



2010 RUSI WA BLAMEY ORATION

Shaping our Navy in Future Joint Warfighting – Hard and Soft Power

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Good evening Mr. Don Kitchen, President of the Royal United Services Institute of Western Australia, RUSI Council members, Commanding Officer of HMAS STIRLING, CAPT Brett Dowsing distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It gives me great pleasure to join you this evening for both a wonderful dinner and this welcome opportunity to discuss the future of Australia's naval power as part of the Royal United Services Institute's annual program of lectures.

In January this year, the RAN hosted the 2010 Sea Power Conference in Sydney, focusing on 'Combined and Joint Operations from the Sea,' with a view to our new and expansive amphibious capability which will begin to arrive in 2013 with our first LHD.

The strength of the debate over the three days of the conference confirmed my own view that we are in a period of profound change in the way in which Australia conceptualises, plans for, and deploys sea power to defend our national interests.

Our future is one of striving for excellence in our single service environments, but deployed as a joint force.

Background: Maritime Doctrine

The 2009 Defence White Paper, *Force 2030: Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century* describes a future strategy that is essentially maritime. It defines the ADF's primary obligations as to "deter and defeat attacks on Australia".

This entails a fundamentally maritime strategy, for which Australia requires forces that can "*operate with decisive effect throughout the northern maritime and littoral approaches to Australia and the ADF's primary operational environment more generally*".

Opening the new ASC shipyard in Osborne in January, the Prime Minister put it this way: *“We, Australia, have a vast coastline, one of the three longest coastlines in the world. We have a vast maritime zone, and we have the third- largest maritime jurisdiction in the world. We have a vast maritime trade. We are, by definition, a maritime power and we must have a capability to articulate that power.”*

To do this, Australia requires forces that can operate decisively in our own waters, more broadly contribute to military contingencies in the South Pacific and wider Asia-Pacific regions, and support global security as and where necessary.

If Australian interests are deemed to be engaged, then the ADF needs the capability to continue to be involved in operations abroad. However, it would be wrong to conclude that this direction is only about enhancing the Navy – it is very much about the ADF as a whole.

The White Paper prescribes a future force with an extensive capability but one designed to produce a joint effect in conjunction with air and land-specific forces, and increasingly with civilian agencies.

Through our present Border Protection Command structure, and sharing of responsibility for constabulary roles in Australia’s off-shore areas, this is already broadly familiar, and the increased civilian commitment in Afghanistan with a view to civil reconstruction is cementing it.

This is a reconceptualisation of our traditional maritime doctrine.

We have, throughout our history, adhered to Corbett’s maxim that naval wars are fought for their effect on land, where people live, rather than for sea control or denial as an independent value.

For example, our keystone doctrine defines the RAN mission as *“The Royal Australian Navy’s mission is to be able to fight and win in the maritime environment as an element of a joint or combined force; assist in maintaining Australia’s sovereignty; and contribute to the security of our region.”*

However, we have continued to focus on single service development in doctrine, force structure and capability.

Force 2030 has the same mission, but the emphasis is on a joint or combined effort to fight and win in the maritime environment.

In the current security environment, we must retain an ability for unilateral Naval action at sea, but the spectrum of possible operations and the complexities of hard and soft power have evolved far beyond assessing maritime force in a purely Naval sense.

That is what I wish to focus on this evening.

Contemporary Threat Environment

I think it important to note that there is a range of threats against which we are required to defend our country and our region.

Modern threats emphasise the increasing role that transnational crime plays in defence planning. They concern:

- * the illegal exploitation of natural resources, including fisheries;
- * illegal activity in protected areas, which may place the environment at risk;
- * irregular maritime arrivals;
- * threats to each nation's customs regime, which are not limited to illegal drugs;
- * threats to bio-security through the deliberate or accidental introduction of pests and disease;
- * and marine pollution.

As recently as yesterday, the Prime Minister has reportedly reaffirmed the government's widening understanding of potential threats, indicating that "these are emerging non-traditional threats to our national security, which we have not yet fully understood." The report further quoted the Prime Minister as noting that "climate change has the potential to exacerbate, or in time cause, direct security challenges," whilst the enormous impact and cost to society of serious organised crime is becoming more apparent. As transnational crime is increasingly recognised as a serious threat, it benefits from the development of global communications and trade.

