hopes to be able to table its report in the second half of the year.

I welcome Dr Wood. 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 contempt of the parliament. 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. Would you like to make any additions or corrections to that submission?

Dr Wood—I have no changes to make. I have some comments that I put as proposal 1 that have arisen since my submission in terms of the defence debate in the latter part of 1999.

CHAIR—If you would like to make a brief opening statement before we proceed to questions, please do.

Dr Wood—Thank you. I draw to the attention of the committee that I have provided a list of proposals and a CV attached to that.

I wish to speak to the first proposal at this stage and underscore its importance to what the work of the subcommittee should achieve. It states:

That the Defence Act be amended to enable the Governor General, as Commander in Chief, at 28 days notice, to call out on full time duty any member and/or unit/formation of the Australian Army, for whatever purposes and period agreed to by the Commonwealth Parliament and to guarantee equality and protection of service conditions.

That is my first proposal, and I wish to make my introductory remarks along that line.

I put it to the committee that on the eve of the centenary of the Army, the Commonwealth parliament has yet to enact, let alone test in the courts, amendments to the Defence Act for the call-out and conditions of service applicable equally to all members of the Australian Army. As recently as the adoption of the amendments to the Defence Act in December 1999, the Commonwealth parliament continued the longstanding inequity whereby the internationally renowned warrior, known as the Australian soldier, continues to train and to fight with one arm tied behind his back.

I note as merely illustrative of my proposal that the Commonwealth parliament 20 years ago, when discussing amendments to the Defence Act made in 1965, 'regarded as inadequate the call-out of the CMF'. Moreover, when further amendments to the Defence Act were proclaimed with effect on 1 July 1988, the 'drafting process did not extend to consideration of further protection of reservist civilian employment and other related issues'. This was despite the assurance by the then CDF to all members of the reserves that:

... the Defence (Re-Establishment) Act, which provides protection in relation to civilian employment, will be reviewed and recommendation (sic) developed for consideration by government to ensure that the reservists can render full-time service in a call-out situation without disadvantage to their employment.

Moreover, an army working party inquiring into the protection of reservist civilian rights when called out was commissioned too late to be of any significance to the 1987 debate and was finally submitted on 17 October 1991 to the then assistant chief of personnel.

I have a copy of that report, which was known as the Standish report. It was headed by Brigadier G.B. Standish, a distinguished army officer who, in his civilian capacity, was also Comptroller of Shell Australia. His report was an expert examination of the policy and personnel aspects arising from call-out and contains specific recommendations accordingly. His report encompassed the lessons drawn from the Australian and US experience with regard to employment of reservists in the Gulf conflict. These matters, as I understand it, remain uncorrected.

I note that the parliamentary debates on further amendments to the Defence Act during 1999, as I read the *Hansard*, concern themselves primarily with such matters as urine testing, the transfer of senior regular officers to the reserve and a number of parochial issues. I note also that the appropriate minister has removed the fundamental and longstanding provision for defence leave and currently the Defence Act, as I understand it, should the government of the day apply it, accords a penalty of $200 action against an employer. I suggest to the committee that history repeats itself. I note this reference in the *Hansard* on 18 October 1999:

... a review of current legislation is included in a paper being prepared by Defence that will present a range of options to Government aimed at improving the Reserve contribution to the ADF capability.

Ladies and gentlemen, it is almost 100 years since the Army came into being. We have yet to get the legislation right with regard to the force that constitutes something like 50 per cent of its strength and, according to my information, something like 60 per cent of its combat strength. So I put that proposal to the committee. I could talk to the other proposals as the chairman sees fit.

CHAIR—Thank you, Dr Wood. Maybe you could just expand a little bit on this 28-days notice. In practical terms, what implications are there going to be for the people involved?

Dr Wood—When I look through the *Hansard* – and that is my primary source of information – and also the Standish report, I understand that there are practical difficulties between the time that the Governor-General might call out the reserve and the time that an individual is called upon to serve. It may well be that, quite apart from legitimate exemptions, you will get people saying, 'Well, now is my chance to get out of the reserve. So you need some formal period of warning whereby individuals have got due warning, and it ought to be a legitimate and precise period, so that the commander-in-chief can say, 'We call out the reserve with effect on a certain date.'

CHAIR—But 28 days seems fairly short notice.

Dr Wood—It is by nature of a warning.

CHAIR—If, for argument's sake, say half cannot meet that 28 days, what happens then?

Dr Wood—I think that is part of the problem that this committee should look at. As I said, when I went through the Standish report, there are these questions of conditions of service for reservists, and I think they would be quite proper, as they would be for a regular soldier. There may well be compassionate or other grounds why a person could not undertake their service. But it seems to me, whether you agree to 28 days or some other prescribed period, you really need to be able to say, 'From this date, certain individuals or units are called out.'

CHAIR—Have you tested this with people in the reserves?

Dr Wood—People I keep in touch with, yes.

CHAIR—What is their reaction?

Dr Wood—Why not.

Mrs CROSIO—Dr Wood, I found it an interesting submission that you put in.

Dr Wood—Thank you.

Mrs CROSIO—I think you raised some interesting questions. Do you see the Army itself as having a distinct role in peacetime?

Dr Wood—Yes, very definitely. I was going to come to that in terms of this question of the Army being the mobilisation base for an expanded army. That is its role. Its primary role is the defence of the country. I have suggested that a secondary role should be the provision of a prescribed size force – an operational deployment force of, say, a brigade, for contingencies like the one we had in East Timor. The primary role of the Army in peacetime is to prepare for war.

Mrs CROSIO—So you do not see them being involved, for example, when we have cyclones or floods?

Dr Wood—Of course. I see that as a natural outcome, provided you do not skew the everyday training activities of the force to that end. Of course it is legitimate to fight fires and help in national interest projects. I think the idea of special work that is being done with Aboriginal communities is a quite legitimate task for the Army, provided it does not skew, which it has done in the past. I remember after Vietnam people saying to me, 'Why is the reserve spending its time on cordon and search?' Its primary task in life is the tour phases of war. That attitude seems to linger. I imagine following Timor we will see a fair bit of that sort of operation creep back into our standard practice.

Senator GIBBS—Dr Wood, I notice that your proposal 4 states:

That the first priority of the Australian Army be to have in place, or in prospect, the means to successfully defend the homeland in the event of war.

Our Army could not really defend us if we were invaded though, could they?

Dr Wood—Not under the present arrangements. Not by a long shot. I see that, as I have said elsewhere in my submission, as the worst case situation. What we tend to train for and are structured for is not the worst case but the best case. The defence of the homeland would be a massive task, but we need to start from some basic proposition. I suggested in the submission that you reverse your consideration in terms of the order of events and say, 'If we have to deal with the worst case situation, the worst case that could affect this country is war.'

Senator GIBBS—But isn't that what the Army do now? Don't they prepare for the worst case scenario?

Dr Wood—My experience, from my observations over a long time, is that they do not. I think Timor is probably a good example. The government by decision reduced two regular battalions from the order of battle. Suddenly we have Timor on our hands and we have to re-establish two regular battalions.

Senator GIBBS—That is true, but where are we going to get the soldiers from for the two new battalions? People leave the Army all the time; they do not stay. We have to wonder why they do not stay.

Dr Wood—If you deal with purely the reserve, it is the idea that for a long time the government or the parliament has not given a worthwhile role to half the Army. Every time we have had a special commitment, from Korea onwards, what we have required is that we raise additional regular manpower. We have not said a reserve is a reserve. If you use up your regular manpower, you call out your reserve. We have not done that. We had special arrangements for Scheyville. When we needed additional officers for Vietnam and the like, we went to these ad hoc additional commitments. If you are a reservist and you can see that being done again and again, what is the point in being in the reserve?

Senator GIBBS—Have you had much discussion with reservists? We have heard quite a bit of evidence from people in the reserves about how unhappy they are.

Dr Wood—All I can do is confirm a great deal of unhappiness. There was the decision to suddenly re-establish two regular battalions, like turning on a tap, when you could have had the 5/6 Battalion sitting here in Melbourne on full-time duty. The emphasis for three years has been on build-up of this battalion so that we can use it. But we have not used it. If you were member of that battalion, you would say, 'What is all this emphasis for?'

Senator GIBBS—That is true. I would imagine that when the two battalions were disbanded the people were not really happy about it either. We have heard quite a bit about the reservists being trained to full capacity as regular soldiers. They do not have enough equipment. We have heard that there is a lack of equipment and lack of bullets. I think the Regular Army has a lack of bullets too. What is your answer here? Do you feel that they should be fully trained, bearing in mind that these people are in civilian life with jobs?

Dr Wood—There are two aspects to that. The one that I think has been discounted ever since I can remember is that, as a result of their civilian occupations, reservists pick up a lot of skills that are not generally available or available in terms of different experience in the regular force. That has been a real strength. The second point is that we will never have a situation of equality of training in the sense of that outcome until we can put people on full-time training. That is the reality.

Mrs CROSIO—What would you term full-time training? How long would it be?

Dr Wood—I suggested in my submission that you put a reserve battalion on full-time duty for a year and rotate the battalion through on progressive call-out. You would have to give due warning. You would have to fill quite a number of holes. I have suggested as a corollary to that proposal that you have a system of limited Commonwealth service where you make up the numbers for the battalion going on full-time duty out of a Commonwealth service scheme. It would be something similar to the Ready Reserve arrangement. I was opposed to the Ready Reserve when it was first mooted because quite rightly the general reserve became the third eleven. It was a fact.

CHAIR—With hindsight do you still say that?

Dr Wood—With hindsight I would say that the Ready Reserve concept looked excellent. But, instead of creating a separate force, it should have been part of the Australian Army. That is one of the points I hope comes across forcefully in my submission. I am not arguing just a case for the reserve. My case is based on one army. My second proposal was this attitudinal one – ever since I can remember we have had this division; I have given you the historical background and you are probably more aware of it than I am – which says that we have one Australian army, and this division into regular and reservist has crippled us. That is my concern. I am not here just to put the case for the reserve. My concern is the state of the army.

Senator GIBBS—There is a lot of merit in what you say but, because people out there are in the work force, there are a lot of problems with employers. I know we are bringing in legislation to rectify that in some

way, but a lot of employers simply will not give the time. Even if they are forced to do so, they will find some way of getting rid of that person down the track. Let's face it: employers do this sort of thing. How do we overcome that when, for example, somebody has to have a year off? Will we have to legislate to make it law so people cannot say, 'If you are away for a year, just do not bother coming back'?

Mrs CROSIO—We do it for maternity leave.

Dr Wood—We have all these other arrangements in our society that say it is possible to grant people leave. It took us a long time to realise that things like health and safety, equal opportunity and racism need a legislative base. That is my first proposition. Until we get the legislation right, we will go on with these inequities. There is the idea that you can fine an employer $200 under the Defence Act. A plumber could earn that in a day.

Senator GIBBS—Yes, that is a joke.

Dr Wood—You do not wish to belt people into submission; you want their cooperation. So there may well be tax arrangements or whatever that we could come up with.

Senator GIBBS—Thank you.

Senator FERGUSON—I want to follow on in response to some of the questions asked by Mr Hawker in relation to the reserve and the 28-day call-out. If we are going to accept the concept of a regular army and a ready reserve and the fact that much of that regular army is available and ready for immediate deployment, isn't it reasonable to accept the proposition that the reserve should be just that – a reserve that can be called out at some notice? Isn't your proposition of a 28-day call-out for the whole of the reserve – you would have to cover everybody who is in it; you could not just pick some people to be ready in 28 days – asking a bit much of a reserve force which is involved in civilian life and employment, which has been raised earlier? I think that probably the events of East Timor have proved that some reservists can go in with a very quick turnaround time, particularly those with skills. We saw people operating in theatres – surgeons and people like that. Don't you think you are asking a bit much to ask that the whole of the Ready Reserve be available for call-up within 28 days?

Dr Wood—I do not wish to sound frivolous, but I am a teacher and I seriously considered how I was going to get your attention. I do not put this as a frivolous remark. I put the idea of 28 days because my main concern is that we have both an appropriate period of warning and a legal period of warning. In terms of people being available, as I said, that is one of the reasons why I have suggested progressive call-out, putting units on full-time duty. We would then test the system. We would then come across these problems of whether people would be available or whether, if they are working for some organisation, they could be released.

I am not too concerned about the period. I think that is a matter for the committee to decide. My point is that you do need to give due warning, whether it is 28 days or three months or whatever. We had that arrangement in the Defence Act in the past, and I think it was three months. I think that may well be the answer. But there are other occasions, I would think, where you would need to be able to call out individuals much more quickly than that.

In terms of the idea of a reserve – and I think this also comes out of the Gulf War experience – what tended to happen was that individuals were called out initially rather than units and the individuals were lost in the system. So, in effect, you are denigrating the contribution of units of the reserve. To me, that has been a problem: you can put a man in uniform and once he is in uniform full time then regrettably he can disappear into the system in terms of his individual circumstances. I notice in Brigadier Standish's report that a naval doctor who was called out to serve in the Gulf found himself seriously disadvantaged on return with regard to his regular colleagues and raised the whole question of whether or not he should have done so in the first place.

CHAIR—You said 'with regard to his regular colleagues'.

Dr Wood—Yes – in this case the permanent naval officers on the same ship.

Senator FERGUSON—The reason I raised this is that we would want to make it possible for any civilian who wants to join the reserve to be able to do so. But it is a fact that some occupations require far greater notice for people to be able to make themselves available than others. Some employees are easily replaced, depending on their job, and some have roles within their employment that make them very difficult to replace at short notice. I think that if we had a short period of time – and you are suggesting 28 days – in which all people had to make themselves available or employers had to make their people available, it would preclude some people from even becoming members of the Ready Reserve, because they would be considered just far too important in the job they were doing, and some of those people would have the best skills. I just think you are putting a very restrictive piece of legislation and framework if you say that people need to be called out in 28 days. Three months or six months I could understand, because they are reservists.

Dr Wood—Senator, I have said that the period is a matter for the committee to decide. I am just wishing to raise it as a quite fundamental matter. With regard to the type of people in the reserve, which was part of your question, I remember in the mid-seventies people saying that the average individual coming out of a university would have three careers in his lifetime. We are now saying to our students there may be 10 or 15 careers in a lifetime. In my reserve service I joined as a member of a state government organisation. Later on I was a teacher. Then I had 17 years with Defence and Foreign Affairs. Then I had some postgraduate study, and I am back teaching. My career has constantly changed, and yet I had a very successful and fulfilling life in the reserve as a reserve officer.

Senator FERGUSON—But you did not have a 28-day call-out, did you?

Dr Wood—No, but, if it had come to that, that would be a matter at the time. If I was doing some particular job in Foreign Affairs, obviously there would have been a clash, but as a teacher there may well have not been.

CHAIR—This is pretty fundamental because if you are going to have units there and you set this fairly short period and suddenly half a unit just cannot make it, it makes it look very hollow.

Dr Wood—Hollow? I am glad you raised that. Have you looked at the question of how it was possible to get a second regular brigade onto readiness standards? I have seen this again and again in the past where my regular colleagues are saying, 'We've just lost our mortars because we've got to get a battalion on 28 days notice.' That has happened ever since I can remember. Of course it would happen with reserve units, but that is where the filling arrangements come in if you have got some sort of Commonwealth service scheme – you fill them up for the people that cannot get away. If I am on my back in a hospital because I am having cancer removed from my leg I am not available.

