

I draw a distinction between the basis of structuring your force and how you use that force to deal with particular situations. The real options that Australia has in the long term are not about how we structure our force but about how we use it – about the specific capabilities, about readiness, about size, about the emphasis in our training ...¹

Capability

Introduction

- 4.1 The military has a definition for capability. It is the combination of force structure and force preparedness.² Useful though this definition may be it will not be used as a basis for discussion in this Chapter. What we are concerned about in this Chapter is achieving greater resolution on the broad outputs sought of the Army in Chapter 3. In that Chapter we did not specify what type of war fighting capability we wanted of the Army. Nor did we specify how large the Army should be or how ready it should be for operations.
- 4.2 In this Chapter we will look in more detail at the suitability of the Army to meet Australia's needs. We will do this by:

1 General J Baker, Defence Strategy Debate, Transcript, 30 June 2000, p. 47.

2 See Australian National Audit Office, *Management of Australian Defence Preparedness*, Audit Report No 17, 1995–1996, AGPS, Canberra, pp. 14-15.

- Reviewing the Army's existing capability using a conceptual model proffered by the Army. This model looks at capability from four perspectives:
 - ⇒ Force generation
 - ⇒ Force sustainment
 - ⇒ Deployment and recovery
 - ⇒ Combat.
- Concluding with a determination on the suitability of the Army to meet the requirements of future defence strategy.

A Review of the Army's Capability

Introduction

4.3 This section reviews the current capability of the Army. It will do this using a modification of the capability model described in Table 4.1. We noted that many of the issues relating to sustainment overlapped those involving force generation. We also felt that the overall issue of management, command and control required separate discussion. Accordingly the discussion of the evidence on the Army's capabilities will be addressed under the following topics:

- Management and Command
- Force Generation and Sustainment
- Deployment and Recovery
- Combat (including peace and civil support)

Management and Command

Introduction

4.4 The Army's ability to plan, coordinate and execute outcomes affects its performance at every level. Some of the evidence provided to the inquiry indicated concern about this capability. Specifically, respondents to the inquiry raised the issues of:

- The ratio of officers to soldiers
- The number of headquarters

- Higher management and leadership
- Operational command

Table 4.1 Description of the Four Key Functions of Military Capability

Key Function of Military Capability	Explanation
(a)	(b)
Force Generation	The process of providing suitably trained and equipped forces, including their means of sustainment, deployment and recovery. The force generation process must do so within required readiness times.
Deployment and Recovery	Deployment and recovery involves the movement of combat forces to, within and from a theatre of operations.
Combat	Combat operations are the means by which a force undertakes its warfighting mission.
Sustainment	Sustainment is the process of enabling a force to maintain the necessary combat capabilities to achieve its objectives. It embraces all aspects of sustaining the personnel, equipment and stores used to complete a mission.

Source Derived from Army Submission 47, p. 762.

Officer-to-Soldier Ratios

- 4.5 At least three submissions raised the issue of the number of headquarters or the ratio of officers to soldiers.³ The criticisms appeared to touch on a question of efficiency. During the inquiry the Committee was made aware that the Defence Personnel Executive (DPE) had initiated an investigation into the number of officers within the defence force.
- 4.6 A cursory examination of the British Defence and United States Defense web sites indicated that all three Australian Services had higher officer-to-soldier ratios than the Services in these countries. When the Services had attempted to reduce the number of officers we found that this seemed to result in an increase in equivalent number of public servants. From evidence presented it appeared that in the period 1997 to 1999 the reduction of 97 colonel and lieutenant colonel equivalent positions was

3 Mr R Downey, Submission 3, p. 13 and Mr H Jennings, Submission 26, p. 299; See also LtCol J Strain transcript.

met by an increase of 206 public servants with the Department of Defence.⁴

- 4.7 It was far from clear whether these apparently high officer-to-soldier and civil-servant-to-officer ratios impacted on capability or efficiency. The Department of Defence suggested that the high officer-to-soldier ratios arose as a consequence of the small size of the Army. However no evidence was offered that this was a verifiable trend in small armies.⁵ The decision by the DPE to investigate the officer-to-soldier ratio suggested that this was not a conscious strategy and may represent inefficiency.
- 4.8 It was also of concern to us if these ratios are simply adjusted by converting officer positions to public servant positions. High officer-to-soldier ratios are not 'bad' in themselves. They are suggestive of congested and inefficient management. The objective should be the achievement of efficient and relatively flat management structures. Replacing officers with civilians disguises the symptoms. It does not address the disease. We felt that Defence needed to review this entire issue – both for officer positions and civilian equivalent positions.

The Number of Headquarters

- 4.9 Criticism of the number of headquarters within the Army presumably also related to efficiency. However no submission provided evidence as to why the number of headquarters was excessive. Lieutenant Colonel Strain made the proposition that headquarters should not exist if they could not be exercised in their role. In reply to these statements the Department of Defence noted, in the case of Reserve brigades:

It is not considered appropriate by the Assistant Chief of Defence Reserves to deprive brigades of their headquarters.

Comparatively the cost of a brigade headquarters is not a large component of the cost of maintaining a brigade.

- 4.10 As will be discussed later, the issue of the number of headquarters could not be divorced from the apparent excess of hollow units within the Army. The criticisms of the number of headquarters appeared symptomatic of a force structure problem. It appears that the Army has continued to maintain headquarters while progressively reducing the numbers of staff commanded by them.

