

STRATEGIC WARNING TIME AND MOBILIZATION PLANNING:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY

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General Studies

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ABSTRACT

STRATEGIC WARNING TIME AND MOBILIZATION PLANNING:
IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA'S SECURITY by Uliano Peter Polatos, 94 pages.

Mobilization allows a nation to minimize the cost of Defense during times of peace, prioritizing expenditure on social services and building economic resilience. However, the ability to conduct timely transformation of national resources into required military capability is dependant upon strategic warning time of developing threats and may be the deciding factor in conflict. The 2016 Defense White Paper identifies that Australia will face greater uncertainty and complexity over coming decades due to the global nature of its strategic interests. However, as no threat of an attack on Australia will exist before 2035 the Australian Army is not required to plan for force expansion or mobilization.

This research investigates whether strategic warning time negates the requirement for mobilization planning. The research analyzes three case studies whereby Australia was denied strategic warning time, comparing historical circumstances to current strategic interests and available capabilities. The research concludes that Australia's broad interests preclude accurate assessments of warning time, and mobilization planning is required to reduce the risk of strategic shock.

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ACRONYMS

ADF	Australian Defence Force. For consistency, the American English spelling 'Defense' is used throughout this paper.
ANZUS	Australia New Zealand United States Treaty
DWP	Defense White Paper
INTERFET	International Force East Timor
ISREW	Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance, Electronic Warfare
NEO	Non-combatant Evacuation Operation
SDI	Strategic Defense Interest
SDO	Strategic Defense Objective

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The absence of a clear threat means that both strategy and the process of determining Defense capabilities is a subjective process based on judgement, not scientific certainty.

—Australian House of Representatives, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*

Mobilization, the process of rapidly increasing military capability available for operations, has been one of the most critical defense planning functions throughout time. The ability to conduct timely transformation of national resources into employable military capability has often been the deciding factor in conflict, evidenced by such examples as Helmuth Von Moltke's rapid mobilization of the Prussian military and consequent defeat of France in the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71.

Mobilization allows a nation to minimize the cost of defense during times of peace, prioritizing expenditure on social services and building economic resilience - themselves important components of national security.¹ However, underpinning this relative prioritization of expenditure are two critical factors: a risk-based assessment of the likelihood and severity of a potential conflict, and an assumption that necessary military capabilities can then be generated within the required time. These factors are often forgotten in the rush to reduce defense expenditure during peace time and, even when not forgotten, assessments are often incorrect. The 'black swan', a term popularized by author Nicholas Taleb describing an unexpected event with severe impact, characterizes many crises involving use of military force through the last century.²

Much of the problem with mobilization is that it conjures vastly different mental images for different people. Mobilization can encompass a range of actions including the activation of reserve forces, such as occurred for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm, through to the militarization of a nation's manpower and industry as occurred during the Second World War. With such an amorphous scope, and indeed strong negative political connotations when considering the possibility of conscription and massive defense expenditure, it is easy to see why the topic is not at the forefront of public debate. This is particularly the case in countries such as Australia, which are blessed with secure geography and the absence of a clear existential threat.

However, mobilization is neither quick, nor simple. Decisions made during peace time regarding the relative priority of operational readiness or expansion potential have implications which may endure well beyond the point where circumstances necessitate change. History suggests that the ability to conduct rapid and orderly military mobilization is critical both to deter and respond to threats. So the question arises to what extent should a nation at peace prioritize planning to mobilize for an unexpected conflict?

Background

The Australian Defense Force (ADF) is designed to meet strategic objectives identified in the Defense White Paper, a government policy which outlines the nation's defense priorities for the coming decade and beyond.³ The 2016 White Paper establishes three national security priorities: a secure, resilient Australia; a secure nearer region, encompassing maritime South East Asia and the South Pacific; and a stable Indo-Pacific region and rules-based global order.⁴ Acknowledging a complex strategic environment the 2016 Defense White Paper outlines a plan to return the full-time Defense Force to

62,400, its largest size since 1993, and the Government has committed to returning defense expenditure to 2% of Gross Domestic Product. However, unlike earlier White Papers there is no mention of force expansion or mobilization.

When the Defense White Paper was first released in 1976, the ADF consisted of some 68,700 full-time personnel, from a national population of 14 million. The defense budget was approximately 2.3% of Gross Domestic Product, down from 3.8% in 1966, and featured an all-volunteer force following the termination of mandatory national service in place during the Vietnam War.⁵ That White Paper referenced a complex strategic environment, highlighting the recent unification of Vietnam under the communist government, fear of global communist expansion, and the continuing great power competition between the nuclear-armed United States and Union of Soviet Socialist Republics.⁶ Against this backdrop of strategic uncertainty, the Australian Government faced a difficult decision – how large a Defense Force did the nation need, and what could the nation afford?

The answer, in 1976 and echoed in White Papers thereafter, was a relatively small but capable regular force (the force in being), which was to serve as the expansion base when more pressing security challenges necessitated mobilization. Australia has been forced to conduct rapid expansion on four occasions throughout its short history, during the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War and Vietnam. More recently, Australia has also relied upon its reserve forces to sustain enduring peacekeeping commitments in the Pacific, and some combat operations further afield.⁷ During each of these periods the regular forces were too small to satisfy government requirements. Consequently, the regular force was used as the expansion base to support the training, certification and

deployment of larger forces, then during the ensuing peace the force would be reduced again to the minimum level possible to preserve the organization.

As a nation with a small population, numbering just 25 million people in 2018, Australia has always struggled to maintain a large standing military. By maintaining a small force in being and mobilizing troops as required in times of conflict, Australia has managed to keep the cost of national defense to a minimum. Such hedging is possible due to two important factors: geography, and alliances. Australia's geographic position presents any adversary such a challenge in force projection, manoeuver and logistics that no nation currently possesses the capability to invade, with the possible exception of the United States. The Government believes that the national intelligence enterprise would provide sufficient strategic warning were any other nation to develop the capability or intent to attack.⁸

Other than the bombing of Darwin by Japanese air forces during the Second World War Australia has never come under direct armed attack, and its military endeavors have been expeditionary. The close alliance between Australia and the United Kingdom up until the Second World War, and from thereafter with the United States, has provided further confidence to the Australian government that a large force in being is not required as allies would be available to support the defense of Australia in the unlikely event of such an invasion.

The 2016 Defense White Paper heralds a return of difficult geostrategic circumstances, but also firmly rejects the 'Defense of Australia' isolationist approach which had characterized White Papers during the 1980s and 1990s; the Paper confirms that Australia will continue to contribute to both regional and global contingencies in

support of the nation's strategic interests. However, despite Australia's persistent global military deployments over the past two decades and increasing volatility in the Indo-Pacific region, the 2016 White Paper makes no allowance for the need to mobilize and expand the ADF.

To understand why the concept of national mobilization and force expansion have been removed from the consciousness of government and national security planners, it is necessary to look at the impact which the ebb and flow of Defense budgets and force sizes have had on the ADF over time.

Historical influences on Australian Defense Policy

While the strategic circumstances of 1976 were so uncertain that the Government thought it prudent to maintain a force in being larger than that of today and to simultaneously plan for the subsequent expansion and mobilization of further resources, by the time of the 1994 White Paper the ADF was at its nadir. The end of the Cold War, the unchallenged dominance of the United States, and a general improvement in South East Asian peace and prosperity all served to convince the Government that there was virtually no requirement for a standing force. The ADF was reduced to a skeleton organization and major procurement decisions were deferred, a process which had started with the retirement of Australia's last aircraft carrier in the previous decade. The force in being, particularly the Army, came to be viewed purely as an expansion base, with no reasonable prospect for significant military deployment.

In 1999, however, the Australian Government experienced a strategic surprise. Right on Australia's northern border, and unforeseen by the intelligence enterprise designed to provide strategic warning, the tiny nation of Timor-Leste voted for

independence from Indonesia. In the ensuing violence perpetrated by Indonesian-sponsored militias Australia was forced to intervene as the lead nation of a multinational stabilization force. The ADF, reduced after decades of budget cuts and with a force design which prioritized low readiness but long term expansion potential, was in a parlous state and barely succeeded in this relatively simple task. The experience of deploying the unprepared ADF on operations left an indelible mark on the memory of those officers leading the deployment, and who later rose to command the organization.⁹ The desire to maintain a capable force in being during peacetime became the overwhelming priority of the uniformed force.

The 2000 White Paper, heavily influenced by the strategic shock of the Timor intervention, changed Government's Defense priorities. Unwilling to drastically increase the Defense budget, the Government directed that increased operational readiness would now be prioritized over force expansion and mobilization potential. The regular Army was expanded and experienced a period of significant, sustained capability investment. This served the Government well, enabling the Army to contribute to subsequent commitments in Afghanistan, Iraq, Timor-Leste and other theaters in support of national strategic objectives.

However, Australia's Defense policy and budget have not followed a linear path. The circumstances surrounding the 2013 White Paper reveal many of the difficulties involved in developing a consistent defense strategy and associated force design in Australia. The 2013 Labor Government, desperate to increase social spending in the lead up to a federal election, changed the military force structure priorities to be more affordable. Avoiding the costs involved in continuing to develop a high readiness force as

set out in the 2000 White Paper, the Government committed once again to a small standing Defense Force designed to form the mobilization base for future force expansion. When the Labor Government lost the 2013 election, the new Government subsequently released the 2016 White Paper and reverted to a policy of increased operational readiness.

The fear of peacetime force reductions still permeates Defense literature, and despite Australia's experience of having required mobilization in the past, the historical association between mobilization and reductions in the regular Army has likely caused many to view mobilization as a euphemism for budget cuts as opposed to a central component of defense planning. While prioritizing readiness may help to preserve the current force, it ignores the fact that a military of 62,400 is insufficient to defend Australia from armed attack and precludes any sizeable, enduring contribution to regional or global security.

The Australian Government determines the force in being based upon analysis of how much of the federal budget can be spent on defense, against the likelihood of an armed attack on Australia and how significant a contribution the nation may need to make to global security. Any changes in the strategic environment which alter this equation are anticipated to occur with ample strategic warning time, thus allowing for a deliberate increase in the defense budget and methodical growth in the force. This strategy discounts the possibility of a change occurring at a pace which outstrips the nation's ability to mobilize. It also, importantly, ignores the possibility that the government of the day will be either unable or unwilling to act on the strategic warning signs.

The purpose of this paper, therefore, is to seek answers to the following questions.

1. Primary Research Question: Does strategic warning time negate the requirement for mobilization planning?
2. Secondary Research Question: Are there circumstances whereby Australia may have to mobilize despite its alliance with the United States, and what kind of mobilization may be required?
3. Tertiary Research Question: How does strategic warning time impact upon the relative prioritization of operational, structural and mobilization readiness, and what are the key components of a mobilization plan which might aid Australia's ability to withstand strategic shock?

Assumptions

This study is based upon unclassified, publically available policy documents from the Australian Government and defense commentators. It is therefore assumed that these documents accurately reflect Government policy and that the Australian Defense Force employs these same policies as the basis of its force structure and contingency planning priorities.

The study also assumes that no significant change in Government policy has occurred since the publication of the 2016 Defense White Paper, despite a change in Government leadership.

Significance of the Study

Australia continues to benefit from secure geography and a strong alliance with the world's most powerful nation; no other nation has the capability, nor the stated

intention, of directly invading Australia. These factors allow the Government to maintain defense expenditure at a relatively low 2% of Gross Domestic Product, and to choose when and where to employ military power in support of its strategic ends.

However, Australia's security environment is growing more complex and uncertain as nation-states and non-state actors grow in power and seek to challenge the established rules-based global order, including within Australia's immediate region. While recognizing this growing complexity, the Australian Government continues to rely upon the concept of strategic warning time to determine force structure and capability while discounting the need for mobilization planning to enable a rapid increase in available military power. Australia faces the risk that its small standing military may not be sufficient to meet Government requirements in the event of a rapid deterioration in security.

