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GEOPOLITICS OF THE 2016 AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER AND ITS PREDECESSORS

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GEOPOLITICS OF THE 2016 AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE WHITE PAPER AND ITS PREDECESSORS

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ABSTRACT. Australia released the newest edition of its Defense White Paper, describing Canberra’s current and emerging national security priorities, on February 25, 2016. This continues a tradition of issuing defense white papers since 1976. This work will examine and analyze the contents of this document as well as previous Australian defense white papers, scholarly literature, and political statements assessing their geopolitical significance. It will also examine public input into Australian defense white papers and the emerging role of social media in this public involvement. It concludes by evaluating whether Australia has the political will and economic resources necessary to fulfill its geopolitical and national security aspirations.

Keywords: geopolitics; Australia; defense; security; white paper

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Introduction

Australia is a significant ally of the U.S. in the Asia-Pacific region and its small and highly professional armed forces have participated with the U.S. in many military conflicts and global theaters for the past century. It also has growing economic and strategic interests in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions including China’s rise and illegal waterborne immigration. Incorporating these interests and demographic, economic, and political limitations into defense white papers is a perennial challenge for Australian policy makers which is exacerbated by it being an island continent heavily dependent on sea-based trading and lines of communication.¹

Australia is a prosperous highly developed democracy which has experienced significant economic growth due booming natural resources exports

though this growth began slowing in 2015 as China’s economy began declining and due to earlier economic growth declines in the 2010s. Its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) purchasing power parity was estimated to be \$1.1 trillion as of 2014; its annual GDP economic growth rate that same year was estimated at 2.7%; and its per capita GDP that year was estimated at \$46,600. The Australian economy, whose national population was 24,022,042 as of March 9, 2016, exports key commodities including coal, copper, iron ore, gold, titanium, meat, wool, alumina, machinery, and transport equipment with its largest markets broken down by percentage going to the following nations during 2014:

China	33.7%
Japan	18%
South Korea	7.4%
United States	4.2% ²

Canberra’s overall trade deficit was \$A2.906 billion (\$2.019 billion) seasonally adjusted as of November 1, 2015. Its key imports include machinery and transport equipment, computers and office machines, telecommunication equipment and parts; crude oil and petroleum products with Canberra’s major import suppliers in 2014 being:

China	20.5%
U.S.	10.6%
Japan	6.8%
Singapore	5%
Germany	4.7%
South Korea	4.7%
Malaysia	4.4%
Thailand	4.3% ³

Perennial historical challenges in Australian defense planning arise from a strong tradition emphasizing landpower in Australian military policymaking and the belief of many that Australia’s status as an island nation heavily dependent on international trade makes it imperative to emphasize that Australia is a maritime nation whose seapower needs must be reflected in its national security policymaking plans and priorities. Reflections of this land-maritime power contentiousness are frequently presented in Australian defense white papers and analyses of Australian defense policy.⁴

Defense strategic planning documents have been issued by the Australian Government since the February 1946 release of *Appreciation of the Strategic Position of Australia* with supplemental and updated documents being produced on a regular basis. A 2012 assessment of Australia’s geopolitical and strategic worldview makes the following declaration:

Australia’s area of direct military interest covers about ten percent of the earth’s surface. It extends from the Cocos Islands in the west

to the islands in the Southwest Pacific and New Zealand in the east and from the Indonesian archipelago and Papua New Guinea in the north to Antarctica in the south. Other than defending our own territory, the most important strategic objective is to help foster the stability, integrity, and cohesion of our immediate neighbourhood. As successive defence white papers have noted, Australia would be concerned about major internal challenges that threatened the stability of any neighbouring country. In addition, Australian interests would inevitably be engaged if countries in this region became vulnerable to the adverse influence of strategic competition by major powers.⁵

Australia Centered Strategic Map Emphasizing its Northern Approaches



Source: Central Intelligence Agency

Australian Ship Reporting Area and Search and Rescue Responsibilities



Source: Australian Maritime Safety Authority

Australia's November 1976 white paper was issued during Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser's (1930–2015) Liberal and Country Party Coalition government and by Defence Minister Sir James Killen (1925–2007). Topics addressed in this document included Australia's changing strategic circumstances such as the United Kingdom increasingly turning to the North Atlantic and Europe as focal points of its strategic interests; the increasing global growth of sovereign nation states including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Papua New Guinea in Australia's contiguous regions; the Soviet Union's declining political influence despite retaining tremendous military power; China's increasing international outreach and engagement; Southeast Asia's increasing importance coupled with Vietnamese unification and U.S. military disengagement from Southeast Asia; the importance of the Australian, New Zealand, and United States (ANZAC) alliance to the Australia; and Canberra's need to build constructive relationships with adjacent countries to sustain security and stability.⁶



Source: Australian Department of Defence

Self-reliance was a key theme and assumption in this document as the following excerpt demonstrates:

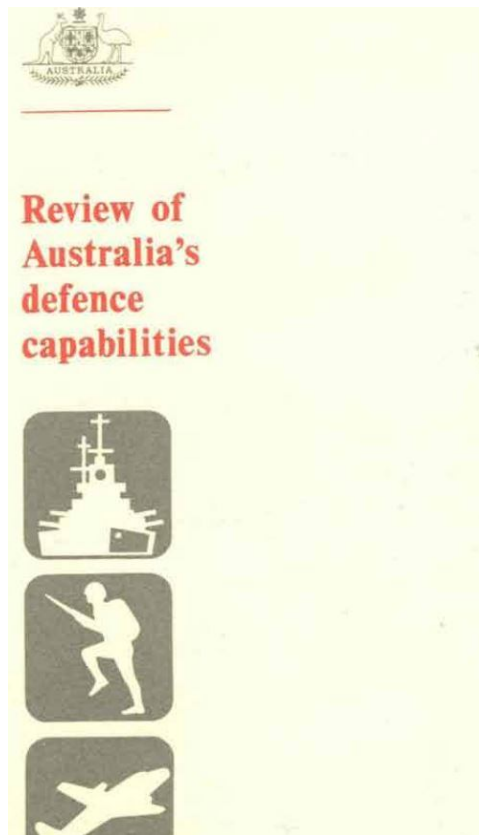
A primary requirement emerging from our findings is for increased self-reliance. In our contemporary circumstances we no longer base our policy on the expectation that Australia's Navy or Army or Air Force will be sent abroad to fight as part of some other nation's force, supported by it. We do not rule 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 joint operations together as the Australian Defence Force (ADF).

Our alliance with the US gives substantial grounds for confidence that in the event of a fundamental threat to Australia's security, US military support would be forthcoming. However, even though our security may be ultimately dependent upon US support, we owe it to ourselves to be able to mount a national defence effort that would maximise the risks and costs of any aggression.⁷

Subsequent sections of this document provided detailed projections of Australian military force requirements, included funding estimates to meet this goal of self-reliance in areas such as maritime surveillance, reconnaissance, and offshore patrol, naval air warfare, land defense, manpower levels, operational readiness, defense facilities, requisite defense science and technology

assets, defense industry support, equipment acquisition, assistance to United Nations and international partners, and manpower expenditure.⁸

The 1976 defence white paper was criticized as being unaffordable and providing little detail on how the government planned to use the force structure proposed by this document. A more recent assessment of this document contends that it described Australia's primary strategic concern as being adjacent maritime areas Southwest Pacific countries and territories, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, and the Southeast Asian region; extending from the Indian Ocean's Cocos Islands to New Zealand covering almost 10% of the earth's surface; and also noting that the Indonesian archipelago and Papua New Guinea could be staging areas in potential offensive military operations against Australia.⁹



Courtesy: Australian Department of Defence

Although not an official Australian defense white paper the 1986, Dibb Review of Australian defence capabilities is another important document examining Australian defense aspirations and strategic interests and Canberra's

ability to match these multiple objectives. Written by Australian National University Professor Paul Dibb for the Labour Government of Bob Hawke (1983–1991), this document was commissioned by Defence Minister Kim Beazley in 1985 and released in June 1986. Its contents included feedback from the Department of Defence, the Chief of the Defence Force, the Chiefs of the Air and Naval Staffs, submissions from state and national governments, industry, national organizations, retired officers, and private individuals.¹⁰

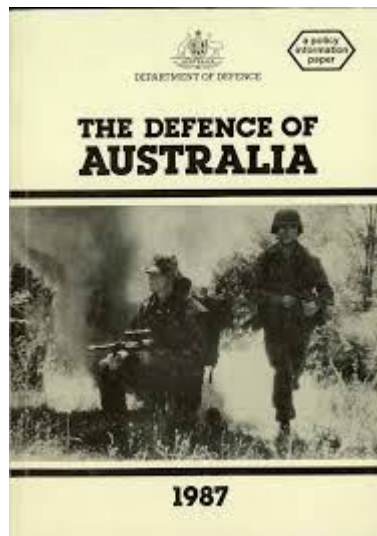
Dibb mentioned seeing no need for Australia to make drastic defense policy changes maintaining that force structure adjustments can be made progressively in the subsequent five years and beyond. Contending that Australia was not imminently threatened, he asserted that Australia should strive to develop a more independent combat capability. He stressed the criticality of Australia's close relationship with the U.S. through the ANZUS pact providing Canberra with access to U.S. intelligence, surveillance, defense science, weapons, and logistics support. This document went on to mention that it could not obtain information from the Department of Defence on the strategic rationale for a 12-destroyer Navy, three fighter squadrons, six regular Army battalions, and an Army Reserve personnel target size of 30,000.¹¹

