

Chapter 11

ADF and AFP interoperability

11.1 To this stage, the committee has looked at ADF and AFP training as though each organisation operated as a silo, as a distinct entity with separate training and pre-deployment programs. Today's peacekeeping operations, however, with their multidimensional and multifaceted nature, require coordination and cooperation between the different elements of a peacekeeping operation:

Cooperation is an essential prerequisite of effective peace promotion. Sufficient cooperation to avoid operations counteracting each other is the very least requirement. Most attempts at cooperation have until now, however, failed to progress further than polite presentations of activities carried out by individual actors. If the aim is to help create lasting peace, however, this is not enough.¹

11.2 In this chapter, the committee considers the extent to which the training and education of ADF and AFP peacekeepers prepares them to work together as constructive partners.

Separate and joint roles of ADF and AFP

11.3 Lt Gen Gillespie used recent experiences to demonstrate the critical role that both the ADF and the AFP have in Australia's contribution to peacekeeping:

If you take Timor or the Solomon Islands, when the institutions responsible for law and order and security have broken down then you need to replace them. The two institutions that Australia can deploy are the Australian Federal Police and the ADF...We went in and re-established law and order and security and we used the instrumentalities that should be used to help do that—the police and the military.²

11.4 The ADF and the AFP, however, have different roles and functions and that carries through to peacekeeping operations.³ Lt Gen Gillespie observed:

...if it is a law and order issue it is to do with the police. Some of the security issues can be police issues as well. But the other end of the spectrum—armed gangs, murderers and failed institutions—is more into the military line. They are the sorts of issues that the AFP and defence are confronting at present so that next time we are put in that situation we handle it much better.⁴

1 Folke Bernadotte Academy, *Cooperation in Crisis and Conflict: A training manual for you serving abroad*, Sandviken, 2005, preface, p. 1.

2 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 23.

3 Associate Professor Wainwright, *Committee Hansard*, 20 August 2007, p. 8.

4 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 23.

11.5 Although the ADF and the AFP have distinct functions in a peacekeeping operation, they may need to support and rely on each other to achieve the mission's objective. Lt Gen Gillespie stated:

Then, as now, most military patrols will have a policeman with them so that powers in terms of law and order for arrest and detention remain where they should be, which is with the police force. If you are trying to bring a nation along to be a law-abiding nation, it ought to learn that police do policing and that the military are about something else.⁵

11.6 The ADF and the AFP are operating within a security and law and order spectrum, which means that they are moving in and out of phases according to prevailing circumstances. In some instances the military would not be required which may give way to a police presence. A sudden flare-up of violence may reverse the situation, with the military again taking the prominent role. Often the military and the police are occupying the same space though performing different functions. Thus, interoperability between the two forces is critical if they are to operate as an effective force. Assistant Commissioner Walters further explained:

Once you create a security pause and law and order is restored, the role of policing in capacity building, in law enforcement and in the law and order institutions of those states is absolutely critical to building a solid foundation for economic growth and good governance. So we are working very closely at the moment with Defence around interoperability to ensure that when Australia provides a response it is across the whole spectrum.⁶

11.7 Defence considered that the ADF and the AFP working together offshore would be a continuing feature of peacekeeping operations, particularly given the emergence of operations in response to the breakdown of internal state institutions.

Removing capability gaps

11.8 Given the distinct yet complementary roles of the military and the police in a peacekeeping operation, Lt Gen Gillespie considered it appropriate that, rather than develop skills in each other's work, their efforts be directed at ensuring there are no security capability gaps. He accepted that 'at the margins some of the defence and police capabilities will move closer together'.⁷

11.9 Some witnesses suggested that there had been capability gaps in some of the operations where the ADF and the AFP have been involved, particularly in relation to the timing of the response and the transition from military to police prominence.

5 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, pp. 22–23; see also AusAID, answer to written question on notice 13, 25 July 2007.

6 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 6.

7 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 23.

11.10 A 2005 article by Lt Col John Hutcheson, who commanded the third rotation of Combined Joint Task Force 635 (CJTF 635) that deployed to Solomon Islands in 2004, revealed some of the difficulties experienced by the ADF and the AFP in Solomon Islands in achieving a high level of interoperability. He noted:

A number of the military activities conducted in support of the PPF [Participating Police Forces] in the Solomon Islands mission demonstrated that significant differences existed in the planning methodologies and descriptive language that each agency employed. For instance, while the Australian Defence Force (ADF) possesses a proactive planning culture, the PPF were largely reactive in character and had little appreciation of the response timings that might be required to conduct actions on foreign soil. Simply, the PPF did not fully grasp the concept of an operation with multiple tasks as part of a wider campaign plan. As a result, the police approach led to many short-notice requests for military support, an inability to prioritise tasks (and assets) to achieve a particular outcome and a tendency to take inadequate force protection measures. The police approach was characterised by compartmentalised activity—an approach that was further exacerbated by the existence of different threat assessment methodologies.⁸

