

THE RETURNED & SERVICES LEAGUE OF AUSTRALIA LIMITED

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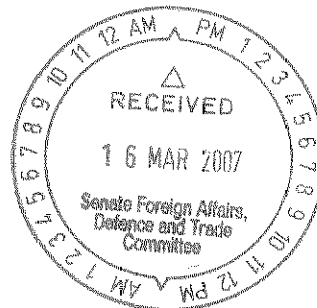


FOUNDED
IN 1916

From: Major General WJ Crews AO (Retd)
National President

R2-22-1/BC:hb
14 March 2007

The Secretary
Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs,
Defence and Trade
Suite S1.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600



Senate Enquiry into Australia's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations

The Returned and Services League of Australia offers the enclosed submission for consideration.

We welcome the opportunity to present our views on this significant Defence capability issue. Since the League was established in 1916, support for a strong and capable defence force has been one of our enduring objectives.

This submission draws on the expertise of our National Defence Committee, made up largely of retired senior service officers with considerable practical experience across all services, academics, and others.

Yours sincerely,

Bill Crews

Enclosure: Returned and Services League Submission

LEST WE FORGET

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THE PRICE OF LIBERTY IS ETERNAL VIGILANCE

**SUBMISSION BY THE RETURNED AND SERVICES LEAGUE OF
AUSTRALIA
TO THE
SENATE INQUIRY INTO AUSTRALIA'S INVOLVEMENT IN
PEACE KEEPING OPERATIONS**

The RSL Contribution to the National Security Debate

The RSL welcomes this opportunity to contribute to the Senate Inquiry into Australia's peace keeping operations. Our submission is consistent with the RSL view that it is in the national interest for Australia to remain proactive in all aspects of national security. This includes peace keeping in all its manifestations. Peace keeping is an integral part of Australia's contribution to the global effort to reduce tension. It is also part of the national contribution to the work of the United Nations.

This submission complements those submitted by the League to earlier Inquiries by Committees of the Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia about matters of national security.

Definitions

In broad terms, activities by member states of the United Nations to bring about peace in other nation states fall into three categories:

- peace making;
- peace keeping; and
- peace enforcing.

Peace Making

Peace making includes a range of activities described in Article 33 of the UN Charter. These include negotiations, mediation and diplomacy in all its manifestations. Another definition of peace making is:

"Peace making embraces all the peaceful means applied to resolve armed conflict once it has begun. Its aim is to reduce conflict intensity, separate belligerents, halt bloodshed, put the parties back on a path to peaceful resolution and ultimately arrive at a durable solution."¹

Peace making does not involve the use of armed force. Diplomacy is the usual means by which parties to any dispute are persuaded to halt bloodshed, agree to a cease-fire and separate belligerents.

¹ Evans, The Hon G., *Cooperating for Peace*, Allen & Unwin, 1993, p.89.

Peace Keeping

Peace keeping activities can be defined as all the activities of a third party state or group of states mandated by the United Nations to keep belligerents separated and committed to a truce. Peace keeping operations depend upon the willingness of belligerents to abide by a truce agreed before the deployment of peace keepers. Peace keepers are regarded by belligerents on both sides as being neutral.

There are other definitions of peace keeping one of which is:

“Peace keeping involves the deployment of military or police personnel, and frequently civilians as well, to assist in the implementation of agreements reached between governments or parties who have been engaged in conflict. Although neither defined nor described in the UN Charter itself (although implicitly authorised by Chapter VI), peace keeping has been fairly claimed as an invention of the UN, certainly one which has won it deserved credit – not least in the Nobel Peace Prize awarded to United Nations Peace Keepers in 1988.”²

Peace Enforcing

Peace enforcing activities can be defined as two distinct but complementary activities. These are:

- The application of UN mandated sanctions; and
- The use of armed force by a third party state or group of states (either under UN mandate or acting as an international coalition of UN member states) to separate belligerents and to create a cease-fire. Peace enforcing can include the use of force to maintain or reinstate an existing cease-fire.

Peace enforcing is one step short of armed intervention and peace enforcers are not regarded as neutral because they may have to use force against both sides in a dispute.

The Changing Nature of Peace Keeping

There is no doubt that peace keeping and peace enforcing operations have changed over past decades - and that they continue to evolve. The examples of peace keeping and peace enforcing operations, including the application of UN mandated sanctions at Annex A illustrate this fact.

The Policy Framework for Involvement in Peace Keeping or Peace Enforcing Operations

These examples of peace keeping efforts by the international community over more than four decades suggest that the Australian policy framework for involvement in peace keeping or peace enforcing operations should be based on:

- Acceptance that the political and military aspects of each peace keeping or peace enforcing operation may be quite different.

² Ibid. p.99.

