

**POLICY, PROFESSIONALS  
AND PUBLIC:  
DISCUSSING DEFENCE  
UNDER DEBATABLE  
DEMOCRACY**

**DAMIAN GILCHRIST**

**2001 RNZAF AIR POWER FELLOW**

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**AIR POWER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE**



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# THE AIR POWER DEVELOPMENT CENTRE

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Damian Gilchrist was born and raised in Hamilton, New Zealand on Weet-bix, spuds and Gaelic idiom. His educators included the local Sisters of Our Lady of the Missions and Marist Brothers, the Marist Fathers at Silverstream, and the History and Classics faculties at the University of Canterbury. He gained a Bachelor of Arts as a university officer cadet in the Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) before graduating with his 'wings' in 1987. He flew BAC 167 Strikemaster, A4K Skyhawk and Macchi 339C aircraft at RNZAF Base Ohakea, across Australia and South-East Asia with Nos 2, 14 and 75 Squadrons. His final RNZAF flying post was as Commanding Officer of No 14 Squadron. After a year as F-16 project officer at RNZAF Air Staff, he completed the RAAF Command and Staff College in Canberra, followed by a fellowship year at the Aerospace Centre. He transferred to the RAAF in 2001 and worked in Capability Systems on Hawk, F-111 and F/A-18 projects. He is currently 'A' (Conversion Flight Commander) at No 79 Squadron at RAAF Base Pearce, flying the BAe Hawk 127. As a proud husband and father of three he enjoys music, rugby, cricket, reading, driving the weekend taxi and dabbling in suburban organic farming.

Kia Maia, Kia U, Kia Ngawari

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The anonymity due to some who assisted in my research prevents me duly acknowledging them and others. The environment in which policy debate and discussion has been conducted continues to deteriorate as leaders subject themselves and their teams to increasingly draconian information controls in a futile pursuit of predicability. Therefore, I must respect the many trusts handed to me during the past 18 months and reserve my thanks to those who passed on their knowledge of events and perceptive interpretations. The hospitality and courtesy afforded me will be an enduring memory.

Finally, to my wife Donna whom I love dearly and who kept us and our three children Michaela, James and Anastasia all together throughout the period. While but a token return on her love, friendship and support, I dedicate this work, as my best, to her.

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## FOREWORD

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The seeds of this work were planted in a small briefing room at Royal New Zealand Air Force Base Ohakea in mid-1998. On the first Friday of most months some of the finest people you could ever work with would assemble to hear a representative from one of the local units deliver an address on anything from systems engineering to South Pacific post-colonial unrest. On this day I offered some thoughts on how the Royal New Zealand Air Force might seek to maintain or improve its air combat capability in the medium-term. The demise of the venerable Skyhawk was imminent, more so than most realised or would admit. Indeed, simultaneously a Ministry of Defence sponsored team was considering an option to lease F-16 fighters from the United States Air Force.

A complex web of factors was already impinging on the likely success or failure of this venture. The years since have seen an intriguing interplay of strategic shifts, fiscal realities, personal agendas, private courage and cowardice alike, all playing out against a background characterised by sometimes public-spirited involvement, sometimes disillusioned withdrawal, as well as every state of political arousal in between those extremes.



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## GLOSSARY

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ADF	Australian Defence Force
ADO	Australian Defence Organisation
CCT	Community Consultation Team
CAS	Chief of Air Staff
CDF	Chief of the Defence Force
CGS	Chief of General Staff
CNS	Chief of Naval Staff
CSP	Contractor Support Program
DA96	Defence Assessment 1996, New Zealand
DCP	Defence Consultation Program, Australia
DOD	Department of Defence, Australia
DRP	Defence Reform Program
FADTSC	Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee
KPI	Key Performance Indicators
MOD	Ministry of Defence, New Zealand
NSCC	National Security Committee of Cabinet, Australia
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RNZN	Royal New Zealand Navy
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force
RSL	Returned & Services League of Australia
RNZRSA	Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association
SES	Senior Executive Service, Australian Public Service
TQM	Total Quality Management

SONZDEF97    The Shape of New Zealand's Defence, 1997 White Paper  
VCDF            Vice Chief of the Defence Force  
WPCG           White Paper Consultative Group



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## INTRODUCTION

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In the decade since the end of the Cold War, both the Australian and New Zealand Governments have gradually revisited and revised their security policies. Recent rounds of policy-making, including the 2000 Defence White Paper in Australia and the New Zealand Framework for Defence Policy, stand among numerous reviews of strategy and governance, all of which have sought to reconcile increasingly strained budgets with increasingly uncertain demands. Community opinion on policy options was canvassed and capability plans framed mindful of a need for resilience against the shock of inevitable future change. These policies have set the stage for the next era of our armed forces' history.

How is this relevant to future challenges? Retrenchment, downsizing and re-alignment may or may not continue at the same rate or to the same scale but there is no doubt that the need to manage change to best effect will endure. Therefore, we may not learn nearly so much from what was done as from how it was done. Governments are complex decision-making bodies facing complex circumstances. Open, honest and balanced criticism of their performance is one key to refining processes and promoting better performance in the future. Good business in defence and government leads to good outcomes, value, relevance and confidence in the eyes of the community.

The first question then is what benchmarks are to be used to value the processes? The term public policy is loaded with meaning. Public ownership, as distinct from mere acceptance or agreement, distinguishes public policy from elite agenda, according it legitimacy. Transparent development, discussion, acceptance and implementation are what make policies public. Public policy processes must therefore reflect democratic principles held dear by the polity. Security policy is no exception.

Processes must support the public interest, which is itself elusive and may be in doubt. The norms and institutions of democratic practice and supporting processes are continuously evolving. Practicality, expediency or opportunity may be as much the enemies of democratic innovation as its catalysts. Clearly it is difficult to choose an appropriate general measure for the policy process since democracy itself, be it classical or more modern, remains a worthy but elusive and contested ideal.

Conformity to current practice is an insufficient measure as it does not inform much on progress and denies the intrinsic evolutionary reality of participatory political systems in progressive and liberal societies. Value is more useful if assessed in terms of what ought to be rather than what simply is. Democratic practice has evolved over the ages: it should and indeed will inevitably evolve as societies continue to change. Nevertheless, fundamental principles of democracy as locally interpreted and expressed will be useful. Therefore, it will be necessary to construct a framework that incorporates such variables.

Comparison across political systems and societies is a complex problem. Variance in the principles of democratic practice can be shown to have generally comparable effects across political systems. For example, a politically appointed judiciary, regardless of its locations, is more susceptible to political influence on its rulings.

Often issues are not so comparable. Weighting the relative importance of democratic principles as variables is difficult, since the combined effects of their interactions may represent convergence or divergence from the central tenets of democratic theory and practice. For example, referenda might determine opinion on isolated issues and promote participation but, as the source of binding resolutions, struggle to provide enduring resolutions to diverse and conflicting interests. Such resolution requires the expert balance of priorities characteristic of a bureaucracy. A bureaucracy's worth is its potential to demystify the complexities of issues. What is a desirable practice or method at one level of governance may be inappropriate at another. What is expedient for governors and leaders may alienate those being governed and led. Within the same political system the level of disclosure appropriate in developing welfare policies may be inappropriate in the consideration of security issues. Despite their similarities, Australia and New Zealand are sufficiently different for similar factors to have disparate effects. Whether working across institutions, issues, actors, processes or states, it is not easy to normalise the influence of context.

If, as in our case, one is considering a single aspect of public policy, there is promise in introducing a second dependent variable. Ideally this variable would be peculiar to defence and security and be consistently defined across the two cultures. The analyst must be careful to determine the useful limit of application, accepting constraints no matter how narrowly focused the analysis therefore becomes. Military professionalism as a concept fits these criteria.

Military professionals are critical to any democratic process concerned with security. At the policy level, professionalism can and should be further refined as influencing the performance of senior military officers and officials who interact with other government agencies. It is characterised by fearlessness and impartiality in the provision of advice, knowledge of implications at all levels of force or influence application, and the training and power to implement its effects and live with its consequences if required. Defence policy-making considers and often directs the armed forces' mission.

Democracy and the military professional are therefore subjects and objects of each other. Security for Australia and New Zealand implies the defence of the democratic system, not the sole province of the armed forces but one in which those forces and their leaders have key roles. Roles for the military professional in defence policy-making in particular and the security apparatus in general must be coherent and consistent with the society, system of government and way of life being secured.

My purpose in this paper is to investigate that professional aspect of the armed forces and society relationship. I will assess two case studies of recent policy-making, exploring their use of democracy and their impact on the democratic process and the profession of arms. I expect therefore to interest all those concerned with maintenance of secure civil society. This includes all military professionals, whether they are at the policy-making core or at the peripheral but active 'sharp' end of defence, interested in

better understanding their duty. Obviously, as far as analysis of examples can be generalised, this paper should usefully prime for duty those transferring between those two spheres by exposing the issues typically in question in a modern democracy.

The first case study is the process of consultation that supported the publication of *Defence 2000*, the White Paper published by the Liberal-National Coalition Government of Australia in November 2000. *Defence 2000* set a new precedent for public consultation and its outcomes were perhaps as remarkably conservative as the New Zealand experience was radical.

The New Zealand consultation was the process that supported publication of the *Defence Beyond 2000 Report* of the New Zealand Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee in 1998. This involved extensive consultation with experts and other voters alike and was eventually declared as the basis for defence policy by the Labour-Alliance Coalition Government elected in November 1999. Its outcomes include perhaps the most fundamental revision of New Zealand's security focus and military capabilities seen since World War II.

The precursors, contexts, actors and outcomes of the respective processes comprise an interesting melange of comparison and contrast which, although complex, is ripe ground for speculation on motive, method and underlying cultural definition. Before that analysis is possible the two environments must be adequately brought into focus.

First it will be necessary to discuss the nature of democracy in Australia and New Zealand. This will suggest what would have been likely or acceptable in terms of process and outcomes in either case. Assuming that either political system is more likely to be evolving towards rather than matching a form that perfectly suits the needs and wants of respective societies, the current state of democratic theory and ideals will also be summarised. This will establish in the unconscious a kind of watch over the democratic desirability of the policy processes under consideration, defining in the process the legitimacy of determining happenings or actions to be democratically positive or democratically negative.

Next the nature of military professionalism will be explored, drawing largely on international sources, which are of limited but also crucial importance to the antipodean experience. These writings tend to express and explore the values and norms of armed forces and society relationships ancestral to our own. Some of this literature focuses on the question of civilian supremacy. While an historical curiosity, the isolated and relatively trivial aberrations of this principle in Australia and New Zealand are almost irrelevant. Therefore, as long as ripple effects of policy throughout society and lower levels of the armed forces are recognised, our analysis can be constrained further. Attention can be focused on the civil-military interface at national government level; that is, the realm of the strategists, analysts, commanders and leaders of the armed forces, the defence departments, the legislatures, the judiciaries and the executives.

This paper will focus on how military professional advice rated against public opinion as a source of policy. Any deviations from traditional processes and practices and their implications will be explored. The result should be not a classic study of elite and popular values and norms, but an investigation of the assumptions surrounding the nature of the military professional as a representative—broadly defined—of

society. Conclusions should highlight the risks and opportunities inherent in maintaining and developing future Australian and New Zealand civil-military relations.

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# CHAPTER 1

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## DEMOCRACY

### A CONTESTED CONCEPT

#### Fundamentals of democracy

Lincoln's famous 'government of the people by the people for the people' is a common and useful starting point for any explanation of democracy.<sup>1</sup> It clearly states the enduring classical democratic principles of governance, participation and pursuit of the common good. At a deeper level, however, and especially when taken out of its American Civil War and slave emancipation context, the phrase raises as many questions as it provides answers. For example, who are the people; how much, if at all do they want or need to be governed; and as individuals is one or the other more or less worthy to seek or receive favour?

These questions introduce variety and divergence as hallmarks of democratic theory and practice. At its contemporary worst democracy 'provides a misleading gloss for practices that scarcely deserve the name'.<sup>2</sup> It is not that diversity in practice is a problem in itself, but rather that the freedom of interpretation of democracy's fundamental principles is sometimes taken to extremes. That said, the ideal is highly valued and requires great effort and attention. Democracy's value is its contribution as a system to achieving peaceful resolution of individual or group interests that at times may conflict.

#### Actors, ideas and institutions – a framework

A good appreciation of a democratic process does not require that diversity and variety be resolved. A particular body politic will view happenings and actions as positive, negative or neutral according to prevailing circumstances, and therefore any value attached to a particular end may be peculiar to context. However, any measure of hope and faith in human affairs implies a belief that the ways and means of process are also important—if not vital—to the progression or regression of the society concerned. Therefore, a useful framework for assessing such change needs not only to consider content but also the process by which democracy is defined and used. Actors, their ideas and their institutions, comprise a useful framework for understanding the processes of a highly variable and debatable concept.

Prominent actors in a political system bring ideas to bear on contemporary issues. They draw support by communicating or at least being identified with those ideas, convincing the individuals or groups in their power base that their interpretation and

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<sup>1</sup> United States Library of Congress, *The Gettysburg Address: Transcript of the 'Nicolay Draft'*, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/gatr1.html>, accessed on 14 August 2001.

<sup>2</sup> Ian Shapiro and Casiano Hacker-Cordón (eds.), *Democracy's Value*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999, p. 1.

plan of action is best. Consistency of approach is a useful trait: enduring ideas will address persistent needs. So long as people get sick they will seek and value medicine in pursuit of the ideal of perfect health. If established institutions continue to reflect valued ideas, pursue relevant ideals and deliver required services they will receive support. General support for political institutions is perhaps overstating the reality: toleration of their necessity may be closer to the truth. Nevertheless, the conduct of human political affairs is dependent on a continuous interaction of actors, espousing ideas, both enabled and constrained by institutions, pursuing outcomes which in the case of a democracy are loosely defined as being in the public interest.

### **The way to a separation of powers**

The organisation of political institutions in a democracy has one central tenet, that power is best divided and shared. ‘All power tends to corrupt; absolute power corrupts absolutely’ presents the cynical view that human frailty will prefer influence independent of authority and legitimacy.<sup>3</sup> This design principle permeates all Westminster-type arrangements. The three estates of the legislature, the executive and the judiciary are common and provide a useful model for dividing the power to enact, use and interpret laws. These institutions of democracy are often judged by how well they reconcile the need to govern effectively against the need to provide adequate space for resolution of contentious issues, a balance that reflects the anti-authoritarian democratic premise.

The different characteristics of law-making and governance in Australia and New Zealand illustrate both the force and limitations of interpreting democracies in terms of institutions. Australia has a bicameral federal legislature that gives the executive limited but often decisive powers, divided between Commonwealth and States on mainly functional lines. This compares with New Zealand’s single parliamentary house and an executive whose power to legislate by regulation and at speed earned the title ‘The Fastest Law in the West’.<sup>4</sup> Such a title is perhaps less deserved since the change to proportional representation.<sup>5</sup> Both countries enact vast volumes of legislation; this apparent faith in law also is evident in the United States and the United Kingdom.<sup>6</sup> Such institutional parallels can be drawn but personalities seem at least as influential in determining how those institutions will be employed.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Acton, *Letter to Bishop Creighton*, 1887; Baron Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws*, Hafner Press, New York, 1949, p. 152, cited in Chandran Kukathas, David W. Lovell and William Maley, *The Theory of Politics: An Australian Perspective*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1990, p. 46, has this to say, ‘there is no liberty, if the judicial power be not separated from the legislative and the executive’.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey Palmer, *Unbridled Power: An Interpretation of New Zealand’s Constitution and Government*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1987, pp. 139–61.

<sup>5</sup> Geoffrey Palmer, *Bridled Power: New Zealand Government Under MMP*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 1997.

<sup>6</sup> Palmer, *Unbridled Power*, pp. 139–40.

<sup>7</sup> For example, Jonathan Boston and John Uhr compare the Hawke and Keating Cabinets in ‘Reshaping the Mechanics of Government’, in Francis Castles, Rolf Gerritsen and Jack Vowles (eds.), *The Great Experiment: Labour Parties and Public Policy Transformation in Australia and New Zealand*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1996, p. 55.

## Actors with choices

Separating the actor from the institution tends to cloud rather than clear the picture of what goes on in politics, but it does provide a useful counterpoint of motivation and constraint. Actors do make a difference with their choices. A Member of Parliament must reconcile their duty to represent constituents with the need to maintain party affiliations. The former requires a listening ear while the latter demands loyalty to an agenda, especially if large majorities limit the effect of independent dissent or issue allegiance. True democracy depends on how key actors exercise limited choice to act through mutually supporting institutions in the practice of governance.<sup>8</sup> Democracy, as a choice, is a contested but worthy ideal.

Democratic actors are disciplined by regular elections, which allay fears of absolutism. Here, and sometimes nowhere else, the people exercise their choice by voting representatives in and out of positions of power. In a minimalist sense power is dispersed, at least temporally. Such minimal participation may be rudimentary but it is decisive nonetheless. It may not be consensus but neither is it mayhem, and has never yet failed to enable a peaceful transition of political power in Australia and New Zealand.<sup>9</sup> Ballots may be paper stones but they are worth valuing.<sup>10</sup>

Emphasis on the political agent can be over-emphasised. The performance of political and bureaucratic actors in a democratic process is not a means to their own welfare but to the welfare of electors: the principals who are the source of legitimacy. Practicality demands that as communities grow or aggregate the wishes of many are best articulated by a few. Representative government is the result that approximates to the direct democratic ideal. Both models share a philosophy of majority rule,<sup>11</sup> the former burdened with structural limits on access between electors and representatives.

## Who are the elites?

The argument for a separation and specialisation of roles is as old as human interaction itself. Without his remarkable ability to argue, Socrates would not have been noticed let alone notorious: prospective philosopher kings were nothing if not talented. Either as social conscience or ruler, recognised human talent is set apart from the mass to be exploited for the greater good. Mill argued that while elected officials could effectively control and criticise the use of political power, the actual conduct of affairs required the ‘acquired knowledge and practised intelligence of a specially trained and experienced few’.<sup>12</sup> Here he loosely defines both the executive and the bureaucracy as one, which in the Australian and New Zealand cases are easily distinguished.

<sup>8</sup> Geoffrey Brennan and Alan Hamlin in *Democratic Devices and Desires*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2000, p. 157, state that ‘the basic issue of democratic politics is seen to be the design of institutional arrangements so that political agents, with their own identifiable interests, can be induced to act in the interests of their principals, the citizenry at large’.

<sup>9</sup> Adam Przeworski, ‘Minimalist Conception of Democracy: A Defence’, in Shapiro and Hacker-Cordón, *Democracy’s Value*, p. 49.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, citing Frederick Engels.

<sup>11</sup> Philip Green (ed.), *Democracy as a Contested Idea*, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1993, p. 4.

<sup>12</sup> John Stuart Mill, *Consideration on Representative Government*, Everyman’s Library, New York 1951, Chapter 5, cited in Green, *Democracy as a Contested Idea*, p. 56.

Cabinet ministers are selected from among higher-ranking and especially talented members of the majority parties. They are a distinguishable entity that nonetheless relies on connections to the legislature, in particular their representation of a majority of members.<sup>13</sup> At least in theory they act constitutionally at the pleasure of both the Crown and Parliament.<sup>14</sup> While they receive and may rely on advice, final judgment is theirs and hence they are solely responsible for outcomes. This arrangement is another manifestation of the compromise between affording sufficient power for individuals to take decisions and govern effectively, while still reserving ultimate veto for the electorate.

Ministers control bureaucrats who provide expert advice, and then administer and implement decisions once taken. The phenomenon of a bureaucracy is ancient while the particular characteristics of the public service in Australia and New Zealand are a consequence of 19<sup>th</sup> Century British experience.<sup>15</sup> The bureaucracy includes the hierarchical administrative staffs directly under ministers and also all other public bodies accorded statutory discretion.<sup>16</sup>

Control of policy is one ingredient of a representative's power. The compilation, weighting and presentation of policy advice to a Minister are typically conducted in private. Information access may be protected by general legislation or be a matter of convention. Both situations are typically open to various interpretations, the latter perhaps more so. An effective opposition will seek to have issues debated in public but limits on their sources of information typically promote a negative policy contest lacking in detail on alternatives. Transparency, accountability and responsibility in democratic government compete with the tendency to disperse the control of policy detail among the bureaucracy.

### **The means to institutional power**

State size and public attitude to politics seem to influence the balance of resources allocated to the legislature in general as opposed to the executive in particular, and therefore contribute to the balance of debate. Funding public institutions and activity is always a matter of choice but popular Australian and New Zealand attitudes constrain rather than encourage.<sup>17</sup> Views on public spending tend to favour parsimony at the expense of an investment culture. Government activity and politics are seen as necessary evils before being admitted as public goods.

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<sup>13</sup> Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Fontana, London, 1963 (1867), pp. 65–6, cited in Kukathas, Lovell and Maley, *The Theory of Politics*, p. 149.

<sup>14</sup> Sir Samuel Griffith, *Official Record of the Proceedings and Debates of the National Australasian Convention*, Acting Government Printer, Sydney, 1891, p. 371, cited in Kukathas, Lovell and Maley, *The Theory of Politics*, p. 147.

<sup>15</sup> See L.J. Hume, *Bentham and Bureaucracy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1981; and Henry Parris, *Constitutional Bureaucracy: The Development of British Central Administration Since the Eighteenth Century*, Allen & Unwin, London, 1969.

<sup>16</sup> Max Weber, *Economy and Society: an Outline of Interpretative Sociology*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1978, Vol. I, pp. 220–223. Also Martin Albrow, *Bureaucracy*, Macmillan, London, 1970, pp. 16–8.

<sup>17</sup> See Rodney Smith, *Australian Political Culture*, Longman, 2001, pp. 22–45, for a discussion of Australian civic culture. Bruce Jesson, 'To Build a Nation', pp. 3–13, and Barry Gustafson, 'Rebuilding Civil Society', pp. 25–34, in Raymond Miller (ed.), *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 2001, describe contemporary problems in New Zealand civil society from different points on the politico-ideological spectrum.

Politics is a means to an end: democratic institutions, traditions and associated civic capacities are less materially valued and so receive little special treatment over other important government services. As an example, New Zealand finds itself unable to fund the level of parliamentary and independent research services available to the Federal Parliament in Australia, while a scale of activity in proportion to the United States big government concept would seem unattainable in the face of Australian taxpayer scepticism. Varying ideologies and fiscal attitudes ensure that the size of governments does change, with pain and gain of expansions and contractions in service provision and delivery tending to be shared across portfolios.

### **Autocracy in new garb?**

This situation undersells the importance of political process and power. The close tie between advice and political decisions raises one of the most vexing questions of modern democracy: who controls the agenda? Public officials striving to act in the public interest might be challenged as to how that interest was determined. On this point there is little agreement and a vigorous debate. Elitists and populists occupy the extreme positions while more pragmatically-minded theorists search for a consensus position at the expense of simplicity and general application. Should the tendency of power to accumulate in the elite be accepted as a physical reality and necessity,<sup>18</sup> or should the effects of the tendency be offset by ‘civilising’ their behaviour?<sup>19</sup> Is a more inclusive model preferable where ‘adequate’ and equal opportunities exist to express preferences and set the agenda,<sup>20</sup> or do participation and representation require a fundamental redefinition if democracy is to be ‘retrieved’?<sup>21</sup>

The elite versus popular argument regarding sources of opinion, information and advice is one of many issues associated with the more general principles of contestability and opposition fundamental to a democratic process. Another is the question of whether publicly provided or privately purchased advice is valid or appropriate. These questions assume rational actors have some measure of self or sub-group interest and motivation that can conflict with wider group commitments or responsibilities.

### **The worth of pluralism**

The value of argument for its own sake is as vital a question as the identities and motives of the protagonists. Regardless of the arguers’ identities and allegiances, their activities are vital to any semblance of debate and choice in politics. Institutions and associated conventions tend to suit compliance, continuity and even apathy. Any idea worth pursuing or statute in place should be resilient to criticism, even if the only value in consideration and discussion is the chance to consider undesirable consequences before accepting them. But the mere discussion of an idea does not justify the answer. Dissent is a valid endeavour and one that requires sponsorship and

<sup>18</sup> Michael J. Crozier, Samuel P. Huntington and Joji Watanuki, *The Crisis of Democracy: Report on the Governability of Democracies to the Trilateral Commission*, New York University Press, New York, 1975, pp. 112–5.

<sup>19</sup> Kukathas, Lovell and Maley, *The Theory of Politics*, p. 24, argue that attempts to dis-empower elites are self-defeating.

<sup>20</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Democracy and Its Critics*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1989, pp. 108–14.

<sup>21</sup> Philip Green, *Retrieving Democracy*, Rowman and Allanheld, New Jersey, 1985, pp. 176–99, cited in Philip Green (ed.), *Democracy as a Contested Idea*, pp. 257–68.

support. Policy should be durable but the influence of context requires that revisions remain a possibility in the longer term. A balance of healthy self-doubt and inquiry is necessary, not for the sake of adversarial self-satisfaction but so that progress is not stifled.

### **Behaviours in balance**

So democracy is both simple and complex. It can be expressed as one word or defined by volumes, but for our purposes is perhaps best viewed as a matter of principles or behaviours in balance. Democracy is as dynamic across different contexts as it must be in one particular context across the passage of time. It is a personal experience that is dependent on its own institutions but driven by individual choices, especially as responses to changing circumstances. What is there in recent Australian and New Zealand experience that might colour or shape the type of politics undertaken and, within the ideals, modify their democratic processes?

## **CHANGES IN THE ENVIRONMENT**

### **The mechanisms of political response**

Regardless of the actual extent of societal change over the past decade there seems to have been at least enough disruption to stress the political process. There is no shortage of literature describing the contemporary era as one of rapid change and uncertainty. Some commentators go so far as describing the current age as a point of inflection, culmination or reversal in the course of human history.<sup>22</sup> Amongst the noise of apocalyptic and millennial ideas some plausible theories of social and economic crisis or change have emerged. These seem of sufficient magnitude to suggest the balance of behaviours described as the democratic process might be tested and perhaps disturbed.

Changes in the social and economic environment of a human political grouping will typically require a response by those sub-groups and individuals charged with the power to act. In Australia and New Zealand this includes the leading lights of the major political parties plus certain key players in smaller parties who either provide the numbers for a workable coalition or hold the balance of power for a parliamentary majority. These individuals as a collective and supported by their key opinion-forming sources are rightly followed as the centre stage of politics in both countries.<sup>23</sup>

They lead the state, an abstract entity encompassing all organisations and institutions reliant on power traded by the governed in exchange for protection from the governors.<sup>24</sup> Put in modern terms, the state's power base is anchored in cash gained by

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<sup>22</sup> Examples include Martin van Creveld, *The Rise and Decline of the State*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999; Alvin Toffler, *The Third Wave*, Morrow, New York, 1980; Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man*, Penguin, London, 1992; and Samuel Huntington, *The Clash of Civilisations and the Remaking of World Order*, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1996.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth McLeay, 'Cabinet', in Miller, *New Zealand Government and Politics*, p. 105; and Graham Maddox, *Australian Democracy in Theory and Practice*, Longman, Melbourne, 1996, p. 211.

<sup>24</sup> John McCarthy, *The Nation State*, lecture, RAAF Staff College, Canberra, February 2000.

taxation. This allows the state to do things which the ancient state, powered by the military muscle of a feudal lord and paying largely in a currency of violence, neither could nor would have ever dreamed.

Political leaders wield tax as the power tool of modern social contract. Hence the primary enabling objective of today's state leaders must be to protect the tax base. It is unlikely that any incoming government will even momentarily be satisfied with a given profile of fiscal distribution and expenditure. A steady or improved supply of funds will allow them to pursue their agenda for change without unduly affecting continuity of current services.

A state's tax base determines the scale and scope of its activities. Commercial activity is of particular importance in so far as levies are imposed on this activity and its attendant cash and capital flows. The importance of this economic view of the state must not be overestimated at the expense of the people doing the producing and the consuming. In all but the most basic provisions of food, water and shelter a community exercises discretion in what it pursues as valuable. There is much more—and much less—to life than money. Government revenue is not the purpose of the state in itself but its supply does suggest, enable and constrain what a state can and should do.

### **Living with competition**

Does humankind recognise a common end that transcends the universal constraints of commercial means? Despite some agreement on the need for environmentally responsible behaviour, ethical science, social equality and universal justice as keys to harmony in the biosphere, there exists no agreed plan of human action. Individual and group entities rather than global governors act in spheres defined in terms of species, races, religions, cultures or nationality, while their actions often impact on a planetary scale. Real or imagined competitive destinies and internal interests rather than a shared vision of collective progress seem to drive human actions and trends. Indeed, even a common view on a definition of progress is difficult to identify let alone seek. An imperfect world stands as stark witness to seemingly imperfect prescriptions for motivation, judgment and resolution of material inequities and other sources of conflict.<sup>25</sup> The prevailing human political paradigm, at all levels, is overwhelmingly Darwinian.

Various political models exist to manage this competition for resources, influence and survival. Governments in general exist as complex decision-making bodies responsible for determining and acting on priorities. These priorities will both reflect and influence public attention and investment. A concentration or rash of changes in environment, whether perceived or real, may promote changes not only in the range of responses exercised by a governing body, but also the process by which those responses are framed and actioned.

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<sup>25</sup> Pope Paul VI, *Populorum Progressio: Encyclical on the Development of Peoples*, The Holy See, 26 March 1967; and *Charter of the United Nations*, United Nations Conference on International Organization, 26 June 1945, Group of Eight Nations Heads of State and Government, *Genoa Summit 2001: Communique*, 22 July 2001, [http://www.g8italia.it/\\_en/docs/XGKPT170.htm](http://www.g8italia.it/_en/docs/XGKPT170.htm), accessed on 16 January 2002.

## State activity in Australia and New Zealand

There have been significant but not drastic changes in the demographic and cultural make-up of Australian and New Zealand society, and despite some minor perturbations these trends seem fairly stable.<sup>26</sup> The majority of the population are Anglo-Saxon and English speaking, with significant European and Asian cultural and lingual minorities. There are a variety of opinions on the future Australian and New Zealand populations and demographics in general. Because of the theoretical economics often quoted to support various models of controlling population size and make-up, both these issues remain contested rather than agreed.

