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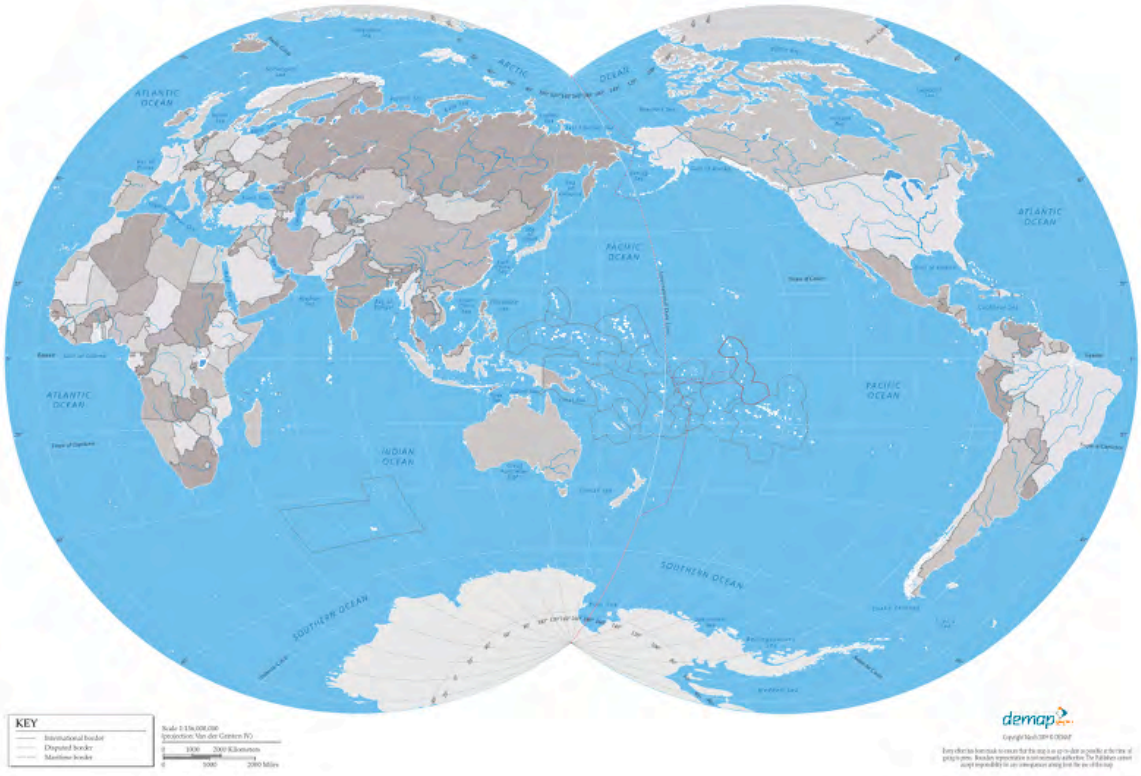
The 2009 Australian Defence White Paper: Analysis And Alternatives



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Synopsis

John Langmore, Calum Logan and Stewart Firth of the University of Melbourne and the Australian National University assess the 2009 Defence White Paper, starting from "its failure to adequately recognise changes in international paradigms of security and defence" and its over-reliance on "the assumption of recurrent great power conflict". Langmore and his colleagues argue that "there is a strong case for Australia's defence planners to temper their realist assumptions with the greater sophistication and complexity inherent in contemporary approaches to security that should play an influential role in the way Australia approaches the world." "The White Paper", they argue, "makes a fundamental misjudgement in treating defence as a silo remote from other aspects of foreign policy." They conclude that "the appointment of a new Defence Minister after the 2010 election will create an opportunity for evolution of military strategy as priorities, constraints and opportunities become clearer."

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Introduction

Governments are necessarily in the business of prediction and no more so than on issues of defence and national security. In this area the task of prediction is bestowed upon 'defence planners', who analyse a range of potential trends and conflicts in order to enable governments to decide on defence policy. Their task is to warn of possible threats to national security and to suggest ways of addressing them. The conceptual basis from which they often start is the nation-state; and they often assume that nation-states are armed against each other in a global anarchy. If so, they argue, is therefore best to arm one's own state as strongly as possible lest some other state invade.

We argue that there are a range of changes, developments and oversights which are given inadequate attention in such over-simplified preferences. The end of the Cold War, the emergence of multidimensional global integration, the development of new international norms and capacities about peacemaking and peacekeeping, and a range of other considerations such as economic, environmental and demographic evolution must be fully recognised in the conceptual basis of Australian defence policy. While these changes of themselves do not automatically limit the potential for conflict, they do require changes to the conceptualisation of the role of military forces as part of a broader approach to Australia's foreign policy. Such a policy should allocate more attention to efforts aimed at creating peaceful international conditions rather than a reactive military insurance policy against remotely possible disaster, such as an invasion of Australia.

The Rudd Government's 2009 Defence White Paper[1], as well as other significant speeches such as Prime Minister Rudd's call for a new regional security architecture do mention the need to address non-conventional security issues, however the White Paper is clearly focused on conventional threats. Resisting invasion of the Australian continent remains the key focus of the Australian Defence force and much of the White Paper deals with creating capabilities focused on this goal. Unlike an earlier generation of Labor ministers in the Hawke and Keating governments this one did not resist demands for a big build-up. The 2009 White Paper intensified key elements of Howard Government defence policy, that is, forward projection of forces, strike capability, and high technology weapons systems, and, like the Coalition, promised increased real spending on defence every year.