Scope and Delimitations

While this research refers to Australian Defense policy and the Australian Defense Force, it is primarily concerned with the Army. The research frames security challenges derived from the principle Government security publications and seeks to understand the implications of strategic warning time for Army force structure and mobilization. While the study will address some of the underpinning Fundamental Inputs to Capability, including materiel and associated Defense industry, it is not the intent of this paper to develop a mobilization plan or costed model for the development of additional capability. Instead, the paper is designed to illuminate the relationship between strategic warning time and capability development and to identify some of the critical

aspects of this relationship which might benefit from further analysis as part of a mobilization plan.

¹ Charles J. Hitch and Roland N. McKean, *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age* (Santa Monica: RAND Corporation, 1960), 3.

² Nicholas Taleb, *The Black Swan: The Impact of the Highly Improbable* (New York: Random House, 2010), xxi.

³ Note the Australian Defence Force is the official name and spelling of Australia's Defense organization. American English spelling 'Defense' is used for consistency throughout this paper.

⁴ Australian Department of Defense, *2016 Defense White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, <http://www.Defence.gov.au/WhitePaper/Docs/2016-Defence-White-Paper.pdf>.

⁵ Ron Huisken and Meredith Thatcher, eds., *History as Policy: Framing the Debate on the Future of Australia's Defence Policy* (Canberra: ANU Press, 2007), 134-135, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt24hbvw>.

⁶ Australian Department of Defense, *Australian Defence* (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, Commonwealth of Australia, 1976), 1-3, https://www.aph.gov.au/About_Parliament/Parliamentary_Departments/Parliamentary_Library/pubs/rp/rp1516/DefendAust/1976

⁷ Lieutenant General Angus J. Campbell, "Australian Army Reserve Transformation – A Total Force," (Address to the Defence Reserves Association Conference 2017, Queanbeyan, Saturday 19 August 2017), accessed 21 April 2019, https://dra.org.au/latest-news-item/25973/australian-army-reserve-transformation-a-total-force/?type_fr=4.

⁸ Australian Department of Defence, *2016 Defence White Paper*. Throughout the 2016 White Paper and previous White Papers (particularly 2009 and 2013) the Government reinforces the need for investment in intelligence and alliance intelligence sharing partnerships to improve warning of any adversary capability or intent to attack.

⁹ Lieutenant General David Morrison, "The Army as an Instrument of National Power," *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 190 (2013): 14.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this literature review is to provide the reader a broad overview of relevant history and elements of defense mobilization as a means to understand the implications of strategic warning time on military capability and force structure decisions. The following texts have been selected to provide an understanding of the complexity of mobilization, the frequency with which nations, including Australia, have been forced to conduct rapid force expansion, and an appreciation for the types of mobilization that might be required.

Strategic Warning Time

In *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present – Writing the Victory Plan of 1941*, Charles Kirkpatrick discusses the planning for full national mobilization of the United States in the lead up to the Second World War. Kirkpatrick describes the impact of domestic politics on the process of mobilization, explaining how the public’s anger over involvement in the First World War had led to a prevailing attitude of isolationism, and how President Roosevelt was unable, “for excellent political decisions, to tell his Army and Navy staffs to prepare for the global war he foresaw.”¹ Kirkpatrick describes the challenges faced by defense planners in trying to design and mobilize resources for an expeditionary military campaign without any clear direction or guidance from the government. That this planning was occurring in 1941 in the absence of political direction is significant.

Kirkpatrick discusses the strategic planning undertaken by the War Plans Department as they considered the possibility of a two-front war. Of particular relevance to Australian defense planners, it was clear to American strategists that Europe would be the priority, with the Pacific theater being relegated to a holding action until sufficient forces were available.

Kirkpatrick also discusses an important observation by the architect of the Victory Plan, Albert C. Wedemeyer, made in the years following this period. Wedemeyer stated that for European defense planners it was long since recognized that mobilization plans and operational plans had to be developed jointly, as the speed with which a nation could mobilize and employ its resources would have a dramatic impact upon the manner in which it waged war. Wedemeyer reflected that in 1941 the United States was ignorant of this fact as its geography led to a theory that the Navy could hold any potential adversary at bay long enough to conduct a mobilization of the army.

In *Force Expansion and Warning Time*, Richard Brabin-Smith discusses the centrality of strategic warning time to Australian defense planning since the inaugural Defense White Paper of 1976.² Brabin-Smith argues that force expansion has been used as a mechanism by the government to minimize defense expenditure, seeking ever greater financial efficiency and reduction in the force in being. However, he suggests that strategic warning time has been used without a robust mechanism to continually compare both the strategic environment and the requirements of the expanded force, in order to base strategic warning planning upon a rational evaluation of data.

Brabin-Smith suggests that the Government's focus on managing the force in being, rather than delving into detailed mobilization planning, is somewhat justified

given the continued absence of an identifiable adversary with the capability or intention to attack Australia. However, in his analysis of the 2009 Defense White Paper, he notes that the rise of Asian economies and in particular China's military capability if matched by a reduction in United States effort in the region might radically alter the strategic environment. The 2009 White Paper acknowledged that such a development might necessitate a drastic increase in commitment of national resources to Defense, however, would only be justified in a precipitous decline in geostrategic stability.

In *Australia's Management of Strategic Risk in the New Era* Paul Dobb and Richard Brabin-Smith argue that the continued degradation of Australia's strategic environment necessitates a reappraisal of mobilization as a national security planning priority. Dobb and Brabin-Smith point to a history of Australian defense policy and planning which was predicated on the absence of credible military capability in the Asia-Pacific region, and therefore long strategic warning time were any nation to develop the ability to attack Australia. Dobb and Brabin-Smith argue that this is no longer the case; China has developed a credible military, economic power, and a growing ability to challenge the United States as the dominant power in the region. Likewise, Indonesia has a rapidly growing economy and population, giving it the ability to conduct rapid military transformation if so desired.

Dobb and Brabin-Smith conclude that, with military superiority now less of a determinant of Australia's security, Government must rely upon assessments of intent, a far less precise science and one subject to more rapid change. Facing the possibility of rapid political deterioration against an adversary with a larger military, economy and

population, Australia must reconsider the value placed on mobilization and seriously consider its ability to expand for deterrence and response.

Dibb and Brabin-Smith, in a theme consistent with much of the literature regarding Australia's defense priorities and likely contingencies, argue for prioritization of the Navy and Air Force. To deter an adversary or to halt an advance towards Australia, they argue that Naval and Air platforms would be critical to strike staging bases, attrite naval and amphibious forces and secure Australia's vital sea lines of communication. Dibb and Brabin-Smith argue that the Army's role in such a defense of Australia would be primarily domestic security and defending the north against those forces which managed to penetrate the Naval and Air forward Defense.

The Importance of Mobilization Planning

In Reframing the Defense Discourse: Australia's 'black swan' and its implications for preparedness and mobilization Andrew Stevens and Dr. Haroro Ingram argue that all defense planning should be framed by preparedness and mobilization principles, and that the defense of Australia should continue to drive discussion on the ADF's size and capabilities.³ The authors propose that discussing the size, capabilities and resource prioritization of the ADF separate to this core requirement risks ignoring the relationship between the level of capability of a force in being and the time required to mobilize in support of a defense of Australia mission. Basing the ADF on the requirements of the recent history of voluntary participation in foreign conflicts and security partnerships risks undermining the nation's ability to respond in adequate time to a degradation in the security environment.

In *Can Australia Fight Alone? The cost of the military's US dependency*, Andrew Davies discusses the industrial implications of Australia's small force in being. Davies discusses some of the fallacies surrounding Australia's ability to be 'self-reliant' for defense, explaining that without a significant domestic market for military materiel Defense industries cannot survive in peacetime even with significant government investment.⁴ Davies points to the benefits of importing materiel from the United States and other markets, namely the access to cutting edge technology and acquisition of more cost-effective systems than those homegrown. However, Davies also points to some significant limitations in this model, which are of particular relevance to the mobilization discussion.

Davies points to several instances throughout history whereby Australia's access to materiel was jeopardized by prioritization in favor of other nations. During the Second World War, when the fall of Singapore signaled an imminent threat of invasion, Australia was desperate to acquire additional airplanes and other materiel from producers in the United States and the United Kingdom. However, prioritization of the European theater meant that Australia's orders were not met. Australia turned to domestic production; however, establishing a defense industry from a low base meant that by the time a homegrown solution was ready for mass production the strategic situation had changed and materiel became available from external sources.

Davies also points to the political risks associated with an external supply of critical defense materiel, highlighting several instances whereby defense suppliers have refused to provide materiel for use in conflicts not supported by the company's parent government. Examples include the supply of Exocet missiles to the Argentinian military

during the Falklands War, but also the supply of Swedish 84mm anti-tank missiles to the Australian Army and supply of training aircraft from Switzerland during the Vietnam War.

Military Readiness and Mobilization

In *Military Readiness – concepts, choices and consequences*, Richard Betts discusses the complex and interconnected components of military readiness across mobilization, structural readiness and operational readiness. Betts's work is of particular importance as it dispels the misconception that military readiness is a linear process which can be improved simply through the application of time and money.

Betts describes the process of mobilization through the lens of US experience, from the Great War to the Gulf War. Betts argues that America's secure geography has allowed for repeated political decisions to reduce military expenditure during peace to build the economy and improve quality of life, however, the consequence of failing to sustain a large and capable standing army has been a huge increase in casualties at the outset of each conflict.⁵

Betts provides a historical example of the complex nature of military readiness through analysis of America's mobilization for the Great War. Despite having the benefit of long strategic warning time, the absence of a direct threat to mobilization bases or industry and a massive injection of capital, the deployment was marred by gross inefficiency. Confusion reigned as manpower and equipment were readied at different stages, equipment was not available to train, and deployment and operational plans did not consider the increased quantities of men and materiel available. Betts attributes this

failure to a lack of pre-conflict planning, which ensured that concepts and procedures did not exist to govern the increased resources when made available.⁶

Betts provides an informative analysis of America's mobilization and preparedness during subsequent conflicts including the Second World War, Korea, Vietnam, the Cold War and Gulf War. During the Cold War, the United States maintained a large, forward-deployed military at a high state of operational readiness to counter the heightened risk of a surprise attack by the Soviet Union. However, this readiness came at enormous and ultimately unsustainable cost.⁷ Despite the significant percentage of GDP spent on Defense preparedness, the time required to raise additional forces to heightened operational readiness was still substantial, suggesting that the process of increasing readiness is affected by time and resource constraints beyond mere availability of funds.⁸

Betts explains defense capability in terms of actual and potential capability, with actual being the forces prepared and available for deployment, and potential being reserves of manpower and materiel which can be turned into operational capability. To maintain actual defense capability beyond that immediately required comes at the expense of expenditure on social programs or economic strengthening. However, failure to transform potential to actual capability in sufficient time will result in insufficient force to meet political requirements. Betts argues that this failure to build actual capability in sufficient time can lead to unpalatable political and strategic sacrifices, such as America's loss of the Philippines to the Japanese in 1942. Betts relates General George C. Marshall's warning to President Franklin Roosevelt that to reinforce and defend the

Philippines in 1942 would imperil the entire Army mobilization effort for the European and Pacific theaters by removing the small mobilization base.⁹

Betts also provides an analysis of the '10-year rule' which governed British defense planning following the Great War, which held that expenditure on defense would be wasted as no war could occur within a strategic warning time of 10 years. Betts describes strategic warning time as constituting strategic (capability) and political (intention) components. Betts questions whether any long term prediction of warning time can be supported by objective evidence, as political change can occur very rapidly, and strategic change can be expedited with budget, priority and time. Despite criticizing the rationale of the 10-year rule, Betts somewhat defends the concept by arguing that increased expenditure on materiel during the inter-war years would have been wasted due to the rate of technological evolution and obsolescence.¹⁰

In *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age* Charles Hitch and Roland McKean discuss the economic and political implications of Defense planning in the nuclear age. While their work is principally concerned with defense policy considerations in the United States, many of their observations and planning considerations are of relevance to Australia's circumstances.