The state has shrunk in Australia and New Zealand. Despite the impetus that spectacular failures of deregulation<sup>27</sup> have given to a 'Third Way'<sup>28</sup> of government involvement in the provision of services, the means to be involved remain limited. Adopting public choice theory from the early 1980s has been largely a matter of fiscal prudence. Australians and New Zealanders still sit 'on the sheep's back' but have had their eyes opened to a general and ongoing decline in their terms of trade and relative standards of living,<sup>29</sup> current low exchange rates and higher world commodity prices notwithstanding.<sup>30</sup> The antipodean state remains responsible for a range of activities, but now must purchase many of the necessary goods and services at arm's length on a global market from a smaller pool of revenue.

While a case can be made for a reduction in the fiscal means available to governments, the question of public policy ends is more complex. It is standard for both Australian and New Zealand analysts to assess standards of public service delivery relative to friendly, allied, culturally similar and historically tied sister states. Foremost in this list are the United States and the United Kingdom. The differing egalitarian and social democratic values of even these two examples highlight some problems of an otherwise useful practice. The core areas of security, law and order, health, education and welfare are the bread and butter of comparative public policy analysis and first world—that is Anglo-European plus Japanese—standards are the most common yardsticks for domestic performance.

National perceptions of appropriate welfare and education standards seem fairly constant and governments of all persuasions pursue essentially re-distributive policies. Likewise, change in civil and criminal codes has been incremental rather than revolutionary. Public health and security are areas where, over the past generation, well-publicised scientific advances and ingenious biological and technological

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<sup>26</sup> Adam Jamrovik, Cathy Boland, Robert Urquhart, *Social Change and Cultural Transformation in Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, p. 211.

<sup>27</sup> Rising prices in the New Zealand electrical power market during 1999 and the Ansett collapse in the Australian airline industry in 2000 were interesting illustrations of the vulnerability of basic infrastructure and services to market forces.

<sup>28</sup> Anthony Giddens, *Social Change in Britain: Inequality and Social Democracy*, 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Economic and Social Research Council Lecture, 21 October 1999, <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrclecture10/socialchange.html>, accessed on 15 January 2002.

<sup>29</sup> United Nations Development Programme, 'Human Development Indicators: the Structure of Trade', in *Human Development Report 2001*, <http://www.undp.org/hdr2001/back.pdf>, p. 186, accessed on 16 January 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Helen Clark, *Catching the Knowledge Wave*, Conference Opening Speech, University of Auckland, 1 August 2001, <http://www.executive.govt.nz/speech.cfm?speechrph=35547&SR=1>, accessed on 16 January 2002.

applications have opened a gap between the capabilities available and those actually delivered as public services. Questions of need such as whether people are more or less healthy or more or less secure are much more difficult to answer.

### **The politics of egalitarianism and homogeneity**

There is relatively little impetus for significant political polarisation in Australia and New Zealand. Relative cultural homogeneity and peace promote political differences of degree rather than kind. Neither Australia or New Zealand experienced intra-colonial wars or violent quests for liberation. National psyches have generally not been framed within the same resource and land shortage context characteristic of the northern hemisphere. The large scale military means required for international material plunder have never been mobilised other than for wars that were essentially defensive. As much as absolutism and sectarian turmoil were scorned by European and New World constitutionalists, so urban poverty and slavery were rejected during the settlement and constitutional development of the Australian and New Zealand nations.<sup>31</sup> At least since its inception, antipodean political process has been called not so much to defend domestic freedom, human rights and equality so much as resolve differences on the relatively banal issues of routine resource allocation and annual public spending.

Trade, commerce and their orderly conduct as well as the regulation or otherwise of its adverse effects have always preoccupied the Australian and New Zealand political processes. Compared to the Westminster and Washington systems ours were imported in a fairly mature state, or contrived in relative enlightenment as to effects and outcomes. Particular conflicts of interest were simply not present or were nowhere near as prevalent as in the religious, cultural and lingual melanges that were the United States and the United Kingdom of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> Centuries. Once the future of federalism/provincialism had been decided, the tendencies for groups and individuals to polarise in the quest for power lacked some drivers that were seminal milestones in the establishment of other national identities and state-based loyalties. The political agenda born of these circumstances is therefore relatively simple and consequently peaceful and stable.

Political culture in Australia and New Zealand was born with a mistrust of tendencies towards economic and social stratification that persists to this day. The quirks of fate and circumstance that had separated waged labour from 'squatter gentry' were so much more obvious in the new colonies than in the established social hierarchies of Europe. Political debate revolves around the apparently simple issues of ensuring 'a fair go' for all, although a definition of this phrase is far from universally accepted. One might see oneself as entitled and indeed duty bound to receive an equal share of gain and pain, or destined for surrender to the influence of life's stimulants and punishments. A more individualistic stance might interpret 'equal' in terms of the chance to occupy the positions that set and enforce the rules of the productive and distributive game. Read differently, 'a fair go' can simultaneously define the most ardent social democrat and his or her liberal antithesis.

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<sup>31</sup> Keith Sinclair, *A History of New Zealand*, Penguin, Harmondsworth, 1984, pp. 50–69.

## Modern political economy

Coupling the continuing reality of Australia and New Zealand as small domestic and international trade-dependent economies with the fact of recent fiscal policy preoccupation makes a strong case for an economically biased view of political history. The fiscal preoccupation of policy processes is no more clearly highlighted than in the experience of the current generation. A general decline in the terms of trade of the Australian and New Zealand economies compared to their major trading partners has occupied minds on both sides of the Tasman. While stopping short of the extreme view of some that democracy is capitalism, frameworks to promote large scale and deep changes in the nature of the productive sector continue to be key policy pillars for parties across the spectrum.<sup>32</sup> Modernising the productive sector to maintain or improve relative position among developing countries is a legitimate and real concern of Australians and New Zealanders.<sup>33</sup>

Despite the potential problems of economies heavily dependent on primary export industries being long identified, neither a command economy nor the laissez faire approach seems to have succeeded in fundamentally altering the primary focus of production. If possible, domestic economies seem to have become even more susceptible to the progress of global commodity and financial markets. The oil shock and hyper-inflation of the early 1970s were at least as devastating to domestic economies 'down under' as to those of other developed nations.

These points may have contributed to or even accelerated the decline of public confidence in politicians,<sup>34</sup> held responsible for seemingly untameable economic conditions and therefore personal and community fortunes. In an era of democratised information and globalised markets, satisfying better informed public expectations of performance and proving actual points of difference in economic management have become extremely difficult.<sup>35</sup> On the one hand a globalised economy has encouraged conformity rather than diversity in economic policy, while any number of comparisons and/or dissenting views are freely available that criticise the relative merits of one state's performance versus another.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>32</sup> In recent times the intent of major parties has seldom deviated from the generally accepted and orthodox formula of moving towards a macro-economic model where manufacturing and service industries contribute a greater proportion of Gross Domestic Product. The 'Think Big', 'Clever Country', 'Smart Society' and 'Knowledge Nation' labels attached to various strategic economic and social plans in Australia and New Zealand reflect this mindset.

<sup>33</sup> Helen Clark, *Catching the Knowledge Wave*; and Chifley Research Centre, *Report of the Knowledge Nation Task Force*, Chifley Research Centre, Canberra, July 2001, [http://www.alp.org.au/kn/kntreport\\_index.html/](http://www.alp.org.au/kn/kntreport_index.html/), accessed on 16 January 2002.

<sup>34</sup> Everett C. Ladd and Karlyn H. Bowman, *What's Wrong: A Survey of American Satisfaction and Complaint*, The AEI Press, Washington DC, 1998; and Peter D. Hart and Robert M. Teeter, 'Attitudes Towards Government', Research Project Findings, Council for Excellence in Government, <http://www.excelgov.org/publication/poll97/hart.htm>, accessed on 16 January 2002.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas L. Friedman, *The Lexus and the Olive Tree*, Harper Collins, London, 1999, discusses these themes.

<sup>36</sup> *ibid.*

## IMPLICATIONS FOR PUBLIC POLICY

### Fiscal reductionism

Intellectual surrender to the mystery and mayhem of the international market, whether it be in actual policy process or even in public and elite attitudes, allows a simplistic reductionism to cloud what might otherwise be complex political debates. If issues of choice and discretion in social and cultural policy are framed in economic terms they may be situated in a realm of relative uncertainty, and therefore all hard questions can be answered with reference to the current level of fiscal rectitude. In a way this explains the relative success of public choice theory in antipodean political economy. Under conditions of declining purchasing power, and therefore relative standards of living, the national interest with reference to state activities has been relatively easy to define: less public spending is good, more spending is bad.<sup>37</sup>

Such reductionism might also discourage public involvement as electors who otherwise would have high levels of interest are discouraged—by the apparent economic complexity attached to many if not all non-economic issues—from participation other than as vote casters. If the means to provide a government service are not available then constructive debate on what might be done in a better fiscal climate will seem nugatory. Certainly there would be less motivation to investigate, discuss, plan and pursue something that has been deemed at variance with the national interest in reducing public debt. The outcome would certainly be an ‘innovation-hostile’ if not a nationally depressing public policy environment.

### Losing sight of the big picture

This might have significant implications for a bureaucracy such as the public service. Policy initiatives would be debased if the desirability of efficiency in the provision of public services was overstated to mean the retreat of government and the public service from providing those services without due regard to attendant effects and risk mitigation against the inevitable unintended consequences. It is hardly natural for a service-oriented class, trade or profession to manage itself out of business. Operating in a contracting environment where tighter scrutiny and resource reductions are the means to limiting or reducing total public outlays, bureaucratic departments might be motivated to focusing on securing budget shares, perhaps at the expense of a whole of government approach to serving the national interest.

Electors for their part might be more prepared—through disinterest, confusion or frustration—to give representatives more freedom to formulate policies in relative isolation. A reduction in general public involvement and interest would also permit the development and promotion of more extreme positions, although the rise of private agendas would require strong individual or interest group motive. Otherwise, assuming the ongoing health of our civic institutions, the civic attitudes on which they depend and a continued supply of adroit practitioners of the political art, the enduring political appeal of economic management as a primary political agenda would perpetuate a history of relative political stability.

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<sup>37</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997.

Control over whom receives what, where and when is not the only factor that guarantees economic policy its centrality on any political agenda. The uncertainty of economic policy and its effects recommends it to political actors in a pluralist society. Politicians are tasked with resolving priorities of want and need, inevitably favouring some over others who must peacefully accept, consciously or unconsciously, and surrender that advantage in the name of stability. Hence politics can become the art of ambiguity and durable politicians its masters.<sup>38</sup> So the prevalence of fiscal agendas in politics, as well as being a matter of management necessity, is assisted by a structural symbiosis.

### **The fall and rise of ‘secondary’ issues**

Fiscal policy continues to provide suitable fodder for ruling groups undivided by ingrained differences. Parties can frame economic policy that varies little from the contemporary orthodoxy. This focus permits limited experimentation, avoids the high costs of structural change in the economy, the tax base and wider society, and bypasses or minimises the apparent importance of other more contentious issues. All this maximises the chance of some workable consensus.

But politics is not just about money. Important and sensitive questions about race relations, immigration and domestic and international security all enjoy their time in the sun. These more contestable, emotive and therefore debatable issues can be pursued when time and circumstances allow, often as distractions, relatively free from the cyclical necessities of annual budgeting. Their attendant issues can be moved on and off the political agenda and therefore become wider points of difference subsidiary to common economic approaches. They might become electoral pivots in their own right. Indeed, where the economic agendas of opposing major representative bodies such as parties or federations are difficult to distinguish, it is quite likely that these subsidiary issues may be elevated in importance and become crucial to electoral performance. The elevation of certain issues on to the public agenda may be also in the interests of actors seeking alternatives to justify their existence or advance their profile. Regardless of the relevance of ‘secondary’ versus ‘primary’ economic issues, the position, role and power of those controlling the issue agenda in the current environment deserve close attention.

### **Summary**

In summary, domestic social conditions, cultural status and productive patterns coupled with external market and technological influences will continue to see economic factors remain the primary business of government and a key political concern.

This is far from saying that they will dominate the political agenda. Politics is inevitable and will find an outlet come what may. Perhaps crucial to the overall public policy environment is the distribution of information power, or in other words the democratisation of information that signals at least the potential for greater involvement in politics and the democratic process. It can be argued that the availability of information will reinforce expectations of both involvement in and

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<sup>38</sup> Hugh Smith, *Ethics and the Military Profession*, lecture, R-1 Theatre, Russell Offices, Department of Defence, Canberra, 30 August 2001.

returns from political involvement. While economic agendas have a basic and enduring appeal to both electors and representatives in Australia and New Zealand, it is possible that these higher expectations may be channelled into debates on other issues where the potential to make a difference seems more promising.



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## CHAPTER 2

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# AUSTRALIA'S AND NEW ZEALAND'S MILITARY PROFESSIONS

## WHY ARE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND MILITARIES DIFFERENT?

### The relevance of mainstream theory

Societies are interested in protecting their security. The current global system of powers sees separate state entities acting to preserve sovereignty, that is, their right and ability to act and rule internally and interact externally. A shared historical experience and sociological perspective in Australia and New Zealand give rise to a consensus that in exercising that sovereignty international conflict is possible. The contemporary shared wisdom on the risk, frequency and complexity of likely tasks required in such conflict has led both states to raise and maintain military forces. These armed forces are designated as the practitioners of any violence required to support domestic or international security.

Formal designation as a sub-group, including role differentiation and skill specialisation, is a function of the peculiarity of the art and science of war.<sup>1</sup> Autonomous organisations are both a consequence and a necessity of democratic process. Their existence presents a fundamental dilemma: what are the appropriate levels of autonomy and control?<sup>2</sup> More specific to military organisations: where is the balance of raising and sustaining a military that is strong enough to defend but will not threaten a society?<sup>3</sup> Strength may be a relevant cause but is certainly not sufficient. The answer is more often found in the complex web of culture, tradition, statute, norm and convention that is fundamental in any society.

Australian and New Zealand legal frameworks manage the same tension as other modern societies that legitimise violence, categorise its agents and invest in them the means to enact violence while preserving its control in the hands of others, namely the elected civil government. Old aristocracies combined these functions but in modern times the nation has replaced the dynasty as the object of military loyalty.<sup>4</sup> A means exists to ensure that the fair measure of power attached to holding guns is not used to resist legitimate civilian control. Military officers swear allegiance and command is vested in the Governor General as viceroy. Military activity is legitimate from the

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<sup>1</sup> Peter D. Feaver, 'The Civil-Military Problematique: Huntington, Janowitz, and the Question of Civilian Control', in *Armed Forces and Society*, Vol. 23, No. 2, Winter 1996, pp. 149–151.

<sup>2</sup> Robert A. Dahl, *Dilemmas of Pluralist Democracy: Autonomy vs. Control*, Yale University Press, New Haven, 1982, p. 1.

<sup>3</sup> Feaver, 'The Civil-Military Problematique', p. 150.

<sup>4</sup> S.E. Finer, *The Man on Horseback: The Role of the Military in Politics*, Frederick A. Praeger, New York, 1962, p. 207.

state's perspective when it is commanded by the Sovereign's representative, according to the advice of Ministers of the Crown, themselves chosen from amongst representatives duly elected by the people.<sup>5</sup> The military officer routinely answers to the government of the day, which in turn is motivated and bound by its electoral responsibility to represent the will of the people.

This control rather than compliance model of civil-military interface alludes to historical baggage more relevant to our political and military antecedents than to Australia and New Zealand. We have comparatively little history of militarily backed autocracies. The wars of our states' formative years were relatively limited and did not support the continuance of a distinct or enduring warrior class. In contrast with say British forces, where aristocracy has slowly yielded to technical prowess as a qualification for advancement, Australian and New Zealand armed forces developed their forces in the late 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> Centuries from relative obscurity. Development of the armed forces often faced hostility to their apparent reflection of the trappings of empire.

Despite commonality with Britain in force structures, operational procedures and organisational culture,<sup>6</sup> the persistent military model is more post-colonial and akin to the American experience. Even the defining moments of early nationhood such as the Boer, Gallipoli and Western Front campaigns are remembered more for the citizen-soldier personalities, the seemingly pointless losses and an anti-establishment and brashly democratic brand of digger militarism.<sup>7</sup> National and empire/alliance securities were almost coincidental. Reconciling this choice with divergent and persistent social perspectives raised an inevitable point of societal resistance.<sup>8</sup> Even if Australian and New Zealand social structure did reflect the armed forces rank structure, which it didn't, anti-autocratic sentiment would probably still have been the defining limitation on antipodean militarism.

### **The military's role in Australian and New Zealand government**

Without a present and enduring threat and a revolution in the relative share of respective national budgets allocated to defence investment, it is likely that neither Australian nor New Zealand armed forces will be accorded greater prerogatives in government.<sup>9</sup> The New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) and the New Zealand Ministry of Defence (MOD) are more junior as players in the New Zealand bureaucracy than the Australian Department of Defence (DOD) is in Canberra,<sup>10</sup> but

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<sup>5</sup> Verona Burgess, 'Salvos Fired at Labor's PS Policy', and Dr Allan Hawke, 'Defence Personnel Responsible to the Minister: Hawke', in *The Canberra Sunday Times*, 1 April 2001, p. 23, analyse constitutional and titular aspects of the Governor General's role vis-a-vis the ADF.

<sup>6</sup> Cathy Downes, 'Australia and New Zealand: Contingent and Concordant Militaries', in Charles C. Moskos, John Allen Williams and David R. Segal, *The Postmodern Military: Armed Forces After the Cold War*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2000, p. 184.

<sup>7</sup> Russel Ward, *A Nation For a Continent: The History of Australia, 1901-1975*, Heinemann, Richmond, 1977, pp. 86-104.

<sup>8</sup> For example, *ibid.*, p. 113 discusses social divisions in the World War I conscription debate.

<sup>9</sup> This linkage of threat and military prerogative is discussed in Alfred Stepan, *Re-thinking Military Politics: Brazil and the Southern Cone*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1988.

<sup>10</sup> The New Zealand Cabinet Office publishes two lists: one of departments with 'broad horizontal responsibilities and issues on which they **must** be consulted' and one of 'departments and issues on which they **may** need to be consulted'. Optional consultation with MOD and NZDF, at least

in both states the military's role in government is necessarily limited to influence on issues of direct relevance to security.

This is not to say that their roles are trivial. State security may be a matter of national survival and the management of sanctioned violence is a core governmental function that can be ignored only at great peril. Threat environments may change rapidly; vulnerabilities would not be so if they were easy to remove or protect at short notice. Both external considerations and internal social, economic and political issues that contribute to an overall security posture and policy require constant reappraisal. Even if longer term, less likely but unacceptably risky national subjugation scenarios are excluded from the consideration of national security, the complex interactions of what might appear to be stable internal and external factors demand close and continuous attention.

An interesting Australia versus New Zealand contrast highlights another more pragmatic public policy argument for an attentive security policy. A bipartisan approach to defence has largely been sacrosanct in Australian politics since the end of the Vietnam War, whereas in New Zealand over the past generation positions have often polarised on party lines.<sup>11</sup> One hypothesis might be that the more geographically removed and apparently secure New Zealand public see defence as less pressing and therefore concern over policy changes and even experimentation are a low political risk. For example, debate over the nuclear warship ban after 1985 occupied the Labour left wing, permitting a factional compromise with the remarkably liberal economic reform agenda then being pursued. Perhaps since then, and proportional to reductions in government services and expenditure on areas deemed to be non-core, defence policy in New Zealand has offered a significant point of difference between parties. It has attracted a fairly consistent share of total government expenditure,<sup>12</sup> against a background of broadly indistinguishable economic agendas that have attracted little public debate.<sup>13</sup> Aside from the persistence of consensus, the public policy importance of defence in Australia is similar, but in this case probably more due to the public's inherent sense of insecurity.<sup>14</sup> Defence as public policy is, despite appearances, underestimated at the peril of incumbent governments.

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according to Cabinet protocols, could be seen as a measure of departmental and portfolio importance. See <http://www.dpmc.govt.nz/cabinet/guide/11.html#s2>, accessed on 25 July 2001.

<sup>11</sup> For example, the election of the 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Labour Governments in 1984 and 1999 saw radical changes to strategic and military procurement policies respectively.

<sup>12</sup> World Bank, *Defence Expenditures and Trade in Arms*, World Development Indicators Report, [http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2001/pdfs/tab5\\_7.pdf](http://www.worldbank.org/data/wdi2001/pdfs/tab5_7.pdf), accessed on 22 January 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Examples of this include the crucial role of David Lange's apparent non-consultation of Caucus colleagues on his Yale University speech proclaiming New Zealand's exit from ANZUS, a statement that can be argued to have been a major catalyst for Geoffrey Palmer's leadership challenge, Lange's entry to the political wilderness and the beginnings of Labour's eventual election defeat in 1990. More recently, Defence procurement programs, for example the F-16 fighter aircraft and LAV-3 armoured personnel carrier projects, have proved fertile ground for both major parties in opposition.

<sup>14</sup> Anthony Bergin and Hugh Smith, (eds.), 'The Public Perceptions of the Army', in David Horner (ed.), *Reshaping the Australian Army: Challenges for the 1990s*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, No. 77, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1991, p. 202. Also Alan Renouf, *The Frightened Country*, Macmillan, Melbourne, 1979.

### **A concordant and compliant military<sup>15</sup>**

It is difficult to see how this importance could be interpreted as threatening civil control. Despite military institutions having many strengths that might enable them to govern,<sup>16</sup> they also have weaknesses.<sup>17</sup> In any case they can not rise to prevail over civil government where the extant political formula is generally accepted, the authority of the constitution and its components are recognised as authoritative, and civic culture—that is, public involvement and attachment to civic institutions—is strong and widespread. Although this final point is arguable in Australia and New Zealand,<sup>18</sup> legitimacy remains paramount and unobtainable by the military separate from civil control. Therefore, any intervention by the military in government is limited to influence, either through normal constitutional channels or through collusion or competition with the civilian authorities.<sup>19</sup> The Australian and New Zealand political cultures are sufficiently mature for the extant civil government to stave off any military challenge to its supremacy<sup>20</sup> and neither state's armed forces pose serious threats to constitutional integrity.

Even though armed forces have been viewed more as necessary evils<sup>21</sup> than pillars of nationhood, the existence of full-time professional armed forces still presents the fundamental civil-military paradox; that institutions created for protection can themselves become objects of fear.<sup>22</sup> 'Fear' in our context might be better described as a challenge or inconvenience to orderly and uncontroversial processes of governance, rather than a genuine risk that the control of government might be wrestled from elected civilians.<sup>23</sup> This can be further narrowed to the military being—potentially—as much a barrier as an aid to policy-making, at least in the context of deliberate planning.<sup>24</sup>

## **TOWARDS AN ANTIPODEAN MODEL**

### **Where does the military sit in society?**

Even without the prospect of coup d'états the civil-military relationship faces a range of challenges. One way to approach the issues is a structural perspective that emphasises division of tasks. It is also useful to consider interests and how these will

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<sup>15</sup> Half of title borrowed from Downes, 'Australia and New Zealand: Contingent and Concordant Militaries'.

<sup>16</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, pp. 6–13.

<sup>17</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 14–22.

<sup>18</sup> See Smith, *Australian Political Culture*.

<sup>19</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, pp. 139–140.

<sup>20</sup> *ibid.*, pp. 87–8.

<sup>21</sup> Bergin and Smith (eds.), 'The Public Perceptions of the Army', pp. 206–7.

<sup>22</sup> Feaver, 'The Civil-Military Problematique'.

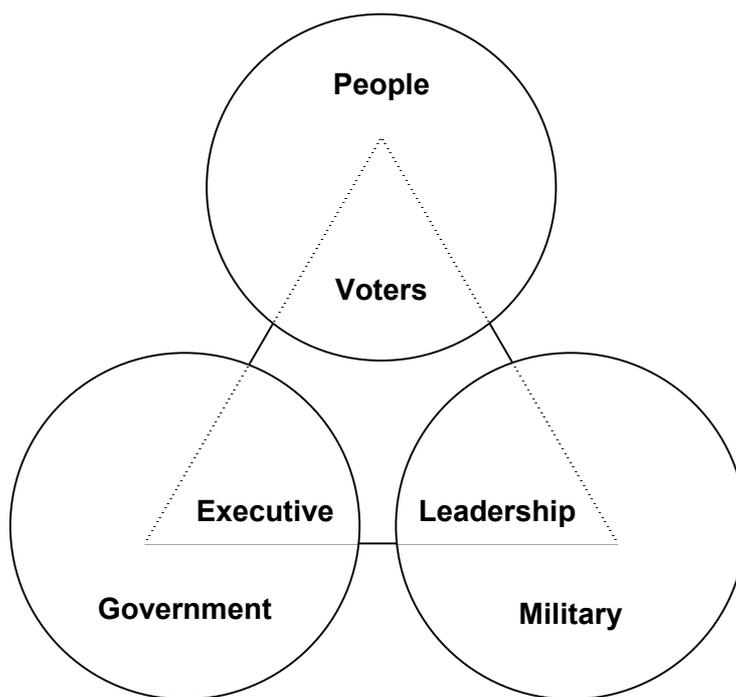
<sup>23</sup> Militarism in the 1890s, the New Guard in the 1930s and military relief from recurring waterfront, air transport and prison worker strikes throughout the 20<sup>th</sup> Century better fit this inconvenience definition than any crisis of control hypothesis.

<sup>24</sup> It can be argued that there is a certain willingness on the part of military forces to be employed, especially where risks are low. This might be the outcome where military forces seldom employ the skills they train so long and hard to obtain and maintain. For an example that illustrates the level of control the executive has over armed forces in this type of environment, even in areas where the law is unclear and maybe even deliberately being flouted, see David Marr, 'Outside the Law', in *The Sydney Morning Herald*, Weekend Edition, 15–16 September 2001, p. 51.

align or conflict. The values of each group involved will also be informative. First the range of actors must be clarified.

There is an ongoing temptation to generalise descriptions. Already we have found the simple civil government and military leadership dyad useful for determining supremacy. This balance is unreal as far as it minimises connections with the people, of whom the elites are a designated sub-group. They are people and they reflect the people's interests, hence any inter-elite conflict or common interest cannot be considered in isolation. Defence and security policy and operations may sometimes seem arcane but they certainly have a customer or client, and neither armed forces nor the executive, nor even Parliament by itself are that client.

A triangular relationship of politicians, military and bureaucrats does not do justice to the influence of the people or identify them with one, some or all of the elite groups in consideration.<sup>25</sup> Another model brings in the people but considers the military as a separate group.<sup>26</sup> For our purposes this framework is more suitable. Foci within those groups are the government executive, the military leadership and the voters. Figure 1 shows a realm of 'connected separation'. This construct reflects their connection as a society but also their separation when engaged in their defining and determining activities.



**Figure 1 – A Realm of 'Connected Separation'**

<sup>25</sup> Hugh Smith, *Political, Military, Bureaucratic Relations*, Lecture in Armed Forces and Society Course of Defence Studies Masters Program, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 2001.

<sup>26</sup> James Burk, 'The Logic of Crisis and Civil-Military Relations Theory: A Comment on Desch, Feaver, and Dauber', in *Armed Forces & Society: An Interdisciplinary Journal*, Spring 1998, Vol. 4, No. 3, pp. 389–446. See also Peter Karsten (ed.), *The Military-State-Society Symbiosis*, Garland, New York, 1998.

Australian and New Zealand history and culture dictates that the military is best described in the bureaucratic sphere, rather than within government.<sup>27</sup> The service they deliver has distinct characteristics but the similarities deserve first mention.

An obvious symmetry exists between this triad and our original democratic proposition: Lincoln's Gettysburg description.<sup>28</sup> There is an important distinction to be drawn, however, between the three components. One could consider the two prime actors to be government and voters. Similar conclusions would probably be drawn if voters were considered beneficiaries and governments the agents distributing public goods. The bureaucracy, however, is a unique type, not an actor so much as a trans-actor.

### **Bureaucratic 'trans-actions'**

The bureaucracy's duty is to both advise the executive and implement its instructions, a dipole often in tension but inefficient if allowed to be in competition. Advice may or may not carry the day in policy-making so the bureaucrat might say one thing and immediately be directed to do another. The advice and the action must not compromise each other as deliverables.

The basis for bureaucratic action is executive decision, constrained by the legislation passed by Parliament and clarified by the courts, in other words, the rule of law. The impact of personal belief should be limited to a bureaucrat's interpretation of the public interest. The bureaucratic output, regardless of the degree of agreement between advice provided and action directed, must be internally supportive, effective and efficient. Bureaucratic allegiance is elevated above the level of content; it values legitimacy of the process as the key to good outcomes.

In the purest sense the bureaucrat advises as the people and acts as the government, but this description disguises the inherent uncertainties of reality. For example, a choice exists whether or not to pre-filter advice, otherwise known as second-guessing the government, by excluding all options deemed to be outside the realms of political possibility. Such an act is difficult to condemn outright and is a poor measure of whether or not a public servant is acting apolitically as the Westminster model requires. Factors that should affect such a determination include the technical knowledge and appreciation gradient between the expert and the politician who has more general concerns. Time available and an assessment of importance relative to the overall ministerial workload should also be considered.<sup>29</sup> Even in this determination phase of our simplified 'advise-act' process the bureaucrat can be seen to be acting primarily for the people while keenly aware of the executive's needs.

Once decisions are made and policies are laid out the bureaucrat is responsible for acting in accordance with the executive's wishes, not forgetting of course that the process must return net benefit to the people. This obligation will be met primarily through the application of discretion in turning the inherent generalities of statute and regulations into the specifics of procedures, rulings, orders and instructions according to the inevitably variable needs of context. In this the bureaucrat will be assisted

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<sup>27</sup> Alan Hawke, Testimony to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, Consideration of Budget Estimates, Senate *Hansard*, FADTS 14–15, 4 June 2001, Canberra.

<sup>28</sup> See Chapter 1.

<sup>29</sup> New Zealand Government official, personal interview, 2001.

believing he knows, by familiarity, both the wish of the executive and the need of the people. Needs become ideas that become policy proposals and vice versa through the bureaucrat's activity. The bureaucracy acts between the two primary spheres in the political relationship, transacting across the boundary as provider, advocate, communicator and representative.