- A realistic appraisal of the successes and failures of all such UN mandated operations over the past half century.
- Acknowledgement that 'quick fixes' are unlikely and the enduring presence of peace keeping and peace monitoring forces may be required for decades.
- Great caution in assuming that truces agreed under UN auspices or by other parties will hold.
- Acknowledgement that belligerents are opportunists likely to use any perceived weakness of resolve or lack of military or police strength by peacekeepers to further their own ends.
- Planning for 'worst case scenario' outcomes, noting that a peace enforcing task force can undertake a peace keeping role but that a peace keeping force is not manned or equipped to undertake a peace enforcing mission.
- Acknowledgement that Australia can become involved in peace keeping or peace enforcing missions as a participant in an operation mounted under the auspices of the UN; as a member of a regional group of nations; or as a member of like minded member nations of the UN.
- Acceptance that Rules of Engagement (ROE) for each peace enforcing or peace keeping mission must be sufficiently robust to allow deployed Australian forces to achieve the mission; that the safety of these forces is not compromised by acceptance of unrealistic ROE; and that self defence is a right of members or units of deployed forces and not an ROE.
- The essential need for all peace keeping or peace enforcing missions to be linked closely to active diplomacy and other peace making activities aimed at achieving lasting settlements.
- The need to set realistic, achievable and verifiable time frames and benchmarks against which the outcomes of peace keeping and peace enforcing measures can be assessed.

The Training and Preparedness of Australians participating in a Peace Keeping

This submission is limited to comment about the training of members of the ADF for peace keeping or peace enforcing operations.

The ADF trains and prepares for war. A by-product of this high level of combatant capability it that all its constituent elements deemed to be at the Operational Level of Capability (OLOC) are able to be deployed at very short notice for peace enforcing or peace keeping missions.

In the past suggestions have been made that the ADF should primarily train for peace keeping operations. It is fortunate that these suggestions have been ignored. Because each peace keeping or peace enforcing operation has different characteristics it is virtually impossible to train any armed force for a generic peace keeping role. More to the point, training for war ensures that the fundamentals of the higher levels of operational service are well practiced and instinctive. Adapting these core combatant skills to the individual circumstances of each peace keeping or peace enforcing operation is therefore comparatively simple and has proven to be successful in a number of varied locations and situations. Any armed force trained specifically for peace keeping would find it impossible at short notice to step-up to higher levels of operations, which is a

further reason for maintaining the current training regime. We could however examine the need for a Humanitarian Assistance Academy that might undertake combined training for the range of Australian stakeholders involved in complex emergencies.

As each Peace Keeping operation has specific characteristics, pre-deployment briefing and training can adequately prepare a conventionally organized force for the particular circumstances of individual deployments.

The Coordination of Australia's Peace Keeping Contributions

As has been demonstrated in INTERFET (International Forces East Timor) and RAMSI (Regional Assistance to the Solomon Islands) the ADF is well experienced in coordinating its peace keeping and peace enforcing operations with other Australian agencies and the forces of other nations.

Lessons learnt from recent Peace Keeping Operations

Major lessons from the three peace enforcing and peace keeping mission at Annex A are:

- Belligerents understand and respect force and will exploit weakness or lack of resolve.
- Peace enforcing/peace keeping forces must have robust Rules Of Engagement relevant to contemporary circumstances in the country to which they are deployed.
- Peace keeping or peace enforcing troops must be armed and supported logistically to the extent needed to enable them to cope with breakdowns in cease-fires or the upsurge of violence.
- Logistic support for peace keeping operations is similar to that required for conventional combat operations and must provide the full range of material, logistic, communications and medical requirements.
- Any peace keeping force must be capable of coping with a sudden and unexpected escalation of violence and therefore must be equipped for higher levels of engagement.

It might also be useful to establish a Centre for Lessons Learned on ADF participation in peacekeeping operations.

Summary

Australia will continue to be able to mount achievable peace keeping or peace enforcing missions or join with like minded member nations of the UN in so doing provided that:

- All elements of the ADF are manned, trained, equipped and logistically supported for war.
- The mandates for such operations and their Rules Of Engagement are not so restrictive as to make it impossible for deployed forces to cope with fast changing circumstances including escalations of violence or break downs of cease fires.

Annex A

Cyprus – Peace Keeping

The need for a UN peace keeping force in Cyprus arose from long standing differences between the Greek and Turkish citizens of the Mediterranean island. Britain annexed the island in 1914 from the Ottoman Empire and made it a Crown Colony in 1925. The relative harmony between the Greek and Turkish citizens started to fracture in 1955 when Greek Cypriots started a campaign of Enosis, or union with Greece. When the island became an independent nation in 1960 the constitution provided for power sharing arrangements between the Greek and Turkish citizens. However, in 1963 the President, Archbishop Makarios, proposed changes to the constitution that would have abrogated the earlier agreed power sharing arrangements. This led to conflict between the two ethnic groups and the establishment of a United Nations peace keeping force (UNFICYP).

UNFICYP (United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus) was restructured in 1974 after Turkey invaded the northern third of the island to ensure the Turkish minority would not be subsumed by the Greek two thirds who were in cahoots with a military junta then governing Greece. A cease fire was agreed, a division of the island negotiated and the restructured UN peace keeping mission got on with the job.