In detail, the White Paper proposes buying: 12 submarines, which would be Australia's largest ever single defence project; air-warfare destroyers and a new class of frigates to replace the ANZAC class ships; maritime-based land-attack cruise missiles; naval combat helicopters; 100 F-35 joint strike fighters; Wedgetail early warning and control aircraft; maritime surveillance and response aircraft; and around 1,100 armoured combat vehicles. The period of acquisition is long, 20 years, but the costs are unprecedented in Australian peacetime defence spending.

This article sets out to assess Australia's defence policy by focusing on the themes of the 2009 White Paper and on issues which it neglected. The title *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030* suggests a theme for a new strategic era, yet the paper undertakes no extended review of key assumptions underlying sixty years of Australian strategic thinking. One central concern is the

Paper's failure to adequately recognise changes in international paradigms of security and defence. The article challenges the assumption of recurrent great power conflict that inspires the White Paper; questions its over-reliance on this theme; and suggests other credible discourses which could instead guide defence planning

Internationally the traditional concept of state-based military power utilised in order to pursue the politics of national interest is increasingly being supplanted by the view that war is a threat to national interests. A recent example is the Report of the International Commission on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament (ICNND), which argues that 'The downside risks of waging aggressive war in a globalized interdependent world are seen today as outweighing almost any conceivable benefit'.[2] The traditional understanding is being replaced by a security paradigm that identifies a diverse array of considerations and actors. The contemporary concern for human security leads to more complex expectations of military forces than did previous frameworks. In order to remain relevant, military thinking must adopt novel and creative patterns while recognising that there may still be situations in which the use or threat of violence cannot be avoided.[3]

We examine key issues raised by the White Paper such as the place of defence in a holistic approach to international policy; the perception of threats; the neglect of peaceful means of attempting conflict resolution; and the types of military action in which the Australian Defence Force (ADF) is most likely to be involved. We also propose changes to foreign and defence policy and to defence funding in order to strengthen a more widely-based and effective approach to national security.

The Global Strategic Framework

The theoretical basis for the White Paper is a form of realism which assumes that military power is the fundamental basis of security. Yet the world is far more complex than that. Alliances enable countries to strengthen their security. Rules, norms and conflict resolution processes constrain aggression. National economic goals are overwhelmingly achieved through commercial and political activity, and countries which act aggressively face penalties. The global order of the early 21st century is one in which considerable benefits flow from cooperating with the international community.[4] While this is recognised in the White Paper, it does not adequately integrate this approach into the overall narrative.

The White Paper mentions the formative role of the UN Charter in establishing a rule-based international system and argues that the maintenance of this multilateral system is a key consideration for Australia's security. Yet it relies on a narrow, realist conceptualisation of the place of military power which fails to reflect the diversity of contemporary thinking about security or to engage in a sophisticated consideration of non-conventional threats. Issues such as terrorism and non-conventional warfare are currently familiar and difficult to deal with. Yet these issues are also complemented by a suite of considerations such as environmental depletion and climate change, growing disparity between wealthy and poor nations, and entrenched unemployment and growing proportions of over 65 year olds in industrialised nations. Added to the failure of conventional military forces to deal effectively with asymmetrical and non-conventional warfare these complex, interrelated issues are complemented by possible new modes of conflict such as

space- and cyber-warfare. It would be more valuable for Australia's defence planners to consider how best to utilise limited resources to create a military capable of engaging in activities that reinforce the international rule of law and the demands of the changing security environment. This includes focusing on capabilities that fall outside the traditional conceptualisation of military power. Thus whilst some traditional military organisation and practice will continue to be important, a broad reconceptualisation is required. Not only must militaries develop new capabilities, their role must be further integrated into a holistic approach towards the international system which understands military capabilities as an important part of a sophisticated engagement with the rest of the world.

National defence is justifiably viewed as one of the principal concerns of governments. In the earlier part of the twentieth century this often did not involve maintaining large standing forces. Since mid-century the Cold War and other factors such as the development of large military-industrial complexes have motivated most large and mid-level countries to keep substantial armies, navies and air forces. Within a Eurocentric context these forces were conceived and organised for use against similarly organised and trained forces from other nation states. The devastating failures of northern military forces in postcolonial struggles and Cold War proxy conflicts in many places indicates that such organisation was never well conceived for roles beyond the scope of a symmetrical Cold War showdown. Accordingly, since the end of the Cold War this military-centric view point has been increasingly challenged by academics, politicians and indeed militaries themselves who are realising that this traditional military paradigm is misplaced. The challenges to the primacy of military orthodoxies are diverse and include the radical recasting of military activity evident in the evolution of phenomena such as peacekeeping and asymmetrical conflict including civil war and terrorism.[5] In light of these changes we can observe shifts within social, political and military thinking and discourse towards a broader perception of factors influencing security.

The development of this new security discourse marks a significant evolution in military philosophy from the early modern perception of war as an extension of national interest. Clausewitz best described this view of war. It understood that military power was essentially an expression of national interest in a realm of violence. Ideally war was pursued in order to achieve rational political ends.[6] This thinking can be likened to a cost-benefit analysis. National leaders would weigh the means available to achieve a national goal and could anticipate within limits the likelihood of success and evaluate cost in men and materiel in waging war. If an ambition was sufficiently desirable to justify the sacrifice of so much blood and treasure then waging war was rational and worthwhile.

