

INQUIRY INTO DEFENCE BEYOND 2000
An Independent Review of the Foreign Affairs, Defence & Trade
Parliamentary Select Committee's Interim Report

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Working Paper 13/99

Abstract

The Report, as it stands, is not focussed on Defence Beyond 2000. It does not look to the future. It does not analyse what the future may mean for New Zealand's defence in either strategic, operational, force structure or capability terms. The foreign policy implications of the more radical lines of argument in the Report are dismissed lightly.

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Centre for Strategic Studies
Victoria University of Wellington
1999

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ISSN 1175-1339

Defence Beyond 2000

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The Report is negative. The existing is pulled apart. Better ways of doing things with others are hardly touched on. I cannot help but think that if this Report is implemented, my generation will be faced with the prospect of having to rebuild a defence force and wider international relationships. The lessons of the past – that doing things on the cheap gets soldiers, sailors and aircrew killed – seems to have been forgotten. Why pull apart a defence force that is modernising itself, that has adapted to the demands of peacekeeping, resource protection, search and rescue, disaster relief and of course for preparing for war? Surely we have an obligation and responsibility to provide our defence force personnel on active service with every real chance of doing their job well and staying alive.

Strategic Context and Realities

The analysis of New Zealand's strategic interests and future operational contexts is constrained. Without addressing these issues it is hard to judge why (or why not) we need a defence force to serve New Zealand interests.

The importance, for instance, of maritime security to New Zealand's interests was not touched on in depth. Our economy is dependent on the security of the seas. 99% of the volume, and 90% of the value, of New Zealand's trade is sea borne. This trade is critical to New Zealand's prosperity. Around 50% of New Zealand's wealth is generated by international trade. Oil from the Middle East forms only a small part of this trade and is a vital element in New Zealand's domestic economy as well¹. The security of international sea lines of communication a matter of critical strategic significance for New Zealand. Yet this issue is not dealt with seriously by the Report.

Interests and Responsibilities

The report tends to assume that *interests* and *responsibilities* are the same thing. The Report pays attention to New Zealand's responsibilities, for instance to the UN charter and to UN peacekeeping. Responsibilities refer to obligations that a responsible state should uphold. In New Zealand's case it has responsibilities to the South Pacific and to peacekeeping in regions where it has few interests. Interests are not the same as responsibilities. Interests cannot be ignored. Interests can be defined as those things that are critical to the preservation of New Zealand's sovereignty and prosperity.

Fortunately New Zealand's sovereignty is not significantly at risk (aside from low level threats). In contrast there are very real contemporary threats to New Zealand's interests afar. These threats are of such importance that they should be reviewed in any serious analysis of New Zealand's defence for the

next millennium. Our sea lines of communication, energy sources and markets are all threatened. The security of sea lanes of communication in East Asia (there is tension now in the South China Seas, Taiwan, Korea and from piracy), Indian Ocean (piracy and spill over from tensions in the Gulf), Middle East (from Iraq), Mediterranean (Yugoslavian Navy) cannot be taken for granted. New Zealand's energy sources in the Middle East are under constant threat from Iraq. Our markets in Europe depend on stability. That was threatened by the civil war in the former Yugoslavia for instance. Fortunately that threat was contained. But it was not easy. South Korea (where a demand for our goods is re-emerging) is faced by a massive threat from the North. A direct conflagration between China and Taiwan could collapse the Taiwanese economy.

This raises a question not addressed in the Report. How are New Zealand's security interests to be upheld? Put another way, what would happen to New Zealand's security interests if all other reliable states shrugged off their responsibilities? This is the heart of the matter for New Zealand. If we want others to act constructively we will need to encourage them to act. This is a vital for New Zealand. New Zealand's voice will not be credible unless it demonstrates its willingness to pull its weight.

How is New Zealand to uphold its interests when there is no system for regulating international order? The United Nations is slow and ineffectual – at least in the business of maintaining international order. Its success rate is uneven – witness Rwanda. UN peacekeepers were forced to stand aside and watch atrocities being committed in Bosnia because the UN chain of command could not make up its mind. This is no reason to denigrate or dismiss the UN. It does well often. But given its track record it would be unwise to place all our defence eggs in the UN basket alone.

