

SUBMISSION TO THE DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 2013

RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS (QUAKERS) IN AUSTRALIA INC QUAKER PEACE AND LEGISLATION COMMITTEE and QUAKER EARTHCARE COMMITTEE

This submission is presented by the Quaker Peace and Legislation and Quaker Earthcare Committees, both national committees of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Australia.

Summary

A defence policy, and the role of the ADF, should be seen as part of a comprehensive set of policies that identify strategic risk and set up ways of minimising that risk. Those threats include wide income inequalities, political and economic dominance, ecological degradation, and economic turmoil. Prevention is the best way to avoid widespread destruction through armed conflict. The threat of ecological degradation and its consequences is not significantly appreciated in the Force Posture Review 2012. Nor is the danger of further economic crises. These threats are far more significant than a direct military threat to Australia, which The Force Posture Review 2012 recognised as low. We strongly support the Government's decision to implement a National Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security. This Plan requires monitoring and evaluation of all Defence policies.

There is a role for the ADF in border protection for immigration and customs, dealing with anti-terrorist and cyber attacks, providing humanitarian and disaster relief, and being part of an international policing force related to an international justice system. The reliance on the USA for military purposes is outdated and inconsistent with the preventive and policing means of addressing the strategic risks. We encourage a more even-handed and independent approach to military alliances.

Our view is that the Government should put more resources and attention towards preventing crises from escalating into violence, use the international system to put in place better ways to achieve this, and work collaboratively with other agencies in the field.

Strategic Risk

A strategic appreciation of the threats to peace includes

- disparities in wealth distribution;
- desires of political and economic dominance by countries and multinational corporations;
- ecological degradation caused by climate warming, pollution, non-sustainable resources use (especially the cost of resources for energy), natural disasters; and
- economic turmoil through an unregulated international financial system.

Prevention

(a) Preventive diplomacy

Preventive diplomacy seeks to identify as soon as possible situations that could produce violence, and to try through diplomacy to remove sources of danger before violence results; where violence does erupt, engage in peacemaking aimed at

resolving the causes; and assist in post violence efforts to prevent further outbreaks. An example of the latter is The Peacebuilding Commission established in 2005 by the United Nations General Assembly and the Security Council acting concurrently. It is an inter-governmental advisory body that helps countries in post-conflict peace building, recovery, reconstruction and development.

(b) International and regional institutions

Important aspects of prevention of violence include human rights dialogues through formal institutions like APEC, ASEAN Regional Forum and East Asia Summit. Peace building is also encouraged through people to people contacts and the Asia Pacific Centre for Civil-Military Co-operation and Australian Civilian Corps.

(c) Independent non-conflict resolution processes

We note that the Force Posture Review 2012 identified possible instability in the South China Sea. However, there are several instances where conflicts over fishery resources, oil and gas exploration, shipping traffic, and other issues have been resolved non-violently through negotiations for joint resource management. This has taken place even between countries with unsettled sovereignty disputes such as China and Vietnam. These examples of mutually beneficial cooperation need wider recognition. The ADF can provide valuable training, communications, and intelligence services to support these joint resource management efforts ¹.

(d) Millennium Development Goals

Australia seeks to support the Millennium Development Goals, which focus on poverty, education, women and children, and environmental aspects of development. A significant proportion of the aid program (administered through AusAID) goes into Asian countries, either through government avenues or NGOs. There are many agencies that offer Australians the opportunity to become engaged in links with Asian countries and people. They work together through the Australian Council for International Development (ACFID) to coordinate their efforts, to maintain standards, and to advocate for the needs of their constituents. Efforts to develop trade relations that do not exploit local people and resources are essential to avoid the threat of income inequality.

