

Chapter 11

Four Decades of the Defence of Australia: Reflections on Australian Defence Policy over the Past 40 Years

Hugh White

The serious academic study of Australian defence policy can be said to have begun with the publication of a book by the SDSC's founder, Tom Millar, in 1965. The dust jacket of that book, *Australia's Defence*, posed the following question: 'Can Australia Defend Itself?' Millar thus placed the defence of Australia at the centre of his (and the SDSC's) work from the outset. Much of the SDSC's effort over the intervening 40 years, and I would venture to say most of what has been of value in that effort, has been directed toward questions about the defence of the continent. This has also been the case for most of the work by Australian defence policymakers over the same period. In this chapter I want to reflect on that work by exploring how the idea of the 'defence of Australia' has evolved over that time, and especially how its role in policy has changed, from the mid-1960s up to and including the most recent comprehensive statement of defence policy, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*.

This is no dry academic question. The key question for Australian defence policy today is how we balance priority for the defence of Australia against priority for the defence of wider strategic interests. The starting point for that debate is the policies of the 1970s and 1980s, which placed major emphasis on the defence of the continent. Over the 1990s our policy slowly but steadily evolved to put more weight back on the ability of the ADF to conduct operations beyond the defence of the continent. This evolution is still incomplete. We have not yet worked out the implications of this new emphasis for the way we plan our forces. This is the heart of today's defence-policy challenge. To understand these questions, we need to ensure we understand Australia's motivations. In this chapter therefore, I want to contribute to our current debates by looking back; first at how and why we came to adopt the 'defence of Australia' policies in the 1970s and 1980s, then at the changes in our strategic environment in the 1990s, and finally at the way our strategic policy has evolved in response. All these issues have been quite seriously misunderstood in much of our recent defence debate. Getting them straight will help us to understand the strengths

and weaknesses of today's policy, and hence to grasp more clearly where it should go from here.

The 'Defence of Australia' Revolution

It may help to start with a definition. By 'defence of Australia' I mean the idea that the principal function of the ADF, and the core basis for choosing its capabilities, is the defence of the Australian continent from direct military attack, and in particular the ability to do so against any credible level of attack without relying on the combat forces of our allies—the self-reliant 'defence of Australia'. This idea began to evolve at the time of the SDSC's foundation in the mid to late 1960s, and was further developed during the 1970s and 1980s, finding its most complete expressions in the policies of the 1986 Dobb Review and the 1987 *Defence of Australia*. But there was nothing new in the idea that the defence of the continent was one of the key questions for Australian defence policy, or that our defence policy would hinge around choices between a narrow continental view of Australian strategic interests and objectives and a broader view. The Commonwealth's first governments thought that Australia's naval and military forces should be able to defend the continent, at least from limited attacks, and they designed the early Army and Navy accordingly.¹ Still, this emphasis faded after 1914, and the idea of defending Australia did not return to the centre of Australian defence thinking until the collapse of the 'forward defence' posture in the 1960s.

'Forward defence' is often seen as a product of the imperial or global tendency in Australian defence policy, rather than the regional or continental tendency, but in fact it was a response to local security concerns in Asia. Australia faced new and totally unfamiliar regional security challenges after the Second World War. Decolonisation and the real threat of communism made the region suddenly much more complex and rather threatening. 'Forward defence' focused Australia's defence policy on encouraging and supporting the United States and the United Kingdom to stay engaged in our region and to deal with these new local security concerns for us. It made a lot of sense while it lasted, but it did not endure. By the early 1960s it was clear that the United States and the United Kingdom did not share Australia's views on key regional issues like Indonesia, and by the end of the decade both allies had decided, for different reasons, that their strategic postures in our region were unsustainable.

Australia's contemporary conception of 'defence of Australia' emerged as a response to these cracks in 'forward defence'. The demise of 'forward defence' began, much earlier than many people think, in the early 1960s, when the United States would not assure Australia of military support against a disruptive and increasingly well-armed Indonesia. Without declaring a change in policy, the Robert Menzies Government set about transforming the ADF into a force that could defend Australia unaided. It purchased new capabilities, including F-111,

Mirage III, C-130 Hercules, and DHC-4 Caribou aircraft, UH-1H Iroquois 'Huey' helicopters, Oberon-class submarines, Guided Missile Destroyers, M-113 Armoured Personnel Carriers, and it also introduced conscription. By 1965 Menzies had, almost by stealth, laid the foundations of a defence force able to protect Australia and its regional interests without relying on allies.

It was as well that he did so, because over the following decade Australia's strategic circumstances underwent a revolution, with both positive and negative aspects. In 1965 Suharto replaced Sukarno as Indonesia's President and the country began to change from a strategic liability into a net asset for Australia. Partly as a result, Southeast Asia as a whole began to emerge from decades of crisis and evolve into a region of peace and development. In the early 1970s the opening to China dispelled for a while one of Australia's major security concerns, and détente promised a safer global strategic balance. All these developments made Australia feel safer. On the other hand, the Vietnam War undermined America's role in our region and prompted, via the Guam Doctrine, a major reduction of America's commitments to Asian allies, including Australia. At the same time, though for different reasons, Britain withdrew strategically from our region too. By the end of the 1960s, the era of 'forward defence' was clearly over. The good news was that our region looked much less threatening than it had for many decades. The bad news was that our allies had made it clear that we would have to deal ourselves with whatever problem might remain.

Well before 1970 it was clear that Australia needed a new defence policy to deal with this new reality. Fortunately, the new challenges stimulated perhaps the most active and informed defence debate we have ever had—in the universities, the press and within government. Coalition Defence Ministers including John Gorton and Malcolm Fraser started airing new ideas in the late 1960s. The debate could not help but echo the founding fathers' debates about imperial versus local defence priorities, but the circumstances were very different, and so were Australia's options. Both the nature of our regional security concerns, and the capacity and willingness of our allies to support us had changed profoundly. In March 1972, the McMahon Government produced a policy discussion paper which confirmed that Australia's strategic policy had to change. It made a blunt assessment: 'Australia would be prudent not to rest its security as directly or as heavily, as in its previous peacetime history, on the military power of a Western ally in Asia.'² And it drew the inescapable conclusion: 'Australia requires to have the military means to offset physical threats to its territory and to its maritime and other rights and interests in peacetime, and should there ever be an actual attack, to respond suitably and effectively, preferably in association with others, but, if need be, alone.'³

These ideas were conclusively established as the foundations of a new defence policy in *Australian Defence*, the 1976 Defence White Paper, published by the

government of Malcolm Fraser. It is a remarkable document. The first chapter explained in a few lines the revolutionary changes of the preceding decade, and concluded: 'The changes mentioned above ... constitute a fundamental transformation of the strategic circumstances that governed Australia's security throughout most of its history.'⁴

A few pages later, under the heading 'Self-Reliance', *Australian Defence* explained the implications of this transformation:

