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Grant Harrison  
Secretary  
Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade  
Parliament House  
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## INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME STRATEGY

Dear Grant,

Thank you for your letter of 5 September 2002 inviting comments on the terms of reference for the Defence Sub-Committee inquiry into Australia's maritime strategy. Be advised that the views presented at the Enclosure are mine alone and do not represent those of any other organisation or individual.

Should the Government or the Parliament require a complete, comprehensive and multi-perspective analysis of Australia's national security strategy and policies, the Centre for International Strategic Analysis (CISA) is well placed to provide it. We have a highly talented, credible and genuinely independent and apolitical team of national and international experts available to undertake such a task.

Yours sincerely

Lee Cordner AM  
Chief Executive Officer

Enclosure: Submission to the Defence Sub-Committee of the Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee – Inquiry Into Australia's Maritime Strategy

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## INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S MARITIME STRATEGY

### Submission To The Defence Sub-Committee Of The Joint Foreign Affairs, Defence And Trade Committee

#### Introduction

Given Australia's geo-strategic and geo-political environments, the adoption of a "maritime strategy" as one of the fundamental aspects of its approach to national security seems perfectly logical. The island-continent of Australia, situated in a vast maritime setting, enjoys the strategic luxury of sharing no land border with another country. This geography affords Australia the good fortune available to few other nation-states: significant strategic depth. The challenge for Australia is to capitalise on this natural strategic advantage while also protecting our wider national interests and making an effective contribution in a globalised and increasingly complex, multi-polar world.

Australia needs a military strategy that recognises our widespread national interests, our geo-strategic environment, and our role as a developed, western, middle power. This requires some new thinking, learning the lessons of our past and of history more broadly. We should be seeking to provide Government with military options as part of a wider whole of nation, whole of government approach to national security that will contribute to shaping and influencing the strategic environment toward optimum outcomes for Australia and Australians. Our geo-strategic realities dictate that this comprehensive strategy must have a significant, but not solely, maritime strategic flavour.

The defence capability to support this strategy requires joint forces that can exhibit the characteristics of combat power, reach, sustainability, flexibility and adaptability. They need to be effective in an asymmetric conflict environment, as well as a more traditional one. They need to be able to operate autonomously or provide a worthwhile contribution and if necessary, leadership to coalition forces (US-led or otherwise). Such a strategy with the policy (including funding) to match would provide Government with expeditionary force options as well as providing the essential "last resort" insurance policy for the defence of our geographical sovereignty.

Unfortunately in recent times our strategy has been written to a budget, not the other way round<sup>1</sup>. The result is ineffective strategy and ineffective policy. A policy-strategy match (and commitment to funding is part of policy) is required that fits our circumstances and aspirations.

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<sup>1</sup>*Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Commonwealth of Australia 2000, pp 117-118. 1.9 % of GDP is specified with "growth" in defence expenditure of "three per cent per annum...slightly below the annual growth rate of Australia's economy over the last two decades...in 2010 we will be spending about the same proportion of GDP on defence as we are today."

## Considerations in Developing Australia's Military Strategy

While Australia's geography is a central consideration, our national interests are only bounded to a degree by geography. Certainly our sovereign territory, territorial seas, extensive Exclusive Economic Zone, and other maritime zones (including those in the Southern Ocean and Antarctica) are extremely important to our economic and strategic futures. However, as a modern trading nation and citizen of the world, Australia's interests range far beyond our immediate and even our regional geography. Our business, leisure, diplomatic, economic, social, environment and therefore security interests are truly global as Australian citizens engage in many ways in the international community. Our national security strategy needs to recognise and provide for these broader aspirations and obligations.

As recent international events have graphically reminded us the nature of conflict is forever changing and evolving. While geographically bounded state on state conflict is far from a thing of the past, Australia's military strategy and defence capabilities need to also cater for many other types of conflict.

Another vital consideration is what type of country we wish to be. This includes the role we see for Australia in international affairs. Do we wish to be passive and distant, or proactive and engaged? Clearly the Government is strongly inclined to the latter. Do we wish to effectively and actively contribute to promoting the rule of law and defending human and other rights? Again the answer is emphatically yes.

