US military and intelligence facilities in Australia - what, where and why?

Richard Tanter
rtanter@nautilus.org
Medical Association for the Prevention of War
Melbourne, 9 August 2012

The Asia-Pacific pivot: the Obama strategic agenda direction after the Bush disasters

- Unchanged: the counter-terrorism agenda
  - Targeted killings, drones, and intelligence cooperation

- Fundamental US issues with China:
  - strategic partner or strategic competitor?
  - Unquestioned assumptions of "power transition theory":
    - "A revisionist power must come into violent conflict with established powers"

- Obama administration mixed approaches to China
  - dialogue with China as strategic partner for global order
  - Military re-assertion and a framework for containment:

  - Drawing a line under the Iraq and Afghanistan disasters

  - The Pacific pivot – "We’re back to stay"

Australia and the Pacific pivot

- Deepening ADF integration with US, Japan and NATO
  - "Interoperability"
  - shared wars

- Shared planning for Australian participation in US global and regional planning
  - Especially re anti-China “AirSea Battle”

- The invocation of ANZUS – from Howard to Gillard

- The dominant climate in Canberra on China
  - More hawkish than the Washington hawks
  - Suppression of well-founded and balanced intelligence assessments
  - Offering bases before being asked

- Technological integration and consequent dependence
Source: "U.S., Australia to broaden military ties amid Pentagon pivot to SE Asia," Craig Whitlock, Washington Post, 26 March 2012

Possible rotational deployment of U.S. Marines, housing of satellite surveillance aircraft, increased air visits.

Possible expansion of RAAF Seng Arring naval base, partly so it could host accommodate visits by U.S. aircraft carriers, other warships and attack submarines.

Possible new Australian fast bases that could also accommodate visits from U.S. warships and submarines.

ADF, Joint & U.S. Bases

Source: "U.S., Australia to broaden military ties amid Pentagon pivot to SE Asia," Craig Whitlock, Washington Post, 26 March 2012
What has Australia signed up to?

- Obama visit agreements on “permanent rotation”
  - Marine Air Ground Task Force (MAGTF)
    - 2,500 at any one time, and ongoing command and logistics presence
  - US Air Force
    - To RAAF northern airfields and training ranges
  - US Navy
    - To HMAS Stirling still being negotiated
- AUSMIN agreements 2004-2012
  - North West Cape
  - Australian Defence Satellite Communications Ground Station, Kojarena/Geraldton
  - Bradshaw Field Training Area
  - Delamere Air Weapons Range
  - Mount Bundey Training Area
  - Joint Australia-US Combat Training Centre
- The transformation of Joint Defence Facility Pine Gap

Darwin: Robertson, RAAF Darwin, East Arm Wharf, Defence Support Hub

RAAF Darwin ordnance loading areas (OLA) (Darwin International Airport)


Bradshaw Field Training Area (8,700 sq.kms. just smaller than Cyprus)

Source: Green Lightning Exercise Strengthens US, Australian Ties, Aero News Network, 29 October 2006; and B-2 Bomber refuelling, Image Galleries, Department of Defence, 27 July 2006

After departing Andersen AFB, the bombers both received 60,000 pounds of fuel from KC-135 Stratotankers of the 506th Expeditionary Air Refueling Squadron. Once over the Delamere range, each aircraft dropped four BDU-50 inert bombs, and then returned back to Guam. The whole sortie covered approximately 4,900 nautical miles and spanned 11.5 hours of flight.

Delamere Air Weapons Range (3,000 sq.kms.)

B-2 bomber mid-air night refuelling en route from Guam to Delamere
B-52 Stratofortress leaving Guam for Delamere Air Weapons Range bombing practice, 2006

“Green Lightning Exercise Strengthens US, Australian Ties”

Source: Green lightning Exercise Strengthens US, Australian Ties, Aero News Network, 29 October 2006

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Michael Leunig on Delamere Air Weapons Range

I regret I no longer have the original reference for this post by Michael Leunig. Presently sourced from http://bp1.blogger.com/_VjDedArkEYE/SBQ2DXg2J2I/AAAAAAAAAB8/qmu_u0u0xTM/s1600-h/leunig+country3.JPG

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Australian Defence Satellite Communications Ground Station, Kojarena/Geraldton