### **The advantages of permanence**

An apolitical bureaucracy is vital to the durability, validity and suitability of the variously styled Westminster systems that are Australian and New Zealand Governments. Although inheriting the ethos of their British antecedent, the antipodean bureaucracies were never royal courts, nor were its members courtiers. Their allegiance has always been more to the nation as a whole and the democratic process than to particular individuals, classes, parties or factions. Regular changes in government assist in maintaining political neutrality; it is unlikely that any government has outlived the average length of service of senior Australian and New Zealand public servants.<sup>30</sup>

Stability assists both the advice and act processes. The bureaucracy is bounded without being daunted, with great freedom to act in its advisory role. The bureaucrat brings diversity and energy to the policy debate since they are relatively insulated from the straightjacket of short-term political considerations. The benefit of permanence is an experiential wisdom that can minimise or eliminate the pursuit of 'red-herrings' and 'blind alleys'. As ultimate responsibility for outcomes rests with the Minister concerned, advice can be free, frank and fearless: what the Minister needs to know about an issue in pursuit of the public good rather than necessarily what he or she wants to know for political benefit or personal comfort.

The delivery of services can endure in the face of political change since the personnel, culture, processes and structures delivering services generally survive the change of government. Variable content of those services required by changing policies can be accommodated with minimal fuss.

Ministerial responsibility also contributes to controlling the scope of policy content. Normally a choice has to be made, and often in a limited time. Effective government as measured by a Minister in control of issues will be highly sensitive to the efficiency of policy processes. The net average differential between a senior bureaucrat's recommendations and Cabinet's decisions must be manageable. Portfolio performance, a Minister's standing and therefore a bureaucrat's credibility all depend on limited opportunities for policy consideration being concentrated on only the best proposals.

A bureaucracy cannot exist independently of an executive and the voters, but it can endure as executives change or rotate. It survives independently of what executive the voters choose. The dynamics of bureaucratic activity are controlled by behavioural norms. These norms are fostered by the same factor, tenure. Bureaucratic legitimacy is preserved so long as activity reflects the non-electable, partially responsible and therefore apolitical nature of its office. Normative compliance is firmly entrenched in

<sup>30</sup> Although at lower levels of administration this is far from certain. See Jenny A. Stewart, 'All's Not Well in New PS', in *The Canberra Times*, Panorama, 31 March 2001, p. 6.

the public service ethic and recognised as a vital component of good democracy. Any tendency for a bureaucracy to assume limited executive powers such as is being considered in Britain has not found favour, at least in Australia.<sup>31</sup>

### **Problems for an apolitical bureaucracy**

Normative compliance and control theories have their critics.<sup>32</sup> A bureaucracy can gain control of a government's agenda. The nature and extent of the power inherent in the ability and mandate to discard or include policy options questions electoral responsibility. Other concerns include whether bureaucratic preference for certain policy choices or lines of inquiry may unduly influence the balance of continuity and change: are bureaucracies inherently conservative? This limitation may be keenly felt around transfers of executive power. Paradoxically, the confidentiality required for effective bureaucracy also gives a non-confrontational public face to the policy process, which in turn is easy fodder for an opposition disposed to believing and/or proclaiming that bureaucratic activity has become politicised or is captive to an ideology.

Balancing all these potential disadvantages is the fact that the bureaucracy is less an independent actor than a trans-actor. This springs from the need of the executive to learn, articulate and meet the needs of the people amongst the complexity that is modern society. The autonomy of a bureaucracy and its prerogatives will either remain limited through its own actions or will periodically be reined in if activity or responsibility traits deviate outside strict bounds.

## **FROM BUREAUCRAT TO MILITARY PROFESSIONAL**

### **Task, interest and value variation**

Public servants, traditionally defined, do not have a monopoly on transactions. For example, private consultants deliver advice to government and services to the people, but they are detached from the Public Service by more than just name. Their interests vary and they apply their own cultural perspective to the task. Their primary reference for performance and therefore their focus of interest is their direct customer, the government. Their pursuit of the public interest is dependent on contract clarity as well as compliance. It is arguable whether private sector providers of public services can apply the same lens of disinterested interpretation, the same value of the enduring public good, to the problems and choices they face.

Like the private bureaucrat, the differences in the military's role in policy-making and implementation reflect the nature of its work, the culture that work requires and the interests that are thereby fostered. Historical precedent is powerful opposition to the labels 'bureaucrat' or 'public servant' sticking on the military profession, but they are indispensable to any task-based or ethical analysis. Calling military action 'service delivery' seems perverse, but perhaps a concentration on policy outside times of crisis will make it more palatable.

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<sup>31</sup> Max Moore-Wilton, Secretary of Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, "Max the Axe" Hacks into Political Staffers', in *The Canberra Times*, Vol. 75, No. 24, p. 1.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Robert A. Dahl, 'Who Governs?' in Philip Green (ed.), *Democracy as a Contested Idea*, Humanities Press, New Jersey, 1993.

### Why are military bureaucrats different?

The armed forces are simultaneously social pariahs and national treasures. They exist to pursue civilised ends through sanitised but fundamentally uncivilised means. Various representative and peculiar, laudable and detestable, they ride a seesaw of public appreciation and ridicule. National preferences one way or the other are evident,<sup>33</sup> as are trends to identify with popularly held images of certain military categories. Diggers get the guernseys while 'brass hats' sit next to their political companions facing the trigger-happy firing squad of public scorn.<sup>34</sup> So long as the icon has a personal face it tends to be worshipped, but cloud its image with the fog of the establishment or its processes and it becomes an easy target of criticism.

Both ethic and station tend to silence the military professional. The military bureaucrat cannot defend their case publicly any more than the civilian public servant. Further, their own—and very necessary—'discipline, obedience, self-abnegation, poverty, patriotism and the like'<sup>35</sup> support an ethic of confidentiality. Muzzled externally, the military has a pressing vested interest in being heard by policy-makers. The nature of their work and their obligations to subordinates provide the military professional with an irresistible urge and duty to petition to the powerful.

### Why autonomy?

Admirals, generals and air marshals carry a grave responsibility for the life and welfare of their subordinates. Service members serve on oath or affirmation at the pleasure of Her Majesty, trusting in the same paternal protection that gives them lawful responsibility, whether directly ordered or discretionary, to conduct acts of violence on behalf of the state. Commanders must be satisfied that their people are only subjected to operations, tactics, rules of engagement and orders for opening fire that the state can and will defend as legitimate and authorised.

Service in the armed forces is a high and demanding calling, demanding in the extreme that 'last full measure of devotion',<sup>36</sup> increasingly in situations where the costs of its refusal are high and the return on its offering may not be obvious. 'Uncertain' and 'unanticipated' seem to have joined 'dirty' as job descriptors most likely to guarantee the armed forces being employed. The hard yards are made at the front line, often by individuals far removed from the centres of power and influence where crucial decisions are made. However, experience in combat or operations of similar risk are seldom forgotten with age or experience and the concerns of the troops tend to remain the concerns of the general.

Responsibility for advice on aspects of the operational art and science is the role of the military professional officer. Just as no plan survives the first engagement, or out

<sup>33</sup> Hugh Smith, *Public Perceptions of the Military*, Lecture in Armed Forces and Society Course of Defence Studies Masters Program, Australian Defence Force Academy, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 2001.

<sup>34</sup> Jane Ross, *The Myth of the Digger*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1984, p. 13, cited in Jeffrey Grey, 'The Historical Development of the Military Profession', in Hugh Smith (ed.), *The Military Profession in Australia*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, University College, The University of New South Wales, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1988.

<sup>35</sup> Finer, *The Man on Horseback*, p. 10.

<sup>36</sup> United States Library of Congress, *The Gettysburg Address: Transcript of the 'Nicolay Draft'*, <http://www.loc.gov/exhibits/gadd/gatr1.html>, accessed on 14 August 2001.

of four options an enemy will take option five, the vital tension between a reviewable political end-state and a flexible battle plan must not be severed.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, practitioners of war are interested in freedom of action, much more so during operations than during initial determination of political end-states and campaign plans.

That said, a clear objective—and only that—will enable the necessary cost and benefit calculations. Once an objective is defined the military strategist will pit their *coeur d'oeil* against the uncertainty, chaos, friction, danger and fog of war. Once war is unleashed the flexibility to act in response to the fluid situation is a powerful tool that helps maximise the chance of victory, and therefore is a vital ingredient in the legitimacy of the decision to coerce and fight at all. As the fog of war thickens, so the balance of interpretative power and legitimacy can shift away from the civil master. This is not a change from civilian control but a change in the ingredients that influence the control decision, and therefore a shift in the location of the decision-making centre of gravity. Therefore, the practitioners must have professional autonomy that can be exploited when required.

A degree of separation and autonomy gives the military its institutional flavour. Separate legal and ethical codes; specific personal selection, appraisal and advancement models; hierarchical management structures; diverse and sometimes unexpected international associations and other apparent idiosyncrasies will persist so long as nation states are the legitimate international actors and civil society is worth defining. This separation must be tempered with the need to maintain legitimacy, both in the eyes of the people and their government.<sup>38</sup> So long as armed forces revel in splendid autonomy rather than isolation, their professionalism will be a hallmark of viability for their directed roles and tasks.

### **A few good (wo)men**

This reality reflects an enduring paradox of the military profession. The military possess most of the hallmarks of a profession<sup>39</sup> but in purely democratic and indeed civilised paradigms it is condemned to outside control by its own destructive force and moral ambiguity. The people afford or allow professional autonomy based on the potential for good and harm plus the knowledge of experience. The military scores low on the latter two of these three criteria, but wartime government arrangements

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<sup>37</sup> For an interesting comparison between two alternative views on this issue, see General Sir John Winthrop Hackett, 'The Military in the Service of the State', Harmon Memorial Lecture 1970, in Lieutenant Colonel Harry R. Borowski, USAF (ed.), *The Harmon Memorial Lectures in Military History, 1959–1987*, Office of Air Force History, Washington DC, 1988, pp. 512–3. Hackett distinguishes between the American and British way of war, the former seeking victory by crushing weight followed by a return to peace with relief while the latter is more Clausewitzian, where war is much more subordinated to the political aim. His contention is that in grand strategy purely military aims do not exist. One must win the peace, and unconditional surrender is not a war aim but acknowledgment of a lack of aim.

<sup>38</sup> The most famous arguments on this issue are presented in Samuel Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Vintage Books, New York, 1957; Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait*, Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1960; and Sam Sarkesian, *Beyond the Battlefield*, Pergamon Press, New York, 1980, especially p. 257. Sarkesian proposes an equilibrium model of civil-military relations that rejects separate sub-systems in society and emphasises societal links and reflections as integral to legitimacy and credibility.

<sup>39</sup> For useful papers on this subject see Smith (ed.), *The Military Profession in Australia*.

and the remarkable recovery of military kudos since the Vietnam War have shown that perceptions can be fluid. Overall the military profession has lagged the pack in developing and fostering its professional autonomy. A positive consequence may be that, compared to say a medical profession seemingly allowing ethical vacuums in the face of bio-technical advances, the military profession better remembers the high costs of being identified as anti-social and shunned or marginalised by mainstream society.

Retrospection, scholarship and continuous improvement are key values for the military professional. The competitive and potentially fatal nature of combat and its means prove a strong motivator, as should any political end worthy of the huge and often non-renewable resources committed to military operations. The zeal, confidence and passion of the warfighter do feature in bureaucratic policy processes, but are often interpreted by the unfamiliar as intransigence, recalcitrance or, at worst, blind ignorance. The antithesis of this behavioural model might be impotent pygmies who, having lost sight of even the most important objectives, become locked in a quasi-hypnotic loop of 'super activity', in the process raising the cost of the simplest operation through complication, eventually rendering impotent the familiar mode of command.<sup>40</sup> Somewhere in between lies the ideal type who can represent their tribe, learn the political compromise implicit in defending their nation, and yet avoid the mind-numbing 'learned helplessness' that can characterise bureaucratic process.<sup>41</sup>

This demands a willingness to understand what society expects of the military. These expectations might be summarised as operational competence, both in the narrow military and broader strategic sense; sound advice and teamed support to elected leaders; statecraft but not partisan politics; and finally, social responsibility.<sup>42</sup> 'When we assumed the soldier, we did not lay aside the citizen.'<sup>43</sup> The ideal soldier is still of the people.

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<sup>40</sup> George S. Odiorne, 'The Military as a Bureaucracy: The Super Activity Trap', in Franklin D. Margiotta, (ed.), *The Changing World of the American Military*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1987, pp. 293–301.

<sup>41</sup> Allan Hawke, *What's the Matter: A Due Diligence Report* Address to the Defence Watch Seminar, The National Press Club, Canberra, 17 February 2000.

<sup>42</sup> Gregory D. Foster, 'Civil-military Gap: What are the Ethics?' in *Proceedings*, United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, Vol. 126, Issue 4, April 2000, pp. 82–6.

<sup>43</sup> George Washington, cited in *ibid*.



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## CHAPTER 3

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# AUSTRALIA'S DEFENCE 2000 CONSULTATIONS

### THE OPENING CONTEXT

#### Desperately seeking certainty

The second half of the 1990s saw Australian governments attempting to meet the uncertain environment with usable and enduring foreign and defence policies. Vigorous international military engagement and tactical flexibility continued to ensure that fielded systems, including some with equipment set for 20–50 year-in-service life spans, retained high utility across the foreseeable range of military and civil support tasks. Changes, and more particularly reductions, to force structures, equipment and doctrine might have seemed appropriate but evidence for idealist versus the extant realist strategic interpretation was insufficient to justify the high costs, both in utility and display, of significant change. However, despite Defence avoiding otherwise universal budget cuts in 1996–97,<sup>1</sup> a range of factors was accelerating a backward slide in Australian Defence Force (ADF) capability.<sup>2</sup>

Australia's interests and intentions had been categorically defined.<sup>3</sup> The tone was realist, the focus economic and the method bilateral within a wider international agenda.<sup>4</sup> As a key player in that scenario the ADF seemed increasingly hard-pressed to meet the explicit and implicit commitments that seemed likely. Funding may have been the solution but electoral considerations made that seem unlikely.<sup>5</sup> There might have seemed an increasing risk that this inconsistency would force an embarrassing diffidence or perhaps even facilitate major policy reversal or failure.

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<sup>1</sup> Jenelle Bonnor, *The Politics of Defence in Australia*, Working Paper No. 68, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2001, p. 15.

<sup>2</sup> Derek Woolner, *Pressures on Defence Policy: the Defence Budget Crisis*, Research Paper 20, 1999–2000, Parliament of Australia, 11 April 2000, <http://www.aph.gov.au/library/pubs/rp/1999-2000/2000rp20.htm>, accessed on 28 April 2000.

<sup>3</sup> Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *In the National Interest: Australia's Foreign and Trade Policy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997; and Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, Department of Defence, Canberra 1997.

<sup>4</sup> Russell Trood, 'Perspectives on Australian Foreign Policy – 1997', in *Australian Journal for International Affairs*, Vol. 52, No. 2, 1998, p. 190.

<sup>5</sup> Ian McAllister and Toni Makkai, 'Changing Australian Opinion on Defence: Trends, Patterns and Explanations', p. 221; Peter Jennings, 'Declining Public Support for Defence Spending', *Newsletter of the Directorate of Army Research and Analysis*, Issue No. 1, February 1995; Frank Small and Associates, *Community Commitment to Australia's Defence: A Social Research Presentation Report*, March 1997, p. 26.

## Opportunity

The deteriorating security situation in East Timor during 1999 was a material concern with opportunities for intervention that were entirely consistent with the broad strategic approach and totally desirable given the circumstances. The Prime Minister, as Chair of the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC),<sup>6</sup> was satisfied that the ADF was prepared and able to complete a timely intervention and humanitarian operation.<sup>7</sup> The operation had a moral imperative and widespread public support. What was a potential catastrophe now became an opportunity to shape the regional security environment, in particular the relationship with Indonesia.

On a list of potential military options for an engaged foreign policy, humanitarian relief in East Timor would not have come top for difficulty, but its conduct proved the complexity and cost of military operations to the NSCC. Short-term provision for payment was achieved through recourse to a special purpose levy.<sup>8</sup> The bar had been set for longer-term Defence costs so the problem became to identify a source of funds. Public debate on the Coalition Government's Tax Reform package had so far concentrated on the 'yes' or 'no' question, with discussions on the revenue windfall receiving much less attention. Expectations on funding reallocations were under-developed. The likely timeframe of two events, Tax Reform and Defence Review, presented an opportunity.

## Who dares wins

Means is one issue, motive is another. Policy proposals for a Defence spending increase had been years in the making but were not guaranteed a priority hearing.<sup>9</sup> Prime Minister Howard has been credited with the decision to quarantine the Defence budget,<sup>10</sup> which, given the fiscal constraints, stimulated widespread debate in public

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<sup>6</sup> Established in 1996 by the incoming Liberal National Coalition Government with a stated aim 'to act as the focal point of decision-making on national security', in 'Australia's Defence: Liberal and National Parties' Policy – 1996', 1996 Coalition Election Defence Policy Paper, p. 5, cited in Bonnor, *The Politics of Defence in Australia*, p. 14.

<sup>7</sup> John Howard, *East Timor*, Motions to the House of Representatives, The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, *Hansard*, 21 September 1999.

<sup>8</sup> The arrangements by which a subsidy on Medicare levies was used to fund the weapons buy-back scheme in the aftermath of the Port Arthur massacre was reapplied to partially offset the costs of the East Timor operation, see The Parliament of the Commonwealth of Australia, House of Representatives, *Medicare Levy Amendment (Defence East Timor Levy) Bill 2000*, Explanatory Memorandum.

<sup>9</sup> Senate *Hansard*, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, Defence Sub-Committee, 'Level of Funding for Defence', Canberra, 31 October 1997, shows that Vice Admiral C.A. Barrie, Vice Chief of the Defence Force; Mr Hugh White, Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence; and Mr Robert Tonkin, Deputy Secretary Corporate, were afforded by members a generally sympathetic hearing when they testified on the funding problems facing defence. Discussion included a search for a funding level that would make a significant difference. Also in Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, specific reference is made to how rising costs will mean either fewer capabilities or increased funding. This position is restated in Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000: Our Future Defence Force: A Public Discussion Paper*, Department of Defence, Canberra, June 2000, pp. 55–6, by which time it was obviously no longer just the wish of Defence but a favoured option for the incumbent government.

<sup>10</sup> John Howard, 'Australia's Defence Policy', Address to the Victorian Branch of the Australian Defence Association, 5 October 1995, cited in Bonnor, 'The Politics of Defence in Australia', p. 15. Also Senate *Hansard*, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade,

and parliamentary arenas. His particular interest in the portfolio seems to reflect the mix of traditional values embodied in his view of Defence personnel, an appreciation of the importance of Defence to the nation, and the freedom from the fiscal rectitude of his past political offices.<sup>11</sup> Allies to his view appear to have been Defence Minister Moore, with his obvious ownership and familiarity, and perhaps more importantly Foreign Minister Downer. If Foreign and Defence policies were coherent<sup>12</sup> the former certainly took a hammering when a generation of appeasement seem to be exposed as fruitless and almost complicit in the ethnic conflict and state-sponsored violence erupting less than a day's steaming from Darwin. The way forward for diplomacy, at least with Indonesia, would from then on swing on the positive outcome of the military face-off. This defining moment<sup>13</sup> in Australian foreign policy had cleared the ground for Downer's greatest challenge and rescued his portfolio from a plague of moral and rational ambiguities.<sup>14</sup>

Ranged in opposition was the now typical swathe of economic rationale. At stake were the next election's war chest, an unknown; bargaining power with State Governments, most if not all of which would be Labor; and the ongoing, sterile public debt-repayment agenda. As long as a public consensus could be maintained, internal opposition to some quite compelling reasoning and examples was looking increasingly futile. Appearing 'mean and tricky' or remotely ungrateful to the 'Digger General'<sup>15</sup> would clearly be 'un-Australian' and probably amount to an affront on the Prime Minister, a slur on public opinion and would present abundant ammunition to an otherwise compliant Opposition front bench.<sup>16</sup>

### **The executive and the people**

There were at least two examples of public consultation on Defence policy that were relevant and useful. The United Kingdom Ministry of Defence conducted a Strategic Defence Review in 1997. This review sought to consult widely with both experts and the wider public within some pre-determined policy parameters so that 'conclusions [would be] formed and tested in a wider forum ... no-one [was] not given the

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Defence Sub-Committee, *Level of Funding for Defence*, Canberra, 31 October 1997, FADT 215, comments by Chairman Senator MacGibbon.

<sup>11</sup> Both John Howard's father and grandfather served in the same battalion in World War I. The year prior to the 2001 election campaign was characterised by generous spending promises by the incumbent government. The impact on 'the Treasurer's' surplus mirrored the experience of John Howard under Bill Hayden in 1982 prior to Bob Hawke's victory.

<sup>12</sup> *In the National Interest* and *Australia's Strategic Policy*, were written in tandem and were intended to stand together as mutually supporting policies.

<sup>13</sup> The Secretary of Defence Allan Hawke supported this assessment in 'Defence – The State of the Nation', address to United Services Institute at the Australian Defence College, 2 February 2000.

<sup>14</sup> Alexander Downer, cited in Hawke, 'Defence – The State of the Nation', said of East Timor that it has 'stood in the way of establishing a genuine long term and productive relationship between Australia and Indonesia'. Proof of this 'can be found in the widespread view in Australia that we could only promote Indonesian ties at the expense of dropping East Timorese issues—that we had to ignore East Timor despite continuing human rights concerns, Australia's historical ties with the island, and its close geographic proximity'.

<sup>15</sup> The hero of East Timor, Lieutenant General Peter Cosgrove, who at that time was the military member most commonly identified in the 'public mind'.

<sup>16</sup> Leader of the Opposition Kim Beazley vigorously avoided a party division on defence and security issues.

opportunity to have their say.<sup>17</sup> Amongst the turmoil that was New Zealand's re-positioning in the 1980s, a Committee of Enquiry published a discussion paper, took written submissions, held public hearings, polled public attitudes and published what became known as the Corner Report.<sup>18</sup> Consultation on defence policy in Australia was novel and the opportunity for participation would be viewed as significant in itself. It was unlikely that challenges regarding best practice or consensus on the method of consultation would demean the government's offer of wider involvement. Even just these two isolated examples showed there was considerable room for manoeuvre and ambiguity, that lifeline to any politician. Public consultation did not imply surrendering the initiative in public policy.

### **The executive and the bureaucracy/profession**

Given the nature of some of the questions posed in the Green Paper, elements in the military bureaucracy might not have been so confident of a favourable outcome.<sup>19</sup> It can not be determined how serious some of these questions were taken, and in any case there was full internal consultation on the architecture of the process. The White Paper Consultative Group (WPCG), comprised of Senior Executive Service (SES) representatives from all NSCC departments, considered all material prior to it reaching the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCNS) and the NSCC. Defence bureaucrats had some precedents on which to reflect when forming a view. These included a genuinely interested executive with whom it had lost some credibility over management. Lumping governance and procurement failure together may have cost the process some internal credibility but the sacking of the previous Secretary of Defence in late 1998 grabbed the attention of all.<sup>20</sup> In agreement or opposition, Defence leaders seemed to face a choice to roll with the tide or drown.

### **The profession and the people**

That said, one would have to ask why the military would not seek to milk the climate of apparent public euphoria, confidence and interest for all they were worth. The array of eminent persons, focus groups, public meetings and media exposure would have been viewed as positive and a perfect counterpoint to the satisfaction and exposure guaranteed by the East Timor operation. Some fears of the public consultation were mitigated right from the start for those prepared to listen. The Community Consultation Team (CCT) was there to 'listen to and report the views of the Australian public ... not make policy recommendations to the Government'.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>17</sup> United Kingdom Ministry of Defence, *The Strategic Defence Review Process*, <http://www.mod.uk/issues/sdr/process.htm>, accessed on 16 January 2002.

<sup>18</sup> New Zealand Government, *The Defence Question: a Discussion Paper*, Committee of Enquiry on the Future of New Zealand Strategic and Security Policies, Government Printer, 1985; and *New Zealand Government, Defence and Security: What New Zealanders Want*, Report of the Defence Committee of Enquiry, Government Printer, Wellington, July 1986.

<sup>19</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 58, listed possible capability choices, some of which, if taken, would mean drastic changes for one or all of the Services.

<sup>20</sup> Secretary Barratt was dismissed in late 1998, apparently over acquisition program delays, the most public of which was the Collins Class submarine project.

<sup>21</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 64.

## Issues within each sphere

Internally, the executive had proved its ability to lead and manage effectively through the NSCC. The bureaucracy had seen many White Papers and a greater number of organisational shake-ups, but this iteration had the makings of disturbance to the public policy process, probably due to its novelty. That said, there were some able strategy and public policy specialists at the helm.<sup>22</sup> Speculation regarding the people is far more difficult but perhaps the peculiarities of Defence's elevated position on the public policy agenda and demonstrated commitment to debate by the Government might have been grounds for confidence that participation would be a useful endeavour.

## Summary

The White Paper process in Australia was an executive and bureaucratic initiative which sought to capitalise on an apparent opportunity to satisfy shared needs. Success would depend on the content of the discussion and any resulting negotiations, compromises and resolutions.

The process was deliberate and—initially—controllable. The primary means of controlling the discussion was through the terms of reference, and later through setting the standards of argument. This control would inevitably feed back into the content of discussion, perhaps acting as an undesirable constraint. Conversely, constraints on debate could be its greatest attribute; perhaps enabling a reasoned position to be reached and a useful contribution made to an identifiable outcome.

Content must be bounded but these same terms of reference applied can prescribe the meaning of the content, while the standards of argument applied will certainly do so. Therefore, such questions as timing, framing of questions, venues and methods of analysis are important when valuing the process itself and the roles of particular players. They will help in judging the policy-making role of the military professional within the bureaucracy in particular and society in general. Hence we are returned to the question of managing the agenda of public policy to support outcomes suited to the contemporary timeframe and environment.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Method

The Green Paper and its supporting video spelt out the agenda for the public consultation.<sup>23</sup> Great leaps were made through vital ideological, social, moral and historical questions. Issues such as the cost, benefit and commonsense of war, or even the legitimacy of offensive or defensive international coercion were not considered. The terms of reference for *Defence 2000* were immediately narrow, positing the reader in a bald and realist perspective. Little quarter was given to establishing an inclusive comfort zone. Deterministic doctrines of economic interdependence and the common stability equals security equals prosperity equals goodness nexus, played out

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<sup>22</sup> Including Senior Executive Service officers Hugh White and Peter Jennings.

<sup>23</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*.

in detail in the Government's previous foreign policy and defence statements,<sup>24</sup> were noted as assumptions. Avoiding these arguments was a vital first step in constraining the debate to a discussion of this Government's and not someone else's policy.

This cursory brush over moot points would have had readers, and watchers of the associated video, either drawn into, left somewhere close by, or well-removed from the declared model of the international system and military environment. Immediate reactions would have been a varying level of association and identification with the ADF and Australian foreign policy in general. This presentation of how things were, with little reference to how they might or ought to be, laid the ground work for the subsequent foray into the decision calculus that is contemporary capability-based planning.

Exclusion of a more idealistic perspective reflected the origins of the process, both in bureaucratic culture and executive values. It is too much to say that exclusion was inconsistent with the stated aim of 'being more open',<sup>25</sup> since this openness was clearly and categorically defined to apply to defence force method rather than justification. Armed forces as a general response were assumed. This was to be a familiarisation visit into the minds of politicians and bureaucrats faced with public policy choices limited by strategies which gained in simplicity and communion what they lacked in rigour.

## Result

Assuming a start to finish progression through the issues as presented, one can imagine the public audience dividing into two broad categories of respondent-type, those who cared and those who did not. The distinction is between those who don't and those who do continue and respond, whether that response be conscious or unconscious, private or public, and therefore which members of the public could be said to have been influenced by the White Paper process. For those who don't care the policy engagement is likely to have been over quickly.

Among the interested there could be three groups: those who care, know and agree; those who care, know and disagree; and those who care and don't know. The essence of 'knowing' in this context would imply a measure of understanding of the issues and an ability to follow the argument as presented in the Green Paper. Agreement or otherwise could concern the underlying assumptions, logic or conclusions of the argument. It is interesting to examine how each of these representative audiences might respond to the method presented in the Green Paper.

What seems to be a fairly calm walk through the rationale of various key choices facing Australia probably splits these groups into those allied and those opposed. The common syntax of the discussion document in this section is to describe an environment or situation; highlight a question or tension; and then conclude by suggesting an answer, resolving the tension or asserting the enduring nature of a relevant choice.<sup>26</sup> For those who care, know and agree the sense of identification

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<sup>24</sup> *In the National Interest and Australia's Strategic Policy*.

<sup>25</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> This approach applies to all the sections in Chapter 4: Key Choices, namely; alliance versus self-reliance, independent action versus coalition operations, defending Australia versus regional

would be high. For those who care and don't know the logic is clear enough to generate a sense of satisfaction, educated fulfilment and probably also identity. The third group is alienated not so much by the conclusion but by the method. The writers answer their own questions, closing off debate at this level. The opportunity to contest the argument seems to be progressively relegated downwards, this time into the technical realm of capability response options. Finally the choice becomes little more than a question of means; a decision on where to draw the line on the shopping list. Of course this is integral to the aims of the whole process, but for those disposed to challenge the conventional wisdom an apparently low probability of vital impact leaves little encouragement to engage in dialogue.

### **Implications for participation**

The apparent lack of success in reaching a broad cross-section of Australian society has been the subject of considerable criticism of the process.<sup>27</sup> Given that participation is legitimised to some degree by representation this criticism is valid. It cannot be proved that the terms of reference and structure of the Green Paper encouraged the attendance of older, white males at the community meetings, but it seems to have done little to discourage the over-representation of vested interest groups.<sup>28</sup> While demographic analysis of those who requested information, wrote submissions or attended meetings is not conclusive, taken together as a trend the prevalence of certain types of individual does not point to a triumph of participatory democracy or diversity.<sup>29</sup>

These criticisms are based on a general democratic ideal but the executive had stated that it did not seek a consensus. The debate was to be limited, if only by implication. The public would be informed about defence needs, have the chance to say what they thought about the decisions the government had to make, and thereby assist the government in compiling its policy. The question 'to what extent?' was left completely open. The most obvious aim was a policy test for the apparently already decided funding increase. The scale of this increase would be set within a fiscal envelope according to the vigour and scale of any negative response. The outcome was a little different from 'the past, where input into these decisions would have been confined to a select group of experts'<sup>30</sup> and so was some progress—albeit minor—for the cause of openness.

### **A supporting internal consultation**

Wider consultation was not simply a change in the relationship between the government and the public. A parallel process was conducted between elements of the bureaucracy and between the bureaucracy and the executive itself. Responsibility for producing public statements of Defence policy rests with Strategic Policy Branch

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commitments, quality versus quantity, conventional wars versus non-combat military operations, and current capability versus future capability.

