Australian Government

Department of Defence

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FASIP/OUT/2007/130

30 March 07

The Secretary
Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee
Suite SG.57
Parliament House
CANBERRA ACT 2600

Dear Secretary,

Please find attached the Defence Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations.

Defence is committed to a whole-of-government approach for the planning and conduct of peace operations and through this mechanism will be well prepared to meet the future challenges of this complex endeavour.

I trust our submission will be of benefit to the Committee's inquiry.

Yours sincerely,

Stephanie Foster
First Assistant Secretary International Policy

Attachment:
A.   Defence Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade – Inquiry into Australia's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations

Defending Australia and its National Interests

Australian Government

Department of Defence

Submission to the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade

Inquiry into Australia's Involvement in Peacekeeping Operations

Key issues:

- Peace operations aim to prevent, resolve or limit conflict and to stabilise post conflict environments. Such operations require a whole-of-government response, both in order to maximise efficient use of resources, and to address the root causes of conflict in a coordinated manner.

- Since the Second World War, Defence has participated in 39 peace operations under the command of the UN and 16 non-UN peacekeeping operations, many of which were sanctioned by the UN. Defence has a comprehensive process to guide participation in peace operations which includes examining the nature and objectives of the operation, risks to personnel involved, the expected duration of the mission, command and support arrangements, costs and impact on other Defence operations, and extent of international support.

- Defence is well positioned to contribute effectively to peace operations and ADF contributions are highly sought after. The ADF's core warfighting capabilities provide forces that are adaptable to peace operations noting that contributions to peace operations beyond our region often centre on individual professional military expertise rather than formed units.

- Our capabilities and our people are well maintained and prepared and when deployed prove to be very effective. Specific peace operation training is routinely conducted for individual members and as part of pre-deployment training.

- Our experience indicates that successful operations require lessons learned to be rapidly included into standard operating procedures. The advantages in providing early warning of a potential operation are also recognised. Other lessons learned include the importance of inter-agency/department planning and conduct of operations, and the significance of local ownership and security sector reform to the success of the mission.

- The UN is pursuing reform of its peace operations planning, conduct and support organisations. It is also examining methodologies aimed at improving agency and departmental coordination.

- Regional peace operation capacity building programs improve levels of mutual understanding, interoperability and cooperation. In delivering these programs Defence often works with the Australian Federal Police and other government agencies.

Introduction

1.   Peace operations are undertaken by the international community as part of wider diplomatic efforts to assist in the prevention, resolution or containment of a conflict. The first peace operations involved unarmed United Nations (UN) observers or lightly armed military peacekeeping forces, deployed after the cessation of hostilities between two or more states and with the consent of the parties involved. Since the early 1990s there has been a decrease in the traditional pattern of interstate conflict and an increase in conflict along ethnic and religious lines of division. Recent peace operations are characterised as being more complex and multidimensional in nature, and range from pure peacekeeping to peacebuilding operations, preventative diplomacy, peace enforcement and peacemaking activities. [1]

2.   The Australian Defence Force (ADF) has participated in 39 peace operations under the command of the UN and 16 non-UN peacekeeping operations, many of which were sanctioned by the UN. Our troops have been deployed as peacekeepers, peace-builders and peace enforcers, in places as close to home as East Timor and as far away as Somalia and the Western Sahara. Their efforts have assisted numerous peace processes aimed at avoiding, resolving and containing conflict.

3.   Increasingly the ADF is being asked to support complex peace operations tasked with tackling internal instability. The international community has undertaken these missions more frequently and is employing not only military force but also civil, political and humanitarian actors working in conjunction to stabilise, reconstruct and build peace. Multi-faceted and integrated campaigns are providing new challenges for the way we operate.

The policy framework

4.   Peace operations are established to prevent, resolve or limit conflict and to stabilise post conflict environments. The objective of peace operations is to provide a sustainable and holistic approach to achieving peace, and such operations are typically multinational, employing military capabilities in support of diplomatic or humanitarian efforts.

