

National Security Strategy

Introduction

- 3.1 Maritime strategies can serve more than just military objectives. A maritime strategy can be far reaching and serve our national security interests including our nation's economic, environmental, societal and political security. In chapter two, this level of maritime strategy was referred to as a national maritime strategy.
- 3.2 The discussion of national security aspects of a maritime strategy occurs first because it is all encompassing. The military component of maritime strategy is a subset of the broader national security objectives.
- 3.3 This chapter explains in more detail the nature and objectives of national security strategies and examines the evidence which argues the need for an Australian national security strategy.

A national security strategy

- 3.4 In August 2000 the committee tabled its report *From Phantom to Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*.¹ Recommendation 1 of this report stated:

We recommend that the Government develop and maintain a national security policy. This policy should, amongst other things, guide the Defence Forces on their role in an integrated national

¹ Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, *From Phantom To Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, August 2000, Canberra.

concept for promoting and achieving international prosperity, peace and security.

We further recommend that the Government explore the feasibility of creating a National Security Council to oversee the development and maintenance of a national security policy.²

3.5 In support of this recommendation, the committee commented that 'the multi-dimensional nature of a security policy will allow Australia's limited resources to be channelled into providing deeper and more robust national security.'

3.6 In May 2003 the Government responded to the committee's report *From Phantom to Force*. In relation to recommendation 1, the Government response accepted the recommendation with qualification. The Government stated it believes 'that the two elements of its national security framework, comprising formal national security policy statements and a machinery of national security committees, has demonstrated its effectiveness and suits the constitutional system of Australia.'³ The Government asserts that it maintains a coordinated policy approach on national security issues based on the establishment of two high level mechanisms for coordinating national security which comprise:

...the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) as one of Cabinets standing committees, and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS). The NSCC is the Government's highest decision-making body on Australia's national security. It considers strategic developments and issues of long term relevance to Australia's broad national security interests. It also oversees federal intelligence and security agencies. The NSCC is chaired by the Prime Minister, and consists of the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney-General.⁴

3.7 This discussion serves to outline the existing approach used by the Government to address issues of national security. Essentially, the NSCC and SCNS coordinate issues relating to national security. The second issue arising from this discussion is that evidence to the inquiry called for an all embracing national security policy. The following discussion examines in more detail some of the key arguments raised in the evidence about the

2 *From Phantom To Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, p. 181.

3 Government response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report *From Phantom To Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, 29 May 2003.

4 Government response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report *From Phantom To Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, 29 May 2003.

reasons for and the key elements of a possible national security strategy for Australia.

Reasons for a national security strategy

3.8 Some of the key reasons for a national security strategy include the need for enhanced coordination and a better understanding of national security objectives and the place of military strategy in achieving national objectives. The Australian Naval Institute stated:

Clearly, a maritime strategy is closely related to national security, however, it should not be seen as a purely naval, nor even military preserve. Instead, the concept involves the integration of a far wider range of national institutions and interests. In addition to purely military concerns, these interests should at least include the economic, cultural, industrial and environmental dimensions of Australia's maritime environment. Hence a true maritime strategy must be a sub-set of national grand strategy and, from this perspective, Australia's military strategy should devolve from our maritime strategy rather than the other way around.⁵

3.9 The evidence suggested that Australia's national security objectives should encompass 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.'⁶ In addition, a national security strategy should also refer to and provide guidance on the security of Australia's critical infrastructure such as power, water, transport systems, information communications and computing networks. This level of infrastructure is as critical as it is vulnerable to attack.

3.10 During evidence, the concern was raised that Australia's national security objectives were not articulated through an holistic approach but rather through a range of separate strategy papers. Dr Alan Ryan, stated:

We need to balance our limited capabilities, our values and intentions as a nation. I am not sure we are seeing, at a national level, our national strategic objectives set out clearly. We have a defence white paper; we have a foreign affairs white paper. We are still operating down effectively at an operational level. As we have seen today, we are focused significantly on capabilities. We have nothing like the national security strategy of the United States,

5 Australian Naval Institute, *Submission 9*, pp. 1-2.

6 Centre for International Strategic Analysis (now Future Directions International), *Submission 6*, p. 2.

which was published the other day, which set out the objectives of American action and how they are going to achieve them and did so in less than 12 pages. That is where we need to start.⁷