Hitch and McKean begin by defining the economic aspects of Defense planning as the quantity of resources available to a nation, the amount of those resources which are allocated to the purposes of Defense, and the efficiency with which those resources are then employed.¹¹ However, where in previous conflicts such as the Second World War the economic potential of a nation was of vital importance to realize significant and protracted mobilization, in the nuclear age this potential is of less relevance than the

percentage already translated into Defense capability or capable of rapid and efficient translation.

Hitch and McKean discuss the political and social complications involved in the economics of defense, particularly within highly democratic nations. Without the appearance of an existential threat, society is unlikely to accept a lower standard of living to support increased defense expenditure, which in turn prevents Governments from expanding defense capability during peacetime. Hitch and McKean further highlight that there is an established record of democratic governments persisting with policies which are popular long after the external conditions which enabled them have changed.¹²

Within the context of defense planning this can have a significant impact on a government's willingness to acknowledge the appearance of a threat, or to divert resources away from popular social programs before a threat has materialized at an advanced stage. Hitch and McKean also highlight the dichotomy, through the lens of the United States and the Soviet Union, that less democratic nations carry a distinct advantage in being able to increase and sustain large defense budgets without the concern of political reckoning.

Hitch and McKean discuss the problems associated with long term defense planning by way of analyzing costs and gains in time. Investments in capability which will be realized in the future must be weighed against current needs, as these investments are based upon assumptions of projected adversary capabilities and come at the expense of other requirements. If the adversary's capability is realized earlier, or not at all, then those resources invested will have been wasted.¹³ In the context of the United States facing a single existential threat, as presented by the Soviet Union, such long term

planning was based upon assumptions which could be somewhat refined through intelligence; for a country facing a wider range of adversaries and threats, long term predictions of adversary capability are nigh impossible.

Lastly, Hitch and McKean address the problems of balancing readiness against potential in the nuclear age. Due to the severity of conflict involving nuclear weapons a national mobilization like that undertaken during the Second World War is unlikely as a total war between states would be rapid. However, the potential for conventional limited wars has not reduced, and therefore nations must maintain the ability to surge and sustain the forces required. Hitch and McKean argue that industrial mobilization to commence production and generating forces from the civilian populace are not feasible as they will take too long. Rather, those resources which are planned and available for rapid translation into capability will be critical. The rapid and efficient translation of resources requires both an institutional framework, and planning.¹⁴

Australia's Defense and Mobilization Strategy

On 4 September 2000 the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade released its Parliamentary Inquiry into the Australian Army *from Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*. The Inquiry was conducted in light of the limitations identified during Australia's intervention in East Timor in 1999. While the purpose of the Inquiry was to make recommendations to Government to enhance the capability of the Army, several observations related to the overarching defense strategy.

The Inquiry commented that, although the Army's primary purpose was the defense of Australia its historical employment has been primarily geostrategic, conducting expeditionary operations in support of Government policy to enhance its

alliances and regional partnerships. Commenting on the utility of Australia's defense contributions the Inquiry noted that, despite the massive expansion of the armed services during the First and Second World Wars, Australia represented a very small overall percentage of allied troops. Importantly, it was also observed that Australia's contribution did not necessarily achieve the geostrategic aims which the Government had intended.¹⁵

Conversely, the Inquiry noted that during the Second World War Australia was threatened by invasion from Japan, and the allied effort was focused on the European theater. Australia provided all of the troops available for operations until the United States could further mobilize, eventually providing some 25% of the allied troops in the Pacific. In light of this geographical dilemma, the Inquiry observed that while Australia may choose to contribute to a coalition effort further afield, in a regional conflict Australia may not be able to rely upon rapid international assistance.¹⁶

In a final observation on strategy, the Inquiry noted that the development of technological advances including nuclear weapons had failed to prevent ground combat, as the majority of conflicts resided below the level of existential threat. The Inquiry thus cautioned that over-reliance on United States nuclear deterrence was insufficient to guarantee Australia's security.

The Inquiry determined that Australia should base the suitability of its Army on five criteria, which notably included scalability and sustainability. The Inquiry justified this focus on expansion by observing that a thorough study into strategic warning time since 1939 had concluded that an average of 14 months warning preceded conflict.¹⁷ The Inquiry further observed that despite several decades of concern about the possibility of

conflict with Japan, Australia had not moved to address its military capability until within 24 months of the war.¹⁸

The Inquiry established that the Army's primary role should be to maintain a credible capability for expanding to counter threats to the nation's security within 24 months. The Inquiry was critical of the Army's interpretation of strategic guidance for mobilization, believing that there had been an almost complete disregard for reserve forces to focus on improving the regular force. The Inquiry was particularly critical of the Army's ability to expand training to accommodate bringing greater numbers of units to operational readiness. Significant hollowness across the force in both manpower and equipment meant that sustainability and force expansion were unachievable. The Inquiry further noted that the Department of Defense did not maintain any plans to rapidly equip and resource understaffed or equipped units, and concluded that this meant these units should not be factored into planning for any defense requirements. The Inquiry stated that so long as the Army was capable of dealing with short notice contingencies, there was no need to maintain a larger force for less likely scenarios, so long as detailed plans existed to generate them promptly.¹⁹ The Inquiry stipulated that, given the strategic environment and the Government's expectation of being able to commit a brigade group and battalion group simultaneously to different theaters, the minimum force required by the Army was four brigades at high readiness.²⁰

The Inquiry made particular reference to the expansion of Army materiel, recommending that a thorough review be conducted of the Australian defense industry and its ability to support the rapid equipping of under-resourced units. Where industry could not support, the Inquiry suggested there was a need to review policy and plans for

stockholding and rapid procurement from multiple offshore suppliers. The Inquiry stated that plans for rapid equipment procurement in conflict were central to defense planning, and needed to be given higher priority by the Department.²¹

The Inquiry made several recommendations for remediating these deficiencies. While many of the recommendations regarding force structure are no longer relevant due to subsequent expansion and improvements in Army capability, one particular recommendation of the Inquiry remains unresolved, to “develop and maintain plans, processes and institutions to enable the Defense Force to expand to meet significant threats to Australian territory within a warning period of no more than two years”.²²

In 2003 the Government provided a formal response to the Joint Standing Committee’s Parliamentary Inquiry *Phantom to Force*. The Government’s response was tabled on 29 May 2003, by which time the security environment was significantly altered with the events of September 11, 2001, and the 2003 invasion of Iraq. The Government argued that the Defense Force size and capabilities which had been prescribed in the 2000 White Paper were still suitable for meeting foreseeable scenarios, however acknowledged that warning time for a conflict may not be sufficient to develop new capabilities and therefore committed to regular strategic reviews and a focus on maintaining a capable force in being.

The Government response contained two particularly important statements which underpinned defense strategy: that the regular Army was no longer to be viewed as an expansion base for major continental-scale operations, and that Australia should be more cognizant of its limited ability to achieve influence through military force.²³ Together these statements make clear that the Australian Government does not foresee any

situation in which the Australian Defense Force would have to conduct rapid mobilization, and explains to some degree the removal of mobilization and force expansion from the 2016 White Paper.

The Government response also qualified the level of capability expected of the Army as being simultaneous, sustained deployments in multiple theaters of one brigade group and one battalion group, deployable at short notice.²⁴ The Government thus established that it considered multiple, simultaneous security dilemmas to be a realistic objective for the Army. However, the Government believed that this commitment could be sustained with well below the Inquiry's stated requirement for four brigades.²⁵

Literature Review Summary

This chapter reviewed existing literature on mobilization and strategic warning time to understand the range of inputs, complexities, and trade-offs involved in generating military capability to meet future threats. The chapter also reviewed documents which provided historical context and rationale for current defense planning priorities in Australia.

The review firstly identified a trend in the United States and Australia, both governed by democratic institutions, to minimize Defense expenditure during peacetime to improve social programs and economic resiliency. Where less democratic nations can rapidly translate economic potential to military capability, within democratic nations governments are reluctant to do so for fear of adverse political outcomes. This typically delays the acknowledgment of a threat until it is well advanced, leads to a belated and insufficient translation of resources into military capability, and generally results in adverse strategic outcomes or strategic shock. The review concluded that while strategic

warning time is a necessary component of defense planning in a democracy to keep peacetime expenditure low, it is not typically underpinned by an objective framework against which threats can be judged and met by a corresponding increase in the defense budget or preparedness of certain capabilities.

The review identified that American and Australian approaches to mobilization have been, historically, influenced by their secure geography. For both nations in the past, this has led to decisions to prioritize defense expenditure on naval and air forces to fight holding actions and allow for the mobilization of armies. However, the common experience has been that insufficient planning or resources have been allocated to this mobilization, and as such, they have not been mobilized in time to meet government requirements.

A majority of Australian mobilization literature relates to industrial mobilization or self-reliant defense against existential threats. While Australia did face the prospect of invasion and self-reliant defense during the Second World War, the literature review identified that Australia is unlikely to be able to conduct domestic production of advanced military capabilities in the future due to the lack of a peacetime industry and the time and expense of establishing such facilities to meet a conflict. Despite this, the mobilization debate in Australia continues to address mass mobilization and does not address issues such as surge potential or sustainability.

The review also identified that long term defense planning and mobilization planning are inherently based on judgments about developing threats. Where a nation can accurately identify the likely adversary and gage his level of military development such planning becomes relatively simple; decisions regarding the proportion of national

capability translated to defense, and the proportion of defense capability allocated to ready or reserve forces are logically based upon this adversary assessment. However, where an adversary is not identifiable defense planning becomes less about preparedness for a specific threat and more about flexibility in response and potential to rapidly realize capability. This is predicated upon planning and institutional readiness to ensure efficiency.

The literature review also considered the historical basis of Australia's current Defense policy as articulated in the 2016 Defense White Paper. Before the 1999 East Timor Crisis the Government sacrificed Army operational readiness to prioritize naval and air force capability within a heavily resource constrained environment, with the Army designed for mobilization potential. However, the Timor crisis precipitated a change in defense policy from isolationism to active regional engagement, which required greater operational readiness. Consequently, the priority shifted from long term expansion potential towards operational readiness, and without an increase in the budget the change of focus occurred at the expense of expansion potential. This allowed for a gradual transition of the reserve force from one designed to expand the Army, towards one designed to fill hollowness in the regular Army.

¹ Charles Kirkpatrick, *An Unknown Future and a Doubtful Present: Writing the Victory Plan of 1941* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1991), 36.

² Richard Brabin-Smith, "Force Expansion and Warning Time," *Security Challenges* 8, no. 2 (Winter 2012): 33.

³ Andrew Stevens and Haroro J. Ingram, "Reframing the Defense Discourse: Australia's 'black swan' and its implications for preparedness and mobilization," *Australian Defense Force Journal*, no. 190 (2013): 30.

⁴ Andrew Davies, “Can Australia Fight Alone? The cost of the military’s US dependency,” *Australian Foreign Affairs*, no. 2 (February 2018): 45.

⁵ Richard Betts, *Military Readiness – Concepts, Choices and Consequences* (Washington, DC: Brookings Institution Press, 1995), 14.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 6-8.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 19-20.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 21.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 56.

¹¹ Hitch and McKean, *The Economics of Defense in the Nuclear Age*, v.

¹² *Ibid.*, 16.

¹³ *Ibid.*, ix.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 35.

¹⁵ Australian House of Representatives, Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army* (Canberra, ACT: September 2000), 2.22.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 3.27.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.61.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 2.19.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 9.11.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 5.50.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 8.74.

²² *Ibid.*, 183.