Globalisation is the major trend that has shaped world affairs in the last one hundred years and its influence is unlikely to wane.

Primarily a maritime phenomenon, the constant free flow of ideas, capital, goods, services, information and people across national borders will continue and, importantly, it will continue to provide a stabilising influence as strong interdependencies are created amongst nations.

On the other hand it will also facilitate the spread of some ideologies opposed to our values and facilitate the means to turn this ideology to actions such as terrorism.

Since the terrorist attacks on the United States on 11 September 2001, nations and military forces around the world have been confronted with terror as a fundamental threat. The re-emergence of piracy in the Indian Ocean region has also been a dominant theme.

We have been wont to define these as non-conventional or asymmetric threats because they do not represent the state-on-state paradigm that naval history has previously relied upon. However, I consider this misleading.

The threat of violence or unrest from non-state, transnational organisations must now be considered a conventional part of the spectrum of operations, and it demands a transnational, or supranational, response.

The risk of continuing to treat them as non-conventional threats is the expectation that our capacity to respond will be additional to our core role, rather than part of it.

To that end, joint and combined effects are critical at all points on the operational spectrum, from the most benign exercise of presence to active war-fighting. This is the future force envisaged in the White Paper.

Development and Future of Jointery

The very first combat experiences of the RAN in 1914 involved a joint amphibious landing. After unsuccessful attempts to locate and engage the German cruiser squadron among the Pacific Islands, Australia and New Zealand combined to create a Naval and Military Expeditionary Force, of whom 500 (one third) were Naval reserves.

They set out on 19 August 1914, just weeks after the declaration of war, and landed on 11 September in Rabaul to take the wireless station at Bita Paka.

The Australian Naval and Military Expeditionary Force (ANMEF) was a joint force and the concept of their operation was the projection of force *from* the sea in an essentially maritime environment, using the capabilities of our cruiser HMAS *Australia* and the destroyer squadron.

In the Second World War, less well-known events saw *Voyager* grounded, then bombed, landing troops in Betano Bay, Timor in 1942, and *Hobart* leading amphibious operations in Borneo as the Japanese were swept back in 1945.

In the Korean War, which passes its 60th anniversary this year, *Warramunga* supported the Inchon landings.

And as recently as last September, following the devastating earthquake, HMAS *Kanimbla* landed an amphibious relief force in the Indonesian region of Padang.

What has changed since our early history is the strategic acknowledgement of the need for Jointery in the maritime sphere. A quick glance over the DCP and Force 2030 projections makes this clear.

I have mentioned the LHDs, which are part of a major push towards amphibious deployment and sustainment. The ships are each able to embark a battle group,

along with their headquarters and vehicles, as well as conduct multi-spot helicopter operations.

The Joint Amphibious Capability Implementation Team, comprising all three Services, has been at work since 2006 preparing and planning for the Amphibious Deployment and Sustainment capability that arrives with the ships.

The capability involves doctrinal, cultural and structural changes that cross service boundaries. This is because when I speak of our joint amphibious capability, it is not defined by the LHD alone.

The ship is one of a number of sub-systems and elements, which also includes the landing force, watercraft, helicopter and joint fires, all coordinated by a specialised Command and Control team. We could say that these elements are the 'weapon system' of the *Canberra* class LHDs.

Even the permanent crew will reflect tri-Service expertise, and it is envisaged that Army and Air Force members will need to be permanently posted aboard to ensure key operational functions are maintained. Of course, support units are also necessary to deploy the amphibious capability.

While a key development, the LHDs are only a part of our joint future. The *Hobart* class DDGs, and the future frigates, are being designed with an eye firmly fixed on their maritime effect interacting with the capabilities of air and land forces.

The emphasis is on land strike as well as blue water action, and the introduction of the Aegis weapons system will have a revolutionary effect. Further out, the future submarines, about which there has rightly been much public discussion, will significantly enhance our joint approach as well as our sea power with their land strike and Special Forces capabilities.

As a key component of Force 2030, it's vital we make the right decisions as we plan, develop and build the successor to Collins. And, while I am in the home state of our Collins capability, let me offer you some thoughts on our current submarine capability.

