COMMONWEALTH OF AUSTRALIA

Official Committee Hansard

SENATE

STANDING COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Reference: Australia’s involvement in peacekeeping operations

WEDNESDAY, 5 SEPTEMBER 2007

CANBERRA

BY AUTHORITY OF THE SENATE

INTERNET

The Proof and Official Hansard transcripts of Senate committee hearings, some House of Representatives committee hearings and some joint committee hearings are available on the Internet. Some House of Representatives committees and some joint committees make available only Official Hansard transcripts.

The Internet address is: **http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard**

To search the parliamentary database, go to:
http://parlinfoweb.aph.gov.au

SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, DEFENCE AND TRADE

Wednesday, 5 September 2007

Members: Senator Payne *(Chair)*, Senator Hutchins *(Deputy Chair)*, Senators Mark Bishop, Forshaw, Hogg, Sandy Macdonald and Trood

Participating members: Senators Adams, Allison, Bartlett, Bernardi, Birmingham, Boswell, Boyce, Brandis, Bob Brown, Carol Brown, George Campbell, Carr, Chapman, Conroy, Cormann, Crossin, Eggleston, Chris Evans, Faulkner, Fielding, Fierravanti-Wells, Fifield, Fisher, Heffernan, Hurley, Joyce, Kemp, Kirk, Lightfoot, Ludwig, Lundy, Ian Macdonald, Marshall, McGauran, Mason, Milne, Nash, Nettle, Parry, Polley, Robert Ray, Scullion, Siewert, Sterle, Stott Despoja, Watson, Webber and Wortley

Senators in attendance: Senators Mark Bishop, Cormann, Forshaw, Hogg, Hutchins, Payne and Trood

Terms of reference for the inquiry:

To inquire into and report on:

The changing nature of Australia's involvement in peacekeeping operations and the implications for the Australian Defence Force, AusAID, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and the Australian Federal Police and other departments and agencies likely to be called on to assist a peacekeeping operation, with particular reference to:

a. the policy framework, procedures and protocols that govern the Government's decision to participate in a peacekeeping operation, for determining the conditions of engagement and for ceasing to participate;

b. the training and preparedness of Australians likely to participate in a peacekeeping operation;

c. the coordination of Australia's contribution to a peacekeeping operation among Australian agencies and also with the United Nations and other relevant countries; and

d. lessons learnt from recent participation in peacekeeping operations that would assist government to prepare for future operations.

WITNESSES

APTHORPE, Professor Raymond James, Private capacity **34**

BREEN, Dr Bob, Research Fellow, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University **40**

CLUNIES-ROSS, Major General Adrian, Chairman, National Defence Committee, Returned and Services League of Australia **1**

CONNOR, Dr John Stephen, Volume Author, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations* **40**

DOOLAN, Rear Admiral Kenneth Allan (Retired), Member, National Defence Committee, Returned and Services League of Australia **1**

HORNER, Professor David Murray, Professor of Australian Defence History, Australian National University; and Official Historian, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations* **40**

LONDEY, Dr Peter David, Military History Section, Australian War Memorial; and Author, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations* **40**

MALEY, Mr Michael Charles, Director, International Services, Australian Electoral Commission **12**

PICKERING, Mr Tim, First Assistant Commissioner, Electoral Operations, Australian Electoral Commission **12**

PURNELL, Mr David Lyle, National Administrator, United Nations Association of Australia **22**

RAFALOWICZ, Mr Alex, National Vice President (Policy), United Nations Youth Association of Australia **22**

Committee met at 11.39 am

CLUNIES-ROSS, Major General Adrian, Chairman, National Defence Committee, Returned and Services League of Australia

DOOLAN, Rear Admiral Kenneth Allan (Retired), Member, National Defence Committee, Returned and Services League of Australia

CHAIR (Senator Payne)—Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I declare open this meeting of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade, which is inquiring into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping. These are public proceedings, although the committee may agree to a request to have evidence heard in camera or may determine that certain evidence should be heard in camera. I remind all witnesses that in the giving of evidence to the committee they are protected by parliamentary privilege. It is unlawful for anyone to threaten or disadvantage a witness on account of evidence given to a committee, and such action may be treated by the Senate as a contempt. It is also a contempt to give false or misleading evidence to a committee.

If a witness objects to answering a question, the witness should state the ground upon which the objection is taken, and the committee will determine whether it will insist on an answer, having regard to the ground which is claimed. If the committee determines to insist on an answer, a witness may request that the answer be given in camera. Such a request may, of course, also be made at any other time.

I welcome to the hearing our witnesses this morning, representatives from the Returned and Services League of Australia. May I again place on the record the committee's apologies for the delay in commencement of this morning's proceedings. We were delayed in the commencement of our earlier hearing by the late arrival of a plane carrying a witness, and the matters under consideration became somewhat more complex than we were expecting, so that did delay proceedings.

The committee has before it a submission from the RSL, which is numbered 9. That is now a public document. Do you need to make any amendments to that submission?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—No, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR—I would like to ask you to make an opening statement, and then we will go to questions.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Thanks, Madam Chair, and thanks for the opportunity to appear before this inquiry. To add to the peacekeeping example cited in annex A to the RSL submission to this inquiry it is worth reflecting on the lessons learnt from the UN-sponsored mission to Somalia in the early 1990s. UNOSOM was established in April 1992 as a humanitarian mission to feed the starving population of Somalia. The UN experienced extreme difficulty in trying to implement its plan because the need for security had been underestimated. UNOSOM was strengthened in July 1992 and again on 28 August, but without much success. In an attempt to rectify this situation, the UN Security Council adopted resolution 794 on 3 December 1992. This established the UN peacekeeping force UNITAF led by the USA and involving many countries,

including Australia. Who can forget the unopposed arrival of some elements of this force over the beaches at Mogadishu in the full glare of representatives of the world's news media? Unfortunately, this benign impression of Somalia was an illusion. Anarchy prevailed in the virtually lawless country, and during the succeeding month and years UN peacekeepers were attacked and killed while trying to help the people of Somalia.