²³ Australian Department of Defense, Government Response to the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defense and Trade Report, *Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army* (Canberra, ACT: May 2003), 3.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ Ibid., 4.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Background

The purpose of this thesis is to determine whether strategic warning time negates the requirement for mobilization planning, to determine whether strategic circumstances may require Australia to mobilize in the future, and to understand how strategic warning time and mobilization impacts the operational, structural and mobilization readiness of the Australian Defense Force. Chapter 1 introduced a broad definition of military mobilization as being the timely generation of military capabilities required to deter or respond to threats. The chapter also provided an overview of Australian defense policy approaches to mobilization; historically a mechanism to reduce defense expenditure, and more recently being abandoned as the Government demands improved operational readiness and effectiveness from the ADF without a corresponding increase in budget.

Chapter 1 highlighted that Australia had been required to mobilize additional military resources for four crises, one of which included the threat of invasion of mainland Australia. Despite this, the Australian Government still deems mobilization readiness to be unnecessary due to secure geography, alliances, and a belief that strategic warning time would permit a gradual development of capabilities required to deter or defeat any developing threat. Chapter 1 concluded with the observation that peacetime decisions regarding force structure and readiness priorities incur long term impacts affecting readiness and sustainability for conflict.

Chapter 2 reviewed existing research on mobilization. The review covered topics of particular relevance to Australia including historical experiences of Australia and the

United States in mobilizing for conflict, the application of strategic warning time, and Government perspectives on mobilization as a defense planning priority. Chapter 2 also noted that Australian mobilization research is almost exclusively concerned with full national mobilization and questions of military-industrial self-sufficiency, with little attention paid to reserve mobilization and surge potential which may be precursors to industrial mobilization scenarios.

The literature review concluded that strategic warning time is a necessary component of planning constrained by the realities of defense funding in a democracy, however, is not currently underpinned by any quantifiable criteria governing the lead times required to mobilize capability, and is not useful as a determinant of force structure or capability development decisions.

Research Methodology

The thesis will use a qualitative research methodology based on heuristic case studies to answer the primary research question: Does strategic warning time negate the requirement for mobilization planning? The research will be broken into four parts.

Australia's National Interests and Defense Planning Guidance

The first section will conduct a qualitative review of Australia's national interests as articulated in the 2016 Defense White Paper to understand how the Government views risks, strategic warning time and the ADF as a tool of statecraft. The review will seek to understand the range of military commitments envisaged by Government which determines force structure and capability.

Mobilization Scenarios

The second section will utilize the specific Strategic Defense Objectives identified in the 2016 Australian Defense White Paper to investigate hypothetical situations which may require mobilization. The section will utilize key aspects of Australian policy including the US alliance, and case studies of Australian intervention in past conflicts to determine where Australia may be required to lead a military commitment, provide a more sizeable contribution, or to conduct a unilateral intervention.

Strategic Warning Time in Australian Defense Planning

The third section will review the application of strategic warning time in Australia's defense planning. The section will consider how strategic warning time is measured, whether specific metrics are used, and will seek to understand whether warning time can be used to inform the timely development of military capability.

Australia's Mobilization Requirements

The final section will review Australia's military capability in light of the range of military commitments identified in mobilization scenarios, conducting a qualitative review of the Australian army's structure, capabilities and ADF force projection capabilities to identify where limitations exist which may necessitate mobilization. The section will then analyze how mobilization planning might aid in the timely development of military capability.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of data collected in Chapter 2. The literature review concluded that strategic warning time is an unavoidable consideration in defense planning, allowing a nation to focus its finite defense budget on the most pressing requirements, and to coordinate the mobilization of additional military capabilities to coincide with operational needs. However, it was shown that government predictions of strategic warning time were overly optimistic, and political and financial pressures typically prevented an objective assessment of developing threats. The literature review pointed to historical examples whereby manpower, materiel and industry were not available to support the military means required by the government, with consequences including unnecessary loss of life and adverse strategic outcomes.

Having established the general importance of strategic warning time, this chapter analyzes the data in the context of Australia's particular circumstances and considers the implications for the relative prioritization of mobilization planning.

Australia's National Interests and Defense Planning Guidance

The 2016 Defense White Paper stipulates the Australian Government's priorities for Defense Force structure and planning, forecasting strategic circumstances and capability requirements to 2035. The 2016 White Paper reflects a 'limited liability' strategy, envisaging minor force contributions to support Australia's national interests, predominantly within a coalition campaign construct.¹

The 2016 Defense White Paper does not mention force expansion or mobilization and does not foresee any circumstances which would justify an expanded army. The 2016 White Paper reflects a continuation of the philosophy outlined in a 2003 Government statement that “Australia must be realistic about the scope of our power and influence and resource limits.”² The Government provides no specific criteria for strategic warning time, stating only that the prospect of an attack against Australia remains a remote prospect to 2035. However, the 2016 White Paper does recognize that the use of force is not restricted to homeland defense, and acknowledges that Australia’s strategic interests are both regional and global.³

Australia’s strategic interests are expressed in the 2016 White Paper as Strategic Defense Interests. The three Strategic Defense Interests are:

- A secure, resilient Australia with secure northern approaches and proximate sea lines of communication.
- A secure nearer region, encompassing maritime South East Asia and the South Pacific.
- A stable Indo-Pacific region and a rules-based global order.⁴

From the Strategic Defense Interests, the Government derives further Strategic Defense Objectives which provide more specific guidance for strategic defense planning and which determine force structure and capability priorities. The three Strategic Defense Objectives are:

- Deter, deny and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests, and northern approaches.
- Make effective military contributions to support the security of maritime South East Asia and support the governments of Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and of Pacific Island Countries to build and strengthen their security.

- Contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order.⁵

While Strategic Defense Objective One, the defense of Australia, could be considered the most vital in terms of planning to defend against an existential threat to sovereignty, it is the one Objective subject to a specific assessment of strategic warning time in the White Paper. The Government states that there is 'no more than a remote chance of a military attack on Australian territory by another country' forecast to 2035.⁶ This Objective covers threats to Australia's mainland, borders, offshore territories in the Pacific, Indian and Southern Oceans, Coral Sea, Antarctica, and the Exclusive Economic Zone. This assessment has a significant bearing on the size and force structure required of the Australian Defense Force, as it assumes that no threat to Australia's sovereignty will exist for the next two decades, providing extended strategic warning of any developing threats.

Strategic Defense Objective Two, a secure nearer region, is not framed by an assessment of likelihood, scale or severity. However, the Government identifies the nearer region as being of the 'most immediate importance' to Australia and advocates the commitment of 'effective' military contributions, recognizing that instability could have strategic implications for Australia's security.⁷ The Government seeks to remain the regional 'security partner of choice' and acknowledges the need for Australia to play a leadership role in the security of Timor-Leste, Papua New Guinea, and the Pacific Islands, and to promote security in South East Asia to assure Australia's sea lines of communication.⁸

Strategic Defense Objective Three, support to a rules-based global order, is framed by direction to provide 'meaningful' contributions in support of the United States

and other international partners. The Government acknowledges that Australia lacks the capacity to conduct operations in support of a rules-based global order unilaterally, and caveats any support to coalition operations by stipulating such operations be in direct support of Australia's specific Strategic Defense Interests.

While not explicitly defined within the Defense White Paper, the language used to describe the likelihood and relative importance of particular Strategic Defense Interests illuminates the Government's perspective on force structure and appetite to employ force. This is depicted in Table below.



Figure 1. Interpretation of 2016 DWP

Source: Created by author using data from Australian Department of Defense, 2016 *Defense White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, 2016, <http://www.Defense.gov.au/WhitePaper/Docs/2016-Defense-White-Paper.pdf>.

Australian Government Perspectives - Threats

In addition to the three Strategic Defense Interests and associated Strategic Defense Objectives outlined in the White Paper, the Government also provides a perspective on ‘drivers of change’ in Australia’s security environment. These six concerns provide the context in which more specific threats to Australia’s security may be expected to develop. The six drivers of change are:

- The roles of the United States and China and the relationship between them, which is likely to be characterized by a mix of cooperation and competition.
- Challenges to the stability of the rules-based global order, including competition between countries and major powers trying to promote their interests outside of the established rules.
- The enduring threat of terrorism, including threats emanating from ungoverned parts of Africa, the Middle East and Asia. Australians will continue to be threatened by terrorism at home and abroad.
- The spread of extremism and violence is likely to be worsened by foreign terrorist fighters returning from conflicts to Australia and other countries in our region state fragility, including within our immediate neighborhood, caused by uneven economic growth, crime, social, environmental and governance challenges and climate change.
- The pace of military modernization and the development of more capable regional military forces, including more capable ballistic missile forces.
- The emergence of new complex, non-geographic threats, including cyber threats to the security of information and communications systems.⁹

The drivers of change reference specific areas of concern, which constitute a framework for Defense planners to understand both Government expectations of defense capabilities and an appetite to employ military means to attain strategic ends.

State Competition

The White Paper predicts that the United States will remain the world's most powerful military nation over the period to 2035, but acknowledges China's rapid economic growth, military modernization, and expectations of greater regional influence. This is expected to create conditions of constant cooperation and competition, exemplified by China's concurrent participation in United Nations peacekeeping missions, and tensions in the South China Sea. For Australia, economic dependence on China and security dependence on the United States presents a growing dilemma.

Effects of Globalization on Security

Globalization and interconnectedness mean that Australia is now vulnerable to security threats originating well beyond its immediate region. The White Paper references Russia's actions in Ukraine, North Korea's proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction and the rise of ideological extremism as issues which have both directly influenced Australia's security and reflect a broader trend of nations challenging the established international system of governance in place since the Second World War. Australia is affected by these issues but lacks the capacity to resolve them unilaterally, which increases the importance of multilateral approaches to security.

Regional and Global Extremism

A significant expansion in terrorist activity threatens Australia's security and interests around the world. Terrorism has evolved, utilizing media and communications to foment tensions caused by ethnic and economic divides, and enabling terrorist groups to direct activities across borders. Extremist groups have exploited state weakness to

create safe havens, and have challenged the international order by holding territory to attract growing numbers of disaffected people to their cause. Australia has a vested interest in supporting international efforts to degrade terror networks and bolster State security through the provision of military, humanitarian and other support.

State Fragility

State fragility in Africa, the Middle East and parts of Asia threatens Australia's interests by reducing border controls, allowing threat groups to move and operate with greater freedom while allowing easier distribution of weapons. In Australia's immediate region many countries are affected by the causes of state fragility – population growth, weak economic growth, climate change, and governance challenges. Instability in Australia's immediate region could have significant implications for security, by giving greater influence to other nations hostile to Australia's interests. Australia must continue to bolster the stability of countries across its immediate region and must lead on the provision of humanitarian and security assistance where required.

Increasing Military Modernization and Lethality

Military modernization, enabled by sustained economic growth throughout parts of Asia and the Indo-Pacific, reduces Australia's traditional technological edge throughout the region. As Australia's military expenditure is eclipsed by nations across the region, advanced capabilities across all domains will proliferate, and new technologies will be fielded to further degrade traditional western advantages. For Australia this increases the potential lethality of any future conflict in the Indo-Pacific, exposing the ADF to a wide range of advanced capabilities. Simultaneously,

modernization increases the risk of miscalculation and conflict as nations seek to develop strategic positions of relative advantage.

The Proliferation of Cyber and Space Capability

The proliferation of cyber and space capabilities means that Australia is now vulnerable to information collection, disruption of critical infrastructure and degradation of military capabilities by a growing range of state and non-state actors. While Australia seeks increased cooperation and adherence to regulation of space and cyber activity between states, such agreement is unlikely and is undermined by the commercialization and relative ease of developing new systems.

The 2016 White Paper, therefore, details the Government's assessment of those scenarios which may justify the employment of defense capabilities, out to 2035, and directly influences the size and capability of the defense forces required to meet these anticipated missions. Key components of this assessment may be summarized as:

1. Australia's security interests are global, and it may be expected to contribute to coalition campaigns beyond its immediate region. The range of threats to Australia's interests is growing, and therefore military intervention is expected to increase.
2. Increased defense expenditure and increased lethality across Australia's immediate region will increase the costs and risks inherent in operating within this environment.
3. Australia may lead military campaigns in its immediate region and must be viewed as a security partner of choice by neighbor nations.