4 See Department of Defence, Submission No 73, pp. 1112–1113. NB: The Department of Defence was uncertain, at the time of the inquiry, of the significance of this data and was undertaking further analysis.

5 See Department of Defence, Submission No 73, p. 1093.

Higher Management and Leadership

- 4.11 The defence management diarchy was raised on a number of occasions. This issue specifically related to the relationship and management responsibilities of the Chief of the Defence Force and the Departmental Secretary. In public hearing both Air Marshal Evans and Professor Dibb⁶ considered the system to be functioning satisfactorily. Others were more critical, claiming that the division of responsibilities between the civil and military branches should be more clearly delineated.⁷ No hard evidence was provided to indicate where the issue of the diarchy had impacted on the suitability of the Army.
- 4.12 There was also little clear evidence to support suggestions that other management initiatives, such as the loss of the military board, had impacted adversely on the management of the Army.⁸ Some problems currently facing the Army were placed at the doorstep of the Defence Reform Program (DRP) and other initiatives and inquiries.⁹ We felt that there was enough criticism of both the management reviews, such as DRP, and the language used by higher leadership to warrant further consideration. As noted by one respondent:
- ... Defence has more reviews than the New York Times. The problems confronting the Army have been identified repeatedly. The current Review will no doubt confirm that there are areas requiring improvement. The Committee should be concerned over the reasons for the persistence of some problems ... Action to foster open and robust defence debate would help to ensure that the most efficient use of the Army resources is both made and seen to be made.¹⁰
- 4.13 During a forum with troops in Darwin we were concerned to hear one Warrant Officer claim that in 25 years of service he had not been presented the opportunity to discuss the Army's problems in an open way. While his experience may not be indicative it raises concerns about the Army's approach to change management and consultation. We were conscious and supportive of the Army's need to have a discipline hierarchical command chain for operations. We believe however that adherence to this approach on critical change management issues is outdated and an impediment to effective and productive change within the Army. We

6 Air Marshal D Evans, Transcript, p. 122, and Professor P Dibb, Transcript, p. 205.

7 Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, p. 172, and Mr A McCormick, Transcript, p. 188.

8 Mr R Copley, Submission, pp. 630–631.

9 Mr R Cain, Submission, p. 62–63, and Mr R Copley, Submission p. 631.

10 Colonel D Chalmers, Submission No 50, p. 823.

were aware that for the Defence 2000 consultation process the Army had established a web site. This web site provided soldiers the opportunity to voice their opinion. We support this approach but it does not, in our opinion, go far enough. Nothing can replace the personnel face-to-face consultation by senior leadership during periods of fundamental change. Such an approach should have been adopted for the Defence 2000 consultation process.

- 4.14 Some aspects of commercialisation and the DRP did not appear to be thought through for their longer term and operational consequences. Members of our Committee in their day-to-day work have picked up these problems within their electorates. **As a Committee we felt that the three Services and Defence generally communicate poorly with the Parliament, the Government, the Community and internally within the Department. The issue was not the image of the Department but rather its transparency and its apparent insecurity with open and robust discussion. At the very least, the Department and the Army may have to look more closely at how reforms and initiatives are canvassed, planned, implemented and communicated to the Community and within their organizations.**

Operational Command

- 4.15 It was noted by the Committee that, at the lower level, the command and control of the Army and the other services appeared sound. The conduct of the East Timor mission in September 1999 necessitated a high degree of both tri-service and coalition coordination, planning and execution at short notice. This would be a significant operational planning test for any organization. The Committee felt that the Defence Forces and the Army, which provided the bulk of the personnel, acquitted themselves very well.¹¹

Force Generation and Sustainment

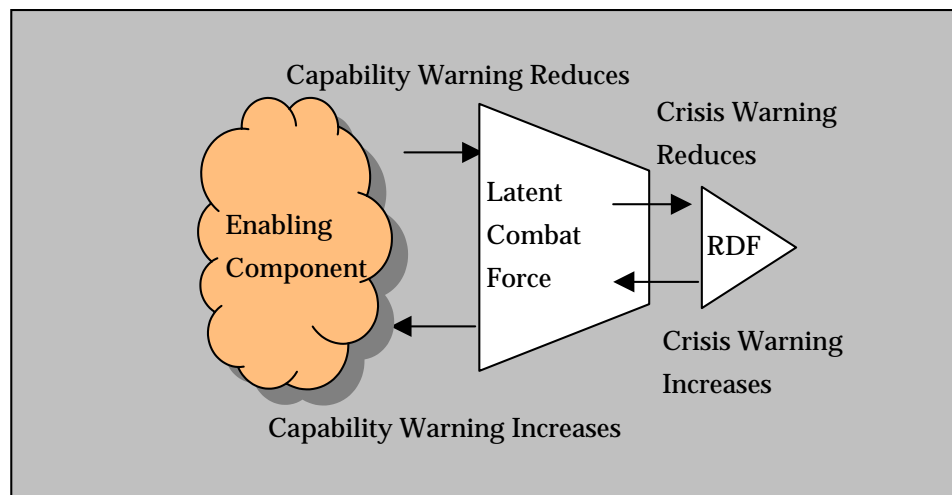
Introduction

- 4.16 Force generation is centred on the concept of readiness. Readiness is the capacity for an individual, unit, or formation to perform a specified task. Maintaining units at readiness is expensive. For instance, it was estimated

11 The Australian Defence Association appeared to support this view. See Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, p. 174.

that raising 1 Brigades readiness for operations in East Timor cost \$183m.¹² Ideally units are maintained at the lowest readiness practicable. Readiness is reflected within an Army model that differentiates between the readiness of different elements in the force. This is depicted in Figure 4.1.