CHAIR—We have got some 24,000 or 25,000 reservists on the books at the moment. Under your proposal you say that will almost have to double to have the same effective number.

Dr Wood—No, I am not saying we call out all the reserve.

CHAIR—No, but you would have to have twice as many.

Dr Wood—What for?

CHAIR—To be sure you would get the number you thought you had.

Dr Wood—The idea of filling happens all the time. It must happen with regular battalions. The device we use for regular battalions is to restrict their establishment: instead of four infantry companies we have got three, or whatever device is used. They should have a proper war establishment. They do not have a proper war establishment, and if they do go to a war establishment then it needs extra men.

Mr PRICE—This issue of 365 days readiness for the reserves is the critical issue that underpins its lack of use, I suppose. Would you agree with that?

Dr Wood—Frankly, I think that is a device as well. If you look at historical evidence and see how long it took to get certain units ready for the 1st AIF or the 2nd AIF or the battalions for Vietnam, you have got ample empirical evidence as to how long it takes the system to get a unit ready for operational service. To have the idea of a 365 days readiness requirement I think is a nonsense.

Mr PRICE—I do not disagree.

Dr Wood—It is just a device to defer it.

Mr PRICE—But, given that you are suggesting that the reserves could be placed on the same readiness as the ready reaction force, or whatever it is called, of full-time soldiers, that is a big leap, isn't it? How do we ensure that they have that fundamental training that will allow them within a month to be deployable?

Dr Wood—That is where the Army would need to plan the progressive arrangements as to likely requirements, and that is why a mobilisation plan would be very important. At the moment we are skewing the idea of the tail-to-teeth ratio when clearly, if you want to expand a force, there are certain units that are required before combat units are called out. For example, ordnance or signals or recruiting or whatever units are required before you actually raise your battalions. If you can work out – and I have seen this in terms of other arrangements – the likely requirements to bring these units and individuals onto the order of battle on full-time duty, that is a straightforward administrative exercise. You could say that these units or individuals will be required before these and that therefore, in terms of the priority with regard to training days, they should have priority.

Mr PRICE—The full-time Army has staggered readiness requirements. We have talked about one element of the reserves having 28 days. How do you see the staggering for the rest of the reserve?

Dr Wood—In terms of a simple idea, the one I used with the 5th/6th Battalion was that you give it due notice. You might give it two years notice. You may say that in our progression of events the 5th/6th Battalion will come on stream in the year 2003.

Mr HOLLIS—Are you talking there about a rotation, of giving them 12 months?

Dr Wood—Yes, on a full-time basis. That means that people can think about their employment, availability and a number of other things but at least the battalion would come on duty.

Senator FERGUSON—That is national service.

Dr Wood—No, it is not national service. You might want to call it that.

Mr PRICE—It is getting close.

Dr Wood—It is on a voluntary basis.

Mr PRICE—Certainly I agree about wanting to use the reserves in a very meaningful way. Would you see reservists accepting a proposition that in order to more greatly utilise their services it may be required to cut down the phantom nature of the reserves and have a smaller establishment number but a more active reserve?

Dr Wood—I think that is a facetious argument.

Mr PRICE—I did not mean to be facetious.

Dr Wood—I wrote the proposal opposing the loss of a reserve battalion in Victoria. The crowd down the road are amalgamating two churches. Those sorts of things invariably lead, not to a greater or more strengthened organisation, but usually to a weaker one. I am arguing that the reserve is a very important part of your mobilisation base. If you take a battalion or a unit off the order of battle on the grounds of what finally gets down to an economy measure, then you are weakening your organisation.

Mr PRICE—Would you not concede the other argument, that the reserves really in a sense are a phantom army? We can never really guess on any given muster what percentage is going to turn up. I think that is a function, by the way, of the points that you are talking about – that the establishment are treating it like a second-class army. I accept that.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Dr Wood, you have had the opportunity to serve in the US Reserve. I wonder whether you have looked at the reserve in Canada. I understand that Canada has a much higher percentage of reservists in their peacekeeping force – as high as 20 per cent.

Dr Wood—I had a look at one stage at the mobilisation arrangements for quite a number of armies. I did look at the Canadian experience for the Korean War. The idea of employing individuals wherever they can get the experience, whether reserve or full time, is excellent whether it is peacekeeping or whatever.

I heard recently about a Swiss military attache with the supervision force in Korea. He was part of the Swiss Army as a colonel. He is doing his duty as a military attache on the demilitarised zone. There is ample opportunity for that sort of arrangement and that ought to be the case. The *Hansard* says that we need to make it easy for the Chief of the Defence Force or the Chief of Army to move to the reserve. General Sturdee in 1942 moved from the permanent force to the CMF. It was easy; they just did it. Where are the corollary arrangements whereby a reservist can move on to full-time duty? I remember being asked that when I was a Lieutenant Colonel. Someone said, 'What do you think about the idea of regulars commanding reserve units?' I said that was fine, providing reservists could command regular units. It is the same army. Until we have got that attitude of one army then we will go on with a division and that is so pernicious.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—There have been reservists serving up in East Timor, for example, but they do it as individuals and they join up full time for three months or whatever.

Dr Wood—Right. Let me pick that point up and go back to Mr Price's point: the idea of reducing the establishment. We have taken two regular battalions off the order of battle. We now suddenly have a military and a political requirement to put two back on.

Mr PRICE—It was not one of us.

Dr Wood—That was a reduction of the Regular Army's establishment which I thought was a very serious decision. How can you have a credible defence force based on four regular battalions at restricted establishments? You are saying, 'Let us reduce the establishment'.

Mr PRICE—The only thing I can say in defence is that the Ready Reserve would have provided ideal people to send to East Timor. I regret that it was abolished. I think we are going to have to look at bringing it back.

Dr Wood—Yes, but the Ready Reserve system was based on the idea of individuals going back to their original states. My proposal is that they are raised in their own state so that they can serve locally.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—On the matter of Australia's strategic policy, you talked about defence of the sea-air gap and said that it was flawed. As I understand it, we have a maritime strategy which does include the Australian Army. Elements of the Australian Army have been at pains to point out to us that it is a maritime strategy rather than just purely a RAN-RAAF strategy. Why do you think that the continued pursuit of the maritime strategy is flawed?

Dr Wood—Again, I think it is a convenient device. I remember the Chief of the General Staff saying in 1971, 'Ladies and gentlemen, we are at the bottom of the pecking order in terms of priorities in the Defence Force. The Air Force and the Navy are going to get priority.' Between the First World War and the Second World War the government of the day said that it was convenient to have a raids versus invasion policy – in other words, all we needed was an army to bayonet, as was said colloquially, the shipwrecked.

That was a very powerful device, because the organisation of the Army was restricted to the combating of raids up to no more than 1,000 people. That was army government policy for almost 20 years. Then Professor Dibb came along and said, 'We need low-level contingencies,' and that again distorted the function of the Army.

I was part of an exercise in Northern Australia where we spent two weeks combating raids along the coast and we had the police commissioner for Western Australia or somewhere saying, 'Ladies and gentlemen, we could have handled this with 100 police officers.' That is the distortion that worries me and, as I said, it is a quite convenient device to say, 'Let's just pretend we are going to deal with raids.'

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Isn't there also a role for the Australian Army in coalition operations in the littoral region?

Dr Wood—Of course, and that is where we get invaluable experience. That is why these overseas deployments have been so valuable to the Australian Army: people get experience and Australia's reputation is enhanced. Finally we have had an Australian lieutenant general in Cambodia commanding an international force. We recently had a major general. That is giving us standing and it has been long overdue. We have a history of being subordinate to someone else. Now for the first time in our history we have two officers of senior rank commanding multinational forces, and that is a major step forward.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—What sort of impediments do you think there are to formed units of the reserve serving overseas?

Dr Wood—One would be notice, in terms of whether it is 28 days. As I said, I got your attention and I just wanted to raise that as a question. I think to actually say that we would put a substantial unit on an overseas deployment, not just a three-month deployment of a company to Malaysia or wherever, would be a major step forward. You would need to build to it, but that could be part of your overall plan.

CHAIR—Dr Wood, one of the difficulties, of course, is that we do not have a regular problem of having to find overseas deployment. It is spasmodic. You could people up to a state of readiness, which we were talking about earlier, and then they may have nothing to do for the next two years. Isn't that one of the difficulties?

Dr Wood—Yes, but equally, as I think Mr Hamilton-Smith stated in Adelaide in his evidence, there he was working in Defence, suddenly the Gulf War was about our ears and he would have been laughed down the corridor if he had said, 'We have a deployment to the Middle East.' The same happened with Fiji. That is the nature of the international threat. Whether it is a lot of angry little men or whether it is a few angry little men or whether it is a boatload of refugees, it is the question of warning.

CHAIR—I will come back to the question of the reserves. There has been some suggestion that, with the complexities of what is required to train a modern soldier, unless you go fully to the Ready Reserve, which is what General Sanderson said to us last week, you are always going to have difficulties in really getting reserves up to a standard where they can serve in any of these frontline positions.

Dr Wood—I wonder whether you have looked at the loss of skill for anyone who undertakes any sort of full-time training. The education system can say, 'Jim we want you to go off and do some computer training,' and I go off and do it, but, unless I am using it all the time from then on, I lose those skills very, very quickly. I think General Sanderson's argument applies equally to any sort of training system. I am in education; I see that every day. You have to bring people up to speed. If you have a certain requirement, an immediate requirement, then you have to retrain, and I have said that in my submission.

CHAIR—Okay, we are obviously coming straight to the Ready Reserve; let us hear a bit more on that.

Dr Wood—In terms of training?

CHAIR—Training and then not using it. That is your implication, isn't it? They are trained and then not used?

Dr Wood—I suggest to you that our full-time forces are doing that all the time.

CHAIR—But they are retraining.

Dr Wood—Yes.

CHAIR—They are up to speed the whole time.

Dr Wood—But part of the problem is this question of getting people up to a peak of readiness and holding it. My memory of the days of dealing with the special air service, or as a commando, was the question of how you keep people at their peak. It is a major problem that armies have had for many years. It should not be used as a weapon against the reserve. I am saying that, whether it is education or teaching someone to drive a motor car, unless you are getting the practice, a lot of the skills are ephemeral.

CHAIR—But the insinuation, I think, from the comments that were made, is that the reserves are never getting up to that level.

Dr Wood—The Army taught me to parachute in two weeks. We used to train soldiers in Melbourne University regiments; we would put them through a two-week recruit course. That was just the start of the process. If we had had more time, yes, we could have gone on with more training, and that is my point about full-time duty. I have served on courses; I have done any number of courses with the Army in the past, and two or three weeks later it is already fading. So it would for my regular counterparts, depending on whether they were directly using those skills at the time.

Senator GIBBS—If this is a problem with reserves, then maybe we would be better off simply building up the regular Army. If we did build up the regular Army, that would cost a lot more money, but that is okay because it would create a lot of employment. But the problem is, how do we attract people into the Regular Army? Because it seems to me that a lot of people are very dissatisfied, and they leave after a certain amount of time – they get their superannuation and whatever, and they sort of move on. What is the answer here? It seems that we have these reservists who are not up to speed all the time through no fault of their own. Do we forget about those and maybe try to build up a regular army?

Dr Wood—No. Could I just correct this impression that it is just the reservists who are not up to speed. The point that I was just making to the chairman was that I have served any number of times with individuals who are regular soldiers, who did the same sort of training as I did, but unless they are using that training immediately in their everyday job, those skills will pass very quickly. That is the real problem. The idea of constantly lifting the benchmark has been with the Army ever since man picked up a club. Before I got my green beret, I spent my time trying to get my green beret. Then I tried getting my parachute wings. The idea is that you are constantly going for the next goal in the system. That is what you have got to create and that is what is so attractive about reserve service – that you have got these alternatives; you have got your civil employment, and you can put in this special effort with the reserve on the basis that, if push comes to shove, you can do full-time duty to get your skills up.

Senator GIBBS—We are talking about combat skills here; we are talking about educational skills.

Dr Wood—It might be that that is a distinction that we need to get clear – the idea of the difference between education and training. Education is a body of knowledge; training is just the skills required at the time, and we do not put enough effort into that. There is too much emphasis on just the skills rather than the education.

CHAIR—To come back to the Ready Reserve, which you say in hindsight you saw some merit in, if you were to suggest its reintroduction – and I am not sure you would – what changes would you make to the previous scheme?

Dr Wood—I would use the concept that an individual could volunteer for a limited period of full-time military service. That is the basic thing that I agree with. The idea that a Victorian would go off to Queensland to do his Ready Reserve training, in terms of his full-time training, obviously is attractive initially, but for him then to come back and be put in another unit where he has not been part of the club, in a sense, or the folklore, invites fragmentation and disinterest. So the idea of the Ready Reserve putting people on full-time duty for specified full-time periods and also part-time periods of service and making it attractive to do so, whether it is in the form of scholarships or whatever, I fully agree with. I do not see any real problem of transposition of that concept across to my suggestion that you put units on full-time duty.

CHAIR—But you are critical of going to Queensland, yet isn't that where we have moved most of our units anyway?

Dr Wood—You are onto an old argument there, Mr Hawker. I grew up in New South Wales and when I came to Victoria people said, 'Jim, the further away you get from the threat, the less interest there is in the Army.' You have had that point of view put to you in all sorts of forums, I am sure. It is in the *Hansard*; it is in your submissions. The idea that only Queensland produces a number of soldiers –

CHAIR—No, you misunderstood me.

Senator GIBBS—He is not a Queenslander.

CHAIR—What I am suggesting is that the focus has been on training for tropical warfare.

Dr Wood—Yes, but I think you can take that too far. When I was Colonel, Plans, 3rd Division, my job here was undertaking major exercises concerned with the protection of our economic base here in Victoria. It is absolutely crucial. The recent gas disaster was a reminder of how vulnerable we are.

CHAIR—But that is not a military threat.

Dr Wood—It could well have been.

Mr PRICE—You mentioned that a naval reservist doctor serving in the Gulf suffered some disadvantage compared to his regular counterpart. Could you give us an idea of what that may have been?

Dr Wood—On Anzac Day 1991 there was a letter to the editor in the *Age*. It said that a naval reservist who was a medical practitioner volunteered to serve on the American hospital ship that was serving in the Gulf. His wife wrote a letter after he came back, and the details are in the Standish report, saying that his regular counterparts – and I do not want to make this a regular/reserve thing; it is illustrative of the point – were entitled to certain arrangements whereby they almost doubled their salary and enhanced their career prospects. This fellow, who had a small business as a medical practitioner, was left with what was called a fairly basic salary. His wife just about went broke. It was only because of the good nature of his professional colleagues that their business was kept going.

When he came back he asked, 'Why wasn't I on the same conditions of service?' According to the letter to the editor, which was from the wife of the reservist, some admiral said, 'Doctors' pay is very appropriate.' And the minister of the day was quoted as saying, 'This man was a volunteer. What more could he expect?' As the bottom line of the letter said, 'Why bother serving your country when you have to cop that nonsense?'