The performance of the United Nations Security Council is dependent on the decisions of five large powers. One of these is a totalitarian state and another faces problems in governing itself. Of the three democracies, at least one seems to be at variance with the other two as a matter of principle. This does not mean that New Zealand should shed its responsibilities to the UN. Indeed New Zealand should work constructively with other states to try and get the UN to work. But New Zealand cannot rely on the UN to secure its vital interests. These kinds of realities should be examined in the final Report.

There is no international police force. The judgements of the International Court of Justice are ignored by nation states if it suits their interests. Its ministrations are unenforceable. I don't know how the Interim Report arrived at the conclusion that rules of international behaviour are "enforceable both legally and in the court of world opinion" (p 13). If we really do live in a "global community [that] is now rules based" then how can we explain the Iraqs of this world?

I agree with the Interim Report's view that multilateralism should be nourished. The Interim Report addresses well New Zealand's responsibility to support this type of constructive diplomacy. However serious analysis is needed of both the strengths and weaknesses of multilateralism. If New Zealand supports multilateralism exclusively what of its interests? Will the ministrations of multilateral

institutions in the Asia- Pacific for instance provide for our security alone? Most security analysts agree that multilateral institutions alone are unable to manage regional order in the Asia-Pacific. Only two genuinely multilateral institutions span the region. The Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) is one. The ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) is the other. APEC brings together annually the leaders of most of the region to discuss trade issues. Likewise the ARF brings together the region's foreign ministers. Both institutions have helped build understanding of contrasting economic and security policy issues. This is important. Both institutions are worth their weight in gold. Both deserve all the support and encouragement that we can provide. They are models of what the region should strive for. But we cannot say that either institution is now capable of providing regional order.

Regional order is underpinned by the United States – yet this issue is not addressed by the Interim Report. It is in New Zealand's interests to encourage this liberal super power to stay in the region. Most regional states encourage the United States to retain its military presence forward. Why? Because regional states fear the strategic vacuum that would accompany an American military withdrawal from the region. Many regional states worry about the prospect of an expansion of Japanese or Chinese military power in the region that may accompany an American withdrawal of its military power. Many states have not forgotten Japanese occupation and China's massive support for communist insurgency from the 1950s-1970s. Neither China or Japan wish to see the other predominant. Given the importance of this issue to the region should it not be addressed in an examination of New Zealand's Defence Beyond 2000?

Regional states want stability for their own interests. The United States military presence is supported by virtually all regional states including Russia, Japan, South Korea, Taiwan, Vietnam (somewhat ironically), Thailand, Malaysia, Singapore, the Philippines, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand and Canada. Only North Korea dissents though China is worried that the United States-Japan Treaty renewal could cover Taiwan. So important is the United States role in underpinning the region's stability that regional states formed the ARF in part to encourage Washington to stay involved. What does this mean for New Zealand's defence beyond 2000?

Training for War

The Interim Report claims that the NZDF should be used for present contingencies (for instance peacekeeping and coalition operations) and should resist "training and exercising for the more remote war scenarios of the future" (p14). Yet the Report does not provide evidence that the NZDF is actually training or exercising for more remote scenarios of the future.

The Report's judgement that peacekeeping is "no soft option" and does not "reduce the demands of warfare" is sound (p 18). The Committee's acceptance that peacekeeping needs military skills and capabilities is equally sensible. The Committee recognises also the reality that New Zealand can make useful contributions to coalition forces where the threat will be more than "a low level threat" (p 20).

Having said this I find the Committee's examination of future NZDF unit/sub-unit operational environments in the years beyond 2000 to be limited. There seemed to be little appreciation of the kinds of threats that could face our forces in the future on peacekeeping or coalition operations.