Additional findings and recommendations contained within this document's executive summary included there being no conceivable prospect of a power invading Australia and subjugating the continent; the need for a hostile power to take at least ten years and have massive external support to invade Australia; that Australia requires the ability to detect, identify, and track potentially hostile forces within its area of direct military interest which was becoming more feasible due to the emergence of over-the-horizon radar; that priority should be given to intelligence, maritime, and electronic-warfare forces; and that possessing strike and interdiction capabilities is one of the best means for Australia to demonstrate its military advantage. Dibb also advocated enhancing anti-submarine warfare capabilities to protect critical areas in southern waters including the Bass Strait, Fremantle, Sydney, and Cape Leeuwin; that at least two fighter squadrons were necessary for continental air defense; that ground forces should protect military and infrastructure assets supporting air and maritime power projection; that ground forces should be primarily infantry, lightly armed, and air mobile; that Australian industry should plan for potential overseas supply disruption; that the Cocos and Christmas Islands and Papua New Guinea are the only external threat contingencies which should be included in force structure planning; and that new capital equipment expenditures may require an addition \$A 1.3 billion (\$983.9 million) and that only modest changes need to be made in the Defence Department's plans to increase defense spending 3.1% between 1986–1991.¹²

This document received praise and criticism from various sources. Proponents favored its emphasis on defending the north-sea air gap to Australia's

north and east and emphasizing placing greater self-reliance in national defense capabilities. Critics stressed concern that Dobb placed insufficient emphasis on offensive capabilities which they worried would see Australia facing an mobile aggressor with hands tied behind its back; that the ADF would be overly restricted; could not pose a deterrent; would not provide western leadership in the wider Southeast Asian or South Pacific area; and would act on a more reactive instead of proactive basis; and that it was necessary for Australia to gain air superiority by counter-air operations against aircraft on the ground, air bases, and supporting infrastructure.¹³

The following year the Hawke Government and Beazley produced *The Defence of Australia* white paper. This document stressed the importance of Australia achieving self-reliance in defense planning and giving Australia the military capability to prevent an aggressor from attacking air and sea approaches, gaining a foothold on any part of national territory, and having the ability to extort concessions from Australia through using military force. This document also stressed Canberra's desire to have forces capable of tracking and targeting adversaries by mounting offensive and defensive operations including air defense, mine countermeasures, and protecting coastal trade with mobile land forces capable of meeting and defeating armed incursions at remote locations.¹⁴



Source: Australian Department of Defence

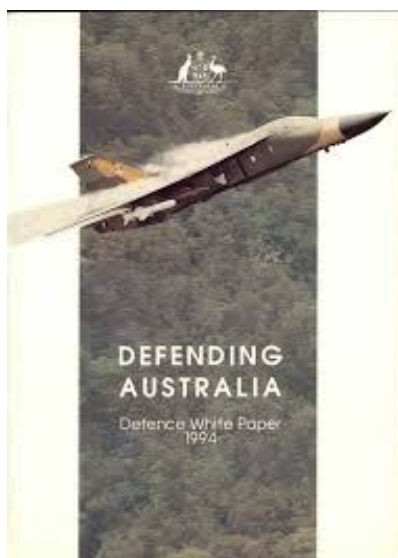
Additional emphases of this document included stressing development of Jindalee over-the-horizon radar with three new stations being planned to facilitate around-the-clock surveillance of Australia's northern approaches, expanding naval surface combat ships from twelve to sixteen or seventeen

and developing a new warship class with range and armament to operate in areas beyond Australia's geographic contiguousness; acquiring six new submarines; and establishing the Royal Australian Navy (RAN) as a two ocean fleet with major portions being based in Western Australia. The Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) was projected to have long-range strike forces of F-111 bombers and F/A-18 fighters with basing for these squadrons planned for Tindal near Darwin, Derby in northwestern Australia, and Cape York Peninsula. Army enhancements proposed in this document included strengthening the Townsville, QD-based Operational Deployment Force; permanently basing major elements of the Australian Army in the north including a fast-moving cavalry regiment of 340 personnel in Darwin, NT; and increasing the number of Blackhawk helicopters.¹⁵

A 2006 assessment of this document praised its declaration that Australia must have the ability to defend itself against air and sea attacks and from gaining control of territory.¹⁶ However, a 1990 analysis of the 1987 defence white paper criticized it for not providing clear costs estimates for meeting its goal of Australian self-reliance and for not providing sufficient funding to meet these objectives with an estimated budget shortfall of \$A 2 billion (\$1.514 billion) over four years, capital equipment expenditures falling from 27.1% of defense spending in 1986–1987 to 21.5% in 1989–1990, and seeking to reduce the number of personnel in defense establishments while hoping to increase their productivity.¹⁷

The *Defence of Australia* also received criticism from the Labour Government's conservative parliamentary critics. Representative Alexander Downer (LIB-Mayo) expressed concern about Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev's desire to become more involved in the Pacific and about the white paper's increasing emphasis on integrating with Asia by mentioning that Australia is part of the western security alliance and should be proud of its part in promoting international security. He proceeded to stress the critical importance of joint Australian-U.S. facilities at the North-West Cape and Pine Gap, that Australia should not worry about whether visiting American and Australian ships carry nuclear weaponry, and that the government should stand up and resist peace movement arguments promoting moral equivalence between the West and the Soviet Union.¹⁸

The next Australian defence white paper was issued in November 1994 by Prime Minister Paul Keating's Labour Party Government and Defence Minister Robert Ray.



Source: Australian Department of Defence

Defending Australia stressed how the Cold War's conclusion had ended the threat of war between the U.S. and former Soviet Union as a threat to Australian security. It went on to emphasize that while Australian security could still be threatened by European and Middle East events, that there was greater likelihood of Australian security being threatened by Asia-Pacific developments. *Defending Australia* noted that the Korean Peninsula and South Asia remained areas of international tension and potential conflict, acknowledged the presence of competing nations and territorial claims in the South China Sea; and that despite repression in countries such as Cambodia stable Asia-Pacific strategic relations and economic growth has enabled countries to evolve on a more stable basis.¹⁹

Specific commitments to enhancing Canberra's military capability made in this document included making defense spending 2% of Australian GDP for five years beginning in 1996–1997 without providing program specific expenditure estimates; beginning planning of potential defense needs until 2010; strengthening northern barrier defense capabilities, stressing the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region to Australian strategic interests while enhancing security ties with the U.S.; including specific quantitative measurements for ADF branches such as 11 destroyers and frigates and 6 Collins Class submarines for the RAN; 103 Leopard 1A3 tanks and 771 M113 armored vehicles for the Australian Army, and 3 tactical fighter squadrons with 52 F/A-18 aircraft and 2 strike reconnaissance squadrons with 17 F111C aircraft, and two maritime patrol squadrons with 19 P3C aircraft for the RAAF.²⁰

A positive critique of *Defending Australia* noted that Australia would have to pay enhanced attention to short-warning conflicts which may require potential deployment of Australian forces to contiguous geographic regions. It also noted that this document's guidance to ADF forces being provided with sufficient numbers and ability to be deployed regionally was restricted by "regional interests" being expanded from the immediate neighborhood to the broader Asia-Pacific region.²¹ Additional praise for this document was found in its plans to expand regional security partnership with Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) countries including Indonesia, Malaysia, and Singapore along with Canberra's plans to support international peace-keeping missions in areas as varied as the Persian Gulf, Namibia, Cambodia, Somalia, Rwanda, and the South Pacific.²²

Criticism of *Defending Australia* was provided in parliamentary debate on December 7, 1994 by opposition defense critic Peter Reith (Lib-Flinders). He noted what he saw as a decline in capabilities and operational and personnel readiness under the Labour Government commenting that since a 1991 force structure review that the Army had lost two of six infantry battalions and that *Defending Australia* proposed restoring one of these battalions by stripping manpower from other depleted ADF assets which he described as robbing Peter to pay Paul when Paul is already impoverished. He also criticized Labour's plans to extend strategic horizons to from Southeast Asia to Northeast Asia as rhetoric which cannot be backed up with effective action.²³

1996 saw the end of 13 years of Labour Party Government with the election of the conservative coalition of the Liberal and National parties. Led by Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007) (LIB-Bennelong) and Defence Minister Ian McLachlan (LIB-Barker), this government published the *Australian Strategic Review* in 1997. Highlights of this document included stressing the global nature of Australian strategic interests while emphasizing the importance of basing security on conditions in contiguous countries as stressed by this following assertion:

... Australia's most direct strategic interests continue to include the stability, safety and friendly disposition of the countries closest to us – the **inner arc** of islands from Indonesia in the west through to Papua New Guinea, the Solomon Islands and the Southwest Pacific. Any substantial military attack on Australia would most easily be mounted from or through these islands. Australia's relative safety from armed attack at present owes much to the common interests we share with these countries, and to freedom from external pressures on their sovereignty.²⁴



Australia's Strategic Policy

Source: Australian Department of Defence

This document went on to emphasize that key foundational elements of Australian national security included:

- The centrality of the Asia-Pacific region to our security.
- The significance of economic growth in East Asia to our strategic environment.
- The challenge of new power relations which result from that growth.
- The special importance of the relationships between China, Japan and the United States for the security of the whole region.
- The unique place Indonesia has in shaping our strategic environment.
- The importance of maintaining, as an integral part of our wider international policies, a strategic posture which includes both the maintenance of effective defence capabilities and the maintenance of active involvement in regional strategic affairs.²⁵

Australia's Strategic Policy proceeded to describe Canberra's key Asia-Pacific strategic interests as being:

- Helping avoid destabilizing strategic competition between the region's major powers;
- Helping prevent the emergence of a security environment dominated by any power(s) with antagonistic strategic interests;
- Helping maintain a benign southeast Asian security environment, especially in maritime Southeast Asia, which protects the territorial integrity of all regional countries; and
- Helping prevent the regional proliferation of weapons of mass destruction.²⁶