- 3.11 Future Directions International commented that a 'whole of nation, whole of government approach to national security is required and our military strategy must be tailored to complement other aspects of national strategy, including a national security strategy and our alliance relationships with the United States and others in the region.'⁸
- 3.12 Throughout the inquiry, there was no resistance to the proposal for a national security strategy. Mr Hugh White, Director of the Australian Security Policy Institute (ASPI), stated:

I have myself for a long time been a bit of a sceptic about the idea of a detailed, articulated national security strategy, because I was never quite persuaded about what it was going to focus on. But I have to say that I am now a convert. I now think that the kinds of challenges that I mentioned in answer to the earlier question including, although I did not expand on this, the particular way in which that global set of challenges—terrorism, WMD, et cetera— affects us does require us to integrate much more closely all the elements of our security policy.⁹

Organisational structure

- 3.13 A key part of the debate on the proposal for a national security strategy focused on the type of organisational structure that would coordinate and deliver the outcomes of a national security strategy. During these debates, the various organisational models used in the US were discussed. Dr Alan Ryan was opposed to the model provided by the US Department of Homeland Security which he argues 'is almost purely pre-occupied with the threat of terrorism and is designed to deal with the problems of a complex system of federal government many times larger than our own.'¹⁰
- 3.14 In contrast, Dr Ryan suggested that a more effective structure could be achieved if it was modelled on the US National Security Council which is administered by the National Security Adviser. Dr Ryan concluded that Australia needs 'greater standing coordination.'¹¹ Dr Ryan did 'see the

7 Dr Alan Ryan, *Transcript*, p. 68.

8 Mr Lee Cordner, Future Directions International, *Transcript*, p. 120.

9 Mr Hugh White, Director, ASPI, *Transcript*, p. 38.

10 Dr Alan Ryan, *Submission 31*, p. 2.

11 Dr Alan Ryan, *Transcript*, p. 70.

advantages of putting a national security council into Prime Minister and Cabinet.’¹²

- 3.15 Dr Michael Evans suggested that a ‘whole of government approach’ was needed to addressing issues of national security. Dr Evans stated:

You would need a whole of government approach. You would need elements made up from Defence, from our national intelligence, from Foreign Affairs, from Trade—they would all have to be welded into an organisation which could look at threats sensibly and intelligently and make the appropriate analysis. The benefit for military strategy in that would be that we would have some idea of how we could mould our strategic forces and our strategy in accordance with our partners in DFAT or any of the great departments of state.¹³

- 3.16 The whole of government approach to addressing issues of national security was emphasised in the evidence. Dr Ryan warned that for too long, Australia has used ‘defence’ as the alternative to developing a national security policy and as a result, strategic policy has been too narrowly drawn and focused on conventional military threats.’¹⁴

- 3.17 The Government’s view, as articulated through its response to the committee’s report *From Phantom to Force*, suggests that a level of organisational effectiveness is achieved through the formal national security policy statements and the actions of national security committees. As indicated previously in this chapter, these committees comprise the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS). The NSCC is chaired by the Prime Minister and comprises the Deputy Prime Minister, Foreign Minister, Defence Minister, Treasurer, Minister for Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs and the Attorney-General. The Government response stated that the NSCC ‘oversees the development of Australia’s Foreign and Defence policy, ensuring that Australia maintains a coordinated policy approach on national security issues.’¹⁵

International comparisons

- 3.18 National security strategies form part of the system of government in a range of countries. The United States (US), for example, released its most recent National Security Strategy (NSS) in September 2002. The US NSS

12 Dr Alan Ryan, *Transcript*, p. 72.

13 Dr Michael Evans, *Transcript*, p. 59.

14 Dr Alan Ryan, *Submission 31*, p. 1.

15 Government response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade report *From Phantom To Force, Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, 29 May 2003.

was developed in the period after 9-11. The key elements of the US NSS are contained under the following topic headings:

- America's international strategy;
- aspirations for human dignity;
- working with others to defuse regional conflicts;
- preventing our enemies from threatening us, our allies and our friends with weapons of mass destruction;
- igniting a new era of global economic growth through free markets and free trade;
- expanding the circle of development by opening societies and building the infrastructure of democracy;
- developing agendas for cooperative action with the other main centres of global power; and
- transforming America's National Security Institutions to meet the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century.¹⁶

3.19 The US has a National Security Council (NSC), established in 1947, to advise the President on the integration of domestic, foreign, and military strategies. In 1993 President Clinton expanded the scope of the NSC to include a range of non-military security issues such as terrorism, narcotics trafficking, environmental degradation, rapid population growth and refugee flows.