The Report needs to factor in the reality that peacekeeping is war. Conflict can escalate to unbelievable levels very quickly in almost all the places where future peacekeeping operations are forecast (whether in the former Eastern bloc, former Soviet Union, Middle East, Africa, South or South East Asia). What separates peacekeeping from conventional operations is tempo. Otherwise the force structure, capabilities, equipment and training needed for conventional operations must serve as the base for peacekeeping operations. The major difference between peacekeeping and conventional operations (aside from tempo) are tailored rules of engagement and specialist training to adapt units for their particular mission.

In planning for the future the Report looks to the past. No analysis of future war is provided. This is a major deficiency as serious defence planning must look twenty years ahead, because equipment (and or systems and equipment upgrade) cycles the world over are generally planned in twenty year cycles. Part of the planning for future requirements must include an analysis of both likely and unlikely scenarios. If history teaches us anything about military planning it is that wars spring up in the most unlikely places and for reasons that are often not forecast. Who twenty years ago would have guessed that the NZDF would provide substantial contributions to the Gulf, Bosnia and Bougainville. Who could have also guessed that the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) would have assumed strategic importance (the military exercises encourage Malaysia and Singapore to co-operate).

Yet things may not always remain the same. One should not discount unforeseen risks. Peacekeeping may be important now. In ten years time will this still be so? Defence has to plan twenty years ahead. New Zealand needs a defence force with the flexibility to respond to change over time.

Bilateral Implications

I agree with the Interim Report's recognition of the importance of New Zealand's defence linkages with Australia and the United States. Yet the report talks of "disband[ing] the jet training and strike capability" of the RNZAF (p 63) and changing the "composition of the Navy's fleet" so that "resources sunk in maintaining those incompletely prepared force elements ... [could be] spent in another way" (p 34). This implies that the maritime and air strike capabilities of the NZDF (around a third of its military capacity) could be discarded. Such radical surgery will have implications for New Zealand's bilateral relations with Australia and the United States. My prediction is that if these radical options are implemented then New Zealand's broader bilateral (and not just defence) relationships with Australia and the United States (and probably Britain, Singapore and Malaysia) will be significantly damaged. New Zealand would be sending a signal to the Region that views security mainly in maritime terms that we do not take defence seriously.

Defence Priorities

The Report claims that the protection of New Zealand's sea lines of communication, defence of Northern Australia, and contributions to collective security are implausible current employment contexts (p 23). I disagree. There are already potential (South China Seas) and actual (Middle East) threats to our sea lines of communication. Bearing in mind that defence planning looks to the future, to say that a threat to our sea lines of communication is implausible is brave stance to adopt. If Indonesia implodes issues relating to the defence of Northern Australia will assume a new relevancy. I was surprised by the claim that collective security as an implausible security context when elsewhere in the Report the possibility of participating in collective security operations is taken seriously.

The Report questions the "continuing emphasis on maritime anti-surface operations, anti submarine operations, and anti-air operations ... based on unfounded fears of attacks by countries that ... lack any intention of doing so" (p23). Elsewhere air strike is questioned. The Report says that New Zealand's "force structure needs to be reassessed" and focused on likely contingencies (which are not examined or described at all in the Report). Military capabilities ought to be focused more sharply we are told. Contributions to multilateral peace support should be given highest priority². Military capabilities ought to be ranked in the following order:

- Land forces
- Fixed wing, rotary wing and maritime transport forces
- Maritime patrol forces (Naval and air)
- Air strike

I found the thinking in the Report old fashioned and inconsistent. The Report seemed to assume that only ground forces do peacekeeping. Yet modern peacekeeping operations include maritime anti-surface operations, anti submarine operations, and anti-air operations. Maritime-air peacekeeping operations off the Balkan coast and in the Gulf roles are taken seriously. Without the security provided by maritime forces in places such as these, land and air operations (reliant on ground bases) would be very difficult to mount and sustain.

Modern ground force operations depend on the air. Modern ground operations meld air, direct and indirect fire support. Ground forces need air strike on operations. Working in a land-air environment requires complex preparation. This preparation requires the army units and air force fast jet strike to train together. We know from our military history that forces that lack the skills for all arms and joint operations incur casualties.