11.11 According to Lt Colonel Hutcheson, the absence of an overall campaign plan by the PPF made it 'difficult to ensure that military activities supported the civil authority in an efficient manner—for instance, during the process of making arrests of suspected criminals'. Further:

During the planning of military support in which a platoon of troops was involved in assisting the PPF to apprehend a particularly high-profile criminal, there was a distinct lack of shared information between the police and the military. Lack of information resulted in insufficient time for briefing, rehearsals and the preparation of police and soldiers for a potentially dangerous inter-agency operation.⁹

11.12 He made a number of suggestions to improve the situation including:

- arranging a system of military secondments to the AFP in order to provide that organisation with a basic understanding of ADF planning methodologies and military culture;
- developing intelligence and operational procedures that ensure the evolution of what might be described as a common operating picture;

8 John Hutcheson, 'Helping a Friend: An Australian Military Commander's Perspective on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands', *Australian Army Journal*, vol II, no. 2, Autumn 2005, p. 48.

9 John Hutcheson, 'Helping a Friend: An Australian Military Commander's Perspective on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands', *Australian Army Journal*, vol II, no. 2, Autumn 2005, p. 49.

- producing an inter-agency handbook based on the RAMSI experience (and modelled to an extent on the ABCA [American–British–Canadian–Australian] Coalition Operations Handbook); and
- developing joint doctrine to facilitate common procedures in inter-agency planning, command and control, intelligence assessment, and the conduct of operations.

11.13 Lt Colonel Hutcheson also noted that the cultural differences between the PPF and CJTF 'created a number of psychological barriers.' He cited as an example, the ADF's 24-hour, seven-days-a-week approach to operations compared with eight-hour-shift mentality of the PPF. In his view, this 'cultural difference was broken down over time as police–military cooperation deepened, personal relations developed and an inter-agency awareness was gradually created'.¹⁰ He suggested that 'in-theatre training sessions, designed to build civil–military familiarity and to ensure that the PPF employed military personnel and resources effectively', could improve the situation.¹¹

11.14 In a 2006 address, Commissioner Keelty acknowledged Lt Col Hutcheson's views on the shortcomings of PPF. These included the PPF failure to grasp fully the concept of an operation with multiple tasks as part of a wider campaign plan and the existence of different threat assessment methodologies. He suggested:

...even if only some of these and similar observations are accurate, the AFP needs to redouble its efforts to ensure that the systems, the processes and, more importantly the doctrine, underpinning future operations by the IDG are adequate.¹²

11.15 More recently, Mr Rob Wesley-Smith observed the unrest in Timor-Leste in May 2006:

After maybe an early role of demonstrating overwhelming force, the need was clearly for police, for flexibility, for a capacity to find out what was behind the incidents, to catch perpetrators, and to remove them from the action for a long enough time. Instead we had a rather ridiculous and embarrassing ongoing scenario of heavily armed and heavily kitted military trying to deal with Timorese who could just run away and hide.¹³

11.16 Both the ADF and the AFP acknowledge that a gap in interoperability had existed and that they have learnt some important lessons. Commander Steve

10 John Hutcheson, 'Helping a Friend: An Australian Military Commander's Perspective on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands', *Australian Army Journal*, vol II, no. 2, Autumn 2005, p. 50.

11 John Hutcheson, 'Helping a Friend: An Australian Military Commander's Perspective on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands', *Australian Army Journal*, vol II, no. 2, Autumn 2005, p. 50.

12 AFP Commissioner Keelty, Speech, National Press Club Address, 11 October 2006.

13 Mr Rob Wesley-Smith, Australians for a Free East Timor and Australia East Timor Association, *Submission 20*, p. 1.

Lancaster, Manager, ORG, explained that one of the major lessons for AFP–ADF interoperability was to 'shorten the gap' between the ADF and AFP engagement. He observed that 'we have to get a response there earlier, effectively to enable the ADF not to have to perform a policing role in that environment'.¹⁴ Lt Gen Gillespie stated that the lessons from May 2006 were learnt and are now put into effect in deployments.¹⁵

11.17 According to Assistant Commissioner Walters, there certainly has been a 'grey area' between the peacekeeping capabilities of the ADF and the AFP. He noted that the IDG, including the ORG, allows the AFP 'to bridge the gap that previously existed in a mission situation between the role of defence and the role of policing'.¹⁶ A particular capability of the AFP is their 'less than lethal' force that sits between general duties and lethal force:

