

The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre's 40th anniversary seminar series

The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre is a research centre within the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies in the College of Asia and the Pacific at The Australian National University in Canberra, the country's capital.

In the second half of 2006, the Centre marked the fortieth anniversary of its founding in 1966 with a series of three seminars (and a dinner) under the theme of *History as Policy*.

Held on 8 August 2006 at the Boat House by the Lake in Canberra (<http://www.boathousebythelake.com.au/>), the dinner was addressed by Professor Wang Gungwu, who gave a masterly sketch of the strategic implications of the rise of China, drawing on his deep knowledge of China's history. Guests included the current Chief of the Defence Force, Air Chief Marshal Angus Houston, the then Secretary of Defence, Ric Smith, and other key figures from the policy world, the intelligence community, and the media. Also in attendance were colleagues from The Australian National University, including the Convenor of the College of Asia and the Pacific, Professor Robin Jeffrey.

Boeing Holdings Australia Ltd continued a long tradition of support to the Centre by generously sponsoring the seminar series and the dinner (which was attended by Paul Gargette, its Vice President of Operations and Business Integration).

The three anniversary seminars were held on 15 August, 14 September and 10 October 2007 at University House on the grounds of The Australian National University (<http://www.anu.edu.au/unihouse/>).

Speakers at the first seminar on *Global Strategic Issues* were Robert O'Neill ('Changing concepts of the nature of security and the role of armed force'), Hugh White ('Predictions and policy'), Coral Bell ('The evolution of the international system'), and Ron Huysken ('Whither the United States?').

Speakers at the second seminar on *Regional Security Issues* were Alan Dupont ('Transnational security issues'), Graeme Dobell ('The arc of instability'), Greg Fealy ('Western counterterrorism in Southeast Asia: Is the 'war of ideas' a fallacy?'), and Brendan Taylor ('Security cooperation in the Asia-Pacific region').

Speakers at the final seminar on *Australia Strategic and Defence Issues* were Paul Dibb ('The Defence of Australia: the history of an idea'), Mark Thomson ('The challenge of coherence: Strategic guidance, force structure and budgets'), David Horner ('The higher command structure for joint ADF operations'), and Hugh White ('Summing Up: Seeing the future in the past').

The papers were of a high standard and prompted much discussion. They provided a stimulating opportunity to reflect on the contribution which the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre has made—to The Australian National University, to Canberra’s strategic policy community, to the national debate, and to the wider study of strategic issues—and to foreshadow some of the work to be done in the years ahead.

In its study of (and work on) strategic issues, the Centre is fortunate to have thriving doctoral and masters programs, the latter currently under the excellent direction of Dr Robert Ayson. (Details of the Graduate Studies in Strategy and Defence (GSSD) program can be viewed at <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/gssd/>.) Graduates from both programs have gone on to forge successful careers either within or beyond academic circles.

The substantial volume of high-quality work undertaken within the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre would have proved impossible without the dedication of the Centre’s academic and support staff, Visiting Fellows, and other researchers and guests who have graced its corridors over the past forty years. Its continued success has also been due to the assistance of numerous colleagues within the ANU academic community.

This volume forms part of the Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence collection. Visit the Centre’s website at <http://rspas.anu.edu.au/sdsc/> for further details about the Centre’s history, staff, and location, and also about its output, including analysis and research items, seminar and academic programs, and its extensive publications collection.