Equally, maritime operations are joint. Maritime and air strike and surveillance and reconnaissance functions are designed to work together. Indeed they have little value operating apart. If New Zealand is to provide credible maritime contributions in support of its vital external interests it will need to be able to contribute maritime units that have trained in a joint environment so that they can work in a joint environment.

The dismissal of the significance of “maritime anti-surface operations, anti submarine operations, and anti-air operations” is in my opinion an error of judgement. Such an approach will increase the risks faced by service people on maritime operations. In effect the Report is saying that New Zealand should disarm and blind our maritime forces. This is a recipe for casualties.

The Report does not analyse the sources of possible threats to our maritime interests.

The Report also assumes that New Zealand’s responsibilities ought to rank higher than our interests. Few others state have adopted this approach to defence.

Why contributions to multilateral peace support should be given highest priority is not explained and it is difficult to see why support for coalition operations is down graded in emphasis in some parts of the Interim Report. What happens if the world changes and peace support operations become rare? Will not New Zealand be left with a niche force without a niche?

The very light force envisaged, at least in one line of reading of the Report, has its limits. Would a light ground force untrained to work with fast jet strike or attack helicopters be capable of working with anyone else except those as starved of resources as ourselves. Is this not a recipe for casualties? Are the lives of our service people less important than money?

If there is a major war or conflict, and New Zealand’s vital interests are effected, the defence force could find itself expected to contribute forces by a government. However if its forces are trained only for multilateral peace support operations of the restricted type envisaged by the Report then New Zealand will lack the reasonably well equipped general purpose forces that we have now. The price for committing unprepared forces (both in terms of skill and equipment) could be casualties.

Casualties

To be fair the Interim Report outlines two possible force structures. One is pretty much the status quo as of early 1998 (with a modified territorial force). The other option advocates massive disarmament and proposes the stripping away of two thirds of the NZDF’s combat capacity. The disarmament option would see fast jet strike support for maritime and ground operations discarded. The combat capability of the ANZACs and Orions would be done away with also. The disarmament option would leave the NZDF blind and incapable of defending itself on operations. The disarmament approach goes against trends in modern warfare and in peacekeeping operations.

The Interim Report’s land force has two significant limitations:

- (a) The land force as advocated is not designed for joint operations. For this reason it will have limited utility in combined operations (that will generally be joint)³. The land force advocated by the Interim Report will need to be thoroughly training in working with air power. Since the Committee

advocates that New Zealand should do away with fast jet strike it is unlikely that New Zealand's friends will be willing to provide this training (just because New Zealanders don't want to pay their taxes on defence). How useful is such a force? It certainly could not be expected to move at 60 days notice as required by the Committee (p26).

- (b) A company of rangers for each battalion are advocated. Rangers are parachute trained light infantry in a specialist role. They lack organic fire support and are vulnerable especially during the drop and form up period at the Landing Zone. (This will take some hours to complete as equipment and soldiers are dropped separately. The New Zealand Army has found that it often takes much longer to marry soldiers with their kit than expected.) Parachute forces generally take very high casualties when they encounter even scattered opposition with a few machine guns. Parachute forces lack balance and are very vulnerable if cut off. If things go wrong – and military history is full of epic disasters such as Crete and Arnheim) – high casualties may ensue.

Justification for Land Force First

The Interim Report asserts that:

Land forces are usually a more conspicuous assertion of our identity, partly because of their closer involvement with populations than naval and air force combat units are likely to have, and also because, unlike frigates or Skyhawks, they are seldom operating outside the range of news media coverage (p 26).

This is an extraordinary justification for what may be called the 'Land Force first' approach adopted by the Committee. It must be pointed out that the army (and the navy and air force) has generally lived apart from civilian populations while on active service.

