

SCFADT Inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations
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Australia's involvement in international peacekeeping first commenced in Indonesia on the 14th September 1947, some 60 years ago, when four Australian Military officers were deployed by Australia as part of a United Nations Good Offices Commission. Since then, Australia has contributed over 46,000 Australian military and police to more than fifty peace operations around the world¹.

Australia can be proud of its contributions to peacekeeping. By its actions it has contributed to international peace and security, and shown responsibility as an original Member State of the United Nations. Australian military and police contingents have earned a good reputation as effective peacekeepers, and other Australian government assistance with electoral officers, civilian administrators and experts has also been received positively. Australia has benefited through its exposure as a responsible nation and through the experience gained by our peacekeepers in difficult and testing environments.

As a previous UN Head of Mission in the Middle East, followed by my appointment as the Military Adviser in UN Headquarters, and my continuing engagement with peacekeeping activities, I am well aware of how Australia has performed and is perceived across the world. I strongly believe that Australia can significantly assist international peace and security, and therefore our own security and development, by more actively supporting the development of the United Nations, regional and coalition peace support operations capacity.

Peacekeeping operations have developed significantly since 1947. Today most are multi-dimensional, multicultural and multi-national integrated missions with complex mandates. They combine both peacekeeping and peace-building tasks as they tackle the intricate security, development, and humanitarian support challenges faced within a post-conflict environment. Australia should ensure its future contributions to world and regional stability are well prepared for these difficult and complex assignments. We should also actively assist the United Nations and other countries to be well prepared to conduct such operations.

Australian contributions

Australian police, military and civilian contributions need to be well prepared for peacekeeping missions that are both difficult and testing for individuals and groups. Not only does each of our components need to be professionally competent in their own discipline, they also need to fully understand the complex nature of integrated peace

¹ For a full list of these peacekeeping operations, see the Department of Veterans Affairs web site at: <http://www.dva.gov.au/commem/commac/studies/anzacsk/res2.htm>

operations. They also need to appreciate the cooperation and coordination necessary between components and individuals to achieve support in such environments.

The ADF has already appreciated that those deploying on peace operations must be well trained in “war fighting” capabilities, and the “use of force” to be credible, but they must also appreciate the principles of minimum use of force, consent and impartiality, and the complex nature of peacekeeping operations to be fully effective. Some peacekeeping training is already integrated within basic military training, promotion courses and at the ADF peacekeeping centre at Williamstown. Nevertheless, there is considerable ignorance concerning the complexity of peacekeeping operations in many components of the ADF. In particular, our military leadership could work more closely with AFP leadership and DFAT at developing expertise in combined approaches to international and regional security initiatives.

Similarly, police preparation for peacekeeping missions needs to build considerably on the individual and collective skills that Australian police learn in their community policing role. Australian police contributions have been significantly improved in recent years by the formation of the AFP International Deployment Group, to which AFP, State and Territory police are seconded for international training, preparation and deployment. The facilities and structures being developed at Majura in the ACT have already contributed to a better performance by Australian police contingents in Timor Leste, the Solomon Islands and Tonga, but there is room for further consolidation and expansion. Again more combined training with the ADF should be encouraged to develop better cooperation between components and increased understanding of the different approaches to their respective peace tasks. Plans by the AFP to develop a police contingent commanders training package will further improve the performance of our police contingents. This should eventually grow into a combined military, police and DFAT approach to training leaders who are prepared to command Australian contingents in peace operations

Australia would benefit by developing a national peacekeeping facility to integrate all civil, military and police peacekeeping training and to coordinate Australian peace operations policy and preparation. For our contributions to international peace and security to be most effective and beneficial to our own interests, we need to develop a coherent “whole of government” approach, and one that both studies and teaches an integrated Australian approach to peacekeeping and peace-building. It would be most beneficial if all Australian peacekeeping training and research was conducted in a coherent environment that was jointly manned by civil, military and police experts. Studies undertaken in such an institution could also analyse lessons from UN and other peacekeeping activities and assist in clarifying Australia’s contribution to international and regional peacekeeping development.

Support to UN development

Australia can do more to assist the development and reform of the United Nations as the principal global institution responsible for international peace and security, and to

strengthen its partnership with the various regional organizations. There are three particular areas that might be considered by the Committee.

- Australia should seek to place more military, police and civilian experts into UN bodies. There appears to be no coherent Australia approach to such placements with Defence, Police and other departments applying on an “ad hoc” basis to UN vacancy announcements. Additionally those Australians who have undertaken such appointments on their return to Australia have not been placed into appropriate positions where they can most effectively use the experience gained. Such UN postings do not appear to be considered by our leaders as career enhancing, yet that is exactly what they are due to the demanding, diverse and difficult assignments given to people in these appointments. There is immense value to be gained from filling such appointments, not only from the development of our individuals, but also in the ability to promote Australian values within the UN and to positively influence the conduct of a wide range of UN programmes. Australia should aim to have at least one military and one police officer seconded to the military and police divisions in DPKO at all times, and routinely to apply for senior positions in these divisions and other UN departments whenever possible.
- Australia should also actively seek to assist the development of the UN peacekeeping and peace-building policy and doctrine. Common doctrine develops trust and understanding within specific operations, and leads to better interoperability and cooperation between nations. The UN is now trying to prepare, in cooperation with Member States, a comprehensive set of policies and procedures to guide UN activity, and they are encouraging regional organisations, such as the EU and AU, to adopt these where practical. This will assist the partnership between the UN and regional organisations, particularly when one organisation hands over to the other (such as InterFET to UNTAET), or when they are operating along side each other (as in the Balkans and several African countries). Australian influence in this process can be achieved by active participation in UN committee and working groups, and by assisting to host and support regional seminars on such topics.
- Australia should also provide greater financial and administrative support to a range of international and regional peacekeeping training and development programmes and activities that are being conducted around the world. Other responsible UN Member States such as Canada, the UK, the USA, Germany, and the Nordic countries have hosted a number of these programmes in recent years in Europe, the Americas and Africa. Australia, to their advantage, could provide leadership for such activities in the Asia Pacific region. In particular, there would be value in offering to host one of the UN Senior Mission Leadership (SML) courses in the region. This course has been designed in conjunction with UN contributors and regional organizations to better prepare the future leadership of UN missions, and is to be a prerequisite for all future leaders for UN peacekeeping missions. SML courses have been conducted during 2005 and 2006 in Africa, Europe and the Americas.

Support to regional nations

Australia can also provide better support to the development of a peacekeeping capacity in nations in the Asia Pacific region. Such training and support is non-threatening and will expose participants to international standards of governance, rule of law and accountability, and as such could contribute to better stability in the region. It also provides Australia with a good opportunity to develop useful contacts within the Region. Such programs could be directed at nations in the Asia Pacific region through their civil, police and military communities. This could include funding the preparation and deployment of contingents from the region to peace support operations, or alternatively it could be assisted by including elements from developing nations within Australian contingents.

Additionally, Australia should continue to provide training spaces for regional nations' participants at Australian courses and to host regional peacekeeping seminars and courses.

Conclusion

Australia:

- Has a good record and considerable experience in international peace operations.
- Could do more to support international peace and security.
- Could better prepare its leaders and Australian contingents for integrated peace operations.
- Should develop a national peacekeeping institution to coordinate training and research
- Should further assist the development of international peacekeeping policies
- Should specifically assist regional nations to develop their capacity to support international peace and security.



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