On December 2, 1997 Representative William Taylor (LIB-Groom) praised *Australian Strategic Policy* for emphasizing the following four priority areas for ADF development: effectively exploiting information technologies to allow Australia to use its small forces to maximum effectiveness; developing military capabilities to defeat future threats to national air and maritime approaches; maintaining an effective defense force strike capability; and developing capabilities to defeat threats within Australian territory.²⁷

However, concerns about this document expressed by Labour Party figures that stressed the Howard Government should place more emphasis on remote crisis areas such as the Mideast instead of the contiguous inner arc and *Australian Strategic Policy* was also faulted for the ADF's projected strength of 50,000 being insufficient to carry out expanded security requirements expected of it by this document and the expected absence of new funds to execute its responsibilities.²⁸

Although the next Australian defence white paper would not be released until 2000, its contents would be significantly influenced by Canberra's 1999 military intervention into East Timor. In August 1999, people of this country voted to be an independent country and separate themselves from Indonesia. Pro-Indonesian militias responded violently by killing pro-independence East Timorese and trying to deport other areas of Indonesia. The United Nations Security Council passed resolution 1264 on September 15, 1999 authorizing the creation of an Australian-lead International Force in East Timor (INTERFET) to restore order and provide humanitarian relief to this newly independent country. Australian force size in this operation reached a peak of 5,700 in 1999 and a Canberra retained a residual military presence in this country until November 22, 2012.²⁹

Australian intervention and sustainment in INTERFET was considered relatively successful in establishing some level of stability in East Timor and representing the most decisive Australian regional military intervention in Southeast Asia since World War II. It was also aided by Indonesia's decision not to resist the intervention. However, the decision-making leading up to the intervention has been criticized as have ADF capabilities in being able to execute and sustain such missions including large-scale counterinsurgency operations. Additional criticism of Australian participation in INTERFET has also focused on the interoperability of the ADF with coalition forces in future multinational operations. This operation also forced the ADF to deploy nearly half of the Army's combat force on extremely short notice to face irregulars with limited military assets. INTERFET occurred so quickly that the ADF had to borrow camouflage suits, night vision goggles, and water purification plants from the U.S. due to supply shortages.³⁰

December 6, 2000 saw the release of Australia's next defence white paper under the aegis of Prime Minister Howard and Defence Minister John Moore

(LIB-Ryan). Entitled *Defence 2000: Our Future Defence Force* this document stressed that the ADF's primary objective was defending Australian territory from credible attack without relying on another country's combat forces. This emphasis on a self-reliant strategy stressed developing a maritime strategy to control air and sea approaches to the continent by denying them to hostile ships and aircraft and provide maximum freedom of action to the ADF. It assigned a vital and central role to ADF land forces in assisting ADF air and sea forces in implementing this maritime strategy. This document also stressed that Australia would take a highly proactive approach to secure a rapid and favorable result and end to hostilities. *Defence 2000* also stressed making a major contribution to securing Australia's neighborhood, being able to operate in adjoining countries if requested by host governments, using preponderant force if military action is required, contributing effectively in coalitions to international crises in areas far away from Australia, and providing indigenous coastal surveillance and emergency management support *Defence 2000* also stressed a concentric circles security model focusing on a hierarchy of five interests and associated objectives including:

- Ensuring the defense of Australia and its direct approaches.
- Fostering immediate neighborhood security.
- Promoting Southeast Asian stability and cooperation.
- Supporting strategic stability in the wider Asia Pacific region.
- Supporting global security.³¹

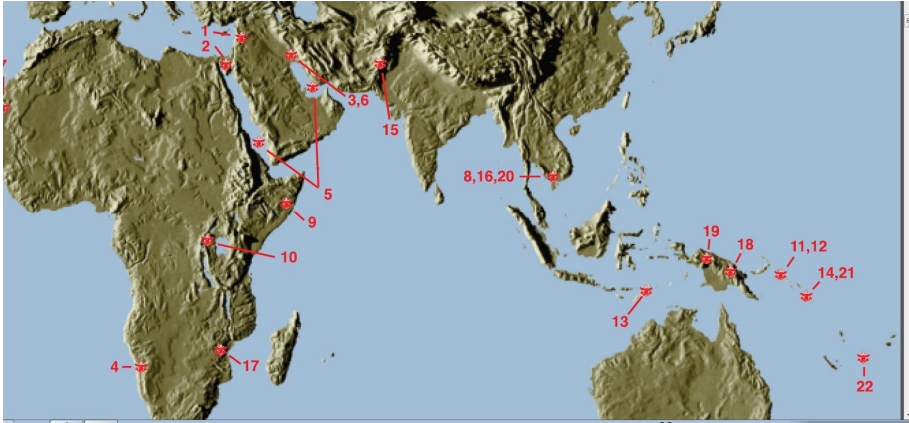
Defence 2000



Our Future Defence Force

Source: Australian Department of Defence

Examples of Australian involvement in international peacekeeping missions since 1956 has spanned areas as far flung as Afghanistan/Pakistan, Cambodia, Namibia, the Sinai, the Solomon Islands, Somalia, and Western Sahara as the following chart demonstrates:



Source: Australian Department of Defence.³²

This white paper sought to increase Australian defense spending by \$A500 million in 2001–2002 (\$261 million) and \$A1 billion (\$523.212 million) in 2002–2003 and increase by \$A 23 billion (\$17.450 billion) over the next decade. Parliamentary supporters of this white paper such as Representative Kay Hull (NAT-Riverina) stressed that *Defence 2000* detailed Australia’s need to invest in deployable defense forces capable of protecting Australia in land, sea, and air combat and to upgrade its forces to maintain pace with evolving technologies and capabilities. Representative Gary Hardgrave (LIB-Moreton) stressed the consultative nature of this report emphasizing how public input was sought and obtained for report contents. Parliamentary criticism of *Defence Australia* on February 28, 2001 by Representative Laurie Ferguson (LAB-Werriwa) criticized the government for its pre-East Timor intervention statement that ADF strength of 42,500 was sufficient while it now contended that personnel strength of 54,000 was required. Ferguson also added that current force separation rates meant that by 2010 the ADF would be 12,000 personnel short of desired levels. He also criticized the government for what he contended was poor morale in defense warehouses due to plans to out-source defense functions.³³

Defence 2000 also received bracing criticism in many scholarly assessments. One analysis noted that while this document stressed the revolution in military affairs, missile proliferation, failed states, and transnational crime, it contained little analysis of the varying implications these challenges had on how Australia would manage its complex and changing security environment. It was critical of the White Paper asserting that Australia should have a balanced and conventional approach to meeting divergent threats.³⁴

Another critical assessment maintained that *Defence 2000* maintained an ambivalent attitude toward Indonesia as a possible threat to Australian security if Jakarta would revert to authoritarian rule; that it did not address how Aus-

tralia would respond if the U.S. requested it to provide military assistance if China attacked Taiwan and consider how China might seek to punish Australia if it supported the U.S. in such a contingency; and whether Australia can economically afford to defend itself in an conventional military conflict. This writer also stressed that the war on terror was a misleading metaphor and that police efforts would be more important than ADF operations.³⁵

A final harsh assessment of *Defence 2000* argued that the maritime strategy associated with this document did not account for what the author considered the declining strategic relevance of geography and proliferating non-state challenges to state security. Its author contended that Australia's northern air-sea gap could not be defended in a world of technological profusion, protean crime, epidemic diseases, illegal migration, and terrorist attacks such as the October 12, 2002 Bali bombing killing 88 Australians. This analysis also contended that a true maritime strategy to control sea lines of communication and contain continental powers was beyond Australia's capability. It advocated that future ADF capabilities should emphasize greater strategic reach and off-shore deployments beyond Canberra's immediate neighborhood to support wider security interests, that the ADF must be trained and structured to defend Australia from conventional military attack, counterterrorism, participate in complex peace operations, and defend against weapons of mass destruction, and that technological superiority must be usable and appropriate for new and old wars and that future conflicts will emphasize lower cost, modular, multi-purpose platforms equipped with miniaturized missiles and drones, lethal microbots, and various precision guided munitions supported by Command, Control, Communications, Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance (C4ISR) and real-time sensor-to-shooter architecture.³⁶

Australia's next defense white paper would be issued in 2009 by the government of Kevin Rudd (LAB-Griffith which defeated Howard's conservative coalition government in the 2007 elections. During the preceding decade, the ADF participated in U.S. military operations in Afghanistan and Iraq while also intervening in the Solomon Islands to prevent internecine strife in that Pacific Island country from causing the collapse of governmental authority. Numerous assessments exist on the propriety of these operations and their successes and failures.³⁷

Prior to issuing the 2009 White Paper, the Rudd Government announced on May 7, 2008 that it was directing a formal evaluation of the effectiveness of the Defence Material Organisation (DMO) to see that this entity was carrying out its mission to provide effective value for Australian defense spending, achieve better results for the ADF, greater transparency and accountability, and improved efficiency and effectiveness. This review, known as the Mortimer Review, was compiled by University of Sydney Professor

David Mortimer, and it released its findings on September 18, 2008. Review findings included inadequate project management resources in DMO's Capability Development Group; inefficiencies in the process leading to governmental approvals for new projects; insufficient DMO personnel; and delays due to inadequate industry capacity, and introducing equipment into full service.³⁸

Recommendations for improving Australian defense spending accountability and efficiency included:

