
Strategy

Regional Special Operations Force Capacity Building: An Asymmetric Australian Maritime Strategy

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Abstract

This article explores the establishment of an operationally-orientated organisation to effect regional capacity building, which might serve as a focal point for coordinating unorthodox responses to contemporary security challenges within the region. Such an organisation would be capable of providing strategic deterrence through the employment of land-based anti-ship missiles to deny maritime chokepoints in an Australianised version of an anti-access, area-denial strategy. Habitual capacity-building operations would posture such an organisation to be capable of affecting strategic response options through practiced engagement within the archipelagic region to Australia's north. Establishing such an organisation sends a clear strategic message. Australia is united with the United States and its regional partners to deter aggression from a potential state-centric adversary, while building the necessary institutions to resist disruptive threats that infiltrate

transnational borders. Such a strategy would promote a 'pre-crisis' mindset involving the building of a coalition, the rehearsal of robust contingency plans and the development of familiarity with the operating environment, to hold response options within our highest priority regions.

Introduction

In 2012, strategist Michael Evans argued against the Sino-centric focus that seems to dominate Defence thinking, arguing that 'the force structure of the Australian Army of the future must always be configured for expeditionary operations and carefully embedded within a clearly articulated Australian Defence Force joint maritime strategy — as befits an island trading nation situated on the cusp of an economically dynamic Asia'.¹ Such observations are in the context of Australia's historic employment of 'expeditionary land power elements ... to achieve national political objectives'.² Evans argued the necessity to plan for 'most likely' as low to mid-level in intensity — which is at odds with Army's focus on 'joint land combat'.

Army's strategic analysis is seemingly anchored to a cognitive bias for the high-intensity conflict in the defence of Australia, frequently referred to as Australia's least likely task.³ This ties it to a framework that envisages defensive action to repel an invasion force in northern Australia. Army has yet to understand how it might contribute to an expeditionary, joint maritime strategy.

This article therefore advocates a manoeuvrist approach to both the primary task of the defence of Australia and its secondary task, a stable Indo-Pacific. The essence of the manoeuvrist approach 'lies in defeating the enemy's will to fight by 'destroying' the enemy's plan rather than destroying his forces'.⁴ By simply knowing that an element of the Australian Army holds a robust anti-access, area-denial (A2AD) capability, planned aggression against Australian territory could well be defeated cognitively. An adversary may well determine that they are unable to generate sufficient intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR), and/or security forces to 'find, fix, finish' such small, yet lethal threats to their plan. The very asymmetry of Iranian influence over the Straits of Hormuz is indicative that such a calculus can hold true.

A simmering region. The Chinese government has recently made aggressive assertions of sovereignty over portions of the South China Sea, provoking strong reactions from Vietnam, the Philippines, Malaysia and Indonesia. The United

States responded, announcing its 'pivot to Asia', and thus drawing the nation into the geopolitical 'cauldron' of the South China Sea. Arguing against perceived US interference, Chinese President Xi Jinping commented that, 'in the end, the business of Asia can only be handled by Asians, the issues of Asia can only be solved by Asians and the security of Asia can only be maintained by Asians'.⁵ Perhaps he is correct, and local militaries need to take responsibility for local issues. Indeed the indirect strategy currently being applied in Iraq of using Western forces to build indigenous capacity could potentially provide a model to mitigate the threat of conflict in South-East Asia.

A 'stable Indo-Pacific'⁶ is of particular Australian strategic interest, prompting the question of how Australia might support the Asian community in securing a balance within South-East Asia given the assertiveness of China. This article argues that an Australian-led, combined joint special operations task force (CJSOTF), including embedded officers from a broad range of government agencies and orientated indigenous capacity-building (ICB) throughout South-East Asia, would have much to offer the Asian community in its quest for regional stability.⁷

Why now? The Australian Government will consider the challenges posed by Chinese assertiveness, Islamic fundamentalism and enduring geopolitical realities in its forthcoming 2015 Defence white paper. It is therefore both timely and appropriate to consider how such challenges are met. Does Australia require a dozen submarines to deny maritime chokepoints in the primary operating environment (POE), or might this effect be achieved by other means? Could Indonesian and Malaysian foreign fighters return battle-hardened from Iraq and Syria to create a new cohort of regional terrorists? How are Australia's regional partners addressing these and other challenges, and how can the Australian Defence Force (ADF) assist them?

In a recent US policy document, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, senior US Army, US Marine Corps and Special Operations Command (SOCOM) leaders describe the logic of a special operations force-centric, partnered approach to national security.

Forward deployed, actively engaged forces have proven essential to contributing to peace by reassuring our friends and deterring our enemies. Such forces provide a broad range of benefits that includes: demonstration of US commitment, establishment of enduring relationships with regional military and political leaders, improved capability of hosts to handle their own internal security challenges,

increased willingness of hosts to participate in friendly coalitions, ability of the US to achieve a higher level of understanding than is possible just with technical means, reduced chance of experiencing strategic surprise, reduced chance that an aggressor will miscalculate US resolve or capability, and increased responsiveness to crises.⁸

This article will first examine the geopolitical drivers of military strategy in South-East Asia before considering the effect of the United States 'pivot' toward this increasingly important region. Against such a background, the article will then analyse how Australia could 'punch above its weight' by linking into the geopolitical networks within and outside the region in partnered archipelagic defence in depth. Given the limitations of space, combined responses to non-regional security challenges such as the Korean Peninsula or the current commitments to the Middle East are considered beyond the scope of this article.

The South China Sea 'cauldron'

The initial section of this article will review the constraints imposed by geography on the primary operating environment (POE) of Australia's northern approaches. This will be overlaid by national security agreement considerations that underpin international networks such as the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Finally, the geographic and diplomatic ramifications of the employment of military force in South-East Asia will be considered, particularly the South China Sea which,

In geopolitical terms ... might arguably be the most critical geographical juncture of the non-Western world... A 'strong foothold' in the South China Sea gives China a strategic 'hinterland' of over a thousand miles stretching to Indonesia, and would thus act as a 'restraining factor' for the US Navy's Seventh Fleet transiting the Pacific and Indian oceans.⁹

The primary operating environment. Sweeping from Rangoon through to Rarotonga, the POE encompasses Australia's highest and second-highest priority regions, as articulated by *Defence White Paper 2013*. The ethnic, religious and language diversity within the tropical, littoral and increasingly urbanised POE, presents a challenge for Western culture. Fostering regional cooperation within this archipelagic environment will be difficult, exacerbated by historical frictions and the bold aspirations of various neighbours.