The UNFICYP mission is ongoing. Its task is to supervise ceasefire lines, maintain a buffer zone and to undertake humanitarian activities.

Long term peace keeping operations such as UNFICYP in Cyprus rely on the fact that the two belligerent groups, Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots are constrained from returning to armed conflict by the apparent desire of their client states, Greece and Turkey, not to support any resumption of hostilities.

UNFICYP is a classic peace keeping mission where forces deployed by third party nations are for the most part engaged in constabulary duties and are regarded by both Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots as neutral.

Australian military and police have been involved throughout the life of UNFICYP.

Bosnia, Croatia and Serbia – Peace Keeping and Peace Enforcing

A more recent UN mandated peace keeping mission, UNPROFOR (United Nations Protection Force), to parts of the former state of Yugoslavia was not so clear cut.

After the demise of the Warsaw Pact, Yugoslavia broke up and erupted into civil war. European efforts failed to end the conflict and the UN intervened. UNPROFOR was established in February 1992 with an initial mandate to create the conditions of peace and security required for the negotiation of an overall settlement of the crisis that was based on traditional inter-positional peace keeping. However, there was no peace to keep. The belligerents were driven by ancient ethnic hatreds and had no hesitation in resorting to violence to achieve their aims. Distribution of humanitarian aid was disrupted due to the non-cooperation and hostile actions against peace keepers. Of the 39,000 peace keepers

deployed, it has been claimed as many as 390 were killed while on duty with UNPROFOR or its follow-on UN peace keeping/peace enforcing operations.

Eventually the UN and NATO had to combine to try to bring order out of chaos to what started as a peace keeping operation. The massacre of civilians at Srebrenica who had been placed under UN protection was a notable tragedy during the protracted conflict. The civil war in the Balkans was complex, multi-sided and completely at odds with earlier UN peace keeping missions. Forces deployed to UNPROFOR and its follow-on UN missions were not equipped to cope with the ferocity of the belligerents and were constrained by a restrictive mandate from the UN.

Iraq – The Imposition of UN Sanctions

On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded Kuwait with 100,000 troops and 700 tanks. The relatively small Gulf state of Kuwait was overwhelmed within a very short time.

The UN Security Council took a dim view of the Iraqi invasion of its neighbour and on 6 August 1990 imposed comprehensive economic sanctions against Iraq. These sanctions were wide ranging and were designed to persuade Iraq to withdraw from Kuwait. They included mounting a sea blockade of all but humanitarian supplies to Iraq – a task in which five Australian warships participated.

After a UN mandated international coalition force drove Iraqi forces out of Kuwait in early 1991, the UN passed resolution 687 which, amongst other things, barred Iraq from selling oil until a UN Special Commission (UNSCOM) had verified the destruction of all prohibited weapons. Once again Australian warships were used to enforce the UNSCOM sanctions. These were not lifted until after the toppling of the Iraqi government by a coalition force in 2003.

The imposition of UN mandated sanctions against Iraq in 1990 was unsuccessful in that they did not persuade the Iraqi government to withdraw its force of occupation from Kuwait. The UNSCOM sanctions were only partially successful because the vigour with which they were able to be imposed was undermined by the “oil for food” programme introduced in 1996; and because some Iraqi oil was exported over land.

East Timor – Peace Enforcing.

Peace keeping operations during the past decade such as that in East Timor have provided new dimensions to the task of peace keeping.

Following the ousting of Indonesian President Suharto in 1998 the Habibie government allowed the people of East Timor to decide at a referendum whether to remain an integral part of Indonesia or to form an independent state. Indonesia and the former colonising power, Portugal, signed an agreement on 5 May 1999 for the United Nations to oversee and conduct a ballot on 30 August 1999 about the future political status of East Timor.

As the date of the referendum grew closer, tensions rose. Militias supported by Indonesia became involved in civil disturbances and the security situation in East Timor steadily worsened, despite the presence of United Nations personnel charged with monitoring and

overseeing the referendum. When the people of East Timor voted by an overwhelming majority for independence this was violently opposed by those who wanted East Timor to remain a part of Indonesia; and fighting broke out. The conflict quickly got out of hand and although Indonesian forces were present, a state of anarchy was allowed to develop. As a consequence the United Nations Security Council passed Resolution 1264 authorising a multinational force to take all necessary measures to restore security in East Timor. The International Force East Timor (INTERFET) was established to achieve the UN aim.

Australia took the lead in INTERFET with substantial deployments of most elements of the ADF, police and personnel from a wide variety of other agencies.

With no cease fire in place, the INTERFET task was one of peace enforcing. This was achieved - and the new state of Timor Leste came into being on 20 May 2002. For a variety of reasons including a too optimistic appreciation of the ability of the new nation to govern itself effectively chaos returned in April 2006. The international community was obliged to step in once again with a peace keeping mission. This included the largest deployment of the RAN's amphibious forces since World War II.