Mr PRICE—Is there any reason why the Australian Army couldn't be all reservists or, alternatively, that it couldn't be all full-time?

Dr Wood—On the second point, the parliament would not allow it. Ideally, you could say we need a regular army of 100,000, and I would have no real problem with that, except that you will never get the money. The record is that we take two regular battalions off the order of battle and we restrict the others. So if that is the parliament's view on the state of the present full-time force –

Mr PRICE—It is this government's view, by the way.

Dr Wood—Yes, but governments come and go. You can look back over the record and see the same sort of thing happen. I do not see a full-time reserve service as an option at all. The Swiss have something like several thousand people on full-time duty and a massive capacity to mobilise. The Swedes have a similar system. I am not advocating that we just have a reservist arrangement, not by a long shot. The real benefit of having two components of Army is the proper interaction between the two.

Mr PRICE—What are the criteria which should determine whether a unit is a reserve unit or a full-time unit?

Dr Wood—I would think the immediacy of commitment in the sense that the government would need to decide priorities as to what they saw as their immediate requirements. It could well be that a signals intelligence unit might have a much higher priority than a regular battalion at certain stages in the spectrum of conflict. The government would have to decide priorities in that regard.

CHAIR—On that point, if you are given the sort of budgetary constraints that I think most governments have had to face for some time, and which would continue unless they saw a greater threat, what changes would you make to the current structures?

Dr Wood—In my submission I have suggested that the Australian Army be based on a skeletal organisation of one Australian corps and that it be based on a nucleus or permanent staffing arrangement. The bulk of it should be on reserve conditions of service that should equate to regular conditions of service in terms of financial and other arrangements. My proposal is that we have a structure in place in peacetime that would allow us to develop the force if a threat of whatever dimension should eventuate. I put quite clearly in my submission as to how it should be organised and where it should be organised.

CHAIR—And how does that link in with the role that we undertake in peacekeeping?

Dr Wood—You have a component of that one Australian corps. I have said that the Army should have a full-time ready brigade for this sort of operation. Since my submission, we have got a brigade in Darwin that was beautifully positioned to undertake the activities it has undertaken. I think that would be essential.

Mr PRICE—You talked about 100,000. I think so did Mr Hamilton-Smith from Adelaide. You have conceded that is impractical. What would you say is your more realistic estimate about the size of the army?

Dr Wood—The problem with using 100,000 is that it is a convenient figure.

Mr PRICE—Nicely rounded up.

Dr Wood—And it is tripe. You would have to assess the capability that you require. The parliament or the government would have to say, 'This is what we need'. I am suggesting that if you have a basic structure of a corps in terms of outline and manned at different levels, you could respond to whatever your contingency was. I think to pursue the idea of a full-time force of 100,000 would be self-defeating.

Mr PRICE—Do you think the current size is about right?

Dr Wood—Obviously, the current size of the regular force is not right because we have now had to re-establish two battalions.

Mr PRICE—But isn't that also a part of the function that we have not been able to utilise the reserves?

Dr Wood—That is right and that is my point. I said earlier in my comments that the idea of a reserve is that, if you use your reserve, you reconstitute it from any other source immediately. That is a basic tactical principle. If you lose a company or whatever, you have to reconstitute another one. What we have done here is lose two regular battalions. We should have reconstituted them in terms of full-time duty from the other 19 infantry battalions on the order of battle. We did not do that, so we are violating a basic principle.

Senator FERGUSON—I am sorry I had to leave for a minute, Dr Wood. You made a very important statement just a minute ago when you said there was a need to assess the capability you require. I think one of the problems for successive governments is trying to assess what capability we do require. There was a view expressed on a visit we were making last year that Australia is far more vulnerable to international crime – and what follows – than it is from a hostile external invading force. If we assess the capabilities we require as part of a peacekeeping or peacemaking role in external conflicts rather than in defence of our homeland, the thought of 100,000 or even a smaller amount of reserves is something people might assess as an excess capability to what we require.

Dr Wood—Again, we come back to this quote and that point about the argument. Hamilton-Smith said that there he was in Defence and he would have been laughed out of school if he had said, 'We have a commitment to the Middle East.' I did a paper some years ago in another situation where I said – and I have said it here in a different form – 'What about the inevitability of conflict as the basis for your preparation?' I said that we will have problems of one sort or another. What form they take will vary from day-to-day almost. Every time another 1,000 refugees appear on our shore, someone says, 'What is the Army or the defence force doing about it?' People are publicly concerned about that sort of thing. The idea that you can forecast these requirements, however excellent your intelligence system, has to be taken with a great deal of caution. I do not think you can prepare for a specific threat.

Senator FERGUSON—I would agree. But if you are talking about the inevitability of conflict, some judgments have to be made as to whether that is an inevitable conflict in defence of our homeland – which is one of the things you talk about in your submission – or whether we have to assess our capability to be able to contribute to a conflict that takes place offshore and the extent that the contribution should be. There are some people who would say that perhaps we have the capability about right because we were able to take a major role in a conflict offshore. True, it had its problems. If it had gone on for a long time, how would we have maintained the presence on our own? Whoever is making the assessment of the capability has to take all of those things into consideration.

Dr Wood—I said to you in the submission that you should look at the question of the state of the Army's preparedness to do certain activities, and only the government can say what role they want their defence force to play. That is part of your task. Armies respond to government policy, not make it. You can take some proposition like the inevitability of conflict to say, 'We will be prepared for certain circumstances, but not specific cases.' That is where we have got ourselves into trouble. The real worry about Timor is that we will go on talking about Timor for the next five years in terms of our day-to-day activities when there could suddenly be something else very quickly.

CHAIR—Dr Wood, just to expand a bit, you mentioned the role of the Army with refugees. I was not quite clear what you thought.

Dr Wood—I am talking about public perception.

CHAIR—But what would you see the role, if any, being of the Army?

Dr Wood—I remember when about 28 or 30 Chinese immigrants turned up on a cattle station about 100 kilometres in from the north-west coast and said, 'Good day, here we are,' or some fellow walked into the local milkman in Darwin and said, 'I have just come in by boat.' The public are very unsettled by that sort of thing. They say, 'What are the defence force and government doing about this sort of thing?' There is an irrationality

about that. Obviously, the Army or the Defence Force cannot be everywhere. I am saying you have a public confidence problem there, and we all live with it everyday. What the Army does about it is another matter.

CHAIR—What are you suggesting the Army should be doing?

Dr Wood—In terms of that sort of thing?

CHAIR—Yes.

Dr Wood—I would imagine that you would be strengthening Norforce and the surveillance unit.

CHAIR—To do what though? Do you mean surveillance?

Dr Wood—That is what they were established to do.

Mr PRICE—What damage do 20 people do stumbling around the Kimberleys?

Dr Wood—I do not know the answer to your question. In a sense, we are back to the 28 days argument. I raise the fact that the public gets disconcerted –

Mr PRICE—I accept that they do get disconcerted.

Dr Wood—There is an irrationality about that disconcertion in that we are not quite sure what the Army should do. In a sense, it is after the event anyhow.

Mr PRICE—But you yourself earlier in your contribution said that the civil police in Western Australia would be much better dealing with a boatload of people landing.

Dr Wood—That was the response of the police force and they may well have been right.

Senator FERGUSON—You have raised the issue of Norforce and the surveillance role that they play. In view of my earlier comments about international crime, how do you feel about a surveillance force run under the Defence Force's command actually during their operations of surveillance? If they see a plane flown by an Australian citizen that brings, for instance, drugs into Australia, it lands on a strip and the armed forces can do nothing about it except notify Customs.

Dr Wood—Senator, given the way things are going, I can see a time when the Prime Minister will say to the Chief of the Defence Force, 'This is now a military problem.'

Senator FERGUSON—At one of our previous hearings it was suggested by, I think, the Chief of Army who said that the Army's role was not to ever apprehend or to detain Australian citizens, and they did not want to see that ever change.

Dr Wood—That may well be the case because you would have to change fundamentally not only the legislation but the attitude. You made a point about international criminal organisations. We are all, as individual citizens, becoming very aware of the dimensions of the threat to our society. What role the Defence Force plays in that is a matter for a great deal of consideration.

CHAIR—I think we have had a pretty good hearing. So, Dr Wood, I thank you very much for coming today and for your submission. If there is any additional information we need, you will not mind the secretary writing to you and asking you for it.

Dr Wood—Of course not. It was my pleasure to appear before the committee today. Thank you all for your time.

[10.05 a.m.]

O'CONNOR, Mr Michael James, Executive Director, Australian Defence Association

CHAIR—Welcome. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect as the proceedings of 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 a contempt of the parliament. Having said that, the subcommittee prefers that you give all evidence in public, but should you at any stage wish to give evidence in private you may ask to do so and the committee will give consideration to your request. We have received the Defence Association submission. It has been authorised for publication. Would you like to make any additions or corrections to that submission?

Mr O'Connor—Yes. I apologise for some corrections that need to be made. In paragraph 9 there is a misplaced comma. It appears in a sense which reads: 'In both wars, the AIF ...'. It should read: 'In both wars the AIF ...'. And in paragraph 12 the word 'battalion' should be inserted after the word 'Australian' on the last line, and in paragraph 23 the finger moved too quickly and there is a 'g' in the word 'within'. Apart from that, Mr Chairman, I wonder whether I could make some comments given that the submission was written before the Timor deployment perhaps just to reinforce the submission to some degree?

CHAIR—Yes, please proceed.

Mr O'Connor—I think in one sense the title of the committee's inquiry is a little misleading, and Timor reinforces that. It refers to the Australian Army in peacetime, peacekeeping and war suggesting that these are separate entities or separate concepts. In fact there is a continuum among all three. It does not even mention, for example, peace enforcement, and the Timor operation was a peace enforcement operation.

We are going through a phase of euphoria over what INTERFET achieved in East Timor, and there is a sense, I think, that this validates the state of the Army at the moment. In fact, I believe that euphoria is misleading and is going to distract us from basic problems unless we apply something of a reality check. For example, Timor was a very small military operation. Five and a half thousand troops do not constitute a large operation when you consider that at times during World War II Australia had the better part of a million people in the armed forces and one-third of the population we have at the moment – and so on. You could go on making the comparisons. It is a very small military operation.

However, that operation was not sustainable in its size and form without substantial call-out of reserves or an expansion of the Regular Army. It could not have been sustained beyond six months. The Department of Defence was talking about nine months. I think that is really expecting too much of the troops themselves in a very demanding physical and intellectual environment. It was also dependent upon a minimal reaction from the Indonesian armed forces at a time when Indonesia had a very erratic government, a very erratic president and highly undisciplined and factionalised armed forces. The fact that Indonesia did not respond forcibly may be good luck or may be good management, but if they had done so in an unpredictable way then we would have been in serious difficulty.

The deployment depended heavily upon the skill and training of the commanders and the troops rather than on any inherently sound structure. We were well served by our troops and by the command, but I do not believe that necessarily reflected the structure we have in the Australian Army at the moment. To illustrate this, I would point to the fact that the INTERFET force comprised a large number of units and subunits that were withdrawn from their parent formations. The idea was that 1st Brigade in Darwin would manage INTERFET – would, in effect, form the INTERFET force. Well it did not. Most of the foot troops came from 3rd Brigade, with some drawn from 1st Brigade and some from other places. There were reserves pulled in from their own units and formations. So it was a force that was cobbled together; it was not a force that, in a sense, we had ready and available.

Finally, I would note UN Secretary General Kofi Annan's statement yesterday that he has plans for a United Nations ready reaction force. If that is the case – and he has been talking about it for a long time, as have his predecessors – I think the INTERFET experience is going to place further UN demands on Australia for combat forces rather than for the specialists that we have been inclined to send in the past. I do not believe that that is a bad thing. Based on studies that I have been doing on peace operations worldwide, there is absolutely no doubt in my mind and in the minds of experts overseas that Australian troops are the best peace troops in the world because of their personality, training and doctrine. They are not unique, but they are better than their nearest competitors.

CHAIR—Thank you, Mr O'Connor. I think some of those comments were reinforced by General Sanderson when he appeared before the committee last Friday. But equally, when you mention a reality check,

the euphoria and so on, that is not to presume that, had the troops been put to a test against a more difficult situation, they would not have been able to achieve a similar result. I presume you are not suggesting that?

Mr O'Connor—They would have performed very well, but there would have been casualties. I think we would have faced the necessity to reinforce INTERFET with more people – more numbers, more units – and that would have increased the strain on the Army.

CHAIR—You talk about being cobbled together and so on, and that is a fair comment. But that particular exercise was not one that would have been planned for any more than, I suppose, any others we have been doing in recent times. Given that, why will it change in the future, or why could it change, or should it change?

Mr O'Connor—My understanding was that planning for INTERFET started in about July, that the expectation was there. Indeed, our association was publishing on this, saying that there would be a serious security problem in East Timor after the ballot.

CHAIR—The government moved a bit earlier to get another brigade ready?

Mr O'Connor—This is interesting, because the government not only moved to have another brigade ready they also moved to lease HMAS *Jervis Bay*. But these were government initiatives; these were not departmental or Army initiatives. The initiative came from the political level of government. I am not saying that it was not good; in fact, it was very good. The failure lies in the administration of Defence in not having these capabilities in place, of not warning the government that these capabilities were needed. Here is what I emphasise is the problem: that the government of the day – and it does not really matter who is in power – is not being well served by the Defence administration.

CHAIR—Do you want to expand on that?

Mr O'Connor—In my view, the Defence administration has been too willing to accept what it regards as limits on budgets that it believes are set in stone, that governments are not going to respond to a need for more resources. I think the department and the military headquarters have been too slow in reforming their own internal processes, and this view is reinforced by the secretary's statement to the National Press Club the other day. I think that there has been a strategic approach, particularly since the end of the Vietnam War, or maybe since the Tange reforms of the Defence department of 1973, that really focuses too much on this notion of defence of territorial Australia when the defence of territorial Australia is the most remote contingency that we ought to be planning for.

Mr PRICE—What should we be planning for?

Mr O'Connor—I think the planning should be based on the need to provide government with the widest possible range of options, within budgetary and other constraints, for the use of military forces so that the Fijis, the Rwandas, the Somalias, the Timors, do not come as a surprise out of left field, that you do not have to sit down and cobble together forces, that you have actually got something ready and something which is sustainable.

In our submission, we make the point that the Defence Force, specifically the Army, needs to have these qualities of flexibility, adaptability and sustainability. If you contrast that with the Army 21 process – the restructuring of the Australian Army doctrine – there is a rigidity in that, in terms of strategic approach, intellectual capacity, adaptability of equipment and so on, which is the absolute antithesis of the flexibility, adaptability and sustainability of the ability to create options for government to use.

Mr PRICE—I am sorry, you lost me on that last point. Why would the concept of smaller battle groups with embedded elements of it be a less flexible structure?

Mr O'Connor—Having smaller battle groups, I think, is a rational and sensible move, but it is a move which is usable, if you like, or it is a capacity which is usable in a whole range of deployment options. It is not one that is adaptable only to operations on the Australian mainland; it is the sort of thing you would necessarily do anywhere. Indeed, some of the lead for that came from the Papua New Guinea Defence Force's experience on Bougainville.