- Defence preparing an annual submission detailing current and future defense capability gaps and their remediation priority for government consideration and approval.
- The Defence Chief Financial Officer should assure Defence Capability Plan Affordability including its impact on future personnel and operating costs as part of annual defense budget considerations.
- The capability development process should be expedited to allow the National Security Committee to focus on major issues and a subordinate subcommittee created to handle minor and simpler defense acquisition matters.
- The Capability Development Group should be sufficiently financed in terms of workforce numbers and skills to develop capability proposals and incorporate specialist advice from the Defense Materials Organisation and Defense Science and Technology Organisation; and
- The Government should work with industry and State Governments to address defense industry skills shortages.³⁹

The 2009 white paper *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030* was issued by Rudd and Defence Minister Joel Fitzgibbon (LAB-Hunter) and released on May 2, 2009. *Defending Australia in the Asia-Pacific Century* was prepared during the post-2008 international financial crisis. One significant change in this document from its predecessors was speculating about the possibility of a major power adversary (potentially China) attacking Australia while stressing that Canberra's major strategic priorities remained defending Australia against direct armed attack and ensuring the stability, security, and cohesion of its immediate neighborhood. *Defending Australia* emphasized a commitment to maintaining Indonesian territorial integrity saying a weakened and fragmented Indonesia could threaten Australian national security. This document also stressed concern about challenges facing the Southwest Pacific and East Timor stemming from economic stagnation, political and social instability, weak governance, and crime. It also stressed concern of Fijian military interference in the democratic process while mentioning ongoing security cooperation with New Zealand in East Timor and the Solomon Islands.⁴⁰

DEFENDING AUSTRALIA
IN THE ASIA PACIFIC CENTURY:
FORCE 2030



Source: Australian Department of Defence

To address these emerging security challenges Rudd's Government decided to acquire 12 new submarines to be built in South Australia as part of a program expanding three decades with these Future Submarines having greater range, longer patrol endurance, and capabilities beyond those of the current Collins class submarines. Examples of these expanded capabilities include strategic strike; mine detection and mine laying operations; intelligence collection; and supporting special forces with infiltration and exfiltration missions. This document also committed to enhancing Australia's surface fleet by acquiring three air warfare destroyers and a fleet of eight Future Frigates. It committed to maintaining an Army force of three combat brigades with around 4,000 troops consisting of battalion sized units and enhancing Army deployment, lead time, and sustainment capabilities through the Adaptive Army Initiative. The Air Force was slated to benefit from the 2010 arrival of the F/A-18F Super Hornet fighter and the acquisition of approximately 100 F-35 fifth generation fighters, and the Growler E-A 18G electronic warfare aircraft.⁴¹

During September 8, 2009 debate on the defense science and technical provisions of *Defending Australia* Minister for Defense Personnel, Material, and Science Greg Combet (LAB-Charlton) maintained that the government had given defense scientists greater freedom to design and develop new technologies and developing new roles for them in analyzing technical risk and designing risk management and risk mitigation strategies to enhance defense capabilities. However, MP Bob Baldwin (LIB-Paterson), while acknowledging what he saw as possible developments in the Defence Science and Technology Organisation (DSTO), stressed concern about \$A20 billion

(\$16.803 billion) cuts in defense spending with DSTO experiencing a 50% annual budget reduction from \$A26 million (\$21.844 million) to \$A13 million (\$10.922 million) and that such cuts would have injurious effects on defense workforce health and safety conditions.⁴²

Components of *Defending Australia* were also praised and criticized in a series of articles in the Australian security policy journal *Security Challenges*. One assessment praised the white paper for examining national security policy objectives out to 2030, for the Rudd Government's commitment to maintain annual 3% defense budget increases, and for its determination that the U.S. will remain the world's most preeminent military power until 2030 and that no other great power will be able to challenge U.S. East Asian primacy in the near term.⁴³

A second assessment mentioned how climate change, pandemics, drugs, and internationally organized crime need to be factored into national security policy planning. It went on to criticize *Force 2030* for failing to discuss the evolving relationship between hard and soft power as a conditioning factor in emerging military operations. This appraisal also faulted this document for not emphasizing that successful counterinsurgency operations requires isolating civilian communities from insurgents, and providing education, health, and well-being to give civilian communities reason to oppose insurgents and that *Force 2030* fails to suggest how such solutions can be achieved as matters of policy and strategy.

In addition, this analyst also criticized *Force 2030* for an insufficient subtlety in confronting the emergence of ideological conflict in the form of Islamist absolutism; emerging and differing forms of national power; the acute unpredictability in which cultural, economic, ideological, and social forces might interact; ignores the role of culture in strategic pathology; and the global strategic system's vulnerability to individual leaders whims and decisions.⁴⁴

A third *Security Challenges* assessment of *Force 2030* faulted it for imprecisely defining how interests in Chapter 5 relate to policy precepts in Chapter 6 and tasks defined in Chapter 7. Specifically, it declared that *Force 2030* failed to define what are unique Australian national interests, that it was ambiguous in determining how interests impact ADF force priorities, and that there is major and consequential confusion about whether Australia's strategic objective should be defending the continent against the forces of a major Asian power only against forces Indonesia might use. This analysis also criticized *Force 2030* for failing to mention neighboring countries denying access to military bases to potentially hostile powers that this document's emphasis on militarily protecting shipping lanes and sea-borne trade by major or middle tier powers is extremely difficult and beyond the existing Australian military capabilities.⁴⁵



Source: Australia Department of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet

In October 2012, the Government of Prime Minister Julia Gillard (LAB-Lalor) who had ousted Rudd in a 2010 internal party dispute released *Australia in the Asian Century* white paper. This document stressed the increasing importance of the Asia-Pacific region in Australian foreign and national security policy. National security topics stressed in this document included recognizing that future Australian prosperity is critically linked to developments in this region; that the region's security environment is shifting in response to regional economic growth, changing national strategic power, and the behavior of non-state actors; that Canberra will promote cooperative arrangements among regional nations as the economic and strategic landscape shifts; and that Australia supports China's participation in regional economic, political, and strategic development. *Australia in the Asian Century* went on to emphasize that Australia would continue working closely with the U.S. to ensure Washington maintains a strong and consistent regional presence; that global and regional institutions were central for developing regional collective security, building trust, and supporting norms and rules; that the East Asia Summit would be a crucial regional institution for managing regional security challenges; and that Australia seeks to increase human security by developing resilient markets for basic human needs including energy, food, and water, and grappling with climate change.⁴⁶

One assessment of this document praised it for stressing that India could play a positive role in Canberra's security interests while urging Australia place increased importance on building a strong strategic arc linking the Indian and Pacific Oceans. This analysis also criticized *Australia in the Asian Cen-*

ture for ignoring controversies in Australian immigration policies including stopping illegal seaborne immigration and detaining immigrants and for not addressing North Korean nuclear and cyber rattling.⁴⁷

The next Australian defense white paper *Defending Australia and Its National Interests* was released May 3, 2013 by Gillard who would be toppled by Rudd the following month and Defence Minister-Stephen Smith (LAB-Perth) and incorporated public consultation in its compilation and preparation. It also was issued in the aftermath of an \$A20 billion (\$20.741 billion) defense funding loss between 2009 and 2012 due to the Australian economy entering into a budget deficit consequently dropping Australian defense spending below 2% GDP. Topics addressed in this document included matters affecting Australia's strategic outlook including the Indo-Pacific, adverse effects of the global financial crisis, Southeast Asia, and North Asia, the Indian Ocean, regional military modernization, terrorism, climate change and resource security, Antarctica, technological development implications for the ADF, and cyber war. It defined the four key tasks of Australian defense as:

- Deterring and Defeating Attacks on Australia
- Contributing to stability and security in the South Pacific and East Timor
- Contributing to military contingencies in the Indo-Pacific
- Contributing to military contingencies supporting global security.⁴⁸



DEFENCE WHITE PAPER 2013



Defending Australia and its National Interests
www.defence.gov.au

Courtesy: Lowy Institute

This white paper also stressed drawing done ADF personnel from overseas operations in the Mideast, Afghanistan, East Timor, and the Solomon Islands; maintaining ADF capabilities with particular emphasis on excellence in conventional combat operations; ensuring ADF capability development meets current and future needs; providing timely and accurate intelligence support to ADF decision-makers; and enhancing allied interoperability. Additional aspirations of this document included maintaining ADF force strength of approximately 59,000; increasing the defense budget to 2% of GDP, providing longer warning time of threats to the continent; enhancing force surge capability; and dispersing base locations to ensure they align with strategic requirements and ensure critical capabilities; that bases be located near industry and strategic infrastructure; incorporating a U.S. Marine Corps rotational force at Darwin; and since 2009 approving over 125 new proposals for new and enhanced defense capabilities worth over \$A 17.3 billion (\$12.347 billion) including C-17 heavy lift aircraft, F/A-18 F combat aircraft, Bushmaster protected mobility vehicles, and two large amphibious/sea vessels. Anticipated future purchases include three Air Warfare destroyers, two landing dock helicopter amphibious ships, and two F-35A Joint Strike Fighter aircraft.⁴⁹

This white paper was released a few months before the 2013 election ousting the revolving door Labour governments of Gillard and Kevin Rudd who toppled Gillard in a partisan battle to become Prime Minister again in June 2013. Consequently, this document received limited parliamentary discussion. On May 14, 2013 Representative Nick Champion (LAB-Wakefield) asked Smith how the defense white paper outlined a plan providing for Australian security. Smith responded saying *Defending Australia* described the formation of an Indo-Pacific strategic entity reflecting the rise of China and India; stressed the importance of the U.S.' rebalance to the Asia-Pacific; and stressed that Australia remained the world's 13th largest defense spending country even though this spending represented less than 2% of GDP.⁵⁰