The assertion that the army gets closer to civilian populations than the other services ought to be questioned also. What of the reactions of people in the Pacific Island's and elsewhere to RNZAF Iroquois, C 130 and Skyhawk crews. The Skyhawks attracted enormous public attention in the Cook Island's during exercises in the late 1980s. So to do the visits of our frigates to overseas ports. It is not the colour of the uniform that shapes the forces relationship with people. Rather it is the role of the forces that defines this relationship. In Bougainville for instance personnel from all three services had a close relationship with civilians as did peacekeepers drawn from all three services in places like Cambodia, the Lebanon and Bosnia.

The assertion that land forces "are usually a more conspicuous assertion of our identity" also needs to be questioned. For sure our soldiers in the South African War, the World Wars and the post war conflicts asserted New Zealand identity and attracted media attention. But so to did the navy and air force attract coverage as well. The Battle of the River Plate is still remembered as a New Zealand naval battle. The achievements of New Zealand air crew in the Battle of Britain, in bombing raids over Europe, in D Day where a New Zealander was the first to shoot down a German fighter and in the Pacific were not only reported at the time but are still referred to in the media 50 years on.

The general assertion that land power is more media friendly than air or sea power should be questioned also. Did not air and sea power attract enormous media coverage during the Gulf War and Bosnia?

Media coverage is a very important factor to be considered when thinking about defence in a democracy, but there are other considerations as well. Defence Forces need to be effective and foreign policy considerations need to be kept in mind. We all have a duty to give the service people the very best chance of staying alive in dangerous and unpredictable environments.

The Revolution in Military Affairs

This section of the Interim Report was weak. It did not touch on the issues relating to the Revolution in Military Affairs (RMA).

The RMA is much more than just modern information technology and new weapons systems. There is no need to fear technology. The RMA is also about ideas and new ways of doing things to reduce casualties and increase effectiveness. In summary the RMA consists of the following components:

- (a) dominant precision strike;
- (b) situational awareness created by the fusion of information gathering and processing technologies;
- (c) joint force operations; and
- (d) focussed logistics.

The RMA is about getting all units from the navy, army and air force to work together in synergy (joint force operations), to provide operators with relevant information about their own and others weapon and command systems (situational awareness), to use force with precision against selected high value targets which will reduce civilian and battle casualties (dominant precision strike) and to organise the supply and sustainment of units in the field on time, in the right place with the supplies they actually need (focussed logistics). The RMA is designed to end indiscriminate force. Opposition to force modernisation is whether the Committee likes it or not a subscription to indiscriminate warfare.

Most of the weapon systems, command, control, communications, computers, and intelligence are affordable for a state like New Zealand that seeks good quality general purpose forces that can work with others. New Zealand's contributions to overseas operations are at unit/sub unit level. New Zealand does not need to invest in the higher formation level systems such as AWACs and Stealth Fighters. What New Zealand needs is a range of units capable of:

- (a) working in a joint combined environment (that is formations of units from other Services and other states);
- (b) capable of precision strike;
- (c) the capacity to receive from and contribute information to the formations they are part of;
- (d) skills and knowledge;

(e) the ability to slot into the logistic systems of others and that ensure that New Zealand sourced supplies and reinforcements will get to our units at the right place and at the right time.

New Zealand is lucky in a sense that it needs only to equip our forces at the unit level. The equipment New Zealand needs is generally mass produced, well tested, and if not cheap at least affordable.

The RMA has significant utility in peacekeeping operations. Commanders can check and double check the location of the major weapons systems, traffic movements and concentrations and command centres, of the threatening parties (and their own troops). It is in peacekeeping operations that ground forces are most dispersed and thus most likely to get into trouble away from their own direct and indirect fire support. Now peacekeepers needing fire support can call it in confident that the risk of civilian casualties can almost be eliminated and that fire can be directed against selected targets. Imagine for instance an isolated group of peacekeepers who need fire support but are beyond the range of their own artillery and cut off from their armoured support. An option open to soldiers with the skill and experience of working in a joint environment is the capacity call in close air support from fast jets in almost any weather conditions or terrain at minimum risk to themselves or air crew. In the future a fast jet fighter will become an extension of a soldier's weapons systems, just as the soldier of the future will become an extension of a fighter pilot's sensory and targeting systems.