This perspective on security was largely abandoned by the most powerful states after the catastrophic experiences of WW1 and WW2, which demonstrated the realities of total war to both populace and political elites. The United Nations represented a measured response to the prospect of renewed general conflict following World War II. The UN has generated practical means of constraining inter-state war which have contributed to preventing a global cataclysm since it was established. The 'stability' of the Cold War rested primarily upon the stifling order imposed by the threat of nuclear war. However, this order frequently failed to address conflict in the third world which was often attributable to proxy Cold War superpower

confrontation. UN efforts to deal with these conflicts were fundamental in developing peacekeeping, a unique and unprecedented contribution to international security which, since the end of the Cold War, has expanded rapidly.

The reduction of tensions and the thaw in the international system that accompanied the end of the Cold War gave impetus to a process of change that is once again altering the way we think about conflict. A new situation has arisen, characterised not only by threats such as terrorism and asymmetrical military action, but also by new responses such as humanitarian intervention and innovative forms of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peace-building including active diplomacy, mediation, negotiation and other forms of conflict prevention. Changes are also evident in the reinterpretation of fundamental aspects of the international system. The evolving norm of the Responsibility to Protect reorients national sovereignty. It elevates the importance of human rights in international relations by predicating sovereignty on governmental responsibility to aim for at least minimum standards of human wellbeing.

Whilst these developments may be widely regarded as positive they must also be considered cautiously. Efforts to deal with conflict and instability around the world are replete with dilemmas including wariness of involvement where national interest is not apparent, a lack of willingness to investigate many of the factors implicit in fuelling conflict, and practical inability to resolve conflict once committed. Moreover some aspects of the responsibility to protect receive more attention than others. The Responsibility to Prevent conflict which is a fundamental aspect of the Responsibility to Protect receives limited attention. More worrying still, the actual involvement of western military forces in places like Iraq and Afghanistan engages with these concepts in a very limited way. These campaigns seem to represent a highly militarised turn in a liberal concept of military intervention. Whilst these interventions seem underpinned by a notion of creating more just societies, a contentious undertaking in itself, the campaigns have been beset by practical failure. The difference in style between these interventions and Australia's efforts in Timor Leste and the Solomon Islands is marked. Whereas the involvement in Iraq and Afghanistan involved invasion or conquest and a highly militarised presence, the deployments to Timor Leste and the Solomons have involved a degree of consensus with local authorities and regional governments as well as an array of different multilateral agencies.

There is a strong case for Australia's defence planners to temper their realist assumptions with the greater sophistication and complexity inherent in contemporary approaches to security that should play an influential role in the way Australia approaches the world.

The Purposes of Defence

Overt political tensions between states have declined substantially since the end of the Cold War yet much of the physical military infrastructure developed during that confrontation remains in place. The number of nuclear weapons has fallen from a peak of over 70,000 in the mid eighties to about 23,000 in 2009 yet the USA and Russia maintain around 2,150 nuclear warheads on high alert status (launch on warning) despite the fact that military confrontation has ended. This situation means

that major nuclear war must remain the most dangerous scenario in an appreciation of threats, even though it is the least desirable and least likely scenario. Thus military doctrines and procurement programs remain focused in part on this nuclear threat, but more importantly on traditional conventional threats even as a new security landscape evolves. Increasingly political and social attention has turned to issues such as humanitarian emergencies, mass human rights abuses, intra-state conflict, state failure, terrorism and WMD proliferation. Militaries are frequently required to play a key role in responding to potential conflict and its consequences and to natural disasters. So the range of activities that the military may be required to undertake has expanded substantially. This security-centred paradigm requires a reinvention of the roles for which the military prepare. Fundamental to this shift must be a concerted effort to dismantle the threat of nuclear conflict so that priorities can be refocused.

The largest single deployment of Australian troops in recent times has not been to our northern borders to protect the country from invasion or even to Iraq and Afghanistan, but rather to East Timor at the head of INTERFET, a coalition of the willing with UN authority. The interventions in East Timor and Solomon Islands brought together the Australian Defence Force and the Australian Federal Police in joint projects for restoring law and order while building the state. Kevin Rudd said when Prime Minister that the contingencies for which the ADF is being prepared 'range from stabilisation operations and humanitarian and disaster relief to the more remote possibility of direct conflict'.[2] The determining consideration in Australia's defence planning should be likely contingencies of this and other kinds, not the 'remote possibility' of international conflict.