Trouble in paradise. The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) currently consists of Brunei, Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and Vietnam. These nations encircle the 'cauldron

of the South China Sea' and many are involved in territorial claims in the region.¹⁰ The relatively small size of these nations compared to an assertive Chinese military giant encourages regionalism, collective defence considerations and an arms race that presents both risks and benefits for Australia. Increased military modernisation throughout the region not only erodes Australia's technological advantage, but also increases the likelihood of regional conflict. This 'Asian arms race' is funded by increases in regional military spending (45 per cent higher in 2014 than in 2005). However, Chinese assertiveness may also persuade regional nations that the key to their security lies in developing and managing military partnerships in the region. Japan's acceptance of the critical role of multilateral organisations is one example of this.¹¹ As Patrick Cronin et al. argue,

ASEAN and its related institutions and meetings have served as vital venues for managing competition between great powers while providing platforms for increasing substantive confidence-building measures. These multilateral arenas therefore provide a cushion between the United States and China, which can often make US–China cooperation politically and bureaucratically easier, as neither side is seen as leading a particular initiative.¹²

Current security networks. Australia has strong defence relationships in the region with Singapore and Malaysia under the Five Power Defence Arrangements, and with the other non-ASEAN nations of New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The ASEAN Defence Ministers' Meeting Plus formally invites non-ASEAN nations into a collaborative defence forum. The growth of these extra-regional institutions further signals the geostrategic importance of the South China Sea, the 'beating heart of the Asia–Pacific and a cross-roads for the global economy'.¹³ The Asian region is also increasingly important to global economic prosperity. As Peter Chalk asserts, 'should plans for a projected Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership (RCEP) come to fruition, it would enmesh ASEAN in what would be the world's single largest trading bloc'.¹⁴ Regional relationships are increasingly characterised by enmeshed bilateral and multilateral agreements. According to Cronin et al.,

Countries in Asia — including Australia, India, Japan, Singapore, South Korea and Vietnam — are developing bilateral security ties with one another in unprecedented ways. This emergent trend of intra–Asian defense and security cooperation which we term the 'Asia Power Web' will have profound implications for regional security and US strategy in Asia.¹⁵

With a combined US\$2.1 trillion gross domestic product (of which Australia's two-way trade share is approximately US\$87.48 billion), ASEAN is too big not to merit special consideration. This point was recognised in September 2013 when Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs, Julie Bishop, announced the appointment of Australia's first resident ambassador to ASEAN.¹⁶ By 2020 and, more significantly, by 2030 economic growth could potentially transform the region into a significant global power, particularly through the burgeoning influence of such nations as Indonesia and Vietnam.¹⁷ The influence of ASEAN and these rising nations will significantly alter the dynamic of the current regional balance of power.

The pivot to Asia: current efforts in the region

This section will examine the longstanding US interests in, and strategic guidance on, the Asian region, as well as the operational alignment of forces linked to these interests. Discussion of the recent posture of the United States in South–East Asia and the post-Afghanistan desire to shape and influence the region without being forced to intervene militarily will follow. The section concludes with the description of additional security interests in the region.

Obama's pivot? President Obama signalled the 'pivot' to Asia with his comment that US economic and security interests are 'inextricably linked to the developments in the arc extending from the Western Pacific and East Asia into the Indian Ocean and South Asia'.¹⁸ This 'inextricable link' must be an important focus for Australian strategic policy if, as Peter Jennings asserts, 'the big strategic challenge for Australia is not China's growth but rather the risk that the US ceases to be a great military power and withdraws from the East Asian region'.¹⁹ Rory Medcalf seemingly agrees. In analysing a recent Lowy Institute poll, he concludes that the results could be read as 'a reminder for Australia to do its utmost to influence and shape the [US] alliance and US foreign policy more generally so that it continues to serve Australian interests in a changing world'.²⁰ Conditions may well be set for an alignment of interests given President Obama's recent comments at West Point regarding networked capacity-building efforts,

Earlier this year I asked my national security team to develop a plan for a network of partnerships from South Asia to the Sahel. Today, as part of this effort, I am calling on Congress to support a new counterterrorism partnerships fund of up to \$5 billion, which will allow us to train, build capacity and facilitate partner countries on the front lines.²¹

Aligning with US interests. One of the longest-serving, regionally-orientated and operationally-engaged organisations in the region is the US Pacific Command, and its subordinate component, the US Special Operations Command, Pacific (SOCPAC). SOCPAC is force assigned the 1st Special Forces Group,²² and US Marine, Navy and Air Force special operations capabilities. Regionally, SOCPAC divides its efforts into a number of sub-regions, within which a combined joint special operations task force – South–East Asia (CJSOTF–SEA) would clearly be positioned. These regions are: North–East Asia (China, Japan, Mongolia and the two Koreas), South Asia (Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Maldives, Nepal and Sri Lanka), Oceania (14 countries, including Australia) and South-East Asia (the 11 member countries of ASEAN).

US *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* guidance for special forces elements captures the challenge of globalised connectivity. It notes that ‘the rapidly accelerating spread of information is challenging the ability of some governments to control their populations and maintain civil order, while at the same time changing *how wars are fought* and aiding groups in mobilising and organising’ (emphasis added).²³ This encapsulates the American strategic response to the irregular conflicts initiated by the Arab Spring, the complex globalised terrorist threat and the increasing utility of special operations force responses.

The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World 2020–2040 gives such complexity momentum by noting that, ‘shifts [in the geopolitical landscape] and the violence associated with them occur more rapidly than in the past due to advances in technology, the proliferation of information, and the associated increased momentum of human interactions’.²⁴ In this geopolitical landscape, the special operations force ‘small footprint’ approach reflects the requirement for small, adaptable elements to keep pace with environmental shifts. In a sense, such employment of forces could be seen as a response to the challenges of the information age. As Robert Martinage from the Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments states,

The 2006 Quadrennial Defense Review (QDR) asserted that SOF [special operations forces] should be re-oriented ... to one that is shaped, sized, and postured for long-duration, steady-state operations critical to the war against violent Islamic extremism such as intelligence collection, foreign internal defense, and unconventional warfare; reactive and proactive counterterrorism and counterproliferation missions; and high-end theatre warfare as part of a joint force.²⁵

Recent operational commitments demonstrate that such approaches are not 'exclusive' to special operations. Indeed, the Australian Army has a long and proud history of capacity building through the Pacific Islands Regiment and service in Malaya, Vietnam and Timor–Leste, in addition to its lengthy investment under the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP). But this speaks to the heart of the issue, 'cooperation' needs to become an 'operation', emulating the US Army, US Marine Corps and SOCOM approach.