Lessons to be learnt from this experience were highlighted in the RSL submission to this committee. Firstly, ADF elements deployed on peacemaking, peacekeeping or peace-enforcing operations must be trained and prepared for war. Adapting core competent skills to the particular circumstances of any peacekeeping operation is relatively simple. Secondly, peacekeeping forces must be capable of coping with sudden or unexpected escalations of violence and have the equipment, communications, logistic support and robust rules of engagement to deal with such circumstances.

Over the last 20 years the ADF has been heavily involved in peacekeeping operations in a variety of differing circumstances, and this involvement is likely to continue into the foreseeable future. The success of the ADF in coping with these challenging situations has been due to its concentration on training and equipping itself for its core war-fighting function, which promotes the necessary cohesion, flexibility and individual skill to meet any challenge.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. Admiral, do you wish to add anything?

Rear Adm. Doolan—No, thank you, Madam Chair.

CHAIR—Thank you for your submission, which complements a number of the submissions we have received across this inquiry. For example, I think you make a suggestion that it may be useful to have what you describe as 'a centre for lessons learnt' in relation to the ADF's participation in peacekeeping operations. There have been a couple of suggestions about centres, including from Major-General Tim Ford in his submission, and we discussed these, in some brief consideration, with General Gillespie when he appeared before the committee on behalf of the ADF. I am wondering if you have any familiarity with what the Peacekeeping Centre at Williamtown does, and whether that might be the sort of facility which could incorporate your suggestion, or whether you think it should be a separate operation, a separate facility?

Rear Adm. Doolan—I think the RSL would go along with whatever the ADF felt was the best means of setting up a peacekeeping centre, whether that be at Williamtown or at another college that the ADF runs. The important thing is that the lessons that have been learnt the hard way, over a period of quite a considerable number of years now, be put together so that we do not go down the same track again.

CHAIR—Speaking of lessons learnt, your submission also talks about INTERFET and its particular role. I think it is late in your submission that you talk about the effectiveness of the early intervention in East Timor in relation to the activities of INTERFET and then the regression, if you like, which ended up in the activities of early or mid-2006. Is there a way, at least from the ADF's perspective, that the sort of centre you are talking about might have averted or assisted in averting those events, or encouraged the ADF to maintain a higher presence in East Timor or something like that?

Rear Adm. Doolan—I think the point we are making there—and we have gone back to it several times—is that, when you are in a peacekeeping or peace-enforcing situation, you have opportunists against you the whole time. Looking through rose-tinted glasses at what these opportunists will do, whether they be the rose-tinted glasses of military people involved in peacekeeping or of their political masters, adds up to the same thing: that whilst you have a firm control over the situation and can keep that firm control then the political process in that country can evolve in a safe way. I suppose Timor is the classic example of that: perhaps if a more robust system of peace-enforcing, breaking down to peacekeeping, had been kept there throughout that period of time there would not have been the need to go back again and redo what had already been done.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—By the time we went to INTERFET, we had quite a significant amount of experience in peacekeeping operations and in peace-enforcing and peacemaking, and I think most of the lessons had been pretty well learnt. But I think one of the lessons that we obviously had not learnt is that you cannot go into one of these operations and expect to be successful in a few months and that, if you are going into an operation like INTERFET, you have to be mentally prepared to stay there for a considerable period of time. And if the situation does subside after the initial deployment, which it did, you do not then assume that the situation will stay that way forever. I think that is probably the key lesson to be learnt from that particular exercise because we then had to go back. We did not quite have to start from taws again, but we did have to go back and reimpose security on the situation, which had deteriorated.

Rear Adm. Doolan—If I may add to that: the instance we cited, of Cyprus, is quite germane to this, because the Cyprus thing has been running for decades. The reality of it is that it is gradually easing down to being a policing situation, but the police are still there keeping the peace.

CHAIR—Indeed; they have been there since 1964, I think.

Senator HUTCHINS—Gentlemen, a number of witnesses referred to the ‘responsibility to protect’ doctrine and the need for mandates to allow the use of force to protect civilians. The Christian World Service proposed that force protection, the safety of forces, must be of the highest importance but not more important than accomplishing the mission of protecting civilians. What are your views on the ‘responsibility to protect’ principle and its implications for ADF peacekeeping personnel?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Their responsibility is to protect civilians. I think this is pretty fundamental to any peacekeeping operation. If you are going into a peacekeeping operation where you are trying to keep two sides apart, you are obviously also trying to build up credibility with the civilian population. The indiscriminate injuring or killing of civilians is totally counterproductive to whatever mission you are going into. There is one very good example that came out of Somalia, I think. An Australian section were patrolling in a crowded area in a marketplace, and they were fired on. The section commander who was commanding that patrol made a snap decision not to fire back because he thought in so doing he might injure civilians. You need a very high degree of training and awareness of the situation to be able to make that decision because the instinctive reaction of any section commander who is properly trained

would be to fire back. That seems to me a good example of the way that the ADF is trained and the way that ADF people will respond. Any ADF person will have at the back of his mind—not at the back of his mind but probably at the front of his mind—that he should not be harming civilians in any way, and I am sure this is what is drummed into them.

Senator HUTCHINS—In Melbourne Professor McCormack suggested to us that on a macro—but also on a micro—level there was a responsibility to protect for peacekeeping personnel, and that at some point in a situation personnel would need to make a decision to intervene because civilians were going to be harmed or killed. In both your experience and in your opinion—or in the RSL's opinion—would you see that as a component of training for Australian defence personnel?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Indeed I would, yes, and I am sure it is. When we made the point about training for war we meant that the fundamental core training exercise has got to be the conventional one, but then you adapt your core training to the particular circumstance you are in. That requires a lot of extensive briefing and any other activity that is required, but I am sure that what you mention is at the forefront of people's understanding and, indeed, specific training for the mission that they are going to undertake. Would you like to add to that?