<sup>27</sup> Graeme Cheeseman and Hugh Smith, 'Consulting the Public on Defence', Working Paper No. 62, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2000, p. 15.

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> *ibid.* Also Defence Review 2000 Community Consultation Team, *Australian Perspectives on Defence: Report of the Community Consultation Team*, Department of Defence, Canberra, September 2000, Appendix C.

<sup>30</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 1.

within the Department of Defence. The focus of their internal consultative efforts was threefold. First, raising responsibility and ownership among the executive required ‘long-term engagement and focus by Ministers on the long-term process of long-term policy development’.<sup>31</sup> This was achieved by replacing the ‘blank cheque’ with a ‘blank sheet’,<sup>32</sup> or at least a sheet as blank as the agreed strategic policy would allow.

Selling the process between departments was a greater challenge.<sup>33</sup> The issues of failing governance, the preservation of the Defence bureaucracy from rationalisation, and on top of that an agenda for increased funding undoubtedly made it an easy and tempting target for bureaucratic rivalry and competition. Self-relaxation of Defence’s grip on defining its core business was the means to generating understanding, and therefore the price to be paid for agreement and support. Such an approach could have easily foundered without executive support. The process of interdepartmental consultation was logical but far from simple, and its management stands as a master-stroke of policy planning.

Consultation within the Department itself occurred at two levels: with senior executives through the WPCG and across the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO) through the internal Defence Consultation Program (DCP). Close connections between military strategists and ‘Strategic Policists’ is structurally supported by collocation in the Strategic Policy Group under the Offices of the Deputy Secretary, Strategic Policy. Given the consensus-seeking approach of the WPCG, Defence Output Executives (Service Chiefs) would be likely to have agreed an approach with Strategic Policy before entering into meetings. Division between those two branches during the WPCG process would again be likely to be resolved outside the meeting forum. While the issues raised in WPCG typically needed highest level approvals, those officers were generally not present. Indeed, consideration of submissions, minutes and proposals was more often than not delegated downwards, not unusual and understandable given the high tempo of current operations then in progress. However, the fact that policy proposals were non-threatening should not be underestimated.<sup>34</sup>

## SUBMISSIONS

### Consulting the communities – military and public

The Community Consultation Team reported that the Australian public believed the international environment was becoming more unstable and unpredictable. They

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<sup>31</sup> Hugh White, ‘White on White Paper’, Address to Defence Education and Training Conference, Canberra, 8 May 2001, cited in Department of Defence, *Defence Information Bulletin*, Defence Public Affairs and Corporate Communication, Canberra, 2001, p. 10

<sup>32</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>33</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>34</sup> With its roots in a funding increase agenda, the White Paper process promised to be beneficial to the ADF. Therefore, strong resistance or filibustering would have been surprising as well as professionally unethical and counter-productive from an interest group perspective. Predictably, the report of the DCP showed general agreement with the strategic fundamentals and capability proposals of the Green Paper. However, the report also had a strong focus on Defence personnel issues, including widespread criticism of the Defence Reform Program and a view that ‘management’ did not appreciate the place of people as critical to capability.

preferred prudence to complacency, supporting a balanced and well-funded Defence Force ready to respond quickly to situations as they arise.<sup>35</sup>

The Secretary of Defence and the Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) reported on the Defence Consultation Program. ADO personnel understood the complexities of the regional security situation and supported a self-reliant strategy in alliance with the United States. They wanted to be part of a balanced, well-equipped, ready, flexible, sustainable and interoperable joint force, unencumbered with incompatible management models and recognised as a unique and vital contributor to national security.<sup>36</sup>

### **Common themes – community and ADO consultation**

Comparison between the Green Paper, the CCT Report and the DCP Report shows up two features.<sup>37</sup> The first is fairly uneven coverage of issues as divided by the Green Paper. The discussion of strategic fundamentals and the interests of Australia drew relatively little attention; this trend being more marked among the public but still observable in the military responses. Community meetings saw a similar topical spread and those addressing conceptual issues were a clear minority. This minority was divided between advocates of traditional security concepts and those suggesting a more comprehensive approach, but all highlighted the ADF structure required to support their own positions.<sup>38</sup> Military participants were more vocal and often partisan on capability questions.

Explanations for this topic avoidance or omission might include the limited terms of reference and argument style described above, acknowledgment of limited knowledge and an associated lack of confidence, or satisfaction with the policies as they stood in these areas. Where concepts were discussed there were common threads, especially regarding the priority given to defeating attacks on Australia, self-reliance and vulnerability to unconventional and non-military threats.

Both the public and the military had plenty to write and say on the questions of funding and efficiency. A consensus supported a funding increase for Defence and discipline with funds by senior management. The impact of outsourcing and the Contractor Support Program (CSP) were commonly criticised.

The second feature is the way in which both groups raised issues of particular concern that were outside the original terms of reference. These included personnel, reserve forces, industry and, from the people only, the interests of regional Australia. The prevalence of comment on these issues assured them a place in respective consultation reports. The main point regarding personnel was a push for both resolutions by and action from the Government to improve and maintain the profession of arms, including action on training opportunities, education, pay and conditions of service. Support of Cadet Forces was also seen as worthwhile. Service members' doubts about industry's ability to support operations were framed differently by the public, in actuality by a particularly interested, engaged and therefore over-represented industry

<sup>35</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 1.

<sup>36</sup> 'Chief of Defence Force & Secretary's Report on the Internal Defence Consultation Program', Defence Intranet, <http://defweb.cbr.defence.gov.au/whitepaper>, accessed on 23 January 2002.

<sup>37</sup> See Appendices.

<sup>38</sup> Cheeseman and Smith, 'Consulting the Public on Defence', pp. 13–4.

lobby. Their perspective was more that they were still capable but things were getting worse, this decline requiring a long-term action plan.

So simultaneously there is coherence and disconnection between what the executive and the bureaucracy led the people to discuss and what they chose to discuss. For whatever reasons some fundamental concepts attracted little attention, while apparently less 'strategic' issues were thrust into the limelight and to some extent forced policy in perhaps the same direction but along different or maybe parallel paths. The CSP has been reviewed, a viable corporate renewal strategy focusing on communications is continuing, flexible pay and conditions criteria are becoming entrenched and an approach to building public image has been invigorated. Reserves, Cadets and Defence-related industry have received tangible psychological and financial boosts. All of these programs existed before the release of the White Paper and depend on a favourable funding environment. However, all owe their present urgency and momentum not only to the re-identification of needs during the Consultations but also to the relationship of openness and receptiveness that the process encouraged.

Despite these positive aspects there are valid concerns regarding the handling of other aspects of the whole consultation process which are less well known and seldom discussed.

## STANDARDS OF ARGUMENT

### Senior military influence

Compared to the Community and Defence Consultation Programs the role of senior military officers remains a relative mystery. They had input into the Green Paper but it cannot be assumed that this encompassed all the issues they wished to have raised. Indeed, prior work suggests that personnel issues and especially the outcomes of the Defence Reform Program (DRP) were high on their agenda. But going back to the roots of the Defence funding problem we see the capability questions and the approaching '*block obsolescence*'.<sup>39</sup> As clearly spelt out in the Green Paper there was a clear choice to be made between increasing funding for the present or other capabilities, maintaining the same capabilities and further hollowing out their support, or cutting capabilities to match the present—and declining in real terms—budget. This choice would undoubtedly have been the main game for the Service Chiefs.<sup>40</sup>

Vigorous input to policy-making by senior military office holders was limited to important subsets of the process, namely the questions of capability maintenance and replacement, and to a lesser extent personnel funding. Comment and representations on internal memoranda and discussion documents prepared at three-star level policy coordinators were often left to much more junior levels in the separate Services concerned.<sup>41</sup> The high tempo of East Timor may be some excuse but raising, training and sustaining forces should involve a holistic perspective on Defence capabilities.

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<sup>39</sup> Department of Defence, *Defence Review 2000*, p. 55.

<sup>40</sup> Personal interview, DOD official, mid-2001.

<sup>41</sup> *ibid.*

As previously argued the discussion documents were structured to lead an argument on capability choices. Previously declared pressing issues—especially regarding personnel—were left out. This betrays where priorities lay. The ongoing secrecy of White Paper deliberations, probably as much for commercial and perhaps political reasons as for the cause of national security, supports the view that fiscal envelopes were allocated to various outputs at executive level. This was the main game for the Services and where their efforts were concentrated. Once success in securing increased funding seemed assured only the share to each Service remained in doubt. In that respect the policy environment was fairly predictable. Cuts in capability were not coming, this time. These low threat policy conditions did not encourage transformational leadership styles nor revolutionary policy content. What little evidence there is suggests that those senior military professionals participating in the White Paper development process represented their own sectional interests in a traditional and stable manner. In short, their behaviour was fundamentally bureaucratic.

### **No revolution please – we're Australian**

As far as this compliance with the process is true it represented a 'straightjacket on Australia's security'.<sup>42</sup> By agreeing to play that game of representation and trade-off on environmental and Service structure lines, Service Chiefs exerted some control over the standards of the argument and therefore predicated the outcome. A radical departure from the extant range of capabilities fielded by the ADF was highly unlikely. They had sowed the seeds of a fairly predictable agenda some years before based on an expectation of a particular type of harvest, a new method at this late stage would not only compromise the product but also unsettle the market. The outcome of the consultation did not see the military professionals relinquish a tight grip on their part of the policy process.

### **Data treatment and conclusions – compatibility biased**

The standards applied to the collection and analysis of replies were mostly suited to the aim of building a general picture and not a detailed statistical breakdown of public opinion. In reporting back, the writer of the CCT Report relied heavily on descriptions such as 'many', 'few', and 'some' when describing the range and prevalence of opinions. Therefore generalities, with caveats if required, should have qualified interpretation of the data collected.

There are many answers to criticism of the consultation processes. For example, what more could be done than inviting anyone that wanted to speak. The fact is that many did not. Reasons could never be conclusively determined but a somewhat intimidating forum and leading preambles have been suggested as possible causes. Certainly attesting to 'emerging consensus' seems more convenient to the cause of conformity than diversity.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Greg Hewson, *Defence Review 2000: A Straight Jacket on Australia's Security*, Essay, Royal Australian Air Force Staff College, Fairbairn, Canberra, 2000.

<sup>43</sup> Cheeseman and Smith, 'Consulting the Public on Defence'.

While there seems to be no evidence to doubt these claims, there is the issue of the polling and focus groups conducted in parallel with the community consultation.<sup>44</sup> If anywhere it is in the former where objective preferences might have been determined, and in the latter where detailed debate might have been generated. Indeed, the 1986 Corner Report employed all these means to support its conclusions. One could assume that the poll and focus group results of 2000 were not relevant or suspect they were not helpful. Perhaps their non-publication, either in full or as recommendations, can be written off to time constraints, which undoubtedly affected the administration of the whole process. This incomplete coverage of all consultation avenues and results does compromise the legitimacy of the consultation exercise. Overall the impression remains; all that the executive and the bureaucracy were after was a public reaction.

### **Public opinion – ideas in context or choices in isolation**

Again in reply, it has often been claimed that public opinion polling tends to isolate issues out of context and therefore elicit unsubstantiated claims and inconsistencies from respondents, delivering the so-called irresponsible scourge of referenda.<sup>45</sup> A defence against this claim might be that the executive wanted to share the experience of its decisions with the public, in the full context of events and not isolated from the pressures of real time trade-offs and consequences. But the people are not the executive, they do not know what the executive or the bureaucracy knows and they never will, nor do they pay themselves to make decisions. Their collective good is the public good on which decisions should be based.

Data handling was also inconsistent in the CDF and Secretary's report on the DCP. Some points raised by Service members were presented without comment. Others were downplayed or elevated in importance. There was no discernible standard applied to determine which comments received which treatment. Also it is not clear which readers the report writers sought to serve when it occasionally outlined present or future policy responses to issues that were raised. For example, comments regarding progress on Activity Based Budgeting seem to be aimed at satisfying the Government and its auditors, while the varying responses to other comments, including silence, suggest a selective agenda.

One final point should be made about data handling. The data on respondent characteristics suggests a bias in audience might also have been achieved. While attempts to normalise input through weighting would be questionable, efforts to offset the predictable over-representation of vested interest groups, such as industry, as well as to reach further and deeper into the community were either not practicable or not obvious. In determining opinions of the many and the few, the writers of the CCT Report were probably dealing with a non-representative portion of the Australian people.<sup>46</sup> While it is true that some considered opinions are better than many unconsidered, the process failed to prove that all, or a representative sample of all, opinions had been heard or that those not heard were necessarily of lesser value. The consultation process was at best exclusive and at worst exclusionary.

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<sup>44</sup> Ian McAllister from The Australian National University conducted the poll and a public relations firm, Buchans, the focus groups.

<sup>45</sup> National Conference of State Legislatures, 'Boom Vox: the Making of the Illegitimate Voice of the People', in *State Legislatures*, Vol. 19, No. 7, July 1993, pp. 62–3.

<sup>46</sup> Cheeseman and Smith, 'Consulting the Public on Defence'.

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## CHAPTER 4

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# NEW ZEALAND'S SELECT COMMITTEE DEFENCE BEYOND 2000 INQUIRY

## THE OPENING CONTEXT

### Desperately seeking sectional consensus

The post-Cold War New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) delivered a peculiar peace dividend. The source was not capability reductions but operating economies assisted by managerial provisions of the Public Finance Act 1999. Not being based on contingencies, the structure and scale of the NZDF—including major re-equipment projects in progress—survived the end of the Cold War largely intact. Force element modernisations were more prevalent over the period but fiscal pressures, including the 1991 recession and proximate 'Black Budget' as well as growing expenditure in other government sectors, drove an imperative to save on Defence.<sup>1</sup>

Lurking behind the successes in operating budget accommodations and work-arounds were promissory notes for capital expenditure, some of which were, ostensibly, already funded through earlier surrender and sale of real estate, as well as depreciation provisions. By 1996 it was time for redemption. The processes that culminated in the 1997 White Paper, *The Shape of New Zealand's Defence* (SONZDEF97), sought to define a capital funding plan including allocations among the competing priorities. The intensively argued, costed and reconciled capability plan<sup>2</sup> struck early criticism, which was fuelled by a coincidental and rapid decline from the assumed exchange rate of US 70 cents to the New Zealand dollar.<sup>3</sup> Strategic as well as managerial fundamentals were debated after the event between champions of the orthodoxy and critics of a Cold War mindset.<sup>4</sup> Some saw hard decisions not taken but postponed.<sup>5</sup> The means of arriving at conclusions also received its fair share of criticism. The policy process and the policy itself were described as elitist, exclusive and eclectic, even by some that supported its conclusions.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> James Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, Allen & Unwin, St Leonards, 1999, pp. 57–8; New Zealand Government Official, personal interview, 31 July 2001; Anna Smith, 'Guns and Gold', *Cases in Public Sector Innovation*, Victoria University of Wellington, 1999.

<sup>2</sup> Interview with former NZ official, April 2000; Cathie Bell, 'Wanted: Viable Defence at Acceptable Political Cost', in *The Dominion*, Wellington, 13 October 1997, p. 2.

<sup>3</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>4</sup> Stewart Woodman, 'Back to the Future?', pp. 2–5, and Grant Crowley, 'A Missed Opportunity', in *New Zealand International Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, March/April 1998, pp. 10–4.

<sup>5</sup> Woodman, 'Back to the Future?' p. 5.

<sup>6</sup> Honourable Derek Quigley, Debate-General, House of Representatives, *Hansard* 5287, 12 November 1997, and *Defence Assessment – Consultations*, Questions for Oral Answer, *Hansard* 5372, 13 November 1997. New Zealand Government official, personal interview, 2001. Member of Parliament Ron Mark, a committee member, is quoted as saying that '... [a wider range of views is a] ... challenge for the service chiefs. They hate the concept of contestable

SONZDEF97 wasn't a revolution, nor could it ever have been. Aside from some minor shifts in emphasis it largely built on the 1991 Defence Review,<sup>7</sup> which itself was more distinctively reactionary than convicted. If the Defence bureaucracy had seemed stingy with ideas in the early 1990s then it was bred of an executive's aversion to distractions from the main game of fiscal balance. Defence was for junior Ministers whose appropriation monologues seldom developed into parliamentary debates. The 1997 Review was a well-argued and agreed internal process that attracted the greater attention its cost deserved,<sup>8</sup> but had neither mandate nor imperative for a strategic shift. The finance rescue plan satisfied the executive, relieved the departmental executives and avoided the voters. Real conflicts and concern, however, were brewing in the heartlands of all three spheres.

### Opportunity

New Zealand political debate seldom tackles strategic policy.<sup>9</sup> When it does, positions tend to be polar and espoused by lone crusaders seldom spared the typical cartoonists' labels of peacenik or sabre-rattler.<sup>10</sup> Policy fundamentals such as fiscal agendas and sometimes even stability of the political system are threatened by contentious and multi-dimensional arguments; the political interest is in keeping them off the agenda.<sup>11</sup> Defence generates a minuscule legislative workload and employment of forces is typically small in scale and infrequent. Defence policy had struggled for attention from Ministers responsible for multiple and diverse portfolios. The executive did not see Defence policy threatening the minority Coalition Government after the 1996 election. The Chairmanship was surrendered to Derek Quigley, a member of the Association of Consumers and Taxpayers, a minority party that supported the Government on confidence and supply.

Devoid of legislative review, the function that occupies 90 per cent of other subject committees' time,<sup>12</sup> the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee (FADTSC) had operated on a meagre diet of reviewing estimates and financial operations, conducting investigations and hearing petitions. Quigley immediately pursued a parallel policy discussion, which although initially well-supported by relatively senior members<sup>13</sup> promised limited political return to the non-executive actors that comprised the Committee. Quigley had unfinished business with Defence

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advice', in Colin James, 'Quigley Stirs the Pot', in *New Zealand Defence Quarterly*, No. 22, Spring 1998, p. 24.

<sup>7</sup> Ministry of Defence, *The Defence of New Zealand: A Policy Paper*, Wellington, 1991. Crowley, 'A Missed Opportunity', and Dr Jim Rolfe, 'Defence for the Next Century', in *New Zealand International Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 2, March/April 1998, pp. 6–9.

<sup>8</sup> New Zealand Government Official, personal interview, 2001.

<sup>9</sup> The most recent textbook on New Zealand politics is Raymond Miller (ed.), *New Zealand Government and Politics*, Oxford University Press, Auckland, 2001. It boasts 46 chapters, ten of those addressing public policy by specific subject, none of which is Defence. In fact, Defence is mentioned in only two of the approximately 275,000 words in the volume.

<sup>10</sup> Prime Minister David Lange in the 1980s and Max Bradford in the 1990s are good examples of this treatment. Labour Finance Roger Douglas would not transgress on 'David's area' of foreign and defence.

<sup>11</sup> Australian academic, personal interview, 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Keith Jackson in Miller (ed.), *New Zealand Government and Politics*, p. 83.

<sup>13</sup> Including Labour Members Phil Goff and Mike Moore as well as Foreign Minister Don McKinnon early in National's term of office.

governance<sup>14</sup> and a dream of coherent longer-term strategies supported by comprehensive and accountable policy processes.<sup>15</sup> It might have seemed an agenda worthy of the cross-party consensus he sought but it placed at risk the accommodation of ambiguity and inaction that had characterised Defence policy in the 1990s. The unresolved gap between conventional defence procurement logic and public opinion had become a policy minefield that was as easily avoided as it was politically dangerous.

### **The executive and the people**

Quigley purposely maintained a separation between the Select Committee, the executive and the bureaucracy to break what he saw as a conservative continuity and inevitable decline.<sup>16</sup> The implied resource limits, inevitable diversity and potential weight of conclusions made public consultation an obvious instrument for what was initially a public choice strategy against perceived provider capture. Given a suitable platform, public advice from the people would be free, fresh and perhaps sufficiently powerful to convince his peers that Defence warranted more attention. The Select Committee had all care but little responsibility to deliver to the people. The executive, by virtue of its tenuous hold on power, was ill-placed to pursue contentious issues but faced major re-equipment decisions for all three Services.<sup>17</sup> It had a marginal appreciation of the public interest in Defence that was rapidly becoming outmoded.<sup>18</sup> Simultaneously it was hardly guaranteed collective responsibility let alone a Cabinet consensus, making acceptance and pursuit of a controversial departmental position difficult.

### **The executive and the bureaucracy/profession**

Defence sought implementation of SONZDEF97's procurement program.<sup>19</sup> Each Service had a pressing requirement: for Navy the option on a third frigate was about to expire; Army was struggling to reach an internal consensus on replacement armoured vehicles; Air Force had proposed an accelerated and cheaper alternative to its combat aircraft replacement. Their primary focus was on harnessing the attention of the executive, already tangled in the web of intrigue associated with a mid-term leadership change, on to meeting its approved program.<sup>20</sup> New Defence Minister Max Bradford had enthusiastically shouldered a relatively ambitious plan that he would have to pursue from an uncertain power base.

<sup>14</sup> In the late 1980s the Labour Government commissioned Quigley's consultancy firm, Strategos, to report on the New Zealand Armed Forces' management of resources. The extent to which his recommendations were accepted and acted on was a matter of significant debate. See also, Hank Schouten, 'Quigley Targets Efficiency', in *Evening Post*, 7 April 1997.

<sup>15</sup> Quigley, *Hansard*, 12 November 1997; and Honourable Derek Quigley MP, 'Getting to the Hard Issues of Defence', in *Otago Daily Times*, 11 November 1997; and Honourable Derek Quigley MP, 'NZ's Defence Requirements Beyond 2000', in *News Release*, House of Representatives, 27 August 1997.

<sup>16</sup> *Hansard* quote which was followed by Brownlee on Pharmac. More importantly quote from interview on his search around for ideas.

<sup>17</sup> Including the third frigate and the opportunity to lease F-16s as a cheaper alternative to continuing with the A4 Skyhawks.

<sup>18</sup> Hensley, interview.

<sup>19</sup> Ministry of Defence, *The Shape of New Zealand's Defence: A White Paper*, Wellington, 1997, p. 91.

<sup>20</sup> In replacing Jim Bolger, Jenny Shipley headed up a shaky coalition as Prime Minister.

## The profession and the people

The NZDF and the MOD faced significant obstacles in courting the New Zealand taxpayer of the 1990s. Amongst a seemingly endless tide of change towards a New World Order a public relations strategy had to describe and justify an enduring utility and purpose consistent with the national interest. Pervasive images of war portrayed by mass media were probably as much competition as assistance in portraying an increasingly diverse and internationally influential employment profile.<sup>21</sup> In a declining budget environment amidst a generally benign threat perspective strategic risks could be increasingly assumed away. Inevitably, shortcomings in preparation for likely tasks based on recent experience rather than possible future scenarios would come to dominate arguments in favour of defence investments.<sup>22</sup>

## Issues within each sphere

The question of self-reliance encapsulated much of the debate. The general New Zealand security perspective sought independence more than sovereignty, and courted influence more than it guaranteed freedom from invasion. Among political elites this was evidenced by different views on the importance of alliances to meeting those ends, which in turn seemed to reflect a division in the electorate. The single Service structural model continued to encourage professional mastery which, coupled with historical precedent, favoured exploitation of international relationships for combined training exercises and exchanges. Identity could often be stronger across international rather than internal NZDF boundaries. The capability model, as well as the mix of chosen capabilities, delivered back to government and the people was complex. Its most efficient expressions often encouraged parallel rather than continuously joint approaches. The same funding pressures that polarise and alienate departments within a public service continued to influence—probably to its detriment—the concept that the NZDF and the MOD were one company.

## TERMS OF REFERENCE

### Method

The Chairman personally exercised the Committee's significant latitude in choosing terms of reference.<sup>23</sup> The terms seem a very detailed interpretation of only the last of 22 general recommendations on New Zealand's international interests, its place in the Asia-Pacific region and measures aimed at developing the domestic bases for both.<sup>24</sup> Submissions to the precursor Inquiries were strongly internationalist. The considered

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<sup>21</sup> NZDF personnel were increasingly involved in non-traditional peacekeeping and constabulary roles that nevertheless attracted a high international profile, a point keenly exploited during the time New Zealand held chairmanship of the United Nations Security Council.

<sup>22</sup> Peacekeeping and preparation for associated tasks and likely scenarios such as Bosnia, Bougainville and Timor rose up the Defence roles, tasks and funding agenda.

<sup>23</sup> Under Standing Orders 192(2) and 193(4) the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee can consider bills, petitions or other matters referred to it by the House or otherwise and may examine matters related to customs, defence, foreign affairs and trade.

<sup>24</sup> Two prior inquiries—Forty-Fifth Parliament of New Zealand, *New Zealand's Place in the World*, Report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee; and Forty-Fifth Parliament of New Zealand, *New Zealand's Role in Asia-Pacific Regional Security*, Report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee—predated *Defence Beyond 2000*.

opinions of a few were sought on two central and open questions<sup>25</sup> regarding international interests followed by particular reference to an assumed healthy engagement in the Asia-Pacific.<sup>26</sup> These prior discussions offered reasonable fodder for the particular interests of some Committee members,<sup>27</sup> but were primarily means to the Chairman's end of improving Defence. There is no more plausible explanation for the leap made to specifics of Defence strategy, policy, structure, planning, organisation and resourcing that became the terms of reference for *Defence Beyond 2000*.

## Result

The terms were open and unlikely to discourage participation by significant sections of the community. The earlier reports did pursue a particular line but there was a material separation between their consultation, deliberation and reporting and the invitation to contribute to the Defence Inquiry. Facing significantly limited resources the Committee relied more on Hansard record, public notices in printed media and limited journalist coverage to reach the public. Even as a particular view of the world was advanced in the initial reports a constructive and encouraging conclusion lauded 'a healthy debate' and the value of 'competing perspectives'.<sup>28</sup> While these reports were recommended to those offering submissions there was little evidence of direct opinion-shaping prior to the event.

Openness to content may have been laudable but process limitations were less so. Select Committee hearings have a history of employing a confrontational style. Members will inevitably make assumptions regarding witnesses' vested interests and any motive for concealment or bias. The wide variety of witnesses to an Inquiry such as this requires a sensitive and sophisticated approach to hearings. Where some would be best served by a sympathetic ear and minimal rebuttal, the public interest might demand that the next witness be fiercely and comprehensively cross-examined. This Inquiry process offered time in the sun for all. Some ideas and presenters would best be given a gentle tanning while others would require, and probably would expect, a harsh grilling. The Chair holds an immense responsibility for the free pursuit of truth both by avoiding asking witnesses leading questions and by moderating the inevitable process of challenge and critique.

The terms were bound to upset some. Like any institution or process charged with public accountability and audit, exercise of that function can be viewed as self-interested political manipulation. After more than two terms out of government, opposition members could easily feel free to exploit the opportunity to attack current policy. This aside, the terms would confront any reader proportional to his or their level of ownership of the current system regardless of any political persuasion. Firstly,

<sup>25</sup> 'What are the key interests and long-term objectives which should guide New Zealand's participation in world affairs?' and 'How should New Zealand be positioned in order to make the most of the opportunities and challenges which it will face in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century?'

<sup>26</sup> (i) The importance of Asia-Pacific regional security to New Zealand; (ii) New Zealand's present contribution to Asia-Pacific regional security; (iii) Options available to New Zealand in the future development of its approach to Asia-Pacific regional security.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Mike Moore in his push for the nomination to lead the World Trade Organisation, and Matt Robson and his non-aligned and humanitarian interest agenda.

<sup>28</sup> Parliament of New Zealand, *New Zealand's Place in the World and New Zealand's Role in Asia-Pacific Regional Security*, p. 55.

the intention to ‘consider options’<sup>29</sup> raised suggestions that either the present process of doing the same or the answers reached were inadequate. ‘Priority Areas for Further Study’<sup>30</sup> again questions the current setting of priorities. ‘The range ... of ... capabilities and equipments required’ strays well into areas of professional competence. The final term, ‘options available within defence for redirecting resources’, suggests two assumptions: the fiscal envelope was probably not up for negotiation, and some areas of Defence would be prioritised. The end result was a challenge to the executive and the bureaucracy, both separately and in concert. Assuming a low level of executive involvement in Defence policy fundamentals compared to other portfolios, review of the ‘defence establishment’ would target a bureaucratic centre of responsibility and therefore accountability.<sup>31</sup> The Inquiry would certainly ‘stir the pot’.<sup>32</sup>

The Committee was ‘in a unique position to act as a meeting place between the work of the relevant Government departments and the views of parliament and the wider community’.<sup>33</sup> Being everywhere and nowhere freed up the range of what it might propose or recommend, especially given the broad terms of reference, but limited what it could influence or achieve, and also what it could advance with any measure of credibility. Being suited to criticism of some aspects of wider policies, plans and programs is not the same as being able to propose and support comprehensive alternatives. The Committee did not have anything like the resources of the executive. Any more than a limited input by experts from the bureaucracy had the potential to compromise the original agenda. The Committee’s greatest strength was also its greatest weakness, especially when it undertook to analyse alternative options to the depth typical of the extant policies. There were inherent inconsistencies between its educative, deliberative and critical functions that do not seem to have been consciously resolved prior to the process being enjoined. Having the executive-bureaucracy alliance as both prime target and most valuable source of intelligence was not a recipe for a smooth campaign.

## SUBMISSIONS

### Format and content

The submissions to the Defence Beyond 2000 Inquiry can be divided into those taken in the Committee room and the less formal process of hearings during visits to New Zealand and Australian Defence locations.<sup>34</sup> These visits were hosted by mainly uniformed personnel and accorded the Committee a broad view of NZDF activities,

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<sup>29</sup> Forty-Fifth Parliament of New Zealand, *Inquiry into Defence Beyond 2000*, Final Report of the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, August 1999, p. 155.

<sup>30</sup> Robert Ayson, ‘Priority Areas for Future Study’, Defence Beyond 2000 Inquiry, Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee, letter, 6 November 1997.

<sup>31</sup> Parliament of New Zealand, *Inquiry into Defence Beyond 2000*, p. 155; House of Representatives, *Defence Beyond 2000*, Inquiry Terms of Reference, Public Notice, *Dominion*, 23 August 1997, p. 33.

<sup>32</sup> James, ‘Quigley Stirs the Pot’, pp. 22–5.

<sup>33</sup> Parliament of New Zealand, *New Zealand’s Place in the World and New Zealand’s Role in Asia-Pacific Regional Security*, p. 55.