This same day saw Gillard respond to a February 7, 2013 written question from Rep. Stuart Robert (LIB-Fadden) concerning governmental spending on cybersecurity by noting that \$A1.46 billion (\$1.389 billion) was planned for cybersecurity spending out to 2020 by various Department of Defence entities.⁵¹

Defending Australia would not see further implementation due to the decisive September 7, 2013 defeat of the Labour Government by a conservative Liberal-National Party government headed by new Prime Minister Tony Abbott (LIB-Warringah).⁵²

Numerous positive and more numerous critical reviews were made of *Defending Australia* in a series of articles published in a special issue of the Australian defense journal *Security Challenges* published by the Institute for Regional Security. Attributes of this document mentioned in these articles

included recognizing that territorial disputes in Southeast and Northeast Asia are directly linked to regional states concerns about Chinese military modernization; recognizing the need to achieve proper balance between capability and risk within financial resources; emphasizing the importance of building trust in defense and security partnerships and that such trust must extend across governments and societies; praised the U.S. Marine Corps rotation through Darwin; indicating that the U.S. alliance may become more important in the future; approved Plan Beersheba which seeks to structure the Army into three multi-role combat brigades; and implicitly recognizing the need for Australia to have a maritime capability to protect trade and essential materials from being attacked at sea; and commending the documents' emphasis on ADF personnel education and training and strengthening treatment for those experiencing mental health and post-traumatic stress. Another journal's analysis of Australian governmental national security policy planning during this period stressed that Gillard did a better job than Rudd in stabilizing Australian strategic posture and upgrading Canberra's alliance with the U.S and keeping the U.S. engaged in Asia.⁵³

These instances of praise were more than counteracted by often lacerating criticism of deficiencies documented by report critics. These included describing a more positive strategic outlook than its 2009 predecessor without changing force structure other than adding extra electronic Growler aircraft; failing to match ends with means by not going beyond broad statements of objectives without explaining how to achieve such objectives through explicit domestic reforms, enhancing resource allocation to priority purposes, effective outreach within and beyond Australia, hedging strategies against future contingencies; and failing to deliver means matching ends and resources required for these capabilities.⁵⁴

Additional criticisms of the 2013 White Paper included failing to justify the number of aircraft, ships, submarines, and battalions the government intends to purchase with taxpayer dollars; failing to link the activity of defense engagement with desired outcomes through a strategic concept; how seeking regional engagement relates to Australian defense; increased financial costs including choosing financially risky options to replace the troubled Collins class submarines and maintaining the F-A/18 F Super Hornet; the soon to be acquired F-35 Joint Strike Fighter, and Growler electronic warfare aircraft means maintaining three different combat aircraft fleets in subsequent decades; failing to recognize that prior defense funding cuts will diminish Australia's ability to address aerospace combat threats between 2020–2030 and that aspiring to be a middle-ranked military power without realistic funding commitments is not sustainable; and failing to include operational planning for cyberwarfare in the white paper along with not articulating

operational planning for electronic warfare and electronic countermeasures into Australian military planning and strategy.⁵⁵

Plans for a 2015 white paper, initiated by Abbott and Defense Minister Kevin Andrews (LIB-Menzies), began following the conservative coalition's victory in the 2013 election. This paper's release was delayed until 2016 for numerous reasons including turmoil within the governing Liberal Party personified by dissatisfaction with Abbott's leadership style which resulted in him being toppled on September 14, 2015 by Malcolm Turnbull (LIB-Wentworth) who became Prime Minister and appointed Senator Marisa Payne (LIB-NSW) as Defense Minister.⁵⁶

This interim period provided frequent opportunity for those interested in Australian national security policy topics to make their recommendations on what the next Australian defense white paper should include and how the government should implement document contents into its national security policymaking. A 2014 *Naval War College Review* article noted that ADF operations had transitioned from the Middle East to the Asia-Pacific region due to shifting global economic power and strategic competition transitioning to this region, the increasing importance of Australian trade and investment in this region, and the U.S.' shifting to the Asia-Pacific. During the Abbott Government's early months in April 2014, an analysis from the security policy think-tank the Kokoda Foundation made the following points about what was expected to be a 2015 defense white paper including:

- Being open about Australia's worsening strategic environment and how the defense budget must provide force options for protecting large and growing national interests and a roadmap for straightening out the defense budget and modernizing defense capabilities.
- The next White Paper needs to make a clear choice about Australia's future strategic role; design a defense force consistent with that role; commit necessary defense resources; provide sufficient industry and confidence to enable state government and the defense industry to support defense; and provide confidence that this white paper will be implemented and governmental commitment to it sustained.
- Needs to address China's military buildup and modernization while encouraging Beijing's peaceful rise and that regional strategic competition does not lead to conflict.
- Stressing Australia's desire to create and increase regional defense partnerships enhancing regional security while addressing American desires that Australia enhance its regional security commitments and provide move overt support to the U.S. in the event of increased competition between the U.S. and China;
- Ensuring Australian international defense engagement goals are based on a realistic assessment of strategic risk, a clear set of national defense objec-

tives, and a range of capabilities to advance these objectives augmented by short and long-term funds.

- Emphasizing future defense technologies including microsystems, nanotechnology, unmanned and autonomous systems, communications and sensors, digital technology, biological and material sciences, energy and power science, cognitive science, and neuro-technologies and their potential roles in future Australian defense capabilities.⁵⁷

A 2015 assessment of Australian defense white papers by a prominent international affairs research institute analyst was scathing in its assessment of these documents declaring:

Australia's inability to clearly and succinctly define its defense strategy is a perennial failing that will have serious policy and operational consequences if not addressed. Australia's recent defence white papers are part of the problem: they lack coherence, their messaging is poor, and many of their underlying assumptions and planning practices are questionable.⁵⁸

This assessment went on to advocate that the next white paper gave the Abbott Government the chance to reset Australian defense and military strategies. It advocated Australia replacing a maritime strategy with a "full spectrum" defense planning approach providing protection against military threats from space and cyberspace along with conventional air, land, and seapower threats. This document also stressed that full spectrum defense needed to be built on deeper and broader regional partnerships and by a risk assessment process encouraging critical thinking about strategy and future ADF capabilities.⁵⁹

The proliferation of Internet technology, including social media such as blogs and Twitter, allows individual Australian political figures and defense oriented research institutions to comment on and attempt to influence Australian international relations and national security policymaking. Examples of Australian defense oriented blogs and discussion forums include the Institute for Regional Security (previously the Kokoda Foundation) <http://www.regionalsecurity.org.au/>; the Lowy Institute's Lowy Interpreter <http://www.lowyinterpreter.org/>; the Australian Strategic Policy Institute (ASPI) The Strategist <http://www.aspistrategist.org.au/>; Australian National University's Crawford School of Public Policy's East Asia Forum <http://www.eastasiaforum.org/about/>; and this university's New Mandala <http://asia-pacific.anu.edu.au/newmandala/> focusing on Southeast Asian developments. An example of an individual blogger on national defense issues is The Murphy Raid <http://andrewzammit.org/>. Compiled and maintained by University of Melbourne Ph.D. Candidate Andrew Zammit, this site, named for a raid on the Australian Security Intelligence Organization (ASIO) on March 16, 1973 ordered by then Attorney General Lionel Murphy who suspected

ASIO of withholding information on terrorist threats and undermining the newly elected Gough Whitlam Government, features this writer's comments on defense and security matters. Australian political figures with Twitter accounts providing insight on defense issues include Defense Minister and Senator Marise Payne <https://twitter.com/MarisePayne>; Senator Jacqui Lambie (IND-Tasmania) <https://twitter.com/JacquiLambie>; and Senator Peter Whish-Wilson (GRN-Tasmania) <https://twitter.com/SenatorSurfer>. While it is debatable how influential social media comment is in formulating Australian defense policy, there is a growing interest in using social media to advance or defeat various defense policy proposals.⁶⁰

The Defense Department invited public submissions in a crowdsourcing initiative for desirable content to include in historic and contemporary defense white papers. It received 269 public submissions for the newest White Paper with 208 of those submitting material consenting to its publication.⁶¹ These submissions originate from multiple individuals and organizations representing a variegated spectrum of perspectives on Australian national security issues. University of Queensland Senior Lecturer in International Relations Dr. Matt McDonald urged the Defence Department to develop a climate change strategy stressing his belief that climate change could impact homeland security resources; military capabilities; personnel well-being and procurement. He also urged the white paper examine how climate change could impact domestic and international disaster relief, large-scale regional population movements; and that the Defence Department and ADF integrate emissions reduction planning into their programs.⁶²

The Sydney Aerospace & Defence Interest Group urged Australia to adopt international best practices for industry support and including strategic local sourcing as a long term policy; the Defence Department providing a clear statement of the critical capabilities required of local industries and linking this to the national defense strategy; providing a clear policy for sustaining defense acquisitions in the white paper; simplifying the defense contracting policy to make it less complex and costly for off-the-shelf and minor projects; and considering transferring defense industrial policy to the Department of Industry.⁶³

Australia's Northrup-Grumman subsidiary noted the rapidly changing and evolving international security technology environment urging the next white paper to explore the impact of evolving asymmetrical adversarial threat to satellite communication systems (SATCOM) on the full spectrum of military operations and exploring potential benefits of a national SATCOM system which is interoperable with the USAF's protected SATCOM system.⁶⁴ The Marrickville, NSW Peace Group presented a polemical treatise questioning the value of the Australian-U.S. alliance which it complained compromised Australian independence and national interests. This screed went on to claim

that the 2003 Iraq War violated international law, denounced the 2011 stationing of U.S. Marines in Darwin, criticized embedding the ballistic missile frigate *HMAS Sydney* into the U.S. Seventh Fleet during 2013–2014; criticized Australian intelligence gathering and electronic surveillance cooperation with the U.S. at the Pine Gap, and fretted about potential Australian military involvement in a confrontation with China.⁶⁵