RMA technologies will enhance the NZDF's non-combat search and rescue, resource protection, and disaster relief capacities as well. This is because the NZDF information gathering and communications capacities will be greatly enhanced as will their surveillance and reconnaissance capacities. The capacity of infrared detection systems and night vision equipment has obvious utility across the span of non-combat support roles.

The Interim Report refers to the failure of New Zealand defence planners to pay attention to the Revolution of Military Affairs, and its claims that the NZDF has not acquired new equipment in line with RMA trends. This judgement ought to be re-examined in light of government's decisions of late 1998 and the briefs that the Committee itself was provided from the Services and from myself.

I might add the Interim Report pays no serious attention to RMA. The section on the RMA in the Report is muddled. The Committee seems in places to be advocating a disarmed, blind and anti joint force model.

I do not share the Interim Report's assessment of where the NZDF is now or where it should be in the future. I would think that most of the NZDF (once the new defence acquisitions come on line) will be capable of general purpose roles in a modern combined joint operational environment. I certainly do not agree with the claims that the ANZAC frigates could not make an effective contribution to a coalition fleet in battle. The ANZAC's are equipped with precision strike (its gun and helicopter delivered

munitions), good air defence (of the same standard as in Australian, NATO and USN ships), and an excellent anti-submarine capacity.

The ANZACs are on par with the capabilities in the rest of the NZDF. The F 16s (in the maritime strike and ground support) and Orions (subsurface warfare and general reconnaissance and surveillance) are world class. Both the F16s and Orions will train with the ANZACs. The Army once upgraded should be capable of providing and sustaining a battalion group in a range of light reconnaissance-light infantry roles. The NZDF will have the capacity to build on the joint training that is already undertaken.

New Zealand has also an adequate transport and logistic system provided by the tanker and Military Supply Ship (once conversions are completed), army logistics functions including ground transport, and the Iroquois and C 130s.

The Interim Report's section on the RMA seems to spend more time on low level and asymmetrical threats (which it claims are the opposite of the RMA). I found the Report's treatment of these issues odd. The RMA has utility in low level threats such as terrorism and hostage taking. The capacity to see through walls and map the location of terrorists and hostages in a room on a display and to securely communicate this information to special forces is an example of the flexibility of RMA. I would challenge the Interim Report's assumption that asymmetrical warfare is utterly distinct from the RMA. Even rag tag forces such as those in Somalia used cheap high tech communications (cell phones and scanners) and modern weapon systems (especially portable missiles).

There is a misconception that the RMA seeks to displace traditional military skills. This is not the case. The RMA builds on the existing. Patrolling for instance will remain a key role for the infantry of the future. The difference is that RMA infantry may use more longer range sensors, night vision equipment and may communicate with other patrol members via secure voice communications (rather than by shouting or hand signals).

Air Combat Force

I found the Interim Report's handling of the issues relating to the air combat force weak. The authors of this section of the Report did not appear to grasp the importance of the air combat force in contemporary land and maritime contexts (the main roles for the New Zealand air combat force). There are good reasons for retaining and modernising the air combat force. The air combat force meets New Zealand's defence needs. An air combat force is a versatile contribution (for maritime strike, close air support and interdiction roles) that can be dispatched quickly on conventional or peacekeeping operations for maximum effect and minimal risk of casualties. Modern effective air combat force contributions are sought by our allies and friends for both coalition and peacekeeping operations. The No 2 Squadron detachment at Nowra, on the Southern New South Wales coast, is one of the most sought after New Zealand contributions to Closer Defence Relations (CDR) with Australia.

If New Zealand is to provide either ground, air or maritime units for active service overseas they will need to be thoroughly trained in joint operations. Trends in modern peacekeeping and conventional warfare stress the growing fusion of sea-air and land-air operating methods. This means that our frigates, Orions, and ground forces need to be thoroughly familiar with fast jet strike before they deploy from New Zealand. This interoperability takes skill, is technically complicated, and must be routinely refreshed in individual and collective training. This trend in seamless jointary is increasing in importance. Joint operations of the future will require even closer inter- service teamwork. This is why fast jet strike is so important for New Zealand. The effectiveness of this country's other units (ANZACs, Orions, battalion groups) are dependent on fast jet strike.