<sup>34</sup> The Committee visited Canberra and Australian Defence Force bases in Sydney, Northern Territory and Queensland at the invitation of the Australian Minister for Defence Ian McLachlan from 22–26 June 1998.

and a limited view of the ADO, in between meetings to hear and consider submissions. Initially 63 submissions were made, 34 from individuals and 29 on behalf of groups. Eight of these 63 were Government witnesses, although some chose to be heard as individuals.<sup>35</sup> Eleven academics made submissions, nine came from former public servants, including former NZDF officers, and two from groups with economic motive. Five new individual witnesses commented on the Interim Report.<sup>36</sup> Excluding those without a direct professional interest in the business of Defence, at most, 44 public submissions were received, ten of which came from peace or disarmament groups.<sup>37</sup>

Despite the small size of the sample, simple generalisations are elusive. Internal consistency may have been an issue for the more than four out of five written submissions that were supported by oral presentations. What can be observed is the extent to which the main themes of written submissions addressed the five issues raised in the original terms of reference. Over all submissions, the median number of categories covered in detail was two and the mean 1.5. Given the limitations of both the data type and its interpretation, a broader view is more useful. Of the 61 original submissions retained, three quarters dealt with strategy and policy while almost half discussed defence activities. The percentages of submissions that covered capabilities, organisation and resources as main themes were 39, 28 and 16 per cent respectively. While the volume of submissions seems limited, their attention to higher level issues is significant.

Among the identifiable groups of like contributors, such as they exist, there are few 'party lines'. The exception is of course the Government witnesses who—generally—were bound to present Government policy. Also neither conformance to standard written form nor breadth or coverage of the issues distinguished the expert from the apparently 'amateur' witness.

Some witnesses presented follow-up submissions. Some were specifically targeted on the Interim Report's findings, others were requested by the Committee to clarify or expand on points raised or arising. This profile of targeted interest or apparent importance, it is unsure which, is one of few bases for speculation on how submissions were viewed and valued by the Committee. Both the Interim and Final Reports present fewer than a dozen clear references to public opinion as voiced during the Inquiry. Only a few of these directly relate to the recommendations presented, namely those regarding apparently closed-door policy development, nuclear free legislation and a general comment on NZDF deficiencies highlighted by recent deployments.

Conversely the opinions of experts including academics, bureaucrats and technical masters receive common referrals. Overall, however, while there are definite statements of agreement or disagreement through both Reports, the most obvious being the Minority Reports, the criteria of significance or relevance attached to issues are not obvious. The Interim Report arrives at the conclusion that the terms of reference seemed to be seeking at the inception of the Inquiry: that a number of measures are available that will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the

<sup>35</sup> Grant Crowley, Brigadier Roger Mortlock and Major A.M. Hayward.

<sup>36</sup> Released on 24 November 1998.

<sup>37</sup> These figures are approximate. The record of witnesses is piecemeal.

NZDF. Understandably the 19 recommendations that follow are as general and accurate as one might expect the investment of time, money and other investigative resources to deliver. Half of these recommendations are repeated and a further 12 added in the Final Report. The conclusion of the Final Report is not succinct. Rather it is implicit in the broad picture painted of modified policies and policy process, missions, force structure and its command, asset profiles and personnel administration including establishment levels and pay rates. Overall the Final Report is a prescription of how to fix the NZDF with reference to all five categories.

It is clear that military and government witnesses supported some of these proposals but again, as with the public submissions the criteria by which the Committee chose or weighted evidence is unclear. Returning to the terms of reference it was almost preordained that by saying capability could be enhanced within the same budget that recommendations would fall into one or both of two categories. The first possibility is that recommendations would show cause for efficiencies and redirection of funds. The second possibility was that capabilities would be prioritised differently from the current model.

The Committee did however make a choice in favouring certain defence capabilities over others, but its recommendations were not unequivocal.

The structure and process of the Select Committee Inquiry seems to suggest an agenda for change, with all options open other than a spending increase. Indeed, the final report stated that ‘we have found no evidence of widespread public support for increased defence expenditure’<sup>38</sup> without having asked the specific question. This is not the only dubious claim to public participation and representation:

The evidence is clear: deployments of NZDF elements during the 1990s have made deficiencies apparent—and have led to wide public debate about the state of our armed forces.<sup>39</sup>

This suggests that the Committee espoused a rather limited definition, in both scale and diversity, of what constituted public consultation.

## STANDARDS OF ARGUMENT

### Assessment of submissions

The Committee’s Interim and Final Reports reflect the triple aims of promoting public discussion, educating committee members and reviewing Defence performance in general. The terms of reference provided a reasonable steer on the range of issues that would be considered open for discussion and this paid off in the diversity of answers received. Therefore, the educative function of the Inquiry was well-served, particularly for the members who heard and saw many aspects of Defence policy, doctrine and operations. These experiences, as well as submissions from the public would have done as much to inform members on the strengths and weaknesses of Defence-related discussion in New Zealand, at least as far as those views were representative. It is a moot point how well this broad but inevitably shallow exposure

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<sup>38</sup> Parliament of New Zealand, *Inquiry into Defence Beyond 2000*, p. 59.

<sup>39</sup> *ibid.*, p. 60.

to Defence and associated concepts placed members, despite some first-hand experience being declared,<sup>40</sup> to choose and deliberate on the particular issues that became foci in their investigations.

Despite this the Final Report suggests the limitations of uncertainty were, at least sometimes, duly recognised. The problems encountered with information access and disclosure, including from Ministry sources, were often raised and do seem to have prompted some recommendations to be reserved. This virtue is overshadowed by the tendency for the Report to concentrate on issues where deficiencies were perceived. The audit, review and critical aspects of the overall Committee mandate seems to have prevailed over its other intentions. 'Priority Areas For Further Study' were narrowed down from initial submissions, presumably based on the evidence of witnesses. Issues would be likely to be chosen according to their perceived importance but there is little evidence that the inevitably variable influence of different sources of these opinions was normalised. Some submissions were little more than noted while others grabbed attention. Given the Committee was aware of the limitations of its perspective; not least due to restricted information, time and support resources; a defensible and declared basis for choice would seem even more necessary.

### **Problems of balance**

This in turn questions its validity as a forum for discussion. Despite provisions in Standing Orders, the hearings were not recorded by Hansard and enduring records are limited. Neither Report lists the breadth and depth of topics covered. Both make scant and apparently random reference to what public submissions actually said on various issues. Raw participation rates are informative: 53 witnesses gave evidence including written submissions, with a further 16 witnessing only in writing. The hearings generated sufficient attention in mass media that the Clerk of the House was convinced to allocate supplementary resources. The Committee did what it could, with what it had, where it was.<sup>41</sup> The low level of personal participation has to imply that some serious caveats should have been placed on the value of the Inquiry or its Reports as public discussion.

In fact the most prolific sources of advice to the Committee were without doubt all in a loose category of vested interest. The vast majority of respondents, as evidenced by the witness list and program of visits, had current or recent public service and particularly military experience. Some evidence suggests that at least the Chairman was aware of factional and even legislative restraints on some witnesses.<sup>42</sup> Critical weighting of representations made in less formal arenas, especially those encountered on visits, is not supported by the Report or the tendency to focus on certain lines of argument in a confrontational style. For example, the Committee sought explanation on very specific details of armed forces pay. The written answers repeated similar detail already provided, contained very particular answers and consumed large volumes of precious time, given that the Committee sat for only 61 hours in total.<sup>43</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> Ron Mark and Geoff Braybrooke were former members of NZ armed forces.

<sup>41</sup> To paraphrase Roosevelt.

<sup>42</sup> See Chief of Air Staff response to Committee written questions, 26 March 1998.

<sup>43</sup> See Minister of Defence's response to Committee written questions, dated 11 June 1999. This five page brief shows a four-week turnaround time to supply limited data on four simple personnel related questions.

The repetitious and targeted nature of these challenge, consideration and response procedures suggests poor efficiency and possibly preconceptions. Additionally the possible vested interests of international contributors seem to have attracted little consideration.<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>44</sup> For example, the Australian hosts could be argued to have vested interests in a particular outcome for New Zealand defence policy and those employed in the Australian Public Service might be expected to have advanced that view.

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## CHAPTER 5

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# AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND EXPERIENCES COMPARED

## HOW DEMOCRATIC?

### A brief comparison

The Australian and New Zealand public consultations on Defence policy were very different. The Australian program posed no unbearable risk to any interested party. It was initiated internally to a predetermined outcome that appeared achievable and was only as threatening as the policy process was novel. It appeared in advance that the public was amenable to a Defence funding increase. The tasks that Government had asked of Defence immediately prior had indeed substantiated some developing funding issues that unless addressed would eventually constrain operations even of that limited scale. Critical masses within each sphere of Australian society shared a common interest in resolving this gap between required outputs and approved inputs.

In New Zealand the experience was externally initiated to a confrontational agenda of efficiency improvements and draw-down. Divisions on policy were initially framed more as criticism of the determination process, but rapidly developed into two output options: balanced or targeted investment in forces. This choice became a contemporary expression of ongoing divisions between the two major parties, which were often more rhetorical than substantial and which seldom gained much public attention. This fed back into a division among professionals with much at stake. However, not until the workings of what was a non-executive body threatened to materialise did the political or professional conflict ignite significant interest in the public domain, by which time the consultation process was concluded.<sup>1</sup>

### Public consultation – an illusion?

So by the time the Green Paper was published it appeared that the profession and the executive in Australia had ironed out differences, which were few, and sketched a rough plan of action. Fundamentally the Public Consultation was a closed consultation,<sup>2</sup> but it did leave room for movement on issues that were not fundamental to the assumptions and from which a particular policy direction would flow. These points of negotiation were fairly predictable and quite common across the public and, especially at lower level, professional responses.

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<sup>1</sup> Immediately prior to the 1999 election the Labour Opposition undertook to adopt the Select Committee recommendations as a basis for its defence policy.

<sup>2</sup> For a definition see Simon Croft, 'The Role of Consultation in Public Policy: A Comparison of Two Styles', in *Public Sector*, Vol. 23, No. 1, p. 22.

The Select Committee call for submissions was far more open, despite hints of the intended outcome being betrayed in the terms of reference. There was no agreement between the executive and the profession. Both were initially excluded, a position that neither committed much effort to changing. They failed to recognise and/or act on the fact that an external body, whose actual and potential influence they had underestimated, had seized the policy initiative.

The Community Consultation Team simplified its analysis task by using a closed consultation process and covered itself with the rider that their objective was to hear comment but not necessarily act on it. The Select Committee had no mandate nor expectation to achieve policy outcomes but its near universal agenda, limited resources and uncertain time frame were bound to lead to either a stall in proceedings or the application of undeclared but necessary criteria for progression from generalities to specifics. It was as unrealistic to expect the New Zealand public to focus the Committee's gaze as it was to expect the Australian public to compete with the tight package of logic presented by Defence strategists in the Green paper. It might appear that in both cases broad public consultation was illusory and therefore claims to democratic commitment are unjustified. This is arguable under pure classical definitions, but is only partially applicable when more process-oriented descriptions of democracy are invoked.

### **Public policy as democratic process**

One model of public policy assessment uses six Key Performance Indicators (KPI) namely:<sup>3</sup>

- **Customer engagement** – especially with decision-makers;
- **Consultation** – within and across departments;
- **Innovation** – both in subject matter and process including the exploitation of opportunities and the avoidance of potential minefields;
- **Political sensitivity** – to party, Parliament and electorate;
- **'Tangibles'** – such as timeliness, factual integrity and layout; and
- **Provider traits and characteristics** – which although subjective and variable can be broadly defined as such universally valued behaviours such as loyalty, dependability and fearlessness, as briefly discussed in earlier chapters.

Despite the decisive advantage of bipartisan defence policy it is clear that according to the above criteria the White Paper Consultative Group, the Community Consultation and Defence Consultation in Australia were likely to be roaring successes. On the other hand the Select Committee of Inquiry would rate as a dismal failure. While this conclusion is defensible, more on a scale of harmony and disruption than on one measuring achieved objectives, it fails to acknowledge the differing genesis of and motive behind each process. In Australia the strategic and public policy strategists<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Alan Behm and Associate, work in progress.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh White and Peter Jennings.

needed to build the final piece to complete a jigsaw that was fundamentally conservative. They had to articulate a rapidly emerging opportunity into a consensus, minimising cause for diversion by attention to robust and transparent procedure. Hence it was always going to stack up well against a public policy model. In New Zealand Quigley was not concentrating on perfecting the public policy process. If anything he saw his outcome depending on opening alternative avenues of consideration, extending the boundaries of internal consultation. By definition this would undermine the established procedure to some extent and marginalise some traditionally powerful participants.

Despite the clear variance in purpose and method of both processes the degrees of correspondence between original objectives and eventual outcomes are similar. The ADF changes were advanced within the same government's term while a change of government saw the Inquiry seized as one pillar of Labour's Defence policy for New Zealand. A defence funding increase was accepted and approved in Australia and the NZDF now does less with roughly the same budget. Both processes were successful albeit poles apart on a scale comparing degrees of confrontation.

### **The role of the professional**

This public policy comparison is relevant but not sufficient analysis. Nor are we greatly informed by concluding that the public and its views were important, but had a limited impact relative to experts, which included military professionals. We are left with only one dynamic in the triangular relationship of government, profession and people. The crux of learning from defence policy-making in the late 1990s is its exposition of the nature of the relationship between the Government and the military as simultaneously but variously expert bureaucrats and professionals.

It could be argued that despite the opportunities, motives and coincidences of need already outlined as being crucial stimuli to the respective policy activities, their primary cause was discomfort with the provision of professional advice to government. Other considerations determined whether the subsequent ride would be bumpy or smooth.

In Australia it happened to be the executive who took up the cause of changing an annual 'blank cheque' into policy that they understood, identified with and believed in. In New Zealand it happened to be government members outside the executive that took the initiative, perhaps because within the executive Defence could not secure the same hearing over other more pressing issues, which included the very survival of the incumbent Cabinet and the supporting Coalition.

Common to both Australia and New Zealand was a growing acceptance among the governments that the level of ownership and responsibility for the pressured but still massive investment in the Defence portfolio was inadequate. If funding was to go up, down or remain the same in the face of general fiscal pressure the executives and the professionals really had to reconcile their respective and presently incompatible wish-lists. Not only would the professionals' views on this be vital to any credible policy proposals, but also the efficiency and effectiveness of mechanisms and procedures for delivering that advice would prove decisive in the final outcomes.

## THE NEW ZEALAND SELECT COMMITTEE IN DETAIL

### The roots of confrontation

There was a fundamental difference between the immediate problems facing the three NZDF Services. The Royal New Zealand Navy (RNZN) was still battling for the options on the further two ANZAC frigates to be taken up prior to their expiry. The Royal New Zealand Air Force (RNZAF) was also facing significant equipment modernisation costs. Aside from the currency value assumptions made during Defence Assessment 1996 (DA96), the availability of second-hand US aircraft as a preferred option was appearing less likely. Knowing the predicament that any government would face both Services seemed to be adopting a moderate approach and searching for other options if they could be found.<sup>5</sup>

The Army's major problem was not gaining acceptance of its capital investment priorities. SONZDEF97 had done that and proposals had originally been expected by the executive during FY 99/00.<sup>6</sup> The delay was also influenced by failure to reach early agreement on some details of the operational requirement. These internal issues did not compromise Army's representations to the Committee. The content and presentation of Army submission and representations impressed the Committee<sup>7</sup> and seems to have saved at least that Service from the view that the Services lacked vision and steerage.<sup>8</sup> That a member can recall that impression after four years says volumes for the importance of presentation, and perhaps raises concern that the importance of form may have been over-emphasised at the expense of more pertinent content issues. Structural impediments to a fruitful relationship between the Committee and Departmental witnesses did not help in altering that opinion.<sup>9</sup>

It is difficult not to conclude that perceptions of various members at the beginning of the Inquiry were largely reinforced. That said, some questions were left open. This was no doubt partly due to the stilted process of hearing, written question and written answer, as well as stovepiped access to experts. These procedures plagued the information-gathering task of the Inquiry. Of greatest concern is that after over two years a privileged and respected body of the nation's elected representatives bent on discerning how well and where public finance was being spent was still relatively uninformed on some vital and current defence business. For example the F-16 lease contract was in the public domain in the United States<sup>10</sup> but guarded in New Zealand, despite continuous requests from the Committee to the Department, which was effectively constrained by the Minister. Even more ludicrous is the fact that the Committee was in favour of exactly the innovative financing arrangements on which the F-16 procurement rested and yet was largely unaware of their pursuit by officials

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<sup>5</sup> For example the F-16 opportunity was made known early but eventually went forward to Cabinet coincident with the third frigate proposal, whether as a matter of convenience or conscious public policy strategy (positive or negative?) is a matter for speculation.

<sup>6</sup> Ministry of Defence, *The Shape of New Zealand's Defence*, p. 91.

<sup>7</sup> Committee member, personal interview, August 2001.

<sup>8</sup> Parliament of New Zealand, *Inquiry into Defence Beyond 2000*, pp. 38–9.

<sup>9</sup> As later published in State Services Commission, *Public Servants and Select Committees – Guidelines*, Wellington, April 1999.

<sup>10</sup> United States legislation requires any Letter of Offer/Letter of Acceptance to 'lay on the table' in Congress for 60 days prior to approval being given. During this time such information is in the public domain.

of the Ministries of Defence, Foreign Affairs and Trade and Treasury. Even ignoring one telling eyewitness' report,<sup>11</sup> the Defence establishment, and therefore its Heads, but ultimately the Minister, have little with which to answer accusations of obstruction.<sup>12</sup>

### **Public servants, ministers, select committees and conservatism – New Zealand**

The non-executive nature and therefore limited power of the Committee did prove a set-up for the Service Chiefs called as witnesses. As public servants they were bound to represent the view of the incumbent government on any matters of policy. This came to a head when the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) refused to answer questions on that basis.<sup>13</sup> Pressed for a written answer his response was effectively a regurgitation of SONZDEF97 that achieved little for the Committee's purposes and probably less for the Navy's. Despite probably wanting to engage in discussion of the merits of fleet tasking, equipment suitability and funding, no Service Chief had that measure of freedom. Even the Secretary and CDF were constrained by convention from discussing anything other than approved policy with the Committee.<sup>14</sup>

Discussion could not range as the Committee, and probably the Service Chiefs, would have liked. For example, if a level of equipment was limited short of professional recommendations due to cost constraints then a hypothetical question might investigate options for situations where those limitations were different or differently prioritised. Immediately a matter of executive prerogative would be raised and the public servant's advice would have to become unflinchingly conformist and therefore conservative.

In summary, any radical questions, policy initiatives or even similar but viable alternatives were unlikely to come from the Service Chiefs, except of course if representations could be made on non-contentious issues that were not directly in the government's purview. The most likely source of such a subject would be future operations where technical expertise could be showcased, probably with minimal interruption for questioning. Here the Chief of General Staff (CGS) seems to have had an advantage over the other Chiefs. He was also able to play the 'squeaky wheel' with respect to current capability, referring to the embarrassment of limited operations in Bosnia for the massive outlay in deploying, employing and redeploying the New Zealand peacekeeping contingent.<sup>15</sup> This would not be the first nor the last time that the inadequacies of NZDF resources compared to operating partners and allies would be decisive in prompting action or advocacy from interested political actors.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>11</sup> New Zealand Government Official, personal interview, August 2001.

<sup>12</sup> Quigley considered appealing to Parliament's Privileges Committee but saw little gain in such a move.

<sup>13</sup> In March 1998, the Chief of Naval Staff (CNS) was asked by the Committee, 'What is the status of the Navy's current discussions with Government about the future of the frigate force? What is the Navy's current recommendation?' CNS handed the task of providing an answer to CDF as the statutory adviser to government.

<sup>14</sup> State Services Commission, *Public Servants and Select Committees*, p. 2.

<sup>15</sup> New Zealand Government Official, personal interview, 2001.

<sup>16</sup> Another example is the raise in field and operational allowances approved on the eve of the East Timor deployment, which, publicly at least were justified on the basis of the financial deficit NZ peacekeepers would face compared to their ADF counterparts.

Holding the initiative in discussion on future operations and operational concepts would also have lessened the risk that a witness would become bogged down in challenge, questioning and criticism. After all, the Committee was there to be educated, not just to criticise. Examples of what they sought—new ideas—would have been refreshing to Committee members among an otherwise confrontational relationship with the other Service Chiefs. This relationship had been allowed to develop because of the Committee’s management of institutional limitations and the Minister’s perception that the Committee challenged policy-making authority and responsibility. The divisive and confrontational ‘this is wrong now fix it’ line taken by the Committee was easily disarmed and deflected by a more calm ‘what about this idea’ approach, but this tactic was not widely employed.

The absence of a full record of proceedings make a generalisation difficult, but if the tone of written replies is indicative then the Service Chiefs varied in the credibility and importance they accorded the Committee. As the Inquiry proceeded, answers tended to default back to the minimalist responses characteristic of normal daily parliamentary questions. The Army responses tend to be the exception. The tone of these reports seems more focused on providing a learning experience for Committee members using broad and comprehensive answers. Subsequently evidence has been uncovered that Army engaged in a concerted public relations campaign at the expense of the other Services.<sup>17</sup> While this illustrates the risks of such an approach, the point remains that the importance of personal interaction with the Committee should not be underestimated.

The Committee itself was not without fault. Investigative tasks were parceled out for action to various members, which led to them asking very specific questions on areas of either personal interest, moderate familiarity and/or their pre-selected rectification plan.<sup>18</sup> Such plans seemed to have been developed in some detail independent of significant expert advice. Even when considered in the context of surrounding questions some of these reek of being lines of Inquiry grasping for evidence in support of predetermined but unsubstantiated criticism.

Even so, a culture of conservatism and brevity in replies seems to have been a waste of golden opportunities to educate and inform members, none of whom could be accused of not wanting to learn and some of whom were integral to the then current government’s power base. Unfortunately this coincidence of interests was not recognised by those that had the power to broker such an alliance.

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<sup>17</sup> This development was no secret amongst NZDF personnel otherwise unwilling to air inter-Service competition and developing conflict. Two documents listed as being submitted to the Committee as ‘New Zealand Defence Reports’ were *Army 2005 – A Force of Utility: Refocussing the Army and Utilisation of New Zealand Defence Force Capabilities on International Stability and Military Operations 1946–1998*. They are listed, perhaps prophetically, as the last entries received. The latter document is unbalanced and pushes a clearly partisan, and it would seem, derogatory line, especially with respect to RNZN and RNZAF contributions to New Zealand’s security and defence. The integrity of *Army 2005* is compromised by virtue of its juxtaposition and perhaps even its sub-title. *Utilisation* may be the document referred to in internal correspondence as having been requested by and forwarded direct to the Committee in contravention of the normal procedures of communication through the NZDF Inspector General. Interestingly it was forwarded to the Committee unsigned.

<sup>18</sup> New Zealand Government official, private interview, 2001.

In another environment where issues were less divisive and personalities more amenable, the relationship between a Minister's advisers and non-executive actors, including the people and their opinion leaders as well as Opposition members, might be completely different. For the military professionals involved the Inquiry presented a novel test of their judgment of when provisional rights and obligations such as public comment should and should not be exercised. The test has become a regular feature of Select Committee tactics used by opposition members facing the current Government. From a mere distraction the Defence debate has become a regular political battleground. Meanwhile there have been no significant structural or attitudinal changes that might help in unravelling the dilemma of potentially conflicting obligations to the people, to the rest of government and to the enduring interests of the profession as a whole.

## THE AUSTRALIAN STORY

### **The ease of a common aim**

The contrast with the WPCG process could hardly be starker. In Australia the view of the senior military professionals were sought, heard, and appear to have had a significant influence on the structure of both the consultative process and the content of the Green and White Papers. From the scant evidence it would appear that disagreement was more common, as could be expected, between separate Service interests rather than between the military bureaucrats and the executive.<sup>19</sup> The executive was in no mood nor had it any need to disagree with the advice that it was receiving. The NSCC was more interested in clarity and transparency sufficient to support Cabinet responsibility for what seemed to be a real opportunity to significantly alter the Defence funding profile.

A number of military professionals of high standing and long experience voiced satisfaction with the amount of access that the executive had allowed them to present their points of view in support of the policy work preceding the White Paper release.<sup>20</sup> In Australia the advice of the professionals was taken and made the Government's own, before being posted for comment from the public, all as part of a sophisticated selling process.

## VALUING PROFESSIONAL INPUT

### **Did others have better offerings?**

The nature of the disagreement in New Zealand and the reason an agreed policy position was not reached becomes even clearer when the role of retired public servants and military professionals is considered. The Committee recalled most witnesses of this type and was able to explore issues in greater depth. Their advice seems to have attracted more than a little attention, and perhaps not least because they were seen as being free from the constraints of their former positions.

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<sup>19</sup> Australian Government official, private briefing, 2000.

<sup>20</sup> Speakers, RAAF Staff College, Canberra, 2000.

The same can be said for three witnesses in particular who by their appearance further support the view that the bureaucratic limitation was tied to the position and not to the person of the Service Chiefs. Three serving officers, a territorial, a former tactical level commander and an operational level commander witnessed before the Committee. The latter took pains to ensure he was recognised and received as a citizen. Of course he could also not help but be an expert with nearly unmatched levels of inside experience and topical knowledge.<sup>21</sup> It remains tempting to suspect the Committee was more willing to accept this type of advice because it was the only line heard from experts outside the established channels and separate from the incumbent Service Chiefs and Secretary. Had other ‘independent’ experts presented equally authoritative arguments that opposed what seems to have been the Committee’s own ‘emerging consensus’, the Committee’s reaction to such testimony would have provided a good test of its neutrality. An equally authoritative and clear dissenting view from a serving officer might perhaps have even constrained the severity of the policy changes justified by the incoming Government against the recommendations of the Inquiry Final report.

This is purely hypothetical and perhaps misses the main point. There were dissenting policy positions from credible witnesses. The fact that some cogent but opposing arguments were not accepted probably had less to do with them being from academics rather than serving officers<sup>22</sup> and more to do with one of the base assumptions which limited the Committee’s range of outcomes. The only positions that would be consistent with the terms of reference were those that included some form of rationalisation, whether in core or supporting functions, which would allow for the preconceived notions of inadequacy to be addressed without an increase in Defence funding.

### **Professional advice versus public opinion**

The criticism already voiced of the apparent illusion of public consultation is perhaps an overstatement when one considers the positions of those controlling the policy discussion process. There is no evidence to suggest that any of those involved had illusions about the potential of public input, and on both sides of the Tasman there were strong appreciations of the legitimacy their processes would assume if significant public involvement was achieved. The separate Defence Consultation Team in Australia makes for a useful comparison with the public submissions, whereas in NZ there was no comparably sized or ordered canvassing of the non-bureaucratic professionals at lower levels of the organisation.

As already discussed the defence and public responses in Australia had a lot in common, especially on questions the Green Paper had not asked. Defence professionals showed their expertise and particular interest in issues of force structure, capabilities and funding. Again, though without any significant divergence between what the policy process was set up to do and what those involved were likely to say, it is difficult to value the influence of the lower ranks of the profession versus the public. Both sets of representations were mutually reinforcing and discussion rather than debate was typical.

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<sup>21</sup> The then Land Commander, Brigadier Roger Mortlock.

<sup>22</sup> Dr Ron Smith’s testimony on uncertainty, contingencies and wide-utility capabilities.

The hypothesis that these policy discussions represented a shift in the measure of attention paid to the public versus the professionals is not supported. In both cases the same types of individuals, that is uniformed officers, were the key proponents of the ideas eventually adopted.

The difference in New Zealand was the avenue of influence was somewhat unorthodox and in the end unexpectedly successful due to the coincidence that was Labour's electoral success and loose interpretation of the Select Committee recommendations as its broad Defence agenda.<sup>23</sup> The public response in New Zealand was rudimentary and not at the level achieved during more comprehensive consultations in the 1980s.<sup>24</sup>

In Australia public involvement was unprecedented, and the exercise successful even if only for that reason. Defence professionals stitched together policy proposals in ways similar to the past but that policy faced a more engaged executive. The executive realised that despite the window of opportunity to increase the budget a declining support base among the wider electorate might present obstacles; therefore, it demanded the web of justification be spun with an extra thread of public ownership.

### Lessons

The military professional may continue to be challenged by the diversity of democratic process. The two different processes considered here had similar ends in mind but were underwritten by sometimes divergent assumptions. The actors with whom the military professionals dealt came from differing regions of the governmental sphere, but nothing in legislation prevented them from pursuing the issues they did in the form they chose. Institutional and process limitations are a fact of democratic life. Thorny issues are inseparable from a pluralist society. When these limits are tested, ideas and their impact can be skewed. In extreme cases this could prompt a marked divergence from the balanced and comprehensive discussion that best serves the public interest.

Positing an ideal democratic construct is not easy. Actors are too unpredictable, institutions too limiting and ideas too fluid for the detailed definition of absolutes. An entrenched view of democratic propriety will itself be anti-pluralist and anti-innovative. However, it will be useful to clarify where the respective processes and the choices of actors and professionals using the institutions served in support of efficient and effective public policy, and where the processes threatened to or indeed did fail. This should introduce some questions on civil-military interaction in the peacetime policy-making environment, and therefore test the stated and espoused models that guide and justify the tone of professionals' public engagement or reticence.

In Australia key actors, either by design or by accident, had the power and influence to pursue an agenda that was predetermined. There was nothing really illegitimate

<sup>23</sup> Royal New Zealand Returned Servicemen's Association, *Critique of the Report by the Parliamentary Select Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade: Inquiry into Defence Beyond 2000*, Wellington, 2000, anticipated this development and warns against what it considers the folly of doing so.

<sup>24</sup> Such as New Zealand Government, *The Defence Question*, and New Zealand Government, *Defence and Security*.

about the processes they followed; they just weren't ideal. The public meetings, submission collections and indeed the publicity gained by engaging at all were a fine step towards greater public involvement. The anticipated value of public opinion was acknowledged in advance of the consultation. Perhaps one criticism is that this expectation could have been managed more carefully. In the end, the boundaries of comfortable process were only tested in the public sense, and the risk removed by a rider on the value the executive would place on submissions.