4. The first task for the ADF is to deny or defeat a direct invasion of Australia's mainland or offshore territories. However, it will not be resourced for this task as no threat is expected before 2035.

This next section presents several force deployment scenarios based upon historical precedent and stated Government interests, to establish a benchmark for the scale and sustainability of Army commitments which may be required.

Mobilization Scenarios

Scenario One – Defense of Australian Territory

Strategic Defense Objective (SDO) One is to deter, deny and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests, and northern approaches. The 2016 White Paper apportions no more than a remote prospect of such an event out to 2035, based upon the lack of identified adversaries or intent, and a lack of requisite military capability. The White Paper does not specifically define national interests or northern approaches. However, the operations undertaken during the Second World War to deny Japan a staging base from which to attack Australia provide some historical context.

Following the conclusion of the First World War Australia, like many other Western nations, withdrew from active consideration of military affairs. The human and financial cost of the war ensured that no political capital was to be gained by discussion of further military conflict, and the Great Depression brought other challenges for both Government and society. Though some important structural reforms were implemented, the inter-war period was largely characterized by decommissioning and reductions in the scale, budget and preparedness of all services.¹⁰ Continued adherence to the principle of Imperial Defense and belief that Great Britain would provide for Australia's security was

used as a crutch by successive Governments to avoid addressing national defense issues.¹¹

As early as 1920 Australian defense officials had identified Japan as the only 'potential and probable adversary' in a future conflict, however, the force structure and materiel recommended by defense officials to effectively defend against a Japanese incursion were never realized. Despite military planners determining that the defeat of a successful invasion could require as many as seven divisions constituting some 180,000 men, the actual force was allowed to decline to below 40,000.¹² Further, while Australia placed increased reliance upon the security provided by her relationship with Great Britain, both Britain and the United States entered into agreements with Japan which facilitated Japan's development of an enhanced naval capability and reduced the allied forces and Pacific bases which would be available to provide for Australia's security.¹³

Australia relied upon the strategy of a British base at Singapore from which the Royal Navy would defeat any trans-oceanic threat to the Commonwealth dominions. This strategy was readily accepted by the Australian Government despite the reservations of senior Australian defense officials and without thorough consideration of Britain's ability to satisfy its commitments due to the 10-year rule, which held that a major war could not be foreseen within 10 years. This was particularly the case in the event of a two-front war involving both Europe and Japan.¹⁴

The Committee on Imperial Defense continued to renew its the 10-year rule until 1932, which had a significant impact upon Government attitudes towards defense and the state of preparedness of the militaries of both nations.¹⁵ The Australian endorsement of the Singapore strategy continued into the late 1930s despite continual delays and

reduction in the scope of Singapore's Defenses, and the acknowledgment in 1937 that any British commitment to Singapore would be secondary to European requirements.¹⁶ The naval installations at Singapore were eventually opened in 1938, though without a fleet or adequate troops to defend them.¹⁷

Japan's increasing industrialization, military advancement, and invasion of Manchuria 1931 were viewed with increasing concern, however, resulted in a disjointed Government response which attempted to counter Japanese commercial interests in the South West Pacific while ignoring the defense implications.¹⁸ Throughout this period Japan sought to increase trade with Australia beyond the 14% of total exports already received and sought improved access to natural resources in the South West Pacific. However, in 1936 Australia joined British efforts to frustrate Japan's acquisition of resources by imposing harsh tariffs, and the following year ceased the export of iron ore to Japan, resulting in a complete cessation of trade with Australia.¹⁹

The Second Sino-Japanese War in 1937 finally spurred an Australian rearmament program primarily aimed at infrastructure development and platform procurement for the Navy and Air Force. However, the budget allocated was still well below that required for effective expansion and rearmament.²⁰ Due to the lack of peacetime industries for the manufacture of materiel, particularly aircraft, it was not feasible to rapidly source the expertise required for domestic manufacture, and orders placed with British companies were not satisfied due to prioritization of Britain's re-armament and expansion programs.²¹ Due to these difficulties, when Australia joined the war in Europe in 1939, the rearmament programs were still years from maturation, and mobilization of both personnel and materiel was hampered by the lack of planning.²² Although Australia's

pre-1939 modernization was motivated by fear of Japanese invasion, between 1939 and 1942 Australia deployed a majority of its platforms and mobilized troops to support Britain. This reflected the acknowledgment that as a geographically isolated democracy with a small population Australia's security was heavily dependent upon the security of its democratic allies and the hope that by supporting an early defeat of Germany, Japan would be deterred from attacking British interests in the Pacific.²³

Australia mobilized and deployed four divisions to fight in Allied campaigns across the Mediterranean and Middle East theaters, and to reinforce Malaya. These troops arrived poorly trained and equipped, lacking key enablers and being without training experience of combined arms warfare. The constant flow of men and materiel overseas detracted from Australia's domestic defenses against a possible Japanese invasion, although the experience gained by those Australian divisions proved invaluable in training further forces and surviving the Japanese offensive when it came.²⁴ Throughout this period Australia failed to view the European war or threat in the Pacific as a national crisis, and domestic politics continued to prevent a bipartisan approach towards national mobilization and preparation.²⁵

Despite the steadily deteriorating diplomatic situation and a growing appreciation of the threat posed by Japan, the attacks in December 1941 and subsequent capture of Thailand, Burma, Singapore, Malaysia, New Guinea, and Timor found Australia unprepared for war militarily, and the psychological shock was further compounded by subsequent bombings of the Australian mainland from February 1942.

Australia's faith in British ability and willingness to provide for its defense were badly shaken by the fall of Singapore with the loss of some 15,000 Australian troops and

finally brought home that British and American priorities lay in Europe, not the Pacific. Rapidly mobilized formations from company to brigade were sent to New Guinea, New Britain, Ambon and Timor to Australia's north, and New Ireland and New Caledonia to the northeast as a means to prevent the Japanese from simply occupying the islands. However, lacking strength, training, and enablers these forces were expected to be overwhelmed and destroyed in a Japanese assault.²⁶

The lack of seriousness with which war planning had been undertaken meant that mobilization, domestic production, rail and road infrastructure, coastal defenses and defensive plans were all inadequate.²⁷ The Australian Government looked to the United States for support, however with the European theater the priority only two National Guard divisions could be spared until American mobilization allowed additional forces from late 1943.²⁸ The difference in priority afforded the Pacific between the United States and Australia would mean that, even with full mobilization in the United States, Australia would ultimately provide some 25% of all troops in the theater.²⁹

While subsequent analysis indicates that the Japanese lacked the forces required to mount an invasion of Australia, by capturing all of the archipelagos to Australia's north and northeast they successfully sealed sea lines of communication to isolate Australia and prevent Allied passage to either Singapore or the Philippines.³⁰ With Australia's hastily mobilized troops hopelessly outnumbered and outgunned, the Japanese rapidly captured air and sea bases at Rabaul in New Guinea, Timor, Java, and Ambon from which they controlled the archipelago and launched over 100 air attacks on the mainland.³¹

Despite strong opposition from the political and military leadership in London several Australian divisions were returned for home defense, as at this point the combined services were incapable of defeating a Japanese invasion should it have occurred.³² Additional Australian troops were deployed to New Guinea to prevent the capture of Port Moresby, which would have provided a launch point for an invasion of Australia, and subsequently fought a grueling campaign to retake the island at the cost of some 20,000 casualties. Subsequently, some 30,000 Australians were required to clear the Japanese from Bougainville.³³

In Australia the lack of peacetime preparation resulted in desperation and a poorly coordinated mobilization effort, exemplified by the lack of equipment and training for the expanded army.³⁴ While Australia provided vital sustainment to both American and Australian operations throughout the entire Pacific theater, domestic production of tanks and aircraft failed to produce capable systems in time for the war's end, and those variants rushed into operational service were outclassed with disastrous results.³⁵ Over-mobilization of the population detracted from vital industrial and agricultural processes and resulted in an Army which was unsustainable and required selective demobilization from as early as October 1942. Manning pressures culminated in the need to recall the Australian 9th Division from North Africa as it could not be sustained with reinforcements.³⁶

Analysis

Australia's geopolitical circumstances and military capabilities are substantially different today than during the interwar years and Second World War. However, that

experience provides historical context and reveals some of the risks which continue to affect Strategic Defense Objective One.

Like during the early 20th Century Australia is reliant upon the support of its democratic allies for security. Australia's alliance with the United States, the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS), is the cornerstone of Australia's defense policy and provides both the umbrella of nuclear security as well as the basis of decisions made about the extent of capability required for self-defense.³⁷

However, as demonstrated by the reliance upon Britain and America in the Second World War the security provided by the ANZUS treaty is predicated upon America's willingness to intervene on Australia's behalf, upon the presumption that America is not otherwise engaged in a significant military commitment, and that Australia can successfully defend until such time as American reinforcements could be spared, potentially through mobilization. Sir Arthur Tange, Australian Secretary of Defense through the 1970s, identified that the uncertainty regarding the extent and nature of support Australia might receive under the ANZUS alliance as one of the great complications of defense planning.³⁸

While no nation currently demonstrates the intent or capability to attack Australia, China is identified in the Defense White Paper as the greatest challenge to American power in the Pacific based upon its rapid economic rise, military modernization, and revisionist policies in its near region. The 2017 National Security Strategy of the United States of America identified China as a threat to sea lines of communication and trade, a threat to sovereignty and regional stability.³⁹ China has focused both military and diplomatic efforts on securing access to energy and natural resources, which has brought

it into competition with nations including India and Australia as it seeks bases and access further afield.⁴⁰

Simultaneously, China is Australia's most important trading partner. Economic co-dependence provides both a political and economic rationale for maintaining relations, and could conceivably prevent an objective assessment of a developing military capability and foreign policy which necessitates a change in approach. The Australian Government recognizes that China's military and economic power will lead to an increase in competition with the United States and a desire to exert greater influence across the region, actions which will increase friction and threat of miscalculation in the future.⁴¹ This could take the form of China resorting to force in regional disputes, a reduction in American presence in the Indo-Pacific region by moving the Seventh Fleet from Japan, or a regional arms race to counter-balance China's influence. These threats could develop rapidly and would radically alter Australia's security environment and the forces required to achieve self-reliant defense.

As seen in the example of Japanese occupation of the islands to Australia's north, any threat to Australia's sea lines of communication or the acquisition of naval and air bases which could threaten Australia itself would be intolerable, and would likely result in the deployment of large numbers of ground forces to assist sovereign forces or unilaterally defend, secure and retake islands from Java to Fiji.⁴² The Japanese operations demonstrate that an adversary without the ability to invade the mainland could still achieve significant leverage over Australia simply by occupying the northern archipelago and securing lines of communication before Australia was able to generate sufficient forces to respond.

Though no threat is today apparent, the threat of Japan was ignored by successive Australian governments over at least two decades as economics and the promise of security provided by its allies justified political and economic expediency. As China and other nations in the Indo Pacific experience economic growth, military modernization and vie for greater regional influence, the threat of military capability and political intent to attack Australia may materialize far quicker than current political estimations allow.⁴³

Scenario Two – Australian Led Regional Stability Operation

Instability in Australia's immediate neighborhood is covered under SDO Two – A Secure Nearer Region, considered of the most immediate importance to Australia's security and worthy of 'effective' military commitment. The Government recognizes that Australia must be prepared to lead such commitments to ensure strategic outcomes favorable to Australia's interests, and to uphold its reputation as the security partner of choice.⁴⁴

In 1999 Australia conducted such an operation to provide security and stability in East Timor. Despite growing discomfort with the nature of Indonesia's rule since having claimed the province in 1975, Australia had ignored the Timor problem in deference to its relationship with its large northern neighbor.⁴⁵ However, following the Indonesian decision to allow a vote for self-determination in 1999 Australia intervened to halt the violence being perpetrated by pro-Indonesian militias.⁴⁶ The Government's decision to intervene was based in large part on considerable public pressure, reflecting American military theorist Rear Admiral Henry E. Eccles' notion that 'the ultimate source of strategy lies in the values of the people of a nation'.⁴⁷

Australia's intervention in East Timor was deeply unpopular with Indonesians, particularly the military, who saw it as a breach of national sovereignty. The intervention raised the prospect of direct conflict between Australia and Indonesia and was a significant factor in Australia's decision to request 'boots on the ground' from the United States. Although the United States subsequently intervened diplomatically to prevent Indonesian military intervention, their refusal to commit ground troops demonstrated that Australia should not expect allied support as a matter of course when such support may conflict with other interests.⁴⁸

The Australian led International Force East Timor (INTERFET) severely strained Australia's military resources after years of peacetime reductions.⁴⁹ The lack of strategic warning meant that no opportunity existed to remediate deficiencies in force projection capabilities, force readiness and legislation to support mobilization of reserves. From an Army of approximately 24,000, INTERFET consumed 5,300 troops. Though reduced in scale once the mission transitioned to United Nations lead, Australia sustained its commitment through force rotations until concurrency pressures led to a decision to withdraw in 2004, against advice from within the United Nations mission. A further deterioration in 2006 led to the re-deployment of an Australian brigade concurrent to commitments in Iraq and Afghanistan, demonstrating continued priority to regional security assistance.