The Navy League of Australia stressed Australia's historic and contemporary role as a maritime nation and its critical dependence on imports and exports. Specific white paper recommendations made by this organization included Australian defense spending being at least 2% of GDP; that Australia be able to defend its air and sea space; that the military's primary role is warfighting, that RAN surface and subsurface combat capabilities must be strengthened; that new submarines should be purchased and include land attack cruise missiles and mines; and that naval bases at Broome, Cairns, and Darwin be enhanced.⁶⁶

The Returned & Services League (RSL), Australia's primary veterans organization, stressed that main threats to national security include an uncertain global strategic outlook, weak economic forecasts for nations considered stable, the rise of quickly emerging mass civil disobedience movements assisted by social media causing governments to fall, ongoing tensions from nuclear proliferation and territorial disputes, and the rise of ISIS and other militant religious movements. RSL supported the U.S. rebalance to Asia but remains skeptical about its implementation, wants to improve ADF deficiencies in housing and childcare which make retaining personnel problematic, expressed concern with spousal health insurance coverage when a service member retires, and urges that changes in military justice legislation conform to comparable civil law changes.⁶⁷

In November 2015 ASPI released three consultation documents describing capabilities of individual ADF branches. The assessment for the RAAF mentioned it was recapitalizing its entire aircraft fleet from basic trainers to frontline tactical strike fighters. In addition, it noted the introduction of unmanned aerial systems and developing an intellectual framework for Air Operations known as Plan Jericho. Positive changes in RAAF capabilities since 2010 were noted in air control and strike, air mobility, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and command and control. Capability deficiencies since 2010 were listed as being in air mobility and tactical battlefield airlift which were assessed as being low risk, antisubmarine warfare assessed as being medium to high-risk, and force generation and sustainment and fuel supply vulnerability which were assessed as being medium risk.⁶⁸

ASPI's RAN capability assessment stressed that RAN had legacy platforms in service such as Adelaide-class frigates which were past their peak but that new platforms, including combat helicopters, helicopter landing docks,

amphibious lift, and air warfare destroyers were being delivered and would provide capability enhancements. ASPI also noted plans to rebuild the fleet over the next couple of decades. Capability shortfalls stressed by this document include submarine capability which was judged as being medium risk, antisubmarine warfare assessed as being medium/high risk, and patrol and mine-hunting vessels evaluated at medium risk to due Armidale-class patrol boats serviceability declining as a result of extensive use in maritime border protection operations.⁶⁹

ASPI's Australian Army capability assessment mentioned that for the previous 15 years the Army's focus has been on sustaining combat training, stabilization, and peacekeeping operations in adjacent regions and Mideast and Afghanistan theaters. These have placed demands on ADF operational tempo and begin a major rethinking of Army structure under Plan Beersheba which will involve three similar brigades make rotational deployments more manageable and sustainable. Positive Army capability changes noted since 2010 include in artillery, small arms, personal protection, and ground and protected mobility. Static changes include armor capability, aviation, and command and control which may move into positive territory if new acquisitions such as CH-47 Chinook helicopters and systems digitization occur. Capability shortfalls include protected mobility and armored fighting vehicles which are assessed as medium risk; airborne armed reconnaissance assessed as medium to low risk; land-based air defense assessed as medium risk but will become more important due to proliferating armed drone systems; and lack of depth in specialized personnel in intelligence, medical, and combat support services assessed as medium risk.⁷⁰

The 2016 defense white paper was released on February 25, 2016 by Turnbull and Payne and broken into three parts including a conventional policy declaration, budget justification, and statement of defense industry capabilities. This document sought to describe Australian defense needs out until 2035 while identifying security challenges likely to confront Australia while examining defense capabilities needed by the ADF and the Department of Defence to meet these threats. An executive summary of this document contended:

While Australia has effective defence capabilities to draw on to meet current security challenges, significant under-investment in Defence in the past and the deferral of decisions about future major capabilities need to be fixed. Defence's capability plans have become disconnected from defence strategy and resources, delaying important investments in Australia's future security and frustrating Australian defence industry.⁷¹



Source: Australian Department of Defence

Salient points addressed in the 2016 Defence White Paper included the Indo-Pacific region providing 50% of the world's economic output by 2050; a strong U.S. presence in the Asia-Pacific and globally has played a key role in promoting regional peace and security over the past 70 years; that while there is remote prospect of Australia being directly attacked by another country in the foreseeable future that Australian strategic planning is not limited to border defense, but must encompass the behaviors of countries and terrorists; and that terrorism will continue evolving in ways threatening Australian interests. This document also stressed that regional instability could have adverse strategic consequences; that Australia must maintain its technological edge and capabilities superiority which will be challenged by regional military modernization; that the next 20 years will see regional military forces operate with unprecedented range and precision; the exceptional significance of Chinese military modernization; and that cyberattacks threaten the ADF's warfighting capabilities, government agencies, and various sectors of Australia's economy and critical infrastructure.⁷²

Three key strategic defense emphases of the 2016 defense white paper include deterring, denying, and defeating attempts by hostile countries and non-state actors to threaten or coerce Australia by being able to decisively and independently respond to military threats such as incursions into Australia's air, sea, and northern approaches; securing adjacent areas encompassing maritime Southeast Asia and the South Pacific; and building a stable Indo-Pacific region and rules-based global order supporting national interests by working closely with the U.S. Specific applications of these objectives

involve the agility, capability, and potency of the ADF; providing ADF with comprehensive situational awareness; strengthening defense intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance capabilities; enhancing cyber defense and the cyber workforce; increasing the submarine force from 6 to 12 with high interoperability with U.S. submarines; expanding surface naval capability with three *Hobart* class air warfare destroyers and a new class of nine future frigates supported by replenishment vessels; expanding combat aircraft capabilities with the F-35 A Lightning, F/A-18 Super Hornet, and E/A-18G Growler; and expanding land force capabilities with new generation armored combat reconnaissance and infantry fighting vehicles, a new long-range rocket system, adding drone aircraft to enhance land force surveillance and protection, and upgrading bases and ADF logistical capabilities.⁷³

A supplemental volume to the white paper includes cost estimates for these defense aspirations called the *Integrated Defence Investment Program*. This document provides financial estimate for defense spending program areas encompassing future defense force capability, the defense work force, decision-making superiority; enabled mobile and sustainable forces; and coverage of areas such as air and sea lift; maritime and anti-submarine warfare; strike and air combat; and land combat and amphibious warfare.⁷⁴



Source: Australian Department of Defence

Specific quantitative measurements indicated in the *2016 Integrated Investment Program* include \$A195 billion (\$144.992 billion) on defense spending through 2025–2026; increasing ADF workforce size to 62,400 between now and 2025–2026; and structuring defense spending in the following capability streams by 2025–2026:

Air and Sea Lift 6%
Intelligence, Surveillance, and Reconnaissance, Electronic Warfare, Space, and Cyber Warfare 9%
Key Enablers (Infrastructure Maximizing Force Effectiveness) 25%
Maritime and Anti-Submarine Warfare 25%
Strike and Air Combat 17%
Land Combat and Amphibious Warfare 18%. ⁷⁵

Additional budgetary spending targets projected for the ADF in the next decade and beyond include:

Program Title	Time Frame	Approximate Investment Value
Military Satellite Capability	Approved	\$A507 million (\$376.980 million)
Electronic Warfare Operational Support	Scheduled for Approval	\$A100–200 million (\$74.355–\$148.710 million)
High Altitude Unmanned Intelligence Surveillance and Reconnaissance System	2017–2030	\$A3–4 billion (\$2.230.650–\$2.974.200 billion)
Satellite Imagery Capability	2023–2039	\$A 3–4 billion (\$2.230.650–\$2.974.200 billion)
Long-Range Electronic Warfare Support Aircraft	2017–2024	\$A 2–3 billion (\$1.487.100–\$2.230.650 billion)
Enhanced Jindalee Operational Radar Network	2017–2026	\$A 1–2 billion (\$743.550 million–\$1.487.100 billion)
Intelligence Systems	2016–2031	\$A 2–3 billion (\$1.487.100–\$2.230.650 billion)
Space Situational Awareness System and Radars	2018–2033	\$A 1–2 billion (\$743.550 million–\$1.487.100 billion)
Distributed Ground Station Australia	2019–2029	\$A 1–2 billion (\$743.550 million–\$1.487.100 billion)
Position, Navigation, and Timing Capability	2019–2033	\$A 750 million–\$1 billion (\$557.633–\$743.550 million)
Common Operating Picture Capability Program	2017–2033	\$A500–600 million (\$371.775–\$446.130 million)
Land-Based Geospatial Support Systems	2017–2025	\$A 400–500 million (\$297.420–\$371.75 million)
Joint Electronic Warfare Integration Program	2016–2033	\$A 400–500 million (\$297.420–\$371.75 million)
Identification Friend or Foe and Automatic Dependent Surveillance Systems	Scheduled for Approval	\$A 400–500 million (\$297.420–\$371.75 million)
Lead-In Fighter Training System	2022–2033	\$A 4–5 billion (\$2.974.200–\$3.717.750 billion)
Garden Island Defence Precinct Redevelopment	2017–2025	\$A 500–700 million (\$371.75 million–\$446.130 million)
<i>HMAS Cerberus</i> Redevelopment	2016–2024	\$A 400–500 million (\$297.420–\$371.75million)
New Northern Ordnance Explosives Storage Facility	2017–2023	\$A 300–400 million (\$223.065–\$297.420 million)
Mobile Threat and Target Emitter System	2016–2021	\$A 200–300 million (\$148.710–\$223.065 million) ⁷⁶