Our immediate neighbourhood must be fully comprehended, as much of it is dynamic, unstable and uncertain. The so-called "arc of instability" dominated by the Indonesian Archipelago, remains highly problematic. All indicators suggest that security, economic and social problems, and the potential for natural disasters in much of Indonesia and Papua New Guinea, will probably worsen. The Philippines and Malaysia also have internal problems. Many of the microstates of the Southwest Pacific face a bleak medium to long-term future. Some argue that as the "resident" developed, middle power in this region, Australia has an "obligation" to influence, support and if necessary intervene in order to promote peace and stability. We have an obligation, when necessary, to evacuate Australian citizens in difficulty overseas. There are many potential challenges in this largely maritime environment that will impact on Australia's national interests and cause Governments to seek military options.

The wider Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean strategic environment also remains highly dynamic and uncertain. There is the ongoing potential for Great power rivalry involving the US, China, Japan and India. The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in India, Pakistan and North Korea remains of concern. There are numerous delimitation and other disputes, which could result in armed conflict (China/Taiwan, the Koreas, India/Pakistan, multi-lateral claims in the South China Sea, instability in Indo-China). Australia's national interests, including the capacity to trade will be affected by wider

regional conflict and Governments will seek military options to manage crises, probably as part of coalition efforts.

Further afield there are numerous potential crises that will impact on Australia's national interests and may require Government to seek military options as part of the national response. There are active conflicts in Afghanistan, Africa and Eastern Europe. In the Middle East there is the possibility of major war on many fronts and in the very short term. The Arab-Israeli conflict could quickly escalate and the prospect of war with Iraq remains highly likely.

Some analysts suggest that there is a real and present danger of the current "war on terror" and associated Islamic extremism that extends from North Africa, through the Middle East and Pakistan and into parts of Southeast Asia, deteriorating into a major conflagration. Several Middle Eastern regimes are in a very fragile position and could fall to pro-Islamists interests including: Saudi Arabia, Libya, Syria and Iran. Failure of the international community to effectively put down those who perpetrate terror and/or the flow on effects of a US-led attack on Iraq, the Israel/Palestinian situation getting out of hand, or a likely combination of these and other events could result in widespread conflict with economic and human tragedy implications of major proportions. This "war" could be fought on many fronts, and would almost certainly involve weapons of mass destruction and terrorism. Such a conflict would be very difficult to manage and contain.

Some may suggest that this is a highly pessimistic prognosis. However, there is considerable objective evidence that supports the view that the world is passing through an extremely dangerous period of history. This is not a time for complacency. It is a time when the international community of nations should be seeking multi-dimensional "grand strategic" approaches. These would include combining political, diplomatic, social, economic and other factors in a highly coordinated, comprehensive and long-term strategy that seeks to address underlying causal concerns and perceptions, as well as dealing with immediate crises and perceived injustices. A military response is an essential part of this "grand strategy" however a predominantly mono-dimensional military approach will never be enough and is likely to exacerbate and perpetuate the situation. This is a time when the Australian Government needs to seriously review the utility and readiness of all the resources, including military resources, it has available now and may need at short notice in the short to medium term.

These geo-strategic realities and imperatives, and policy directions from Government (either explicit or implied) dictate that we need a military strategy that is comprehensive<sup>2</sup>, flexible and versatile. Many exigencies that may require the application of military force, or the application of military capability for peaceful purposes will not be clearly foreseen and will arise at very short notice. Government requires a

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<sup>2</sup> In military strategy jargon a "comprehensive strategy" can be taken to mean a strategy that is not precisely compliant with any of the traditional schools of strategic thought. It is neither a continental, maritime or aerospace strategy although it will probably encompass elements from all three schools, and may be predominantly slanted toward one or the other.

military strategy and a complementary defence force that is able to offer a range of capability options to support policy considerations across a broad spectrum of requirements.

### **What are the Characteristics of a Maritime Strategy?**

Given that this Inquiry is tasked with evaluating Australia's maritime strategy it is useful to briefly consider what the term "maritime strategy" can encompass. The generic concepts that variously contribute to the maritime school of strategic thought and therefore require consideration in developing the maritime aspects of a comprehensive military strategy have evolved over recent history. They are largely based upon the writings of American Rear Admiral Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914), British strategic analyst Sir Julian Corbett (1854-1922), British Admiral Sir Herbert Richmond (1871-1946) and French strategist Admiral Raoul Castex (1878-1968).