The 2000 Defense White Paper initiated expensive and lengthy remediation of the Army and other Services capabilities found to be necessary from this strategic shock. The procurement of an amphibious capability formed around several Landing Helicopter Docks to allow for regional force projection was announced in the 2000 White Paper but

was not realized until 2014, and the Army's expansion and restructuring to allow for a multi-role combat brigade at high readiness was not realized until after the maturation of Plan Beersheeba in 2017.⁵⁰

Analysis

In addition to the long term problem of supporting Timor-Leste⁵¹ to become a stable and functioning democracy, Australia has been required to commit forces at short notice to the Solomon Islands for peacekeeping and Fiji for non-combatant evacuation following a coup.⁵² The nation of Papua New Guinea has suffered from significant instability since gaining sovereignty in 1975, and waged a campaign on the island of Bougainville to prevent its independence; a Bougainville referendum for independence is planned for October 2019.⁵³ Further potential flashpoints for regional instability include the Indonesian provinces of Papua and West Papua which have called for independence since the refuted 1969 'Act of Free Choice' which ceded autonomy to Indonesia.⁵⁴

While an Australian intervention in Papua New Guinea, West Papua or Bougainville would only follow a significant failure of Australian and international efforts at supporting stability or brokering peace, such an intervention is not without precedent and may be precipitated by large scale violence against civilians which denies the kind of strategic warning time expected of a serious international confrontation.

By geography alone, an intervention in Papua could be exponentially more complex and require more resources, potentially over an extended period as demonstrated by the continued instability in Timor Leste.⁵⁵ While Australia would presumably only intervene under the legitimacy of a United Nations mandate or sovereign request for assistance, both of which may bring with them international support, Australia would

expect to lead the commitment and would be forced to provide a large commitment to ensure the intervention secured its national interests.⁵⁶ Further, the close alliance with the United States would be no guarantee of support for intervention when weighed against the importance of America's relationship with Indonesia.

Such an intervention is demonstrably possible, may occur with little to no strategic warning time, and would be considered of immediate importance to Australia's security thus mandating a response. Depending on the diplomatic circumstances and speed at which the situation developed Australia may be required to provide the bulk of initial forces as well as the ongoing provision of resources beyond those held by typical United Nations contributing nations, such as command and control and aviation. As a vital national interest, Australia could not afford for another nation to lead the intervention and would be forced to meet mission requirements regardless of other concurrent military commitments around the world.

Scenario Three – Global Commitment

Operations conducted outside of Australia's immediate region are addressed in the 2016 Defense White Paper under Strategic Defense Interest Three, a stable Indo-Pacific region and a rules-based global order. The Government acknowledges that Australia lacks the ability to conduct global operations unilaterally, however, directs that Defense will contribute 'meaningful' military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order. Australia's contribution to the war in Vietnam between 1962 to 1972 provides a case study in the strategic and operational implications of such a commitment.

In the aftermath of the Second World War, many European nations sought to reestablish the pre-war status quo with their Asian colonies. However, the period of Japanese occupation had allowed for the growth of nationalist movements which now sought independence. Support from the Soviet Union and the newly installed communist government in China led to several communist insurgencies across French, British and Dutch colonies, extending the ideological battleground of the Cold War to Asia.

Although troubled by the spread of communism in Asia and France's war in Indochina, Australia was predominantly concerned about instability in its immediate region. The British were fighting a communist insurgency in Malaya, and the Netherlands had ceded the Dutch East Indies to become the independent nation of Indonesia in 1949. Through the 1950s increasing authoritarianism in Indonesia along with the growing political influence of both its military and the Communist Party were of grave concern to Australia as it faced the prospect of sharing land and sea borders with an unstable or hostile Indonesia.⁵⁷ Australia recognized that stability in the near region was predicated upon both US and Britain maintaining their presence, thus preventing the development of threats which may impact Australia.

Against this backdrop of regional instability, Australia committed to a policy of Forward Defense and agreed to deploy forces in support of the counterinsurgency campaign in Malaya, and to contribute to a Commonwealth Far East Strategic Reserve.⁵⁸ Although at this stage Britain remained committed to the region, Australia was not oblivious to Britain's post-war financial situation and the risk that she would abandon her remaining Asian colonies.⁵⁹ Australia, therefore, sought the opportunity to build its relationship with the United States and demonstrate its commitment to shared-defense as

a means of guaranteeing American support in the region under the new Australia New Zealand United States (ANZUS) Treaty.⁶⁰

The United States was drawn into Vietnam as part of its broader policy of resisting communist expansion, and fear that communist control in Vietnam would soon lead to the loss of other countries throughout Asia.⁶¹ As American support to France in the First Indochina War transitioned to the subsequent advisory effort, American politicians feared that a unilateral commitment would be portrayed as American imperialism. It was for this reason which America sought the introduction of forces from Australia in 1961.⁶²

Australia deployed its first contingent of advisors in 1962. By this stage Australia realized the limitations of security provided by the United States nuclear umbrella as the security environment across the region deteriorated, giving rise to a range of contingencies which could require the commitment of ground forces. Principle concerns included an escalation of Indonesia's confrontation with Malaysia, a reinvigoration of the communist insurgency in Malaya sponsored by either Indonesia or China, the need to deploy forces in mainland South East Asia including Vietnam, and action by Indonesia to destabilize New Guinea.⁶³ The Australian Government embarked upon a concerted effort to grow the army through voluntary recruitment, seeking to expand from a regular force of 21,000 to 33,000.⁶⁴

As the situation in Vietnam deteriorated America increased its commitment of advisors and began the introduction of combat forces. While eager to see an increased contribution from Australia, Australia's regional security environment was further complicated in 1963 by *confrontasi*, the Indonesian intervention to prevent the creation of

an independent and unified Malaysia, which drew additional Australian forces to Malaysia and Borneo and increased the need for reserves in case of a direct conflict with Indonesia in New Guinea.⁶⁵ Having been unable to expand through voluntary recruitment, the army was unable to sustain a greater commitment to Vietnam as was desired by the Government.⁶⁶

The changing security environment, political pressure for a greater commitment to Vietnam, and the fear that without greater support America would withdraw from the region led Australia to implement compulsory national service in 1964.⁶⁷ The influx of personnel led to a drastic reduction in operational readiness as regular soldiers were diverted to establish new recruit training schools and a new officer training school.⁶⁸ To meet the greater range of operational commitments, the Army also expanded the number of battalions to nine, which required further disruption as regular battalions were split.⁶⁹

The greater availability of forces from 1965 allowed the Australian Government to provide the commitment being sought by the United States, initially deploying an infantry battalion under the operational control of the United States 173d Airborne Brigade (Separate).⁷⁰ However, the use of national servicemen in Vietnam changed the political dynamic within Australia, removing much of the bipartisan support for conscription which was based on security concerns in the immediate region. As a consequence, the Australian Government sought to limit the role of the Australian battalion as a means to reduce casualties.⁷¹

The increasing American commitment led to additional political pressure on the Australian Government to increase its military contribution, for political rather than military necessity.⁷² Where Defense Secretary Robert McNamara had earlier accepted

and defended Australia's limited contribution due to the dilemma of balancing between Vietnam and the threat of Indonesia, he now warned that without a more substantial commitment to the Anglo-American alliance Australia might find itself facing Indonesia on its own.⁷³ This pressure led to the addition of a second infantry battalion in 1966, and then a trebling of the commitment in 1967 with the decision to send a brigade task force which included aviation, logistics and special forces.⁷⁴

While the increased commitment was intended to satisfy strategic concerns, at the operational level the creation of the Australian Task Force and battlespace ownership of Phuoc Tuy province allowed the Australians to wage a counter-insurgency campaign in accordance with their doctrine developed during experiences in Malaya and Borneo.⁷⁵ The Australian approach led to conflict with American General Westmoreland who pushed for a more aggressive campaign as was being waged across the American sectors, with a focus on attrition and the consequent increase in casualties.⁷⁶ However, the Australian operational approach was influenced by the Government's perspective that the commitment was primarily political, that the war was unlikely to be resolved satisfactorily due to the lack of a credible South Vietnamese Government, and as such the priority was to minimize casualties to avoid exacerbating the anti-war sentiment which had emerged.⁷⁷

By 1970 the Australian Army had grown to 44,000. To sustain the Army at this size, over 60,000 national servicemen were called up for service over the life of the scheme. Some 17,000 national servicemen served in Vietnam, and 500 soldiers died during the war.⁷⁸ The decision to send national servicemen to Vietnam, rather than only professional soldiers, had fundamentally changed the nature of the issue in Australia,

given rise to anti-war sentiment, and paced pressure on the Government to limit the scale of its commitment even as the United States applied pressure for a greater contribution.

Australia ultimately failed to achieve the strategic objectives which it had sought, namely continued American involvement in Asia and a guarantee of support under the ANZUS Treaty. The American withdrawal from Vietnam and the Nixon Guam Doctrine articulated in 1969 resulted in a return of American foreign policy focus to Europe, and a general reduction of interest and willingness to commit forces in Asia.⁷⁹ This exacerbated Australia's isolation stemming from Britain's announcement in 1967 of its withdrawal from the region.⁸⁰ The election of a left-wing government in Australia, after 23 years in opposition, led to a focus on domestic reform and a defense policy based on the defense of Australia.⁸¹ The ensuing reductions in the size and budget of the Defense Force, particularly the army, were to contribute to the significant strategic shock experienced in 1999 when called upon to deploy to East Timor.

Analysis

While many analysts view Australia's involvement in Vietnam as a strategic error, the circumstances which led to Australia's commitment, namely degradation of regional security and a need to contribute to the ANZUS alliance as a means of assuring reciprocal support, apply equally to this day.

Australia has long recognized that as a small nation with a limited population and industrial base her security is predicated upon the support of powerful allies. Where Australia's commitment in the Second World War was motivated by the need to assure Britain's survival, her overall contribution of troops was not statistically significant. Rather, in return for the collective security provided by alliances, Australia has provided

military contributions which are geostrategic, adding political support and legitimacy to coalition campaigns.⁸² The Government considers that the alternative, withdrawing into isolationism, would not serve Australia's long term security interests or align with Australia's values.⁸³

Australia's decision to expand its military forces during the 1960s was driven primarily by concern for the security situation in Malaya, New Guinea and the possibility of conflict with Indonesia, not to support a greater commitment to Vietnam. Regardless, the Government found it impossible to expand the military through voluntary enlistment in the short period required and had to resort to conscription, which changed the political nature of its alliance support. In its September 2000 review of the Australian Army the Government acknowledged that the army is an institution which is the subject of great national pride, but in which the majority have no desire to serve; this is an issue which will likely affect the success of rapid voluntary expansion in the future.⁸⁴ The Australian Government acknowledges growing security challenges, but the 2016 Defense White Paper focuses predominantly on platform development for the navy and air force due to the timeframes involved in fielding these complex systems, ignoring the evidence that expansion of the Army has grown significantly more time consuming and complex since the Boer and World Wars.