Rear Adm. Doolan—It really underlines the importance of having those who are sent in harm's way in a peace-enforcing or peacekeeping environment to be capable of moving up or down the scale of escalation of violence to cope with various circumstances. If, as we have asserted, you train your forces at the highest level, it is much easier for them to step back because they have been given all those rungs of capability in their training and have been put through the paces to do that; whereas if they have not been trained to go up the ladder as well, if I can put it in that context, they may well find themselves unable to cope. Perhaps I should add to that—and it is a very important point that we are trying to get across here on the half of the RSL—that they must have the wherewithal in their command structure, including the communications—to go to your point, Senator—to go immediately to a higher authority to check, if there is time to do so. If the person there has not got the right set of communications, that may not be possible. In other words, if you train for the highest level, it is easy to walk back. It is not easy to go the other way.

Senator HUTCHINS—I understand that, and that was the chair's first question about the proposed centre for lessons learnt.

Rear Adm. Doolan—In talking about all of these things, the training that the RSL believes is important is that we build on all this. There is a vast volume of experience now of people who have been involved in peacekeeping and peace-enforcing over the years, and many of these situations, as my colleague has just mentioned, are there and are available to be used as training aids.

Senator HUTCHINS—So you would support the concept that, if there were no clear rules of engagement or even if there were rules of engagement and an individual unit, in their assessment, could provide intervention that would save civilian lives, then they have that right to protect? Would you support it if they cannot make a phone call or radio call and they have to make that decision there and then?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—The judgement will have to be made on the spot, as it always is. But there would have to be rules of engagement laid down anyway for any operation. I cannot see us going into any operation without very specific rules of engagement. Those rules of engagement are the framework on which the individual, at whatever level, makes his decision.

Senator HUTCHINS—The Dutch peacekeepers in Srebrenica, it appears, were well aware that Muslim men and boys were being rounded up to be executed, and they did nothing.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—I think they were operating under UN rules, which did not give them any scope to do anything. You could argue that the commander on the spot, whatever rules he was under, should have done something about it, and that was the argument that was made subsequently: that the commander did not act with any initiative in that situation. But I have no doubt that he was obeying whatever rules had been laid down by the UN.

Senator HUTCHINS—But that is where I go back to this right to protect.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Yes.

Senator HUTCHINS—It might be all right for us politicians here, but you have actually been there. You have possibly been in those positions or observed them. What do you do?

Rear Adm. Doolan—The point I would make is the one we have made in our paper. In other words, the rules of engagement must be sufficiently robust, and the commanders on the ground, in the air and at sea involved in these things must understand and be comfortable with those rules of engagement. One of the lessons that I bring to the table from my experience as the operational commander in Gulf War I is the need for the operational commander to ensure that the rules of engagement that come down from on high are acceptable in terms of the operation that is underway.

You cite the instances in the former Yugoslavia. I do not have specific information, so I cannot give you an answer on that. But, had I been involved in that, it would have been—I would have thought—a command responsibility to ensure that your rules of engagement were sufficiently robust to deal with those sorts of circumstances. You cannot foresee every conceivable circumstance, but the worst thing that can happen to a commander on the ground is to have weak rules of engagement which hamstring him or her in circumstances such as that. That is why we have argued in our paper for very robust rules of engagement.

Senator HUTCHINS—Professor McCormack suggested to us that there could be a responsibility or an argument on the micro level—he used that term ‘micro level’—for the duty to protect. He suggested that, in the end, irrespective of rules of engagement, or statements here and there, or pious and well-meaning documents, peacekeeping personnel, on an individual level, have the right, the duty, to protect.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Do you mean a formal legal right or a moral right?

Senator HUTCHINS—A moral one.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—I think that most Australian commanders would see some moral imperative if they were faced with that sort of situation.

Senator HUTCHINS—So would you concur with Professor McCormack's view—and I am using Professor McCormack's words as I recall them—that there is a duty to protect on a micro level, irrespective of any rules of engagement or documents or statements or undertakings?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—I think I probably would, but I do not know whether I am getting into a difficult situation here.

Senator HUTCHINS—If you would not mind, gentlemen, please take that on notice and go back to your boards and see whether they have a view on it.

Senator TROOD—I want to continue on from Senator Hutchins's inquiry. There are two issues here to do with training. There is the question of the way in which individual members of the Defence Force are trained for the various responsibilities that they will be required to undertake during the course of their service from the time that they are inducted into the Defence Force and then move through the ranks. As I understand it, your proposition is that the kind of training that they undergo at the moment should continue to be the basis upon which we undertake peacekeeping activities. Is that right? Apart from the need for some perhaps specialised training that might arise in the case of individual missions et cetera, the foundations of the training should continue to be the foundations of the peacekeeping activities. Is that right?

Rear Adm. Doolan—I am sorry if I have misled you. No. The RSL very strongly believes that the basis of training for all members of the ADF must be for full-scale war.

Senator TROOD—That is what I am saying.

Rear Adm. Doolan—I misunderstood.

CHAIR—I think that you are in agreement.

Senator TROOD—Perhaps I misrepresented myself.

Rear Adm. Doolan—It is easy to scale back; it is not easy to scale up.

Senator TROOD—I understand that. I am familiar with ladders of opportunity of various kinds. I understand that proposition, which is not an uncommon view. We have heard that from the Defence Force and other witnesses to the committee. But it seems to me that there is a second question. Apart from the basis of training for all members of the Defence Force, there is a question about structures within the Defence Force and how you address the question of peacekeeping activity. While one might have members of the Defence Force trained as warriors, if you will, or as soldiers in the normal way, might there be a case, in your view, for the Defence Force turning its attention to some kind of structure which might allow it to maintain some kind of permanent capability to meet the peacekeeping needs that the Defence Force might confront from time to time?

Rear Adm. Doolan—A defence force that is structured to go into a full-scale war is the best possible option for any commander. They can downgrade and adjust that as needs be. That provides that commander with all the options. If you structure a fighting force to do something low grade it is much more difficult to go back the other way, because the focus, whether you like it or not, once you change those structures is not for full-scale operations. If the belligerent on the other side—and there always are such in these opportunistic places—wants to up the scale, you suddenly have to change your structure.