Maritime strategy is principally about the extent to which the sea is controlled or used with the intent of strategically affecting events on land. There are several aspects of maritime strategy that have evolved over time:

- a. **Sea Control** which is "defined as that condition which exists when one has freedom of action to use an area for one's own purposes for a period of time and, if required, to deny its use to an opponent."<sup>3</sup> The area includes the air space above the water, the water column and the seabed as well as the electro-magnetic spectrum, and increasingly, space-based assets. *Sea Control* implies a proactive posture, employing offensive as well as defensive defence assets to take the initiative away from an adversary. Some authors describe a related concept called *Sea Assertion*, which is about asserting control of the sea for ones own purposes.
- b. **Sea Denial** has the "aim of prevention of the use of the sea" by another force against us. This is "defined as the condition that exists when an adversary is denied the ability to use an area of sea for its own purposes for a period of time."<sup>4</sup> *Sea Denial* implies a more passive posture where the emphasis is on defence (although this does not preclude the employment of offensive capabilities), and where the initiative is likely to remain with the attacking power.
- c. **Power Projection**, while not exclusively a maritime strategic concept, recognises that maritime forces, through *Sea Control*, can shape, influence and control the strategic environment, and can deliver combat force ashore if necessary. "The delivery of force from the sea is defined as *maritime power projection* and can take the form of the landing of amphibious or special forces or the delivery of seaborne land forces, or bombardment by guided or unguided weapons from seaborne platforms."<sup>5</sup> Submarines and air forces can play an important role in this.

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<sup>3</sup> *Australian Maritime Doctrine: RAN Doctrine 1 2000*, Commonwealth of Australia 2000, p 39.

<sup>4</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *op cit*, p43.

The characteristics of maritime power<sup>6</sup> contribute to a maritime strategy and have considerable resonance in Australia's geo-strategic environment. Some comments upon the application of maritime strategic characteristics in the Australian context are as follows:

- a. **Mobility in mass** – seaborne forces are able to move considerable quantities of combat power and military cargoes over long distances and relatively quickly. They are able to remain mobile and to a significant degree autonomous from external support for considerable periods. They may be able operate on the high seas, clear of territorial claims for much of the time and until Government decides they need to be committed.
- b. **Readiness** – the concept of readiness does not apply solely to naval forces, as the idea of having elements of the ADF ready to operate at appropriate notice is universally important. High readiness is expensive and elicits a heavy toll on the personnel, logistics and systems involved so requirements must be carefully balanced. The term *Preparedness*, a combination of readiness and sustainability, is more widely used in the ADF.
- c. **Access** – in Australia's geo-strategic context the sea-air environment provides considerable access. In a largely archipelagic setting the vast majority of significant population areas can be accessed from the sea. Providing ADF forces are appropriately constituted, with the necessary reach, sustainability and training, this offers significant advantages in our region.
- d. **Flexibility and Adaptability** – the Government needs an ADF that can provide a range of military options. This means multi-role defence capabilities that can contribute to a broad spectrum of requirements. They need to be capable of rapidly reconfiguration for changing missions and locations. Modern warships, for example, offer the capability to contribute across the spectrum of conflict from diplomatic through constabulary tasks to high-end war fighting. A frigate can be conducting peacetime border protection tasks today and concurrent air defence, bombardment, surface and anti-submarine warfare tomorrow. In a wider sense adaptability and flexibility includes the utility of ADF forces to be able to quickly adjust and reconfigure as necessary to deal with natural disasters, asymmetric contingencies (i.e. terrorism), peacekeeping, peacemaking and war fighting. This capacity to rapidly relocate and re-role requires high levels of professionalism and is essential to the ADF, as a relatively small force with a large geo-strategic challenge.
- e. **Reach, Poise and Persistence** – the requirement to conduct sustained operations over vast distances is self evident in the Australian context. ADF assets that are limited in this regard offer less utility. For example, land-based fighter aircraft have limited radius of action. A quick look at the air defence areas that can be effectively covered by F/A18 or F35 aircraft operating from the Shearwater, Curtin or Tindal bases is instructive in this regard. Being able to

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<sup>6</sup> This list is a derivation from that provided in *Australian Maritime Doctrine*, pp 48-56.

remain in an area for extended periods at considerable distance from home bases can be important. For example, a maritime force can be kept locally ready while diplomatic and other efforts are progressed.