5.   Today's peace operations have been variously called stabilisation and reconstruction efforts, peace support operations, and peacekeeping operations. Peace operations may include the following elements:

- Preventive Diplomacy or Deployments: actions aimed at preventing the development of disputes, preventing existing disputes from escalating into conflict, or limiting the expansion of conflicts when they occur. A military deployment can aid negotiations and containment.

- Peacemaking: activity conducted to secure a ceasefire or peaceful settlement. These activities primarily involve diplomatic action sometimes supported by direct or indirect use of military force.

- Peace Enforcement: the coercive use of civil and military sanctions, and collective security actions, by legitimate, international intervention forces, to restore peace between belligerents, who may not consent to that intervention.

- Peacekeeping: a non-coercive instrument of diplomacy, involving legitimate, international civil or military coalitions. The peacekeepers operate with the consent of the involved parties, in an impartial, non-combatant manner. The use of force is

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[1] These terms are defined below at para 5

typically only for self defence. Peacekeeping implements conflict resolution arrangements or assists humanitarian aid operations.

- Peacebuilding: strategies aimed at enhancing stabilisation and reconstruction efforts in post conflict environments to prevent the recurrence of fighting or the conditions which generated it. Peacebuilding also applies to the pre-conflict environment through the use of preventative action involving activities aimed at influencing long term economic, social, bureaucratic and political measures which can help states deal with emerging threats and disputes. The main focus in peacebuilding is on transitioning to and using non-military capabilities.

6.   It is expected peace operations will continue to evolve as a strategic tool for the resolution of conflict and that such operations will contribute to, and are coordinated with, a whole-of-government approach.

7.   Capabilities acquired primarily to defend Australia and its interests can contribute effectively to peace and stabilisation operations. However, adapting this capability for peace operations requires robust policy, doctrine and training. This includes the ability to properly use Civil Military Cooperation (commonly referred to as CIMIC), information operations and population protection capabilities effectively. Defence is continuously developing its policy, doctrine and associated training objectives, incorporating lessons learned from other countries and its own participation in peace operations.

8.   The ADF may be tasked to participate in peace operations under the operational control of the UN, a lead nation, a regional organisation or under an alliance headquarters. Where Australia is not leading the operation, and depending on the size of its contribution, Defence planning may be confined to the deployment phase and policy matters concerning the deployment of Australian forces beyond our national borders. Where Australia is the lead nation, Defence planning will not be confined to any one operational phase but will need to attend to a range of tasks from gaining regional support and drafting proposals for Status of Forces Arrangements, rules of engagement and detention policies to organising logistical and administrative support for the mission.

9.   Australia's contributions to peace operations are highly regarded and often sought, not least because our military personnel have developed a reputation for professionalism, reliability and resourcefulness. In the case of peace operations beyond our region, Defence places priority on adding value predominantly through the contribution of expertise, rather than pure numbers of military personnel.

10.   Defence has a comprehensive process to guide participation in a peace operation. Considerations include the nature of the operation, its duration, and the practicability of the operation. We would normally not recommend participation if there is ambiguity about the objectives of the mission and the nature of the operation, its time limits and the level of ADF involvement, or where the feasibility of the current plan is in question.

11.   When examining each proposal for ADF involvement in a peace operation, the following factors are typically considered:

- The nature and extent of Australia's interests, including regional, alliance and humanitarian interests.

- Whether the mission has clear and achievable goals, is appropriately resourced and has capable leadership, and whether a satisfactory outcome is likely in a reasonable timeframe.

- The extent of allied, regional and international support for the mission, including local acceptance of the operation, and to Australia's participation therein.

- Costs of Australian participation, including the effect on the ADF's capacity to perform other tasks, including domestic security.

- Our commitment to other operations at the time.

- Other defence implications of an ADF commitment, including the training costs and benefits, the need for and prospects of Australian command of the operation, and the risks to personnel involved.

12.   No matter what the legal basis for the peace operation or who is leading it, the ADF will typically deploy as part of a multinational force. Multinational operations generally receive wide support and allow contributing countries to share the financial, logistical, and personnel burdens. Multinational participation in operations also helps garner international acceptance of the mission. All Australian forces deployed on peace operations to date have been part of multinational forces.