Senator TROOD—I understand the debate about force structures in relation to battalions and infantry units and all that sort of thing. I suppose that I am really thinking about whether or not there is room within the Defence Force establishment for an office of peacekeeping which might more fully develop the kinds of expertise required for peacekeeping and then which might be able to draw upon the forces needed as the circumstances arise.

Rear Adm. Doolan—What has happened over the years, as I understand it, is that the ADF structure has evolved for the worst case scenario, and the structure remains that way. You can then use those elements to do what was needed after Cyclone Tracy in Darwin or what was needed after the tsunami in Indonesia. Once you have a highly trained and broadly capable defence force with all the necessary elements—communications, logistics and all those sorts of things—geared to high-level operations, it is very easy, with multiskilled people, to adapt. That is the point that I would make: you multiskill your people so that they are very flexible and are able to go and do all these other things. This goes back to the chair's opening question as to whether there needs to be another centre of excellence. My answer to that, if I recall, was that I am sure that the RSL would go along with wherever the ADF wished to put that. They could put it in one place or penny-parcel it out and do lots of it in lots of courses, which is a matter in which they are the best judges. But I believe that I speak for my colleague in saying that to have a special arrangement, structure or something of that nature for peacekeeping within the ADF is something that would not sit comfortably with the RSL.

Senator TROOD—I see. Your submission, which I recognise is focused primarily on the defence forces, does not say anything about the evolving role of the Federal Police in peacekeeping activities. In your view, is that a desirable development? Do you see a role for the police to play? Your focus is on the virtues, as need arises, of particular kinds of training and the need to be able to deploy force when needed. Of course, that is not the capability that the Australian Federal Police possess, but increasingly the Federal Police are involving themselves in peacekeeping missions. I wondered whether you have a view on that evolution and that development.

Rear Adm. Doolan—We have cited Cyprus as a place where police have been involved from the word go. We have talked about RAMSI, where police are involved. Yes, we did focus on the ADF in our submission, but we certainly did not discount either the police or, for that matter, other federal agencies or other non-government agencies. Those other agencies, particularly when you get to peacemaking and peacekeeping, are part and parcel of the deal—perhaps not in the first instance when we are going into a peace-enforcing operation, which is virtually one step short of outright conflict, but, as peace is provided, the history of this country's involvement in peacekeeping missions has been to gradually get to the stage where the ADF moves away from the role and other agencies take over. I suppose Cyprus is the classic example of that. We would

believe the police are a vastly important part of it. We do not happen to have a member of the police on our National Defence Committee.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—There are two recent examples which are currently underway. One is RAMSI, in the Solomons, and the other is the Timor exercise. The police are heavily involved, and the Australians in Timor are working very closely with not only Australian police but also Portuguese police and others. In RAMSI, the police have a very significant role to play. As things settle down, as my colleague has said, the role that the police play will be far more important than the role of the ADF in certain situations. We do not underestimate, by any means, the role of the police; it is just that we do not have any specific expertise in it, and we concentrated on the role of the ADF in this regard.

Senator TROOD—I appreciate that your submission was focused on the ADF, but I was interested in this intersection, which is becoming increasingly important, between the role of the police and the role of the ADF.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Absolutely.

Senator TROOD—It seems to me that in many ways there is an evolution there which is likely to continue. In relation to the development of the AFP's capabilities, do you think it justifies a substantial expenditure on building a capability which the AFP would have for a relatively high degree of independence in its roles and missions?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—I think the Federal Police have established a training college at Majura, specifically for that purpose. I heard a newsflash the other day that a vastly increased number of police are going to be involved in these sorts of exercises in future. The fact that they have established such a college—we did have a brief from the deputy of the college not long ago—shows that they are concentrating very much on that aspect, because they are going to get involved more and more in the future, without a doubt. I think they see it that way too, quite frankly.

Senator TROOD—The international force that they are creating is projected to go up to 1,200 personnel over a period of time, but they have also said to the committee that they would need to develop some kinds of capabilities in relation to moving their people around, and that might require vehicles and various other pieces of kit and equipment. I suppose the question then is, 'How far should this evolution go, independent of the capacity to work with the Defence Force?' Do you have a view on that?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—They will inevitably be working in conjunction with the Defence Force, and it would seem to me reasonably logical that they would have their own means of transport, communications and various other things. It would be impossible for them to work from the Defence Force's capabilities; they would have to have their own, I would think. I would not have any problem with that proposition at all.

Senator HOGG—I want to raise the issue of the mental health and wellbeing of the people who serve in these spheres of operation—not necessarily at the time they are in the operation but subsequently. It seems, from some of the evidence that we have heard, that people do suffer from service in places like Rwanda and so on. It did not seem to be mentioned in your submission. I

am wondering how the RSL addresses this issue given that there can be limited numbers of people participating in some of these operations and it may well be a substantial time after their service that the symptoms emerge. How does your organisation address this matter? Do you get many people coming to you raising this concern as a result of their service? If so, how could it be addressed to ensure that people who might be vulnerable are not placed in these positions?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—The principal function of the RSL is veterans' affairs, and these sorts of conditions come very much within the sphere of Veterans' Affairs. Anyone who has had, in the modern parlance, post-traumatic stress disorder as a result of a peacekeeping operation or a peace-enforcing operation—depending on the nature of that operation and whether it was designated as 'operational service' or some other designation—would receive the same treatment under the Veterans' Entitlements Act as any soldier who was engaged on operations.

Senator HOGG—I accept that, but my question goes to whether this is manifest in your organisation in, say, people who served in East Timor who are no longer active service personnel but are suffering. How does your organisation track this and follow it up, or is this something that is of a minor order and therefore does not warrant a great deal of attention?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—As far as the RSL is concerned it would be a very significant aspect. When anyone suffering from any sort of situation that they may have been in comes to the RSL, they would immediately be given all the resources of the RSL to put them on the right track—in other words, to get to Veterans' Affairs to find out what their entitlements are and so on. So the RSL would consider that a very important part of the exercise. It does not come under the defence committee specifically, but there are other elements of the RSL that would take all these matters extremely seriously—in fact, they would be dealing with them on a daily basis.