In New Zealand a non-executive actor exploited an established institution in a typical way for an honourable end. The extent of his journeys eventually brought him into conflict with a powerful blocking force that might almost as easily have been an ally. It was at this point that limitations of the approach served to reinforce the perceptions that had led to the Inquiry in the first place. A predisposed military that had had no input to the terms of reference of an inquiry, which would inevitably trespass on issues that were its specialty, found itself relatively powerless to exert influence in pursuit of its own ends, unless those ends happened to coincide with the Inquiry's apparent predispositions.

Problems were complicated when this divided political camps that could have been aligned. The process ended up with actors who were unable to convey their ideas. Whether through inadequacy of the content or the process, the outcome was the same.

Democracy is often more easily described by what it is not rather than by what it is. This brief exposition has discussed where significant tensions and conflicts of interest complicated the policy process. It also identified the military professional expert as a key and valued source of Defence advice. It is appropriate now to explore issues surrounding provision of that advice in a democratic context.

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## CHAPTER 6

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# PROFESSIONAL ADVICE – ISSUES

## TO BE OR NOT TO BE A PROFESSION

### The place of policy advice

Defence is an important issue for any society and will attract a considerable amount of debate and discussion. The debate will occur independently of whether uniformed military professionals are involved or not. Their involvement is not automatic, but it is required. They may exercise a preference not to speak and indeed aspects of their role can restrict participation. Within the military profession there does seem to be elements of doubt as to what is and isn't acceptable and ethical behaviour. This might be defined on the basis of what should and shouldn't be up for discussion, how it should or should not be discussed, and where that discussion should or should not take place. However, effective armed forces matched to the national interest depend on the progress and outcomes of the Defence debate, which in turn can be greatly influenced by professional involvement.

The two case studies illustrate limits on the military professional's prerogative to provide advice both to the executive and to the people. The advice they provide may or may not be welcome, it may or may not be correct, but the standard of defence and security debate in a nation will be proportional to the capacity of institutions and actors to accommodate the range of ideas that might constitute military advice. If there is considerable doubt about the configuration of the military matching the requirements of its parent society this may be manifest in the emergence of challenging agendas in the public policy arena. Under certain conditions, as have been described, this may develop into unorthodox policy approaches that might consider and accept professional advice in full or in part, or might avoid that same advice altogether. The Community and Defence Consultations in Australia and the Select Committee Inquiry followed by Labour's policy appropriation in New Zealand are good examples.

### A triangular tension

Seeking a resolution of this problem we observe three competing tensions:

- the right of free speech is inalienable,
- the restrictions implicit in public service, and
- the obligation on military professionals to assist public discussion on defence and security.

These tensions are inseparable in that they are all inevitable consequences of a democratic system. In some ways they enable interaction, in other ways they inhibit it.

An analogy may be drawn to the three spheres of society as described. Military professionals have rights as people but fill two bureaucratic roles as professionals where their person is of limited relevance. They are simultaneously agents of the executive and agents of the people.

### **Discussion as free speech**

Free speech is not easy to surrender, perhaps because it is reinforced in a free democratic environment. People talk about what they do. Defence professionals will involve themselves in debate and discussion as much as they are comfortable with and versed in their work. 'Loose lips sink ships' but not all, and often only a little, of what a military professional does is classified or sensitive.

In the absence of direct and continuous threats, without observable let alone measurable results, the Defence portfolio is often more about provision and risk management than about application. That provision has both long- and short-term funding requirements. It is no wonder that somehow the very existence of a Defence Force must be continually justified to its funding taxpayers.

Therefore, within the bounds set by considerations of national security, healthy debate is probably more important to Defence than it is to other portfolios. A military professional cannot be mute and yet still support the democratic process. However, there is a time and place for every purpose<sup>1</sup> and neither can the professional be completely unguarded in his discussions. The process of national Defence debate in liberal democratic societies is a litmus test of tolerance and commitment to pluralism as well as an indicator of the sophistication and development of governing processes.

### **Discussion as public service**

The main restrictions on the form, content, volume and audience of defence discussions by defence professionals relate primarily to their relationship with the executive. The need for secrecy and confidence is debatable, and therefore more correctly described as the advantage available to those with the ability and desire to control the flow of information in their conduct of official business. For a number of reasons an executive demands the confidence and conditional silence of its public service.

Information affords power to the executive and they control it because they can. Controlling the flow of information can assist with maintaining the initiative in the political arena. Careful manipulation of the initiative contributes to the ongoing task of pursuing advantage over political opposition and is therefore an essential skill. Consequently, the picture of collegial unity this control can portray within an executive and its core of policy advisers becomes a strong indicator of resolve, strength and commitment. The urge to control is reinforced by both policy success and policy initiative failures attributable to successful opposition challenge. Reasons to limit information flow are often reactions to structural characteristics of the policy environment.

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<sup>1</sup> Ecclesiastes 3:7.

Initiative and an innovative environment require mutual appreciation of ability and worth as well as a commitment to the protection of secrecy where necessary. Risk taking is not a default characteristic of bureaucratic behaviour. Often executive arms of government give strong impressions that predictability and conformity are more desirable. An innovative environment requires some measure of privacy. Fear of publicity and consequences can constrain the investigation, consideration and deliberation of diverse options, all of which are vital to a fertile policy environment. The provision and receipt of free, frank and fearless advice comes more or less naturally to different people in different roles so it must be nurtured and encouraged.

Content and context influence the sensitivity of an issue. Issues that one day are innocuous can be a political killing ground the next. The restriction on their discussion in public will be contextual. Issues may move on and off the list of subjects that are prohibited or ill-advised to discuss. A single issue may have some aspects that can be discussed and some that can not. The reasons for 'issue migration' may include security considerations, political embarrassment or a lack of promise relative to other more important questions. The need for internally secure policy deliberations is more dependent on institutional characteristics and the reaction of actors within those institutions than on content. Therefore, the executive's interest in limiting discussion on an issue can wax and wane.

Consequently any argument that quarantines 'government policy' from discussion rests on shaky assumptions. What is government policy? Is it only and all those activities conducted under executive auspices or only those that have both its conscious attention and approval? Many activities conducted by bureaucrats may be in accordance, or at least not at variance, with what are inevitably very general government policies. Responsible Ministers may specifically sanction none of these. Policies and associated activities only gain relevance, and sometimes earn either praise or rebuke, in certain political contexts. Nevertheless, as far as defence professionals discuss matters in public at all and still maintain their servant status they must distinguish the boundaries of topical and contentious issues.

Policy initiatives are high-risk areas. Whether genuinely new or simply re-visits of old problems they impact on an existing system. Innovators craft them as packages aimed to influence a total system according to current needs. The uncertainty of policies' true impacts makes them lucrative targets for Opposition parties ever ready to disturb the executive's momentum. Components of policies taken in isolation and debated out of context can damage the public perception of forthcoming change, which may compromise its planned outcome in advance of the policy being pursued. The benefit/cost ratio of criticism far exceeds that of policy development but an opposition will pick and choose its moments according to the perceived political return.

Here we see another contextual influence affecting the need for private versus public discussion, one that is determined by influence external to the executive and its bureaucrats, including military professionals at the highest levels of office. The requirement for military professionals to favour private counsel over public comment is contextual, with the choice often made on no better basis than a desire, often unspoken, by the executive to avoid embarrassment. If military professionals were indeed non-political, there would be no evidence of contextual discretion or any justification for restricting participation in public, including media, debate.

Ironically and often, the closer a contested policy comes to a culminating point of decision the more limited its enabling debate will become. This dilemma is not peculiar to the actors in the executive-bureaucracy/professional relationship. A non-political definition of military professionalism leaves all non-executive politically aligned bodies, including the opposition, facing a wall of silence from the military professional. Having already identified the serving professional as a font of current wisdom on operations, often unmatched among nationally available resources, we can conclude that either professionals limit their advice to non-contentious and general matters or that discussion on the specifics of policy development remains relatively uninformed outside the executive. Even on a bipartisan policy issue this is undesirable as points of difference will be sought among specifics, which is exactly where an in-depth knowledge is indispensable, and where its absence or inadequacy can have the greatest detriment to the cause of enlightenment.

### **Discussion as social obligation**

Having open-minded, reflective and articulate members is as important for the military as for any other profession or indeed social group. Competitive ideas and their discussion are the essence of pluralism, the lifeblood of democracy,<sup>2</sup> and the foundation of scientific and humanitarian enlightenment. But what use is enlightenment if it is exclusive, especially in societies where government choice is legitimised by inclusion? The ideal would seem to be the greatest number convinced by the arguments of the expert, who by definition remain the few.

In any case defence and security debate will take place independent of military involvement. In some cases the uniformed expert may be the only provider of information on particular subject areas. Quarantining segments of the community, especially experts in a particular field, from the debate will be counter-productive. Such a practice or convention is suppression of best evidence and therefore not in the public interest.

Restrictions on contributing to discussions on matters of the public interest should be limited to those absolutely necessary. Reasons might range from national security considerations down to political considerations of the impact of dissent on government function. The onus of proof, however, should rest with the actor demanding the restriction, and not be assumed as a blanket reason to stifle debate.<sup>3</sup>

Military professionals have a right to discuss defence and security matters and indeed an obligation to support public debate. A simple portrait of the silent non-political servant soldier is logically inconsistent and yet, given the limited military prerogative in our societies, is apparently the default option. It seems that a more sophisticated model of defence professional involvement in public discussion is necessary. If we are to reconcile our conflicting democratic ends—the freedom to speak, the responsibility of representative and compliant agents, and vibrant pluralism—we need to consider the ways in which these might be pursued.

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<sup>2</sup> Tom Schieffer, 'America, Australia and the War on Terrorism', in *Perspective*, ABC News Radio, 23 October 2001, <http://www.abc.net.au/rn/talks/perspective/stories/s398243.htm>, accessed on 7 February 2002.

<sup>3</sup> This is consistent with the intent of official information legislation in both democracies.

## CHOOSING LEGITIMATE TARGETS

We may refer again to our democratic model of behaviours in balance, where ideas influence actors to use institutions to further those and other ideas. Are military professionals better able to influence actors, institutions or ideas? How should this balance shape plans to rectify the present inadequacies of professional involvement in defence debate and discussion?

### **Influence over actors**

Votes are free, as are voters. Voters select themselves since despite voting being a legal obligation in Australia people can still choose, as they can in New Zealand, whether or not they vote. Activism in parties or other associations with significant political influence is again a matter of free choice. Allocating votes is an even more inviolable right, actively lobbied only by party officials, candidates or representatives themselves according to strict guidelines. Voters and their choices are not legitimate targets of defence professional advice.

Service members are seldom mobilised as a constituency and more recently are even less likely to be concentrated in an electorate except in traditionally remote areas where defence populations are relatively higher now than in the recent past.<sup>4</sup> Their political interests seem no less diverse or less motivated by the wider public good than is true of the general public. In general, defence personnel are widely dispersed among the mainstream community in all senses. Where local interest groups have defence and security issues that might influence a government or opposition party in the formation of its policies, these are often represented by organisations affiliated to or supporting the military profession. These include the Returned & Services League of Australia (RSL), the Royal New Zealand Returned and Services' Association (RNZRSA), and Defence industry associations.

Mobility also influences the ability and inclination of Service members to mobilise as a distinctive political constituency. Members cannot occupy public office. Whether individually or as a profession, the armed forces have no special influence on the appointment of representatives.

The profession can exert influence on the composition of its own political actor population. While appointment of Service Chiefs is somewhat independent of both the profession and the incumbent government,<sup>5</sup> senior commanders effectively control, including with power of veto, promotion to subordinate ranks from which senior executive appointments are made. The onus is on incumbent leaders to educate and advance a choice of successors, funding development of a viable human resource pool, viable both for the jobs required in place and as candidates in competition for advancement. This pool must provide a real choice from enough suitable candidates for Service Chief so that exercise of an unexpected but still legitimate selection choice will not be a great organisational shock. The survival of the military institution or its adequate performance in operations cannot be enslaved by an entirely predictable and immobile career progression policy. Good people must be available in large measure.

<sup>4</sup> For example Darwin, Katherine and Townsville.

<sup>5</sup> This is still the case despite recent changes to the role of the State Services Commission in the New Zealand appointment process.

Likewise, all candidates unsuitable as Ministerial advisers must be well-removed from contention.

The military profession has very limited influence over the processes that raise political actors to prominence. At the sharp end of politics representatives are the public and prominent face of their parties, their constituents, and a general political program. Direct dialogue between the military professional and a representative is a high risk process, especially since the detail of policy and the cause of greater understanding can easily be subordinated to the more mercenary but politically vital quest for positive public perceptions and approval.

Therefore, there is little to balance the risk that defence and security advice provided to political representatives might be framed for partisan political benefit, and not necessarily further the aims of the adviser. That said, Ministers will normally seek the advice of Service Chiefs on technical matters and are in fact sometimes bound to do so by legislation. This consultation will extend well beyond the minimum legislative requirements, especially if the content of advice is agreeable and the personal relationships and timeframe involved are favourable. Minister and adviser typically share a similar although often unbalanced need to understand both their own and each other's jobs in the limited time available between appointment and removal or retirement. Both must enhance their understanding of the tricks of each other's trade but only the Minister must convert that new-found knowledge into public speech. This alone would guarantee the Minister responsibility and therefore dominance, but he still remains dependent. The prospects of a fruitful alliance between Minister and Service Chief are good.

This relationship overshadows all other relationships between civil and military actors. It is lucrative, conventional, authorised and makes the influence of other civil-military actor relationships seem insignificant. However, return on investment by the profession in any indoctrination and/or other assistance provided to a Minister is highly sensitive to his or their intellectual capacity, interest level and agreement. The relationship could hardly narrow the availability of advice more than it does. An election, a swing in political fortune or any number of natural causes over which the professional has no control can immediately cut the channel. Even politicians moved out of Defence or Cabinet become entirely dependent on how a new Minister chooses to frame and share the advice he or she is given by permanent military professionals.

The Minister and Service Chief relationship imposes firm but necessary controls on free speech, thereby achieving the necessary environment of confidence and security, but it does little to meet professional military obligations to those outside the executive. A good working relationship can generate a high return for defence in general but this favours short-term outcomes over long-term priorities.

Under the current model there are few links between professionals and political representatives that are both authorised and enduring. Issues requiring a longer-term view will inevitably suffer while the ideas of military professionals on defence and security are advanced to such a restricted audience. Contributions to the wider defence debate will tend to be sporadic. Improvement, measured in actually or potentially enhanced understanding by the public and politicians in general as opposed to those particularly interested within the executive, is likely to remain elusive or at least be severely limited.

## Fluid institutions

Actors using institutions in a political arena can be counted on to stretch the associated statutes, rules and regulations in pursuit of their aims. Conventions and customs are even more vulnerable to misuse and abuse. Their interpretation may be debatable and their ideals are difficult to enshrine in law. Institutions by themselves do not fully protect the public interest from being manipulated. The probability of such exploitation is likely to be proportional to the political gain and inversely proportional to the ability of a political opponent, or an apolitical actor such as the military professional, to prevent such an action. This is the same as saying that an actor might risk activities around or over the margins of due process and accepted practice, or tread new ground in public policy where and when the potential gain justifies the risk of doing so.

The military professional has only limited influence over the structure and operation of the political institutions within which he or she must exist and operate, and this influence is very contextual. Obviously, involvement in policy determination will be limited by subject matter. On defence and security matters participation will be legitimate, but will be recognised by other actors only to the extent that the military participant becomes engaged. Attempts to enforce interdepartmental consultation have been notoriously unsuccessful and the default option appears to be expedience at the expense of involvement. Recent changes in Australia reflect a heightened prominence of security in the wider government agenda as evidenced by the formation of the NSCC. This is more prominent than the New Zealand model where Defence is not viewed as a department where consultation is automatic. Defence must keep an informed watch on issues progressing through other departments, especially central policy coordination departments such as Prime Minister and Cabinet where good relationships will be vital.

Notwithstanding the constitutionally defined role of the Governor General, modern Service Chiefs enjoy and suffer respectively many of the freedoms and limitations of the Public Service in general. It is in this context they can expect to influence the future shape of political and more mundane governmental process, on the same basis as their civilian counterparts, by means of reasoned and considered submissions to the State Services Commission or its Australian equivalent. The Australian and New Zealand military professions operate within a general framework of procedure that has minimal allowance for any special security or defence related requirements.<sup>6</sup>

If a point of difference is to be made on the basis of the peculiarity of the military role in government, it will need to be made with relevant proof, such as would be provided by difficulties of command or management in an actual or looming crisis situation. In these circumstances it is more likely to be convincing, attract bipartisan support and probably be ratified and implemented. Hypothetical deficiencies exposed by paper exercises or scenario planning will not command the same attention and imply the same urgency as real life difficulties. In a more benign environment, even if operationally active, it is probably more likely that the institutional status quo, the

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<sup>6</sup> Although the Howard Government's formation and use of the NSCC perhaps indicates a return to segregation of defence policy from mainstream public service, such as was characteristic of the post-World War II Navy, Army and Air Boards.

expression of procedures that define and bound activity, is the most favourable that can be expected.

### **Shaping ideas**

The remaining portion of our democratic model, the realm of ideas, is the most susceptible to military influence for a number of reasons. Ideas are durable and invasive. Once framed they exist and may endure independently of both their origin and their audience. Hence they exist independently of any formal relationship and are less constrained by potential limitations. Therefore, compromise or violation of conventional boundaries of contact between officers and subjects of the state are not inevitable.

Ideas are most difficult to control. Even were it desirable, restricting their dissemination is difficult and therefore their impact is near impossible to eliminate. Furthermore, their existence and the intellectual harmony and discord they comprise are fundamental to pluralism. The discussion of ideas is the appropriate channel through which the military professional can and must exercise his or her obligation to inform society.

Ideas will undoubtedly change, and they can be changed. The current supply, exercise and level of agreement and disagreement with ideas regarding security, defence, policy in general and the supporting processes will affect not only what the actors will do but also how they will use the institutions. The military has not only an ability to influence but also a duty to do so. As a part of the bureaucracy they are custodians of an enduring public interest that in its purest forms transcends the detail of petty politics and the machinations of short-term political gain, and can only be delivered in a context of long-term provision, attention and nurture. Military professionals are the repository of a multifaceted view on the historical, legal, moral, ethical, cultural and technical problems of violence, especially as legitimised under the notion of state sovereignty and the international system. It is their grave responsibility to analyse, interpret and evaluate the past, present and future of conflict in a particular social context of which they are themselves part and according to a value system with which they are aligned.

This is one description of the military professional. Devoid of ideals, soldiers become mercenaries and the profession just another job where services are delivered for pay. In such circumstances just wars waged by societies and civilisations are replaced by the rule of raw might, where action is relatively unconstrained and yet simultaneously not enabled by other pillars of national power: diplomacy and responsible, representative military capacity. If professionals shirk that responsibility then they do not only themselves but their constituents (the people) and also their controllers (government) a disservice.

The burning question then must be how to best discharge that duty.

## CHOOSING CHAMPIONS

### The problems with Service Chiefs

As already argued the link between profession and government is primarily served by the interaction between Service Chiefs and the Minister. This relationship is unchallenged and unequalled.

Chiefs are promoted from a pool of technical specialists and gradually versed in the political skills required of the position, mainly through experience in the environment at more junior levels. Much attention is given to broadening the minds and appreciation of experienced unit commanders with a view to breeding generalists and potential generals. This is proper and sufficient investment in their future roles as advisers to politicians. Only with a wide-ranging viewpoint and a perception of conflicting priorities can a Service Chief or his or her immediate advisers make sensible recommendations on the priorities that a politician must balance. Even if those recommendations are supported by a narrow technical specialisation the same principles can be used to filter the advice of immediate subordinates representing other services, corps or branches. Compared to the general population and even government actors, officers in these very senior rank levels must have high levels of familiarity with current military operations and unmatched access to intelligence.

Despite this, once established in their position they often find themselves hamstrung.<sup>7</sup> They are poorly placed, relative to others in their organisation, to comment on, discuss and debate defence and security in both public and private professional arenas. Therefore, they are also limited in what they can do to actively foster the development of the profession.

Despite a decade of organisational renewal initiatives and modifications to the traditional authority and responsibility models of both core and non-core military functions<sup>8</sup> the military profession remains fundamentally hierarchical. An ethic of obedience, loyalty and the presence of compulsion to enforce the same create an environment where the capacity, permission and ability to exert influence outside the organisation in any way whatsoever are either mutually supportive or disruptive, depending on one's position in that hierarchy. An individual's potential influence may depend on his or her level of knowledge and skill and therefore be in rough proportion to experience, which can equal position within the hierarchy. Influence is tightly bound to seniority by convention, order and instruction. Additionally, indoctrination into and developing familiarity with this environment is more likely to lead those with tenure into accepting the current situation as satisfactory. Conservatism can become endemic. Senior prerogative is likely to be gradually accepted by an individual that progresses through the ranks. Once among the ranks where significant, albeit limited, external power and influence is concentrated, an individual is highly unlikely to disperse that power.

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<sup>7</sup> A former RNZAF Chief of Air Staff has commented that he was happy to have redesigned the uniform hat during his tenure.

<sup>8</sup> Examples include the Defence Reform Program, RNZAF Project Refocus, RNZAF AIRQ (TQM), RAAFQ (TQM), and Business Process Re-Engineering.

While never surrendering their original allegiance, loyalty and professional technical competence, senior officers become more and more politically aware and oriented. Among their many professional obligations, service and especially advice to the current government become relatively more important parts of their duty. They remain professionally obligated to society as a whole but they become the most bureaucratic of the military professionals.

Facing a decreasing connection with operations, a structurally induced partiality to conservatism<sup>9</sup> and advancing age, the Service Chief designate is transformed from serving solely at the pleasure of the Crown into a contracted Output Executive<sup>10</sup> directly responsible to the government of the day.<sup>11</sup> Is it constructive and/or fair to place the responsibility for the long-term health of the organisation in the hands of an individual or a small collection of individuals so bound? Three points are relevant to their potential as advocates for the profession: their conditions for appointment, their conditions for removal, and the nature of the relationship between such contractualism and broader principled behaviour.

### **The rise of objective control**

The power of appointing Service Chiefs is dispersed. The procedures for appointment of senior commanders in Australia and New Zealand are roughly similar and based on sound principles that keep appointments largely apolitical. Although a choice is normally offered from a range of candidates, opening the way for political favour, more than lip-service is paid to the candidates' seniority, something over which the executive has had limited or no control up to that point. Despite its drawbacks, having seniority as a qualification for a post such as CDF disciplines the selectors.

Appointments must be taken at least having noted the advice of officials. They must also be ratified by the Governor General, to whom the individual appointed or commissioned remains ultimately responsible. Both the Minister and the Commander-in-Chief must either act in compliance with received advice or at variance only with good reason. 'Good' reason may be defined by its robustness under cross-examination or criticism by those actors in the political sphere, such as opposition members or press, who might choose to challenge. Where responsibility cannot be so easily accounted for, as in the Vice-Regal case, the convention is for action to be taken in accordance with counsel received. In Australia the Governor General's titular rights are to advise, to encourage and to warn,<sup>12</sup> a formula not contradicted by any New Zealand constitutional legislation or principles.

Other than in extenuating circumstances, such as infirmity, illegal action or gross impropriety,<sup>13</sup> the term of a Chief will end in a predictable manner at a predictable time according to contract. Early removal or dismissal is possible but again the power

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<sup>9</sup> Norman F. Dixon, *On the Psychology of Military Incompetence*, Cape, London, 1976.

<sup>10</sup> As of July 2000, the separate ADF Services have been termed 'Output Streams'.

<sup>11</sup> Hawke, 'Defence Personnel Responsible to the Minister: Hawke', in *The Canberra Sunday Times*, 1 April 2001, p. 23.

<sup>12</sup> Walter Bagehot, *The English Constitution*, Fontana, London, 1963 (1867).

<sup>13</sup> The censure of Major General Dodson, the New Zealand Chief of General Staff in September 2001, was by his commander the CDF, which in the opinions of some left the door open for the Government to lose confidence and recommend dismissal by the Governor General, an option not taken. After further issues were exposed Prime Minister Clark admitted that she would rather wait until the end of his contract the following February.

of the mechanism is dispersed among a few. The rarity alone of such an action would guarantee in-depth scrutiny, which might develop into opposition and perhaps legal challenge if motive could be construed as pursuing a partisan rather than public interest.

The contractual relationship does provide a degree of control over the actions of the Output Executive. There has been an increasing tendency to frame such contracts in terms consistent with an overall strategic management framework, such as Governments' Strategic Result Areas. While this might lead one to think that there would be little conflict with what is in the long-term public interest and, therefore, what the Service Chief would desire as the long-term prospect for an individual Service or a Defence Force as a whole, the fact that variable means may be employed in pursuit of those (normally) common and enduring ends complicates the issue.

The professional and his or her employer will continue to differ. Armed forces and their custodian commanders are slaves to the past, that is the force in being, and acolytes of the future, especially the benefit and therefore lure of leading edge capabilities. Executive and professional views will only coincide when the provision of capabilities is possible within social, legal, moral and fiscal constraints. What a country can afford in military provision is exactly what it decides to afford. Harmonious security and defence policy and operations are only likely where alignment, or at least constructive tensions, can be maintained between political and military views on appropriate levels of investment.

The impact of a contractual relationship in the public service can be over-drawn. A contract is mainly a means to clarify, often to individuals of vast experience compared to the elected Minister and other overseers, the edges of doubt and difference that will inevitably arise as they seek to shape their performance to meet Government objectives. A contract is not a prescription of what to do and does not of itself provide certainty as to performance. It does permit the Minister a higher degree of confidence that a manager left to manage will act in pursuit of government objectives, and that doubt about the scope, level, tone and content of a leader's mission will be minimised. The wider and inherently more productive task of the Output Executive is to maintain and invoke a bedrock of ethical and professional behaviour of which a contract is the final guarantor, referred to in activity alignment and review but only invoked in rebuke under extraordinary circumstances.

### **Extra-contractual requirements**

This is particularly relevant to the activity of the military, which although bureaucratic according to a contracted Service definition, must be disposed to be anything but predictable. While a contract is suitable for specifying limits to action it is less suited to defining the pursuit or measurement of essentially relative concepts such as security and defence. It is even more limited in the peculiar arena of military operations where military actors must remain aware of and open to the inherently uncertain and chaotic nature of their business.

But, in order to favour one choice over another, people need information about the range of possible options, not just the politically framed knowledge that is consistent with the assumptions of the ruling elite or one particular segment of society. Even if it is not hotly contested, a political decision must sit somewhere on a continuum

between agreement with all electors and total opposition by the same. People need to know what they should have opinions about. They need access to current information and, where forward plans are under consideration, forecasts on some probable futures. The more that such information is framed in political language and form the more it will foster narrow and sterile debate, risk excluding larger and larger segments of the population, and fail to prevent the ideas of bureaucratic, professional or political groupings diverging from a more generally held popular will.

Such a situation is highly likely if public discussion and debate on defence and security relies too heavily on the politically framed views of the senior sections of the military profession, filtered as they will be through the ideological or rational lens of the ruling executive. Again the people, and other arms of government, will be denied best evidence.

In summary, we can conclude that the best military advice comes from those most current in military affairs; those prepared and accustomed to commit themselves or those like them to the ultimate sacrifice. A wider view of not only their technical specialisation but also an equation that includes other contributory outputs is also necessary. This view must be tempered with acknowledgment that the higher echelons of military service imply bureaucratic limitations on freedom of speech and therefore the provision of best evidence.

How might we rectify or at least improve this situation? A general picture of the roles and tasks and perhaps a program of action are required. The plan could be tested against the enduring realities, requirements and characteristics of the art and science of war and other conflict, such as the legitimacy of and need for a profession to conduct these affairs of state. These factors would suggest that any program would be ongoing, so is more likely to involve a change in the relationships that are constituted of actors, ideas and institutions more than a change to the individual components themselves. If it is to endure, such a program is likely to be one incorporating general principles rather than prescriptive rules. Additionally in the Australian and New Zealand paradigms where military prerogatives are minimal, change in any civil-military interface arrangements would best be evolutionary rather than revolutionary.

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## CHAPTER 7

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# PURSuing DEMOCRATIC DEFENCE

### INERTIA IN DEFENCE INVESTMENT

The public policy models supporting the development, dissemination and implementation of Defence policy in Australia and New Zealand appear to be in transition. Their traditional forms seem to be falling short of the outcomes required by a changing environment.

Continuity has the upper hand over change. The outcome picture continuity presents to actors is coherent, familiar and supported by precedent and experience. Options for change often need to be justified in terms of their total effect. The comfort of certainty tends to force ethereal strategies to be expressed as a question of what military platforms should be employed. This is necessary to keep arguments relatively simple and understandable to a cross section of society and allow a reasonable breadth of idea ownership. Also it enables the next step, that is, definition of the likely range of outcomes, or at least an exposition of the implications of the public policy choices that are being presented.

On the one hand real change must either involve a fairly radical approach to the same strategy or a new strategy. Both are likely to imply an untested force structure and operational concept that has little precedent and experience to recommend it and may be a significant disruption to public policy and funding systems. Its impact may even disrupt the electoral equilibrium, especially where national investments are influenced by 'pork-barrel' politics. If a decision must be made for change then the desire to minimise risk favours force maintenance or improvement. If the situation favours the latter then technological substitution of complete or partial capabilities is likely. Otherwise, even in a declining budget environment, maintenance of apparent force capability is possible by hollowing out other areas of the force or its preparedness. Readiness and sustainability are typically the first casualties when Defence funding declines.

Whether decisions are sought from experts or novices any choice that minimises change in defence strategies and associated force compositions has a greater chance of success. This characteristic implies a fundamental lag between environmental change and institutional or organisational response, prompting those responsible for securing substantial change to employ alternative and sometimes purposefully disruptive policy processes. The default outcome, as shown by the carefully choreographed Green Paper consultation and the opportunistic application of the Select Committee consultation, seems to be a power shift in favour of the executive. At the expense of traditional actors, such as the apolitical bureaucracy, other advice from generalist political appointees and private consultants may rise in prominence and influence. It is difficult to predict the effect of such a change but if a free-ranging servant of

expedience facilitates the release of pent-up pressure for policy change then radical alternatives would seem more likely.

### **Is contestable advice the answer?**

In a way this represents enhanced competition in the provision of advice to government in general and the executive in particular. But if traditional policy models have been inadequate then effects will not be confined to the political elite. If service to voters has also not met expectations they must cope without the direct means or perhaps the immediate motive to hear an alternative perspective, let alone purchase one. In time a significant gap might develop between what an executive might want and what the public might understand and support. The relationship between the government, the military profession and the people is a complex web of interaction where each sphere provides services to the other. Disturbing this balance has the potential to significantly disrupt the democratic process and in the longer-term may not improve the efficiency and effectiveness of policy-making as planned. Like the entry of peripheral but powerful players into any virtual monopoly market new models of advice to the executive require some robust competition law and convention.