A primary requirement arising from our findings is for increased self-reliance. In our contemporary circumstances we can no longer base our policy on the expectation that Australia's Navy or Army or Air Force will be sent abroad to fight as part of some other nation's forces and supported by it. We do not rule out an Australian contribution to operations elsewhere, if the requirement arose and we felt that our presence would be effective, and if our forces could be spared from their national tasks. But we believe that any operations are much more likely to be in our own neighbourhood than in some distant or forward theatre, and that our Armed Services would be conducting operations together as the Australian Defence Force.⁵

While Sir Arthur Tange forged the unified Defence organisation needed to implement this vision, the implications of these bold new ideas for the ADF were painstakingly worked out. Progress was slow, and many logjams remained when Kim Beazley became Defence Minister in 1984. To break these, Beazley commissioned Paul Dibb to review Australia's defence capabilities, and then write a new Defence White Paper, *Defence of Australia*, released in 1987. Neither Beazley nor Dibb invented 'defence of Australia': their contribution was to work out how to implement it. They converted the bold new ideas of *Australian Defence* into a robust approach to force planning. Their work was very successful. It won popular support by appealing to a sense of national self-confidence. It reassured our neighbours about our strategic objectives. It provided a clear basis for disciplined decisions about capability priorities. And it stepped around the electorate's deep post-Vietnam War allergy to expeditionary operations.

One measure of this success was the willingness of governments and electorates to fund the policy. Defence spending averaged 2.3 per cent of GDP during the 1980s, compared with an average of 2.1 per cent (of an admittedly larger GDP) during the 1990s.⁶ This appears surprisingly high in a period when threats seemed remote and deployments were rare. Perhaps it showed that that public understood there was no alternative to a policy of self-reliance, so we needed to make long-term investments in the necessary capabilities. Certainly the 1980s saw big investments in major capabilities, including the F/A-18 *Hornet* aircraft, *Collins* class submarine, guided missile frigate, ANZAC ship, air-to-air

refuelling tankers, and a major expansion of our basing infrastructure in Australia's north and west.

Australians took a while to accept the new policy. Most thought we did not have the weight to look after ourselves—a sentiment Jim Killen alluded to in 1977 when saying we couldn't defend Botany Bay on a sunny Sunday afternoon. But once we got used to it, Australians warmed to the idea that we could defend our own continent without having to call on the help of our allies. When Gareth Evans, soon after taking over as Foreign Minister in 1989, said that Australia's self-reliant defence policy had 'liberated' Australia's foreign policy, he was perhaps indulging in a little of his own characteristic flamboyance.⁷ But there was something to his statement. As General John Baker often remarked, taking responsibility for our own defence provided Australians with a new sense of confidence in their engagement with Asia. It also made a subtle but important difference to the way we viewed our alliance with the United States. Self-reliance helped ease the stigma of dependency in the relationship, and made it much easier to construct an account of the alliance which enjoyed broad support across the political spectrum in Australia. We were no longer seen to support the United States in the hope that one day in the future it would come to our defence, but because the alliance directly served specifically Australian strategic interests.⁸

Was 'Defence of Australia' isolationist?

In recent times, however, the 'defence of Australia' doctrine of the 1970s and 1980s has received a bad press. It has been criticised as isolationist and reactive. These criticisms derive primarily from the view that 'defence of Australia' totally precluded Australian military operations beyond the narrow defence of the continent. This is, at least in part, a misunderstanding, and it is important to clear it up. A more accurate view of how 'defence of Australia' balanced continental defence with wider strategic interests, and of the consequent strengths and weaknesses of the policy, will help us understand better how policy on this central question has evolved since then, and where we need to go from here.

The policy revolution that resulted in 'defence of Australia' was not driven by a deep ideological predisposition against military operations beyond Australia's shores. There was an element of that in some of Gough Whitlam's statements,⁹ but the idea that really drove the new policy was self-reliance. Australia abandoned 'forward defence' primarily because our allies were no longer strategically committed to our region. Without them, our new defence policy imperative was to maximise Australia's military capacity to protect our security unaided. This is clear from the passages quoted above from the 1972 Discussion Paper and *Australian Defence*. The main message in both papers was that, in future, Australia's forces would need to operate independently of allies. The ADF might need to operate not just in defence of the continent but also 'in

operations elsewhere'. The *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities* (or Dibb Review) and the 1987 *Defence of Australia* took the same view. For example, *Defence of Australia* said:

A requirement has also been identified for Australia's defence policy to take account both of developments in the South-West Pacific and South-East Asia—our region of primary strategic interest—and to be capable of reacting positively to calls for military support further afield from our allies and friends, should we judge that our interests require it.¹⁰

This language was not just for show. In private, the government of the day was very focused on a number of scenarios in which Australian forces might be deployed on expeditionary operations—such as the then much-feared contingency of a clash on the Indonesia–PNG border. It vigorously maintained Australia's forward commitments in Asia through the Five Power Defence Arrangements¹¹ and in other ways, and when crises arose (for example in Fiji and in the Persian Gulf in 1987), it was quick to deploy forces.

So expeditionary deployments were in no sense precluded by the 'defence of Australia' policies of the 1980s. Nonetheless, they did place much less emphasis than previous policies on operations to defend Australian interests beyond the continent, and it is worth asking why. The explanation has several elements. First, these were years in which public support for expeditionary operations suffered a deep nadir, which certainly provided strong incentives to present policy in other terms. It can be hard now to recall just how strongly Vietnam turned Australians against expeditionary operations. As Millar wrote in 1979: 'No political party is interested in deploying the Defence Force overseas.'¹² Some people, such as Robert O'Neill,¹³ had the foresight to suggest that this feeling might not endure, but it did last through the 1980s. As late as 1991, fears of 'another Vietnam' shaped public, political and policy responses to Iraq's invasion of Kuwait.

These reservations were backed by a sense—perhaps, in retrospect, rather exaggerated—of our own weakness. Following the withdrawal of the United Kingdom and the United States from the region, it was likely that Australia would have to mount any future regional operations alone. Few Australians at this time thought we had the capacity to do that. And governments were also cautious: *Australian Defence* downplayed Australia's ability to shape our region with military power,¹⁴ and the Dibb Review said: 'There are clear limits to our defence capacity and influence.'¹⁵ These limits were real. When most Australians doubted we could defend the continent, few indeed thought we could do much to stabilise the region.

But perhaps more than any of these factors, the relatively low priority given to offshore operations in the policies of the 1970s and 1980s reflected the unusual strategic circumstances of the time, which did much to shape those policies. At the time, it made sense to focus Australia's defence efforts on the continent rather than on defending wider interests, because in those last two decades of the Cold War our wider strategic environment looked unusually benign. By the mid-1970s, the Cold War was largely over in our part of the world. At the global level, after easing with détente in the 1970s, Cold War tensions intensified again in the early 1980s. The global balance between the United States and the Soviet Union was important to Australia's security,¹⁶ but it did not seem to have much bearing on Australia's own defence. We felt no need to build forces to help fight the Soviet Union (with the possible partial and special exception of submarines), and the United States did not press us to do so. It seemed clear that any Australian military contribution to a global superpower war would be too small and come too late to count. We hosted important US–Australian Joint Facilities instead.