Senator HOGG—Would the RSL be able to provide us with any evidence that might show how many people from specific operations have approached the RSL over time with conditions that might not have been obvious at the time they were discharged?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—I am sure that the RSL could provide some sort of information on that.

Senator HOGG—Would you take that on notice for us?

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Yes, we can. It is not really in our bailiwick, but we can certainly bring it up and I am sure they can provide something. Essentially, the people who could provide these sorts of statistics are the Department of Veterans' Affairs.

Senator HOGG—Yes, but they have difficulties because some of these people have not necessarily reached the Department of Veterans' Affairs at this stage. They may well be trying to plead their case that they have a problem, in the first instance, so these may not be confirmed cases.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—The RSL, in the states, would be engaged in this sort of exercise on almost a daily basis.

Senator HOGG—Yes, I accept that. Would you take that question on notice.

Major Gen. Clunies-Ross—Certainly if we can provide statistics, we will.

Senator HUTCHINS—Can we get your observations on the role of the ADF in humanitarian activities? We have had some submissions, particularly from Oxfam, that the military involvement in humanitarian activities has blurred the role between NGOs and the ADF. The NGOs, particularly Oxfam, have suggested that it poses a threat to the security and space of humanitarian organisations such as Oxfam. Do you have any comment or observations on what may appear to be an increasing role by the ADF in humanitarian activities and how that can differentiate itself in the field from what might be seen as NGO people where we are serving?

Rear Adm. Doolan—I will do the best I can to answer your question by referring to what the ADF did in support of the massive tsunami in Indonesia a couple of years ago. The ADF's great strength and ability in humanitarian efforts is to be able to get there with sufficient equipment and personnel and to do things immediately. The ADF then, as we understand it, steps back when it sensibly can to allow the NGOs to take over. No turnover in these areas will ever be perfect, because every circumstance will differ depending upon the arrangements at the time.

I think the ADF has a proud record of humanitarian efforts. I cited before what happened in Darwin after Cyclone Tracy. Although there were massive efforts by a lot of people, the Australian Defence Force did a great deal in our own country, and will be available to do that elsewhere. For each circumstance there will be a point of decision where the humanitarian effort put forward by the Australian Defence Force is able to be taken over by a non-government organisation such as Oxfam. The judgements will have to be made at the time as to what is the appropriate time to do it. If by the question that you put to me you are suggesting that the ADF should be responsible for transporting those people into a theatre of humanitarian need, that is a judgement that they would have to make at the time.

Senator HUTCHINS—Admiral, what organisations such as Oxfam have put to us is that the ADF can pick up a rifle and shoot it or enforce whatever the rules of engagement are but that they are there to make sure the water is running or that the medicine is delivered. Their concern is that they are being labelled as part of a political solution—and I am using my observations here—whereas they see themselves as non-political, non-religious et cetera. It has been put to us that using the terminology 'humanitarian' is possibly inappropriate for armed forces activities or intervention.

Rear Adm. Doolan—I think I could probably say that the RSL view would be that, if there were a humanitarian need, it would be churlish of the nation not to use its Defence Force to assist to the extent that it could and would wish to do so. Terminology really is not the important thing if you are looking at the needs of the person on the ground. The people on the ground are being beset by whatever disaster has befallen them and they are the people who need help. I suspect they really could not give a damn, quite frankly, what word is used to describe it as long as they got some water or some food.

Senator HUTCHINS—But someone might say that Oxfam does. I know that we are running short of time. Gentlemen, I wonder if we could send you some questions on notice. If you would not mind responding in writing, that would be helpful.

Rear Adm. Doolan—We will certainly do our best on that particular issue, but you will appreciate, just to round that out, that the whole business of being involved only comes about because the government of the day, on behalf of the people, sends the ADF to do this. This is not something that the ADF stands up and says that it wants to do. It is quite capable of doing it and it does it very well.

CHAIR—Indeed. Rear Admiral Doolan, Major General Clunies-Ross, thank you both very much for joining us today. Again I apologise for the delay in the commencement of proceedings.

[12.21 pm]

MALEY, Mr Michael Charles, Director, International Services, Australian Electoral Commission

PICKERING, Mr Tim, First Assistant Commissioner, Electoral Operations, Australian Electoral Commission

CHAIR—I welcome representatives of the Australian Electoral Commission to this hearing. I reiterate my, and the committee's, apologies for the delay in inviting you to the table. I am not sure if you were here for the end of the previous hearing, but the committee conducted a hearing into a piece of legislation this morning and it took longer than we expected. One of our witnesses was delayed by fog or flights, or both I suspect. I understand that a copy of today's opening statement has been provided to you. Do you have any questions regarding that?

Mr Pickering—No, we do not.

CHAIR—We have before us the submission of the Australian Electoral Commission, which we have numbered 21. That is now a public document. Do you need to make any amendments to that submission?

Mr Pickering—No, we do not.

CHAIR—I invite you to make a brief opening statement and then we will go to questions from the committee.

Mr Maley—The Australian Electoral Commission has been involved with UN peacekeeping at various points since 1999 when we first sent people to Namibia to participate in the Namibian independent elections of November of that year. The involvements have been diverse, ranging from deploying large groups of election supervisors or observers—as in Namibia and Cambodia—through to specialised involvement in the certification or management of election processes, as in East Timor and in Cambodia again; involvement in UN survey missions in preparation for peacekeeping operations with an electoral dimension; and providing backroom support for UN operations such as the Timor popular consultation in 1999 when we actually did not have people on the ground in the country. There have been a number of parliamentary committee inquiries since about 1991 looking at Australian involvement in peacekeeping. On each occasion we have taken the opportunity to put a submission to those committees updating them on what the AEC has been doing, how we have worked with other parts of the Australian government in configuring our involvements in peace operations, and updating the parliament on the evolving character of electoral operations within the peacekeeping environment. Our current submission falls within that framework—it is for the information of the committee. We are very happy to take questions.

CHAIR—Mr Pickering, did you wish to add anything?

Mr Pickering—No, thank you.