Defence Industry Policy Statement

This document stresses areas in which Australia's indigenous defense industry is capable of meeting ADF needs and which areas where it is not meeting Australian military needs. It is broken up into sections covering the partnership between the Department of Defence and the defense industry; a section on delivering defense capability and the proposed establishment of The Centre for Defence Industry Capability; developing new approaches to defense innovation such as a Next Generation Technologies Fund and defense innovation hub and portal; driving competitiveness and export potential; and cutting red tape to enhance defense efficiency.⁷⁷

This document notes Australian defense industry triumphs including developing high-edge leading end phased array radar in Canberra, next-generation protected Hawkei vehicles in Bendigo, VIC, and developing the F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, and that approximately 3,000 small to medium enterprises support the Australian defense industry. Examples of these companies include the Western Australian company VEEM Ltd. providing maintenance support for Special Air Service regiment Supacat vehicles, South Australia's Levett Engineering manufacturing precision components for the Joint Strike Fighter and Collins submarine program; New South Wales Bales Defence Industries supplying weapons storage systems, and Victoria's Sentient Vision Systems specializing in video analysis software and surveillance video small optic detection.⁷⁸



Source: Australian Department of Defence

The proposed Centre for Defence Industry Capability will receive funding of \$A 230 million (\$218.863 million) through 2025–2026; next generation technologies will be funded at \$A 730 million (\$694.653 million) during this time period, the defence innovation hub will be funded at \$A640 million (\$609.011 million) during period; constructing surface warships will become a priority; a Defence Industrial Capability Plan, is supposed to be released in the second quarter of 2017; fuel management will become an increasing area of emphasis for ADF and the defense industry; and the Defence Innovation Portal is intended to enhance engagement between the Defense Department and innovation activities nationally. The Next Generation Technologies fund will prioritize the following areas:

- Integrated Intelligence, Surveillance and Reconnaissance
- Space Capabilities
- Enhanced Human Performance
- Medical Countermeasure Products
- Multidisciplinary Material Sciences
- Quantum Technologies
- Trusted Autonomous Systems
- Cyber
- Advanced Sensors, Hypersonics and Directed Energy Capabilities.⁷⁹

Analysis and Reaction

Australia has an extremely capable military and defense industry and its defense white papers have sought to incorporate Australian geopolitical, diplomatic, and military aspirations within the limits of economic resources and domestic political will. The 2016 Defense White Paper reflects Australia’s ambitions, but it remains to be seen whether Australia will be able to match and sustain its defense policy objectives in the years to come. An article in the conservative *The Australian* praised the white paper for producing a “surprisingly comprehensive military blueprint that—because it is costed—holds has a chance of becoming reality. This article also lauded the document for seeking to make Australia a muscular regional power by creating its most powerful naval force in peacetime. Additional approval of this document stressed its candid criticism of China’s military buildup and constructing artificial islands in the South China Sea, for Canberra’s commitment to spend 2% of GDP on defense, and for trying to align strategy, capability, and resources into a single document.⁸⁰

Concerns expressed by *The Australian* included optimistic assumptions made on naval shipbuilding projects despite recent cost overruns and schedule delays in the program to build three new air warfare destroyers, not discussing how the ADF intends to recruit the extra 5,000 personnel it will

need to run its force of new warships, aircraft, and army equipment as its size increases to 62,400 in the next decade, the RAN needing to find crews to man its incoming boats, and finding money to lure engineers and technicians from the mining industry. Another assessment in this source observed that Indian and Pacific Ocean waters would be patrolled by more than 70 Chinese submarines by 2020, the increasing deployment by Asian militaries of drones, longer range fighter aircraft, and ballistic missiles potentially capable of threatening Australian territory including China's CSS-4 and DF-31 and North Korea's Taepodong-2. A third assessment from this source stressed the importance of the ADF having intelligence capabilities to monitor threats from submarines, Mideast and Asia-Pacific terrorism, and cyber warfare against government agencies and industry.⁸¹

Early parliamentary reaction to the 2016 White Paper was varied. On February 25, 2016, Prime Minister Turnbull stressed that Australia's security was the government's highest priority stressing that this document desired to enhance Australian military power across land, sea, and air and it would enhance Australian capabilities in these areas along with being fully costed, enhancing, tow force resilience, geared toward enhancing the Australian defense industry by enhancing spending within Australia. Foreign Minister Julie Bishop (LIB-Curtin) stressed that the white paper would enable Australia to develop deeper partnerships with the U.S. and other national allies, strengthen Australian defense cooperation and presence in Southeast Asia, the South Pacific, and Northeast Asia, and in areas including counterterrorism, maritime security, science and technology, intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance, and maintaining a rules-based international order.⁸²

On February 29, 2016, Rep. Tony Zappia (LAB-Makin) criticized the delays in releasing the white paper and expressed concern on behalf of his South Australian constituents that this document contained no guarantees about when submarines and offshore patrol vessels will be built. He also complained that shipping construction commitments were election promises that the government could not be trusted to deliver on.⁸³ Parliamentary debate on March 2, 2016 saw Labour Party leader Rep. Bill Shorten (LAB-Maribyrong) question Turnbull about newspaper reports concerning leaked national security documents concerning the timing of the future deployment of Australian submarines mentioning former Prime Minister Abbott who denied leaking the documents. Turnbull replied that the Australian Federal Police had started an investigation into this leak.⁸⁴

Finally, a March 4, 2016 Lowy Institute paper criticized the white paper for not specifying how increased defense spending will be paid for and asked whether this would occur from selling tax increases and other governmental expenditure savings in an environment of increasing demands on social ser-

vices and health costs, an eroding tax base, and projections of slowing global economic growth.⁸⁵

The following tables quantify Australian defense spending in U.S. dollars, as share of GDP, and personnel size from 2010–2015 encompassing both Rudd Governments, and the Gillard, Abbott, and Turnbull governments.

Australian Defense Spending 2010–2015 U.S. Dollars

2010	\$26.993 billion
2011	\$26.597 billion
2012	\$25.665 billion
2013	\$25.442 billion
2014	\$27.171 billion
2015	\$22.764 billion ⁸⁶

Australian Defense Spending GDP Share 2010–2014

2010	1.9%
2011	1.8%
2012	1.7%
2013	1.63%
2014	1.65%
2015	1.83% ⁸⁷

Australian Military and Civilian Workforce June 30, 2013–June 30, 2015

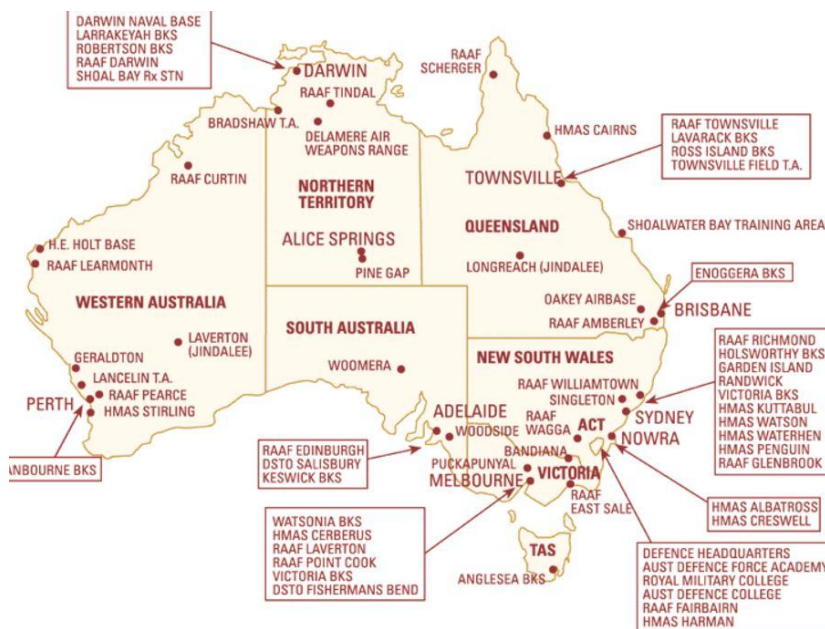
Royal Australian Air Force	13,934	14,076	+142
Australian Army	28,568	29,366	+798
Royal Australian Navy	13,862	14,070	+208
Australian Public Service (APS) Dept. of Defence Civilian Workforce	19,988	18,787	-1,201 ⁸⁸

Conclusion

Australian power projection is dependent on the logistical need to cover great distances to reach operational theaters since its landmass consists of 7,682,300 square kilometers, its water area encompasses 58,920 square kilometers, and its coastline encompasses 25,760 square kilometers. Australia’s population was 24,022,042 on March 9, 2016.⁸⁹ Due to significant quantities of the Australian landmass being covered by the desert outback, the majority of Australia’s population is located on the Boomerang Coast covering from Queensland to parts of South Australia incorporating the eastern and south-eastern parts of the country. This is demonstrated by the states of Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria, and South Australia having a June 30, 2015 population of 19,534,300 representing 81% of Australia’s population.