Under Team Collins, which stood up earlier this year, my counterparts in ASC and the DMO have joined me in overseeing the establishment of the Australian Submarine Program Office, within which Navy, DMO, and ASC people have cooperated closely to develop a new Integrated Master Schedule for the Collins class, and also jointly tackle our present challenges. The results over the past few months have been rewarding.

I was very pleased to see HMAS *Dechaineux* return to service last week following its full cycle docking in Adelaide. *Dechaineux's* docking resulted in the refurbishment and recertification of the myriad systems in this complex submarine platform.

In addition to maintenance work, *Dechaineux* was fitted with the latest version of the Australian/US-developed combat system and torpedo, special forces exit/re-entry modifications, and a raft of other safety and capability improvements that make it our most capable submarine.

The upgrades to *Dechaineux* during her recent docking far exceed those made to the previous Oberon class submarines through their whole life. Submarine maintenance and upgrade is a complex business, but *Dechaineux's* return to service proves what we can achieve in Australia.

Just as encouraging is the fact that *Dechaineux* and the other submarines now operating at sea from Fleet Base West, *Collins* and *Waller*, have full complements of trainees and continue the essential task of training the next generation of Australian submariners.

Over 50 new submariners have been qualified in this financial year to date, resulting in a 6% increase in the submarine workforce. Submarine recruiting has been a focus this year and has improved to the extent that we now have a full training pipeline.

This focus on training will have to continue well into the future to grow the workforce needed for the future submarine, but I'm pleased to say that today's submarine force is contributing to that goal.

Demographic Change

The strategic recognition of Jointery as the ADF's future warfighting doctrine requires development not just in capability platforms but in personnel. And it is here that we face, and will continue to face, our greatest challenge.

Resilience and adaptability are valued as aspects of sea power in particular, but we must also have them as attributes of the men and women who take the ships to sea.

How will we shape the sailor we need for the future force? As a baseline, I think we need to accept and respond to the OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development) description of human capital as "...the fundamental building block for growth in the knowledge based economy."

Outside a defence context, the Chairman of the Productivity Commission, Mr Gary Banks, observed that Australia's economic growth during the 1990s was most directly affected not by changes to monetary and fiscal policy, although they contributed to the stability of progress, but by changes in the behaviour of businesses, workers and consumers.

Demographically, the RAN has developed considerably in the last generation (25 years). Today, our numbers stand at approximately 13 900, of whom 3000 are under training. Fifty-four percent of our people have a tertiary qualification, including many junior sailors with university degrees.

For the ADF, we have a relatively young force, but it is older than in previous generations – in the last ADF census (conducted in 2007, published in 2009) 50% of members were aged in their twenties, plus another 7% under 20. The median age was 27 years, compared to 45 years for Navy Reserve (but the difference shows the ongoing commitment and participation by retiring members).

To crew systems as complex as a fully operational LHD, we need highly trained, specialist sailors who maintain a broad appreciation of the systemic context in which their own tasks fall.

This is a competing pressure, pulling us towards increasingly technical specialisation and towards broad generalisation at the same time. I have no doubt that this tension reflects the experience of many high tech private industries.

The most significant demographic change, however, is female participation. In 1975, we had 808 women, including 49 female Officers, who were not required to serve at sea. Today, women comprise 18% of our force (approximately 2300), and they are required to serve at sea in all roles except clearance diving, including in submarines and in all surface ships. Commander Jenny Daetz first took command of the survey ship *Melville* in 2005, and in 2007 Commander Michelle Miller (now CAPT) served as CO of a frigate. They have since been succeeded by other women, in major and minor fleet units.

However, to maximise our use of Australian human resources into the joint warfighting age, we need to harness greater female participation. The Chief of the Defence Force has introduced an Action Plan for Women, and in Navy we are making significant efforts as part of our overall New Generation Navy reform agenda to improve Service opportunities for women.

As the Australian economy regathers its strengths in the next year or two, especially in WA's resource industry, we must ensure we remain an employer of choice. We can't rest on our substantial achievements in recruiting and retention over the past 12 months.

In part, that success has been due to New Generation Navy, a reform program which has just passed its first anniversary, and which is firmly directed to reforming our culture, leadership and structure for the future. We only have 3-4 years before the LHDs are expected to commission and that future materialises.