The Minister's Preface to the White Paper begins 'There is no greater responsibility for a national government than the defence of the nation, its people and their interests.' This familiar claim for the pre-eminence of defence needs to be put in context. Protection from external threats is one aspect of national and personal security but so are economic stability, opportunities for employment, environmental sustainability, high quality health and education services, safety on the streets and much more. The claim exaggerates the importance of defence in peacetime and lays a foundation for the misleadingly narrow analysis which characterises the White Paper. National security is only one aspect of national wellbeing**.**

The White Paper makes a fundamental misjudgement in treating defence as a silo remote from other aspects of foreign policy. The isolation of military strategy prevents discussion of the relative priority and weight given to other aspects of foreign policy such as comprehensive reviews of bilateral, regional and multilateral relations; political contact and discussions; diplomatic activity; multilateral engagement; peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding, especially negotiation, mediation and conciliation; development policy including official development assistance (ODA); international economic, financial, social (including human rights) and environmental relations; and global governance including its economic, social and environmental dimensions. Although military thinking does incorporate these consideration the military force planned for in the White Paper does not reflect the demands of a sophisticated approach to security. Increasing conventional capabilities do little to equip Australia to be active in setting international conditions in its favour. Rather increased military spending resembles an insurance policy that Australia may hope to defend itself if the international system deteriorates. There is a fundamental

opportunity cost inherent in a choice between allocating resources towards proactively creating a stable international environment or building military capabilities to reactively deal with possible worst case scenarios.

A holistic approach to national security would reflect a qualitative development in strategic thinking. Such a change would indeed reflect a creative re-evaluation of Australia's security requirements for a new Asia Pacific century. Such a development would entail the recognition that conventional military forces are commonly ill suited to achieving desirable international outcomes. This in turn would require a considerable reallocation of human and financial resources to increase the capabilities of other national departments and national and multilateral agencies. The White Paper even acknowledges that many 'argue that Defence should be considered in a whole-of-government security context that includes aid programs and diplomacy and contributions to non-government organisations'[8] but explicitly chooses not to do this, instead treating military spending as if it is a closed world which can be considered in isolation from other factors which determine the degree of cooperation or hostility between countries.

Misjudging Threats

The treatment of defence as a silo is central to the White Paper's misjudgements about Australia's strategic environment. There is an overemphasis on resisting threats of invasion and to the sea-air gap between Australia and Asia, and an under-emphasis on developments in international relations, particularly in Australia's region of interest. Take, for example, the ASEAN-Australia-New Zealand-Free Trade Area which came into effect in 2010. It covers 12 economies with a combined GDP of $3.1 trillion and a population of more than 600 million people. Over time, it will open more and more South East Asian markets to the free entry of Australian goods and services, and deepen the mutual dependencies that sustain inter-state peace in the region. The contrast with the South East Asia in the 1960s is striking. Whereas Australia traditionally imagined its security in terms of being protected from the region and regional conflict by an imperial great power such as Britain or later the US, Australia must reconceptualise its security as emanating from the Asia Pacific region. This would acknowledge and reflect the dramatic development in the region which has witnessed decolonisation, economic and social development as well as strides towards regionalism. Thinking about national security must reflect these changes and their impact upon Australia's interests.

The White Paper asserts that the 'primary obligation [of defence] is to deter and defeat attack on Australia' and moves straight on to address force structure, rather than discussing whether resisting the threat of invasion is currently or foreseeably the highest realistic priority. Such a view invokes traditional security dilemmas stemming from Australia's sense of isolation from cultural and strategic allies. It fails to accommodate the changing nature of the region and Australian society. It also works against the White Paper's own assessment that there is neither currently nor foreseeably any power in the region capable of mounting such operations. The continuing geo-spatial anxiety about Australia's northern borders, manifest in the militarised reaction to informal immigration fails to realise that physical Australian interests there, such as mineral and energy resources, are unlikely to be violently fought over. Rather conflict over these assets may more conceivable played out in

diplomatic, legal and commercial realms as witnessed in the Stern Hu affair, or in a murky cyber realm, demonstrated by alleged cyber attacks on Australian resource companies.[9] The fear of invasion is close to fantasy: there is no credible interest for any state in attacking this country nor has there been for two thirds of a century. As Kim Beazley said when tabling a committee report on threats to Australia over three decades ago, only one country has the capacity to invade Australia, the USA, and it is able to obtain all it wants from Australia without such action. Paul Monk writes 'in Australia's case, both now and for decades past, there has been no serious possibility of such an invasion'. And later: 'in the eyes of a number of observers … the most realistic threats to the country's future security and prosperity do not consist of an invasion of the kind against which so much has been invested in capital equipment since the 1980s'.[10]

Identifying threats, likely or unlikely, is what defence planners do. The task of government, neglected in this case, is to bring a restraining sense of proportion and perspective to the process. In the 1990s Australian planners stressed the uncertainty of the post-Cold War situation and liked to list potential flashpoints in East Asia. They pointed to the Korean Peninsula, for example, where a decaying Communist state and a rising but troubled capitalist one confronted each other across a demilitarised zone; to the Taiwan Straits, where China might have entered hostilities with Taiwan over the question of reunification; and to the Spratly Islands in the South China Sea, where five regional powers including China competed for territory potentially rich in sub-seabed oil and gas. These potential conflict sources rightly remain highly relevant to security considerations in the White Paper.

However, approaches to potential conflict must include consideration that military preparedness should not necessarily constitute the primary effort towards mitigation or resolution. Equal or more intense efforts need to be made towards exploring peaceful resolution. Eschewing engagement aimed at peaceful resolution for a focus on military development also risks militarising the wider region. An overt preference for a reactive military capability demonstrates a lack of confidence in the region and risks increasing incentives for other regional nations to follow suit and invest in armaments. This has the potential of creating a regional security dilemma resulting in a threatening and wasteful spiralling arms race. In itself this could add to potential insecurities as resources are directed away from peaceful development, fuelling many of the economic and environmental sources of conflict. Moreover such a course discounts the transformative possibilities of peaceful resolution of potential conflict. Australia's relationship with Indonesia is a good example of the unanticipated consequences of dynamic change. Given Australia's earlier support for Suharto's regime and reticence to engage in Indonesia's domestic issues few would have predicted that the military intervention in a regional succession from Indonesia would not damage Australia's long term relationship with Indonesia. However despite considerable dilemmas Australia and Indonesia have managed to maintain a generally positive relationship. Much credit for this must be given to active diplomacy and to a willingness to support each other in instances of natural disaster.