How are US special forces being utilised in the region?

Operational preparation of the environment. Operational preparation of the environment (OPE) is designed to describe pre-emptive capacity building designed to enhance partners' means to maintain security before a crisis emerges. Admiral McRaven, then Commander US SOCOM, describes OPE efforts as 'building a network', a response to the current 'era of persistent conflict'.²⁶ In simple terms, OPE (also known as Phase Zero²⁷) comprises early, fine-tuned intervention to improve indigenous capacity and prevent a nation becoming a 'failed state'. The efforts of the Joint Special Operations Task Force — Philippines in assisting the Filipino government conduct counterinsurgency operations against the Abu Sayyaf Group in Mindanao from 2002 provide just one example of this low-signature model.

Basing. US SOCOM is moving to adjust the current balance of its special operations forces, 90 per cent of which are stationed in the continental United States, to a more forward-engaged posture.²⁸ As a consequence, the United States recently secured an agreement with the Philippines for the use of Clark Air Force Base in Luzon, and with Singapore to base four littoral combat ships at Changi Harbour (and potentially also a joint high-speed vessel). This repositioning presents a strategic opportunity for Australia, given the close ties developed in recent operational theatres.

Joint combined exchange training serials. Joint combined exchange training serials are nominally training events, yet are recognised as operations that are linked to campaign strategies and global counterterrorism efforts. Similarly, Australia's regional international engagement training serials are almost indistinguishable from recent operational train, assist and advise missions. SOCPAC is already broadly engaged within the region, having conducted 22 joint combined exchange training serials in South-East Asia through the 1st Special Forces Group alone in 2013.²⁹ The example set by US SOCOM through such engagements recognises that actions performed within joint combined exchange training present a realistic and

challenging form of training for the demands of operational train, advise and assist missions. This same realistic and challenging training model is not apparent in the Australian Army's regional engagement under the Defence Cooperation Program.

How is Australia engaged, and is it doing enough?

Defence White Paper 2013 notes that 'Australia must seek to shape an international environment favourable to [its] future security and prosperity'.³⁰ Understanding the region, its strengths and its fragilities is therefore essential. The shaping of relationships throughout the region occurs daily, particularly in the joint environment, primarily through the Royal Australian Navy's freedom of navigation and conduct of port visits. The Royal Australian Air Force also has the ability to achieve similar outcomes through combined exercises such as Exercise Pitch Black. Neither service has the ability or imperative to engage with the local inhabitants however, particularly as they are largely dissociated from the population at 25,000 feet or 50 nautical miles out to sea. Army is in an entirely different situation.

Army conducts regional engagement through the Defence Cooperation Program (DCP), albeit without an explicit operational orientation that postures for future conflict.³¹ This engagement could arguably be enhanced through collaboration with US forces which are similarly active in our region. However, DCP engagement generally does not address improving indigenous capacity to counter terrorist and unconventional threats that may destabilise the region. All South-East Asian nations, with the exception of Singapore and Brunei, have experienced insurgency since the end of the Second World War.³² Efforts to improve regional counterterrorism and counterinsurgency capabilities are particularly timely given reports that 'up to 200 Indonesians, 40 Malaysians, 100 Filipinos... and a "handful" of Singaporeans may have joined ISIS in Iraq or Syria'.³³

Capacity building as an operation. Recent operational experience has taught the Australian Army the long-term value of capacity building in setting conditions for eventual military exit. However, this is a culturally attuned, immersive and difficult task.³⁴ Andrew Davies, Peter Jennings and Ben Schreer argue that special operations forces 'offer the best value in unconventional operations and in these so-called "Phase Zero" missions, which focus on building and shaping defence relationships with key partners in a pre-crisis environment'.³⁵ Indeed, noting the difficulty of the task, the potential for DCP actions to be managed under a standing operation in conjunction with the amphibious ready element and commanded by the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters is worthy of consideration.

A special operations complement to the amphibious ready element / amphibious ready group. The introduction into service of the landing helicopter dock heralded the arrival of a highly visible political tool for the conduct of international engagement, and humanitarian assistance and disaster relief. The use of special forces elements for the operational preparation of the environment in support of and prior to the arrival of the amphibious ready element / amphibious ready group, is a critical requirement of the Australian amphibious concept.

OPE in the POE

This section will review how US SOCOM is pursuing a global strategy of operational preparation of the environment (OPE), in the context of what it now perceives to be an era of persistent conflict. This strategy aims to build indigenous capacity to resist the destabilising threats of non-state actors and hold unconventional capabilities against hostile nation-states. It will further explore the interests of regional nations seeking to hedge against an assertive Chinese military, concluding that subtle capacity-building efforts within the primary operating environment (POE) directly support Australian strategic interests.

Strategic deterrence

'Australianised A2AD'. The geography of the South China Sea, drained by chokepoints at the Sunda, Malacca and Makassar Straits and the Molucca Sea, coupled with thousands of archipelagic islands, provides the potential for land-based, anti-ship missile systems to be a low-cost, asymmetric strategy to Chinese military expansion. A recent RAND study noted the significant difficulty in intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) detection of such systems, their reach (approaching 200 kilometres), and their potential lethality when combined with sub-surface and aerial platforms.³⁶ The study describes how to establish a 'distant blockade' in the event of a conflict with China, a version of an anti-access area denial (A2AD) strategy.³⁷ The generation of such A2AD effects across the Sunda, Malacca and Phillipine straits and the Makassar Strait and the Molucca Sea would alleviate pressure on limited regional naval and air assets in any conflict against China's People's Liberation Army – Navy and People's Liberation Army – Air Force. It would also maximise the value of the planned MQ-4 Triton Broad Area Maritime Surveillance acquisition as a component of a maritime 'reconnaissance-strike complex'.

RAND analysis concluded that, given the ballooning costs of modern warships, land-based anti-ship missile capabilities 'may prove potent and inexpensive joint force multipliers'.³⁸ The thousands of miles of island chain would 'significantly dilute the effectiveness of PLA [People's Liberation Army] missile and air forces', and most of the nations upon which this defensive concept relies are 'strong partners or allies' of the United States, or are alarmed by China's aggressive attitude in the South China Sea.³⁹ The challenge that Hezbollah's Katyusha rocket launchers and C-802 land-based anti-ship missiles presented to Israeli forces in 2006, exemplifies the surveillance dilemma of small, easily concealed launchers.