Figure 4.1 The Army Model



Source Derived from Submission 47, p. 763.

The Army Model

- 4.17 The Ready Deployment Force (RDF) consists of those elements that are trained and equipped to be able to deploy at short notice. To expand the RDF, in the event of emerging crisis, lesser trained and equipped elements within the Latent Combat Force are brought up to readiness. The latent combat force is then backfilled by freshly trained personnel and new equipment and stores from Army's Enabling component. The Enabling Component includes facilities such as schools and training centres. The Enabling Component in turn draws on the national infrastructure.
- 4.18 The Army's own assessment of its capabilities for force generation was described as follows:

The capacity for force generation is sufficient for routine peacetime requirements. Rationalisations over the past decade have reduced the Army and supporting and enabling elements to the extent that their capacity to support short-notice surge requirements has effectively been removed. For example, it is assessed that the Training Command – Army will have difficulty meeting all the

12 Woolner, D, *Pressures on Defence Policy: The Defence Budget Crisis*, Research Paper No. 20, 1999-2000, The Department of the Parliamentary Library, p. 8.

potential individual training requirements necessary to sustain the enhanced combat force, remediate the personnel shortfalls in the lower readiness formations, and fulfill the additional demands generated by Army support to the Sydney olympics in 1999 and 2000. The Enabling Component would need to expand to support a large-scale force generation task.¹³

The Army appeared particularly prescient with this assessment. The East Timor deployment has forced an expansion to the enabling component. The government approved an increase to the size of the Army by 3,500 personnel to make this possible.

4.19 The remainder of this section will look at the force elements within the Army model more closely before moving onto the subject of sustainment. It will do this in the following order:

- Ready Deployment Force
- Latent Combat Force
- Enabling Component

Ready Deployment Force

4.20 At the time of the inquiry the RDF, which traditionally has been focused on 3 Brigade (Townsville) was expanded to include, amongst other elements, 1 Brigade (Darwin). The two brigades represent the majority of the Army's readily deployable full time combat personnel. The current size of the RDF is a direct response to the situation within East Timor over the period of the inquiry. The establishment and use of the RDF has been criticised from two viewpoints:

- The RDF elements in East Timor involved too much ad-hoc grouping which could have compromised the force in the event of organised armed resistance.¹⁴
- 1 Brigade has elements which have been brought up to readiness, but are inappropriate for deployment to East Timor.¹⁵

4.21 Both criticisms touch on the balance of the forces within each brigade. In an ideal world we thought that independent brigades should be self-contained fighting formations requiring minimal supplementation. All elements should be useable and very few elements should be drawn from areas external to the brigade. The more forces that have to be mixed-and-

13 Army Submission 47, p. 775.

14 See comments by Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, p. 175.

15 Colonel D Chalmers, Submission 50, pp. 9-10.

matched the greater the chance, when in conflict with an enemy, that procedures and command and control will break down. This might result in unnecessary casualties and defeat in a conflict.

4.22 The criticism levelled at the RDF also raises the issue of how much of Army's capability should be ready to deploy at relatively short notice. Based on our criteria for the Defence Force to be able to dominate one major and one minor focal area¹⁶ we considered that the Army needs a **sustainable** Ready Force of:

- One independent brigade. This brigade would be between 2000 and 3,500 troops. It would have its own integral transport, logistics and weapon systems to enable it to operate as an independent fighting organization.
- One deployable battalion group. This battalion group would be constituted from an existing brigade and would take from the brigade appropriate transport, logistic and other specialist supplements to allow it to operate independently for a limited duration.¹⁷

The actual readiness times of these elements would vary depending on the situation.

The Latent Combat Force

4.23 As a rule of thumb the latent combat force needs to be maintained at twice the size of the RDF. The reason for this is, at any one time, one third of the force can be held on operations; one third is being refurbished from operations, and one third is being brought back up to readiness to return to operations. To maintain a brigade on protracted operations, as in Vietnam War, requires two brigades in the Latent Combat Force.

4.24 In theory the Army's deployment to East Timor should have been easily accommodated as the Army's latent combat force in 2000 consisted of seven brigades. However the Army sought, and was granted, an increase in 3,000 full time personnel to sustain the East Timor commitment. The basic reason for this was because the Latent Combat Force was not able to fulfil its role. It was and is dysfunctional. In 1999, of the Army's nine brigades, two were in the Ready Force. Of the seven brigades within the Latent Combat Force only one, 7 Brigade, could probably be equipped and

16 The nature of focal areas has been defined by the size of the force commitment. It does not necessarily reflect a set geographical size. Hence the commitment of a brigade of 2,000 to 3,500 troops defines an area as being a major focal area. A Battalion Group will, by definition, occupy a minor focal area.