We found in Timor that, if we sent the normal general duties police out in the street with batons, handcuffs and OC spray, the area of engagement was over 20 or 30 metres because they were hurling rocks or sending darts at us and those sorts of tools were not quite enough. The ADF's next step could be the use of lethal force, whereas we have less lethal capability to be able to counteract that with things like shotgun bean bag rounds, which are very effective over 30 to 50 metres. We found they were very effective in that environment.¹⁷

11.18 The violence that occurred in Solomon Islands in April 2006 and Timor-Leste in May 2006 demonstrates that peacekeeping operations occur in volatile circumstances with the potential for sudden shifts in the security environment. Again, military and police personnel need to understand each other's role and function in such situations so their activities mesh smoothly and no capability gap emerges. It is also critical that they increase their capacity to work side by side.

14 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 9.

15 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, pp. 22–23.

16 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 9.

17 Commander Lancaster, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 9.



Burning buildings during the riots that occurred in Solomon Islands in April 2006 (image courtesy AFP)



Members of the ADF and the AFP working together during the Solomon Islands riots in April 2006 (image courtesy AFP)



Commander of the Participating Police Force and Commander of the Combined Task Force 635, at the Australian-led Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) Headquarters in Solomon Islands (image courtesy Department of Defence).

Enhancing interoperability

11.19 There are many considerations that can enhance or diminish the ADF and the AFP's ability to operate together. Assistant Commissioner Walters noted that more is required than simply building capability within individual organisations and emphasised the importance of interoperability between the ADF and the AFP.¹⁸

18 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 34.

11.20 Lt Gen Gillespie explained that experience in East Timor and Solomon Islands over the past few years has made apparent the need for the two agencies to work more closely together, not only on the ground but also 'in terms of our procedures, our understanding, the capabilities that we have'. This familiarity with the way each other operates is to ensure that 'we communicate with the same equipment and have the same expectations of each other in our tactics, our techniques and our procedures'.¹⁹

11.21 The AFP submitted that interoperability remains a 'work in progress', with developments in 'command and control relationships, intelligence and information sharing, compatibility of systems and planning strategies being of the highest importance'.²⁰ Assistant Commissioner Walters explained:

The body of work that we are doing now is to make sure that when we deploy in that situation again we do know each other organisationally and, as much as we can, personally, so that we deploy cohesively rather than as two agencies having to smash together at that time.²¹

11.22 Commissioner Keelty explained that the AFP and the ADF were working toward 'an effective policy on interoperability'. In his view, a greater cohesion and understanding between them was now producing positive results. He believed that it was 'incumbent upon the leadership to ensure a seamless approach to these interoperability deployments'.²² Assistant Commissioner Jevtovic provided some concrete examples of the steps being taken to establish 'common ground in the areas of doctrine and communication'. He referred to the requirement for an exchange of training initiatives and exercises, 'so people are not exposed to a situation where our cultures, language and planning methods are different'. He noted that both organisations had agreed to a number of senior officer outpostings to key areas within each other's organisations.²³

11.23 Defence cited measures such as improved and integrated planning between them and personnel exchange programs that are intended to improve ADF–AFP interoperability.²⁴ Lt Gen Gillespie referred to the process that takes place on deployment through improved personal contacts:

One of the really interesting things, if you go to the Solomon Islands in the first few weeks of either deployment of the military or the AFP, is to see the two groups starting to work together to build trust so that if one group or

19 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, pp. 19–20.

20 *Submission 28*, p. 15.

21 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 10.

22 AFP Commissioner Keelty APM, Speech, National Press Club Address, 11 October 2006.

23 Assistant Commissioner Paul Jevtovic, quoted in Juani O'Reilly, 'Policing the neighbourhood and keeping peace in the Pacific', *Platypus Magazine*, Edition 96, September 2007, pp. 13–14.

24 Defence, answer to written question on notice W6, 24 July 2007.

the other gets into trouble they know how the other group will react and how it will all work. I think it augurs well for the future, because the sort of peace operation we are talking about will, I think, be out there for a while.²⁵

11.24 Both Defence and the AFP were clearly of the view that the two organisations, especially with the development of the IDG and the ORG, had an increasing ability to work together to provide the security capability to meet Australia's future involvement in peacekeeping operations. Neither saw the need for a different or separate security entity focussed specifically on peacekeeping operations. Assistant Commissioner Walters explained:

I think that the model that is presently being worked through between ADF and AFP to provide a broader capability will provide the government with the capability it requires. I do not see that there is a need to establish a separate peacekeeping capability.²⁶

11.25 The committee notes that the foundations for effective interoperability are set long before deployment. Mutual understanding and trust, the building blocks of interoperability, start with secondments, education and training in the pre-deployment phase. The committee now looks more closely at the measures taken to improve ADF/AFP interoperability.