This sense of detachment from the conventional military competition between the superpowers induced a similarly detached view of strategic developments in Northeast Asia. Strategic relations between Asia's major powers seemed permanently frozen by the Cold War into a stable and, for Australia, relatively benign pattern. After the US opening to China, both Japan and China were, in their different ways, aligned with the United States. The Soviet threat guaranteed that the United States would remain strategically engaged in Northeast Asia, which would preserve the resulting strategic balance. So, short of the threat of global war itself, Australia seemed to have nothing to fear from Northeast Asia. *Australian Defence* made this point very starkly when it said: 'No more than the former great powers of Europe can we expect these powers [India, China and Japan] individually to play a large military role in strategic developments directly affecting Australia's security in the foreseeable future.'¹⁷

The paper went on to dismiss the risk that these 'large external powers' would acquire strategic influence in Australia's nearer region.¹⁸ As a result, the 'defence of Australia' doctrine gave little or no thought to military contingencies in Northeast Asia.

This is why the policies of 1976 and 1987 focused Australia's defence policy on Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific—what the 1987 *Defence of Australia* called our 'Region of Primary Strategic Interest'. *Australian Defence* and 1987 *Defence of Australia* clearly emphasised Australia's direct strategic interests in this region. They both explicitly acknowledged that Australia might need to undertake military operations to protect these interests.¹⁹ However, threats to those interests seemed much less likely in these years than at any other time before or since. As we have seen, by the mid-1970s many of our most pressing concerns about Southeast Asia had dissipated, as the region was transformed

from an area of crisis to a model of political stability, economic growth and regional cooperation. In the South Pacific, as independence came to PNG and other Southwest Pacific neighbours, Australia's strategic commitments seemed to be shrinking as well. Our newly independent neighbours were expected to be stable. There seemed few circumstances in which Australia would need to intervene in our backyard. And so it proved. The 'defence of Australia' doctrine evolved during a period in which remarkably few demands were made on our defence forces. In these years the ADF was deployed on only a handful of relatively minor and benign peacekeeping operations. Our neighbourhood generally enjoyed peace and prosperity, and the wider strategic balance in Asia did indeed remain fixed in the grip of the late Cold War. In retrospect, it was a fortunate time to overhaul Australia's defence policy.

The policy balance

In these circumstances, it made sense to focus Australia's military capabilities on the defence of the continent. This was a new task for the ADF, and it raised important and complex questions. Yet the old issue remained: how to balance the new priority for continental defence with the enduring need to be able to defend wider interests? What did the demands of military tasks beyond continental defence mean for Australia's capability priorities in the age of 'defence of Australia'? There was a simple answer: the forces we built for the defence of Australia could do all we needed to protect our wider interests, so there was no need to build forces specifically for this purpose. As the 1987 *Defence of Australia* noted: 'Should the Government wish to respond to developments in areas other than our own, the capabilities being developed for our national defence will, subject to national requirements at the time, give a range of practical options.'²⁰

This has been one of the core principles of Australian defence policy for several decades, and the question of its future is at the heart of our current policy debate. The idea is simple enough, but it has been more disputed than analysed. To supporters, it has been a kind of self-evident truth, while critics have dismissed it as a sophistic sleight of hand. I can understand the critics' suspicions. It seems almost too good to be true that we can simply dissolve the traditional dilemma at the heart of Australian defence policy by asserting that forces developed solely for the defence of the continent could do everything else as well. Indeed, the critics might fairly say that this has always been more an assertion than a careful conclusion based on detailed argument. So far as I am aware, there was never any attempt to analyse in detail what kind of interests Australia might have beyond the defence of the continent, and what forces we might need to protect them. Moreover, in retrospect, one can see that the constraints imposed on the Australian Army's planning by the 'defence of Australia' discipline were counterproductive, and failed to provide a credible basis for force development. On the other hand, supporters of the 'defence of

Australia' approach can fairly argue that it has been proved true in practice. Over the 30 years since the 1976 Defence White Paper *Australian Defence*, Australian Governments have always been able to send forces sufficient to meet their strategic objectives whenever the need for overseas commitments arose. So the policy worked. That is a significant vindication of the 'defence of Australia' doctrine. The question, or course, is whether it would keep working.

The Post 'Defence of Australia' Revolution

Events are merciless on policy. In the late 1980s, just as we had settled our post-Vietnam defence policy, another series of major changes in Australia's strategic environment were starting to unfold. Even as the 1987 *Defence of Australia* was being published, some of these revolutions were in train. By 1987 Mikhail Gorbachev was already in the Kremlin, market economics had come to China, Indonesia's Suharto was entering his twilight, Fiji's first coup had ended the South Pacific's post-colonial honeymoon, and Osama bin Laden was building an organisation in Afghanistan. These were early portents of long-term developments which would transform Australia's strategic circumstances during the 1990s. Their impact has been comparable to the revolutionary developments of the late 1960s and early 1970s that impelled the 'defence of Australia' doctrine revolution, but their implications are quite different. They would reassert the importance of protecting Australia's broader strategic interests, and require us to reconsider the priority balance between protecting wider interests and defending the continent. How we respond to these changes remains the key issue in Australian defence policy today. So it is worth spending a few paragraphs exploring these developments, before considering how our defence policy has responded to them thus far. We can identify four key trends: (1) new global demands for peacekeeping and stabilisation operations; (2) new uncertainty in the strategic balance between Asia's major powers; (3) increased instability in Australia's nearer region; and (4) the steady erosion of Australia's relative strategic weight and military capabilities compared to our region.

New roles

Following the Cold War we witnessed a sharp change in the ways that governments used armed force around the world. Many different forms of peacekeeping and intervention became more common, and broadly-supported principles of humanitarian intervention started to emerge. Australia, like other countries, was initially cautious about this trend. However, governments around the world faced strong humanitarian and political pressures to get involved, and for Australia alliance considerations also played a role. The result was a startling increase in the number of expeditionary deployments. In the early 1990s, after years of relative inactivity, the ADF was suddenly very busy in remote places. It undertook substantial deployments to Namibia in 1989, Western Sahara in

1991, Cambodia and Somalia in 1992, and Rwanda in 1994, as well as repeated deployments to the Persian Gulf and many smaller operations and commitments near and far.²¹ Suddenly, Australia's forces were being deployed globally again.

Nor was this just a global phenomenon. For reasons we will examine shortly, the same trend was also evident in Australia's nearer region. Starting perhaps with the first tentative deployment to the waters around Fiji at the time of the first coup in 1987, Australia found itself during the 1990s increasingly contemplating or undertaking military deployments in our own backyard—in Vanuatu, Bougainville, Irian Jaya and other parts of Indonesia and PNG—to undertake operations as diverse as famine and disaster relief, peace monitoring, evacuation of Australian citizens, and restoring law and order.