The 2009 White Paper points out that China will be the strongest Asian military power 'by a considerable margin'. Not only that, the modernisation 'appears potentially to be beyond the scope of what would be required for a conflict over Taiwan.' The implication is that Australia needs to prepare for Chinese aggression.

The China question presented the government with a dilemma. On the one hand, China's vast appetite for resources underpins Australia's future prosperity; on the other hand, China's military power might one day match America's in East Asia. How should the government depict the rise of China, as opportunity or threat? In the end, the White Paper argues both ways and against itself. 'In coming years', it says, 'China will develop an even deeper stake in the global economic system, and other major powers will have deep stakes in China's economic success. China's political leadership is likely to continue to appreciate the need for it to make a strong contribution to strengthening the regional security environment and the global rules-based order.' Elsewhere, the White Paper stresses that China will be the strongest Asian military power 'by a considerable margin', and that its military modernisation is more than might normally be expected even from a growing power. China may or may not become a military threat as it expands economically, but to posture against it before evidence justifying this emerges risks encouraging aggressive Chinese preparation in return. Allan Behm writes: 'Quite simply, in the timeframes considered by this White Paper, China will have neither the intention nor the power to mount a direct attack against Australia. The chapter's key judgement is breathtaking in its naivety and lack of nuance.'[11]

In this sense China operates more as an abstract threat than an actual entity in the security environment Australia confronts. Focusing simply on China's economic and military development in terms of its size does little to interrogate the implications of such growth. China is confronted by numerous considerations and dilemmas that need to be included in an assessment of its power. Domestically its regime bases much of its legitimacy on supervising uninterrupted growth and development. This dynamic is complicated by demographic change, and by social and environmental insecurity. Whilst many fear that any slowdown in an economy traditionally dependent on foreign consumption may push the Chinese government to use nationalism to bolster its authority, questions need to be raised about whether nationalist rhetoric will translate into nationalist aggression. For example, the long term implication of the one child policy is a radical re-engineering of a key social institution, the family. In the context of deficient social security young workers are an increasingly important commodity to Chinese families. Thus regardless of the government's interests, Chinese society may not be willing to waste young lives fighting wars of national aggression. Demographic issues as well as general health and obesity are relevant for many powers in the region including Japan, Korea, the US and Australia. These points do not change the fact of China's growing capabilities; however they do complicate the image of a rising China. Abstract analysis of a handful of trends without an effort to situate or contextualise them is not good enough for any defence planning that proposes to consider and allocate security priorities as far as twenty years into the future. Planning must attempt to assess existent societies, as complicated as they may be, not comfortable theories about imagined nations.

The White Paper's simplistic view of China, then, is that size implies potential threat. This interpretation – contested by the White Paper itself – becomes the basis of its single new analytical contribution, which is that Australia confronts a 'transformation of major power relations in the Asia-Pacific region', also described as a 'strategic transformation of the region over the period to 2030.' Said to be 'currently unlikely' in one part of the White Paper, this transformation is accepted elsewhere in the document, including its Executive Summary, as a fact requiring an Australian

response in the form of an unprecedented military build-up over 20 years. A transformation theory, blighted by lack of sophisticated appreciation of the multitude of competing regional issues lies at the heart of the White Paper analysis as well as its plans to arm Australia.

The White Paper is inconsistent not only about China, but about all conventional threats to Australia. It recognises that 'The enduring reality of our strategic outlook is that Australia will most likely remain, by virtue of our geostrategic location, a secure country over the period to 2030' yet it fails to plan on that reasonable conclusion.[12] Geoff Miller, the former Director-General of the Office of National Assessments, concludes that 'the White Paper only makes the case for the huge expenditure it projects by focusing on the stated principal task of 'deterring and defeating attacks on Australia without relying on the combat or combat support forces of other countries, while ignoring its own conclusions about the limits to self-reliance and about the likelihood of Australia having to defend against a major power adversary on its own'.[13]

Non-violent Resolution of Conflict

Further evidence of Australia's preference for a military insurance policy over positive international activity is the White Paper's failure to engage with non-violent conflict resolution. The White Paper is not even consistent about Australia's commitments, as a member of the UN, to the principles of the foundational document of postwar multilateral relations, the UN Charter. Despite repeatedly emphasising that one of the Government's foreign policy goals is to re-engage with the UN and that it seeks to play a leadership role there, a huge expansion of Australia's arsenal of sophisticated weaponry has been announced which does not even mention the commitment of all UN Member States to peaceful conflict resolution.[14]

Article 1 of the Charter describes the first purpose of the UN as being:

> To maintain international peace and security, and to that end: to take effective collective measures for the prevention and the removal of threats, and for the suppression of acts of aggression or other or other breaches of the peace, and to bring about by peaceful means, and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law, adjustment of international disputes or situations which might lead to a breach of the peace.