While Australia would appear to have succeeded in limiting the extent of its contributions to coalition operations since Vietnam, these commitments are distinct by being geographically distant from Australia. The largest commitments made to coalition operations since Vietnam, those in Iraq and Afghanistan, have been completely outside of Australia's near region. A question which remains from the Vietnam experience is how

much pressure Australia would receive politically, and how much of a military as opposed to political commitment would be required if the conflict was closer to Australia.

A multitude of tensions exist within Australia's near region, not least those created by China's growing influence and the inevitable friction this causes with nations including the United States and Japan. It is difficult to see how Australia could avoid becoming involved in a conflict in South East Asia if requested by the United States, and participation may increase the risk to Australia itself, just as intervention in Malaysia increased tension with Indonesia. If the resolution of the conflict was of greater importance to Australia than the United States, it might be forced to provide a substantial commitment beyond the political contribution envisaged by Government. The influence of China, terrorism across South East Asia and the ever-present risk of greater radical Islamic influence in Indonesia mean that Australia faces a range of threats which exceed her unilateral capacity and increase the importance of assuring continued American presence in the region.

Strategic Warning Time in Australian Defense Planning

Australia's involvement in East Timor, Iraq, and Afghanistan dispelled any notion that in the new globalized security environment crises would present with ample warning time and provide an opportunity to methodically develop new military capability.⁸⁵ This change was acknowledged and addressed in the 2016 Defense White Paper which directed the ADF to maintain higher levels of operational readiness and prepare for future short notice, global contingencies which affected Australia's interests.⁸⁶

However, the 2016 Defense White Paper makes an important qualification regarding warning time, that the prospect of an armed attack on Australia remains a

remote prospect until at least 2035.⁸⁷ This implies that the ADF does not require the capability to prevent an attack on Australia for the foreseeable future, but must have ready the ability to lead a regional security mission and participate in global contingencies at short notice. The White Paper does not elaborate on how the 2035 judgment is made, nor what circumstances may contribute to a reduction in warning time.

The 2016 White Paper does not specifically refer to mobilization or force expansion and, as a consequence, there is no appreciation for what criteria may warrant a reduction in strategic warning time or how this might affect the size and structure of the ADF, particularly the Army. Importantly, as strategic warning time is only applied to preparedness for Strategic Defense Objective One, there is no consideration of expansion being required to meet regional or global contingencies, revealing an underlying assumption that these commitments will remain within the current capabilities and capacity of the ADF, and will not present concurrently.

Previous periods of regional instability have necessitated mobilization in Australia and, as demonstrated by scenarios covering the Second World War and Vietnam, the belated approach towards mobilization planning has adversely affected strategic and domestic political outcomes. The 2016 White Paper acknowledges that Australia faces a new period of regional uncertainty and that traditional advantages based upon western technological superiority will be eroded by the military expansion and modernization across the region.⁸⁸ In these circumstances, traditional concepts of strategic warning time based upon an adversary's mobilization are less relevant, as threats can emerge suddenly to challenge regional and global interests.⁸⁹ Instead, it appears that the Australian Government's framework for strategic warning time is based

upon the absence of an adversary with political intent. However, intent can change much faster than military capability.⁹⁰

Australia's ability to determine strategic warning time is complicated by the broad range of threats and contingencies which affect national interests. This issue affects all nations who lack a persistent identifiable adversary, reducing tangible indicators of hostile military development and increasing the role of judgment in determining intent.⁹¹ Australia's defense planning is also complicated by a broad range of contingencies which may arise concurrently. As was demonstrated during the period of the 1960s, the appearance of multiple concurrent security dilemmas can rapidly exceed the capacity of the Defense Force and limit the Government's response options.

Without an identifiable adversary, it is difficult to maintain a robust mechanism to measure strategic warning time. The Government accepts that the Indo-Pacific region will see significant development of military capabilities over the coming decades, which will erode Australia's traditional military advantage. With many nations developing the military ability to adversely affect Australia's interests, the Australian Government must base strategic warning time on assessments of hostile intent towards Australia. Such assessments are subject to rapid change and increase the risk of strategic shock due to the disparity in military capability. In light of the Government's acknowledgment that, historically, only 14 months of warning on average preceded a conflict, it would seem that a prediction of political intent to 2035 is insufficient grounds for defense structure and planning decisions.⁹²

As a consequence of the Government's approach to strategic warning time, the Australian army must be prepared to manage multiple concurrent contingencies within the current force structure.

Australia's Mobilization Requirements

In the wake of the strategic shock experienced by the 1999 Timor Crisis, the Australian Government's investigation into the Army recommended a substantial expansion from the existing force. The Joint Standing Committee assessed that the current force, consisting of one high readiness light infantry brigade and one low readiness mechanized brigade, was insufficient and determined there was an immediate requirement for four brigades, with the ability to mobilize an additional eight brigades within two years.⁹³ The increased defense budget after 1999 allowed for significant expansion, but the Government ultimately determined that the budget required for the recommended force exceeded the strategic necessity.⁹⁴

The Army's current structure was designed under Plan Beersheba, a major Army restructuring, and modernization initiative announced in 2011 to institutionalize improved operational readiness as directed in post-1999 East Timor Crisis Defense White Papers. The regular Army was expanded to 30,000 forming three multi-role combat brigades and three enabling brigades (Intelligence, Surveillance, Reconnaissance and Electronic Warfare (ISREW), aviation, and logistics), along with a Special Operations Command.⁹⁵ The proportion of the Army in the deployable force increased to above 60%, and combat brigades rotate through a 36-month rotation cycle with 12-month periods as Ready, Readying and Reset. The Army is now structurally capable of

deploying, at short notice, one combat brigade plus special operations forces, and sustaining that commitment indefinitely through rotation.⁹⁶

Under Plan Beersheeba the Army also underwent a period of modernization which increased both sophistication and lethality. This modernization reflected the acknowledgment that state and non-state actors throughout Australia's primary operating environment were acquiring advanced weaponry, and that even non-permissive peace enforcement operations required a much heavier combat force than in previous decades, not least the combat operations being conducted across Iraq and Afghanistan.⁹⁷ The modernization included communications and information systems, combat vehicles including new tanks, reconnaissance and infantry fighting vehicles, and upgraded combat systems including aviation and artillery.

While the combat brigades follow a three-year rotation model, the enabling brigades are required to generate support to every formation. This has increased pressure on specialist elements across ISREW, aviation, and logistics, though the centralization of specialists under support brigades was itself a response to shortfalls identified before Plan Beersheeba. The Army continues to experience significant hollowness across the force, particularly within specialist elements, which in turn limits the ability to sustain prolonged operational commitments.⁹⁸

Perhaps the biggest change to the Army's structure is in relation to the Army Reserve. Historically the Army Reserve provided a mobilization base for the expansion of the regular Army in time of war. However, this has changed as a result of the need to maintain a regular Army at higher readiness and a greater level of technological sophistication without an exponential increase in budget. Under Plan Beersheeba the

Army Reserve now forms part of the defense ‘total force’, responsible for generating individual and collective force packages to fill hollowness across the Army force generation model, not replicating Army structures at lower readiness.⁹⁹

Under Plan Beersheeba each combat brigade is paired with two reserve brigades, which are collectively responsible for generating a single battlegroup during the Ready phase.¹⁰⁰ This force constitutes a third infantry battalion to the brigade, providing the forces required for operations at the brigade level in accordance with Australian doctrine. However, there is a significant disparity in training and equipment provided to the reserve formations due to the cost of modern platforms and access to training for reserve soldiers.¹⁰¹ This limits the roles which reserve formations can undertake, and means that further reserve contribution to the combat brigade will reduce combat power. In his 2017 speech to the Defense Reserves Association, Chief of Army General Angus Campbell stated that due to hollowness in the regular force, a sustained brigade deployment was likely to see reserve contributions increase from 10% in an initial deployment to 60% by the third rotation.¹⁰²

In addition to the problem of sustainability, the army is not optimized to manage concurrent commitments. During the biennial Exercise Talisman Sabre, the certification of a brigade combat team causes complete disruption to the force generation model, requiring all of the Army’s enablers and two of three combat brigades.¹⁰³ The Army further identifies that a regional contribution greater than that required in East Timor in 1999 would likely require two brigades with all enabling forces which could not be sustained.¹⁰⁴ Such a commitment would prevent force generation of the third brigade and

would require a prolonged period of reconstitution to remediate personnel and equipment readiness.

Separate to the issue of generating or sustaining forces is the problem of force projection, particularly noting Australia's regional and global interests. During the 1999 East Timor Crisis Australia was incapable of projecting her available forces, resorting to chartered transportation and requiring support from the United States in the form of sealift, transport, and logistics.¹⁰⁵

During the Non-combatant Evacuation Operation (NEO) to extract Australian and Approved Foreign Nationals from Lebanon in 2006, Australia found that commercial platforms were not available due to competition from other nations conducting evacuation of their citizens.¹⁰⁶ While the distances involved in the NEO made the use of organic resources unfeasible, the lack of available platforms presents a cautionary tale for future force projection or sustainment planning which is reliant upon commercial support.

The 1999 East Timor Crisis forced the Government to consider the scale and readiness of the ADF's force projection capabilities and to embark upon a substantial capability acquisition program to improve organic air and sealift capabilities and logistics. This program has continued through successive Defense White Papers, and currently, the ADF maintains a dedicated amphibious capability consisting of one logistics support ship and two landing helicopter docks, and airlift capability consisting eight C-17 aircraft for global projection and twelve C-130 aircraft for regional projection.¹⁰⁷ These capabilities are a significant improvement on the organic resources available to planners during the 1999 East Timor Crisis.

As a capability, the amphibious three-ship package may support a broad range of missions, from Humanitarian Assistance through to the lodgment of a combat force. However, from the perspective of force projection, the amphibious capability is designed to lift and sustain an embarked force of some 2,600 personnel, less than the typical establishment for an Australian Army brigade of 3,600.¹⁰⁸ The Australian Army is progressing the amphibious capability through the commitment of the 2nd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment, to develop doctrine and amphibious expertise which can then guide future expansion. However, such an expansion cannot be achieved within the Army's current personnel cap, and the deep expertise required for amphibious operations make it unlikely that one of Army's three brigades in the force generation cycle can be dual-assigned to perform such a role.¹⁰⁹ Consequently, without a Government decision to expand the Army or a significant departure from the current force generation model, it is unlikely that the amphibious capability will be capable of supporting the force projection of an Army brigade for combat operations.

Despite these challenges to the Army's ability to generate and sustain forces no mobilization plan exists.¹¹⁰ This may be as a result of Government direction regarding the changing role of the Army Reserve and the absence of mobilization guidance in the 2016 Defense White Paper, however, as a consequence, there is little detail on force generation challenges available to guide decision making. While the Army may have expanded and improved its survivability for limited offshore commitments, it appears that little has changed in terms of preparedness to face concurrent or sustained commitments.

¹ Michael Evans, "The Tyranny of Dissonance – Australia's Strategic Culture and Way of War 1901 – 2005," (Study Paper No. 306, Land Warfare Studies Centre,

Duntroon, ACT, Australia, February 2005), 47. Evans uses the term ‘limited liability’ to describe an Australian defense policy where the minimum military capability is contributed to coalition operations to demonstrate political support without providing a substantial commitment which might strain the ADF. It is not a term used by the Australian Government.

² Australian Department of Defense, Government Response to *Phantom to Force*:, 3.

³ Australian Department of Defense, *2016 Defense White Paper*, 15.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 68.

⁵ *Ibid.*

⁶ *Ibid.*, 71.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 16.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 16, 39.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 40-41.

¹⁰ John McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defense, A Study in Air and Sea Power* (St. Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1976), 17-18.

¹¹ Norman Angell, *The Defense of the Empire* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1937), 29-30.