Senator FERGUSON—Mr O'Connor, you surprise me when you talk about the leasing of the *Jervis Bay* and the readiness of our troops, as though these were a government initiative. Are you suggesting that all these things took place without consultation with the defence department?

Mr O'Connor—I suspect the consultation was one way, but I do not know for sure.

Mr PRICE—I return to East Timor. I would like to share your sentiments about Australian peacekeepers and the job that has been done there. Would you like to elaborate a little on the issue of sustainability of that operation? Do you see Australia's upper level of commitment about a brigade size or do you see it larger than that?

Mr O'Connor—On the question of sustainability with the East Timor commitment, if you had had any anticipation of the size of that original INTERFET commitment going beyond six months, you would have to have done a lot to expand the Australian Army as it stands.

Mr PRICE—More than the two extra battalions?

Mr O'Connor—Yes. An army is a lot more than what you can just put into the field at any one time. It has to be sustained; it has to be renewed and retrained and re-equipped. As far as the size of a commitment is concerned, I tend to the view that we ought to have a deployable brigade group of some mildly elastic form available at very short notice at any time. We have that. What we do not have is the ability to sustain that over an extended period. In a hot conflict period we might have to replace that brigade within three months or even less if casualties were high. But that then leaves you without any capacity for another deployment. I think it is a matter of judgment as to whether you would not be better served by having a capacity to deploy two brigades – a brigade each in two separate commitments or two brigades together as the circumstances determine.

That then calls into the question of your reserves, following on Dr Wood's comments. If you are going to have the reserve as nothing more than a recruiting pool for the regular force, which tends to be its role at the moment in real terms, then we may be better off forgetting about the reserve and concentrating on a larger regular army or reshaping the reserve so that we can access the reserve. The problem really is that we cannot access the reserve. All the peripheral issues are whether you have enough time for training or protection of employment – and they are not peripheral issues; they are important issues, but they are peripheral to the main question of whether you have a reserve that you can use. If you relate back to his mention of 5/6 RVR, you have to have the notion that 5/6 RVR is a battalion which, with minimal pre-deployment training, can be sent overseas as a unit into an operation like East Timor or Bougainville.

Mr PRICE—You are pretty scathing in your comments about the obsolescence of a lot of the Army's equipment. Given that Army is having great difficulty paying for East Timor – and, in fact, some capital equipment money is being diverted to recurrent expenditure – do you see much prospect of Army being able to afford to modernise its armaments and equipments as rapidly as you suggest in your submission?

Mr O'Connor—I do not think that they are going to be able to do anything particularly rapidly, or is anybody, but if you do not start by recognising the problems and assigning a degree of urgency to it, then you will never get started. I would suggest that there is a range of problems here. There is the question of whether we continue to operate tanks, for example. I would regard that as a nonsense question. Of course you have got to have tanks, particularly in the way the Australian Army has used them, since 1942, as armoured protection and fire support for infantry in the sort of terrain in which we operate. Then you look at the question of whether what we are buying is actually suitable for the sort of terrain in which we are going to operate. I would suggest that the wheeled armoured vehicles, for example, the Bushmasters and the ASLAVs, are not going to have a great deal of utility in some of the terrain in which we may have to operate – Papua New Guinea, for example. I think the Army has underinvested in helicopters, helicopter transport and helicopter fire support, and that is something that they really need to deal with.

This is a long-term problem; we are not going to solve the problem by throwing money at it and expecting to get the results next year, for example. Indeed, I would say that the decisions are going to be driven by a much more realistic strategic appreciation than we have had in the past and a recognition that Timor type deployments may well be the way of the future, whether they are close by in East Timor or whether they are further afield.

Mr PRICE—Given the temporary nature of the extra two full-time battalions, doesn't the government signal that it does not expect to make brigade level deployments, because you would really need those as permanent fixtures to be able to successfully rotate those troops?

Mr O'Connor—I think if the government feels that it is not going to consider brigade level deployments it is flying in the face of current experience, because that is in fact what we had in East Timor, in effect.

Mr PRICE—Even though you were criticised for suggesting it before the event.

Mr O'Connor—Personally, I regarded it as absolutely predictable. The fact that it was not predicted suggests that there is something seriously wrong with our strategic analysis.

Mr PRICE—What would your comment be, then, on the fact that the two battalions are being converted to full-time for two years rather than permanently? Have you got a comment about that?

Mr O'Connor—I would tend to regard that as an interim decision at this stage of the piece. If it is indeed a temporary restoration, then that would be a mistake.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In your submission you suggested that the Army should focus on what it has traditionally done best: small wars, counterinsurgency type operations and so on, with low intensity. What sort of changes would need to be made to the structure of the Australian Army for that role?

Mr O'Connor—Probably not many that are not already in hand. I think this is really what the Army is tending to produce. It is certainly where our skills and our doctrine are well based. The reason I suggested that was in a sense a reaction to the talk around the shop, as it were, that the Army should have a capability to join with a coalition force in operations like the Gulf or potential operations in the Korean peninsula or whatever. I do not believe the Australian Army has a role there because it will never be large enough; even if we invested heavily, it would never be more than about one twenty-fifth of the size of the United States army, and its utility would be limited probably to guarding prison camps and not much else.

We really need, just in the context of that alliance with the United States, to be able to say to the United States, indeed as we have over the Timor affair, 'Let us look after the small brushfire things, which you are not very good at but we are very good at. You go and look after the big operations, which you are good at and we cannot compete with.' It is a reaction, I guess, to a lot of the semi-academic and bureaucratic discussion about our role in the context of the alliance and the revolution in military affairs. I think we need to look at and focus on what we do best, use such technologies as enhance that, but not bother about the others; not try to turn ourselves into a mini American army.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I see. So if Australia were involved in coalition operations it would just be more for a political purpose, that there would be another flag there in the coalition rather than any utility it would bring to high intensity conflict?

Mr O'Connor—To a large extent I think that is the case. It is not necessarily so with the Navy and Air Force which have a greater interoperability with their American counterparts and can apply probably greater value than the Army can in a large-scale ground war. It is one of those areas where you have to make judgments and create options, but I would suggest that one of the options that is available to create an army capable of operating in a large-scale ground war is one that we should not pursue.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you have any other comments you would like to make about the land warfare doctrine document?

Mr O'Connor—I am not sure that I am familiar with that – yes, I am, sorry –

Dr SOUTHCOTT—It is called *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*.

Mr O'Connor—Like a lot of the documents that come out of that network generally it is sound enough in theory but it tries to do too many things. It is better than most but it does try to pursue the line that the Australian Army can be a small American army and I do not believe that that is its capability or, indeed, its role.

Senator GIBBS—Mr O'Connor, why are people leaving the Army?

Mr O'Connor—There is a very good reason for it, Senator: they get bored witless, particularly after they come back from a deployment like Timor to ordinary garrison duty in Australia. It is boring. These are vibrant young people physically and intellectually. They have been challenged and all of a sudden the challenges have disappeared so they go out looking for a challenge. If I can offer an anecdotal comparison: my son was a regular soldier. He served in Namibia with the United Nations. It was a relatively quiet peacekeeping operation although our guys were doing a lot of mine clearance. When he came back he was bored out of his brain so he left the Army and joined the police, which is very exciting.

Senator GIBBS—Particularly these days.

Mr O'Connor—You are talking about young, vigorous people who join for the excitement and if they do not get the excitement they will leave.

Senator GIBBS—What about career soldiers? They end up leaving, too, after a certain time. When their superannuation is ready, they are out – unless they are generals, of course.

Mr O'Connor—There are a couple of factors there. Firstly, if they are working in that highly bureaucratic system in the defence department, that is very frustrating, particularly if they have come from a unit where they have been very active and they get into a place where they have very little authority, very little power, very little influence. They get disillusioned. Those who have been in longer service have opportunities, once they have qualified for the pension, for rewarding jobs. Others will have made up their minds that they are not going to be in until they get to their nominal retiring age. Soldiering, in particular, is a young person's business. For example, from my own experience, if you were to be operating in Papua New Guinea, for example, you are too old at 35. It is simply too physically demanding.

Senator GIBBS—Yes, the knees go and all the rest of it, I know.

Mr O'Connor—So do I.

Senator GIBBS—I am very interested in your comments on the structure. You say that we have these fantastic, you-beaut people who can go to East Timor and look after things for us. We are always being told

that the Australian Army is the best and we believe it. But you say the structure was not there. We have these people who can actually go and do the things that we want them to do but the structure is not there. We have obviously got an administration problem here. I am hearing – and you can correct me if I am wrong – that we have got 14 two-star generals just sitting around making paper clip chains because there are not enough troops for these 14 two-star generals to have under their command. Is this right or is this just a little bit of spite?

Mr O'Connor—I think it is an overstatement of the case. Indeed, without getting away from the point of the question, I think there is a very strong case for major generals doing very little except making paperclip chains in peacetime because that is their time when they should be thinking about their job, working out what has to be done, working out in their own minds how they would do it, rather than doing a lot of paperwork. But let me get back to the original question. What we have are some extraordinarily good Australian soldiers, from the lowest levels to the highest; they are very, very good soldiers. What I do not think we have is an army or a defence higher organisation which knows what it needs to do, what has to be done, which is capable of advising the government adequately and of implementing the decisions of the government. It is too sclerotic. There are too many people playing around with things.

I served in Navy office, on the naval staff, before the Tange reorganisation. Quite frankly, what I could see in the Tange reorganisation is what persuaded me to leave, because the authority that I had by delegation prior to that was simply taken away and I had to consult with about 20 people before I could do anything. What you have is an organisation which is staffed by extraordinarily talented people who are not able to exercise those talents to the best value for the Australian people.

Senator GIBBS—I have heard that.

CHAIR—Mr O'Connor, do you think there is a problem with the concentration in Canberra of too many of the senior officers and bureaucrats?

Mr O'Connor—There is a whole range of problems and you cannot say it is any one problem. I believe the diarchy is one of the problems, the shared responsibility between the Secretary and the Chief of the Defence Force. I think they have separate roles and I think their joint responsibility should be abolished and that they should focus on what each is required to do to support government policy. I think that a lot of the processes of public administration are too complex, unnecessarily complex, because they do not give responsibility to individuals to get on with the job. There is too much second-guessing, too many cooks in the kitchen, and this simply inhibits decision making. We can see it in the context of changes in legislation, changes in arrangements to allow greater access to the reserve force.

I can remember the then Minister for Defence, Senator Ray, telling one of our functions that this was going to be fixed within six months. That was in 1991, and it is still not fixed. We have a declaration now from the minister saying it is going to be done, but there is nothing set out as to how it is going to be done. These are fairly key issues which are simply not being dealt with because the system is not capable of dealing with it. I think it is a very undisciplined system as well. You have decisions made which are then revised within a very short time, very often for reasons which owe more to the predilection of the person making the revision than to any sound conceptual basis.

CHAIR—I think we could get very deeply involved in this area but we are trying to keep it on the Army. Mrs Crosio has a question.

Mrs CROSIO—Can I come back to something in your answer to Senator Gibbs's question and in clause 71 of your submission where you say, 'Australia is blessed by good soldiers but a poor Army.' My question is going to lead up to what you feel are the challenges for the Army over the next decade, but I would like to do that by coming backwards in your submission. You have told us in clause 30 that you feel modern conflict is characterised by short warning times, and that a defence force that cannot respond quickly would be ineffective, Then you go on in clause 31 to state that the association has noted Australia could not commit more than a single brigade to sustained operations, and then only for no more than a year. I do not want to read it all because you know what I am referring to. I suppose I am bringing both 30 and 31 into what you see as the challenge for the Army over the next decade, but I want you to bring it into clause 17 of your submission where you say:

What government needs to do is to persuade not only the Australian people but also the diverse interest groups in Defence that contributing to regional and global security is not simply an optional extra but an essential and priority element of the defence of Australia.

How do we do all of those things and then come back to 17 and convince the Australian people?

Mr O'Connor—Not easily. I believe the first priority is to get the higher defence organisation fixed up. I must say I was delighted to see the statement of the Defence secretary because it was the first time we have seen an admission from a responsible officer that something is seriously wrong. That clears the decks for

reform. Reform is the most important thing. I do not believe there is a high priority, necessarily, to get these ready brigade structures ready because that will tend to follow naturally if we get the reform of the defence higher organisation. We really do need to clear the decks so we know what we need to do and how much we need to spend.

Mrs CROSIO—If it was in your power to now take a direction from the secretary to clear the decks, what would be the first thing you would do?

Mr O'Connor—The first thing I would do would be to separate the secretary's role – the departmental role – from the Defence Force role. This would upset a lot of the military people. I would make the department responsible for strategic policy and capability definition as well as general administration of defence acquisition and that sort of thing. I would make the Chief of the Defence Force responsible for the operational command of the Defence Force. I would make him responsible for personnel policy, equipment policy and at least military intelligence. I would then go on and make the individual service chiefs responsible for the raising and training of formed units to be then assigned to Headquarters Australian Theatre, so you have a clear division and almost a firewall between the military headquarters and the department. I think that way you would get rid of a lot of the second-guessing. That does not mean to say you do not have military officers appointed to the department or civil officers appointed to the military headquarters for their specific roles. It does mean that you do not have this overlapping of roles and this constant attempt to interfere in each other's proper tasks. I believe that is the greatest problem.

Mrs CROSIO—You have not heard of where one individual is asserting the role of another one and then taking it over from them?

Mr O'Connor—I think a lot of that goes on, but in an informal sense because the structure tolerates that ability. A lot depends on the intellectual and personal influence of individuals within the structure.

Mrs CROSIO—You do not feel also then that, having distinct structures like that, you are not then going to have duplication?

Mr O'Connor—I think you will have some duplication, but a lot of the existing duplication will be eliminated. More importantly, there will be clear lines of responsibility and accountability, which you do not have at the moment. One of the appalling blurrings of responsibility and accountability has been the establishment of this Defence Executive of 13 of the most senior people, who effectively have taken upon themselves the responsibility of making major decisions. That is fundamentally wrong in principle. It is also contrary to the directives issued by the minister to the Chief of the Defence Force and to the secretary.

Mrs CROSIO—So how they done it? Are they getting away with it?

Mr O'Connor—They have just done it.

Mr HOLLIS—Quite a few of the points I was going to raise have been brought up by Mrs Crosio and Senator Gibbs. Our inquiry is into the Army; maybe it should be into Defence full stop, more or less on the points you were making then. Taking the RAAF and the RAN, what sorts of changes would be needed there to bring about some of the things you have been suggesting as it applies to Army?

Mr O'Connor—Generally speaking, I think the Air Force and the Navy are in fairly good shape, but they are still plagued by this problem of the higher defence organisation. For example, in the Navy's case, our association was pointing out in the late 1970s – 23 years ago – that the time was then for making decisions, for making plans for the replacement of the DDG destroyers. We are now down to two of those, both geriatric, both probably with zero serious operational capability, and they cannot even make up their minds on what should be done. This is not even a matter of giving options to government; they cannot make up their minds what their options are. It is the same with the Fremantle class patrol boats, which are the hardest working parts of the Navy. They are now between 15 and 20 years old, which is elderly for vessels of that type, particularly when they are hard worked, and they cannot make up their minds what sort of replacement they need.