- US Australian ground station for the US Mobile User Objective System (MUOS)
  - a narrow band networked satellite constellation for UHF satellite communications enabling secure all weather and all terrain 3 G mobile telecommunications.
- Australian ground station for US Wideband Global SATCOM system
  - high data rate satellite communications in the Ka and X-band frequencies
  - tactical command and control, communications, and computers; intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (C4ISR); battle management; and combat support information.
  - Australia paid $1 bn. for one; gets access to all seven

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North West Cape, nuclear attack submarines, and the militarisation of space

- Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America Relating to the Operation of and Access to an Australian Naval Communications Station at North West Cape in Western Australia (2008)
  - Renewed or expanded US access to VLF submarine communications
  - Sensors including radars to be emplaced as part of US Space Surveillance Network at North West Cape and elsewhere (unspecified)
- Space Object Identification: Detecting and monitoring all objects in orbit 200 kms to 36,000 kms
  - Monitoring space junk (debris) for the global public good
  - Monitoring satellite location, character and intent for US Joint Space Operations Centre under the US Air Force Space Command
- Space Fence
  - S-band (2-4 GHz) phased array radars at North West Cape, and either Ascension Island or Kwajalein or both depending on budget
US Space Surveillance Network assets:
Blue: RADAR sensor coverage at 800 km altitude; Red: electro-optical telescope sensor coverage at 800 km altitude.

PAVEPAWS (Phased Array Warning System) Clear Air Force Base, Alaska

Pine Gap: the great expansion

- Two different functions of Pine Gap:
  - Command, control and data download of US geo-stationary signals intelligence (SIGINT) satellites over SEA and the Indian Ocean
  - Remote Ground Station for geostationary thermal imaging early warning satellites (DSP/SBIRS)
- Both now more important than ever
  - SIGINT for missile telemetry and launch preparations, radar, microwave transmissions, satellite communications
  - DSP/SBIRS for missile launch early warning, nuclear and conventional post-attack assessment, and for missile defence
  - Both closely involved in the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan
  - SIGINT collection, processing and distribution globally integrated
- Australian involvement in all parts of Pine Gap
  - Personnel in all sections
  - Australian DSP/SBIRS downlinks
  - Australia receives SIGINT data


Pine Gap now a National Reconnaissance Office facility, with CIA, NSA and uniformed military personnel

Special Collection Elements resident at Pine Gap

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>Branch</th>
<th>Unit</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>US Navy</td>
<td>Navy Information Operations Command</td>
<td>U.S. Naval Detachment Combined Support Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Air Force</td>
<td>Air Intelligence Agency</td>
<td>Detachment 2, 544th Information Operations Group</td>
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<tr>
<td>US Army</td>
<td>754th Military Intelligence Brigade</td>
<td>Remote Detachment, Alice Springs, 743rd Military Intelligence Battalion</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US Marines</td>
<td>Marine Cryptologic Support Command</td>
<td>Sub-Unit 1, Alice Springs, Marine Cryptologic Support Battalion</td>
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Geo-stationary orbit, 33,000 kms above the earth’s surface - schematic
Pine Gap - north, January 2011

New radome under construction - 40 m. diameter

Australian DSP/SBIRS links - Uncovered antennas

Source: Angel PC & Susana SF, Panoramio, 18 October 2011
http://www.panoramio.com/photo_explorer#view=photo&position=18&with_photo_id=64219611&ss_play&order=date_desc&user=410036

Pine Gap, March 2012 - closeup


DSP and SBIRS Remote Ground Station

Note two new small radomes

Source: Angel PC & Susana SF, Panoramio, 18 October 2011
http://www.panoramio.com/photo_explorer#view=photo&position=18&with_photo_id=64219611&ss_play&order=date_desc&user=410036
Cocos Island base plans

Karlo Kopp, Cocos basing proposal, AirPower Australia

Cocos (Keeling) Islands

Cocos Islands - by island community (2006 and 2011 Census data)
What now?

- Building resources for an informed democratic debate about security and defence
- Understanding Australian interests vs. US interests
- What are the consequences of our current and projected force structure and basing arrangements?
- Thinking deeply about China and making genuinely realistic assessments about China
- What actual security threats does Australia face?
- What intelligence and military force structure does Australia need for actual threats?
- What are the alternatives, and what are the consequences for the bases?

Richard Tanter:
Email: rtanter@nautilus.org
Homepage: http://nautilus.org/network/associates/richard-tanter/

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