Two particular deployments—at either end of the decade—were especially significant for Australia's future strategic choices. The first was the 1990–91 Persian Gulf War, which was not a peacekeeping operation but a full-scale armed conflict—our first since the Vietnam War. The swift and relatively bloodless victory over Iraq restored the credibility of expeditionary operations in support of allies, and it did much to lift the shadow of Vietnam, and restore the credibility of the United Nations. The second really significant operational deployment of the 1990s was INTERFET in East Timor. INTERFET gave Australians a new level of confidence that we could launch and lead substantial overseas operations ourselves, rather than simply joining as a junior coalition partner. It left an increased sense of our power, and our responsibility, in the immediate neighbourhood.

None of these commitments—even, thankfully, East Timor—turned out to be very demanding military operations, but they raised important issues for our defence policy. The Army naturally bore the brunt of many of these operations and some analysts naturally questioned whether that Service should not be reshaped specifically to handle the tasks it was now being asked so often to perform. Partly this was a question about whether our defence forces should be configured for non-military tasks and, on that question, Service chiefs and Ministers were adamant that the ADF should not be downgraded from a warfighting to a peacekeeping force. Yet many of these commitments involved genuine military operations, which thus raised legitimate questions about whether hypothetical 'low-level contingencies' were as important for the Australian Army's future as these demanding new expeditionary deployments. So even before East Timor, the new pattern of operations had raised doubts that the Army's future was limited to preparing to repel raids in northern Australia.

Northeast Asia

While the ADF's many new deployments grabbed the most attention, the final collapse of the Soviet Union was propelling a second and more profound

change in Australia's strategic circumstances. The end of the Cold War threw into doubt our comfortable assumptions about strategic dynamics in Northeast Asia and their significance for Australia. The Soviet Union's collapse liberated China's strategic policy from the Soviet threat and opened new strategic opportunities, just as its economic growth was starting to deliver Beijing real increases in strategic and military clout. It became clear that China might one day surpass Japan and even challenge the United States as an economic power, and ex-Soviet military technology assisted China in accelerating the expansion of its air and naval forces. People started to view China as an emerging strategic power with the potential to disrupt the international system in much the same way that Germany had done in late nineteenth century Europe.

The end of the Cold War had dissolved the glue in the US–China relationship, and raised the prospect of increasing strategic competition between them. At the same time, America's own role in Asia was thrown into doubt. Many believed that the United States had neither the reasons nor the resources to sustain its old Cold War posture in Asia now the Soviet Union had vanished, and that America's instinctive isolationism would re-assert itself. When Bill Clinton became President in 1993 with the slogan 'It's the economy, stupid', such fears seemed reasonable. And the US–Japan relationship, also now without the Soviet threat to hold it together, was under strain from differences over trade and strategic burden-sharing. No one could assume that it would last forever. Suddenly the major power balance in Asia, which had seemed so stable, looked very uncertain. By mid-decade, the question being asked was: Would Europe's past be Asia's future?²²

All this posed a major challenge to the judgements underlying 'defence of Australia' that had more or less completely excluded Northeast Asia from Australia's strategic policy calculations. It quickly became clear that strategic competition between the great powers of Asia could in future—as in the past—intrude into and destabilise Australia's nearer region, and potentially pose threats to Australia itself. Quite suddenly Northeast Asia was restored to the traditional place it held before 1970, namely as a key focus of Australia's strategic attention and concern.

Two crises around mid-decade reinforced the change. In 1994, tension over North Korea's nuclear program found Australian policymakers facing the possibility that we might have to send forces to another Korean War. Two years later, when the United States deployed carriers to the waters round Taiwan, Australia had to consider whether we would join the United States to fight China if the crisis flared into combat. In both cases the forces we had been developing for the 'defence of Australia'—especially our air and naval forces—provided a range of military options for government if needed. But the precepts that guided

Australian defence planning during the 1980s were already starting to look badly outdated.

Turbulent Neighbours

The third big change in Australia's strategic situation in the decade after the end of the Cold War was a growing concern over the stability of our nearer neighbourhood. By 1990 it was already evident that Indonesia's future after Suharto remained unclear, and possibly unstable. When he fell after the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis, an era of comparative certainty in Australia's relations with Indonesia seemed to have passed, to be replaced by an uncertain future. And, more broadly, the financial crisis shook our confidence in Southeast Asia as a region of growth and stability, deepened the sense that ASEAN was a 'spent force', and raised doubts about the dynamics of Southeast Asia as a whole. What all this meant for Australia's future defence remained uncertain, but it was clear that the comfortable assumptions about Southeast Asian stability that underpinned the 'defence of Australia' were no longer valid.

Further east, the situation seemed in some ways to be even more of a concern. By the early 1990s it was becoming clear that the newly-independent states of the Southwest Pacific faced systemic problems that threatened their viability. The Bougainville crisis, which dragged on throughout the 1990s, both demonstrated and exacerbated these problems in our largest Pacific neighbour. It deepened Canberra's pessimism about the ability of PNG to manage its own problems and steer towards a stable and sustainable national future, and raised the spectre of further fragmentation. These concerns, and their implications for the ADF, came to a head in the Sandline crisis of 1997, when the possibility arose that the ADF might need to be deployed to Port Moresby to deter or reverse a coup by the PNG Defence Force against the legitimate though incompetent government of Sir Julius Chan. That crisis was averted, but the lesson was plain: there was a high likelihood that the ADF would probably soon be deployed on relatively major independent operations to preserve stability in our immediate neighbourhood.

In the event, of course, that happened not in PNG or elsewhere in the South Pacific, but in East Timor. INTERFET sounded the tocsin for the idea that the Australian Army should be organised, trained and equipped primarily for operations on Australian soil. It became clear that the security of Australia's immediate neighbourhood was going to be an increasing priority for the ADF, especially the Army. What Paul Dibb had labelled in 1998 'the arc of instability' was moving back to a central position in Australian defence concerns.

Losing the Technology Edge

Fourth, over the 1990s the levels of military capability in the Western Pacific increased significantly. In the 1970s and early 1980s it was reasonable for

Australia to assert with some confidence that our forces would retain a decisive advantage in military technology over credible regional adversaries. Over the 1990s this became ever less credible. Critical military technologies such as Beyond Visual Range air-to-air combat had become commonplace by the mid-1990s. It became clear that Australia would need to rethink both the way it developed its forces and the way it planned to use them, if it was to remain strategically competitive in this more demanding military environment. As the economies of our neighbours grew, the long-term trends were going against us, despite the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis. Some confident assumptions about our ability to defend the continent unaided were coming under pressure, and so was the assumption that the forces we developed for that task would provide all the options we needed for more distant contingencies. If we wanted to be able to compete in Asia's more competitive military environment, we would have to plan more carefully for it.