17 See the Glossary for definitions.

staffed to replace one of the brigades within the Ready Force within a reasonable time frame.¹⁸

- 4.25 We received proposals for an Army capability to meet worse case scenarios for a force size between 50,000¹⁹ and 2,500,000.²⁰ This would suggest a latent combat force of between 35,000 and 170,000. These large numbers were suggested as they would provide:

A demonstration of the potential capability and determination to raise and deploy such a force ... would give pause to a potential invader.²¹

- 4.26 We understood that these aspirations for a significant force generation capability within the Army would be sensible if deterrence is to be credible. The maintenance of such large forces with no threat would be prohibitively expensive. More desirable would be to have a Latent Combat Force that could sustain the immediate demands on the Ready Force. Should the threat change then the Latent Combat Force could be expanded to permit a larger Ready Force.

- 4.27 The bulk of the existing latent combat force is based on seven predominantly reserve formations. We received a large body of evidence on problems within the Reserve. Many of these issues relate to personnel management, training, recruiting practices, equipment provisioning, callout legislation and most of all resourcing. The majority of these issues are dealt with in Chapters 6, 7 and 8. We will restrict our observations in this section to a key management tool which appears to have made the Latent Combat Force dysfunctional – ie, Readiness.

- 4.28 Much of the latent combat force appears to be on readiness levels in excess of 180 days notice. As pointed out by the Australian Defence Association:

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 resources. If you insist that a reserve unit be available in 90 days, then you have got to give it resources.²²

We were concerned that the practice of long readiness times delivered no useable capability while creating the impression that the Army was large

18 For further clarification on the Army's personnel and equipment limitations read Chapters 7 and 8.

19 Mr L Usher, Submission 4, p. 45.

20 This later figure was suggested from an extrapolation of Australia's WWII commitments using the present day population. See Mr J Gallaway, Submission 9, p. 82-85.

21 Mr J Gallaway, Submission 9, p. 83.

22 Mr M O'Connor, Transcript, p. 177.

and capable. We felt those units with readiness times of in excess of 180 days, or more:

- Are of limited utility to operational planners dealing with short notice contingencies; and
- Receive resourcing which results in basic individual and collective skills never being achieved or else becoming degraded.

4.29 **Given the strategic role we considered for the Army in Chapter 3 we felt no unit should have a readiness time in excess of 120 days. If units existed that could not be resourced to meet this readiness time they should be removed from the force-in-being.**

4.30 **Finally, the size of the latent combat force needs to be sufficient to support a deployed independent brigade and a battalion group. This would require that the minimum size of the latent combat force be two brigades and two more battalion groups. In other words the total Ready and Latent Combat Forces need to be four brigades. This would constitute the minimum acceptable force-in-being for the Army.**

The Enabling Component

4.31 The Enabling component consists of those elements needed to generate new forces. It includes training establishments, repair, supply, acquisition and recruiting. Some indications were received that not all aspects of the Army's logistic system were functioning correctly for East Timor. Anecdotal evidence received by individual members of our Committee suggested that some aspects of commercialisation may have contributed to this. No clear formal evidence was received on this aspect of the enabling component.²³

4.32 More evidence was received on the limitations of the Army's Training Command. Specifically we were told by the General Officer Commanding Army's Training Command that:

Put simply, we do not have enough fat in our training establishments to meet the requirement to suddenly increase our training throughput. The planning we undertook to meet a larger ongoing commitment to East Timor, had we been called upon to do so, exposed our limitations in this regard.²⁴

23 Brigadier McIntosh was aware of some difficulties experienced in East Timor with the Army logistics system however he was not appraised of the details. See Brigadier P McIntosh, Transcript, p. 258.

24 Major General R Powell, Transcript, p. 290.

The Army Training Command would, on this assessment, not satisfy the strategic requirement to expand the Army significantly within a two-year period. But what would be a 'significant expansion' of the Army to meet a serious threat? Our judgement was that a significant force would be to triple the size of the force-in-being (see Paragraph 4.30 for the size of the Ready and Latent Combat Forces, ie: the force-in-being). This would mean that the Enabling Component would need a capability to expand the Army by an additional eight brigades within two years.

Sustainment

4.33 The Army defines sustainment as:

... the process of enabling a force to maintain the necessary combat capability to achieve its objectives. It embraces all aspects of sustaining the personnel, equipment and stores that enable a force to complete its mission.²⁵

4.34 By definition the sustainment process engages many of the same agencies and processes involved in force generation. Our Committee previously examined the issue of sustainability as recently as 1994.²⁶ The Report on Sustainability and Stockholdings within the ADF notes, amongst other things, the following key deficiencies:

- Units were not being equipped or stocked sufficiently to meet capability criteria.
- The Department should determine the activity levels and usage rates needed to sustain the highest level of credible threat.
- There is a need for Defence Power Legislation with respect to civil infrastructure.²⁷

4.35 Professor Paul Dibb also noted the lack of agreement within the Department on the contingencies against which reserve stock should be maintained. Since the 1994 report significant progress does not appear to have been made in stockholding or sustainability.²⁸ The issue of stockholding and sustainability is dealt with in detail in Chapter 8.

25 Australian Army, Submission 47, p. 762.

26 Australia, Parliament, *Report on Sustainability and Stockholdings*, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, AGPS, Canberra, 1992.

27 *ibid.* pp. 72–73.

28 This will be expanded considerably in subsequent draft following the Department's supplementary submission.

- 4.36 In broad terms we were concerned that the Army's field logistics capability cannot support more than two brigade deployments in an Army of nine brigades.²⁹ This points to a serious underlying force structure problem. Evidence was also received that indicated the logistic capability could not support the brigades if they were not collocated in Australia on the same operation.³⁰ We were therefore uncertain of the Army's capability to support two dispersed operations.