If New Zealand discards its fast jet strike the combat viability of its ANZACs, Orions and ground forces will be significantly degraded. For these units will not be able to train with fast jet strike. If they don't have the knowledge and skills needed to operate with fast jets then they will be of limited viability in either a peacekeeping or coalition environment.

The Interim Report resorts to a straw men argument to support its general view that there are good grounds to question the future of the air combat force. The Interim Report insinuates that the air combat force is not as useful as the A4s "have never been used in combat" (p 29). This is not the point. Hopefully we will never use our forces in combat. It is also selective. The C 130s, Iroquois, and Orions have never been used in combat either.

The Interim Report also dismissed the MoD assessment that it would take up to 15 years to build a air combat force up from scratch. The Interim Report claims the MoD "overstates the difficulties and is quite hypothetical, taking into account the wide range of institutional knowledge that would continue to reside in other parts of the Air Force" (p30). Yet aside from this speculation what evidence does the Interim Report provide in support of its assertion. If the air combat force goes how could the air force keep up to date with new developments in the field. If the air combat force was to be disbanded why would fast jet weapons, avionics, engineering and air crew specialists stay on in the air force. What future would they have?

The Interim Report does not provide an alternative assessment of how long it would take to build such a capability from scratch.

Naval Requirements

I found the part of the section entitled "Naval Requirements" problematical. The section starts by dismissing New Zealand's vital maritime interests such as the security of the sea lines of communication. I have outlined above why I think there is a strong case for arguing that New Zealand's leading security interests are maritime. I am disappointed that the Committee did not take the opportunity to get beyond prejudice and seriously analyse how New Zealand is to defend its interests with others.

The review of naval forces in the region is not supported by analysis. Nor is the review complete. For reasons left unstated the Interim Report excludes the United States, Russia and Canada from its assessment. This is a crucial error as the United States Navy plays the pivotal role in maintaining this region's security. The strategic (and indeed geo-strategic) role of the region's largest navy cannot be ignored. Nor can the implications of both worrying and encouraging trends in regional maritime security. The worrying trends include China's use of maritime forces in the South China Seas, its capacity to use maritime force again to intimidate Taiwan, and North Korea's hostile use of its maritime forces. Looking ahead questions must be asked about the viability of the fleet of the former Soviet Union. This issue has an environment side (the safety of old nuclear reactors and waste) and military implications (what is happening to state of the art Soviet era (and Russian) weapons systems and technology). Positive trends include the uses of naval forces in the region to build confidence and trust between states. Many unanswered questions remain also. Why are states modernising their maritime and air strike forces in the region? How important is it that New Zealand and other sensible countries encourage the United States while also contributing to confidence and security building activities (such as the FPDA exercises) using naval forces? Can New Zealand contribute to the keeping of the peace in the South China Seas using maritime forces in new ways?

The scholar in me cannot avoid noting that this section relies on very old information (for instance an article that appeared in a 1989 issue of *the New Zealand International Review*) and overlooks important and relevant expert studies such as the Vignaux Report and studies prepared by the RNZN. The deliberate citation of out of date information and the passing over of up to date data raises questions about the reliability of the Interim Report. The biggest problem with this approach is that the Committee cannot sustain its argument that New Zealand may not need a modern three frigate navy as the argument is dependent on deliberately misconstrued evidence.

The Committee's assessment of the capabilities of the ANZAC's is not supported by evidence. The Interim Report argues the ANZAC's are "under equipped for serious warfare". Where is the evidence? It also claims that they are "over-equipped" for the fisheries role (p 35). In fact the frigates have the seakeeping capacity, range, and weapons systems to carry out both roles. Equipment is employed depending on the context. Fisheries protection roles (ANZAC's perform interdiction roles) require ships with good seakeeping characteristics, range, secure communications, boarding parties, detection capabilities (systems used to hunt submarines can stealthily hunt fishing boats), a helicopter, and a gun of some kind. The only ANZAC capability that would not be used in fisheries protection roles is its air defence system. It is technically inaccurate for the Interim Report to claim that the ANZAC's are "over equipped for fisheries".