The Evolution of the 'Defence of Australia'

Today's defence debate often assumes that the current official policy—essentially the policy of *Defence 2000*—is in all essentials identical to the 'defence of Australia' policies of the 1987 *Defence of Australia*. This is not so. During the 1990s, in response to the four major trends described above, Australian defence policy underwent significant change, the most important of which was a growing emphasis on operations beyond the defence of the continent. In the following paragraphs, we shall track that process through a few of the more important policy documents of this time.

Australia's strategic planning during the 1990s

In the latter months of 1989—even before the Berlin Wall fell—it became clear to Defence policymakers that Australia's strategic horizons needed to expand. *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, approved by Cabinet that month, though not released until 1993, made the point clearly: 'The strategy described in this document goes beyond the defence of the nation against direct attack to include promotion of our security interests.'²³ And a few paragraphs later:

Our national defence policy has evolved over recent decades. It has come from a position of defence dependence on allies (and consequent involvement in their strategic interests) through concentration on the immediate needs of self defence, to a positive acceptance of both the needs of self-reliance and our need to help shape our regional strategic environment, in which we are a substantial power.²⁴

This passage offers a fascinating contrast with the policies of the preceding two decades, and the last phrase—describing Australia as 'a substantial

power’—suggests how much Australia’s strategic self-confidence had grown over the 1980s. The paper went on to identify many of the regional trends which were to shape strategic policy over the following decade and beyond: instability in PNG and the Southwest Pacific,²⁵ the post-Suharto transition in Indonesia,²⁶ Japan’s evolving strategic role,²⁷ and the importance of keeping the United States engaged in Asia.²⁸ It accurately identified key underlying trends: ‘a growing view that the strategic stability of the Asian region should be primarily a matter for the local powers’²⁹ and the ‘increasing military power of some Asian nations’.³⁰ Interestingly, however, it underestimated China. Writing a few months after the Tiananmen Square incident, and two years before the collapse of the Soviet Union, the paper said that, ‘while China is developing strategic influence and reach, its preoccupations will remain internal. Economic growth will slow and China’s capacity to provide resources for Defence will be impaired ... the Soviet Union will continue to be its main military concern’.³¹

This interesting lapse notwithstanding, *Australia’s Strategic Planning in the 1990s* stands up very well to the scrutiny of hindsight. It followed up the predictions quoted above by quite accurately foreshadowing how Australian defence policy would respond to these regional trends: a move away from a defensive and reactive operational concept to a more proactive one,³² the need to provide capabilities specifically to support stability in the South Pacific,³³ and, most importantly, the need to take a broader view of our strategic objectives and interests in planning our capabilities. The paper said: ‘We have in the past made comfortable judgements that the force-in-being developed for our national defence would provide suitable options for meeting other tasks. But the regional uncertainties noted above suggest that this judgement may be less justified in future.’³⁴

So, by 1989, defence policy was already moving away from the idea that forces developed for the defence of Australia would provide all the options we might need to protect Australia’s wider interests. How far this was true, and what we might do about it, were to become the key issues in Australian defence policy over the following decade.

Defending Australia 1994

Some of the ideas foreshadowed in 1989 took clearer form in the 1994 Defence White Paper, *Defending Australia*. Emphasis was given to operations beyond the direct defence of Australia:

Planning for the defence of Australia takes full account of our broader strategic interests. Australia has important interests beyond the direct defence of our own territory, and the ADF will be called upon in the future, as it has in the past, to undertake activities and operations elsewhere in our region, and in other parts of the world in cooperation

with neighbours, allies and international institutions, particularly the United Nations.³⁵

After the doubts expressed in 1989, the experience of successful operations since 1989 in Iraq, Somalia, Cambodia, Rwanda and the immediate neighbourhood had restored a measure of confidence that ‘forces developed for the defence of Australia give us a sufficient range of options’³⁶ to undertake such operations. But deeper questions about our future defence needs had emerged. *Defending Australia* bluntly predicted that Australia’s technological edge over potential adversaries was under long-term pressure³⁷ and, in response, hinted that Australia would need to take a more expansive view of the defence of the continent, and adopt a more proactive strategic posture, with increased emphasis on longer-range operations³⁸—though still framed in terms of the ‘defence of Australia’ itself.

More fundamentally, the *Defending Australia* paper took a strikingly gloomy view of Australia’s strategic environment. It deviated from earlier policy papers by focusing not on Australia’s nearer region—Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific—but on the wider Asia Pacific as a whole, and it identified two key trends that would shape that region over coming decades. The first was shifting relationships between the major powers after the Cold War. The United States, it predicted ‘will neither seek nor accept primary responsibility for maintaining peace and stability in the region’.³⁹ As a result, ‘the strategic affairs of the region will be increasingly determined by the countries of Asia themselves. ... Much will depend on the policies of the major Asian powers themselves—Japan, China and India—and on their relationships with one another and with other countries in the region’.⁴⁰

The second key strategic trend identified in *Defending Australia* was economic growth, especially in China. By 1994 the central role of China in Australia’s strategic future was fully understood:

Over the next fifteen years, the most important focus of economic growth in Asia will be China. If the patterns of recent years are sustained, China’s economy will become the largest in Asia and the second largest in the world within fifteen years. This will affect global power relationships and become a dominant factor in the strategic framework in Asia and the Pacific.⁴¹

And while noting some hopeful signs, the paper identified a number of trends that ‘could produce an unstable and potentially dangerous strategic situation in Asia and the Pacific over the next fifteen years’.⁴² The implications were set out quite starkly:

Previously our defence planning was able to assume a degree of predictability in our strategic circumstances. Now we need to take

account of a more complex and changeable strategic environment. Australia's ability to shape that environment will become more important to our security, and our policies will need to encompass a wider range of possible outcomes than in the more predictable decades of the Cold War.⁴³

Australia's Strategic Policy 1997

All of these ideas were picked up and carried forward with much greater clarity and force in *Australia's Strategic Policy* which was published in 1997. This was the first major defence policy statement of the Howard Government. The new government largely accepted its predecessor's policy settings, but John Howard's first Defence Minister, Ian McLachlan, thought that policy still took too narrow a view of Australia's strategic interests and capability needs. He wanted a more forward posture. With his encouragement, the broad statements of the *Defending Australia* were translated into more specific policy.