Deployment and Recovery

- 4.37 With Australia's vast land mass the capability to deploy and recover forces is a critical capability if combat forces are to be useable and sustainable. The Army defines deployment and recovery as:
- ... the movement of combat forces to, within and from a theatre of operations.³¹
- 4.38 A number of capabilities impact on the Army's ability to deploy on operations. Foremost amongst these is the RAN's capability for amphibious lift and the RAAF's capability for air transport. Internally, within the Army, there is the troop lift capability provided by its vehicles, helicopters and landing craft. The majority of the Army platforms are used to move tactically within the theatre. However, wheeled vehicles, such as the ASLAV and Bushranger, can be used to deploy operationally.
- 4.39 A key deficiency identified by the Army was its capability for Terminal Operations.³² Terminal operations are the equivalent of military stevedoring activities and are necessary to support a force being resupplied and sustained through a port.
- 4.40 There was also concern about the general capability for troop lift. As noted in Chapter 2, the Army has historically had very low levels of mechanisation compared to European armies. The Army has only recently started to develop a motorised capability within one brigade.³³ The majority of brigades do not have a capability to self deploy and fight.
- 4.41 The Army has indicated that it does need more helicopter assets for mobility. It estimated that in the longer term it is deficient some 15 to 20

29 Colonel D Chalmers, Submission 50, p. 822.

30 Australian Army, Submission 47, p. 778.

31 Australian Army, Submission 47, p. 762.

32 *ibid.* pp. 775-776.

33 Brigadier P McIntosh, Transcript, pp. 251-252.

helicopters.³⁴ Further discussion on the suitability of vehicles and helicopters is provided in Chapter 8.

Combat Operations

Introduction

4.42 The combat capability within the Army does not simply relate to weapons. It involves all those elements necessary to engage the enemy in modern combat within a theatre. Many of these elements have utility in situations well short of combat. These include engineering, construction, transport, communications and medical elements. Combat operations for the Army embrace the range of activities it may be called upon to perform. Because of this, the discussion of the Army combat capability is discussed under the following headings:

- Warfighting
- Peace Support Operations
- Peace – Aid to the Civil Community

4.43 The Department of Defence specifies

that the Army has the capacity to defeat incursions and recapture territory. Its capabilities currently enable the Army to conduct the following indicative tasks:

- To seize and protect forward operating bases.
- To eject an adversary from a forward operating base.
- To participate in coalition warfare to support regional security.
- To conduct surveillance and reconnaissance operations.
- To conduct special operations; to conduct special recovery; counter terrorists and combat search and rescue operations.
- To provide command, control and communications.
- To provide operational-level sustainment of land based operations.
- To provide humanitarian assistance.³⁵

4.44 In assessing the Army's capability to fulfil some of these tasks we were fortunate in being able to evaluate aspects of the Army's performance in

34 Department of Defence, Submission 73, p. 1088.

35 Department of Defence, Submission 35, p. 556.

East Timor.³⁶ In other areas our deliberations were constrained by understandable security considerations (eg, counter terrorism), or through lack of other evidence.

- 4.45 The East Timor experience indicated that the Army has a good capability for participating in, and leading, coalition operations of low combat intensity. The Army worked effectively within a situation requiring both force and humanity.³⁷ Its credentials for providing and supporting humanitarian assistance have been well accredited by Timor.
- 4.46 What East Timor has not been able to inform the Committee is Army's capability for conflict involving a higher level of combat intensity. The Army's own assessment is that its capability in this area is deficient.³⁸

Warfighting

- 4.47 The inquiry evidence indicated a wide variety of perceptions of Army's ability to conduct combat. The Army's own assessment was that it has had a limited capability for conflict involving medium intensity combat.³⁹ This was supported in a number of submissions and in testimony. The Defence Reserves Association,⁴⁰ the Australian Defence Association⁴¹ and the Returned Services League⁴² all either state or infer that the Army's capability for combat, other than low intensity, is limited. The Defence Association bases its argument partially on the age of the combat equipment and platforms owned by the Army. The Returned Services League's concern appeared to centre on the mass of the combat force. In other words the Army has a combat capability but it is too thin. It lacks personnel and sustainability. The Defence Reserves Association appears to echo the sentiments of the Returned Services League and raises a number of issues, most specifically, the impact of the Commercial Support Program.
- 4.48 The assessment of Professor Paul Dibb was that the Army was correct to assert that:

36 A visit by the Committee to East Timor in late 1999 facilitated this assessment process.

37 Brigadier R Atkison, RFD, Submission 44, p. 662. Brigadier Atkinson defined the 'essence of peacekeeping' as being the application of force and humanity. The Committee thought this a particularly apt description of the challenge involved in peacekeeping operations.

38 Australian Army, Submission 47, p. 758.

39 Australian Army, Submission 47.

40 Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, p. 218.