¹² David Horner, *Australia’s Military History for Dummies* (New York: Wiley Publishing, 2010), 158-159.

¹³ McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defense*, 10.

¹⁴ Betts, *Military Readiness*, 14.56.

¹⁵ McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defense*, 19.

¹⁶ Jeffrey Grey, *A Military History of Australia* (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 2008), 128.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ Christopher Wray, *Timor 1942 – Australian Commandos at War with the Japanese* (Hawthorn: Century Hutchinson Australia, 1987), 7-8.

¹⁹ Max Sutch, “1930s Couldn’t Happen Again – Could They?” *The Australian*, 30 June 2012, accessed 6 May 2019, <https://www.theaustralian.com.au/national-affairs/s-couldnt-happen-again-could-they/news-story/779257b1023dd4a1108b623342687c09>.

²⁰ McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defense*, 82.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 100-104.

²² Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 144.

²³ Evans, “The Tyranny of Dissonance,” 47-48.

²⁴ Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 163-164.

²⁵ McCarthy, *Australia and Imperial Defense*, 4, 129.

²⁶ Lieutenant General John Grey, “Australian Army Amphibious Operations in the South-West Pacific: 1942-45,” (Opening Address by the Chief of the General Staff), accessed 18 April 2019, https://www.army.gov.au/sites/g/files/net1846/f/1994_australian_army_amphibious_operations_in_sw_pacific_1942-45_0.pdf, 2.

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²⁸ Grey, *A Military History of Australia*, 176.

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CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Mobilization allows a nation to minimize the cost of defense during times of peace, prioritizing expenditure on social services and building economic resilience. However, the ability to conduct timely transformation of national resources into required military capability may be the deciding factor in conflict. This process is dependent upon strategic warning time, or the notice which a nation receives of an adversary's hostile intentions, greater than the time required to generate capability.

Australia will face greater uncertainty and complexity over the coming decades due to the regional and global nature of its strategic interests. The Australian Defense Force will be more active in the region and will require higher levels of preparedness to meet the broad range of emerging threats and contingencies stemming from state competition, lethal non-state actors and state fragility. However, despite this increased uncertainty and complexity, the Government maintains that there is little prospect of an armed attack against Australia before 2035, and consequently there is no need for a mobilization plan or expansion base for the Defense Force.

For most of Australia's history mobilization was the primary means of generating military capability for war. Australian contingents raised for overseas service from the Boer War to Vietnam were supplemented by civilians who could be trained, equipped and deployed at leisure. Following the Vietnam War, a period of isolationism saw this concept taken to the extreme as the regular army was reduced to a mobilization base for home defense. The isolationist defense of Australia policy was thoroughly discredited by the 1999 East Timor Crisis and the realization that Australia must be capable of

projecting land forces at short notice. However, without a substantial increase in defense spending high operational readiness and mobilization readiness were considered mutually exclusive, and mobilization was abandoned.

This thesis sought to understand whether strategic warning time negates the requirement for mobilization planning for Australia. To answer this question research was undertaken to understand the components of mobilization planning and strategic warning time, and to understand Australia's strategic interests and the range of contingencies on which the Government bases defense capability. Three scenarios were built, merging defense policy with historical precedent to determine factors which might impact upon strategic warning time and the implementation of mobilization. This chapter presents the conclusions of the study, recommendations for Australian policymakers, and recommendations for further research.

Conclusions

The purpose of this research was to determine whether strategic warning time negates the requirement for mobilization planning for Australia. The study commenced by analyzing Australia's strategic interests and defense planning guidance as contained in the 2016 Defense White Paper. The Strategic Defense Interests drive the three Strategic Defense Objectives (SDO):

- Deter, deny and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests, and northern approaches.
- Make effective military contributions to support the security of maritime South East Asia and support the governments of Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and of Pacific Island Countries to build and strengthen their security.

- Contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order.

In the 2016 Defense White Paper, the Australian Government establishes a relationship between the three SDO, the likely importance and scale of a commitment, and strategic warning time. SDO 1 is the most important and demanding task for Defense. However, the ADF will not be suitably structured or resourced as no threat to Australia is expected to materialize before 2035. SDO 2 is of the most immediate importance and may require 'effective' commitments, those where Australia may lead or play a decisive role in the outcome. SDO 3 is of least importance and may require 'meaningful' commitments, those which demonstrate political support for alliances in the maintenance of a rules-based global order. Although no specific warning time is prescribed to SDO 2 or 3, they are expected to arise with little warning.

To determine whether the relationship between strategic warning time, scale and importance of commitments under the SDOs is supportable by the ADF's current structure, readiness and capabilities, three case studies were presented which analyzed the application of the SDOs in Australian history. Case study one examined SDO 1 through the period between the First and Second World Wars, whereby Australia failed to interpret the strategic warning signs offered by the economic and military development of Japan. The existence of a great power in the Indo-Pacific region, with values inimical to Australia's, was ignored by virtue of blind faith in the strength of her alliance with Great Britain, a lack of bipartisan political support, and domestic economic priorities.

The rapid change in Japan's political intent resulted in strategic shock and left Australia without sufficient time to develop the military capability required for defense. With her allies committed elsewhere, Australia lost lives and territory and found that

without sufficient forces to control the archipelago to her north she was isolated and faced the risk of invasion.

Case study two examined SDO 2 through the East Timor Crisis of 1999, whereby Australia was forced to undertake a regional intervention precipitated by a moral cause. The Timorese vote for independence and subsequent militia violence avoided strategic warning of developing hostile capability or intent against Australia, and without anticipated warning time the military was unprepared for the extent or duration of the operation. An appeal to the United States for combat troops to deter Indonesian intervention was refused, causing a reappraisal of Australia's general expectation of alliance support. The case study showed that Australia must be prepared for major contingencies within the region with no strategic warning and that she may be the major force contributor.

The final case study examined SDO 3 through the period of the Vietnam War, which saw a general degradation of security across the region and presented Australia with multiple, concurrent security dilemmas. Facing the prospect of hostile neighbors and the possibility that Britain would withdraw from her Asian colonies, Australia sought to deepen her participation in Vietnam as a means to secure reciprocal support from America in the region.

Australia found itself unable to expand the Army through voluntary enlistment, resorting to conscription to grow the forces required for regional interventions and reserves in case of conflict with Indonesia. America's political isolation led to ever-increasing pressure for a greater Australian commitment in Vietnam, under threat that America might otherwise withdraw from the region. The case study showed that a

significant military contribution may be required outside of the region to maintain alliances and that Australia may face multiple concurrent security dilemmas. Importantly, the experience undermined assumptions about the speed or ease with which the Army can be expanded.

The study determined that the Australian Government has abandoned mobilization planning on the assumption it will receive long strategic warning time of a developing threat, that it will be secure by virtue of its alliance with the United States, and that crises will not occur concurrently or of a scale which exceeds current defense capability. However, the greater uncertainty and complexity across Australia's region and historical precedent demonstrate the inherent risks in such assumptions. As an island nation, Australia's ability to assess strategic warning time is more, rather than less complicated as the regional and global nature of her strategic interests means that developing military capability is less of an indicator of hostile intent. Instead, Australia must rely upon political warning time, a concept which is less tangible or measurable and is subject to rapid change.

To mitigate risk over the next two decades, the Australian Government will invest in modernizing the Army to enhance its survivability and lethality and improve operational readiness to improve responsiveness in a dynamic region. However, the Army suffers from hollowness, lacks sufficient depth in key enablers, and is becoming more reliant upon a reserve force which is lagging in training and equipment. The Army's ability to surge forces, to sustain multiple concurrent commitments or to sustain an enduring commitment are of serious concern. This concern is exacerbated by the lack

of mobilization planning which means that neither the conceptual nor structural base for rapid expansion exists.

Against all of this must be balanced the fact that neither a massive increase in budget nor expansion of the Army are justified by current strategic circumstances. To do so without justification would increase the rate of equipment obsolescence and reduce expenditure in vital areas such as regional foreign aid and international engagement. Instead, the gap in Australian defense preparation is mobilization planning to ensure that the Army and Government are fully conversant with the limitations of the current force, understand the timelines required to generate additional capability, and understand the key decisions which will be required to conduct the timely transformation of national resources into military capability.

Recommendations for Australian Policymakers

This study determined that there is a gap in Australia's defense capability between that required to support the three Strategic Defense Objectives and what is available. Consequently, the study makes two recommendations for Australian policymakers. Firstly, mobilization planning should be included as a task in future defense planning guidance as a means to quantify the limitations, costs, timelines, and risks associated with generating greater defense capability.

Secondly, without a means to measure strategic warning time of an attack or threat to Australia, its national interests and northern approaches, the assumption of no threat to 2035 should be removed. The current assessment provides a false and unjustifiable sense of security and ignores the range of other contingencies which may necessitate force expansion.

Recommendations for Future Research

The purpose of this study was to question the basic assumption that mobilization is not required in Australian defense planning. Having determined that a range of contingencies may require force expansion, further mobilization study must be undertaken across the fundamental inputs to capability. These areas of study are critical to inform Government and defense planners and to enable future mobilization planning.

Doctrine

Possible areas of study include developing operational level doctrine for the conduct of Army mobilization and reviewing the suitability of current Army doctrine which relies upon the incorporation of regular and reserve elements without standardized training and equipment. Further study is required to analyze the Army's force generation policy and the implications of surging or sustaining a commitment beyond those forces in the Ready phase.

Organizations

Possible areas of study include the establishment of a Joint mobilization office to develop mobilization plans against Defense contingency planning and the establishment of an Army mobilization office, noting the particular risk associated with concurrency and surge requirements. Further study should be conducted to determine whether Whole of Government (cross-departmental) mobilization planning is warranted.

Training

Possible areas of study include operational readiness implications of surging initial recruit and officer training school throughput, establishing additional training

schools, and accelerating reserve operational readiness through improved access to combined arms training and certification activities. Further study is required to analyze the future training implications of incorporating the reserve force if not equipped with regular army platforms and systems.

Materiel

Possible areas of study include reviewing critical defense materiel for domestic production, implications of stockpiling and obsolescence, distributing foreign sources of supply to reduce the impact of non-availability, and the extent of reliance upon commercial systems for distribution and supply. Further research is also warranted into the distribution of new systems across the active and reserve components given the new 'total force' model.

Leader Development

Possible areas of study include reviewing critical training to allow for shortened leader certification and promotion and the implications of rapid organizational expansion on Army leadership.

Personnel

Possible areas of study include identifying the maximum sustainable active and reserve force, understanding the Australian and foreign experiences of rapid expansion through voluntary enlistment and conscription, and reviewing the suitability of regular and reserve force structures for emergent capabilities such as cyber (as opposed to non-uniformed solutions such as defense civilian or contracting). In light of the changing role

of the Army Reserve, further research may review the distribution of combat and logistics capabilities across the active and reserve force.

Facilities

Possible areas of study include analyzing requirements and options for mobilization stations, analyzing domestic infrastructure to support movement and deployment, establishing pre-purchased capacity with civilian aviation and shipping organizations, utilization of industry capacity for rapid construction of ports, rail, and camps, the establishment of offshore pre-positioned supplies or supplies afloat.

Policy

The most vital area for further research is in the area of policy. While this paper has demonstrated the rationale for the inclusion of mobilization in defense planning guidance, this carries significant implications for Government policy and the defense budget which require further analysis. In particular, further research may question the suitability of the current defense budget at below 2% of Gross Domestic Product, the Government's emphasis on domestic production of high-end air and naval platforms, and the relative prioritization of the Army, Navy and Air Force budget.

GLOSSARY

Australian Army Reserve. The part-time component of the Australian Army.

Australian Regular Army. The full-time component of the Australian Army, also referred to as the force-in-being, active component or regular component.

National service. A form of conscription, last introduced in Australia under the National Service Act (1964). All 20-year old males were liable for 2 years of compulsory service and were selected via a lottery draw. The scheme was disbanded in 1972.

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