- f. **Manoeuvre** – this concerns the ability to rapidly apply combat power against opponents' critical vulnerabilities, or for non-combat tasks, to place assets in the right place at the right time to create the optimum effect. In the Australian geo-strategic environment joint forces with considerable manoeuvre ability are vital. For example, it is important that Australian army units are readily air and sea transportable.

This brief analysis tells us is that when taken as a whole, a defence force structured to exhibit the characteristics of a maritime strategy offers considerable utility and relevance in the Australian context. Such a force would be capable of ranging across Australia's nearer sea, air and remote offshore and onshore approaches; it would offer many military options in the wider maritime and archipelagic environment; and provide expeditionary options for both war and peace coalition operations much further afield.

### **Does Australia Already Have a Maritime Strategy?**

The short answer to this rhetorical question is NO. *Defence 2000* clearly states, "...we need a fundamentally maritime strategy"<sup>7</sup>. While we certainly need a maritime strategy, what we have in effect is mainly a continental strategy.

While Australia clearly sits in a maritime geo-strategic environment our thinking has been dominated by a continental approach. There is a high degree of consistency in strategic approach from Dobb's "denial" strategy<sup>8</sup>, through "layered strategy of defence in depth" in the 1987 White Paper<sup>9</sup>, more "defence in depth" with some "adaptability" in the 1994 White Paper<sup>10</sup>, and "The key to defending Australia is to control the air and sea approaches (note: the "sea-air gap" of former years has now been reversed) to our continent, so as to deny them to hostile ships and aircraft..."<sup>11</sup>

*Defence 2000* has gone a step further than its recent predecessors in that it expresses a desire to "...take a highly proactive approach in order to secure a rapid and favourable end to hostilities...We would seek ...to attack hostile forces as far from our shores as possible, including in their home bases, forward operating bases and in transit."<sup>12</sup> While this is an extension of "defence of the moat in order to defend the continental homeland"

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<sup>7</sup> *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Commonwealth of Australia 2000, pp XI and 47.

<sup>8</sup> *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, Report to Minister of Defence by Mr Paul Dobb, March 1986, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1986.

<sup>9</sup> *The Defence of Australia 1987*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1987.

<sup>10</sup> *Defending Australia 1994: Defence White Paper 1994*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1994.

<sup>11</sup> *Defence 2000* op cit, p 47.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid*, pp 47-48.

thinking there is very little in the way of real capability to support it (see the discussion below on capability and the need for a strategy-policy match).

Conceptually the current Australian military strategy can be closely related to the former Soviet Union approach of using the Navy to defend the seaward bastions of the homeland, and the Peoples Republic of China use of naval forces to defend the land perimeter extended to include the traditional "tongue of the dragon" in the South China Sea. Both Russia and China are clearly continental powers with continental outlooks that have dominated their approaches to strategy and defence throughout their histories. Their thinking has little in common with maritime strategic concepts as used by the United States (recently presented in US Navy strategy documents *From the Sea* and *Forward from the Sea*), which includes *control of the sea (for ones own use)* and *power projection from the sea*. Nor does the Australian version of a so-called "maritime strategy" have much in common with the traditional British version. While Britain has clearly moved beyond her colonial past where the navy was used to create and service a vast empire, the current British strategy includes a significant element of traditional maritime strategic thinking in its approach to national defence and expeditionary warfare.

In summary, all the strategic indicators would suggest that Australia should have a comprehensive military strategy with a significant maritime flavour. The most recent Defence White Paper presents some of the words that would indicate this to be the case. However, in reality, we have a predominantly continental strategy based around defence of the homeland, with naval and air forces in support to deny a hostile attack. Australia lacks the real sea control and power projection capabilities required for a genuine maritime strategy.