41 Australian Defence Association, Submission 46, pp. 689–690.

42 Returned Services League, Transcript, p. 216.

... it does indeed have very limited capabilities for war fighting, even at the lower end of the war fighting capability contingencies.⁴³

In fact there were very few respondents or witnesses who asserted the Army had too much combat capability. Even World Vision Australia appeared to support the need for the Army to maintain its core warfighting capability.⁴⁴ One possible exception to this was provided by Doctor Graham Cheeseman who argued for an Army

... largely structured and prepared for multinational peace operations ... While these forces would still be able to protect themselves they would not require the types or numbers of heavy weapons needed for conventional warfighting roles, nor would they need to rely on tapping into either the RMA or traditional military alliance networks.⁴⁵

- 4.49 The difficulty the Committee continually faced was how much and what type of combat capability was appropriate for Australia. It was clear that the majority of submissions dealing with this capability considered Army's combat capability to be deficient. Army earmarked its capability in nuclear, biological and chemical defence as a deficiency it would like rectified.⁴⁶ However, most of the eleven capability outputs listed within the Army submission had deficient aspects.⁴⁷ These deficiencies included the age or sufficiency of equipment and the availability of trained personnel.
- 4.50 We received advocacy for and against broad combat capability types. For instance Brigadier Cooper suggested that armoured capabilities had little utility within Australia's region. He pointed out that terrain could seriously degrade the capability of units structured for heavy or armoured operations. As pointed out in one submission:

While there are some similarities between the jungles, towns and cities of our Region, the rolling plains and deserts that exist in Australia are uncommon in our region. It is of the same magnitude of difference that exists between Iraq and Yugoslavia, the location of two recent conflicts. While high speed armoured and mechanised manoeuvre warfare could be carried out in Iraq and Australia, in Yugoslavia and our Region it will be high speed

43 Professor P Dibb, Transcript, p. 193.

44 World Vision Australia, Transcript, p. 183.

45 Dr G Cheeseman, Submission 30, p. 401.

46 Lieutenant General F Hickling, Transcript, p. 68

47 See Australian Army, Submission 47, pp. 776-778.

air/land manoeuvre battle due to terrain, vegetation, climate and paucity of roads. While mechanised forces can operate, their area of operations will be limited.⁴⁸

4.51 We could see that, attempting to avoid risk by purchasing ‘high end’ capabilities may be a flawed strategy if the operating environment is not factored in.⁴⁹ We did not feel that we had either the evidence or the expertise to comment on the suitability of specific combat capabilities. We did believe, however, that we could provide sufficient guidance to the Army to optimise the capability with the limited funds available. This guidance would require a clear statement on the environment for which the Army must be optimised. This was done to a significant extent in Chapter 3 by stating the technical, operational and geographical parameters needed to guide the efficient development of the ADF.

Peace Support Operations

4.52 The term Peace Support Operations (PSO) is used to cover both peacekeeping and peacemaking activities. With some notable exceptions, the Army’s capability for PSO was not addressed significantly in written submissions. The advent of the East Timor deployment however, allowed the issue to be further explored during public hearings. The views expressed about Army’s capability for peace support appear to fall into one of the following categories:

- Army’s capability is good and is grounded in the organisation’s warfighting capabilities.
- Army’s capability is satisfactory but could be improved.
- Army is not sufficiently orientated towards peace support operations.

The Army as Successful Peacekeepers

4.53 In view of the Army’s heavy involvement in both Bougainville and East Timor, many witnesses thought the Army had acquitted itself well. When the discussion of peace support operations was expanded to include less recent involvements, such as Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda, the overall impression of the Army as peacekeepers and peacemakers is very good. Mr Michael O’Connor of the Australian Defence Association claimed that his own studies had indicated to him that Australians are the ‘best peace

48 Brigadier B and Mr S Cooper, Submission 19, p. 149.

49 Mr M O’Connor Transcript, p. 170 notes the difficulties wheeled vehicles would experience in New Guinea.

troops in the world'. He believed that the reasons for this can be traced back to personality, training and doctrine.⁵⁰

- 4.54 Witnesses during hearings were at pains to emphasize that the Army's strength in these missions was founded on a capacity for war fighting. This was the view of the Australian Defence Association⁵¹ and also the experience of serving and retired senior army officers. Brigadier McIntosh, from his experience in Rwanda, believed that his soldiers' ability and confidence in warfighting was crucial to their ability to operate in Rwanda. He noted that:

The reason why we were so effective over there was that the protection elements ... were capable of being able to provide protection and do their job regardless of what had occurred with the security situation.⁵²

Likewise Lieutenant General Sanderson, who commanded United Nations forces in Cambodia, reinforced this view by stating:

... the best peacekeepers are troops who anybody who is opposed to the mission takes seriously. Those who come along not organised, nor with a military endeavour, tend to be unable to implement the peacekeeping mandate; they are not taken seriously and normally are the ones that suffer the casualties. That certainly is a conclusion that I made out of Cambodia.⁵³

- 4.55 It was also made clear to us that United Nations' operations authorised under Chapter 7 of the United Nation's Charter are in reality war operations.⁵⁴ Restricting the Army to PSO will not negate the need for the Army to maintain credible capabilities for warfighting.

The Army as Peacekeepers with Room for Improvement

- 4.56 Not all respondents considered that the emphasis on peacekeeping was sufficient within the Army. Improvements were urged at two levels:
- A greater emphasis on the use and deployment of those units which have utility in peacekeeping; and
 - A greater emphasis on the training of soldiers for the difficulties unique to peacekeeping.

50 Australian Defence Association, Transcript, p. 168.

51 *ibid.* p. 174.

52 Brigadier P McIntosh, Transcript, p. 255.

53 Lieutenant General J Sanderson, Transcript, p. 151.

54 *ibid.* p. 147.