(e) Women, Peace and Security Agenda

Australia has supported the full implementation of UNSCR 1325 since its adoption in 2000 and subsequent resolutions. Demonstrating its commitment to the principles of these resolutions Australia has undertaken a broad program of work to integrate gender perspective into its peace and security efforts, protect women and girls' human rights and promote their participation in conflict prevention, management and resolution. In March 2012 Australia adopted a National Action Plan to implement this Women, Security and Peace Agenda. We strongly support this initiative and draw particular attention to the importance of monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of the strategies required to implement this Plan ². In particular, we expect that there will be a gender perspective applied to conflict prevention activities and strategies, more equal representation of women in peace and security institutions, and more co-operation with civil society in promoting women's participation in settings where Australia is operating.

(f) The need for international/regional police/justice institutions and processes

¹ Rosenberg, D. 2012. Governing The South China Sea: From Freedom Of The Seas To Ocean Enclosure Movements. Harvard Asia Quarterly.

² Australian National Action Plan on Women. Peace and Security 2012-2018.

An essential part of prevention is the establishment of justice systems that enable appropriate action to be taken not only against crimes of humanity, but crimes against the environment or ecocide³.

Ecological Degradation

Climate change has the potential to stoke regional instabilities and fuel international tensions, according to a major report from the US National Intelligence Council⁴. Elsewhere in a US Intelligence Council coordinated paper, it states that during the next 10 years, many countries important to the United States will experience water problems (shortages, poor water quality, or floods) that will risk instability and state failure, increase regional tensions, and distract them from working with the United States on important US policy objectives. Water problems will hinder the ability of key countries to produce food and generate energy, posing a risk to global food markets⁵. The World Bank's recent concern (with others) that we are tracking to a warming world of 4⁰C plus, with huge consequences for adequate food and water, supports this identification of a major threat to security and stability.

Economic Threats

Economic initiatives need to address banking systems, and the absence of effective international control of multinational abuses of human rights and environmental responsibilities. The main causes that led to the recent global financial crisis have not been changed, and the financial system continues to be corrupt and inefficient. Future financial turmoil can be reasonably predicted with severe consequences for a stable and peaceful world.

The Role of the ADF

The four ADF tasks identified in the 2009 Defence White Paper are worthy of examination:

(a) *To deter and defeat attacks on Australia.* The Force Posture Review 2012 recognised that a direct military threat to Australia is low. We see a role only for the ADF in border protection for immigration and custom purposes, and dealing with anti-terrorist and cyber attacks.

(b) *To assist in achieving stability and security in the South Pacific and Timor, especially through humanitarian and disaster relief.* We support this role, and see it as best achieved through the preventive approach described above.

(c) *To deal with military contingencies in the Asia and Pacific region.* We note that the ADF played a useful role in Timor Leste and the Solomons in a policing role, but not in Fiji (where a different approach was needed).

(d) *To contribute to the rest of the world through such activities by the United Nations.* We believe that the ADF should be seen as part of an international policing force related to an international justice system. Its role would then be defined largely

³ <http://eradicatingecocide.com/>

⁴ Murray, J. 11 December 2012. US intelligence community warns of rising climate security threat. Guardian.

⁵ http://www.dni.gov/files/documents/Special%20Report_ICA%20Global%20Water%20Security.pdf

in ways in which it can contribute to the resolution of the threats we have identified above. Any decision to involve the ADF overseas should be after a full parliamentary debate.

The close ties with the USA forged during and after the Second World War need to be reassessed in the light of the demise of the cold war, and the influence and growing importance of China, India and Indonesia. We endorse the comments by Richard Tanter ⁶ (University of Melbourne):

"The fundamental issues are whether an Australian government retains its sovereign power to ensure that American facilities it hosts are not used against the interests of Australia, or that the integration of Australia with US forces does not render independent choice by Australia impossible. Without that capacity, democratic policy formation about defence becomes a contradiction in terms, and more to the point, a dangerous impossibility".

Canberra, February 2013

⁶ <http://nautilus.org/napsnet/napsnet-policy-forum/australia-in-the-pacific-pivot-national-interests-and-the-expanding-joint-facilities/>