### **Some Observations About Defence Capability**

A high priority in *Defence 2000* and the associated *Defence Capability Plan (DCP)*<sup>13</sup> is the replacement of F111 and F18 aircraft facing block obsolescence, with a single aircraft type, probably the JSF (F35). The preferred aircraft has a similar or lesser radius of action than the F18 and less than the F111. The capability to operate in Australia's vast maritime environment is therefore limited. There will be very little capacity to contribute to control of the maritime arena, project power or to deploy in support of coalition operations further afield. *Defence 2000* makes light of this significant deficiency when in relation to the need to help our neighbours resist aggression it states we "...would expect to be able to operate from bases in its territory."<sup>14</sup>

Suggestions that at least part of the JSF capability requirement for land strike could be met by a Tomahawk Land Attack Missile (TLAM) type capability, launched from a variety of platforms including naval surface vessels and submarines, large aircraft and

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<sup>13</sup> *Defence Capability Plan 2001-2010*, Published by the Industry Division of the Defence Material Organisation, 2001.

<sup>14</sup> *Defence 2000*, op cit, pp 48-49.



ashore, have so far not been fully considered. Such an approach could provide a far more viable strike option for Government than a small number of short-range and highly expensive aircraft.

The Air Warfare Destroyer (AWD), which is intended to provide sea control and maritime power projection capabilities (local battle space dominance), has been afforded a lower priority. Providing the acquisition schedule in the *DCP* does not slip, and there are ongoing funding pressures that may lead to this, the first AWD will enter operational service in approximately 2012. This will mean a 12-year capability gap since the Adams class DDGs were retired from service. The lack of this capability will be sorely felt if the Government wishes to undertake independent operations or contribute to coalition operations in the region.

Our Anzac and Perry Class frigates, currently operating in the highly complex and dangerous Persian Gulf area, have very limited self-defence against sea-skimming missiles that are prolific among local navies in the Middle East (and in Southeast Asia). Programs to upgrade the capabilities of both frigate classes have been delayed. Requirements for improved amphibious capability and afloat support have been recognised in the *DCP* but there will be no significant improvements to amphibious capability until after 2010.

Border protection has recently become a Government priority. The naval surface force, supported by elements of air and land forces, has appropriately worn the brunt of this commitment. However, there are serious capability gaps, including being able to provide all weather, all year patrol and response capabilities in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic areas, which are so far not addressed in Government endorsed defence plans.

Other priorities in the *DCP* include significantly improving rotary air, firepower, lift and information technology available to support land forces. Government was forcibly reminded of the extent to which the Australian Army had been allowed to deteriorate. Mounting a relatively minor peace enforcement operation in East Timor significantly stretched the capabilities of the land force for what was a close run operation. This improved land force is lacking in special forces and other capabilities given the emerging asymmetric warfare challenges. It will also be stretched in providing Government with options to deal with mounting instability across the "arc of instability" while also offering some high-end capabilities for coalition operations elsewhere. The Australian Army has limited expeditionary capacity, which would be part of a genuine maritime strategy.

In summary, the current ADF, and the force projected in the *DCP* over the next decade, is small with some good capabilities and significant gaps in capability. The force is experiencing its highest level of operational activity in many years. The current and projected ADF reflect decades of inadequate investment in defence and will remain unable to effectively support a maritime strategy. The ADF is unable to provide the

necessary military options to satisfy a Government now being confronted with multiple challenges.

The Australian Defence Force (ADF) must be able to project flexible and capable forces quickly and effectively. The strategy must lay the conceptual framework for a defence capability that:

- a. has real combat power;
- b. is flexible, versatile and adaptable;
- c. is able to project decisive combat capability over vast distances, therefore has considerable reach and sustainability;
- d. is able to perform against asymmetric foes;
- e. is carefully integrated with other national security agencies, in a whole of nation, whole of government approach;
- f. is able to act independently or as part of an international coalition;
- g. is interoperable, particularly with US forces, and must therefore be technologically advanced;
- h. is ready; and
- i. has excellent people with strong leadership, superb training and high morale.