Layers of Defence. Indonesia may become the world's tenth largest economy by 2030, with commensurately large military capabilities. Benjamin Schreer argues that 'a friendly, militarily more powerful Indonesia would be a major geostrategic asset for Australia'.⁴⁰ Indonesian investment in anti-ship cruise missiles, fighter aircraft and diesel submarines, 'will make it very difficult for any hostile force to establish a stronghold in the archipelago'.⁴¹

Strategic response

Any armed attack against Australia would require an adversary to physically cross the air space, potentially the land mass and also the territorial waters of not just Indonesia, but Timor-Leste, Singapore, Malaysia, Papua New Guinea and/or Brunei. The collective size of the forces of these nations is at least half a million serving personnel, 16 frigates, 10 submarines (with at least an additional three in the next five years), over 300 tanks and in excess of 360 modern combat aircraft (not including forward-based US platforms).⁴² Australia's security could therefore be significantly enhanced through our partners' capabilities if these are employed collaboratively.⁴³ Australia could enhance the protection of its 'air-sea gap' through building deeper strategic partnerships and contributing positively to the region's security and stability.⁴⁴

Collectively, these considerations prompt an expansion of the traditional concept of combined arms. In its concept of joint combined arms operations, the US Army described this expansion 'to include the integration of not only joint capabilities but also the broad range of efforts necessary to accomplish the mission'.⁴⁵ *Army in a Joint Archipelagic Manoeuvre Concept* similarly argues that the ADF should 'be capable of applying focused maritime control operations that deny an adversary's access to, or ability to control, the key routes within a maritime archipelagic environment, and mounting and leading expeditionary stability operations in our immediate region'.⁴⁶

A standing and practiced operational command and control structure is essential to the development of a *combined* joint archipelagic manoeuvre concept. This development will only be possible with the enhancement of Australia's limited military-to-military engagement with regional nations, asymmetric capabilities and dedicated contingency planning teams. As Alan Dupont argues, 'Australia cannot be a disinterested observer in any future conflict in the western Pacific because virtually all our core defence and economic interests are engaged'.⁴⁷

The strategic importance of partner capacity building

In 1999, Dr Jim Rolfe wrote that 'the major lesson from the Second World War for New Zealand was [that] it could not defend itself by itself. Security was to be found through working with like-minded powers with similar values and similar world-views'.⁴⁸ Australian strategic guidance over several decades highlights the importance of the Australia–US relationship and notes this country's dependence on its 'great power ally' to underpin its security requirements. Explicitly recognising that Australia's national security relies on relationships with other nations will increase understanding of the vulnerability of its sea lines of communication and the challenges of Australia's decreasing technological advantage in the region.

The Importance of the ANZUS Treaty and the benefit of aligned interests. The US Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments recently observed that 'for the first time since World War II, Australian and American areas of strategic priority overlap. The strength of this rekindled convergence suggests that the US–Australia relationship may well prove to be the most special [sic] relationship of the 21st century'.⁴⁹ In this context, 'if Australia appears less than serious about its own security, or about shouldering a portion of the security burden in a changing Asia, it will be difficult to maintain credibility in the eyes of the United States, itself struggling to follow through on its declared "rebalance" to Asia'.⁵⁰ Clearly, Australia can play a role in supporting such objectives so as to mitigate the risk of a US withdrawal from the region, particular by strengthening US multilateral ties with ASEAN.

The purpose of a standing operation

At the strategic level, the formation of a combined joint special operations task force (CJSOTF) would represent an initial step for the Australian Government in acknowledging the increasing potential for instability and burgeoning competition between nation-states within the region.⁵¹ Such a step distances Australia from the benign assessments of the *Asian Century White Paper*, while responding to those positive engagement objectives and foreign policy concepts this white paper espoused. Furthermore, it promises to strengthen the ASEAN regional framework

that currently stabilises the region, directly supporting broader stakeholder interests, such as those of India,⁵² the Republic of Korea and Japan.⁵³ Finally, a CJSOTF would add another layer to the ANZUS (Australia, New Zealand, United States Security) Treaty of shared defence responsibilities and contribute to the sharing of regional defence concerns.

At the operational level, a CJSOTF could fill a long-term advanced force operations role within the 'Phase Zero' and 'Phase One – Shaping' stages of campaign planning, under a named, standing operation.⁵⁴ The CJSOTF would therefore be tasked to collect environmental intelligence, conduct indigenous capacity building and exercise force projection within the region.⁵⁵

Tactically, a CJSOTF could support the seizure of points of entry into hostile nations and neutralise high value targets in support of a theatre campaign plan. In the aftermath of major combat operations, detailed understanding of the targeted region can support indigenous capacity building during the 'stability' and 'transition' phases of a campaign. The ability to provide support to all phases of a campaign plan is a significant strength and, as knowledge of the operating environment is developed, defence partnerships will be established and interoperability built and tested.

These effects are described in a recent US Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments report that considered Australia's location at the juncture of the Indo–Pacific in ANZUS strategic planning. The centre considered Australia's potential role as a 'supportive sanctuary' for allied military forces. The report also described Australia as an 'Indo–Pacific watchtower' for ISR cooperation, a 'green water warden' supporting Indonesia's role in safeguarding the Sunda and Lombok Straits, and a 'peripheral launchpad' to support campaigns into the Indian Ocean, should conflict break out in the western Pacific.⁵⁶ A standing operation would provide a 'running start' for any of these concepts through a CJSOTF structure oriented to the ASEAN region.

The value of a CJSOTF–SEA. An Australian-led effort to build a sub-network within SOCPAC oriented to ASEAN nations, represents a logical effort with like-minded partners, both internal and external to the region. Such a sub-network would adhere to the intent of US SOCOM engagement to use small footprints and a low-level presence that unobtrusively assists partner forces while maintaining ongoing surveillance.⁵⁷ This sub-network would operate through routine deployments and establish logistic infrastructure seeking to mitigate the costly interventions of conventional conflict typical of Afghanistan's surge and the Iraq invasion. Most importantly, as US Admiral McRaven highlights, 'the US can't do it alone'.⁵⁸

A special operations lead in Phase Zero?