The democratic process is not only sensitive to the sources of information but also to its targets. The efficiency and effectiveness of a relationship can be measured by how well expertise and therefore value to actors in other societal spheres is matched with influence. For example, as experts in the profession of arms, military officers and non-commissioned officers must be in communication with **all** the government **and** the people. To do otherwise risks the dissatisfaction of some actors, such as non-executive members of Parliament, as well as the very many electors who are less engaged in debate of the issues. As conventional and accepted processes are compromised policy programs become vulnerable to distortion in the name of expedience and self interest at the expense of the common good.

The executive must be informed of the people's view on issues but be mindful of the professional view on those and other associated subjects. The profession must be sensitive to the people's needs and responsive to the Government's overall agenda. The people must at least know and either accept or tolerate executive decisions, and this is best done in the knowledge of facts combined with professional opinions. All actors must mix in both other spheres for a shared and common interest to develop. Once this relationship is established it must be developed and maintained through commitment to process integrity over content expedience. This is especially relevant to Defence where particular policy proposals rely on risk assessments, not certainties, and are only as acceptable and well-regarded as the supporting assumptions are shared.

## **ENGAGING SOCIETY ON DEFENCE ISSUES**

The current model of interaction between the three spheres of government, people and the military profession relies on limited points of contact. If progress is to be made towards a more vibrant and legitimate Defence discussion these links should be maintained, clarified and enhanced. Other opportunities to build relationships must also be exploited.

**Between executive and people**

Regarding service delivered from people to executive there is certainly scope to improve the methods of polling public opinion and discerning public interest. How this can be done is beyond the scope of this paper but suffice to say that, even if it is limited by democratic peculiarities to domestic application, work towards best practice in public consultation would seem worthwhile. Questions might include further clarifying the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of open versus closed consultation and its likely effect on inclusion and response profiles. Where closed processes find favour better ways of avoiding the impression of contrivance and exclusivity will be necessary. Public confidence in the democratic model will continue to rely on honest and transparent policy aims and objectives and the open and enduring consideration of all possibilities.

There are valuable lessons from our case study of the Green Paper on how to sell decisions to the people. Good policy will always rely on contested ideas, consultation, a unified government position and, optionally, a bipartisan approach. The executive should present a unified position, confidentially prepared by apolitical advisers who can demonstrate commitment to its implementation should that be necessary or agreed.

**Between executive/government and military profession/bureaucracy**

The executive's relationship with the military profession is well-established but still immature. The crux of the problem is to determine the true nature of contractualism and objective control, and what they mean for the profession. The purpose of the contract needs to be better understood not as a prescription for behaviour but as something more precautionary. It may include detail of performance criteria, goals, results and the like but it is better seen as a codification of what professional services a particular executive will require, accept, fund and tolerate.

The range of options the profession may be required to provide, with due notice, is not constrained by a contract between a Service Chief and a Minister. To do so would ignore the inherent uncertainty of the conflict environment to which the profession may be committed and be expected to operate in at short notice. It would also distort the governmental and public perception of the inherent flexibility of military forces and military operations, thereby effectively and unnecessarily limiting the return that is likely to be reaped on the Defence investment.

Points of conflicting interpretation will no doubt arise in this environment. Attention is required to tease out and test such scenarios. Risk factors in the Defence public policy environment should be exposed and mitigated against. The alternative is to remain dependent on the lessons of experience, and therefore vulnerable to the risk that policy process solutions will be sought through either reactionary or radical but almost definitely sudden and highly disruptive structural change.

Both the executive and the profession should engage in and sponsor the development of public policy research. This should include consideration of the specific issues raised by the peculiarities of armed forces organic to, dependent on and yet protective of the state. Oiling and testing the mechanics of Defence governance is a matter of vision, and should be seen as enabling the mission of individual armed forces in a

range of favourable and unfavourable policy environments. On this aspect the comparison of the Australian and New Zealand public consultations and subsequent funding decisions are most interesting.

An increased emphasis on the public policy processes in Defence is seen as a worthwhile, overdue and potentially fruitful area of research. It would go some way to providing a balance with the much wider array of strategic policy knowledge that supports Defence decision-making. But no end of knowing what can be done as strategy will rectify deficiencies in the means of choosing and employing the same. The processes for pursuing national strategic end-states must be robust and durable regardless of the prevailing social, political and economic climates.

When these environments are less favourable to fulfilling the Defence task, successful and smooth resolution of policy choices will only come with a common and equally informed appreciation of the issues. If choices are to be de-politicised then they must be understood, with open emphasis on the consequences of accepting one choice versus another. This will disarm the partisan political actor and inhibit the issue, whatever it may be, from being exploited for political gain at the expense of better public appreciation. Access to Defence information and especially expert opinion must be balanced, cognisant of limited resources, between all spheres to which the profession has an obligation. The public and their opinion formers, government members as their direct representatives, and potential executive candidates are all equally deserving and in need of expert advice. This will not occur without a real commitment to more open government and a commensurate balancing of the resources and opportunities available for all three spheres to interact. Primarily though, the profession must carry and spread the conviction that the publicity and information task is a vital ingredient of a professional Defence force.

### **Between military profession/bureaucracy and people**

There is a range of means available by which the profession can fulfil its educative obligation. Scholarly discussion within the profession is the first ingredient, with a range of options available to translate messages for different audiences. Indeed, if a choice had to be made then at least the former puts ideas in place that might subsequently be referred back to, interpreted separately or developed by other agencies. Even a solely internal dialogue is better than no dialogue at all.

This is not the same as leading debate. If the profession rides ahead of discussion, keeping ahead of the development of new ideas, not only will it be recognised as innovative but it will retain the initiative. A focus on the future will prevent the profession becoming bogged in the political quagmire that will often develop out of the executive's primary distraction with the immediate success of its policy program, its social impact and its influence on future electoral fortunes.

The ongoing defence debate needs to be separated from the major concerns of the executive. The executive must have advisers to argue the points of priority as they arise. It can and will use its apolitical permanent civil servants, admirals, generals and air marshals, its close political appointees and also its fee-for-service subject or process oriented consultants. The mix of interaction with these sources of advice will be determined by the nature of the current agenda and its results will drive what the armed forces do here and now, as well as in the near future. The program of current

activities and operations will be the concern of the executive's principal military advisers and also the objectives against which those advisers will be assessed.

None of this should prevent a separate level of vigorous, rigorous and stimulating debate occurring in parallel. Nor should such a process, the lifeblood of a profession, be hidden from public view. Indeed, it serves to inform and educate even without direct interaction because ideas brought forward cannot be easily retracted. Participation in this debate is not the primary role of the Service Chief or his immediate advisers since their participation could often transgress the boundaries of loyalty to the executive. However, as previously mentioned, a minimalist interpretation should be taken of this requirement for confidence as most of the time many issues are not of direct relevance to the executive's program. Therefore, they are not in the contestable, controversial or politically embarrassing realms.

Even where there are tough questions to be considered there is no conflict in most members of an armed force being engaged in discussing the merits of an issue. A key perception is that they value the process, and the freedom to engage in it, over the actual idea itself. This behaviour allows the professional approach to be taken. A true professional will be able to say one thing in debate and do another in the performance of his or her routine duties. They will recognise that the strength of the idea is fundamentally tied to the context in which it is being considered. They will relish the system they defend as it permits the continuing consideration of alternative perspectives. If their argument is good enough then it will either succeed or endure until the next opportunity.

This debate need not be a solely formal process. There are numerous opportunities and avenues by which it can be supported and fostered across a range of public activities. Either established written positions or more current oral interpretations could be promoted on everything from military history to current affairs or social policy. The military professional can contribute to discussions on ethics, law and morals across a variety of venues from mass media to tertiary education, and even as far down as high school level subjects such as social studies.

The issues under discussion need not be humanities focused. Opportunities exist in technical fields where military professional expertise in often leading edge areas of research and application are highly valued by civil scholars and practitioners alike. Given the aim of greater breadth and depth in professional-public interaction, peace groups would seem a logical target. The purpose of enhancing and developing links is not to indoctrinate or convert to a particular party line but to enrich the standard of the debate and therefore increase the chance of an informed and valid public interest being developed. Not even traceable logic or rationale would be key indicators of success. Persistence and presence are more important than a reasoned consensus.

### **Who are the missionaries?**

Aside from the already mentioned constraints on Service Chiefs, there are no particular criteria for military professionals to qualify for or disqualify from participation in public discussions. Of course it happens naturally when sailors, soldiers and airmen discuss their roles and tasks with family, friends and associates.

Varying levels and types of experience will suit some avenues and subjects better than others. Middle ranking officers might offer a younger perspective than the typical retired, and sometimes visibly tired, military commentator. Recent recruits could capitalise on their unmatched psychological and cultural proximity and connection to wider, albeit normally younger sections of society. Senior commanders not in the direct team of Ministerial advisers should be able commentators on mass media, and would be viewed credibly on matters military. Why should an Australian or New Zealand flag, general or air officer not be well-qualified to give an opinion on military operations and campaigns, within the constraints of operational security, wherever in the world they may be happening. Some specialisation would be advisable since after all the profession has some obligation to and interest in promoting its own image. However, unless an armed force wants to be characterised by individuals with widely separated levels of commitment and therefore compatibility then again, participation and reach is to be valued over conformity and rigour.

## **CLOSING THE GAP**

Broadening the contact opportunities between professionals and public can be viewed in terms of our original three-sphered model of society. The void between the general populace and the specialist sub-groups of government and profession represents a potential gap in understanding, communication and therefore interest. Reducing this gap on matters of security and especially defence is a key role for the military professional. Shirking behind excuses such as resource shortage or lack of critical mass does not rectify the deficiencies that inattention will inevitably create. Professionals must do what they can, with that they have, where they are, which in smaller armed forces with high structural overheads may mean a higher reliance on the personal commitment of the individual to pursue the interests of the profession. If this means that educational objectives, duty statements and funding frameworks are well provided with justification that service is more than just a job, then so be it.

The initiative for a new approach to public affairs and the wider civil-military interface rests with the leaders of the profession. Their interpretation of the relationship orders the current state of relative silence and disconnection. It is their blanket application of their own contractual and ethical free speech limitations over the whole of their Services that constrains discussion opportunities and contributes to an overly cautious and risk-averse communication culture.

However, it is an easy but deceptively comfortable state to be in. Complacency alone is sufficient cause. Only a conscious decision to change, an ongoing commitment to engagement and a realisation of the dire consequences of losing the initiative will support the effort required to close the inevitable gap between society, its democratically elected leaders and its armed forces.

## **CONCLUSION**

Defence is an expensive business, but it is also deadly. People invest in providing for their security and the security of their nations, their state, and those with whom they ally or share common goals. It is important that the public gets value for its defence

dollar, but this won't come without due attention to defining and pursuing exactly what it means by security, including how, where and when it wants to be defended. Defence is too important for generals and politicians, either separately or together. It must be a duty for all society.

Defence decisions today are not as simple as those prompted by concerns for homeland defence and national survival in the face of invasion. We pursue more contrived and complicated security concepts. Peacekeeping and other precautionary operations aimed at containing conflicts before civil or general international war break out conform more to a comprehensive and pre-emptive security model. This is the typical expression of today's advanced societies as they seek to preserve, to build and to endure. We seek a better world through active contributions to the maintenance of world order and justice.

When we recognise an uncertain, erratic and unpredictable security environment the line between war and peace becomes a zone of relative conflict. The distinction between crisis decision-making and normal governance blurs. Major discontinuities such as mobilisation and pause periods are reduced or eliminated. Armed forces come as they are and societies go to war, or its modern equivalent, without much chance or capacity to think on their feet. In such an environment routine debate and discussion on raising, training and sustaining armed forces is not only desirable but a vital link in the chain of social responsibility for military action.

In pursuing security, societies still send armed forces on missions not just because they are fine individuals, but because they can kill and will kill if necessary. Soldiers, sailors and airmen are merely the instrument of a society's decision to wage war or use violence, whatever the end. It is a society and the people within it that must be ready to risk sharing the guilt as much as the glory.

Therefore, the moral obligation on individuals is not one that tolerates apathy and acceptance of second-best politics, but one of vigorous public engagement and commitment to improving the determinations associated with such weighty issues. It is not enough to say our state is small, we can do little, we can rely on the reasoning of others to justify our own actions and therefore may side-step the sophistication of modern government. Weapons of war must be ready but without the comprehensive control born of in-depth contemplation and deliberation their users may stand accused as self-interested and careless rather than as a force for a wider if not global common good. Democracy might be exportable and its form variable between sovereign states, but its ultimate value is in its support for international as well as domestic peace.

Extinguishing life, on either side of a conflict, is not legitimised purely by a state-centred and valued end. Whether one's perspective is humanist, religious, legal or otherwise, the legitimacy of democracies acting with force beyond their own limited boundaries also depends on virtuous decisions and decision processes. Without such procedural virtue a state is as reckless building its defences as it is ignoring them.



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## APPENDIX 1

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### EXCERPTS FROM THE GREEN PAPER

# DEFENCE REVIEW 2000: OUR FUTURE DEFENCE FORCE

## FOREWORD

This discussion paper marks a new approach to making defence policy. Australian governments have not in the past extensively consulted the community on matters to do with national security. We are consulting now because it is important that all Australians should have their say on the important defence choices we face.

The Government is conducting a fundamental review of defence policy. A review of this depth has not been carried out since the mid-1980s. In the intervening decade-and-a-half there have been fundamental changes in our strategic environment, increasing cost and budgetary pressures on the Defence Organisation, and important changes in military technology. These developments require us to look again at the basic premises of our defence policy.

Australians have a right to expect that the Government will do whatever is necessary to keep the country safe from possible threats. But what exactly is 'necessary' in these new circumstances? Our answer must recognise that there are limits to what any government can realistically afford to spend on defence. So some difficult policy choices have to be made.

- What do we want our armed forces to be able to do?
- Where do we want our forces to be able to operate?
- What is the best way to structure the Defence Force?
- What is the best way to spend the Defence budget?

In this paper we set out the issues and the options for all Australians to consider. This is not a statement of Government policy. We have not yet taken decisions on these issues. Those decisions will be made and published later in the year after taking this consultation phase into account.

This paper explains how you can be involved in this policy debate in a number of different ways. We encourage all Australians to express their views on these critical defence issues.

John Howard, MP  
Prime Minister

John Moore, MP  
Minister for Defence

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Government is conducting a fundamental review of our defence policy to take account of major changes in our strategic environment, important changes in military technology and the increasing costs and budgetary pressures for the Defence Organisation. As part of this review we want to listen to the views of the Australian community on defence. The review will focus on the big issues—the key choices that shape our military capabilities. To do that, we have to take into account financial and strategic realities.

Some difficult policy choices have to be made.

- What do we want our armed forces to be able to do?
- Where do we want our forces to be able to operate?
- What is the best way to structure the Defence Force?
- What is the best way to spend the Defence budget?

The Services of the Defence Force must fight as a joint organisation, but in deciding how to develop our air and maritime forces, we face a number of choices.

- What levels of adversary capability must our forces be able to handle?
- Do we want to be able to defend Australia against any regional power, or against the lower-level military capabilities available in our nearer region?
- Can we maintain within realistic budget limits a full range of air and maritime capabilities giving the Australian Defence Force (ADF) diversity and flexibility, or should we specialise in one or two capabilities, putting lower priority on others?
- Should we keep our forces prepared for operations at short notice, or can we assume we would have enough warning of a crisis to bring them up to combat readiness?

There are also key choices in developing our land forces.

- What size forces do we want to have ready for rapid deployment?
- How long do we want to be able to sustain forces in the field?
- Do we want our land forces to have capabilities to operate in more intense combat environments?
- How much capability do we want in order to deploy and insert land forces in potentially hostile environments?
- Do we want the capability to expand our army quickly?

In this discussion paper, we look at a range of issues that are the important background to these key choices about the type of Defence Force Australia needs. Here is a brief summary of the topics the paper covers.

## Strategic Fundamentals

**Is War a Thing of the Past?** Some people argue that long-term trends in international affairs are making wars less likely, especially major wars between nations. The international system works in many ways to reduce the risk of problems degenerating into wars, but we should not assume that major wars cannot happen.

**Military Operations Other Than War.** Over the past few years the unique capabilities of armed forces have been used in an increasing number of non-combat operations. We have undertaken many different types of operations, including famine relief and other forms of humanitarian assistance, peacekeeping and combat operations.

**Key Strategic Changes.** Our region is extraordinarily dynamic and complex. Regional economic growth will contribute to regional security over the longer term. It also is likely to lead to expanding military capability in the region. Much will depend on how the rising powers of our region define their future greatness.

**Regional Defence Capabilities.** Many of Asia's bigger defence budgets were only marginally affected by the economic crisis. In the last year the defence budgets of many affected countries have again started to increase. If larger defence budgets in our region continue to expand air and maritime capabilities, our relative military capability will come under pressure.

**What Are Our Strategic Interests?** Our strategic interests are engaged directly in relations between the Asia-Pacific's major powers. Our most immediate strategic interests are in the arc of islands stretching from Indonesia to the islands of the Southwest Pacific.

**Defending Against Whom?** At present no country has any intent to use armed force against Australia. But we do need to take account of what capabilities are needed to attack us effectively. An invasion could not be mounted by any country in our region now, though many already have the capacity for minor attacks.

**Defending an Island Continent.** Our strategic environment is fundamentally maritime, though defending Australia against a major adversary does not mean just the defence of the coastline. If we have the capabilities to deny our air and sea approaches to hostile ships and aircraft, we can defend our continent. Land forces would also be critical, especially in some lower-level contingencies.

**Alliance vs Self-Reliance.** The choices we have made over the last twenty-five years about the type of forces we need have been shaped by the policy of self-reliance. From our alliance relationships we can expect in the future to receive support, including military support, in any crisis that directly threatens our security.

**Independent Action vs Coalition Operations.** Coalition operations have become almost the norm today. Investment in interoperability may need to be a key priority.

**Defending Australia vs Regional Commitments.** Some will argue we should maintain a narrow focus on the defence of our territory. But there could be circumstances in which our strategic interests might require us to commit forces to

operations overseas. Choosing between these demands might not be necessary if we can do both at reasonable cost.

### **Designing Our Defence Force**

**Quality, Quantity, Diversity.** To keep defence spending affordable, we will have to make tough choices and take some considered risks. The quality we need is relative to the kinds of opposing capabilities we might face in combat.

**Conventional Wars vs Non-Combat Military Operations.** The ADF does disaster relief at home, humanitarian assistance abroad, evacuations, search and rescue, coastal surveillance and enforcement, and helps the police in counter-terrorism. But our Defence Forces have been structured, trained and equipped to respond to military threats to our security.

**Current Capability vs Future Capability.** It takes many years to complete a major capability development project that provides tomorrow's capabilities. But unexpected demands on today's forces can arise with little warning. We need to take account of both factors.

**What Defence Capabilities Do We Need?** Our aim is to select a set of capabilities that gives Australia the widest range of military options to support our strategic interests, at an affordable cost. For the defence of our own territory, we would need air and naval capabilities that could deny our approaches to an adversary. For defence of our regional and global interests, we would need capabilities that could contribute to a coalition. Individual circumstances would decide the nature of our contribution.

**Air Combat.** Australia's air combat capability is based on our fleet of 71 F/A-18 aircraft. Key strengths are the skills of the personnel who operate, maintain and support the aircraft. At present we are losing parity with the best regional airforces so we are upgrading the F/A-18's radars, missiles and electronic warfare systems. Later this decade we face one of the most important decisions—how to retain our air combat capability after the F/A-18s.

**Strike.** Strike is the capability to target an adversary's forces and infrastructure in their own territory, as well as in transit to Australia. The muscle of our strike force is the unique capability provided by our 33 F-111 long-range bombers. In the next few years we must consider how to maintain our strike capability after 2020.

**Maritime Interdiction.** Australia's maritime forces include surface ships and their helicopters, submarines, maritime patrol aircraft, and F-111 and F/A-18 aircraft that are very effective for attacking hostile ships. Anti-ship missiles and attack by hostile aircraft are increasingly important for us as regional countries improve their capabilities. Once problems are resolved, the Collins will be among the best submarines in the world.

**Land Capabilities.** The core of our land force is two high-readiness infantry brigades, each around 3000 personnel. We also have Special Forces—highly trained specialist troops invaluable in a wide range of situations, including counter-terrorism. Reserve brigades around Australia provide the bulk of our sustainment capability.

**Information Capabilities.** Information capabilities are about applying the ideas of the knowledge economy to the business of fighting wars. With a small but sophisticated force we are well placed to keep a lead in our ability to use what we have to the best effect.

### **Defence Spending Issues**

**How Much Does Australia Spend on Defence?** Australia spends around \$13 billion or \$700 per person on Defence annually. Funding for Defence has been held steady in real terms in recent years though it has declined from around 2.5 per cent of GDP in the mid-1980s to about 1.9 per cent in 1999. The level of Defence funding is an important social choice—any change in this funding affects the level of taxes or the amount of money available for other Government programs.

**How Does Defence Spend Its Budget?** Around 60 per cent of the Defence budget is spent on current capability, with a further third spent on investing in future capability. Some expenditure is committed to providing support to our people in uniform and takes account of the special nature of serving in the armed forces.

**Efficiency and Reform Programs.** The Government is determined to increase Defence's efficiency further to give value to taxpayers. The next series of reforms and efficiency measures need to be bold.

**Budget Pressures.** Major investment costs are rising in real terms. A number of our key war-fighting platforms will become unaffordable or no longer cost-effective to maintain within a few years of each other after the middle of this decade. The cost of recruiting, training and retaining ADF personnel accounts for a major slice of the budget.

**Funding Future Capability.** Further efficiencies offer some potential over the next few years to find resources for combat capabilities without increasing funding. However, maintaining the current range of capabilities would require an increase in funding over the longer term. Alternatively, if we wish to maintain current levels of funding permanently, we will need to reduce some current capabilities. Whatever is decided, some difficult choices about trade-offs will remain to keep the Defence budget within reasonable bounds.

### **The Future Defence Force**

**What Sort of Force Will We Need in the Future?** Responsible planning can only be done by making deliberate and informed decisions about priorities. How much weight should be placed on the more likely involvement in peacekeeping compared with the less likely, but far more serious consequences of an attack on Australia? What are the likely dynamics of regional security and what implications does this have for the timing of major acquisitions of capability?

**Forces for Defeating Attacks on Australia.** The most important capabilities for defeating attacks on Australia are likely to be those that provide air defence and maritime strike. It would be possible to capably defend Australia against attacks, from within the current budget. This could place some limits on our ability to contribute to security in the region. If we want to retain more options for contributing to regional

security it is unlikely this could be achieved without additional funding over the longer term.

**Forces Structured for Regional Security.** A policy focusing on contributing to regional security could be a legitimate alternative to structuring against a direct attack on Australian territory. One option might be to develop our land force capabilities in a way that would allow them to contribute more to higher-intensity conflicts, though this would be an expensive approach and limit other options. A different approach would involve placing higher value on maritime forces.

**Military Operations Other Than War.** Military operations other than war can include assistance for a range of civil emergencies and providing forces for humanitarian assistance. Enhancing our peacekeeping capabilities would require reductions in other capabilities to maintain the budget within realistic bounds.

**Evaluating the Options.** In a military crisis it is the force that we have at that precise moment in time that will need to be used. Whatever choices are made about the size and structure of our armed forces for the future, our goal should be that they are, qualitatively, world class.

## INTRODUCTION

### Why Have a Defence Consultation Process?

Towards the end of this year, the Government will make a number of important decisions that will determine the future of our Defence Force. In the past, input into these decisions would have been confined to a select group of experts. However, this Government wants to know what all Australians think about our defence needs. Our aim is to be more open about the business of making defence policy.

So this discussion paper is not a statement of Australia's defence policy—that will come later in the year. This paper is intended to describe the key questions for our future defence needs so that the public can better see and understand the issues that the Government must make decisions about.

With the release of this discussion paper, the Government is starting a public consultation program to listen to the views of the Australian community. This will help to inform the Government's thinking as we develop the Defence Policy Statement later in the year. We want to focus on the most important defence decisions and choices about military capabilities that the Government must take on behalf of all Australians. And we have to take into account important financial and strategic realities.

Public reaction to the discussion paper will not necessarily produce a consensus on key defence and security issues, but that is not the goal. The Government wants to encourage a vigorous, challenging and constructive discussion. We hope that the discussion paper and consultation program will play a valuable role in informing the community about our defence needs, and assist the Government in producing the Defence Policy Statement.

## How Will the Consultation Process Work?

Members of the public can forward written responses to the discussion paper directly to the consultation team or through their local Federal Member of Parliament.

The public consultation program will be run by a team led by Mr Andrew Peacock. The team will make sure that all interested people and groups have an opportunity to have their views heard and that these are passed to the Government.

Interested people can attend public meetings which the consultation team will hold around Australia. Particular care has been taken to ensure that regional and rural Australia will be able to participate. At these meetings, the team will present a short video covering the main issues raised in the discussion paper and then invite questions and comments. The team will note the main themes that emerge from the discussions that follow.

Industry, academic, local government and community groups will have opportunities to meet the consultation team as it travels around Australia.

Comments on the discussion paper can also be made through the feedback facilities on the website at [whitepaper.defence.gov.au](http://whitepaper.defence.gov.au).

The consultation team will report to the Government on the themes emerging from community feedback. That report will be a valuable resource for developing the Defence Policy Statement due for release later this year. The report will be made available to the public after the Policy Statement is delivered.

The consultation team's visits will be widely advertised and further information will be made available in newspapers and on the website.

## Structure of this Paper

The discussion paper has been designed to bring out the key issues for decision that the Government needs to address in the Defence Policy Statement later this year. We ask four key sets of questions.

*What is happening globally and in our region?*

- In the **Strategic Environment** section we ask questions about the continuing role of military force in world affairs and about how Defence fits into the way Australia manages its international relations. We ask how global and regional developments affect our defence interests.

*What do we want the Defence Force to be able to do?*

- In the section titled **Australia's Defence and Strategic Interests** we explore what Australia's strategic interests mean for Defence. What roles might we want the Defence Force to be able to do, globally, regionally, close to home and on the Australian landmass itself? We also look at some of the key issues that affect the types of military capabilities we have in the force.

*What does our current force look like, and how much does it cost?*

- In the **Capability and Budget Issues** section, we look at the key military capabilities needed for defending our interests—air combat, strike, maritime interdiction, land capabilities and information capabilities. We also review the Defence budget, the prospects for making further efficiencies and the pressures on current spending.

*What are the options?*

- Finally, in the section titled **What Sort of Force Will We Need in the Future?**, we review the different ways we could shape the Defence Force to meet different strategic objectives.

This paper is not a statement of policy. It's the starting point for a constructive and informative debate.

The discussion paper is designed so that people do not need to read it all the way through. The issues are presented as separate topics. Although there is a very clear connection between the sections, people can go directly to particular topics that interest them or read the material in a different order to the way it is structured here.

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## APPENDIX 2

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# EXCERPTS FROM AUSTRALIAN PERSPECTIVES ON DEFENCE: REPORT OF THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION TEAM

SEPTEMBER 2000

### FOREWORD

The report of the Community Consultation Team represents an important stage in a new approach to making defence policy. It is the first time any Australian Government has made a serious and determined effort to find out what the Australian public thinks about our national security. We would like to commend the Prime Minister, The Hon John Howard MP, and the Minister for Defence, The Hon John Moore MP, for this important initiative. We would also like to thank the Leader of the Opposition, The Hon Kim Beazley MP, and the Shadow Minister for Defence, Mr Stephen Martin MP, for their support.

The fact that we have undertaken the consultation process reflects our recognition of the importance of community involvement in, and support for, the major decisions that are needed now about the future capabilities of the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Many Australians welcomed the unique opportunity to be able to participate in the community consultation process, and this was reflected in their enthusiastic participation in the public meetings and the large number of written submissions. The report is based on the opinions of the very many people who were highly motivated and came forward because of their interest in Australia's defence and security.

What follows is a report to Government on what the Australian public has told us; that is, what Australians think must be done to ensure that we continue to have military forces that can safeguard and protect Australia.

It was clear to us as we travelled the country that the ADF is held in high regard. The achievements, traditions and culture of the Defence Force form an important part of the fabric of Australian life. The pride that Australians have in the Defence Force, as displayed at ANZAC ceremonies and more recently in relation to our troops in East Timor, was evident to us in towns and cities across our country.

For some, this pride is expressed through service in the Regular or Reserve forces, for many others it is linked to business and industry activities that support the national defence effort. The overriding sense, though, is that maintaining a modern and capable defence force is fundamentally important to the protection of our national interests and the maintenance of the Australian way of life. It is very clear to us that many in the community are keen to work with governments to ensure we have a defence force that can achieve those objectives.

## **SUMMARY OF KEY FINDINGS**

Our key findings about the Australian public's perspectives on defence are presented at the end of each section of the report. For ease of reference, they are also presented below in a consolidated form. However, there are a number of key points we wish to highlight at the outset.

The first key point is the importance most people attached to the issues being addressed. The people who spoke to us recognised that the decisions about to be taken in the forthcoming Defence Policy Statement would shape Australia's military capabilities for the next twenty years or more. In a world in which new challenges arise almost daily, there is a widespread view that it is vital for Australia to get those decisions right.

It was also clear that there was a widespread appreciation that important changes were under way in our region. Many people were concerned that these changes had heightened instability in the region and introduced a new measure of unpredictability about Australia's strategic outlook. We heard frequent references to the possibility of demands being placed on the Defence Force at very short notice, as happened last year with the deployment to East Timor.

We gained a strong sense that in these circumstances the majority of the public viewed increased investment in our military capabilities as a prudent insurance measure. This contrasts sharply with the views of some academic and bureaucratic commentators. There was a very strong consensus that this is no time for complacency about Australia's national defence effort. The public believes that our military capabilities need to be well-resourced and well-balanced so that the Defence Force can respond quickly and effectively in a wide range of circumstances.

A year ago I would have been far less concerned about national security. But the crisis in East Timor has changed all that. Like many other ordinary Australians, I now realise that we have been complacent, if not naive...