New South Wales	7,618,200
Victoria	5,938,100
Queensland	4,779,400
South Australia	1,698,600
Western Australia	2,591,600
Tasmania	516,600
Northern Territory	244,600
Australian Capital Territory	390,800 ⁹⁰

This population concentration along Australia’s Boomerang Coast is reflected in this map of Australian military bases:



Source: Australian Dept. of Defence

The phrase “The Tyranny of Distance” has been used by the eminent Australian historian Geoffrey Blainey to describe Australia’s traditional geographic distance from most of the world’s economic and strategic markets. However, this isolation has lessened in an era of globalization, precision guided munitions, ballistic missiles, and Internet connectivity including cyber warfare. It is 3,419 miles from Australia’s largest city Sydney to Jakarta, Indonesia; 5,542 miles from Sydney to Beijing; 4,842 miles from Sydney to Tokyo; 5,155 miles from Sydney to Seoul; and 4,814 miles from Sydney to Hanoi. This technological diminishing of distance makes Australia increasingly vulnerable to security threats such as disorder in Pacific Islands nations such as the Solomon Islands, illegal airborne and seaborne mass migration, dis-

ruptions in trade routes in the South China Sea and Malacca Straits, North Korean ballistic missiles, and increasing Chinese military spending and assertiveness. All of these factors are producing an increased emphasis on greater international security cooperation by Australia and have been incorporated into the 2016 defense white paper and must be recognized by current and future Australian national security policymakers.⁹¹

These security developments, including the threat of Islamist terror demonstrated by the December 15–16, 2014 hostage crisis at Sydney’s Martin Place Lindt Chocolate café near the Reserve Bank of Australia, provide ample justification for Australia increasing its defense spending and security vigilance. This justification is further amplified by Asia and Australasia representing 22.8% of world global defense spending in 2015; Asian defense spending increasing nearly 6% annually between 2013–2015; Chinese defense spending increasing 19.8% in 2014–2015; Chinese cruiser, destroyer, and frigate strength reaching 73; Beijing’s tactical aircraft fleet of 1,084; and Chinese defense spending representing 41% of Asian and Australasian countries defense spending.⁹²

Australia probably has the economic resources to sustain the defense spending advocated in the 2016 defense white paper. However, there are problems within Australian government and politics that make successful sustainment of these defense spending commitments problematic. The first is the short-term nature of Australia’s electoral cycle. Australian federal elections are held at least every three years and may be held more frequently if requested by the Prime Minister and approved by the Governor-General. This makes sustaining long-term governmental and public commitment for programs uncertain.⁹³

A more serious problem has been chronic political volatility and internecine factional fighting within Australia’s governing parties the Labour Party and the Liberal-National Party coalition since 2007 when Labour defeated the Coalition Government of John Howard which served from 1996–2007. During Labour’s 2007–2013 administration, Prime Minister Kevin Rudd was toppled by Julia Gillard on June 23–24, 2010 and Gillard would eventually be toppled by Rudd on June 25, 2013. Rudd and Labour would go on to lose the September 7, 2013 election to the Coalition lead by the new Prime Minister Tony Abbott. However, Abbott would encounter increasing dissatisfaction within Coalition ranks about his leadership style and would be toppled by Malcolm Turnbull on September 14, 2015 giving Australia five Prime Ministers in an eight year period. Such governmental volatility is more reflective of a dysfunctional developing country instead of one of the world’s most advanced democracies, economies, governments, and militaries. In addition, the three year mandate for parliamentary elections means Australia will have another parliamentary election sometime during 2016.⁹⁴

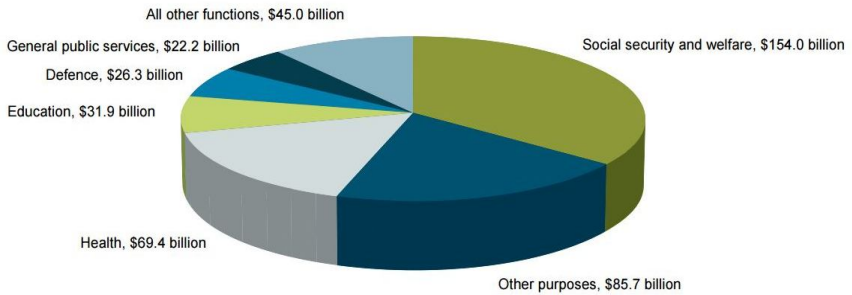
Australia also faces economic challenges in meeting the ambitious defense spending objectives set out in the 2016 defense white paper. While it had a GDP of \$1.455 trillion in 2014, its economic growth rates have fluctuated increasing 2.7% in 2011; 3.6% in 2012; 2.4% in 2013; 2.5% in 2014, and 2.2% in 2015, and its economic growth is heavily dependent on exports; particularly minerals to export markets such as China and Japan which rank as Australia's two largest trading partners with the following Asia-Pacific countries South Korea, Singapore, New Zealand, Thailand, Malaysia, and India ranking among Australia's top ten leading trading partners.⁹⁵

China's current economic difficulties have decreased Beijing's demand for Australian natural resources which has resulted in declining commodity prices and had an adverse impact on Australian government revenues. In December 2015, Australian Treasurer Scott Morrison (LIB-Cook) released the *Mid-Year Economic and Fiscal Outlook 2015–16*. This document stressed that Australia's budget deficit is expected to decline from \$A 37.4 billion (\$27.907 billion) (2.3% of GDP) in 2015–2016 to \$A14.2 billion (\$10.595 billion) (0.7% of GDP) in 2018–2019 and that net national debt is expected to peak at 18.5% of GDP in 2017–2018 and then decline in the medium term. Additionally economic growth of 2.75% was forecast in 2016–2017 due to historically low interest rates, a falling Australian dollar, lower oil prices, and increasing Australian economic diversification away from resource investment-led growth. This growth could be achieved if government projections of unemployment falling from 6% in 2014 to 5.5% by 2018–2019 are correct and with implementation of the Trans-Pacific Partnership and free trade agreements with China, Japan, and South Korea.⁹⁶

Australia's commitment to spend 2% of its GDP on defense is laudable, but this NATO benchmark has been criticized for not measuring burden sharing or quantifying risk sharing. A Carnegie Europe study noted that Greece spends more than 2% of its GDP on defense, but that its military is unable to project significant force across time and space. During the apogee of NATO's 2012-surge in Afghanistan, Greece had just 160 troops representing 1.2% of allied forces and by December 2014 Athens only had 9 troops representing .02% of the 41,000 NATO force in Afghanistan. In contrast, Denmark has spent approximately 1.5% of its GDP on defense since 2000. However, Denmark's highly capable and deployable military contributed 750 military forces at the height of the Afghanistan surge and maintained 130 personnel in theater at the end of 2004. Copenhagen also contributed seven of the 185 aircraft involved in NATO's Operation Unified Protector against Libya in 2011 as opposed to just five Greek aircraft. Effective analysis of military spending should also include metrics such as force deployability capability and the ability of armed forces to engage in sustained military operations.⁹⁷

The \$22.764 billion of Australian defense spending is dwarfed by the government’s 2015–2016 social services portfolio budget of \$A 154 billion (\$115.434 billion) and health expenditures of \$A 69.4 billion \$51.784 billion representing over 49% of Australia’s \$A 434.5 billion (\$324.215 billion) government budget for 2015–2016 as broken down by this pie chart.⁹⁸

Where taxpayers’ money is spent (2015-16)



Source: Australia Commonwealth Treasurer

Australian military forces need agility, flexibility, and striking power to defeat aggression and instability threats from multiple sources including turmoil in adjoining Pacific Island nation states, threats to critical supply lines such as the South China Sea, cyber attacks, and illegal immigration which could be used as a means for infiltrating Islamist terrorists to augment Islamist cells. During 2014–2015, the Australian Federal Police (AFP) conducted eight operations resulting in 25 individuals being charged with terrorism and other offenses. AFP also announced that the Syria–Iraq conflict is of particular concern as it is causing an increasing number of Australians to fight in this conflict and return to Australia radicalized and willing to conduct operations on Australian soil. This conflict also places Australians traveling to Southeast Asia at greater risk to terrorist attack.⁹⁹

The ADF also needs to bolster its ballistic missile defenses against emerging threats from China and North Korea, enhance its submarine assets to deal with the increasing presence of Chinese submarines in Indo-Pacific Ocean waters, and maintain its commitment to building and maintaining RAAF capabilities in fighter, interceptor, and intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance aircraft to defend its airspace. Enhancing the striking power and survivability of its Army is also critical as is maintaining an agile and robust intelligence infrastructure to deal with emerging national security threats from foreign and indigenous sources.

Australia also needs to strengthen the ANZUS pact to incorporate it into emerging Asian relationships and institutions. This would enhance Australia’s regional posture and make it a more effective U.S. ally with particular regional

expertise. Canberra could help China find ways to enhance its integration into the regional order and adhere to international norms. The U.S. has encouraged greater defense cooperation between Australia, India, Japan, and South Korea working with these countries to counterbalance Chinese assertiveness in the East and South China Seas. Intelligence cooperation between the U.S. and Australia as part of the Five Eyes Network whose membership also consists of Canada, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom continues increasing. The U.S. must be careful not to take Australian support for granted in the event of a security crisis with China, while recognizing that Asian countries having concerns about U.S. regional staying power due to America's deteriorating economics and political conflict between Congress and the President.¹⁰⁰

The Turnbull Government's 2016 defense white paper has a laudable and realistic vision of the emerging strategic environment facing Australia. It was produced through a transparent process inviting and receiving significant public feedback. This document's willingness to back this up with resources and support for Australia's defense industry is commendable. It remains to be seen whether Turnbull or later Australian Prime Ministers of both governing parties are willing and able to sustain this commitment to enhancing the ADF given the continuing public demand for domestic social programs by going against public opinion for additional government sustenance by trimming such programs or slowing their funding growth. Ending internecine intraparty strife is crucial for stability in Australian national security policy-making, as is some level of bipartisan agreement on Canberra's national security objectives and role in the world. Civilian and military Australian national security policy analysts and policymakers will engage in ongoing reviews and updates of domestic and international economics, public opinion, military capabilities and trends, to determine if Australia's 2016 defense white paper sufficiently addresses Australia's emerging national security requirements.

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