Australia's Strategic Policy did that in several ways. *First*, it affirmed and amplified the judgements in *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s* and *Defending Australia* about the trajectory of Australia's strategic environment. It spoke explicitly of the 'uncertainties about the direction Indonesia will take when President Suharto eventually leaves office',⁴⁴ emphasised the risks posed by endemic weakness among our smaller neighbours,⁴⁵ and dealt at length and with surprising frankness about the challenges of China's rise:

China is already the most important factor for change in the regional security environment. ... China's growing power is an important new factor in Australia's security environment, and it is not yet clear how that power will be accommodated within the regional community. ... It would not be in Australia's interests for China's growing power to result in a diminution of US strategic influence, or to stimulate damaging strategic competition between China and other regional powers. Such competition is not inevitable, but there are some—in China and elsewhere—who are inclined to see it that way.⁴⁶

Second, it went further than either *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s* or *Defending Australia* to explicitly discard the idea that Australia's primary strategic interests were concentrated in a region of primary strategic interest covering Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific:

In the 1970s and 1980s Australia defined its region of primary strategic interest as Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific. At that time, strategic events in Asia beyond that closer region affected our security only through their consequences for the global balance, rather than more directly.

That is no longer true. Today, our strategic interests are directly engaged throughout the wider Asia-Pacific region.⁴⁷

Third, Australia's Strategic Policy picked up and amplified the idea first hinted at in *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, namely that Australia's force planning should focus more on the kinds of operations we might need to undertake to defend wider interests beyond the defence of the continent, both in the Asia-Pacific and beyond. To underline this new approach, the paper deliberately dropped the iconic phrase 'defence of Australia' and used instead the fresher and more active 'defeating attacks on Australia'. In a major change, 'defeating attacks on Australia' was described, not as the sole primary task of the ADF, but as one of three basic tasks: 'There are three basic tasks which could require the ADF to undertake combat operations: defeating attacks on Australia, defending our regional interests, and supporting our global interests.'⁴⁸

The paper affirmed that DAA (using the Defence Department's abbreviation for 'defeating attacks on Australia') remained the highest priority task and the most important criterion in force planning,⁴⁹ but it gave significant and sustained attention to the new task of Defending Regional Interests. The paper referred to the significant possibility that 'we might want to make a direct contribution to the maintenance of broader regional stability, in a future conflict in which Australia's strategic interests were engaged'.⁵⁰ By this the drafters meant that we needed the capability to make a meaningful contribution to conflicts involving the major powers of Asia if, as seemed possible, our interests were caught up in conflicts between them—for example over Taiwan. That was a sobering thought, and the paper went on to draw out its implications with some care:

The strategic interests at stake in the range of situations that could arise in our region are very important to our security. Australia must have the capability to make a substantial military contribution in many different circumstances.

The strength of these interests means we will need to pay close attention to the adequacy of our forces for this task. Rather than assuming that the forces developed for the defence of Australia would be adequate for any regional tasks, we need to demonstrate whether this would be the case.

...

The capabilities of the ADF will therefore be developed to defeat attacks against Australia, and provide substantial capabilities to defend our regional interests. Priority will be given to the first of these tasks, but decisions will be influenced by the ability of forces to contribute to both tasks.⁵¹

The eclipse of 'defence of Australia' as the cynosure of our defence planning was plain: 'In the end, our judgement on the priority we give to defeating attacks on Australia will be tested to see how well a force developed on this basis is able to perform other tasks.'⁵²

Fourth, Australia's Strategic Policy broke new ground by offering a clearer, more systematic and substantive definition of Australia's strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific region than had been set out in an official policy document for some decades, if ever.⁵³ The need to do this was clear: if the 'defence of Australia's' regional interests was to become an increasingly important task for the ADF, and a growing influence on its force structure, it was important to be able to give a clear and rigorous statement of those interests.

Fifth, the paper gave specific attention to the third of the basic tasks of the ADF—Supporting Global Interests.⁵⁴ The way this task was treated in *Australia's Strategic Policy* drew together two elements of Australia's strategic environment: (1) the increasing importance of non-traditional military tasks including peacekeeping and humanitarian operations; and (2) the growing importance of global security interests, including the need to support both the United States and the United Nations in their emerging roles as supporters of stability in the post-Cold War world. By running these two together, the paper did not specifically identify what was soon to become a prime driver of defence policy—the need to undertake, and to take the lead in, stability operations in Australia's immediate neighbourhood. But by identifying Supporting Global Interests as a third basic task for the ADF, the paper did significantly raise the profile both of stability operations and of the significance of global commitments to Australia's broader security—thus moving policy in important ways away from the 1980s paradigm, and clearly foreshadowing important future developments.

Sixth, the paper sounded a sombre warning about the importance of long-term economic trends for Australia's future security. If, as seemed likely, long-term economic growth among our neighbours exceeds that of Australia, our relative economic and hence strategic weight in the region would gradually decline. Australia therefore faced a twin challenge: to meet increasingly demanding strategic circumstances with resources which were dwindling relative to those of potential strategic competitors and adversaries.⁵⁵ For several years following the 1997–98 Asian financial crisis this warning seemed a little too gloomy, as Australia's economic growth continued while that of some of our neighbours collapsed. But as the long-term trends have reasserted themselves, the importance of this challenge is again clear.

The answer, according to *Australia's Strategic Policy*, was to focus harder than ever on spending our defence dollars on those capabilities which are most cost-effective in meeting our needs, and to deliver those capabilities as efficiently

as possible.⁵⁶ The paper made at best a modest start to these tasks: it proposed a simple hierarchy of capability priorities,⁵⁷ and highlighted the need for further efficiency improvements in Defence. The paper did not attempt a rigorous financial analysis of capability options and long-term funding needs. All it did was sound an important warning that while current funds if carefully managed could sustain current forces in the short term, long-term cost pressures were going to force some tough choices. It concluded: 'The current budget does not make it possible to contemplate developing major new capabilities in the form of new fighter aircraft or new surface combatants.'⁵⁸

Defence 2000—Our Future Defence Force

This was the challenge that the Australian Government had to confront when, after the 1998 election and the appointment of John Moore as Defence Minister, it announced the preparation of a new Defence White Paper. In the event *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force* was not published until December 2000. As a result, the paper was influenced in important ways by the experience of East Timor in late 1999, although *Defence 2000* was not primarily a response to East Timor. Its aim was to draw together the defence-policy trends that had emerged during the 1990s and articulate some clear answers to the questions they had posed. Only by doing so could we create the kind of rigorous policy which *Australia's Strategic Policy* had signalled was necessary to meet Australia's underlying strategic challenges.

In particular, the government needed clear new policy directions to make a well-informed decision about the long-term future of defence funding. Over the 15 years since 1985, defence funding had broadly held steady in real terms, while costs (especially real per-capita personnel costs) had risen inexorably. Personnel numbers had been cut sharply to compensate, but the scope for further cuts was inevitably dwindling. The government faced a simple choice: to either provide long-term funding increases or scale back capabilities and hence strategic options. In the event, the government decided to commit to a significant long-term increase in defence funding after Australia's National Security Committee had considered at length how Australia's policy should respond to the strategic lessons of the 1990s and the trends of the new century. In many ways these discussions foreshadowed the wider public debates since 2001. During 2000, Ministers considered whether the ADF still needed to prepare to fight conventional wars, or whether it should plan instead to focus on stability and other non-conventional operations. They considered whether 'defence of Australia' needed any longer to be a major policy priority, and whether in the new security environment higher priority should be given to the Australian Army at the expense of the RAN and the RAAF.