In the case of the Air Force, we have this project to get airborne early warning aircraft for 20 years, and we still do not have a decision. We have a decision only on who is the preferred tenderer, but even that has been revisited now as to whether in fact we can afford them or not. We have had a project for years on the replacement of the Caribou short-range transport aircraft. There is a short list. These aircraft are 36 years old this year. They will begin to fall out of the sky soon and then we will have casualties – we will have crashes – but the project to replace them just jogs along and we are not getting anywhere.

Quite frankly, this is scandalous. We will get more Black Hawks, we will get more Westralias because not only are the people in the Defence Force having to make do with elderly equipment; their funding for operations, maintenance and training is being withdrawn to chase projects like the *Manoora* and *Kanimbla*, which have blown out by $300 million or $400 million. That is where the money comes from; it comes out of operations and maintenance.

Mr HOLLIS—In answer to an earlier question, you were talking about helicopters. You said that the Army having to have more helicopters is a long term thing. Looking at an exercise such as that in Timor, you had all three services involved there. I am just wondering whether there could be more coordination, a whole integrated approach, rather than the Army going and doing their thing, the RAAF going and doing their thing and the Navy going and doing their thing. How much real cooperation and strategic planning is there between the services?

Mr O'Connor—I do not think there is much strategic planning. I think that in respect of Timor there was a lot of joint operational planning, and I do believe it worked very well. I was enormously impressed. I think this is a product of the establishment of headquarters Australian theatre as much as anything. I have not seen it published in Australia, but it has certainly been published in New Zealand by the Centre for Strategic Studies there: there was a very large Australian air operation – naval in particular – mounted at the time to deter any Indonesian adventurism. And that was integrated into the whole process of lodgment of INTERFET into East Timor. That seemed to me to work very well, and I think there was a lot of joint planning there, which was very impressive.

Mr HOLLIS—Just one final question: one issue that has been put to us a couple of times – we were in Timor for a day and it was put to us there too – is the whole approach of training, whether it should be for peacekeeping or whether it should be conventional training. Some argue that, by having the troops train in a conventional way, for conventional warfare, they can then adapt to peacekeeping. Another very strong argument put to us when we were there was that it should be the reverse. Do you have any views on that?

Mr O'Connor—I have a very strong view on that, Mr Hollis. The troops should be trained for highly skilled combat operations. Their predeployment training can then adapt them to the particular circumstances. The particular circumstances require a low profile law enforcement type of operation. They can adapt to that. I will put it this way in the context of what we have been talking about: if INTERFET had gone to East Timor and there had been a very strong reaction from the Indonesians both from across the border in West Timor and from the troops still in East Timor, having a force trained simply for peacekeeping would have been disastrous. Indeed, the confrontation that did occur on the border – wherever the border happened to be on that day – and the actions of that highly skilled Australian combat force in itself acted as a significant deterrent to Indonesian adventurism. I think you have to start at a higher level and be prepared to lower your tempo.

Mr HOLLIS—Somewhere in the papers I have read that it has been suggested that the Canadians ran into a bit of a problem with too much emphasis on training for peacekeeping rather than for combat.

Mr O'Connor—It is a very challenging area. A lot of the countries which traditionally perform peacekeeping operations – for example, the Scandinavians and some of the Africans – are virtually useless in a very difficult situation such as was experienced in Rwanda, Somalia, and even in Namibia, which was a very low intensity operation whereas the much more highly skilled combat troops, like the Australians, the British and the New Zealanders do much better. But they do have to have a proper peace operation doctrine.

Let me say that I prefer the term 'peace operations' because the division between peacekeeping and peace enforcement is highly artificial and legalistic, based on the United Nations charter. It does not apply to the troops on the ground. There is a continuum there.

Mr HOLLIS—The challenge is to get that mix right.

Mr O'Connor—Yes, absolutely. This is the challenge the troops face all the time. When you get down to the level of the individual soldier faced with an individual that may or may not be armed, in a hostile situation, that soldier has a very difficult role to play particularly if he has a television camera pointing in his face at the same time. That demands a highly skilled soldier but also a psychologically stable and well-trained personality. It demands a person with a strong humanitarian instinct that sees himself as the protector of the oppressed in that community and one that has a determination to deal with the oppressor. It is very much the policeman's role. It is a high intensity police operation. It has to be seen in that context. You do not put a policeman on the streets trained solely in patting people on the head and telling them what good fellows they are. That is the comparison I would make. This is one of the reasons I believe that our people do it very well and why we are the best in the world.

I would go to the other extreme and say the Americans are no good at this. They are bad at this because their doctrine is focused on high intensity war fighting and they find it very difficult, for cultural reasons as much as training reasons, to pull back to effective peace enforcement. Again, leading on from Kofi Annan's statement yesterday, I think that one of the fallouts from East Timor will be a much more professional view coming from the United Nations that they need only the best troops for peace operations rather than having a grab bag of units from all over the world, and that is going to put heavy demands on Australia.

Senator FERGUSON—And also perhaps unfair demands on Australia.

Mr O'Connor—Yes, and very challenging demands. These are unfair demands in the sense that there is a heavy cost involved for us. It is not necessarily just in money, although I think that popular support for such operations will be very generous, particularly in clear humanitarian disasters like Rwanda, Somalia and East Timor. They will be challenging demands in another sense. If in Australia's belief the operation is unlikely to be successful for whatever reason – maybe because the mandate is inadequate – then we have to be prepared to get up and say, 'No, we will not do it; there will be not one soldier.'

Senator FERGUSON—You made two statements earlier that I want to bring back to your attention. You referred to the Army's use in putting out brush fires in East Timor. I think it is fair to say that, when they left to go to East Timor, they did not know whether it was going to be a brushfire or a bushfire. To suggest that they could only be used in what we might call minor events rather than major events probably did not sum up the situation when our forces left. The second thing is that I felt that you were somewhat critical of the fact that we talked about the Army's readiness in that the 1st Brigade could not go as a brigade to East Timor because – to use your words – they had to cobble together a force to go to East Timor from the various brigades and other areas. That was possibly a plus for the Army in that it showed they were flexible enough to be able to deploy the forces without any interruption; they were able to gather together the most flexible force that was required for East Timor without it necessarily being the 1st Brigade or just 3rd Brigade.

Mr O'Connor—I think the actual situation was that they did not have a brigade properly structured for the sort of operation they needed in East Timor so they had to pull units from everywhere. It was forced upon them by circumstances rather than by choice.

Senator FERGUSON—But does it matter?

Mr O'Connor—It matters in this sense: you form brigades as such to provide the Army with formations that can operate as a brigade. They are used to operating together. They work with the same brigade staff; they know the brigade staff and how they think. They have barbecues with them and all the rest. If, all of a sudden, a unit is pulled out of its brigade and sent off to another brigade, it is not catastrophic, but it does result in some reduction in efficiency. The purpose of having well-structured brigades is to create an efficient formation.

Senator FERGUSON—Are you suggesting that the deployment of forces in East Timor was less efficient than it might have been had it all been part of a single brigade?

Mr O'Connor—Yes, absolutely.

Senator FERGUSON—I have not heard that criticism before.

Mr O'Connor—It went very well. I suppose the measurement of efficiency in this situation is a fairly subjective sort of thing. In the circumstances in which they found themselves it did not really matter all that much. If they had been put into that East Timor deployment and there had been a strong Indonesian reaction that question of brigade structure would have been very important.

Senator FERGUSON—So where were the inefficiencies?

Mr O'Connor—You are asking for something that really cannot be documented. If you have a structured brigade that knows its brigade staff and the mind of the brigade commander, then you are going to have a more effective brigade than one that is cobbled together and brought together with an unknown staff and commander. Depending upon the circumstances in which they find themselves that may be important. In East Timor it probably did not matter but it might have mattered if the Indonesians had reacted strongly. It is an imponderable.

CHAIR—We might get onto the reserves question. You did make some comments on that – I think you suggested there are problems of access and in your submission you talked about the question of being a force in waiting not being relevant to modern security concepts. General Sanderson was pretty scathing when he came before the committee on Friday and he was very strongly in favour of reintroduction of the Ready Reserve. Maybe we could start discussion on that point.

Mr O'Connor—We were never in favour of the Ready Reserve, and I still have to say that I do not like the concept as it was formulated. It was a creation of a third army. One of the justifications for the Ready Reserve has always been to make the tie with the wider community. The general Reserve does that more effectively than anybody. A Ready Reserve was not going to do that. The whole purpose of the Ready Reserve was to replace two regular battalions with reserve battalions. The best way to do that, if that is in fact what you want to do, is to raise the level of readiness in existing general reserve units. By creating the Ready Reserve, and particularly with much enhanced conditions of service, I believe there was serious damage done to the morale of the general reserve, without actually overcoming the problem that the whole process was designed to overcome.

Mr PRICE—The Ready Reserve was abolished without any change in the 365 days of readiness of the reserve.

Mr O'Connor—That was a mistake. I believe it was probably right to do away with the Ready Reserve. It was not right to leave the situation untouched. You had to restore those two regular battalions, you had to increase readiness levels in the general reserve. I think we have moved on from there now; we are in a different era. We really have to do all those things.

CHAIR—Including a Ready Reserve?

Mr O'Connor—I think the Ready Reserve notion, which creates the impression of a third army, is fundamentally flawed in itself.

Mr PRICE—Why do you say that when the full-time Army has staggered periods of readiness? I accept the morale aspect that you make, and I think it is a very important point that you make about the Ready Reserve. But don't you need that same staggering in the reserves? If East Timor has taught us anything – although there were some reservists used; and without wanting to reflect on the reserves – it is that the reserves were not capable of being used. Isn't that the central message? We have got a phantom army that cannot be used.

Mr O'Connor—That really encapsulates the problem. You have this phantom army that cannot be used. The answer to that is not to create a third army but to create an army which is not a phantom army and spend the money to do it.

Mr PRICE—Okay. Being able to call them out is one point. How much money? The Army is already struggling. You pointed out some of the efficiencies of that 2nd Brigade but they were really money issues, cobbling together a lot of equipment as well as units to get them up to readiness. Now you are saying more money on reserves.

Mr O'Connor—I do not think it was just a matter of money with that brigade. I think there was a time factor involved as well.

Mr PRICE—Yes.

Mr O'Connor—Essentially, you are right – it is a money problem. This is what we keep coming back to all the time, right around Defence: it is a money problem. Our view in the association has always been that there is no point in throwing money at Defence until you get the higher structure right, until the money can be used effectively, until you get situations where you are not producing, at huge cost, submarines that cannot be used, you are not buying landing ships which are immensely important, as are the submarines, to the structure of the Defence Force but which cannot be used for years because you have to spend hundreds of millions of dollars you had not planned on to get them up to operational readiness. These are core questions, but the bottom line –

Mr PRICE—Not unique for the Australian Defence Force, though.

Mr O'Connor—No, but it is a situation which is eminently fixable in our view. We believe that, ultimately, once you get all these organisational problems sorted out, the Australian community is going to have to spend more money on defence. When you have got your economy growing between three per cent and five per cent in real terms each year, the capacity to provide that money is there, as I think we put in our submission to this committee's inquiry into defence funding. If you allocated just 10 per cent of the increase in government revenue each year to defence, you would get up to a perfectly adequate level of defence expenditure within about eight years and 90 per cent of that increase in government revenue would be available for other government programs.

Mr PRICE—What else needs to be done to the reserves that you have not already covered? And doesn't that reflect an absolute failure of a government that wants to put more emphasis on the sharp end of the business when it has great difficulty maintaining 5,000 out of 50,000 troops on deployment? Isn't that a gross failure?

Mr O'Connor—Yes, it is. It is a failure of readiness planning. It is a failure of the structure which will allow you to call out reserves in a politically acceptable fashion. The government has the power to call out reserve units now for a deployment like East Timor, I believe, but the political obstacles, for example, from employers really act as an inhibiting factor. I think I mentioned in the submission the experience of 5/6 RVR which has 30-odd Victorian policemen in it. These are essential service people in a much undermanned force. These are issues that have to be dealt with rather than having the Army itself and the Defence higher organisation and indeed the government pretending that they do not exist. They are issues that have to be confronted and dealt with.

Mr PRICE—And the reserves? Are there some changes that have not already been put on the record that you would like to see first?

Mr O'Connor—I think the basic change that I would like to see implemented is this: when ordinary Australians sign on to the reserve it has to be made absolutely clear to them that legally, politically and in every other way the government or the Army owns them if it wants them and when it wants them and that they

have obligations that they cannot avoid. And if they do not want to undertake those obligations then their enlistment should not be accepted. This is a fundamental issue which strikes at the very notion of the community's understanding of the role of the Defence Force and the role particularly of the reserve in Australian society. It is something that very necessarily should be taken up in the public discussion in the run-up to the white paper this year. It is a key issue. In other countries, for example Singapore and Israel, to take extreme cases, there is no question. People know that the government owns them. In Israel the saying is that every Israeli citizen is a soldier on leave, and it is somewhat similar in Singapore. I do not say that we go to that extent –

CHAIR—I do not know that we face quite the same level of threat though.

Mr O'Connor—No, it is quite different. The strategic situation is quite different. But I am saying that is an extreme case and I am not advocating that by any manner or means. You could also, however, look at the United States situation where by declaration of the President a reserve unit can be called up for six months without any beg your pardons. In the American structure, say, during the Gulf War, they stripped whole local communities of their key personnel – policemen, firemen, and so on – for a six-month period, and there was a general understanding in the American community that that was legitimate, right and normal. We do not have that understanding in Australia and that impacts on the availability of the reserve.

CHAIR—I suppose Mr Price's point is: how do you actually get to that point? You are saying that we are not likely to get that understanding in Australia. Okay, getting down to some of the nuts and bolts, there is level of training and everyone says you cannot really train a reserve soldier on the level of training that is provided. Yet if you go to the six-week training which has been recommended a lot of people find it very hard to get leave from work.

Mr O'Connor—I am not sure that that is true. It is quite common for reserve units to provide adequate training for their people, but this will not be training that makes them immediately available for mobilisation. You may get some reserve units that, given the resources, will be able to get up to, say, a 60- or 90-day readiness. I think that ought to be the objective with our reservists, but you can do a lot of the necessary training within the unit itself, within their ordinary training regimen, provided you give them the resources and provided they are not going down there on a Tuesday night just to change the oil in the Landrovers. They have got to be able to do harder training in the limited time that they have available, but that is expensive in resources. It is expensive in training ammunition; it is expensive in fuel; it is expensive in mileage; and it is expensive in boots, even. But these are the key issues.

CHAIR—So in terms of priorities, you have touched on the problems of acquisitions – and we are painfully aware of that – but where would you put the priority of funding for the upgrading of reserves in the budget we have?

Mr O'Connor—I think the priorities come from your readiness directives. If you accept, for example, that a reserve unit does not have to be ready in 360 days, then you do not need to give it any resources. If you insist that a reserve unit be available in 90 days, then you have got to give it resources. When I say 90 days, let us just relate that to the Timor experience. I think I wrote in the *Australian* on 18 September – the day after the decision was announced – that, if this was going to be an extended deployment, that was the time to start calling out reserve units so they could get their equipment and training up to scratch and be ready three months later to replace regular units in East Timor. There is absolutely no reason why some of these reserve units could not do that in such an operation, provided they are given the resources and provided there is a community understanding that that is the role of the reserve – that they are part of one army.