### **Strategy-Policy Match**

The Inquiry and this paper so far have concentrated on military strategy and defence capability. Another vital aspect is national defence policy and its congruence with military strategy and capabilities.

Defence investment and the strategic assessments that support it require a very long-term perspective. Typically the time taken from concept to introduction to service of a major new or replacement defence capability is more than a decade, and that capability is likely to remain in service for at least two decades. Similarly, ADF personnel require a long-term investment approach, with middle level commanding officers typically taking 15-20 years to develop and senior operators and technicians 10-15 years.

Relatively benign strategic assessments and other Government priorities like getting Australia's economy on track and funding social welfare have meant low priority has been placed on defence. Although the strategic outlook was becoming increasingly uncertain and complex throughout the past decade and before, there has been no great desire by successive Governments to embrace a policy choice of increasing defence expenditure. When Government policy approved certain levels of defence expenditure this has generally not been realised. For example, Dibb foreshadowed the need for a 3% increase in defence expenditure<sup>15</sup> and the 1987 White Paper identified a requirement for 2.6-3.0% of GDP for defence<sup>16</sup>. However by 1990 actual defence

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<sup>15</sup> *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*, op cit, p 172.

<sup>16</sup> *The Defence of Australia 1987*, op cit, p 112.

expenditure had fallen to 2.3% of GDP. This fell below 2% by the early 1990s and by 1999, defence expenditure had dropped to approximately 1.8% of GDP.

The *Defence Efficiency Review (DER)*<sup>17</sup> aimed to improve the “teeth to tail” ratio of defence spending but without an overall increase in funding. The *DER* was implemented with considerable haste and was based around an insistence that investment in combat capability should take priority over personnel and operating costs. The negative implications of this policy on personnel and sustainability are still being felt, with personnel separation rates proceeding at historically high levels (and at considerable cost) and most sections of the ADF experiencing major logistic shortfalls.

*Defence 2000* specifies a constant 1.9% of GDP to defence across the decade, with growth in defence expenditure based upon an expectation of three per cent annual growth to GDP<sup>18</sup>. This defence policy is clearly too little too late to support a genuine maritime strategy and therefore meet the nations defence needs. There are signs that Government is becoming increasingly frustrated with defence being unable to provide military options given the rapidly emerging strategic challenges being faced (which have been generally forecast for the past decade and more). In particular Government would like to have better expeditionary capabilities at its disposal. The lack of preparedness to deploy in elements of the ADF first came home to Government during the 1990-91 Gulf War when the options available were very limited<sup>19</sup>. The lack of ADF capability was further revealed during the East Timor operation, although inadequacies in combat and force projection capabilities of the RAN and RAAF were not fully exposed because fortunately Indonesian forces did not dispute the landing. A USN Aegis cruiser helped to fill the air defence capability gap during the critical early stages.

In summary, given Australia's geo-strategic environment a comprehensive military strategy, which includes a strong maritime aspect, is logically required. However, the strategy will be useless unless there is Government commitment to a complementary national defence policy. This policy must include commitment of the necessary resources. It is already too late to provide an ADF the size and shape the Government and the nation requires to meet current and emerging security challenges. A steady commitment of 2.5% of GDP across the past decade and into the decade ahead would have put the ADF in a better position to meet Governments' expectations. A large increase in defence expenditure is now required. However, given the lead times for the acquisition and introduction to service of defence systems and personnel the results of this will appear too late to be effective in the current crises. Australia's national security, and the ability to protect our national interests are in jeopardy.

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<sup>17</sup> *Future Directions for the Management of Australia's Defence: Report of the Defence Efficiency Review*, Department of Defence Publication, Canberra, March 1997.

<sup>18</sup> *Defence 2000*, op cit pp 117-118.

<sup>19</sup> For example: ground forces were unsuited and poorly equipped for desert warfare and a WMD environment and the RAAF fighter force was not prepared for combat. Only warships, with some capability augmentation, could be offered in time.