The policy framework that was developed to answer these questions drew strongly on the ideas that had been evolving throughout the 1990s, and especially

those presented in *Australia's Strategic Policy*. But it went significantly further in many ways. Building on the policy paper, a specific statement of Australia's broader strategic interests and objectives was developed and set out in Chapter 4 of *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*. These interests covered not only the defence of the continent and its direct approaches, but the stability of the immediate neighbourhood, the security of Southeast Asia and the wider Asia-Pacific, and support for global security.⁵⁹ They provided the foundation for the statement of strategic tasks for the ADF in Chapter 6 of that paper, which included not only defending Australia but contributing to the security of the immediate neighbourhood, and supporting wider strategic interests.⁶⁰ This was a significant elaboration of the 'three basic tasks' set out in *Australia's Strategic Policy*, and took defence policy even further away from the classic 'defence of Australia' construct of an ADF developed simply to defend the continent against direct attacks. *Defence 2000* clearly set out the government's aim to see the ADF evolve into a flexible instrument designed to achieve a wide range of different functions beyond the defence of Australia.

This was reflected most clearly where it mattered most—in *Defence 2000's* plans for ADF capabilities. *First*, the government decided that in order to ensure the ADF could help defend our interests in the wider Asia-Pacific, air and naval forces had to be able to operate effectively in coalition operations against the region's major powers like China. This was critical to the Australian Government's decision to undertake major long-term enhancements of Australia's air and naval forces. In particular, it underpinned the largest single capability decision in *Defence 2000*—the allocation of major funding for a large number of new fifth-generation combat aircraft.

Second, the *Defence 2000* overturned earlier thinking about the role of the Australian Army. It described the increasing demands of non-traditional military tasks (including stability and humanitarian operations) and concluded:

The Government believes that this is an important and lasting trend, with significant implications for our Defence Force. Over the next ten years the ADF will continue to undertake a range of operations other than conventional war, both in our own region and beyond. Preparing the ADF for such operations will therefore take a more prominent place in our defence planning than it has in the past.⁶¹

The implications were spelled out clearly when *Defence 2000* dealt with the future of the Australian Army's capability. The decision was made to increase permanently the number of high-readiness battalions from four to six, and to invest in new capabilities, including larger amphibious ships, to improve significantly the ADF's capacity to deploy and sustain land forces beyond Australia's shores. The rationale was spelled out quite clearly:

In view of the issues raised in earlier chapters of this White Paper, the development of our land forces needs to reflect a new balance between the demands of operations on Australian territory and the demands of deployments offshore, especially in our immediate neighbourhood. While still giving priority to the defence of Australia in our overall strategic and force planning, the development of our land forces will take fuller account of the demands of possible short notice operations in our immediate neighbourhood. For much of the last two decades, land force planning has been dominated by preparations to meet lower level contingencies on Australian territory. This focus will now be broadened to meet wider range of possible contingencies, both on Australia soil and beyond.⁶²

We had come a long way from 1976 and 1987.

Next Steps

Yet have we gone far enough? Although *Defence 2000* went some way to respond to the major changes of the 1990s, and focused significantly on tasks for the ADF beyond the defence of the continent, it has been criticised for being still too narrowly concerned with the defence of the continent. There is some basis for that charge, at least as far as declaratory policy is concerned. *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force* said that the defence of Australia remained 'the primary priority for the ADF', which 'provides a clear basis for our defence planning'.⁶³ At several places one can find an uneasy tension between the significant innovations in approach and outlook described in the last section, and affirmations that the defence of the continent remained the core of Australian strategic policy. How do these divergent policy ideas fit together? Does it really make sense, for example, to say that our policy gives overriding priority to the defence of Australia, and then say that the key role of the Army is to support stability in our immediate neighbourhood? Or to state that a key factor shaping our air-combat and strike forces is the need to contribute to coalition operations in the wider region against major powers like China? On the critical question of the balance of priorities between continental defence and the defence of wider interests, *Defence 2000* does seem inconsistent.

As we have seen, *Australian Defence* and the 1987 *Defence of Australia* argued that the capabilities developed for the defence of Australia would provide government with an adequate range of options for other contingencies. But *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s* and *Australia's Strategic Policy* both questioned this approach. They said that the adequacy of our 'defence of Australia' defence force to meet wider needs should be carefully tested as the demands of offshore contingencies grew with changing strategic circumstances. *Defence 2000's* approach therefore marked a reversion to the earlier doctrine. It

claimed, in similar terms to the 1987 *Defence of Australia*, that 'forces built primarily to defend Australia will be able to undertake a range of operations to promote our wider strategic interests',⁶⁴ even though it specifically proposed that forces should be developed for strategic tasks beyond the defence of Australia. This tension is not resolved. While setting out the elements of a new, more expansive strategic posture for Australia based on the defence of a set of broad interests, *Defence 2000* still held on to the ideas which had formed the foundation of defence policy for the preceding 25 years, without explaining how the old and the new fit together. The result was a measure of policy 'dissonance' (to use Michael Evans' term).⁶⁵