Chairman of the US Joint Chiefs of Staff, General Martin Dempsey, recently asked, 'Should we consider that [US] SOCOM is the global combatant command, and most everybody else [is in support]?'⁵⁹ While the United States adapts its aim, its response to the globalised security environment, characterised by a web of interconnectedness and irregular threats, may continue to evolve.⁶⁰ Against these globalised irregular threats, the United States intends 'to increase significantly, its abilities to improve the capabilities of partners around the globe ... a principal component of our Phase Zero military activities'.⁶¹ US SOCOM contributions to the strategic aspects of understanding the human terrain will continue, operating by, with and through partner forces across more than the current 70 nations globally.⁶² Andrew Davies, Peter Jennings and Ben Schreer highlight the importance of special operations forces in the future, arguing that,

Special Operations have a lot to offer in Defence's regional engagement strategy ... [prioritised upon] Australia's near region ... [by] establishing SOF liaison elements in selected Australian embassies ... [and] maintaining and strengthening SOF cooperation with our US ally ... vital for activities in the Asia-Pacific theatre and further abroad.⁶³

Why should Australia establish a standing operation?

A 'stable Indo-Pacific' is undeniably in Australia's strategic interest.⁶⁴ An Australian-led CJSOTF would prove a valuable asset given its ability to generate a number of effects that would assist in the achievement of Army's strategic tasks, including,⁶⁵

- Enhancing the ANZUS relationship with the United States that underpins Australia's national defence,
- Detering aggression against Australia's maritime interests,
- Improving indigenous self-defence, including counterterrorism and irregular warfare through habitual engagement with regional ASEAN partners,
- Complementing the Australian amphibious concept through a habitual exercising of advance force operations in support of the Australian amphibious ready element and/or US Marine Corps elements forward deployed to the region (Darwin), and
- Strengthening the ASEAN regional framework, supporting broader stakeholder interests, such as those of India, the Republic of Korea and Japan.

Pre-crisis prudence. If there is one important lesson from the current operational challenges of Iraq and Syria, it is the confirmation that bad news does improve with time. Prudent military planning could see emerging threats confronted by established indigenous partners, coalition framework, enabling assets and staging locations, through an ongoing strategy. As James Brown and Rory Medcalf assert,

Australian contributions can and should include leadership on security contingencies in the South Pacific; major responsibility for shared situational awareness in the eastern Indian Ocean and the core Indo–Pacific zone of Maritime Southeast Asia; undertaking tailored engagement with countries that the US military is legislatively prohibited from engaging deeply with (including China); and providing military intelligence, planning, and wise strategic counsel in the event of regional crises.⁶⁶

Resolute, but not resounding. China remains concerned over strategic encirclement.⁶⁷ Australia (and the United States) needs to acknowledge this concern. Efforts to improve regional capacity through the ‘light touch’ of a special forces profile may assuage concerns when compared to conventional footprints such as the high-profile rotational basing of US Marines in Darwin, or the exercising of the amphibious ready element in the South China Sea. What is therefore required is a purpose-built, special operations force-centric organisation that can coordinate the enhancement of regional special forces capabilities to fight the full range of threats from unconventional and disruptive, to conventional and existential.

Is a CJSOTF feasible and what is needed to make it work?

This section will examine the best means to create a regionally-oriented network of stakeholders willing to build ASEAN nations’ capacity and capability. It will focus upon the military capabilities that can complement ‘Australianised A2AD’ and capacity-building strategies. Due to the limitations of space, this section will not explore the second-order considerations of policy development, standing operation funding lines, basing arrangements and status of forces agreements, but will instead consider the holistic capability model that would drive such political considerations.

Partners’ perceptions – United States, Canada, United Kingdom and New Zealand. The strategic logic of Australia–US engagement within the region clearly also extends to New Zealand given its national defence objectives.⁶⁸ Indeed, the strong

defence relationship New Zealand maintains with south-west Pacific nations is a considerable asset for a CJSOTF network. Shared training objectives and resourcing is likely to prove attractive to New Zealand special operations forces. However, Canada and the United Kingdom have limited engagement interests within the region, and therefore the provision of liaison officers and/or staff officers to an operational, regional headquarters may prove an attractive economy of effort, while fulfilling headquarter manning requirements.

Regional partner perceptions. The allocation of Western special operations forces resourcing to build regional capabilities sends a strong message to regional nations. In the context of the regional competition for hegemony over the South China Sea, such messages carry greater weight than previous defence platitudes regarding the deterrence of aggression. In spite of this, Defence diplomacy must maintain a subtle balance between building an individual nation's capability and enhancing collective ASEAN capabilities. Indeed, it is this required balance that drives the need for a permanently assigned headquarters that can establish the requisite context.

Individual training and education. The DCP provides an outstanding baseline for expansion into regional training and education to assist regional partners combat their contemporary asymmetric challenges. The United States already dedicates 'several million dollars annually to sending ... SOF representatives from all services, to the US for International Military Education and Training'.⁶⁹ Harmonising efforts through the Special Forces Training Centre — potentially in conjunction with experienced international education providers such as the US Joint Special Operations University — to establish ASEAN-targeted educational programs under a broadened DCP could work to increase trust with regional partners. Collectively, these objectives could form the basis for the establishment of a regional special operations forces training centre, an idea first mooted by the Australian Strategic Policy Institute.⁷⁰

A joint anti-ship / surface-surface missile system. The use of land-based anti-ship missiles in the region to provide an asymmetric means to deny sea lines of communication could potentially be enhanced by cooperation with ASEAN partners (although this is not a current ADF capability). Recent technological advances that improve flexibility demonstrate the true potential of such systems.⁷¹ With GPS (global positioning system) and inertial guidance options, these missiles can be capable of precision-strike effects, fired from land, naval or airborne platforms.⁷² Given the range of such systems, they may also afford long-range precision fire support in an A2AD environment that currently use close air support

platforms. This joint fires concept would require the force generation of a number of teams of surface-surface missile operators, recruited from tri-service backgrounds, and specifically trained for small-team, dispersed employment.⁷³ Such teams may utilise forecast cross-terrain vehicles given an air-transportable, distributed fires employment.⁷⁴ A joint land-based anti-ship missile/surface-surface capability could be managed by the CJSOTF, and would come with the same price tag as a single Joint Strike Fighter airframe.

Operationalised train–advise–assist. The joint operators of a land-based anti-ship missile system could provide capacity-building support to regional nations, allowing them to develop similar capabilities that could complement special operations engagement. This would extend special operations engagement beyond its current counterterrorism focus to enhance regional capability to resist aggression through the development of a joint fires capability. These efforts may require the expansion (or enhanced access) of the special operations liaison officer network throughout the region, building on the recent establishment of a SOCOMD liaison post at US Pacific Command.⁷⁵ The current program of international engagement conducted by the Deployable Joint Forces Headquarters can likewise be focused through this standing operation, as may broader capacity-building efforts by the joint services and other government agencies. The peacetime conduct of train, advise and assist missions will enhance operational preparedness for the indigenous capacity-building line of operation outlined in *Adaptive Campaigning: Future Land Operating Concept*.