Secondments

11.26 The AFP explained that it has staff at various ADF establishments, including Joint Operations Command in Sydney and Canberra and the ADF Warfare Centre in Newcastle. Placing AFP officers in these establishments is intended to 'maximise the exchange of police information and advice for planning, operations and education'.²⁷

11.27 In addition to long-term secondments, AFP officers also participate in some ADF training and awareness raising activities. For example, Commander Lancaster observed that the ADF 'have made a proactive deliberate step to reach out and meet up with us to try to get us to learn from that and start developing that trust'.²⁸ Defence also commented on secondments from the AFP and the excellent relationship between the two organisations:

The idea is to help that international deployment division move from a 'policing in Australia' context to a policing role in support of or being supported by the military in the sorts of environments that we are talking about there. Cooperation has been outstanding. There has been lots of good

25 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, p. 20.

26 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 34.

27 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 3.

28 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 24.

work and a lot of rapid progress, and we are expecting it to get stronger as time goes on.²⁹

11.28 To date, the ADF has not reciprocated with secondments of personnel to the IDG. Assistant Commissioner Walters indicated that while there were no current proposals for ADF secondments to the AFP, the AFP would be looking for 'opportunities for that to occur if it is appropriate'.³⁰

11.29 The ADF and AFP have also established a number of working groups to improve interoperability into the future. Lt Gen Gillespie identified several inter-agency forums that take place: ADF representatives lecture at AFP courses, and police personnel attend ADF staff college courses.³¹ These are intended to bring the two organisations closer together so that on deployment they are more familiar with each other's roles and understand how each other operate.³²

Committee view

11.30 It is important to acknowledge the separate roles of the ADF and the AFP and the important contribution both organisations make to Australia's peacekeeping operations. The evidence indicated that there is no apparent need for a specific peacekeeping capability and that the ADF and the AFP can deliver an adequate security response to peacekeeping operations. The effectiveness of their response, however, depends in large measure on how well they work together.

11.31 Australia's experience in peacekeeping operations that respond to intra-state conflicts, such as those in Timor-Leste and Solomon Islands, demonstrates the spectrum of security responses required. In these environments, interoperability between the ADF and the AFP and their ability to transition in and out of different security levels are essential. There was general agreement in evidence that Australia is currently on the right path to developing and coordinating its contribution to the security element of peacekeeping operations. For example, the AFP's IDG, including the ORG, now provides an important element of the total security response that Australia is able to bring to peacekeeping operations. Such improvements in capability are highly commended by the committee.

11.32 The committee is also conscious that successful interoperability goes well beyond having the right range of capabilities and logistical compatibility. It is important for both the ADF and the AFP to share intelligence, assess threats, integrate strategies and tactics, command operations and communicate during operations.

29 *Committee Hansard*, 24 July 2007, pp. 19–20.

30 *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 24.

31 *Committee Hansard*, 6 September 2007, p. 40.

32 Assistant Commissioner Walters, *Committee Hansard*, 25 July 2007, p. 10.

11.33 The committee found that the ADF and the AFP have not always been able to operate smoothly in the field due to a lack of familiarity and different work culture. Defence acknowledged the need for 'the agencies to work more closely' while the AFP referred to interoperability as a 'work in progress'. Clearly more work is to be done and both the ADF and the AFP should treat this as a matter of urgency. Lt Colonel Hutcheson's suggestions indicate the scope for improving interoperability (see paragraph 11.12), particularly exchange programs, secondments and developing joint doctrine.

11.34 The committee fully supports the secondments of officers as a means of developing mutual understanding of the different work environments, practices and cultures and of cultivating a network of contacts that should endure into the future. It urges both agencies, particularly the ADF, to increase the number of personnel seconded to relevant units in the AFP. For the same reasons, it favours greater engagement by the ADF and the AFP in each other's pre-deployment training courses.

Recommendation 10

11.35 The committee recommends that the ADF and the AFP work together to devise and implement programs—joint training and exercises—and develop shared doctrine that will improve their interoperability when deployed overseas. In particular, the committee recommends that the ADF implement a program of secondments of their members to the IDG.

11.36 The committee envisages that another way of enhancing interoperability between the ADF and the AFP may be through the establishment of a joint training facility (see Chapter 25).

11.37 In this chapter, the committee focused on ADF–AFP interoperability. The committee now broadens its consideration of Australia's contribution to peacekeeping to include other government agencies that deploy personnel to peacekeeping operations.