Article 2 requires that Member States act in accordance with stated principles, the third of which is that:

> All Members shall settle their international disputes by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security, and justice, are not endangered.

The fourth is also relevant:

> All Members shall refrain in their international relations from the threat of use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of

> any state, or in any other manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

That is, membership of the UN requires countries to attempt by all reasonable means to minimise and avoid the use of force and to seek non-violent means of minimising and resolving conflict. Article 33 at the start of Chapter VI of the Charter commits member states which are a party to any dispute

> the continuance of which is likely to endanger the maintenance of international peace and security [to] first of all, seek a solution by negotiation, enquiry, mediation, conciliation, arbitration, judicial settlement, resort to regional agencies or arrangements, or other peaceful means of their own choice.

The rest of Chapter VI and Chapter VII then set out the goals and means by which the Security Council and the General Assembly are to work for resolution of conflict, including, as a last resort, through action including the use of force. But as one observer writes 'the principle of the peaceful settlement of disputes occupies a pivotal position within a world order whose hallmark is the ban on force and coercion'.[15] There have been many resolutions in the Security Council and General Assembly elaborating the theme of peaceful conflict resolution. Even the divided UN World Summit held in September 2005 included agreement by the 147 heads of government (including PM Howard) to rededication to the principle of refraining 'from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the UN, resolution of disputes by peaceful means and in conformity with the principles of justice and international law'.[16]

The rationale for the plans announced in the White Paper for massive increases in the purchase of weapons is the presumption that they might have to be used. The White Paper specifically articulates the development of a strategic strike capability which would enable Australia to undertake pre-emptive strikes against targets in Australia's northern approaches. Although there is a basis in International Law for undertaking preemptive strikes, the extent of Australia's preparation runs contrary to the spirit of the UN requirement for use of force only as a last resort in response to aggression.

The White Paper offers little explanation - other than assertions about the risk of the threat of invasion - about what might cause conflict or war and nothing at all about peaceful means of attempting to resolve potential conflict. Australia's interest is as much in peaceful conflict resolution as is that of all UN member states, yet this top priority is neither mentioned nor discussed comprehensively or in detail. Nor is the value of regional political and economic bodies in strengthening integration and stability acknowledged.

The White Paper does not mention the decline in the number of military conflicts and in the numbers of war deaths since the start of the 1990s.[17] Since the early 1990s, the number of conflicts causing 1000 or more battle deaths in a year has fallen by 80 per cent. More civil wars have been ended by negotiation in the past 15 years than in the previous two centuries. There are many reasons for this striking improvement including the end of colonialism and of the Cold War; the decline in the

number of authoritarian governments and the growth of economic interdependence. Another powerful reason, however, is that there has been a major increase in the international effort especially through the UN but also through a number of new and increasingly effective NGOs concentrating on preventing, managing and resolving conflicts. One of the most effective is the International Crisis Group so substantially expanded by Australia's former foreign minister Gareth Evans. It is vital that the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) build its capacity for engagement in peaceful conflict resolution through, for example, establishing a branch of professional staff trained and increasingly experienced in mediation and the other means suggested in the UN Charter for peaceful settlement of disputes. The Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs is an example of how to do this and what can be achieved.

It is striking that Australia's principal ally has also recently come to this conclusion. In his seminal address at West Point on 22 May 2010 President Obama announced a new national security strategy based on diplomatic engagement and international alliances. In effect he repudiated President Bush's emphasis on unilateral American power and the right to wage pre-emptive war. 'America has not succeeded by stepping out of the currents of cooperation. We have succeeded by steering those currents in the direction of liberty and justice'. He said that the US would 'be steadfast in strengthening those old alliances that have served us so well' while also trying to 'build new partnerships and shape stronger international standards and institutions'. Aspects of this which he mentioned were 'preventing conflict and healing wounds', 'renewed engagement of our diplomats', support for international development and promotion of human rights.

The US Alliance and Extended Nuclear Deterrence

The White Paper fails to adequately explore pertinent questions related to the US Alliance. The ANZUS relationship offers considerable benefits such as access to military hardware and intelligence; however these benefits must be weighed against the costs. The commitment to war in Iraq, much like Vietnam before it, is now generally recognised as a mistake that inflicted terrible suffering on the Iraqi people. Ultimately it would seem the most certain legacy of this conflict is that the destruction in Iraq and the abuse of its people, documented in images of the 'Shock and Awe' campaign and Abu Ghraib prison, will erode the legitimacy of Australia's participation in US-led campaigns and possibly inspire further acts of terror against Australian personnel and citizens. These costs of the alliance demonstrate how resorting to military force may have left Australia less secure. Other governments of countries allied with the USA, for example Germany, France and Canada did not support the invasion of Iraq, yet this did not fragment NATO.