CHAIR—That last proviso is still the big one, though, isn't it?

Mr O'Connor—Yes, it is, but I think that is an issue that has to be confronted in public. The Australian public is not timid about these issues. All too often the Australian public is simply persuaded by the propaganda that all is well, when now, particularly with Dr Hawke's statement, we are starting to understand that all is not well. This is a first and important step, and the Australian public is not frightened of taking hard decisions. You can go back, I suppose, to the classic experience. The Australian people led the government in 1939 and 1940 to form a second AIF. The government was very timid at the time. The Australian people responded to the fall of France by being recruited into the AIF in unprecedented numbers. They swarmed in.

CHAIR—We have covered a range of subjects, and we could get onto ones that are strictly outside the terms of reference – which we have done a bit anyway. Mr O'Connor, I would like to thank you very much, first of all, for your submission and, secondly, for coming before the committee and giving us some very interesting and valuable insights from your experience as to what we should be doing through this inquiry and generally on defence matters for Australia. If there is anything else, I am sure you would be happy for us to write to you to get responses.

Mr O'Connor—Thank you, Mr Chairman.

Proceedings suspended from 11.13 a.m. to 11.25 a.m.

GWYNNE, Ms Beris, Group Executive, International and Indigenous Programs, World Vision Australia
KELLY, Mr Daniel Matthew, Manager, Emergency Relief Unit, World Vision Australia

CHAIR—On behalf of the subcommittee, welcome and thank you for coming along. 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 contempt of the parliament. The subcommittee prefers that the 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 the World Vision submission and it has been authorised for publication. Would you like to make any additions or corrections to that submission?

Ms Gwynne—No.

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

Ms Gwynne—If we may, thank you very much, Mr Chairman. I would like first of all to convey from Lynn Arnold, our Chief Executive, his best wishes for the deliberations of this inquiry. World Vision Australia, as the largest non-government aid agency in Australia and with significant involvement in emergency relief situations in a large number of countries around the world, speaks from its experience, both in relation to these emergency situations and in regard to its increasing and, we believe, mutually beneficial cooperation with the Australian defence forces.

We would like to begin our presentation by commenting on the changed global context. In the last 10 to 15 years we have not only observed a proliferation of conflicts in various parts of the world but also noted the increasing intractability of those situations. Resolution of conflict situations and return to peace and reconciliation seem to be more and more difficult. In that context, we are particularly concerned about the rights of children as a child focused agency. We see the devastation wrought by war and conflict of different kinds involving state and non-state parties, particularly with the use of landmines and other weapons which maximise damage in civilian areas, and also through the proliferation of small arms.

In response to this changing context, we in World Vision throughout the world have been very much aware of, and have contributed to, discussions within the United Nations context. We have observed the deliberations of the Security Council. We have been involved in dialogue with various governments. World Vision is represented in a large number of countries around the world. We have been pleased to see recently that the international financial institutions are also taking stock of the damage that is being caused by the proliferation of conflicts to which I have referred. The non-governmental community is itself rethinking its roles and responsibilities, so that we might be part of a global effort to deal with the impact of conflict, particularly as it relates to civilian victims and children.

There are three areas where we believe that the Australian Army, in relation to its peacetime peacekeeping and war activities, has a very important role to play. As you would expect, we are very interested in conflict prevention. We do find ourselves in situations where crises are emerging where appropriate interventions are able to prevent or at least mitigate the effects of conflict. While it is our role to deal primarily with aspects of poverty and injustice, we are also interested in governance as NGOs. In that regard, we believe that the Australian Army has a role to play in improving the capacities and the awareness of human rights of international humanitarian law of other military forces in neighbouring countries among our allies. We look also at disaster mitigation. In those tragic situations where our best efforts have failed to prevent the conflict, we seek to engage in ways that minimise the expansion of that conflict and sow the seeds for eventual resolution. We refer in our paper to the do no harm framework, which has been devised by an American economist, Dr Mary Anderson.

Finally, we are looking at the peace building reconciliation activities where, as I have stated, the seeds that are sown in our response to conflicts around the world are also the seeds for the reconstruction of civil society and of peacetime activity. We believe that it is time for a much more intensive round of discussion between the Australian Army and the armed forces generally and non-governmental organisations like World Vision. We believe this is important so that we can break down some of the preconceptions that each side may have of the other. We can establish very clearly what the principles are that guide us in our daily activities and, on that basis, define the roles to which we are best suited. We accept that the role of the Australian Army is primarily to defend the country and to engage in conflict where that is determined to be in the national interests. But we do believe that there are ways in which Army, and the armed forces more broadly, could work with non-

governmental organisations, which would enhance the effectiveness of our humanitarian responses to those situations.

I would like to mention very briefly three areas where we have had some experience and invite my colleague Dan Kelly to elaborate on those. In recent years World Vision Australia has been privileged to be part of briefing Australian defence personnel prior to their departure for various theatres of engagement. We have been able to identify areas of activity where, from our respective fields of expertise, we are able to contribute in a complementary fashion, providing the humanitarian activities that go with peacekeeping or peacemaking operations in various parts of the world.

We have also been able to engage with the Defence Force in dealing with post-traumatic stress syndrome. As we have come to realise, there are enormous personal costs to be paid when our own staff are involved in situations like Rwanda, the tsunami in Papua New Guinea, and like situations. Those are just three examples but we thought that it might be more appropriate for the committee if we elaborated on some of the material prepared in our submission by referring to case studies. I would invite Dan Kelly to deal with some of those if that is acceptable.

Mr Kelly—I am going to mention a couple of areas. At a programming level we have had significant involvement with not just the ADF but also other peacekeeping or military entities in a global sense. I will just refer to the one situation that is most relevant and pertinent to our discussions here at the moment in terms of East Timor. From the very outset there has been a very close understanding and working relationship with INTERFET forces there. Even prior to the deployment of INTERFET and the Australian troops as part of that contingent, members of my staff and I have been involved not only with military entities but also with the Federal Police in coming to some mutual understanding of how humanitarian activities and workers can interface with military entities in a context such a East Timor.

That has played itself out in the field in East Timor to the degree that I believe there was a clear understanding of roles and functions in East Timor between INTERFET forces and humanitarian organisations. We believe there was a very strong collaboration to the degree that our different objectives have been met in useful and successful ways. I refer specifically to a number of situations where our staff were in rather difficult and precarious situations in trying to deliver humanitarian assistance. It would not have been possible had it not been for the presence of INTERFET/military forces to provide safety and security for those staff. We had specific situations in Dili, the capital of East Timor, where our staff were in a program of delivering relief food to East Timorese returning to Dili. Were it not for the presence and crowd control measures that the INTERFET troops put in place for our staff not only would it not have been possible for them to distribute that relief assistance but also we believe our staff would have come to physical harm.

Secondly, again in the East Timor context, the INTERFET forces there were able to assist our humanitarian activities enormously in terms of logistical support. I refer specifically to transport of personnel and supplies from Darwin to Dili. We regularly used *Jervis Bay*, for example, as one of the means of transport to move our supplies and personnel into East Timor. We had some access to road transport within East Timor to deliver humanitarian relief commodities particularly in the early days into areas that were inaccessible or in some cases where there were concerns of security for our staff. In terms of logistics, many of our relief goods were delivered by military helicopter into a number of locations, again demonstrating a very close and useful working relationship between humanitarian activities and military personnel.

Finally, an area where I believe it is important to us to elaborate and perhaps give further attention to is: what do we do in situations where humanitarian activities are actually being delivered by military forces and yet those activities will then be transferred to the responsibility of humanitarian workers or non-government organisations? These situations have arisen in a number of contexts, such as in Rwanda, Somalia and, to some degree, even in East Timor. There has been an ongoing and quite recent dialogue with members of the ADF on working out strategies of how we might transfer or transition the responsibilities associated with those humanitarian activities between a military entity and a non-government organisation such as World Vision.

There are some more practical issues in terms of our input to training activities with the ADF here in Australia. We are regular participants in providing training to ADF staff at Williamtown, the peacekeeping centre, as well as in previous years to officer training at Queenscliff in Victoria. Very recently we have provided training to two exercises in Townsville and Brisbane of the ADF in the context where Australian troops were to be deployed. That training consists of helping military personnel to understand the mentality and mindset of non-government organisations, why we function the way we do – it is obviously a very different hierarchical system to how a military would function. We believe it has been mutually beneficial for us to have those opportunities to dialogue and to work out how each of us operates. It has also been an opportunity for us to understand where each other's boundaries and responsibilities lie in terms of going into a common context where conflict and activities against civilians are perpetrated. There are other situations

further afield where World Vision internationally has interfaces, not necessarily with Australian peacekeepers. I refer to contexts such as in Kosovo in the Balkans, Bosnia, et cetera. They are some of the more practical outworkings of some of the directions and opportunities that we see should exist between non-government organisations and the ADF.

CHAIR—Thank you. For value to the committee it might be a good starting point to talk about some of the other projects you are involved in and what you might be getting involved in in the future, so as to give us a bit more of an understanding of World Vision.

Mr Kelly—Does your question relate to World Vision in terms of its usual programs or more specifically where those programs interface with military entities?

CHAIR—More the latter.

Ms Gwynne—Perhaps while Dan assembles some information in relation to our emergency relief operations, I could mention that World Vision Australia is part of an international partnership. There are offices in about 80 countries around the world. Our largest programming is supported by child sponsorship, and that consists in long-term development programs, community organisations, community development, water, sanitation, health, agriculture, micro-enterprise or micro-finance, education, those sorts of programs. Obviously in those circumstances where there are natural disasters or conflict situations we also have significant emergency relief activities.

In addition to the relief and development programs that we have internationally, we have a program here among indigenous communities in remote areas. In that regard too, it is salient to mention that we have welcomed the involvement of the Australian Army in community development projects, in construction activities, in indigenous communities. We see again a possibility for an interface there since we are skilled at working in communities, in participatory processes, and that there might be a complementarity there.

In terms of our emergency relief operations, World Vision first moved into emergency relief in response to the African and Indochinese emergencies in the seventies and eighties. Our figure for this past 12 months or so is that we have responded to some 14 or 15 major situations around the world, many of them involving armed conflict between state or non-state parties. In addition, of course, we do respond to natural disasters of the kind of Hurricane Mitch and the mud slides in Colombia, Nicaragua and Venezuela.

Mrs CROSIO—Who decides when you should respond?

Ms Gwynne—In international emergency situations, there is a relief network where the officers who are likely to be delivering assistance will liase with the officers who are able to raise funds, either through private donations or through government funding. Our decision to respond will be based first and foremost on need and secondly on our capacity to contribute. If we are on the ground, obviously we are prepositioned and well able to provide a contribution. If we are not on the ground and consider ourselves unlikely to be able to obtain the necessary resources, then we would seek to work in partnership with other organisations. Dan is a member of the international relief network and, as a result, is much closer to the specific situations. Perhaps, Dan, you could talk about the ones we have responded to this year.

Mr Kelly—I have already referenced East Timor, and that has been a very significant part of our workload and attention during this year, going back not just to September last year but three or four months prior to that where, with the events of the latter part of 1999 in East Timor, it was becoming quite apparent as to what we thought was going to occur there. So there was a deal of prepositioning on our part in terms of advocacy type initiatives, getting personnel, funding and relief commodities prepositioned somewhere in the pipeline ready to move in to East Timor as quickly as possible.

We have also been heavily involved out of Australia in providing resources for the response in Kosovo. I believe at one stage we had 15 Australians actually working on the ground in the Balkans conflict – not only in Kosovo but in Montenegro and Albania as well. There has been a string of natural disasters that have occurred in Latin America – Venezuela, Nicaragua, Honduras, Brazil. We have been involved in all of those contexts out of Australia – most of the Latin American contexts in terms of supply of resources and some technical expertise – but it has been a wide ranging involvement in the last 12 months. There are ongoing conflicts or disaster situations in Africa. A number that we are continuing to focus on are in Angola, Sudan, Somalia and the Great Lakes – Rwanda and Burundi type contexts. While World Vision International, in an emergency relief context, does have a wide involvement, I would say the same of World Vision Australia in terms of our contribution to that large international intervention.

CHAIR—Maybe we can come back to the interface between NGOs and your experience with the Army. Obviously, some have better experiences than others. But what are the key points in getting a good relationship with the Army? What would you identify as the way of getting a good working relationship?

Ms Gwynne—One of the most important areas in my experience has been the better understanding of each other's frame of reference and responsibilities. It has typically been the case that non-government organisations are seen as humanitarian agencies or advocacy groups who are most frequently critical of government or other players. While we contest that there is a role for us to remain to have that voice in civil society, we do believe that it is important for us to have a better understanding of the frame of reference and experience of other players.

Just our experience in having had our World Vision relief staff in training programs or in briefing situations, we believe, has done a lot to break down many of the misconceptions or preconceptions about each other's operation. At the same time we, as World Vision, have had former military personnel working with us. I think most particularly of de-mining activities. We have a large program to remove unexploded ordnance in Laos, and there are several military personnel working with us in that environment, too. So they have, over that time, developed a new respect, particularly in the NGO world. There has been a tremendous sea change in regard to the requirements for us in levels of professionalism and accountability. I think it has been impressive for some of our counterparts in the military to have seen the way in which we operate and the capacity of an organisation like ours – an operation which is valued at over half a billion US dollars around the world – to deal with one another as professionals working from our areas of expertise.

The second thing that I would comment upon reflects the discussions that we have had with military personnel in Canberra. They relate to the matter to which Dan referred. In conflict situations military personnel are drawn into activities which could more properly be described as part of a humanitarian response. While there is need for them in those circumstances, particularly where the situation is such that non-governmental agencies are not able to be on the ground, those activities should take place in ways that do build community and do not complicate responses to the conflict situation and prepare the ground for a hand-off at an appropriate point so that non-governmental agencies can come in. The health area particularly is one where defence personnel have expressed frustration to us that, while their roles in a peacekeeping or peacemaking situation were to provide medical support to the armed service contingent, clearly there were civilians needing medical assistance of a kind for which field hospitals are ill equipped. We do feel that we can develop protocols that relate to the kinds of work that we each do best to make sure that we are developing the interface or the hand-off in those regards.

Mr HOLLIS—There has been some comment recently more concerned with CARE Canada about defining the role the military and NGOs perform. You said that the military is sometimes drawn into activities where there should be a more humanitarian response. Are NGOs ever drawn into an area where there may be a more appropriate military response?

Ms Gwynne—It is difficult to see NGOs being drawn into provision of defensive or offensive military responses.

Mr HOLLIS—What about intelligence work?

Ms Gwynne—There are dangers for us in terms of either intentional or unintended involvement in information gathering. We have made very clear, both in response to the situation which was recently in the media but also through our policy documents, that we will not be involved in gathering or sharing of information, other than for humanitarian purposes, including where that information gathering may be misinterpreted to be for other than humanitarian purposes.

Mr HOLLIS—You have mentioned before about your having some former military people working for you. I guess we all are reflections of our society. Do you have any special training? If, say, a major or a captain in the army for 20 or so years joins World Vision, do you develop any special training for these people or do you consider where they are going? You talked about mine clearing. Have you at all thought about what would happen if you put a former military person who is now working for World Vision into a sensitive conflict situation?