13.   The objectives of peace operations may include: the cessation of conflict; the delivery of humanitarian relief; the establishment to an acceptable level of the rule of law; stable democratic governance; and sustainable economic development. The establishment of a secure environment is the key to enabling other parts of peacebuilding.

14.   Planning for a particular mission must be underpinned by proper scoping of all the likely tasks, both stated and implied. Occasionally, history has shown that insufficient attention has been given to some of the key rule of law and broader governance aspects of a mission. This includes the need to adequately prepare both in logistic and policy terms for the likelihood of detainee handling, ensuring local or international due process mechanisms are in place, and having the troops prepared to effectively perform crowd control, public security tasks or related support functions. Peace operations also require training in rules of engagement and a clearly articulated and shared command philosophy. If these issues are not adequately addressed in an agreed approach among all operation partners they have the potential to undermine international, domestic and local support, and can critically affect the chance of success.

Training and preparedness

15.   The ADF's warfighting capabilities provide forces that are adaptable to peace operations. ADF preparedness is a combination of readiness and sustainment. Readiness is the availability and proficiency or serviceability of personnel, equipment, facilities and consumables allocated to a force. Sustainment is the provision of personnel, logistics and other support, including recovery and reconstitution, required to maintain operations. The ADF has individual readiness and element reporting systems in place to ensure that preparedness is continuously monitored and deficiencies addressed expeditiously.

16.   Pre-deployment training, both of a general and mission-specific nature, ensures that ADF personnel are appropriately prepared to undertake peace operations. However, as operations become more complex the level of sophistication of training must also continue to evolve. Defence is continuing to improve the capture of lessons learned and is evolving pre-deployment training to match the requirements of specific operations.

17.   The ADF's peace operations training organisations are the ADF Peacekeeping Centre (ADFPKC) and 39th Personnel Support Battalion (39 PSB) - Sydney. They are complemented by the Asia Pacific Centre for Military Law (APCML).

18.   The APCML is a collaborative initiative of Defence Legal Division and the Melbourne University Law School. The centre aims to promote greater understanding of and increased respect for the rule of law aspects of military affairs within the ADF and in the region. The centre runs a civil military cooperation course which aims to equip participants from government and non-government organisations with knowledge of planning processes and to familiarise participants with each others' perspectives and methods. In addition, the centre delivers a law of peace operations course. The legal framework for peace operations is also taught on its command and staff operations law course.

19.   The function of the ADFPKC is to develop and manage peace operations doctrine and training. The centre acts as a repository for peace operations expertise and experience, monitors international peace operations issues, assists in ADF peace operations training, develops doctrine and procedure and represents the ADF on peace operations matters at seminars and conferences where appropriate.

20.   ADFPKC training includes an international peace operations seminar and an ADF military observers course, both of which are recognised by the UN. Other courses ADF personnel may undertake through the ADFPKC are UN pre-deployment courses available in a self-paced electronic format, or correspondence courses offered through the ADFPKC administered United Nations Institute of Training and Research. In addition, the ADFPKC is engaged in a collaborative training arrangement with the Australian Federal Police (AFP) under which an ADFPKC member attends the AFP Peacekeeping School to deliver lectures to AFP personnel about to deploy overseas. AFP members deliver briefings to ADFPKC and 39 PSB courses.

21.   The ADFPKC leads a biennial bilateral peacekeeping training exercise with Thailand. The exercise aims to improve understanding of the strategic and operational planning considerations for participation in a multidimensional UN mission.

22.   In the event of a peace operation, and where response times permit, training specific to the mission and area of operation is delivered to ADF personnel by the 39 PSB as part of its force preparation training responsibilities. While 39 PSB is primarily an ADF training facility, it has, in the past, trained representatives from the AFP, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Customs, the Quarantine Service and the then-Department of Immigration and Multicultural Affairs. In addition to mission mandate and skills training, courses also include liaison and negotiation skills, cultural awareness training and civil military cooperation training.