3.20 In July 2002 Taiwan released a National Security Strategy (NSS) which clearly defines its national interests and goals. Taiwan's NSS incorporates political, economic, diplomatic, military, psychological and technological dimensions. Taiwan's NSS states:

National security" herein refers to sustaining national survival and development, ensuring national sovereignty and interests, elevating the nation's international status, and safeguarding the well-being of the citizens; and "strategy" refers to buildup of strength, and the art of creating and utilizing advantageous options for the purpose of attaining the maximum success and favorable results in achieving desired goals. In short, "national security strategy" refers to the all-inclusive approaches or major plans for fulfilling national goals by way of political, economic, military, psychological, technological and diplomatic means.¹⁷

16 The President of the United States of America, The National Security Strategy of the United States of America, September 2002.

17 <http://www.mnd.gov.tw/report/REPORT/revised/bb/Chap2-2.htm>

- 3.21 Japan, in contrast, to the US and Taiwan, does not have a National Security Strategy. Japan, does however, have a 'National Defense Program Outline'. Through the 'Outline', policy is developed through advice from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the Defense Agency, the Diet, the Cabinet and the Security Council of Cabinet.¹⁸

Conclusions

- 3.22 Evidence to the inquiry provides persuasive reasons for the need for an Australian national security strategy (NSS). This is consistent with the approaches used by other countries such as the United States and Taiwan. An NSS would articulate all the elements that the Australian Government has at its disposal to address issues of national security. At the same time, the NSS would set out guiding principles and policies that could be reviewed depending on the circumstances. At the moment, there is no formal statement of how this happens or what are the key features of Australia's national security. With the increasing risk of terrorism and asymmetric nature of future conflict, for example, this level of detail is required.
- 3.23 The types of issues that an NSS would address are more than just defence issues. The proponents of an NSS are more interested in developing an holistic approach to Australia's security needs for the 21st Century which encompass business, leisure, diplomatic, economic, social and environmental interests. These types of interests and challenges should, as the Australian Naval Institute suggested, form the essence of a national grand strategy. A maritime strategy would form a subset of this which would further devolve to broader military strategy.
- 3.24 Australia's national security framework comprises the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS). What is needed, in addition to the NSCC and the SCNS, is a clearly articulated policy which sets out Australia's key interests and challenges as we enter the 21st Century, and the government institutions that we can bring to bear in promoting our interests. This policy statement would draw together all the threads of government and how they can be used in meeting the variety of national security challenges. It should be a public document which satisfies a range of different audiences. It should be noted that while the defence and security community understand the role of the NSCC the broader community would probably be oblivious to its existence.

18 http://www.jda.go.jp/e/policy/f_work/taikou/index_e.htm

- 3.25 In view of these arguments, the committee recommends that the Australian Government develop a national security strategy which addresses Australia's key interests such as, but not limited to:
- economic;
 - business;
 - leisure/tourism;
 - diplomatic and trade;
 - social and cultural;
 - transnational crime;
 - illegal migration;
 - population policy;
 - the protection of critical infrastructure such as water, power, transport and information communications;
 - environmental; and
 - defence and security.
- 3.26 The NSS should clearly articulate and demonstrate that there is a coherent and coordinated approach by Government to securing our national interests. Next, the NSS should indicate the different elements of government which influence these national interests. Finally, the NSS should indicate where our maritime and military strategies fit within this 'grand strategy.'
- 3.27 In 2000 the committee referred a similar recommendation to the Government, and the response came back from the Defence Minister. The matter of an NSS is of such importance that it cannot be dealt with by just a single Minister.

Recommendation 1

3.28 The committee recommends that the Government develop a national security strategy (NSS) which addresses Australia's key interests such as, but not limited to:

- economic;
- business;
- leisure/tourism;
- diplomatic and trade;
- social and cultural;
- transnational crime;
- illegal migration;
- population policy;
- the protection of critical infrastructure such as water, power, transport and information communications;
- environmental; and
- defence and security.

The NSS should clearly articulate and demonstrate that there is a coherent and coordinated approach by Government to securing our national interests.