Ms Gwynne—My response would be to refer to one of your own comments. We would think very carefully about where to put such people. We would not put a person with a military background into a conflict zone where we were seeking to perform humanitarian action because there are too many risks of that person's own background predisposing them to forms of behaviour or reporting which might be misinterpreted in that context. The former military staff whom we have working with us are not working in conflict zones and are very thoroughly briefed before they go in terms of where the borders are and as to what their activities might incorporate.

Mr Kelly—The other thing I would add to that is that in our recruitment process, regardless of a person's background one of the things that we are looking for is compatibility with the nature of our activities. If red lights emerged during the process of a recruitment interview that said there could be concerns if this person was allocated to a certain context, I think that would cause us to shy away from recruiting that individual.

Mr HOLLIS—Do many people from the defence area join World Vision?

Ms Gwynne—A very small number, in my experience, which spans a period of six or so years with the organisation – most particularly where logistics might be an important consideration in an emergency response scenario, in demining or in areas of that kind, but not in a conflict zone, necessarily.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—In an area – say, for example, Bougainville – you might possibly have a situation where AusAID are making a contribution in the health area to the capital costs of a hospital. You have a military hospital there that do not have, as part of their mission, the treating of civilians, but they have treated civilians on an ad hoc basis – for example, they have done caesarean sections and so on. In the health area how do NGOs work out what are the roles of AusAID and of ADF personnel on the ground?

Ms Gwynne—This is part of a discussion which is in progress at the moment in relation to the specific situation in Bougainville. Non-government organisations, generally, would regard their expertise in community based preventative health programs – for example, tropical preventable diseases, basic hygiene, vector borne diseases or health awareness training. We have had discussions with the defence forces about the possibility of our undertaking complementary health work. On the other side, the defence forces, through surgical teams and through field hospital situations, are sometimes better able to handle trauma cases, which are not necessarily high incident in a situation like Bougainville at this time. The danger for us – and we have had discussions with Defence Force personnel on this issue – is that the expectation in terms of the level of servicing provided by an Australian medical establishment and that which is appropriate in a developing country for community based health programs is also quite different, even to the protocols about what forms of treatment are appropriate. We have initiated discussions on that subject so that, from our experience in international health situations in developing countries, we are able to help, we are able to indicate what our responses are to certain health situations which present compared with what the Defence Force would regard as an Australian treatment protocol.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Thank you for that. You said that peace operations should be a core, not a peripheral, part of training for the Australian Army. The committee has had it put to them that if you were to train the Army for peace operations alone, it would involve some deskilling. We have to make it clear that we are talking about peacekeeping – just monitoring a peace – as opposed to when we are talking about peace enforcement, such as INTERFET's role in East Timor. Do you see peace operations as having the central role or do you think it is one that is complementary, perhaps, to the major role of preparing for war, preparing for counter insurgency operations and so on?

Ms Gwynne—World Vision's vision for the world is a world that does not tolerate poverty. We could just as readily say a vision that does not tolerate conflict. My own sense is that, at this stage, while we would certainly want to see an enhanced peacemaking, peacekeeping capacity, we would not see that as the overriding purpose. Rather, we would see the defence forces looking for strategic alliances with people who will complement their own capacities. We would not want to see any deskilling in regard to the Army's main focus of activity.

Mrs CROSIO—I would like to come back to one of the answers to Dr Southcott. It occurs to me that, if you are over there as World Vision, working in a particular conflict area administering health, you do not have the opportunity of utilising a field hospital that is put up, putting your own people in there – in other words, using the resources that have already been established. I know you were saying that the Army feel they could not assist the community at large because they are there for a specific purpose. But if they have set up a structure, is it not possible for some of the NGOs to move their staff in and say, 'Can we just use this over the weekend; you are not using the facility at the moment?' I have not heard one CARE organisation say that that is either feasible or possible. What do you feel?

Mr Kelly—Could I reference the experience of the ADF in Rwanda and their interface with NGOs in that context? This has been part of the discussion that we are having at the moment within Australia with the ADF medical arm. The ADF went to Rwanda and they had a specific mandate that related to health. They established certain health facilities, not just for their own personnel, of course, but also for the civilian population.

Mr PRICE—I thought their mandate was for the force, in that the civilian was secondary.

Mr Kelly—Right. But a part of that was to actually provide a medical service, as I understand, for the civilian population.

Mr PRICE—For the United Nations force?

Mr Kelly—Correct. There was also a component which was for the civilian Rwandese population.

Mr PRICE—They did get up the civilian hospital and they did service civilians?

Mr Kelly—Correct. And it is that part that I am wanting to reference. In that context, they established what they, I believe, genuinely thought was an appropriate level of health care. But when the time came for them to

withdraw their presence, they began to cast around to see what they would do in terms of ensuring that that health care continued to be provided for the civilian population. Most NGOs, I believe, were in the position of not actually being able to take on board what had already been established so there was this gap.

Mrs CROSIO—Why couldn't they take it board? Was it because of financial problems or inadequacy?

Mr Kelly—It was a level of health care that was out of kilter with what was the commonly understood health care service provision level within Rwanda at the time.

Mrs CROSIO—Even though the ADF had set that up to service civilians?

Mr Kelly—Correct. And so there was this gap between what NGOs were able to come in for, or were willing to provide, and what the ADF had established. What we are talking about now is working with ADF so that when they go into a similar situation in the future, what they establish is actually transferable – and it was one of the three points I referred to at the –

Mrs CROSIO—Could you give me a couple of examples why that could not take place or why it was not suitable?

Mr Kelly—If they were to set up a suitable –

Mrs CROSIO—No, in the one that was not suitable for the NGOs to come in and take over.

Mr Kelly—If there were a surgical field hospital, for example, set up which utilised a reasonably high level of technology which was out of the realms of financial sustainability for that country, then NGOs would be reluctant to establish that knowing it was not sustainable. So our dialogue with the ADF at the moment has been to endeavour to make sure that there is an appropriate level of health care established in the first instance when ADF go in so that NGOs later on can actually pick up and continue with the ultimate goal of transferring that health service facility to the national health care system.

Mrs CROSIO—Do you have a body that speaks on behalf of all NGOs?

Mr Kelly—The Australian Council for Overseas Aid is an umbrella agency for organisations like our own.

Mrs CROSIO—You are also saying, I think, Ms Gwynne, earlier in your submission, that you feel that if we are going to have, in other words, a better relationship, even though it is a very good relationship at the moment, there should be more ongoing consultation. Has there been in place a process whereby World Vision, instead of waiting for Army to come and say, 'Look, we have to have more ongoing consultation,' actually going to them and saying, 'We need more ongoing consultation'? I am saying that it is a two-way door; it swings both ways, doesn't it?

Ms Gwynne—I think, in response to that question, we have, through ACFOA, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid and with a smaller group of like agencies of similar size to our own with interests in humanitarian response mechanisms, initiated a dialogue about ways in which we could develop strategies to build relationships with the defence forces.

Mrs CROSIO—So has it progressed from initiation?

Ms Gwynne—We have taken the initiative and we have had those discussions. We are now involved in training programs and we are looking to actually getting some runs on the board in cooperative activity. Until we trial working together we are going to find it difficult in the abstract to work out where the lines need to be drawn and what protocols need to be designed.

Mrs CROSIO—But you have not found, from Army's point of view, any hesitancy?

Ms Gwynne—Quite the contrary. In fact, we have found a significant level of interest albeit with the reservations that are associated with not understanding who NGOs are or what they do and, of course, generalisations that are often drawn when you are comparing a very large organisation like World Vision with other smaller agencies which might not have the same capacities. I will also mention two case studies In the lead-up to Kosovo and to East Timor, in dialogue in which World Vision was involved in AusAID among NGOs, on a number of occasions World Vision and other major NGOs called for a comprehensive dialogue. We felt that there was a dialogue with aid agencies, but there was a dialogue going on in other places between the Australian government, the defence forces, and what have you, and while we certainly were not expecting to have access to all of those discussions, at some point all of the parties needed to come together.

I could just mention another example of the way in which non-governmental organisations are drawn into political situations even when their primary mandate is a humanitarian mandate. There is a situation in progress at the moment in Sudan where we are at risk of being invited to leave the operation in southern Sudan because of political decisions being taken about our capacity to operate in that theatre. If we were to chose to compromise our humanitarian principles –

Mrs CROSIO—Difficult decisions being taken by whom?

Ms Gwynne—Political groupings within Sudan. If we were to choose to compromise our humanitarian principles, we would be seen to have taken sides in that conflict. The alternative of not taking sides is that we may be asked to leave. Hundreds of thousands of people who are currently depending on us for their daily food ration are going to be at the mercy of the elements and the forces at work in that country.

There are very definitely areas where NGOs, governments and military forces are having to redefine the rules of engagement. For us, it is very important that the humanitarian mandate be paramount and uncompromised. Other organisations may choose to behave in different ways, but there needs for transparency when World Vision approaches. In the former Yugoslavia, for example, we work with Serbs and Kosovars. We have worked in Croatia and Bosnia. We are in Montenegro. People need to know that we are there for humanitarian purposes. We believe that it is possible for the defence forces to understand that mandate and for us still to find ways where we are able to work together to make each other's operations more effective.

Senator FERGUSON—My first question is somewhat tongue-in-cheek. It follows from Mr Hollis's earlier question about the number of personnel from the defence forces who are involved in aid organisations in general. Do they outnumber the number of ex-members of parliament or leaders of government who are involved in aid organisations, and are the MPs put through the same compatibility tests that the Defence Force personnel are?

Ms Gwynne—That is a very good question. I am sorry, I do not have the numbers on that.

Senator FERGUSON—It is not meant to be any reflection on your CEO, who is held in very high regard.

Ms Gwynne—Of course not.

Senator FERGUSON—Seriously, you did make the statement earlier about intelligence gathering that it must only be used for humanitarian purposes. How on earth do you distinguish what are humanitarian purposes, when some peace enforcement operations can be seen to be for humanitarian purposes, if it involves the stopping of people killing each other? How do you make that distinction between intelligence gathering for humanitarian purposes and intelligence gathering which may be used by defence forces in their role of maintaining peace and peace enforcement?

Ms Gwynne—You have raised what is a very significant issue for non-governmental organisations. It is, indeed, an issue which represents more of a dilemma in many situations where we have access to information which could conceivably save lives but which, if passed to inappropriate persons or authorities, could be perceived to have the opposite effect.

Senator FERGUSON—It could cost lives?

Ms Gwynne—Exactly. Within our World Vision policies, we have a very clear statement that says we will not engage in information gathering on behalf of militaries or governments. There is a threshold there. We, in World Vision, will not collect information or provide information to militaries or governments. In terms of our own information gathering, there are situations where, as happened to our colleagues from CARE, information is collected which has military significance because we are tracking where situations are likely to arise and whether our supplies will be delivered appropriately or not. There is information sharing within the NGO community. We constantly have to assess and reassess the meaning of terms like neutrality and impartiality. The Red Cross has a specific mandate and absolutely abides by principles of impartiality and neutrality. So they will not pass on information, even in the situation where it could be to bring to justice a war criminal or to prevent some military action or other.

World Vision leans toward that end of the spectrum, but we are in situations where we are not bound by the specific mandate that the Red Cross follows, although we have signed up on the code of conduct of the Red Cross. While there is a not a black and white situation, each one would be assessed on its merits. We constantly have to assess the longer term implications, particularly with a view to ensuring that a short-term decision does not complicate prospects for peace in other theatres.

Senator FERGUSON—I suggest that the emphasis you put on only collecting intelligence for humanitarian purposes could be resolved by saying that you will not collect intelligence for military operations. If the emphasis was placed on the organisation not collecting intelligence for military operations that would be better than saying you will only do it for humanitarian purposes because it is sometimes impossible to distinguish the humanitarian purposes.

My final question is in relation to the aid agencies and their role in conjunction with defence forces. I sat next to Helen Hunt at lunch yesterday and we had a long discussion about the aid agencies in Timor and the role of defence forces. It was a private conversation so I would not want to reveal the sorts of things we said. There have been views expressed publicly that the work of the aid agencies is sometimes not understood by some members of the defence forces because they have been trained in military operations but they have never

worked side by side with aid agencies in theatres of conflict. There is perhaps a lack of understanding by the troops.

The commanders and all of the others understand the aid agencies and how they work but, as you move down the ranks in the troops, there may be very little understanding sometimes of who the aid agencies are, what their role is, why they are there and how they should be cooperating with the defence forces. That only comes through an educative process as they are working together. They should perhaps know that before they get there. Is that an experience of World Vision or other NGOs? If it is, I think that would help us in our inquiry because one of the things that we have talked about is the suitability of the Army in peacekeeping and peace enforcement. This may be an area where we need to make recommendations.

Mr Kelly—I think what you have described is very real. It has been recognised certainly by NGOs and members in the ADF. Much of the interface between NGOs and ADF has been at the officer level. As recently as January, our staff have been involved in two exercises that have involved all ranks where our people have role-played an NGO in the context that we are speaking about. So, in a sense, as best as we can we are playing out a real life situation to equip these people prior to deployment. I think that is a recognition of what you have described.

Senator FERGUSON—As part of the military training, and maybe for NGO training as well, should there be more of a role for them to learn about each other?

Mr Kelly—Absolutely.

Mr PRICE—There is debate about whether we should train for combat or peacekeeping. One of the unit commanders in East Timor put to us that, without compromising combat readiness – for as long a period as possible prior to deployment – there should be training for peace enforcing and peacekeeping. That necessarily would involve the concept of working with NGOs. Would you support that approach?

Ms Gwynne—Very much so.

Mr PRICE—The Australian Army, if I am not mistaken, does not really have a civilian miliary affairs deployable unit. We were advised that there were only three officers in the Regular Army that had any training in that. I think that East Timor is the first time we have seen a civilian military affairs unit established. Do you see that as a shortcoming in the Australian Army organisational structure? Would you advocate it being beefed up and having a proper role?

Ms Gwynne—To have such a capacity within the armed forces would provide a point of contact, which is one of the things which is lacking at the moment. We do tend to deal with different parts of the military and of the Army on specific areas of interest. In some respects, the public relations area is that charged with relations with others, but it is more in the sense of communicating the Army's message rather than engaging in building relationships, seeking new alliances and what have you. So something along the lines you have outlined would be most welcome for us.

I certainly would agree that, without reducing defence readiness, there is a need for more purposeful training for peacemaking and peacekeeping, where we as NGOs are also learning. The point was made that, as part of learning to understand one another, NGOs also have to do some awareness raising and build their own understanding of their roles and responsibilities. I would just mention that if there were more purposeful dialogue, then we would have a chance to build levels of understanding and confidence. You could then do as we do with regard to our relief work and conduct what we call 'lessons learned' exercises, where we step back from our response and say, 'What worked, what did not work? Why did certain things have unintended consequences? How can we make sure that we avoid doing that in the future?' Such an arrangement in relation to the East Timor situation or for other situations would be most useful, but it would be good for that to be structured rather than for it to be an ad hoc arrangement.