23.   For a specific mission the ADF may also concentrate elements and conduct a mission rehearsal exercise prior to deployment in order to practice and refine the ADF contingent's ability to deal with potential mission scenarios.

24.   Training is important for providing cohesion among troop-contributing countries. The UN is developing peace operations training modules and doctrine that member states can adapt to meet their own specific needs.

25.   Programs such as the US Global Peace Operations Initiative [2] provide an opportunity for enhancing our efforts to build the capacity of regional countries to respond to conflict, disaster and instability, through training and education. The capacity of regional nations to

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[2] The GPOI is a US funded five year project launched in 2005 as a response to the growing demand for international peacekeepers. The program aims to train troops, police and other stabilisation personnel in peacekeeping to UN guidelines, and to foster an international deployment and logistics support system to transport peacekeepers to the field and to sustain them. In addition, the program plans to advance security cooperation, enhance operability and interoperability, and encourage training sustainment.

undertake or contribute to peace operations is a critical component of security in the Asia-Pacific region, and globally. [3]

The coordination of Australia's contribution

26. A coordinated whole-of-government approach to peace operations has greater potential to address the root causes of conflict than relying solely on a military approach. To meet the multi-dimensional nature of peacekeeping operations Defence will often find itself engaged in consultation and planning with a variety of agencies such as DFAT, the Attorney General's Department (AGD), the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), the Australian Electoral Commission and the AFP. Engagement with International Organisations (IO) and NGOs is also increasing in an attempt to ensure coordination of effort.

27. Interagency operations, like all operations, require agencies to have a single and mutually agreed purpose, which necessitates coordinated planning, conduct and monitoring of activities and their effectiveness. In recent years a more whole-of-government approach to peace operations has developed. Such an approach necessitates a thorough understanding of the interrelated roles of all actors involved and methods to plan and implement a multifaceted campaign. The whole-of-government approach to planning, implementation and monitoring, and whereby all relevant elements are coordinated at the strategic and operational level, maximises the efficacy of the resources made available.

International Force in East Timor; facilitating humanitarian assistance operations

The operation of International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) is an example of the cooperative relationship which must be developed between a military force and contributing agencies and organisations in order to achieve the goals and objectives of a peace operation.

Following the rejection of a special autonomy for East Timor within the unitary Republic of Indonesia by a majority of voters in a popular consultation held in 1999, pro-integration militias launched a campaign of violence throughout the territory. As a result of the visit to Jakarta and Dili by a UN Security Council mission, on 12 September 1999 the Government of Indonesia agreed to accept an offer of assistance from the international community. By resolution 1264, the Security Council then authorised INTERFET, under Chapter VII of the UN Charter, to restore peace and security in East Timor and, within force capabilities, to facilitate humanitarian assistance operations.

UN agencies began a large-scale emergency relief effort, including aid convoys and the provision of shelter and basic services. INTERFET elements initially air dropped supplies of food and medicine, and protected convoys carrying aid workers, making sure supplies got to the East Timorese people. Relief workers and supplies were deployed incrementally as the security situation improved, and consideration was given to the many thousands of displaced East Timorese people in West Timor and other areas in Indonesia and the region.

Part of INTERFET's success can be attributed to the security and support it provided to the stabilisation process, permitting freedom of movement and access to the affected local population by humanitarian elements. An effective civil-military operations cell which directed activities in support of NGO and the UN agencies, including UNICEF and UNHRC, contributed significantly to this success.

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28. The ADF has acquired much experience at coordinating and cooperating with host nations and humanitarian aid agencies to achieve the common objectives of complex peace operations. Such an approach recognises that improvements to the security environment are

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[3] Other regional capacity building efforts are described at paras 31, 46, and 47

partially dependent upon successfully addressing the social and economic issues that may be driving the conflict.

29. Depending on the level of threat in the operating environment, AusAID and its NGO partners can be uniquely placed to respond to the humanitarian and development needs that often underlie the causes of conflict. Working closely with AusAID, Defence can develop an effective plan for engaging the NGO community noting that these organisations often have concerns relating to the preservation of their independence and impartial stance when dealing with the military. Such planning can ensure military efforts do not cut across carefully planned NGO campaigns. Conversely uncoordinated NGOs goals and actions can unwittingly contribute to a conflict or compromise the desired security of a mission.