*Elizabeth Turnock, NSW*

The following paragraphs present our more detailed findings in relation to the fundamentals of Australia's strategic policy, the structure and capabilities of the Defence Force, personnel issues, the Reserves, the role of defence industry, defence spending and efficiency measures and the interests of regional Australia.

## Strategic fundamentals

Overall, we found there was basic agreement about the fundamental principles that should underpin our strategic policy. Very few people advocated radical alternatives.

More specifically:

- Most people believe that the first and foremost task for the ADF is the defence of Australia.
- An integral part of this belief is an expectation that the ADF, alone or with coalition partners, should be able to undertake significant operations within the region, particularly in our nearer region.
- Many participants argued that the most immediate threats are non-military, namely illegal immigration, drug smuggling, attacks on information systems and terrorism.
- Participation in peacekeeping operations, particularly in the region, is strongly supported as being in Australia's interest.
- There is strong support for the US alliance and the majority view is that we should strive for as much self-reliance as possible within the context of the alliance.

## Structure and capabilities of the Defence Force

The community sought reassurance that the premiums it paid for defence would be used to build a force that could operate effectively in a wide range of possible circumstances. Many expressed the view that there was no point in under-insuring. Accordingly, there was strong support for a properly equipped, well-balanced force able to undertake combat operations at short notice.

In summary:

- Most people believe the ADF should be structured to maintain a war-fighting capability for the defence of Australia and its interests.
- They argued that such a force could readily be adapted for other roles, such as peacekeeping, but the reverse is not true.
- Most people argued for a better resourced Defence Force and that a properly equipped and balanced force structure provides the best way of coping with all eventualities.
- Many people are worried that the capabilities of all three Services have been cut to the point where they are inadequate for effective and sustained deployment in the region.
- Most participants supported the need for a highly capable ADF. Specifically, there was notable support for:
  - the Army being able to sustain combat operations in two separate locations;

- the Navy retaining a blue water capability based on surface combatants and submarines;
- replacing and expanding the patrol boat fleet;
- maintaining highly capable combat aircraft;
- a capacity for long-range strike operations; and
- maintaining a capability edge in key areas, including intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities.

### **Personnel**

We were struck by the strength of feeling within the community that the vital role people play in ensuring the ADF is an effective fighting force has not been given adequate recognition by governments or the Defence organisation over the past ten years or so. There is a sense of the danger of believing that high technology platforms and weapons alone could safeguard Australia's security.

In summary:

- There is a broad view that the Defence organisation is not giving sufficient attention to personnel issues.
- Many serving members are frustrated by inadequate training opportunities and conditions of service, leading to low morale and poor retention rates.
- There is significant concern about ADF personnel leaving at the point in their career at which they have the knowledge and experience the organisation needs.
- Many submissions argued that the outsourcing of support functions for the Defence Force has been a major contributor to de-skilling and low morale within the Defence workforce.
- There is strong public support for the Government to treat employment in the Services as a unique vocation or way of life, not as just another job.

### **Reserves**

Across Australia there was very strong interest in the issue of the Reserves. The community considered the Reserves had been inadequately supported and under-utilised, but were an integral part of the ADF and needed more attention. There was a strong view that the Reserves were the direct link between the ADF and the community. It was apparent to us that they played a significant role in engendering a sense of community pride and support for the Defence Force.

In relation to the Reserves:

- The public strongly supports the concept of Reserve forces being full partners in the ADF, particularly to help sustain operations. Most people believe there are too many impediments at present for Reserve forces to meet that objective.
- The public expressed strong support for measures that would make it easier to deploy Reserves, and deploy them quickly.

- Greater incentives for reservists and their employers are also strongly supported.
- There is support for a cadet scheme, funded and controlled by Defence.

### **Industry**

The community considered that defence industry must be an integral part of Australia's national defence capability. Industry itself was extremely worried by the spectre of the continued de-skilling of the defence industrial base. There was widespread concern that the treatment of defence industry in the Public Discussion Paper was grossly inadequate and that the issue needed much more comprehensive examination in the forthcoming Defence Policy Statement.

In summary:

- There is strong public support for a sound, competitive domestic industrial base as a key element of the national defence effort.
- There is widespread concern about the decline in Australia's manufacturing capability, the de-skilling of Australia's workforce, including the ADF, and about industry's capacity to support and sustain ADF deployments.
- Industry groups see themselves as a fourth arm of defence capability.
- Defence industry is worried by the increasing gap between stated policy toward industry and its practice.
- Defence industry wants predictability and direction to allow it to plan in a sustainable manner.
- Defence industry wants to see a strong industry aspect in the forthcoming Defence Policy Statement that includes a clear articulation of the longer-term requirements of both Government and industry.

### **Defence spending and efficiencies**

It was clear to us that an overwhelming majority within the community considered that defence spending should be increased. This, however, went hand-in-hand with calls for more efficient management by the Defence organisation.

In summary:

- The public supports an increase in defence funding.
- The public expects greater discipline in defence expenditure.
- Apart from business groups, many people considered that the outsourcing of support functions had been taken too far and was impacting negatively on the operational capabilities of the Defence Force.

### **The interests of regional Australia**

The strong association the ADF has had with regional Australia for almost one hundred years was very apparent to us as we travelled across Australia. There is a

sound relationship between the ADF and local towns throughout regional Australia from which both sides benefit.

The following are our key findings in relation to the interests of regional Australia:

- Regional Australia has great pride in our Defence Force and identifies strongly with the local Reserve units.
- Some communities were concerned that our sea and air borders may be being breached and would welcome an increased ADF presence across the north.
- The presence of Defence in regional Australia provides considerable economic and industrial benefit to the local region.
- There are very strong links between many local communities and the ADF bases.
- Efforts should be made to improve community awareness of the activities of Coastwatch and their linkage with the Regional Force Surveillance Units.

## **THE COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS**

Through the community consultation process the Australian community was given an unprecedented opportunity to contribute to the national Defence policy debate.

The Community Consultation Team undertook to consult extensively and widely and to provide as many avenues as possible for receiving and considering the views of individuals, communities and interests. We recognised the importance of widening the dialogue well beyond the limited number of academic observers, media commentators and interest groups that normally dominate the defence debate. This objective was achieved. More than 2000 people attended the public meetings and, significantly, well over 80 per cent of the submissions were from individual citizens.

Our consultations extended over nine weeks, running from 6 July 2000 to 7 September 2000, and included 28 public meetings, plus meetings with State and local governments, interest groups, business and industry associations in capital cities and numerous regional centres. Throughout the process, a website provided on-line access to the discussion paper and other information, as well as telephone, facsimile and e-mail contact details for comments and submissions.

Over 1100 submissions were received. We appreciate the significant effort that went into the submissions and we warmly thank all who participated in the process.

Of course, we received a wide range of opinions. They ranged from views that all Australians should be armed, that the Defence Force should be equipped with nuclear weapons, to those who were opposed to maintaining any military force. However, as the Prime Minister and the Minister for Defence said at the outset, the process was not designed to establish a consensus. So in the report we have aimed to highlight key judgements that attracted significant majority support.

<b>Web site hits</b>	<b>179,745</b>
<b>Web site visits</b>	<b>105,865</b>
<b>Discussion Paper downloads</b>	<b>6453</b>
<b>E-mail messages</b>	<b>5316</b>
<b>Submissions</b>	<b>1157</b>
<b>Calls and voice-mail</b>	<b>3674</b>
<b>Discussion paper distributed (hardcopy)</b>	<b>17,935</b>
* A web site visit is a series of consecutive requests from a user to an Internet site.	

The vast majority of those who participated in the meetings or submitted their views were positive about the process and keen to participate and build on the initiative. The predominant view was that the process was a positive step in policy development.

This certainly is a new concept, in that the public can give input to such an important process, for the defence of the country and its national interest must be the primary responsibility of the Government. I sincerely hope that this procedure is a great success and that it helps the Government in its deliberations. I also hope that it will not be devalued to 'it was a great idea at the time' and that the status quo will not prevail.

*John Gates, QLD*

Nevertheless, some members of the public were sceptical, even cynical.

I have never come across a more hypocritical and groundless discussion paper in all of my life. Its propaganda is so evident and it is so obvious that the Howard Government is incorporating a Reaganite policy on Defence and social spending...

*Robert Wrona, NSW*

On the whole, though, many observed that a considerable level of interest and momentum had been generated and that the Government should build on this by continuing the discussion with the community on defence issues after the publication of the Defence Policy Statement later this year. Those sceptical of the process will quite possibly be looking for evidence of the degree to which the process is ongoing, as a measure of the Government's commitment to consultation. Either way, there was a strong view that this program of consultation should be seen as the first phase in an ongoing process.



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## APPENDIX 3

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### EXCERPTS FROM

# CHIEF OF DEFENCE FORCE & SECRETARY'S REPORT ON THE INTERNAL DEFENCE CONSULTATION PROGRAM

## FINDINGS

### 1. Views on Defence Policy Issues

The DCP [Defence Consultation Program] has revealed a Defence organisation that is strongly aligned with the community it serves. The feedback received by the Service Chiefs, Group Executives and the Defence Consultation Team during the DCP accord closely with the findings of the Community Consultation Process. The range of views, attitudes and expectations expressed by Defence personnel reflect those of the broader Australian public and provide further evidence of broad consensus within the community on important defence and security issues.

#### 1.1 Strategic Fundamentals

The DCP demonstrated that Defence personnel recognise the complexity and challenges of the Asia-Pacific region and expect that the White Paper must clearly define the future direction of the ADF and the strategic context in which it will operate.

For most Defence members, the defence of Australia is seen as the primary role for the ADF. This includes the ability to operate in the near region and to protect our offshore interests, including our maritime approaches, sea lines of communication and economic resources. During the consultation the term 'regional defence of Australia' gained widespread acceptance. Many in the Army saw operations other than war as being more likely than defence of Australia and more relevant to Defence planners in the current strategic circumstances.

While supported, peacekeeping operations in the region are seen as secondary to the primary role of defence of Australia and should not be a force structure determinant. Peacekeeping operations would, in the main, continue to be conducted in coalition with other countries.

The US alliance is also important and supported. However, it is recognised that Australia does not always share the same interests as others and should be able to operate on its own. Accordingly, support for the alliance was not seen as removing the need for a high degree of self-reliance.

## 1.2 Structure and Capabilities

The overwhelming view is that the ADF should be structured for war not for peacekeeping. The rationale for this is that a force trained for the worst case can more easily adapt to peace keeping whereas the reverse is far more difficult, especially with little or no warning time.

It is apparent that the INTERFET and UNTAET deployments have focussed attention on the strengths (and deficiencies) of the ADF, and have reaffirmed the need for a balanced force that can deploy and be sustained overseas at short notice. The balanced force was described as an integration of land (including Special Forces), maritime and air components able to provide a mix of capabilities that are a regional benchmark.

People strongly and rightly believe the traditions and culture that define the ethos and professional standards of the Navy, Army and Airforce [sic] must be preserved. However, sometimes this is taken too far—not all Defence personnel have yet embraced the concept of ‘jointery’ and the effects of ‘tribalism’ were apparent in discussions on the acquisition of capability. Also, people question the need for the present number of headquarters, arguing that this results in a confusing chain-of-command.

Personnel are seen as a crucial component of capability. They are what gives the ADF its ‘competitive advantage’ and are the key to the ‘knowledge edge.’

There is widespread condemnation of the ‘fitted for but not with’ philosophy. Personnel would rather see quality not quantity in the acquisition of future capabilities. Interoperability is seen as being important but it is realised that the technology gap with the US is widening and will be expensive to close.

The capacity of the ADF to meet new threats to security, particularly unconventional threats (eg. computer network attack) also requires examination.

## 1.3 Reserves

The results of the consultation program highlight the general acceptance of the need for Reserves and improved measures that will enhance their availability, integration and deployability. However, the optimum role and tasks of the Reserves need to be better identified so they can be structured and funded appropriately.

The ability to train Reserve personnel effectively during peacetime and before operations was identified as a key challenge that will require Government commitment (through application of the new legislation) and a determined effort by Defence. Adequate resources need to be made available for the conduct of challenging and more appropriately structured Reserve training to ensure they can achieve their roles and responsibilities.

Initiatives to increase Reserve capability and operational employment have already been approved by Government. The proposed new legislative amendments will provide the ADF with more certainty in the ability to employ Reserves in both war and peacetime. This certainty, in turn, will provide more flexibility in the management and integration of both Reserve and regular personnel and allow the deliberate

inclusion of Reserve forces in future ADF operational planning activities. The Reserves should, consequently, provide the ADF with a significantly more consistent and reliable operational capability in both war and peacetime.

#### **1.4 Defence Acquisition, Industry and Support**

Defence personnel recognise the need for an efficient and effective relationship with Australian industry to achieve a modern and sustainable defence force. They are greatly concerned with the problems recently highlighted in Defence acquisition processes, both at the Defence and Government levels. Within Defence, they are keen to see a more responsive and dynamic system that meets the needs of the users in a timely manner.

They also favour an effective relationship with industry. Subsequent to the release of the White Paper, VCDF's staff will issue in early 2001 a Defence Capability Plan and Defence Capability Development Master Plan with details on key milestones for all new major equipment projects. An unclassified version will be released to Industry.

During the DCP, there was widespread concern and questioning of the capacity of Defence to sustain equipment and provide adequate logistic support. Personnel are also troubled with the impact of inadequate training resources on training standards. Shortages of basic commodities are of particular concern—ammunition and fuel are but two examples—and are a root cause of declining job satisfaction.

There is also a widespread perception that CSP has gone too far; that it has been implemented across Defence for financial imperatives only and without adequate central coordination. It is viewed as having impacted on the operational capacity and flexibility of the ADF.

In particular, concerns were raised on the deployment of the ADF to overseas areas where existing civilian infrastructure may not be available and where contractors may be unwilling or unable to provide assistance. Other concerns voiced during the DCP include the potential unreliability of contractor provided logistic support during higher intensity military operations and the 'de-skilling' of Defence resulting from the transfer of critical knowledge and experience to CSP contractors.

Some of these views may be overstated. In particular, East Timor has demonstrated that CSP is capable of delivering an appropriate level of support, but we will ask the Service Chiefs to take stock of the situation and report back to us.

The impact of the CSP on conditions of service and civilian and military career opportunities is discussed further in the second section on Personnel and Defence.

#### **1.5 The Defence Budget**

Overwhelmingly, the view of our people is that Defence funding should be increased.

Defence personnel are troubled by the impact of budget pressure on their ability to do their job. They perceive they have to do 'too much with less', are unable to see where the savings from efficiency initiatives have gone and consider that some of those

savings should have been returned to them to stem reductions in their conditions of service, let alone improve them.

Personnel believe that adequate Defence spending is an ‘insurance policy’ for the nation by supporting a modern and effective ADF able to meet Government requirements. They know the ADF must be capable of deploying at short notice, surging to meet unpredictable demands and sustaining operations but have doubts whether this can be achieved using pure ‘business templates’.

Improvements being made to our preparedness and financial management systems will enable Defence to present to Government better estimates of the resources associated with the sorts of Defence capabilities the Government wants and, when a contingency arises, the recommended capability options, risks and associated costs.

## **2. Personnel and Defence**

During the conduct of the DCP, personnel took the opportunity to express their feelings on a number of issues beyond the immediate focus of the Discussion Paper. These fall into two broad and interrelated categories; first, their hope that the White Paper will provide a ‘circuit breaker’ for the decline of Defence as a ‘Profession of Arms’; second, the need to arrest the perceived erosion of important and specific conditions of service.

### **2.1 Expectations for the White Paper**

It is apparent that there is considerable decline in the level of morale within Defence and a general feeling that the status of ADF personnel within the broader community is being eroded. This disquiet stems partly from concerns over an underlying ‘hollowness’ in capabilities and limited funding for maintaining high levels of ‘preparedness’. It is also the result of despondency over the longer-term impact of this situation on job satisfaction, retention of trained personnel and attractiveness to potential recruits.

Personnel clearly want Defence to be respected as a professional military organisation and their service as being part of a ‘Profession of Arms’. Personnel see a need for the White Paper to set a new ‘tone’ for the future relationship between Government, Defence and the community—one that clearly acknowledges the unique responsibilities and mission of Defence personnel.

Our people also made the point very strongly that they want the White Paper to recognise the critical need for trained and dedicated personnel to sustain capability and not simply focus on equipment. It must emphasise those capability enhancements necessary for the ADF to undertake the range of tasks expected at a time of regional uncertainty and high operational activity and address the shortfalls in training resources, logistics and other ‘mission critical’ support revealed during the East Timor deployment. The lack of spares, fuel and ammunition is of particular concern to personnel.

## 2.2 Personnel Issues beyond the White Paper

ADF personnel raised a number of related but more specific concerns on declining conditions of service and leadership within Defence. These issues go beyond the scope and terms of the White Paper, although the Policy Statement will provide an important foundation from which to address them.

Civilian personnel are equally dedicated to the performance of Defence and operational reputation of the ADF. They have different expectations to ADF personnel, yet they still desire job satisfaction, career opportunities, appropriate pay and conditions of service.

All Defence personnel recognise that career opportunities exist outside Defence and they can no longer be simply expected to stay without suitable encouragement.

The recruitment and retention of Reserves is another particular challenge which requires a balance between the demands of civilian and military employment.

Issues such as declining job satisfaction, pay and conditions, and increasing disillusionment are driven both by concerns about declining capabilities and funding, as well as cynicism about change and the rationale behind it. The net result is that while people *are* our best asset, there is a strong perception that no more than lip service is being paid to this at present, and this is a primary motivation to leave the Services and the Department. In the face of capability-critical retention (and recruitment) levels, Defence's leadership and Government, must respond comprehensively to the issues raised.

Change fatigue, review and survey overload are all strongly evident—impacting heavily on organisational morale and individual job satisfaction. Defence is perceived to have a poor track record of change management thus far. By way of example, there is much evidence that the reasons for and the benefits accruing from change initiatives—such as the DRP and CSP—are not well understood.

Foremost amongst the concerns with the CSP are:

- the loss of previous respite posting and ship-shore ratio opportunities with their consequent impact on retention;
- the strong belief that in the face of cost savings and rationalisation, people are the first to go, irrespective of the need to keep platforms operational or provide essential support services during contingencies; and
- the disappearance of attractive trade and professional career structures that have previously supported a lifetime career in the ADF.

Defence personnel's concern with the impact of the CSP—including operational readiness and capability development as discussed in section one—will be further assessed by HSC [Head Strategic Command]. We have asked for him to report back to us by 31 January 2001. This will provide a basis to make judgements about the veracity of concerns, possible corrective actions and targeted internal communication as required.

### 2.3 Arresting the Decline in Service Conditions

A factor of the perceived undermining of morale and related decline in job satisfaction is the deterioration in pay and conditions that is supposed to compensate for the demands expected from a 'Profession of Arms'. Income is usually not the main motivator in joining the ADF. Combined with the shortage of training resources, however, the perceived erosion in conditions of service is frequently the 'final straw' in members decisions to leave.

During the consultation process, members highlighted—dissatisfaction with MSBS, reductions or loss of allowances to justify a pay rise, and in particular, changes to conditions for those in operational/remote areas (eg. Remote Locality Leave Travel entitlements and respite postings). Consideration of the welfare of Service Families also was important.

It was difficult for Defence members to reconcile perceived 'penny pinching' in personnel expenditure in the face of what they perceive to be wastage in other areas. While fiscal responsibility must drive everything that we do, personnel strongly believe that military service *is not* a job like any other and it is essential that remuneration arrangements acknowledge the special demands placed on those who choose to serve. We need to ensure that advertising reflects this, together with the acceptance that a viable Defence Force is fundamental to Australia's future.

The employee market in which Defence competes is changing rapidly—built on much more individual employee flexibility and one in which several discrete careers in a lifetime is no longer unusual. This presents particular challenges for Defence in needing to reverse current performance in attracting and retaining personnel of high calibre with the necessary professional skills.

It is widely acknowledged that military and civilian careers within Defence will not be fully commensurate with salary levels and career prospects in the private sector. The challenge is to provide an environment in which pride, job satisfaction and conditions of service are sufficient to meet the recruitment and retention levels required for longer term force sustainability.

We need to grapple with the full complexity of the problem: identifying those important, specialist skills and abilities where there need to be professional opportunities and greater parity with private sector pay scales (such as aviation, engineering and medicine); in other areas enhancing the parity between military and commercial training and professional development; better capitalising on the skills and knowledge of those Reserves and Service personnel who do leave; and, where feasible, providing more flexible entry, exit and re-entry arrangements, not least so we can establish more sustainable career structures in partnership with industry.

### 2.4 The Need for Better Communication

Another challenge for Senior Defence Leadership and Government is to communicate more clearly and comprehensively to staff the rationale behind continued reforms, articulate the benefits of reforms already undertaken, and involve our people throughout Defence in assessing that benefit.

Defence has in the past lacked a capability for strategic and comprehensive organisational communication and the impact now is widespread and detrimental. The relatively new Public Affairs and Corporate Communication Division has been involved closely with the DCP and will be instrumental as we develop and implement our response. This will need to be planned carefully, delivered credibly and be cognisant of the range of other activities and initiatives underway in Defence. It will be at the heart of the Secretary/CDF's Defence Renewal Agenda.

Care also needs to be taken in the type of response we deliver—demonstrating on a number of levels that we acknowledge the credibility of concerns. Any further 'survey', or 'review' activities could significantly undermine our attempts if not handled in a genuine manner.

Fundamentally, we need our people to understand our shared future and the fiscally responsible environment that Defence must operate in. Defence *is not* like any other business, but the challenge is to communicate a unique Defence solution that acknowledges the need for efficiency and cost effectiveness, while delivering essential warfighting capabilities and respecting the ethos of the Profession of Arms.

Respect and reputation are fundamentally important to ADF members. It is a unique profession. Personnel want acknowledgement of their worth within the organisation, and recognition in the community that they are doing an important job. Interestingly, the results show that the community is far more conscious of this than our members perceive, and we need to tell them as much. We need to actively track and engage these perceptions.

The challenge goes deeper still. Cynicism and criticism are widespread that the Canberra-based hierarchy has lost touch with the needs of a force that undertakes difficult operations at short notice. Acceptance of responsibility at all leadership levels will need to be demonstrated actively during the renewal process. We will be working with our Senior Leadership Group to that end.

## CONCLUSION

The level of participation and results of the DCP have shown that Defence personnel are keen to present their views on the current strengths and deficiencies of Defence. This discussion will now continue. It will inform both the development and implementation of the White Paper and the provision of appropriate responses to the specific 'conditions of service' concerns raised by personnel.

The feedback received during the DCP simultaneously highlights the dedication of Defence personnel and their frustration with its current state (a lot of which appears to derive from the implementation of the DRP). In some cases, there is a real need to improve internal communications. In others, there is a need to arrest the decline in the perception of Defence as a 'Profession of Arms' in the White Paper. In others, there is a need for Defence leadership to provide specific responses to concerns about service conditions.

In all these instances, steps are underway to meet these challenges and act on feedback received during the DCP. Importantly, the DCP has provided the start of a

new dialogue between leadership and personnel within Defence as we seek to set the standard in everything we do. The onus is now upon all of us in Defence to ensure it results in better policy development, a better and more ready ADF and increased job satisfaction for everyone involved in the defence of Australia and its national interests.

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## APPENDIX 4

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### EXCERPTS FROM

# INQUIRY INTO DEFENCE BEYOND 2000 REPORT OF THE FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE COMMITTEE

AUGUST 1999

## COMMITTEE PERSONNEL

### Approach to this Inquiry

We met 51 times between 21 August 1997 and 26 August 1999 to hear evidence (25 hours and 10 minutes) and to consider and deliberate (35 hours 45 minutes). In addition, members spent five days on a study tour of the Australian defence establishment, and visited NZDF camps, bases, exercises and operations on several occasions during the course of the inquiry.

### Committee Members

Hon. Derek Quigley (Chairperson)

Hon. Marie Hasler (Deputy Chairperson)

Geoff Braybrooke

Dr Wayne Mapp

Ron Mark (from February 1998)

Rt Hon. Mike Moore

Matt Robson

Annabel Young (from May 1998)

Rick Barker, Dianne Yates (in 1998) and the Hon. Phil Goff (in 1999) were substitute members during the inquiry.

Ron Mark replaced Brian Donnelly and Annabel Young replaced Murray McLean.

## **Advisers**

Dr Robert Ayson (until May 1998)

Dr Malcolm McNamara (from June 1998)

## **Committee staff**

David Saunders

Lyn Main

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

### **Committee terms of reference**

As per the provisions of Standing Orders 192(2) and 193(4), the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee can consider bills, petitions or other matters referred to it by the House or otherwise under Standing Orders and may examine matters related to customs, defence, foreign affairs and trade.

### **Inquiry terms of reference**

The Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Select Committee intends to consider options for the development of New Zealand's defence policy, structure and capabilities beyond 2000 with reference to:

- i. Defence strategy and policy goals
- ii. Areas of defence activity requiring particular emphasis
- iii. The range and nature of defence capabilities and equipment required
- iv. Structural options, planning and organisation for an appropriate and effective defence establishment
- v. Resource needs and options available within defence for redirecting resources to enhance military capabilities

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. We recommend that New Zealand develop closer defence relations with Fiji and the French forces in the Pacific.
2. We recommend that New Zealand develop closer defence relations with Malaysia and Singapore.
3. We recommend that recruits undergo more extensive basic training than they receive at present, including comprehensive civil defence training (including ambulance work and fire-fighting) and training in skills applicable to peacekeeping, prior to beginning more specialised military training.

4. We recommend that the Government investigate options for developing peacekeeping training for the NZDF and interoperability with a wider range of potential partners.
5. We recommend that the Government amend the Defence Act 1990 to introduce provisions parallel to those set out in section 9 of the Act to cover the deployment of NZDF personnel overseas on warlike operations.
6. We recommend that any deployments of NZDF force elements that would lead to a requirement for further appropriations should be debated in Parliament before the Government enters into a commitment to extra expenditure.
7. We recommend that an independent forum be established to provide advice on defence and other national security matters.
8. We recommend that the Government direct that responsibility for arranging the assessment and audit of the NZDF in relation to any function, duty or project, including the measurement of the operational preparedness and performance of the NZDF, be re-allocated to the Secretary of Defence in terms of the Defence Act 1990.
9. We recommend that a machinery of government review be undertaken to:
  - Assess the current accountability arrangements for the Secretary of Defence and the Chief of Defence Force and the present balance of responsibilities and authority between the two;
  - Assess the effectiveness of the structural changes implemented in 1989/90 including the split into two organisations;
  - Consider the options for coordinating departmental inputs into defence and security policy; and
  - Consider ways to enable more effective public participation in the formulation and administration of defence and security policy.
10. We recommend that there should be no change to the New Zealand Nuclear Free Zone, Disarmament and Arms Control Act 1987.
11. We recommend that the Government adopt a stepped policy for the procurement of specialist military equipment which:
  - Avoids the risk of subsequent block obsolescence;
  - Takes into account likely utility in the short to medium term;
  - Upgrades joint military capabilities to a level where they are deployable and sustainable in medium-level combat; and
  - Maximises the potential to keep abreast with technological advances.
12. We recommend that the naval combat review begun in June 1999 be terminated and that its terms of reference be subsumed in the terms of reference for the next Defence White Paper.

13. We recommend that that State Services Commission review NZDF pay, allowances and other conditions of service and advise the CDF on appropriate levels.
14. We recommend that personnel planning focus on meeting the requirement of upgraded combat capability and the need to retain a larger number of highly trained specialists to carry out likely operational tasks.
15. We recommend that the Government:
  - Re-examine the current policy requirement to deploy and sustain a ship for up to twelve months beyond New Zealand and South Pacific waters;
  - Re-examine the requirements to upgrade the HMNZS *Charles Upham* and consider instead stepwise acquisition of two logistic support ships with more versatile delivery options than those of a roll-on/roll-off vessel; and
  - Reassess the composition of the Navy's fleet based on a configuration of two ANZAC frigates (including the possibility of one being upgraded through a weapons improvement program to retain compatibility with the Australian ANZAC frigates), plus two purpose-designed logistic support ships; and
  - Take into account the criteria of:
    - Affordability (including opportunity cost);
    - The range of low-level contingencies that the Navy should always be able to address in the extensive exclusive economic zones of New Zealand, the Cook Islands, Niue, Tokelau and the Ross Dependency;
    - Likely scenarios involving a rapid New Zealand response with well equipped land forces to coalition operations; and
    - Other operations consistent with the advancement of New Zealand's national interest.
16. We recommend that the Government retain as its *ultimate* objective the maintenance of two mobile infantry battalion groups ready for deployment within 60 days and sustainable, to contribute to an international force for peace support operations; and that a reconnaissance company supported by other appropriate combat and combat-support elements, trained and equipped for medium-level conflict, sustainable, with its own independent means of deployment, and fully interoperable with similar Australian forces be available at 28 days notice.
17. We recommend that the Government provide full estimates of the cost of upgrading to F-16 C/D capability the F-16 A/B aircraft which it intends to acquire, and of the additional personnel that will be required to crew and maintain the larger F-16 fleet.

18. We recommend that the Government address the following questions:
  - With regard to using the F-16s or missile-equipped Orion aircraft in the maritime strike role, what is the scale, nature and likelihood of this particular task?
  - In what circumstances short of war would the New Zealand Government consider sending aircraft to sink ships?
  - And in that event, in what circumstances would suitably armed Orions not be able to do the job?
19. We recommend that the Government consider equipping a minimum number of P-3 Orions with maritime strike capacity and provide the NZDF with a credible minimum attack helicopter capacity.
20. We recommend that the government reconsider the place of the air combat force in relation to NZDF tasks on the basis of the following options:
  - To disband it on purely financial grounds; or
  - To downsize it to a fleet of not more than ten well equipped modern aircraft to retain institutional knowledge of air combat capability; or
  - To replace the current A4K Skyhawks with more modern combat aircraft on the basis of their capacity to contribute to the advancement of the country's national interest (including a clear statement of the scale, likelihood and nature of the circumstances in which it would be appropriate, *in political terms*, for the strike aircraft to be used in each of their three designated roles), considered alongside other competing expenditure priorities.
21. We recommend that there be greater transparency in the development of proposals for further rationalisation of real estate holdings, and that a full range of proposed costed options be made available, before final decisions are made.
22. We recommend examination of the balance between the allocation of resources to all the various aspects of the conduct of foreign relations, looking at the interdependencies and in terms of a strategic approach to the management of whole-of-Government priorities.



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