CHAIR—I want to record the committee's thanks for the very comprehensive submission that the AEC has provided. It is very interesting and will assist in our deliberations in this particular inquiry. There are a couple of issues which I want to start with. You talk in the submission about the AEC's mandate under the Commonwealth Electoral Act to do the sort of work that we are talking about here. You note that that support is predominantly funded under organisations like AusAID and so on.

From the perspective of the AEC, is that a sufficiently guaranteed and flexible arrangement to allow you to identify and prioritise your activities and provide the sort of assistance which is required? I would use as an example—and this is referred to in your submission—the quite extensive engagement in the Solomons Islands in the period leading up to the 2006 elections, which effectively amounted to embedding staff in their electoral commission and pursuing the two programs which were running at the time. It is a very big ask.

Mr Maley—Yes. I think we have been very happy with the way in which we have been able to work with AusAID over the years. I should mention that we are at the point of concluding a strategic partnership agreement with AusAID which will further encapsulate and formalise the very good cooperation that we have had between the two organisations. In a case such as the Solomons, the nature of the RAMSI operation I think made it absolutely inevitable that we would be working closely with both AusAID and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade because it was conceived as a whole-of-government operation and ours was but one part of that exercise. Although we were very heavily involved in the Solomons, the strain that it placed on our own organisation was not especially severe because we did not have large numbers of people on the ground at any particular time there. The Solomon Islands Electoral Commission office is fairly small and we did not want to overwhelm it by putting large numbers of international advisers in there. Our aim was to work cooperatively with them so that you would have some development of local capacity as well. That was a challenge, but it was an enterprise that we thought was worth pursuing and continue to think is worth pursuing.

When it came to the civic education program, which is discussed in our submission, our particular focus was to try to work as much as we could with people from the Solomon Islands. In fact, we recruited very good local staff who were involved in the design of curriculum materials and the day-to-day management of the project. We had one full-time coordinator there from the AEC, plus one of my colleagues from my section who has a special focus on the Pacific. He went in from time to time to work on the curriculum development and so on. The field coordinators and the people who were actually doing the education work were Solomon Islanders. When it is feasible, we think that is the most effective way to work not only because it lessens the burden on our organisation but because it provides an operation which is in the long term much more sustainable. It is a matter of some gratification to us that some of the people who worked with us on that operation have since been able to work internationally in doing capacity building work in other countries. For example, one of our very best facilitators from the civic education program in the Solomons has spent quite a bit of time in the last 12 months in Papua New Guinea, working with the Papua New Guinea Electoral Commission. That is the sort of objective that we try to work towards in putting together these operations.

Mr Pickering—I would like to add to the issue in relation to availability of staff. As you were saying, the profile of AEC staff in some of these missions is dependent on the operational

availability of staff within the Australian context as well. For example, given our closeness to a federal election—

CHAIR—So I keep hearing!

Mr Pickering—the availability of staff would be somewhat limited compared to other times—hence Mr Maley's comment about us trying to maintain small numbers of staff available at all times in these particular areas, except for the high-peak periods of operational exposure here in Australia.

CHAIR—I will move on to my colleagues because I know that there is a deal of interest in your submission, but I might say that I had the opportunity to observe, at very close hand, the work in the Solomon Islands in particular. I observed the relationship between the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission and your staff who were working closely with them. Also, Solomon Islanders had been part of delivering the CEP. Without exception, it is more than highly creditable. It was an exceptional arrangement, in my personal view, which, having seen it play out in the context of the RAMSI engagement as well, showed me how very important that process is and how very professionally and effectively the AEC carries out its role.

I was in a remote area, Gizo-Kolombangara, where in fact I was being guided at one stage by one of your CEP trainers. He was very pleased to observe the high level of formality at the booths which we were visiting in the count process at the end, and so on. So I think that level of engagement really pays enormous dividends. I also observed the Solomon Islands Electoral Commissioner interacting with your staff, and that relationship also seemed to me to be a very productive and a very good one. So my feedback, for what it is worth, on that particular matter—and I have also seen it in East Timor over several years, as Mr Maley well knows—is extremely positive.

Mr Pickering—Thank you, Chair.

Senator TROOD—Thank you, gentlemen, for appearing this afternoon. Your submission refers to this BRIDGE activity you have been undertaking. I wonder if you could just provide me with a little more information about how that relationship works between the commission and the United Nations, as I understand it, but also some other institutions. For example, does your staff deliver these programs, or do you contract that out to others? I would be interested in a wider understanding of how this particular relationship operates.

Mr Maley—Perhaps I should start by giving you some brief background on the genesis of the BRIDGE course. In the late 1990s, a lot of our work involved sending technical advisers to other electoral commissions around the world to do a specific task. Very often, the first person they would encounter would be a newly appointed electoral official, particularly in a country that was trying to retool its operations or move in a more democratic direction. This person may well have come from outside the electoral world—from the judiciary, academia or wherever—and would seize upon any electoral expert from another country and pepper him or her with questions not just on the things which he or she had been sent to do but on a whole range of aspects of the electoral process. It became very clear to us through getting these reports back that there were many people being tasked with running elections who had very little knowledge from the beginning of what they had to do and who really were facing an extremely difficult and

challenging task. At that point, there was nowhere in the world they could go to get a comprehensive introduction to what is involved in running an election. It seemed to us that there was an opportunity there. There was a gap to be filled. There was a chance to develop some tools for capacity building which could help these people.

So, in December 1999, we assembled a small advisory team here in Canberra which consisted of some people from the AEC, plus a number of officials from other countries who had been in exactly that situation. We had a colleague who was Supervisor of Elections in Fiji**.** We had a member of the Indonesian electoral commission, the KPU. We had the just-finished-up deputy chief electoral officer from the UNAMET operation in East Timor. We had some colleagues from the South African Independent Electoral Commission. We said to them, 'Try to devise a curriculum which will tell you all the things which, with the benefit of hindsight, you wish you had known when you first came into this job.' That was the genesis of the BRIDGE course.

We were joined in this exercise by International IDEA, the International Institute for Democracy and Electoral Assistance, and also by the UN Electoral Assistance Division, with which at that time we had been working extremely closely on the Timor referendum. From that came the project to develop a comprehensive curriculum which would be made generally available to people who were in a professional situation where they needed to be able to run these sorts of courses.