30. Peace operations are typically composed of various national contingents some of which may not be traditional allies. Aside from language and cultural differences they may have different policy, doctrine, training and equipment capabilities. These differences can create interoperability issues for the planning and conduct of operations.

31. It is in Australia's interest to actively pursue the enhancement of regional cooperation in peace operations capability and interoperability. This has the added benefit of generating regional confidence and enhancing Australia's international relationships. Our long term goal is the evolution of a regional framework for standardising approaches to peace operations, conducting multilateral exercises and the planning and conduct of operations by a unified regional task force. Australia is promoting within the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) the establishment of a network of peacekeeping expertise and the development of ASEAN CIMIC standard operating procedures.

32. Both the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) and the European Union are extending their contribution to global security through the provision of higher end capabilities, training, logistic support and facilitation, and peacebuilding support. Defence is examining for applicability recent endeavours to standardise, improve interoperability and command and control, develop doctrine, and improve training.

United Nations

33. UN peace operations exist under a unique set of political circumstances that determine which member states will contribute to the operation, and the extent of that contribution and on-going commitment. Every mission has it own rules of engagement, and harmonisation between contributing contingents is always a challenge.

34. In recent years there has been an increase in the number of multinational peace support operations that are endorsed by but not led by the UN. There has also been an increased emphasis on regional personnel participation, with support and logistics provided by the global community if required. The United Nations Security Council (UNSC) has increasingly chosen to authorise regional organisations to perform peace functions under the mandate of Chapter VIII of the UN Charter [4] instead of UN-led Chapter VII or Chapter VI missions. [5] This trend has arisen because many regional bodies have a greater capacity than the UN to mount a timely and effective operation.

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[4] Ch VIII of the UN Charter, Article 53: 'The Security Council shall, where appropriate, utilise such regional arrangements or agencies for enforcement action under it authority'

[5] Ch VII of the UN Charter authorises the Security Council to take any measures necessary (including economic and military sanctions) to restore international peace and security. Peacekeepers deployed under this mandate are able to use force to achieve the mandate. Ch VI authorises the Security Council to make arrangements for the peaceful settlement of disputes that endanger the maintenance of international peace and security. Peacekeepers deployed under this mandate are only able to use force in self-defence.

35.   Since 2000, there has been a series of UN capability reviews aimed at improving the planning and conduct of peace operations. Efforts to improve the efficacy of the UN planning and conduct of peace operations are currently underway. On 15 February 2007, UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon informed the General Assembly of his intentions to achieve organisational changes aimed at strengthening the capacity of the UN to manage and sustain peace and security operations and to advance disarmament agendas. His letter to the General Assembly articulates many of the limits and challenges of peacekeeping and makes clear the increasing burden of peace operations on the UN's staff and resources. [6]

36.   Defence is monitoring UN developments, such as improvements to multi-agency planning and campaign implementation and monitoring. The UN and several member countries are already experimenting with such capabilities. The Integrated Mission Planning Process (IMPP) draws in not only military and police factors but the relief, political, social and economic agencies of the organisation as well.

Lessons learned

37.   The ADF has a number of mechanisms for identifying and analysing lessons learned from operations. Operational analysis teams deploy regularly to identify and record lessons, while the ADF Warfare Centre and the Centre for Army Lessons act as repositories for ADF lessons learned. Previous peacekeeping operations are analysed, and lessons applied to doctrine. These are also incorporated into standard operating procedures and result in changes to tactics, techniques and procedures. In addition, these lessons inform consequent mission rehearsal exercises for elements preparing to deploy or replacing elements already deployed.

38.   As with all operations, early identification of the potential use of ADF assets is critical. The greater the warning time provided, the better prepared deploying elements will be.

39.   As previously noted, whole-of-government planning, implementation and monitoring is essential in achieving the goals and objectives of peace operations. High levels of coordination, de-confliction and implementation across all agencies and departments will have a significant beneficial impact.