Mr PRICE—I suppose the hardest thing in any operation is really getting that dire, urgent humanitarian aid flowing and then restructuring the community. We tend to give our commanders a set of instructions having to do with enforcing the peace and security. They have proven adept at things like getting a civilian police force up and running very quickly and a court system in Somalia and getting a civilian hospital running in Rwanda, but these seem to me to be outside the actual charter of the commanders. How do you handle that difficulty? Or do you wait, as in East Timor, until the UN agency says, 'This is how it is going to run,' and moves in and directs NGOs?

Ms Gwynne—Part of my response to that question would be to acknowledge that non-government organisations and the international community need to improve both the speed of their response and the coordination of their response in emergency situations. In our experience, if there were faster response times and clear lines of communication under a UN auspiced emergency response, there should be a framework for dialogue between the non-government parties and UN agencies involved in delivering assistance and the

military forces who are charged with creating the space for that to proceed. That would be a useful framework and, within that arrangement, there could be an NGO or humanitarian assistance liaison function which could be part of brokering a better understanding between the two.

CHAIR—In your opening remarks you talked about preventative action and the need to try to get in there earlier. I am wondering how you can reconcile that with the problem of when a country felt it was losing control and the last thing they wanted to do was to admit that they had a real problem. How do you get around that?

Ms Gwynne—In that particular situation it is likely to be non-government agencies or non-military agencies which would have the best chance of going in to provide assistance. If we were to use the Kosovo or the East Timorese situations – and, of course, we do so without knowing whether such interventions would have been successful in either case – then it might have been possible for there to be parties perceived to be non-political, without alliances to the armed forces, engaged in building community organisation and peacemaking sorts of activities among sectors of the population. Once the situation has deteriorated to the extent that the government is not prepared to allow folk in, then we are in a different scenario. That is where we would move to the preparedness stage, as we did in the case of East Timor to make sure that, while we continued our efforts to avert conflict, we were prepositioned so that we were in Darwin together and that when finally the signal was given that the military were able to go in in a peacekeeping operation, the NGOs were there ready to move immediately.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—I was going to ask a question related to that. We have talked about the interface between NGOs and military. How do you coordinate it between yourselves when you have a lot of NGOs in the field? Sometimes the United Nations takes the lead. If the United Nations is not there, how do you do it?

Ms Gwynne—If the United Nations is not there, the Australian Council for Overseas Aid has been very active in pressing for better coordination between NGOs. The larger agencies have recognised the benefits of coordination. We certainly have moved forward from the days where we would be competing with one another for attention or duplicating effort. Now there is very much an understanding among the larger agencies involved in humanitarian assistance responses. We each have areas of expertise. We know what the other does well. We do tend to work together. Dan is part of a regular dialogue with the program officer and manager equivalents in other agencies. NGOs themselves are certainly trying to improve their act. ACFOA is providing a lead. There are regular meetings and working groups on different emergency situations to make sure that there is an adequate information flow. But there is also a need for much better coordination of these situations on the ground through UN coordinating bodies.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Practically, how would you avoid overlap of programs?

Ms Gwynne—Dan might give a case study from Australian NGOs.

Mr Kelly—If we take the case of East Timor at the moment, there are coordination groups in each speciality area such as health, shelter or water. Each of those coordination groups sits under an overall coordination banner which is led initially by OCHA, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, a UN entity that has now moved onto the UNTAET structure. Within each of those subgroups, the sectoral groups work out between them which agencies should dedicate their resources and energies to particular geographical locations. They work out standardisation in terms of types of service delivery. If it is shelter, for example, they work out what types of material we should supply to each family for reconstructing their house. There is a reasonably good level now of coordination that occurs between NGO organisations and between NGO organisations and UN entities. It is within that larger framework that the coordination occurs with the military. That is INTERFET in this case.

CHAIR—We have covered a fair area. I thank you both very much indeed for coming before the committee and for your submission. If there is anything further, no doubt you will not mind us writing to you to seek more information.

Proceedings suspended from 12.21 p.m. to 1.32 p.m.

McCORMICK, Mr Alistair Warner, (Private capacity)

CHAIR—On behalf of the subcommittee, I welcome Mr McCormick. I must advise you that the proceedings here today are legal proceedings of the parliament and warrant the same respect which proceedings of 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 a contempt of the parliament. The subcommittee prefers that all evidence is given in public, but should you at any stage wish to give evidence in private you may ask to do so and the committee will give consideration to your request.

We have received your submission and it has been authorised for publication. Are there any additions or corrections you would like to make to that?

Mr McCormick—Yes. There is a correction on your page 329, my page 13, the fifth line from the bottom. I unfortunately missed out the word 'that' and a comma – 'compared with that,' – otherwise it reads the reverse of what it should.

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

Mr McCormick—Yes, I would.

CHAIR—Please proceed.

Mr McCormick—First I must thank you for granting me the privilege of contributing to these discussions. I trust that my input will be of value. In Canberra, Colonel Chalmers noted that he was not well known to the subcommittee. I must class as a completely unknown.

I would like to make a few comments as a result of my perusal of the Adelaide and Canberra transcripts. In Adelaide, both Major General Nunn and Colonel Strain noted the difficulty of recruiting for the reserve forces due to resistance from employers. As the federal government is probably the largest organisation in Australia issuing requests for tenders, would it be possible to annotate each request with a comment to the effect that preference will be given to responses from organisations which support reserve military service and actively encourage employee enlistment? As national security is every Australian's responsibility it might also be possible to persuade state governments to do the same. This would be in addition to the changes to industrial relations legislation already suggested.

Mr Hamilton-Smith is in favour of moving major units towards the middle of the country in South Australia and in locating regular units close to population centres. Apart from military significance, this could have economic and public relations advantages and, with a well disciplined force, might encourage youth and parents to consider a military career. I would add that perhaps one of the more suitable parts of Australia for initial training of commando-type troops might be the west coast of Tasmania. Special boat personnel capable of coping with waters around Macquarie Harbour should have little trouble elsewhere and the adverse weather and complex terrain would develop teamwork, unit competence and leadership skills. A major presence in Tasmania, with its consistently chronic unemployment problems, might encourage enlistment and would not do the economy any harm. I am not advocating the dispersal of military forces merely to assist local economies, but it may be that there are alternatives to the present geographical spread of forces.

A number of witnesses and committee members have questioned the military-civil diarchy in Canberra. Where there is obvious duplication this should be eliminated. It must be retained in mind, however, that senior serving officers must be exposed to as many different military tasks and philosophies as possible in order that they can efficiently deal with whatever situation may arise. In order to ensure this familiarity it is necessary that these officers move from branch to branch at regular intervals. Between two and three years appears to be the optimum time that senior officers should stay in one post. There are projects and ongoing tasks in any large organisation that take much longer than this period. In order to ensure continuity and reduce the learning curve of any new incumbent it is necessary for a senior person to be consistently involved with the task or project. This is a task for senior civil servants who are less likely to require a breadth of experience similar to that of a senior serving officer. This is somewhat analogous to the relationship between ministers and permanent heads. Ministers change at relatively short intervals while permanent heads ensure that the required degree of continuity within their department exists and reduces each minister's learning curve. I imagine records will show how many defence ministers Sir Arthur Tang 'educated', for example.

It is also worth noting that an apparently top-heavy military structure, with regard to senior staff and infrastructure, permits rapid expansion of the service in an emergency. Lieutenant General Hickling introduced the problem of the shortages of personnel within the areas of higher technology. Aircraft technology was mentioned but the problem probably exists to some degree in most high technology areas. Mr Snowdon asked if there was a process in which excess technologists could be moved from one area to another. It has to be

recalled that, although the basic trade might be aircraft mechanic, there are additional skills and knowledge developed through specific type training and experience. This makes rapid transfer from one piece of equipment to another less than efficient. Type knowledge can be picked up on an operational unit but, depending on the complexity of the equipment, there may be an extensive learning curve and lower efficiency. Air Vice Marshal McCormack will be able to supply figures of the cost in time and money for the type training of skilled technicians in the UK for the Hawk lead-in fighter.

Mr Laurie Ferguson asked the lieutenant general if recruiting adverts would be inserted in migrant newspapers. I suggest that this would not be a wise move in the prevailing multicultural atmosphere. Immediate response to commands is imperative. If the recruit has to read the advert in a migrant newspaper, there is a strong possibility that any commands given in the national language would have to be interpreted in that soldier's mind before action is taken. Delay could be fatal for that soldier and possibly the remainder of his group. The military services cannot be expected to teach recruits basic English. Political correctness must not adversely influence military efficiency.

Dr Cheeseman, in calling for a major review of defence policies, noted that the United Kingdom and Canada had conducted such reviews. These may not be the best nations with which to compare our defence policies. Both are members of NATO. Canada has the advantage of the Monroe doctrine and the Rio Pact of 1947. Australia has much less recourse to equally reliable mutual security arrangements with its regional neighbours. His view that 'money has been more than enough to do the kind of jobs that are expected of defence forces' is open to challenge. What is expected could well be the unexpected. Defence spending must take priority over other branches of public service. If an expert defence committee concludes that a certain course of action involving increased expenditure is essential for Australian national security then that course must be taken.

I am not advocating financial irresponsibility but, in an extreme analysis, I cannot see the importance of handing over to an occupying power a nation with a budget surplus as a priority. Profligacy must be avoided but parsimony could be perilous. Amen. Here endeth the lesson.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Mr McCormick. In one of your opening remarks you talked about including willingness to encourage employees who do reserve service as part of a tender document. Do you have any examples of this practice anywhere else in the world?

Mr McCormick—No, but I have not checked. I have not looked.

CHAIR—It sounds an interesting concept.

Mr McCormick—It was lateral thinking probably.

CHAIR—That is fine. Moving to another area, in the light of experience in East Timor, has anything changed your views on the role of the Army and the way it should be organised?

Mr McCormick—No, but Dr Allan Hawke has on the culture of learned helplessness.

CHAIR—Do you want to comment on his public statements?

Mr McCormick—Yes, broadly. He is probably right, but he may be attacking the effect rather than the cause. I think we have to look further up the ladder before we start attacking.

CHAIR—Hang on; he attacked it. It was not the minister; it was the head of the department and not the minister.

Mr McCormick—That is right. He was attacking his department.

CHAIR—Yes. Are you looking along here and saying it is the politicians who should be –

Mr McCormick—He should be attacking equally.

CHAIR—He should be attacking the politicians?

Mr McCormick—Equally. I think so. He is not in a position to because he is paid by –

CHAIR—That is an interesting observation. Maybe we had better hear a bit more of this. We are all ears.

Mr McCormick—I am markedly older than all of you, but I have seen a terrible degradation in respect for politicians since Whitlam probably. It has gone down the drain. The public in general has very little respect for political servants. There is an adage that a country gets the politicians it deserves. I am not sure that that is true. But the perception is that the politicians are not doing the job in the national interest as much as they are in party political interests, and that disturbs me and worries me.

CHAIR—As it relates to defence issues and the Army in particular, I was wondering if you might want to expand on that.

Mr McCormick—I mentioned it in my submission. I think the *Westralia* and the Collins class thing must have had a devastating effect on serving people. No politician or head of department offered his resignation over it. Under the Westminster system that would have been the correct thing to do.

CHAIR—You draw the analogy of Lord Carrington.

Mr McCormick—Yes.

CHAIR—That was as a consequence of an invasion of part of British territory. Do you think that was a slightly stronger case?

Mr McCormick—I do not consider that if the Minister for Defence had offered his resignation it need necessarily have been accepted, but I think it should have been offered.

Senator FERGUSON—A couple of issues have been raised. Have you have had any experience in the forces yourself?

Mr McCormick—Not since 1955, and that was in the Royal Air Force, but I think a lot and I read a lot.

Senator FERGUSON—There is no reason why you should have had to have served in the forces to make the submission; I just wondered what your own background was. One of the underlying assumptions in your submission is that all operations that the defence forces in Australia take in the future will be joint operations.

Mr McCormick—Between the services.

Senator FERGUSON—I am sorry, you mean between the services. I thought you were talking about joint operations with other countries.

Mr McCormick—Not necessarily so.

Senator FERGUSON—I wanted to clarify what you meant by that. Mr Hawker asked you the question, as a result of East Timor, whether you had changed your view. Do you have any particular view following the deployment of forces to East Timor on their performance in that theatre?

Mr McCormick—Anecdotally, their performance was not as good as the Ghurkhas, but then the Ghurkhas have had much more experience in this sort of activity. I am old fashioned enough not to like wars and military operations being influenced by the media. I am afraid the media influenced a couple of things. There is another one in this week's paper of a few soldiers, probably under the influence of alcohol, embarrassing the group, and of course that gets headlines in the press. We used to have three means of keeping the media on a leash: the Defence of the Realm Act – DORA – and regulation 18B and D notices. In peacetime they are very hard to put in, but they really do need to watch that the media does not have unbridled access to sensationalism, perhaps.

Senator FERGUSON—I think the media have well and truly broken the leash.

Mr McCormick—Yes, that is a problem. Norm Gallagher said that once you give a dog a bone it is a hard job getting it back again.

Senator FERGUSON—The other thing you raise in your submission is the suggestion about a bipartisan approach on the strategy that Australia adopts. I presume you mean between the political parties?

Mr McCormick—Yes.

Senator FERGUSON—It is strange you should mention that, because Mr Price and I were only discussing that as we walked down to get a sandwich today. I would have thought that in most issues in recent times there has been pretty much a bipartisan approach to major decisions, because a government that follows a government of a different persuasion does not have time to make quick changes in the defence forces; decisions that are made are all long-term decisions. I would have thought that currently most of the decisions made in the defence forces have been pretty bipartisan.

Mr McCormick—I would suggest that the Collins class decision to purchase, if it were bipartisan, shares equal responsibility and is not a pleasant responsibility, as I see it.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Are you familiar with the Australian strategic policy document of 1997, the Defence white paper that was published two years ago?

Mr McCormick—No, I have the fundamentals, but that was the only one I could collect.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you have any comments you would like to make on current strategic policy?

Mr McCormick—It is a continuous thing and it has to be constantly under review. I would think that the policy of defence overseas which was in existence is probably the best way. Certainly we cannot permit an invasion of any sort. We must do our best to prevent anything like that, even on a small scale. I do not think we are liable to be attacked by a mass of Asians or anyone else for that matter, but even on a small scale I think it is better dealt with overseas.

Dr SOUTHCOTT—Do you have any comments on the role of the Army in peacekeeping as opposed to involvement in low-level conflict, let us say, or peace enforcement type operations as we saw in East Timor?

Mr McCormick—It is an extremely difficult thing to train a man to kill and then tell him he must not. The amount of training required to make our small force – and invariably it will be small in comparison – highly competent in both requires a great deal of forethought and application.

CHAIR—Do any other committee members have questions? Mr McCormick, you have done a very good job. You have explained all the points that people wanted to raise. Thank you for coming before the committee and thank you very much for your submission. You will be sent a copy of the *Hansard*. If there is anything you see as an error that want to correct, please feel free to inform Hansard. If there are any other matters that the committee would like to get in touch with you about, I am sure you would not mind us writing to you?

Mr McCormick—Not at all. It has been a privilege and a pleasant duty.

Resolved:

That this committee authorises publication, including publication on the parliamentary database, of the proof transcript of the evidence given before it at public hearing this day.

Subcommittee adjourned at 1.52 p.m.