NGN recognises that there have been paradigm shifts in Australian society, in terms of knowledge training, expectations and management in recent years and our program for cultural change is designed to respond to and harness that change. Deep and meaningful reform is something our people are calling for at all levels. As Chief, I am not surprised by the desire for change. Personnel management is complex and needs to readjust at intervals to reflect shifts in knowledge, training and social expectations.

Structurally, we are already operating under the single aegis of HQJOC. As single services, we train and sustain our forces, but assign them to JOC to achieve the operational results required of us.

In cultural terms, we have advanced considerably in identifying and describing how we want Navy people to behave, and are now working to embed signature behaviours emphasising people, performance and professionalism. This will take time, and will not be a smooth road, but it is one we have no choice but to follow.

We are also addressing leadership, reintroducing an emphasis on ethics and an understanding of how what we do fits into broader national objectives. This kind of values framework will guide our leaders as they move through difficult and uncertain new areas in the field of joint operations. It also recognises that leadership is not the preserve of command or position. We need, and expect, leadership from all our men and women based on their role.

Finally, NGN presents Navy with the cultural vehicle to adjust to and to achieve the Strategic Reform Program, that ambitious but achievable program of efficiency reforms which will fund Force 2030 over the next ten years. These are the issues which will shape our future joint force from the personnel perspective.

Hard and Soft Power

The last issue I would like to discuss is how the traditional distinction between hard and soft power will apply in the future joint environment.

The Royal Australian Navy seeks to exert influence in securing our sea lines of communication through application of both forms of power, which we could define as friendly international naval engagement and confidence-building, on the one hand, and considered and precise application of maritime power to exert sea control, on the other.

The RAN places a high priority on contributing to international efforts through active and creative middle power diplomacy. One of the most important ways that we seek to promote mutual strategic interest is through a network of alliances. Australia continues to develop and maintain a network of naval partnerships as an important foundation of being able to work together if and when required.

This ensures that any potential threat to Australia's sea lines of communication may be obviated through mutual understanding and a high level of confidence. In fact, I recently returned from the Middle East, where I attended the second Indian Ocean Naval Symposium Conclave of Chiefs in Abu Dhabi. The Indian Ocean Naval Symposium, or IONS, is an initiative which broadly aims to increase maritime co-operation among navies of the littoral states of the Indian Ocean Region, generating a flow of information between naval professionals that would lead to common understanding and possibly agreements on the way ahead.

The program for the Symposium in Abu Dhabi included presentations by attending senior officers and academics on the theme “*Together for the reinforcement of maritime security in the Indian Ocean.*”

Subsequently, I took part in the IONS Conclave of Chiefs along with the Chiefs or their representatives of 28 other Indian Ocean Region littoral nations, as well as delegates from the Royal Navy, United States Navy, and the Italian Navy.

While IONS is still in its formative stages, the enthusiasm surrounding its development and a strong desire for the RAN to remain fully engaged both demonstrate the utility of partnership as an arm of soft power, particularly as it applies to maritime security in the Indian Ocean.

The move into a truly joint future forces a rethink of our traditional approach to hard and soft power. We will need to consider whether, and what, forces are best suited to separate strategic goals and to avoid duplication of effort.

From the RAN’s perspective, I caution against a too ready pigeonholing of ADF forces into hard and soft power roles, because I think it critical to retain a capability to scale between both. Navy in particular is suited to the full range of tasks, especially because of our capacity to exert off-shore presence, without infringement on the sovereignty of others.

Further, we will remain guided by government on the extent to which our capability is spread between constabulary and more typically military roles. These are matters for considerable thought.

Conclusion

I have moved over several topics in the course of this evening’s oration. The common thread is the challenge to the men and women of the RAN as we face a future dominated by joint operations, and in the short term, a demanding but achievable program for internal cultural and financial reform.

We need to rethink our doctrine, structure, personnel and capability for Force 2030, which will be more potent and better equipped than our force today, but will also be fundamentally a joint force producing effects in the maritime environment.

Shaping the future force requires us to challenge all our orthodoxies and to be prepared to discard outdated modes of doctrine and management.

It is imperative that we discuss and resolve Navy’s role, both hard and soft, in future warfighting. However, this kind of introspection is not easy and I suspect we will still be working through them when the first crew takes charge of NUSHIP *Canberra*.

It is an issue which will occupy us for some time, and one in which not only the former Service community but all Australians have an interest.