It was generally agreed among the three partner organisations—us, IDEA and the UN—that we would not seek to restrict the use of the materials once they had been developed, other than to ensure that the course could only be delivered by properly accredited facilitators, because it is a very interactive exercise and it is not the sort of thing that can be taught by anyone. We have in fact developed a facilitators' course which is taught separately from the BRIDGE course, and we have quite a number of facilitators who have been trained up around the world.

Beyond that, it became a tool that could be used by the different organisations as they saw fit in their own programs. So, within the AEC, we have embedded the BRIDGE course in a lot of our work in the Solomons and in Pacific countries where we are funded by AusAID under the Pacific Governance Support Program. We have used elements of BRIDGE in our work in Indonesia and in Papua New Guinea—that is done bilaterally—and it was used extensively in East Timor as a development exercise in 2001. We are in current discussions with the Timorese to do more BRIDGE courses up there after their current elections. In the meantime, International IDEA had some active programs in southern Africa, and they have done a lot to foster the courses used down there.

It has simply been about acquiring momentum through word-of-mouth information among the electoral world, which is a fairly small and intimate world. The course has been used in Afghanistan. In fact, they have accredited facilitators there and people who are going off and organising courses without any help from us, which we see as the ultimate objective—that this should become so sustainable that there are people in each country who have the teaching and organisational skills to put a course together and who can use the curriculum materials to advance their own capacity building and development. So it is getting bigger and bigger.

Our work within the AEC is to coordinate a single set of curriculum materials. We have an office, based in our Melbourne state office, with several colleagues who work to me, who

coordinate curriculum development and redevelopment and who gather information about courses that have been run around the world. Where facilitators come up with a good idea for a new activity which may get particular messages over in an effective way, we try to gather that resource with a view to incorporating it as an option in future courses. So that is a lot of work.

I think the most recent development—which has happened even since our submission was lodged—is that the UN Development Program and IFES, the International Foundation for Election Systems, based in Washington, which is the main US provider of electoral assistance for election administration, have come on board as project partners, so we now have five partners rather than the original three. The way in which the partners relate to each other is determined by an exchange of letters, which was undertaken at the end of March at the global election officials network conference in Washington. Basically, we have a project partnership committee which meets from time to time, where we discuss issues of mutual cooperation between the partners. We share information about particular courses that we may be sponsoring in different parts of the world, to make sure that we do not bump into each other and overlap, but the bulk of the cooperation is about the development of the curriculum.

We are in the process of developing a second version of the curriculum, which will go from the current 10 modules to 23, with a different structure. We are getting input from electoral experts from around the world in doing that, plus clearance through all the different partner organisations. That is going smoothly at the moment and is creating a lot of work for us. Most recently, one of my colleagues was in Nepal with UNDP looking at scoping the use of BRIDGE for long-term capacity building there in the aftermath of the elections with which the UN is involved at the moment. So it is a picture which changes every week, but we are happy with the direction in which it is moving.

Senator TROOD—Mr Maley, you obviously do not retain absolute control over the BRIDGE program; others can deliver it on the basis of the materials that you develop—

Mr Maley—That is right.

Senator TROOD—but you clearly retain in some places some control over delivering these programs. Do you deliver those from your own resources, or are they generally delivered in conjunction with AusAID or some other agency? The question really goes back to the question that Senator Payne asked about whether or not you are dependent upon your own resources or whether these activities are frequently, often or never, as the case may be, funded by outside bodies.

Mr Maley—We get a lot of funding from AusAID to do these activities in particular because AusAID has a particular interest in a number of its governance support programs in trying to develop capacity in a sustainable way, so they are particularly enthusiastic about course work of this type that can build local capacity. We will be looking towards our own resources, for example, if we need to send someone to a particular country to either facilitate a specific course or scope it. But even then we charge AusAID for the relevant costs of the staffer for the period in which they are involved in that, so it does not impose an additional burden on us in terms of salary dollars or that sort of thing, although it may well take someone out of the office for a few weeks, but that is part of our mandate.

Senator TROOD—I appreciate your focusing on electoral systems and elections and that element of governance, if you will, but I would be interested in your views as to whether or not you think there is some virtue in or need for developing a wider area of governance expertise which might be used overseas in conjunction with peacekeeping operations rather than, for example, pulling out some of the expertise that might exist in the Electoral Commission when that occasion arises, or perhaps you are actually contributing, for example, to the fragile state component of AusAID et cetera. Do you have a view on those questions?

Mr Maley—I think there are a number of different ways in which I can take your question. One question which I think is significant is whether electoral assistance of the type we are doing is best delivered by people from electoral commissions or by a specialised cadre of people. Having mused on this over the years, I am coming to the conclusion there are real benefits in being anchored in an Electoral Commission, for a couple of reasons. The first is that when you are working day to day in an Electoral Commission you remain in touch with the state of or the developments in the field. That is not just high-tech operations—electronic voting or those sorts of things, though by continuing to work in the AEC we are engaged with those sorts of issues—but you also have a different attitude to the running of elections when you are in an established election management body.

For those of us who work in the AEC, elections are a three-year activity. We start preparing for the next election almost as soon as we finish the last one. This is one of the great differences you see when you look at election management bodies in developing countries. There is a sense that, once the election is out of the way, nothing is going to happen for several years and that elections are things that are done in the last six to 12 months. To a certain extent, this is reinforced if a country has had a number of elections which have been undertaken in a peacekeeping environment, because they very typically are characterised by activity in the last six to 12 months before an election. This sort of stop-start approach to election management really has the capacity to limit the ability of a country to improve its elections beyond a certain point, because too much is done in crisis mode, too many new systems are implemented late in the day when there is not the opportunity to test them properly and to bed them down effectively and to develop the skills that are necessary for them to be used to their best capacity.