Feasibility summary. The interoperability of distributed joint fires with US and Australian ISR capabilities significantly enhances Australia's potential to achieve its strategic objectives in the primary operating environment. Collective use of proposed systems could see the achievement of 'distributed manoeuvre', 'Australianised A2AD' and partnered train, advise and assist missions in the joint environment, well beyond the 'air–sea gap' patrolled by Australia's Joint Strike Fighters. Furthermore, the potential generated by an Australian SOCOMD-led 'ASEAN focal point' addresses the American desire for its 'allies to cooperate in implementing a strategy which employs a more flexible, expanded, multifaceted, and integrated framework for security, encouraging more action and responsibility amongst allies ... to address and mitigate security challenges at national, regional and even global levels'.⁷⁶

Conclusion

Geoffrey Till recently argued that any country that abrogates its responsibilities to contribute 'is especially likely to lose the capacity to influence outcomes'.⁷⁷ In South-East Asia, it is clear that China is seeking to influence the outcome of maritime disputes in the South China Sea. In response, this article advocates the strengthening of the Asian security framework that is ASEAN, through nation-to-nation military diplomacy,

It would be healthier for the American–Chinese relationship — the most important bilateral relationship in the world — if Asian states themselves helped balance against rising Chinese military power, rather than relying overwhelmingly on the United States. The most obvious mechanism for that is a strengthened Association of South-East Asian Nations. ASEAN is ascending.⁷⁸

Special operations capacity-building efforts in South–East Asia directly support Australia's strategic interests at a time when support from the US cannot be guaranteed due to the strategic concerns of fiscal pressures, Russian resurgence and ongoing conflict across the Middle East and North Africa. Enhancing such efforts through a standing operation is a significant step for the ADF to take to adjust to the US 'pivot'. The threat to Australia has continued to metastasise, either through raw economic and armed forces growth in Asia, or through globalised connectivity to inform the latest application of terrorist tactics, techniques and procedures.

A combined joint special operations task force 'focal point' will produce a pre-crisis, cascading alignment of nuanced support, directed into the primary operating environment.⁷⁹ The building of a multi-lateral network oriented to the ASEAN region, performing a combined intelligence and operations function comprises a response to observations that 'the preferred strategy of Western powers, Australia included, will be one of building capacity in other nations to reduce the need for security assistance and military employments'.⁸⁰ Developing regional capability and supporting the US pivot to Asia is critical for Australia to generate 'defence in depth' that can enhance Australia's maritime strategy and enable archipelagic defence in depth to achieve 'a secure Australia'.⁸¹ ■

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Endnotes

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- 2 Ibid.
- 3 David Kilcullen, among others, write about the 'regularity of irregular war' with significant statistical backing to demonstrate that military focus upon major combat operations is a cognitive bias that has no solid grounding as a 'most likely' framework. See David Kilcullen, *Out of the Mountains: Coming of Age of the Urban Guerilla*, UK: Oxford University Press, 2013; R.B Schaife, 'The Regularity of Irregular War', *Small Wars Journal*, 16 October 2012, www.smallwarsjournal.com/printpdf/13377.
- 4 Future Land Warfare, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1: The Fundamentals of Land Power*, Canberra: Army Headquarters, 2014, p. 41.
- 5 Lisa Murray, 'China Plans to Build Artificial Island in Disputed Waters', *Australian Financial Review*, 28 May 2014.
- 6 Department of Defence, *Defence White Paper 2013*, Canberra, 3 May 2013, www.defence.gov.au/whitepaper.gov.au.
- 7 The inclusion of inter-agency capabilities within a CJSOTF is implicit throughout this document as, given recent operational experience, inter-agency representatives are routinely included within a CJSOTF structure. A regional CJSOTF structure has precedence in the US establishment of a JSOTF-GCC (Gulf Cooperation Council — Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Bahrain, Qatar, United Arab Emirates and Oman).
- 8 Raymond Odierno, James Amos and William McRaven, *Strategic Landpower: Winning the Clash of Wills*, TRADOC, Washington, 6 May 2013.
- 9 Robert D. Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron: The South China Sea and the End of a Stable Pacific*, New York: Random House, 2014, p. 41.
- 10 This 'cauldron' terminology has also been used with the analogy of the South China Sea as a 'second Persian Gulf' in geopolitical analysis by Kaplan, *ibid*.
- 11 The Japanese government notes that, despite a US\$51 billion defence budget, a strong US-Japanese alliance that has delivered the Aegis ballistic missile defence capability and what is presently the world's fourth largest navy, 'Japan Cannot Secure its Own Peace and Security by Itself'. Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, *National Security Strategy*, 17 December 2013, p. 3, provisional translation <http://www.mofa.go.jp/policy/security/>. Such a conclusion is notable given Australia's limited US\$26 billion Defence budget.

