

Abstract

This monograph contains historical and comparative analyses of four Australian regional force projections in the 1980s and 1990s: (1) a contingency evacuation deployment to the waters off Fiji; (2) an armed peacekeeping operation into Bougainville; (3) an unarmed peace support intervention into Bougainville; and (4) a multinational stabilisation operation into East Timor. It uses the following framework of 10 functions of force projection to describe and analyse these interventions:

No.	Function	Elements
1.	Generic Preparation	Military capability that is made up of force structure, readiness, mobilisation and sustainability
2.	Command	Command, control, communications and computer systems
3.	Specific Preparation	Concentration of force elements in mounting or home bases, reconnaissance, reinforcement, training, administration and issue of equipment and stocks
4.	Deployment	Concentration of personnel and <i>matériel</i> , loading, movement of force elements to area of operations and, best effect arrival and pre-positioning
5.	Protection	Intelligence, surveillance, contingency rehearsal and rapid response
6.	Employment	Conduct of operations that may include maintaining deterrent presence, manoeuvre and application of firepower
7.	Sustainment	Planning and carrying out the movement of supplies and maintenance of forces through a supply chain
8.	Rotation	Reinforcement, relief, resting, retraining, re-equipping and redeployment of force elements
9.	Redeployment	Protected movement to specified locations, normally home bases
10.	Reconstitution	Return to required level of military capability

After explaining the relevance and importance of these functions, the monograph sets the scene with a short history of Australia's proficiency in force projection from 1885 until 1985. Australia depended on allies for this period. When they were not in a position to help, Australia struggled. These deficiencies increased risk at tactical tipping points in New Guinea in 1942 and in Vietnam in 1966. These were short periods when the outcomes of tactical contests had strategic consequences for Australia. Both times, Australian troops prevailed against the odds. Bravery and good luck saved Australia from political and strategic embarrassment.

After 1972, Australia's strategic emphasis moved towards more self-reliant defence and conducting joint (maritime, land and air) operations. The Australian armed forces did not learn from the tipping points of 1942 and 1966. In 1987, risks emerged during an evacuation contingency deployment to the waters off Fiji. Operations in Bougainville in 1994 and 1997–98 exposed persistent problems with preparation and deployment as well as force command, protection and sustainment. The short notice intervention into East Timor in 1999 confirmed that there was still significant room for improvement. These four projections achieved successful outcomes. However, *ad hoc* and inefficient processes

demonstrated that Australia was still struggling for self reliance. For all of these interventions, Australian Defence Force (ADF) higher levels of command put the tactical level under unnecessary additional pressure that increased risk.

Despite concerted efforts to establish more effective command and control arrangements for joint operations, these case studies expose weaknesses in command and control as well as logistics. Examined collectively, they make a case for consolidating ADF command and control arrangements and matching responsibilities of joint commanders with the authority and enablers to achieve their missions. They also make a case for a permanent joint commander of ADF operations, supported by a joint integrated headquarters, and having operational control over assigned high readiness force elements from the three Services in order to rehearse the functions of force projection.