The practical benefits of the American alliance are difficult to gauge accurately. By increasing the community's sense of security, the alliance may have enabled Australia to keep military expenditure lower than it would otherwise have been. Kim Beazley said when Defence Minister that the US defence association saved Australia one per cent of national income. However one motivation for the enormous equipment purchases envisaged in the White Paper is the degree of attention given to interoperability with American military forces. Apart from resisting an unlikely invasion of Australia the only explicit rationale for most of the proposed purchase of

materiel is their value in cooperating with the USA. Procurement plans conceived to deal with such remote possibilities distort defence planning. Interoperability with US forces is privileged over sensible assessment of threats, risks and interests. A heavier and more hardened force is developed at the cost of a more sophisticated, adaptable military that is capable of undertaking a wide range of tasks. This trend is evident in the procurement of Abrams tanks, Joint Strike Fighters, submarines and the extensive array of armaments, infrastructure and personnel required to keep them operational. Such weapons platforms are hugely expensive and have limited purpose beyond conventional warfare. Likewise, Australian participation in missile defence research and development has no reasonable value for Australian security: it simply indicates support for a controversial, provocative US military strategy – which fortunately the Obama Administration has played down. Such Australian collaboration with the US Defense Department seems compliant and submissive rather than cooperative and independent.

In the context of the defence relationship, Australia must continue to affirm the value of the UN's multilateral framework and support US multilateral engagement and adherence to international norms, treaties, and law. Australia should cooperate with the present US Administration, which has reaffirmed the importance of the international rule of law and its multilateral re-engagement, in ways that recognise the necessity for national independence and autonomy. The alliance should be maintained as part of a foreign policy that is clear about our national goals and interests and clear-eyed about American objectives, seeking to be cooperative when we can, yet firm in urging US engagement with the UN and respect for international law.

The White Paper's comments on the nuclear issue were misjudged at the time of writing but since the publication of the report of the ICNND they are outdated. The White Paper asserted that 'Within the timeframe of this White Paper, the United States will continue to rely on its nuclear deterrent capability'. This comment, while true, indicates none of the debate or movement currently underway. Most of the developments have happened since the White Paper was written but nevertheless even at the time their emphasis was inconsistent with that of the Rudd Government, for the Commission had been initiated nine months earlier.

Defence Expenditure and Public Opinion

The White Paper's plans involve spending tens of billions of dollars at a time when the government needs to restrain spending after the global financial crisis. The way around this problem, we are told, will be thoroughgoing reform of the entire defence enterprise, producing savings of $20 billion and delivering efficiency without compromising effectiveness. The vision of Defence run on a tight budget is attractive, but at odds with the fundamental message of the White Paper to spend more on defence than ever before. Sir Humphrey might have described it as 'optimistic' or 'courageous'.

Public opinion does not support the White Paper's overall approach. The Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) Special Report on *Public opinion in Australia towards defence, security and terrorism, Issue 16* concludes that 'support for more defence spending has dropped to its lowest level since the end of the Cold War'.[18] The reason is that 'The proportion of voters seeing a security threat to

Australia has declined consistently since the late 1960s.' Priorities have evolved significantly since the global financial crisis causing a fall in the priority being given now to arresting climate change and that to economic security having risen. There is no evidence, however, that these changes have caused voters' average concern for defence to grow. Most voters are far more concerned with employment and living standards, health services and education than with defence.[19] The Medicare card is of greater importance to the security of most Australians than increased military spending. To reflect public opinion as well as a better informed and more comprehensive view of strategic realities, Australian military expenditure must be as constrained as possible to minimise the competition for limited finance for services which voters regard as of greater importance.

Fortunately the White Paper's plans have not been fully implemented in the two budgets since 2 May 2009. Mark Thompson of the Australian Strategic Policy Institute remarked in his exhaustive review of the 2010 budget, the White Paper's 'promise of two decades of continuous growth in defence spending only lasted 10 days before the reality of the 2009 budget hit home'. In May 2009 $8.8 billion of promised funding was cut from the forthcoming six years because of the global economic crisis. Nevertheless in May 2010 net real Defence funding was budgeted to increase by 3.6 per cent, in 2010-11 in comparison with the previous year to reach $26.8 billion, 1.9 per cent of GDP. Deferrals are likely to reduce real defence outlays in the next two years.[20]

Despite the Government's claim in the Budget Overview paper to be presenting 'the first coordinated approach to national security funding' the only information provided was a graph and a brief note on initiatives.[21] There was no definition of what outlays were included in 'national security' neither were any aggregate figures published. The increase in defence funding in 2010-11 of $1.57 billion dollars is 50 per cent more than the *total* annual budget for the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in 2010-11 of $1.1 billion. There are enormous opportunity costs for such a misallocation.[22]

Proposals for Foreign and Defence Policy

Australian security would be strengthened if defence is liberated from the silo within which it is imprisoned so that the framework for foreign and defence policy can be addressed holistically. Recognition of the complementarities of foreign and defence policy would create the basis for a public and governmental discourse in which a range of perspectives and possibilities could be included. In the White Paper the preference for viewing the world in terms of highly dangerous yet unlikely scenarios has been used as the basis for justifying astonishing plans for military equipment purchases. This approach is adopted in absence of sophisticated analysis. The path of preparing for the worst diverts resources and attention from efforts to engage in attempts to create a more secure and stable environment. Moreover the consequences of undertaking a military build up risks pushing neighbours towards pursuing military capabilities, risking a spiralling expansion of arms and a preference for military paradigms. More open and participatory public and official discussions might well lead to wider ranging and wiser conclusions about external probabilities and domestic possibilities for responses.

The Rudd Government established organisational structures which could undertake these responsibilities. The periodic National Security Statements could be expanded to include all aspects of international relations policy including both foreign and defence policy. These would then be the basis for more specialised and technical statements for the various aspects of foreign, defence, intelligence, trade, and aid policy. The new National Security Advisor could chair the inter-departmental group working on the statement under the direction of the appropriately composed cabinet committee. Such official discussions would be supported, strengthened and challenged by wider ranging academic, think tank and public policy debates.