Such instinctive conservatism is perhaps not all that surprising. This document was after all a product of the Howard Government. Policy centred on the defence of our own territory had worked well for many years, attracting widespread public support and bipartisan political consensus in Australia. It was readily accepted by Australia's neighbours, and offered a clear basis for setting capability priorities. While the strong urge to cling to it is hardly surprising, it is no longer tenable. The key strategic trends of the past 15 years have significantly increased the weight that Australian defence policy needs to give to our wider strategic interests. It is artificial to claim, as *Defence 2000* did, that we still develop forces primarily for the defence of the continent. This artificiality prevents us addressing squarely the real and complex problems of policy that our new strategic circumstances present. To build a credible, effective and sustainable defence policy for the coming decades, we need to rethink the place of 'defence of Australia', and bring Australia's wider strategic interests out from under its shadow. So moving beyond 'defence of Australia' is not just a matter of more credible public presentation. It is important to getting the content of our policy right. Unfortunately the atmosphere of the five years since the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001 has been uncondusive, indeed counterproductive, to this effort. The preoccupation with the 'war on terror', and especially the political imperative to frame defence policy in terms which supported the decision to join the United States in invading Iraq, made it difficult to take a balanced, long-term view of the nature of Australia's wider strategic interests, and of the kinds of forces that could most cost-effectively protect them. This is the task upon which Australian defence policy, and scholars who study that policy, must now focus. It is rather different from, but in a way analogous to, the one Tom Millar posed back in 1965, and to which the SDSC has made such a major contribution. I hope the SDSC can contribute as much to this new task.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ A wise and witty account of early defence debates which illustrates this point can be found in an essay 'The True Principles of Australia's Defence' by Colonel the Hon. James McCay, written in 1908 and republished in the *Australian Army Journal*, vol. II, no. 2, Autumn 2005, pp. 255–263, available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/LWSC/Publications/Journal/AAJ_Autumn05/AAJ_Autumn05_retrospect_26.pdf>, accessed 24 October 2007.
- ² Department of Defence, *Australian Defence Review*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1972, p. 11.
- ³ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence Review*, p. 5.
- ⁴ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1976, p. 2, paragraph 13.
- ⁵ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, p. 10, paragraph 6.
- ⁶ Australian Strategic Policy Institute, *ASPI Almanac 2004-2005*, Canberra, September 2004, p. 63.
- ⁷ Gareth Evans, 'Australia's Place in the World: The Dynamics of Foreign Policy Decision-Making', Address by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade to the ANU Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Bicentennial Conference 'Australia and the World: Prologue and Prospects', Canberra, 6 December 1988, available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/library/documents/speeches_ge/foreign_minister/1988/061288_fm_australiasplace.pdf>, accessed 24 October 2007.
- ⁸ See Kim Beazley, *Thinking Defence: Key Concepts in Australian Defence Planning*, Roy Milne Memorial Lecture, Perth, 6 November 1987.
- ⁹ See for example, J. L. Richardson, 'Australian Strategic and Defence Policy', in (eds) Greenwood and Harper, *Australia in World Affairs*, Cheshire/Australian Institute of International Affairs, Melbourne, 1974, p. 246.
- ¹⁰ Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1987, p. 8, paragraph 1.43.
- ¹¹ For example, see a speech delivered in Singapore by then Defence Minister Kim Beazley on 19 November 1987, 'Australian Perspectives in Regional Security Issues' published in *Selected Speeches 1985-1989 by the Hon. K. C. Beazley MP Minister for Defence*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1989, p. 171ff. Beazley said, for example, that 'the security of Southeast Asia is as important to Australia today as it has ever been', and announced a new program of rotational naval deployments to Southeast Asia to underscore Australia's continued strategic engagement there.
- ¹² Tom Millar, *The Political-Military Relationship in Australia*, SDSC Working Paper, no. 6, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, The Australian National University, Canberra, 1979, p. 12.
- ¹³ See Robert O'Neill, 'Strategic Concepts and Force Structure', in (eds) Robert O'Neill and D. M. Horner, *Australian Defence Policy for the 1980s*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane, 1982, pp. 164 and 173. Also see Michael Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901-2005*, Study paper, no. 306, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, February 2005, available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/LWSC/Publications/SP/SP_306.pdf>, accessed 8 November 2007.
- ¹⁴ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, p. 11, paragraph 17: 'Insofar as we can directly influence developments shaping our strategic prospects, this will often be by the political rather than the military arm of policy.'
- ¹⁵ Department of Defence, *Review of Australia's defence capabilities*, Report to the Minister for Defence by Mr Paul Dibb, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, March 1986, p. 42.
- ¹⁶ See, for example, the interesting formulation in *Defence of Australia*, the 1987 White Paper, p. 3, paragraph 1.13, which says: 'Australia is part of the Western community of nations. Australia therefore supports the ability of the United States to retain an effective strategic balance with the Soviet Union. A redistribution of power in favour of the Soviet Union in the central balance, or an extension of Soviet influence in our region at the expense of the United States, would be a matter of fundamental concern to Australia, and would be contrary to our national interests.'
- ¹⁷ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, p. 5.
- ¹⁸ Department of Defence, *Australian Defence*, p. 5, paragraphs 24 and 28.
- ¹⁹ See, for example, the striking formulation in *Australian Defence*, the 1976 Defence White Paper, paragraph 24 on p. 6, which says: 'For practical purposes, the requirements and scope for Australian defence activity are limited essentially to the areas closer to home—areas in which the deployment of military capabilities by a power potentially unfriendly to Australia could permit that power to attack

or harass Australia and its territories, maritime resources zone and near lines of communication. These are our adjacent maritime areas: the South West Pacific countries and territories; Papua New Guinea; Indonesia; and the South East Asian region.'

²⁰ Department of Defence, *The Defence of Australia*, p. 8, paragraph 1.46. See more generally paragraphs 1.43–1.48, 9.4 and 9.7.

²¹ Australian Strategic Policy Institute, *ASPI Almanac 2004-2005*, Canberra, September 2004.

²² Aaron L. Friedberg, 'Will Europe's Past be Asia's Future', *Survival*, vol. 42, no. 2, Autumn 2000, pp. 147–59.

²³ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, Canberra, September 1992, p. 2.

²⁴ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 3.

²⁵ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, pp. 6–8.

²⁶ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 9.

²⁷ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 15.

²⁸ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 13.

²⁹ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 19.

³⁰ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 21. See also p. 27, paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4.

³¹ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 17. Gareth Evans' statement *Australia's Regional Security* published in December 1989, the month after Cabinet considered *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, made a similar judgement about China: *Australia's Regional Security: Ministerial Statement* by Senator The Hon. Gareth Evans, QC, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, December 1989, paragraph 24, p. 7.

³² Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 23, especially paragraph 4.11.

³³ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 26, paragraph 4.21. See also p. 34, paragraphs 5.33 ff, and p. 39, paragraph 5.50.

³⁴ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Planning in the 1990s*, p. 21, paragraph 4.4.

³⁵ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1994, p. 15, paragraph 3.11.

³⁶ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 15, paragraph 3.11.

³⁷ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 27, paragraph 4.25.

³⁸ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, pp. 28–9, especially paragraph 4.31.

³⁹ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 8 paragraph 2.6.

⁴⁰ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 8 paragraph 2.7.

⁴¹ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 9 paragraph 2.12.

⁴² Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 8, paragraph 2.8.

⁴³ Department of Defence, *Defending Australia*, p. 10 paragraph 2.19.

⁴⁴ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997, p. 12, available at <<http://www.minister.defence.gov.au/sr97/SR97.pdf>>, accessed 8 November 2007.

⁴⁵ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 13.

⁴⁶ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 14.

⁴⁷ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, pp. 9–10.

⁴⁸ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 29.

⁴⁹ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 36.

⁵⁰ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 32.

⁵¹ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 36.

⁵² Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 36.

⁵³ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 8.

⁵⁴ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, pp. 32–3.

⁵⁵ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 5.

⁵⁶ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 5.

⁵⁷ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, Chapter 7.

⁵⁸ Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, p. 51.

⁵⁹ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, Chapter 4, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000, available at <<http://www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper/docs/WPAPER.PDF>>, accessed 8 November 2007, p. 30.

⁶⁰ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, pp. 46–53.

⁶¹ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, p. 10, paragraph 2.8.

⁶² Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, p. 79, paragraph 8.11.

⁶³ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, p. 46, paragraph 6.2.

⁶⁴ Department of Defence, *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force*, p. 46, paragraph 6.2.

⁶⁵ See Michael Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901–2005*, Study paper, no. 306, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra, February 2005, available at <http://www.defence.gov.au/Army/LWSC/Publications/SP/SP_306.pdf>, accessed 8 November 2007.