- 4.57 Brigadier Atkinson emphasized to the Committee the utility of medical services within peacekeeping operations. He proposed that medical units should move outside the official constraints of servicing the needs of the UN force. Rather, their role should be expanded to include humanitarian work.⁵⁵ He saw this as a most cost effective way to build bridges between people and strengthen the peace process. To that end he suggested that the ADF medical force may have a leadership role in certain UN missions.⁵⁶ The Committee also received suggestions that Australia's involvement in PSO would be enhanced by the creation of a civil affairs capability.⁵⁷
- 4.58 Most submissions that addressed the issue of peacekeeping noted the requirement for the Army to retain warfighting skills to be effective as peacekeepers. However some evidence was received proposing that the army extend its training for peacekeeping. Colonel Chalmers held the view that the ADF peacekeeping centre trains planners but, what was also needed was:

... a centre which trains soldiers in the types of skills they need specifically for peacekeeping or peace enforcement operations.⁵⁸

One battalion commander reinforced the need for soldier specific training to us during our visit to East Timor. Humanitarian Non-governmental Organisations also emphasized the need for Army personnel to be more aware of non-military aspects of peacekeeping.

An Army Focused on Peacekeeping

- 4.59 World Vision Australia argued that investment in peace maintenance was cheaper than investment in resolving conflict.⁵⁹ World Vision did not make a specific recommendation that the Army be dedicated to peacekeeping but other respondents leaned in this direction. Dr Cheeseman's proposals for an Army more oriented to peacekeeping has already been mentioned. Mr Jones proposed that the Australian Army should be oriented, as is the Irish Army, to servicing the needs of the international community.

55 Brigadier Atkinson, Submission 44, p. 659.

56 One Non-Government Organisation pointed out that the medical care practiced by military units can raise the expectations of a community in an unsustainable way. The emphasis in medical care needs to be on appropriate treatments. See World Vision Australia, Transcript, pp. 183 and 184.

57 Captain B White, Submission 21, p. 178. This view was affirmed by representations made to the Committee during its visit to East Timor in 1999.

58 Colonel D Chalmers, Transcript, p. 104.

59 World Vision Australia, Submission 53.

Peace – Aid to the Civil Community

- 4.60 The use of the Army to support the needs of the civil community was raised in a number of submissions. The Defence Reserves Association saw a particular strength of the Army Reserve as being 'from and of the community'.⁶⁰ Other respondents proposed an indirect role for the Army in the community through national service schemes. While these schemes were seen as important in terms of defence capability they also appeared to satisfy a social role.⁶¹
- 4.61 The conduct of the Sydney Olympics has demanded a significant commitment from the Army. Some respondents felt positively about the Army helping out in the civil community.⁶² Others warned of the damage such commitments could inflict on skill levels. This particularly applied to the Reserve where training times were limited.⁶³ The Army's own view on the impact of the Olympics was described in a submission:
- Army support to the Olympics cannot be provided without detriment to the development of operational capability and readiness, even though some of the force elements involved will obtain some training benefit from their participation. The issue to be addressed is whether the detriment is acceptable or not. When Army was directed to provide unfunded support to the Olympics, the impact of this support on operational capability and readiness was assessed and conveyed to Government. The decision was taken to provide the support on the assumption by Army that the detriment articulated in the impact statement was acceptable to Government.⁶⁴
- 4.62 The role of the military in civil law enforcement was raised on a number of occasions during the inquiry. The Chief of Defence Force argued that the military's involvement in civil law enforcement should be minimised. Admiral Barrie was supportive of the ADF's role in assisting civil agencies; however he was opposed to the use of the ADF in taking action

60 Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, p. 243.

61 Some of the submissions in support of national service schemes included: Mr R Downey, Submission 3; Mr L Usher, Submission 4; Mr P Stewart, Submission 13; Mr N Filby, Submission 10; Mrs D and Mr M Matthews, Submission 15, and Mr R Fung, Submission 17. Not all were advocating universal service and a number included an emphasis on national renewal or youth development.

62 See Defence Reserves Association, Submission 25, pp. 50 and 292 re use of Reservists in support of their communities.

63 LTCOL D Strain, Transcript, p. 3.

64 Department of Defence, Submission 73, p. 1086.

against Australian citizens.⁶⁵ Conversely other respondents felt that events may force the government to start relying on military forces to address issues of international crime.⁶⁶

- 4.63 The issue of employing the Army in law enforcement raises the issue of the Special Air Service Regiment's role in counter terrorism. Time precluded us from exploring further the appropriateness of this capability. In view of the comments made by Admiral Barrie, we thought that a review of the arrangement might be timely. Consideration might be given transferring the capability to the Federal Police with possible assistance provided by secondments from State police forces.

An Assessment of the Army's Capabilities in Future Strategy - Conclusion

Introduction

- 4.64 The Army's capability to meet the strategic objectives we outlined in Chapter 3 is limited. It currently has the capability to deploy forces to a major and a minor focal area within Australia's ACSI. It could not however sustain this effort. Nor could it expand the force in a useful time frame (ie, 2 years) to meet more significant threats.
- 4.65 The higher probability of peacekeeping and low-intensity operations within the ACSI requires that the Army carefully determine its training and equipment needs. Since 1987 preparation for these activities has not received a specific priority within Defence. We believe this priority needs to be defined to enable the Army to regularize training and obtain necessary equipment. It is important that prior to deployment units and brigades have time to rehearse procedures and rules-of-engagement appropriate to their impending task. This is as important for peacekeeping as it is for war. However, peacekeeping priorities must be carefully balanced against the less probable but more serious eventuality of conventional mid-intensity conflict. Equipping and training for peacekeeping should not be done to the serious detriment of warfighting capabilities.
- 4.66 The Army has a good capability for peace support operations but a limited capability for medium intensity conflict. We believe that a capability for

⁶⁵ Department of Defence, Transcript, pp. 79-80.