## Concluding Summary

The following is a dot-point summary of the key elements of this submission:

a. Strategic Considerations:

- Australia's geo-strategic and geo-political environments logically support a military strategy that has a significant maritime flavour. We need to maximise our natural advantages of strategic depth.
- Australia's national interests are not bounded entirely by geography. Our national security strategy must therefore recognise and provide for these broader obligations and aspirations.
- The nature of conflict is evolving. While traditional state on state conflict is not a thing of the past, the military strategy and associated defence capabilities need to be effective in asymmetric conflict.
- Australia seeks to be proactively engaged in international affairs and to be perceived as a supporter of international law and behavioural norms.
- Much of our immediate region is dynamic and unstable with an uncertain future. The wider Asia-Pacific-Indian Ocean strategic environment remains dynamic and uncertain.
- There is a real and present danger of conflict in the Middle East expanding and spreading across much of North Africa, the Middle East, Central and South Asia, and Southeast Asia. Terrorism and weapons of mass destruction could be involved. A global approach that is comprehensive and long-term is required however there is little evidence of this emerging so far. A mono-dimensional military approach may exacerbate and perpetuate the situation. Australia cannot afford to be complacent.

b. Australia's Military Strategy:

- Our military strategy must be comprehensive, flexible and versatile with a significant maritime flavour.
- Many of the characteristics of a maritime strategy and maritime power have application in Australia's strategic setting. They include the need for mobility in mass; readiness (preparedness of forces); access; flexibility and adaptability; reach, poise and persistence; and manoeuvre.
- Traditionally a maritime strategy can include control, denial and power projection aspects.
- The current Australian military strategy is fundamentally continental with some maritime denial aspects. It focuses on defence of the homeland. Australia lacks sea control and power projection capabilities to support a genuine maritime strategy.

c. Australia's Defence Capabilities:

- The current ADF and forces projected to be acquired over the next decade and beyond in the *Defence Capability Plan* is small and professional, with some good capabilities and significant gaps in capability.
- The Australian Defence Force must be able to project flexible and capable forces quickly and effectively. The strategy must lay the conceptual framework for a defence capability that:
  - has real combat power;
  - is flexible, versatile and adaptable;
  - is able to project decisive combat capability over vast distances, therefore has considerable reach and sustainability;
  - is able to perform against asymmetric foes;
  - is carefully integrated with other national security agencies, in a whole of nation, whole of government approach;
  - is able to act independently or as part of an international coalition;
  - is interoperable, particularly with US forces, and must therefore be technologically advanced;
  - is ready; and
  - has excellent people with strong leadership, superb training and high morale.
- The *Defence Capability Plan* requires review taking account of some specific observations (note: this is not intended to be a comprehensive list):
  - The JSF decision requires careful re-consideration, given its very large total cost (including basing, logistics, associated AEW&C and Tanker support) and limited utility in Australia's strategic context. For example: improved deployability and mobility of the fighter force and the possibility of the strike aspect of the requirement being better met by a long-range missile capability launched from a range of mobile and fixed platforms, should be carefully considered.
  - The priority assigned to acquiring and updating naval capabilities, including the Air Warfare Destroyer, the Anzac and Perry Class frigates requires reconsideration with a view to fast tracking.
  - Improved amphibious and afloat support elements to support a limited power projection, expeditionary force need to be fast tracked.
  - Consideration should be given to acquiring a naval capability that can operate in the Southern Ocean and Antarctic areas.
  - Land forces need to be expanded and further upgraded to support a limited power projection, expeditionary force. Improved firepower and mobility will also be required.
  - The land force needs additional special forces and other capabilities to deal with asymmetric warfare requirements.

d. Strategy-Policy Match:

Developing an appropriate military strategy for Australia's geo-strategic circumstances will be to no avail unless complementary defence policies, including funding, are put in place. The Australian Government needs to have a wider and stronger range of military options at its disposal in the current and projected strategic circumstances.

- Defence has been under funded for more than a decade. A steady budget of around 2.5% of GDP might have placed the ADF in a position appropriate for the current and emerging strategic circumstances. However, it is now too late and even a massive increase in defence expenditure would not have a timely effect given the lead times for modern systems and the personnel to operate them.
- Australia's national security, and the ability to protect our national interests are in jeopardy. We need to rectify this unfortunate situation as quickly as possible so that the security of our nation can be properly defended.

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23 October 2002