Equally the Committee is technically wrong to claim that the ANZAC's could not perform serious warfare roles. ANZAC's are general purpose frigates. ANZAC's can find, fix and destroy under water targets, as well as surface targets. They are designed to work with other specialist ships in higher level operations but can work in dispersed teams in lower level contingencies. They are generally as capable

as any other modern navy's general purpose frigates. The ANZAC's can slot into operations along side the maritime forces of Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, South Korea, Canada, the United States, South Africa, Chile, Britain, France, Germany, Denmark, the Netherlands, Belgium, and Norway for instance.

Funding

I would like to emphasise that the modelling of various force-structure and capability options for New Zealand is extremely complex. Such an effort is worthless unless it includes a detailed analysis of New Zealand's interests, circumstances, current and future roles and missions and an assessment of potential future operational environment for the NZDF.

My own research shows (enclosed is an example, my paper on the Revolution in Military Affairs) that:

- (a) if New Zealand wants to acquire capital equipment more quickly it can either alter the proportion of funding it allocates to operating, personnel and capital or inject modest levels of new funding; and that

- (b) all the major equipment proposals put to Cabinet in November 1998 are affordable within current baselines.

Defence currently does not absorb a high proportion of government expenditure. According to the NATO definition of defence expenditure New Zealand allocates around 1.2% of GDP to defence.

The Interim Report applies the NATO definition and concludes that New Zealand "spends around 1.7 per cent of GDP" on defence (p 38). The Interim Report includes the cost of both GST or Capital Charge. However the NATO definition does not include GST or Capital Charge. Both GST and Capital Charge are unique to New Zealand's tax and accounting systems. The Interim Report claim that New Zealand spends 1.7% of GDP, according to the NATO definition, is misleading.

The Interim Report's claim that New Zealand spends "around 2 per cent of GDP" (p 40) is an exaggeration.

Affordability

The Report claims that "New Zealand cannot afford the whole range of forces that we have now" (p 23). No evidence is provided to support this claim. The Report does not contain an assessment of current NZDF capacities or show that the defence budget is too small to sustain current outputs.

The Report claims that the RNZAF jet training and strike capability and the composition of the Navy's fleet be reassessed on financial grounds. These claims are not substantiated. The Report is selective. Only these two capabilities are given this treatment.

The NZDF Now

The Interim Report fails to take into account the major defence re-equipment decisions announced in December 1998. The government has committed funding for the:

- (a) Orion airframe upgrade;
- (b) Orion electronics, sensor and communications upgrade;
- (c) air strike modernisation (replacement of A4K with F 16A/B);
- (d) armoured vehicle upgrade (including APC, fire support and reconnaissance vehicle replacement);
- (e) army tactical communications upgrade;
- (f) army unmanned aerial vehicle acquisition;
- (g) army medium range anti armour weapon;
- (h) Military Support Ship (MSS) conversion.

The deferment of a third frigate stands out as the major exception to this positive trend. Unless a third frigate is acquired New Zealand will possess only a partly operational navy from 2005⁴.

END NOTES

¹ Cathy Downes "No Indefeasible Tittle To Maritime Sovereignty: Maritime Dimensions Of New Zealand's National Security" in Peter Cozens (ed) *A Maritime National: New Zealand's Maritime Environment and Security*, Wellington, CSS:NZ, 1996, p 195

² On page 6 though the Report mentioned that New Zealand needs to be able to participate in both peacekeeping (in all forms including peace making, peace support etc) and coalition operations (p 6).

³ Joint operations refer to two or more of the Services (that is navy, army, air force) working together. Combined operations involve two or more states working together. Combined joint operations where the units of different services of different countries are melded together as formations under control of an agreed commander (usually drawn from the largest contributor).

⁴ G A Vignaux *The Navy Critical Mass Argument*, Wellington, Victoria University, 1997.