⁶⁶ Dr J Wood, Transcript, p. 167.

warfighting, up to and including mid-intensity, is a core requirement of the Army. It ensures that the Army will remain credible in war as well as future peace support operations.

- 4.67 This section will summarise our view on the suitability of the Army's capability under the headings of relevance, credibility, ability to scale forces, sustainability and efficiency.

Relevance

- 4.68 The Army's existing capability appears broadly relevant to the needs of Australia's defence strategy. Its combat capability, although possibly too light, has performed well within peace support operations in Somalia, Cambodia and East Timor. For operations within Australia's ACSI it would be beneficial for the Army to acquire better capabilities for:

- Terminal Operations
- Civil Affairs

- 4.69 Without further analysis we had difficulty deciding whether a better capability for nuclear, biological and chemical defence (NBCD) was needed within the Army. We also thought that the role of the Army in law enforcement, including counter-terrorism needs to be clarified.

Credibility

- 4.70 We believe that the Army's capability to handle immediate security concerns to be credible. However, the Army does not have a capacity to sustain these capabilities. To do this we believe that the minimum size of the Army needs to be 4 independent brigades. We also believe that no element of this force should be maintained at a readiness level greater than 120 days. Brigades and units should deploy as complete entities and not be dependent on piecemeal reinforcements or supplements made up from individuals.
- 4.71 The Army's capability for deterring or defeating more significant security threats is questionable. The Latent Combat Force was not able to provide an expansion base for East Timor and nor could it expand for more significant threats. We believe that the Army's enabling component needs to be planned, structured and resourced to expand the Army by an additional eight fully staffed, trained and equipped brigades within two

years of notice. Its needs to be planned for a combat capability sufficient to be credible in sustained mid-intensity conflict.⁶⁷

- 4.72 The final aspect that could impact on the Army's credibility is its ability to deploy within Australia's ACSI. We were not able to decide whether the current asset of sea and air lift would be adequate for sustaining two dispersed focal areas. In addition we were not certain if the Army possessed the right quantities and types of vehicles needed for effective operations within our region. To answer these questions would require detailed analysis and modelling. However initial indications from Timor would suggest that there may need to be a greater emphasis on tracked vehicles to operate effectively in the region.⁶⁸

Ability to Scale Forces

- 4.73 As indicated above we are not confident that the Army has the ability to scale its force size to meet a more significant threat. We believe that the shifting demands placed on the Army from decade to decade indicate that it needs an institutionalised capability to expand and contract – ie, to scale. A planned capability for expansion will ensure that necessary capability is delivered to Government in agreed time frames. A capability for planned contraction will ensure that force structure distortions and hollowness do not occur in the aftermath of heavy demands.

Sustainability

- 4.74 The Army's ability to sustain short-notice operations will be enhanced by the maintenance of a force-in-being of four brigades on no more than 120 days readiness. Based on the requirement for concurrently supporting one major and one minor deployment the existing logistics system may be insufficient. It is capable of supporting two brigades but not on two separate operations. The capability of the logistics system may need to be reviewed to determine if it can satisfy the capability requirement.

Efficiency

- 4.75 There were aspects of the Army's current capability that appeared inefficient. For instance the maintenance of a large Latent Combat Force

67 See Paragraphs 3.77 and 3.78 for a discussion on warning times. These paragraphs note that the issue of force expansion for the RAAF and RAN may be different to the force expansion solution created for the Army.

68 Suggested to the Committee in discussions with soldiers at Robertson Barracks Darwin on 8 August 2000.

which could not be used in East Timor is one example. Other areas of suspected inefficiency lie in the Army's higher management and command and control. The Department of Defence was investigating the issue of officer-to-soldier ratios. We felt that, if the Latent Combat Force was rationalised to be more ready this might remove the perception of too many headquarters.

- 4.76 We were concerned about both the impact of reforms within the Army and the manner in which the Department of Defence communicated its actions both internally and externally. We agreed that issues impacting on Defence capability, such as reform processes, need more transparency and debate if they are to be successful. This will not occur until Defence and Army are more open and intelligible in their communications with the Government, the Parliament and the Community.⁶⁹

Conclusion

- 4.77 At the start of this Chapter we noted that the military definition of capability was the combination of force structure and preparedness. Preparedness is itself the combination of readiness and sustainability. All of these issues rest heavily on a more detailed discussion on force structures, equipment and personnel. These issues will be expanded upon in Chapters 6 to 8. Before we look at these issues we will consider implications of funding on the Army.

⁶⁹ A clear example of the confusion caused by Defence terminology can be seen in the different ways that Defence uses to describe capability outputs. The Army tasks included within Submission 35 and the capability outputs listed in Submission 47 do not appear to have any linkage or a consistent system of classification. This does not mean that the systems used are wrong but they are unintelligible to most in the community.