- 12 Patrick Cronin, Richard Fontaine, Zachary Hosford, Oriana Mastro, Ely Ratner, and Alexander Sullivan, *The Emerging Asia Power Web: The Rise of Bilateral Intra-Asian Security Ties*, Center for a New American Security, June 2013, p. 33.
- 13 Eloquently defined by US Defense Secretary Chuck Hagel, cited by Greg Sheridan, 'Sabre-Rattling Imbues (the) Shangri-La (dialogue) with a Growing Sense of Menace', *The Australian*, 5 June 2014.
- 14 Peter Chalk, *The US Army in Southeast Asia: Near-term and Long-term Roles*, RAND, 2013, p. 3, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR400/RR401/RAND_RR401.pdf.
- 15 Cronin et al., *The Emerging Asia Power Web*, p. 5.
- 16 Jim Thomas, Zack Cooper and Iskander Rehman, *Gateway to the Indo-Pacific: Australian Defense Strategy and the Future of the Australia–US alliance*, Washington: US Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2013, pp. 4–5. This engagement was emphasised with the Abbott government boosting intelligence-sharing as part of the global fight against Islamic terrorism. See John Kerin, 'PM to Expand Terror Co-operation in Asia', *Australian Financial Review*, 8 January 2015.
- 17 'A shifting regional balance of power where a group of rising new regional powers — including India, Indonesia, Vietnam and South Korea — are challenging the regional power hierarchy.' Leonard Edwards and Peter Jennings, *Facing West, Facing North: Canada and Australia in East Asia*, Special Report, Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the Centre for International Governance Innovation, 2014, p. 13, https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/facing-west,-facing-north-canada-and-australia-in-east-asia/SR_ASPI_CIGI_facing_west.pdf.
- 18 US Department of Defense, *Sustaining US Global Leadership: Priorities for 21st Century Defense*, 2012, p. 2.
- 19 Peter Jennings, 'Move closer to US to avoid bowing to China', *Australian Financial Review*, 17 February 2014, citing David Hale's study *China's New Dream*, published by ASPI in 2014, <https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/chinas-new-dream-how-will-australia-and-the-world-cope-with-the-re-emergence-of-china-as-a-great-power>.
- 20 Rory Medcalf, 'Friendship with US an Insurance Against Rising China', *The Age*, 5 June 2014.
- 21 President Barak Obama's speech to United States Military Academy at West Point, New York, commencement ceremony on 28 May 2014, transcript courtesy of Federal News Service, http://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/full-text-of-president-obamas-commencement-address-at-west-point/2014/05/28/cfbcdcaa-e670-11e3-afc6-a1dd9407abcf_story.html.
- 22 '1st SFG(A) has two forward deployed elements: 1st Battalion stationed at Torii Station, Okinawa, which is under the operational control of the Commander US Special Operations Command — Pacific; and SF Detachment 39, which is forward deployed to Songnam Korea, where its members work directly with the Republic of Korea Special Forces Brigades under the operational control of Special Operations Command — Korea (SOC-KOR)'. Janice Burton, '1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in the PACOM AOR', *Special Warfare*, 27: 1, January – March 2014, p. 10.
- 23 Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, 4 March 2014, p. 3, <http://www.defense.gov/home/features/2014>. The subordinate element the Joint Interagency Task Force — West, which is focused on transnational counter-narcotics efforts combining policing and military resources, is an example of both standing inter-agency support to military headquarters and shifting military paradigms.
- 24 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept: Win in a Complex World, 2020–2040*, US Army, 7 October 2014, p. 6.
- 25 Robert Martinage, *Special Operations Forces: Future Challenges and Opportunities*, Center for Strategic and Budgetary Assessments, 2008, p. 3.

- 26 This term was coined by Army Chief of Staff General George Casey in 2007. See General George Casey, 'Persistent Conflict: The New Strategic Environment', address given to the Los Angeles World Affairs Council, 27 September 2007.
- 27 'Phase Zero is the rubric used to describe both the actions (engagement, diplomacy) and the environment (pre-crisis, peacetime),' Brian Petit, *Going Big by Getting Small: The Application of Operational Art by Special Operations in Phase Zero*, Colorado: Outskirts Press, 2013, p. 56.
- 28 Thomas Szayna and William Welser, *Developing and Assessing Options for the Global SOF Network*, RAND, 27 September 2013, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR300/RR340/RAND_RR340.pdf.
- 29 Burton, '1st Special Forces Group (Airborne) in the PACOM AOR', p. 12.
- 30 *Defence White Paper 2013*, p. 1. *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014* notes that 'A multilateral security architecture – composed of groups such as the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) and regional actors collaborating on issues from humanitarian assistance to maritime security to counterterrorism – is emerging to help manage tensions and prevent conflict' (p. 4).
- 31 'One of the means by which Australian SF can achieve influence throughout the region within the structure of a "campaign" is through the ADF's Defence Cooperation Program (DCP)... Through DCP, Australia seeks to build deeper strategic partnerships and contribute positively to the region's security and stability'. Ian Langford, *Australian Special Operations: Principles and Considerations*, Army Research Paper No 4, Canberra: Army Headquarters, 2014, p. 28, http://www.army.gov.au/~media/Army/Our%20future/Publications/Papers/ARP%204/AustralianSpecialOperations_B5_web.pdf.
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- 33 S. James Ahn and David Hamon, *Premonitions of an ISI Homecoming in Southeast Asia*, Banyan Analytics Brief, 28 Oct 2014, http://www.anser.org/babrief_ISIS-Southeast-Asia.
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- 35 Andrew Davies, Peter Jennings and Ben Schreer, *A Versatile Force: The Future of Australia's Special Operations Capability*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, April 2014, p. 5. https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/a-versatile-force-the-future-of-australias-special-operations-capability/Special_operations_capability.pdf.
- 36 Terrence Kelly, Anthony Atler, Todd Nichols and Lloyd Thrall, *Employing Land-based Anti-ships Missiles in the Western Pacific*, RAND, 2013, http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/technical_reports/TR1300/TR1321/RAND_TR1321.pdf.
- 37 Ibid. Land-based anti-ship missiles are already popular with militaries in the region, including those of Indonesia, Malaysia, Vietnam and Brunei.
- 38 Ibid, p. xii.
- 39 Ibid, p. xvi.
- 40 Benjamin Schreer, *Moving Beyond Ambitions? Indonesia's Military Modernisation*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, November 2013, p. 9. https://www.aspi.org.au/publications/moving-beyond-ambitions-indonesias-military-modernisation/Strategy_Moving_beyond_ambitions.pdf.