Second, funding for DFAT must be substantially improved. The Lowy Institute report on *Australia's Diplomatic Deficit* argues the case particularly persuasively, so detailed repetition is unnecessary.[23] The facts are clear: in 2007-08 the annual funding for DFAT, aid and Austrade totalled $4.4b (of which less than $1.2b was for DFAT), 13 per cent of the total defence and intelligence agency funding of $34.3b. Australia has only 91 overseas missions compared with the OECD country average of 150. The number of Australian staff based overseas fell by a quarter between 1996 and 2008 and of Australian-based staff by 15 per cent while the number of ASIO staff was increased by 139 per cent. DFATs operating budget was reduced every year between 1999-2000 and 2008-09 as it has been every year during the last decade, to $693m, less than 0.1 per cent of GDP.

ASPI estimates that in the nine years from 2001-02 to 2010-11 nominal appropriations (that is, neglecting the effect of inflation) for Defence increased by 103 per cent to $26.8 billion; for the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) by 535 per cent to $438 million in 2010-11; for the Australian Secret Intelligence Service by 344 per cent to $240 million; official development assistance by 148 per cent to $4,349 million; and DFAT by 64 per cent to $1.1 billion. So Defence completely overshadows the other organisations; and the increases to intelligence funding have been multiples greater than those for diplomacy and aid.

To neglect DFAT is to neglect Australia's security interests and to consign diplomacy to a minor role in defending them. Why should diplomacy, the instrument supposed to sustain a global and regional web of relationships and cooperative arrangements favouring Australia, receive one twenty-sixth of the funds allocated to defence? The Lowy Institute argues carefully for reversal of these trends, opening of new missions, increased appointment and training of qualified diplomats and expansion of other vital supporting activities. Swift implementation of those recommendations is vital. Steadily improved funding would allow DFAT to build up its capacity for engagement in peaceful conflict resolution through bilateral and multilateral analysis, consultation, mediation, negotiation and the other means listed in the UN Charter. There is an interesting contemporary parallel to these proposals in the USA. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton is seeking to revitalise the State Department after the obsessive militarisation of foreign policy by the Bush presidency. She has appointed President Bill Clinton's former budget chief to work for restoration of balance to the allocation of resources to defence and diplomacy by rebuilding her Department's finances.[24]

Third, the central place of peacemaking, peacekeeping and peacebuilding in both defence and diplomatic strategy requires increasing recognition. For some years,

the ADF has focused substantial attention on the internal conflicts being encountered in Australia's neighbouring states. Increased contributions to UN peacekeeping are essential if Australia is to take a proportional role in global conflict prevention and demonstrate that we are effectively re-engaging with the UN and warrant election to the Security Council. The establishment of the Asia Pacific Civil-Military Centre of Excellence is a valuable step in this direction.

Fourth, continued expansion of the Australian aid program as promised by the Rudd Government is vital so that Australia can make a fairer and more effective contribution to economic, social and environmentally sustainable development, achievement of the Millennium Development Goals and reduction of despair, alienation and poverty. Even with the increased outlays on international development assistance in the first two of the Rudd Government's budgets, Australian aid in 2010-11 is only 0.33 per cent of national income compared with the expected average of all donor countries of 0.48 per cent for 2010.[25] Australia should make a fairer contribution to reduction of poverty and its consequences.

Fifth, for all these reasons and to conserve scarce funds for high priority domestic programs, Australian military expenditure must be tightly constrained. This would limit competition for finance for services which voters regard as of far greater importance. Good public policy should not treat one kind of public outlay differently from all others by conferring on defence the unique privilege of announced real increases until 2030. The quarantining of defence spending discriminates against every other area of public service, introduces rigidity, and eliminates a financial incentive to strengthen the efficiency with which defence is provided. The effect of exaggerating military threats to Australia has been to justify increases in defence expenditure larger than are necessary, to $73 million a day. Australia does not need military spending per person more than twice that of Japan or Russia and 57 per cent more than Canada.[26]

UN global conferences have frequently agreed on the importance of minimising military spending so as to maximise outlays which do most to stimulate economic and social development. 'Experience has repeatedly shown that the emphasis of the world conferences on minimizing military expenditures is completely justified because of the implications of such spending on the availability of finance for desperately needed human services and infrastructure'.[27] The IMF and World Bank have repeatedly emphasised the same recommendation. Restraining and reducing military spending would also have the benefit of avoiding provoking retaliatory increases by other countries. This would end the loud signal which the White Paper is sending to East Asia that they should emulate Australia's military build up

When he was Prime Minister, Kevin Rudd promised another Defence White Paper in 2014. This provides time for rethinking the policy announced in May 2009. However some aspects of the White Paper are so seriously misjudged that more immediate reconsideration, change and innovation is essential. The appointment of a new Defence Minister after the 2010 election will create an opportunity for evolution of military strategy as priorities, constraints and opportunities become clearer. Provided the newly elected government is committed to seeking peace and justice through broadly conceived national security, and to using limited public revenue with

maximum cost effectiveness, there could be progressive movement towards a more balanced structure in Australian international relations and security policy.

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