40.   Australia's experience supports other studies which highlight the importance and challenges of local ownership regarding peace operations. To be more stable and sustainable, peace operations must ultimately rely on locally owned processes and decision making that inevitably takes time to develop. With clear strategic objectives, a shared political commitment and local involvement, an action plan or route map can be developed, implemented and monitored. Such a process demands sufficient resources are allocated.

Security Sector Reform

41.   The concept of Security Sector Reform (SSR) emerged in the 1990s in Eastern Europe. The strategy aims to address situations whereby a dysfunctional security sector is unable to provide security to a state and its people effectively and under democratic principles. Entities within the security sector of a community or nation can be a source of widespread insecurity. An unreformed security sector can represent a decisive obstacle to the promotion of sustainable development, democracy and peace.

42.   Reforming the security sector in post conflict environments is critical to consolidating peace and security; promoting poverty reduction; rule-of-law and good democratic

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[6] This letter is available at http://www.un.org/ga/president/61/letters/SG-Annexes.pdf

governance; extending legitimate state authority; and preventing countries from relapsing into conflict.

43.   Good security sector governance requires limiting the role of the military in internal security, ensuring that all security forces are under civilian control, meeting basic standards of accountability and transparency, and insisting on respect for basic human rights. The importance of ensuring that police are involved as early as possible in law and order operations in the field cannot be understated. A critical factor to the success of operations in the Solomon Islands and East Timor was that police and military personnel were able to work together at the tactical level to maximise the effectiveness of respective capabilities to complete assigned tasks.

The Defence Cooperation Program: regional capacity building

44.   While SSR is important in post conflict situations, analysis of Australia's Defence cooperation experience indicates there is considerable scope to incorporate security sector reform related objectives into engagement activities as a means to mitigate the potential for conflict.

45.   The Department of Defence contributes to regional capacity building through its Defence Cooperation Program. The program aims to contribute to the maintenance of regional security by encouraging and assisting with the development of the defence self-reliance of regional countries, while promoting more effective and efficient security services in a manner consistent with sound principles of governance, the rule of law and democratic ideals.

46.   Defence Cooperation Program activities encompass assistance to regional security forces in the areas of strategic planning, education and training, command and control, infrastructure, counter-terrorism, communications and logistic support. The program also supports the conduct of combined exercises to improve the ability of regional countries to contribute to regional security. Training programs involve service personnel training together in Australia and overseas, thereby contributing to increased levels of mutual understanding and cooperation.

47.   In delivering the program, the ADF often works with the AFP, which provides law and justice capacity building to regional countries. By embracing a whole-of-government approach, the ADF and AFP work together to establish distinct roles for security sectors agencies, with an emphasis on the use of police capability for internal security.

Conclusions

48.   Peacekeeping operations are used in a diverse range of contexts and support a range of objectives. As Australia's experiences demonstrate, operations must be tailored to and constantly reviewed against local considerations, requirements and development needs.

49.   Both the UN Security Council and the UN General Assembly are examining the need to strengthen the capacity of the UN to manage and sustain peace and security actions, and wide scale reform in the coordination of UN peace operations is expected.

50.   Intervention using peace operations endorsed but not led by the UN has become more frequent, with an increasing emphasis on using local troops, with support and logistics provided by the global community. The capacity of regional nations to undertake or contribute to peace operations is an important element of security in the Asia Pacific region, and globally. It is in Australia's interest to actively work to improve regional cooperation to improve capability and interoperability for peace operations.

51.   Enhancement of regional cooperation programs also has the potential to act as a means of preventing conflict. Regional capacity building incorporating security sector reform mitigate or prevent conflicts.

52.   Primarily acquired as the mechanism to defend Australia and its interests, the capability of the ADF can contribute to the demands of peace and stabilisation operations. Employing a coordinated whole-of-government approach to peace operations has a greater potential to address the root causes of conflict, thus ensuring the best possible chance for enduring peace and stability. Such a strategy will also better prepare Australian elements to integrate into peace operations led by the UN or other bodies.