- 41 Ibid. Schreer (ibid) also notes the acquisition of Russian Yuhont missiles embarked upon frigates (300 kilometer range), Chinese C-802 (120 kilometer range) and the French Exocet Block 2. Russia has offered to sell Indonesia 10 diesel-electric submarines (most likely Kilo or Amur class), while the acquisition of 180 Sukhoi fighters is projected within the next 15 years (pp. 20-22).
- 42 Much of this is relatively modern and could be highly capable with routine training opportunities and strong joint employment concepts. Examples include Scorpene submarines, Exocet-equipped corvettes and fast attack craft, and Su-27 flankers. Note the potential Australian asymmetry through specific enabling capabilities.
- 43 Consideration of some of the lesser regional actors only increases the potential military force behind ASEAN. Vietnam has invested \$2 billion in six Kilo-class diesel-electric submarines, \$1 billion in Russian fighter jets and a P-800 shore-based anti-ship missile system ranging out to 300 kilometers, Myanmar's Tatmadaw of almost 500,000 men under arms is the ninth largest military in the world and the Thai military closely resembles Western models and includes a helicopter carrier, Marine Corps and three amphibious vessels.
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- 45 TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The U.S. Army Operating Concept*, p. iii.
- 46 Australian Army, *Army in a Joint Archipelagic Manoeuvre Concept*, Discussion Paper 01/14, October 2014, p. 2, <http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Publications/Discussion-Papers/Discussion-Paper-0114>.
- 47 Alan Dupont, 'China's Maritime Power Trip', *Weekend Australian*, 24 May 2014.
- 48 Rhys Ball, 'The Strategic Utility of New Zealand Special Forces', *Small Wars & Insurgencies*, 22: 1, 2011, p. 121. *Defence White Paper 2013* identifies this evolving challenge as follows, 'Australia's relative strategic weight will be challenged as the major Asian states continue to grow their economies and modernise their military forces' (p. 15)
- 49 Thomas et al., *Gateway to the Indo-Pacific*, p. 1.
- 50 James Brown and Rory Medcalf, *Fixing Australia's Incredible Defence Policy*, Lowy Institute, October 2013, p. 12, <http://www.lowyinstitute.org/publications/fixing-australias-incredible-defence-policy>.
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- 54 Importantly, unlike an exercise, an operation attracts resources and orientates whole-of-government efforts towards specific issues and priorities.
- 55 When a government dictates its weight of effort to fight terrorism, transnational crime and other non-state actors, this should act as a counterweight to the disruptive forces of globalisation. This weight of effort is largely the realm of special forces. The 'demand for US forces to expand the counter terrorism capabilities of allied or partner forces will likely increase in the coming years. The United States will continue to train, advise and equip partner forces to perform essential tasks against terrorist networks, complementing US activities in the field'. Department of Defense, *Quadrennial Defense Review 2014*, p. 37.

- 56 Thomas et al., *Gateway to the Indo-Pacific*, p. 2.
- 57 See Szayna and Welser, *Developing and Assessing Operations for the Global SOF Network*.
- 58 Admiral William McRaven, Posture Statement Commander, United States Special Operations Command before the 113th Congress House Armed Services Committee, 27 February 2014.
- 59 Major Dave Kenney, 'The USSOCOM Trinity: Refining Special Operations Commitment to 21st century warfare', Special Operations Essays, 2012, JSOU, http://www.nps.edu/Academics/Schools/GSOIS/Departments/DA/Documents/2_Kenney_PA%20reviewed.pdf.
- 60 This terminology is used by the *Quadrennial Defense Review 2006*, which noted an overwhelmingly weighted orientation toward conventional warfare and sought to adapt to the then contemporary insurgent challenge in Iraq by specifically investing in counters to 'disruptive', 'catastrophic' and 'irregular' threats. In doing so, it sought to also adapt to the 'hybrid' threat of multiple threat streams, notable from the Israeli-Hezbollah conflict which dominated at its time of writing.
- 61 James Roberts, *Building the Capabilities and Capacity of Partners: Is this Defense Business?*, PRISM, Centre for Complex Operations, 4: 2, 2013, p. 67. Roberts is Principal Director for Special Operations and Combating Terrorism in the Office of the Secretary of Defense.
- 62 Linda Robinson, *The future of Counterterrorism: Fewer Drones, more Partnerships*, RAND, 18 October 2013, <http://www.rand.org/blog/2013/10/the-future-of-counterterrorism-fewer-drones-more-partnerships.html>.
- 63 Davies et al., *A Versatile Force*, p. 6.
- 64 *Defence White Paper 2013*.
- 65 Future Land Warfare Directorate, *Land Warfare Doctrine 1*, p. 31. These strategic tasks are: shaping Australia's strategic environment, denying and defeating threats to Australia and its interests, and protecting and supporting Australian and foreign civil populations.
- 66 Brown and Medcalf, *Fixing Australia's Incredible Defence Policy*, p. 13.
- 67 Chalk, *The US Army in Southeast Asia*, p.15.
- 68 The New Zealand *Defence White Paper 2010* noted that New Zealand would 'consider the use of military force in the following circumstances: in response to a direct threat to New Zealand and its territories; in response to a direct threat to Australia; as part of collective action in support of a member of the Pacific Islands Forum facing a direct threat; as part of New Zealand's contribution to the FPDA; or if requested or mandated by the UN, especially in support of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region'. New Zealand Government, *Defence White Paper*, 2010, p. 16, http://www.nzdf.mil.nz/downloads/pdf/public-docs/2010/defence_white_paper_2010.pdf.
- 69 Lieutenant Colonel J Lumbaca, 'Relationship Building: The Key Objective of US SOF Phase Zero Engagement', *Special Warfare*, 27: 1, January-March 2014, p. 28.
- 70 Davies et al., *A Versatile Force*, p. 6.
- 71 Particularly missiles such as the containerised Club-K system.
- 72 The evolution of the Harpoon missile is an example of this innovation, with the stand-off land attack missile variant now capable of a 250 km range, with GPS capabilities ensuring significant accuracy. The proposed P-8 acquisition is also capable of employing this weapon system. Operation Slipper exposure to the US HIMARs system has highlighted a special forces surface-surface fires capability requirement that might be met through such systems.
- 73 The targeteering and missile knowledge that already resides within RAN and RAAF for the Harpoon missile systems makes these personnel the logical choice for technical missile operator and maintenance roles.

- 74 As proposed by Land 121 (<http://www.army.gov.au/Our-future/Projects/Project-LAND-121>). Platforms such as the Rhienmetall have already been modified for the Patriot missile system, and therefore may be ideal for modification.
- 75 Davies et al., *A Versatile Force*, p. 6. The authors recommend that 'SOF foreign engagement should prioritise Australia's near region... [and] Defence could consider establishing SOF liaison elements in selected Australian embassies'.
- 76 Bates Gill, *Alliances Under Austerity: What does America Want?*, Centre of Gravity series, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra: ANU, 2013, p. 7.
- 77 Geoffrey Till, *Outgoing Australia?*, Centre of Gravity Series, Strategic and Defense Studies Centre, Canberra: ANU, 2014, p. 4. Till further argues that 'as a middle power Australia will need to offer significant contributions to coalition actions to help resolve low and high end regional crises and ensure Australian interests are protected' (p. 3).
- 78 Kaplan, *Asia's Cauldron*, p. 174.
- 79 This comment responds to criticism by Brown and Medcalf, *Fixing Australia's Incredible Defence Policy*, p. 7: 'Historically, most Australian political leaders have only engaged on strategic military issues in reaction to a crisis or strategic shock... the 1999 East Timor experience of being caught with a defence force unprepared to deploy still resonates deeply'.
- 80 Davies et al., *A Versatile Force*, p. 15.
- 81 *Defence White Paper 2013*, p. 24.