In fact, within the electoral assistance world—we flagged this to a certain extent in our submission—there is now much greater emphasis being placed on trying to get away from seeing elections as events and getting more to see them as part of an ongoing cycle which needs to be sustained throughout the cycle rather than just with resources being thrown at the last minute. That I think is a perspective which is peculiarly to be found in people who work in established election management bodies. People who have learned their elections purely in the peacekeeping game tend to think of them much more as events, for understandable reasons, and they bring a certain skill to that. So I think that is one perspective that I would bring to your question.

In broader terms, it is necessary to focus on developing the skills of your counterparts. Sometimes that requires a very sustained effort, which makes it difficult to take people out of an organisation like the AEC for 12 months or two years at a time. But we do have other options when that arises. For example, a lot of our best work in the Solomons has been done by one of our former retired officers who was prepared to come back on a contract and go to work in the Solomons for a couple of years. A similar sort of opportunity arose in the case of East Timor in

2001, where we were again able to contract a very experienced officer who had retired not very long before to come back on to our books to do that work in Timor; he subsequently did similar work with great distinction in Indonesia. So we use not only our own staff but also our own networks to try to come up with the optimal approach in each case that is going to work best for the country and is also going to work best for us.

Senator TROOD—Is it the habit of the AEC to participate in the work that is being undertaken by the peacekeeping centre at Williamtown? Are you typically involved in the courses that are run there or not?

Mr Maley—Very much so. I think I have presented at all but one of their international peace operations seminars since they started in 1994. The one I missed was because I was with the UN in South Africa. We work closely with the peacekeeping centre. Not only that, but they have very generously been prepared to have AEC officers as students on their peace operations seminar pretty well every year. One of my own staff did the two-week seminar here in Canberra about a month ago and found it to be of exceptional quality. So we are open to working with the peacekeepers at Williamtown.

We also have contacts now with the Australian Defence College out at Weston. In the last two years, they had major exercises going where they were simulating peace operations with an electoral dimension, and we went along for a week each time to provide input into that exercise to try to make it more realistic for the military officers who were doing that work. I was out there only a couple of weeks ago taking part in a smaller sort of exercise of that character and, as long as the election is not called on certain specific dates, I would expect to be out there again a bit later in the year when they have another exercise scheduled. So we are always I think open, ready, willing and able to support the ADF if they need intellectual input from us on any of these sorts of things.

Senator TROOD—We have had submissions and some evidence that some of this institutionalised work that we are doing in relation to peacekeeping training might be more completely developed into a much more elaborate process of training. I just wonder whether or not, from the perspective that you contribute to this exercise, you see some value in developing a much more sophisticated program of training and delivery of courses.

Mr Maley—We could see some value in it but with the rider that I think it has to be appreciated that not all peacekeeping operations will involve elections. When they do involve elections, the elections are not necessarily going to be at the forefront of the thinking of the peacekeepers, except at certain specific points in the operation, though we do think it is valuable, particularly at the planning and command level, that the people who are involved there do have a sensitivity to the importance of the electoral operation. In my experience of Australian planners and commanders overseas, they have always shown that sensitivity and have gone to seek out the electoral people in the operation to try to get a clear picture as early as possible of what they can do to provide support for the operation. But, with that rider, if the ADF were to decide, perhaps on some recommendation from this committee, that that would be the way to go, I am sure again we would be in a position to talk with them to see how we could best provide input to make any courses they were running on that front as valuable as possible to them.

Senator TROOD—The concept of governance is clearly wider than just electoral activity. Would the AEC regard it as within its area of remit to develop more completely ideas of governance as a reinforcement to developing training on electoral systems and conducting elections and things of that kind? My question is prompted by a concern about the need for in many cases, particularly in the Pacific, a movement towards stronger systems of governance and yet a question about where that expertise rests among the Australian agencies that participate in these activities.

Mr Maley—This is something that has been the subject of some discussion between the BRIDGE partners as to what scope would exist to take what is proven to be a very effective training package and broaden its remit to include some of these broader issues. Our view on that is that we see considerable merit in going down that route. We have had discussions with AusAID along those lines within the broader framework of their programs on Building Demand for Better Governance, which are a critical part of the white paper program.

On the other hand, we do not purport to be experts on governance in the same way in which we purport to be experts on elections. I think our contribution to that sort of thing would be to be able to build on the infrastructure which we have for coordinating curriculum development within the BRIDGE program but looking towards either the other BRIDGE partners or outside expertise to contribute curriculum content on that sort of thing. It is very much something that we are looking at.

Senator HOGG—Thanks, Senator Trood—you have probably gone down the path that I wanted to go down. Apart from the concept of general elections which I understand you get involved in, are there civil organisations within some of these communities that do not necessarily understand electoral processes themselves in terms of their own structures that you get involved in? I cannot think of a specific organisation as such at this stage, but it might even be about the structure of the political parties. I am not saying they become involved in the political party per se, but giving those who might run the organisation the idea of how democratic electoral processes operate within the structure of an organisation such as that. Is that the sort of path you are considering going down?

Mr Maley—That is not the sort of thing that we have done and there are a number of reasons for that. The most important is that in the international arena there are already a number of active organisations that do a lot of work with political party development. They include the two American party foundations, the National Democratic Institute and the International Republican Institute, and also the Asia Foundation in some countries gets involved with this sort of activity. Knowing that they have been doing this for years and are expert in it, we have tended to specialise in our own fields of activity. That having been said, we do not deny the huge significance of the attitudes which political parties bring to their participation in electoral processes for the success of those processes. I think you can argue that the defining characteristic of an established democracy is how the losers behave. If I have any comment to make on political party training that I have seen done around the world, it is that it puts too much emphasis on teaching the winners how to win and not enough on teaching the losers how to lose. Losing gracefully is really the tough lesson that a lot of parties have to learn around the world. When we have international visitors coming here at election time, as we have had for the last four or five elections, one of the things that I like them to watch on television, particularly if they come from a younger democracy, is whoever is making a concession speech on election night,

because that is the great example that Australia can teach to these countries about why democracy works: losers do not spit the dummy but congratulate the winners.

CHAIR—In conclusion, Mr Maley, when you were responding to Senator Hogg then, you did not mention the Centre for Democratic Institutions here, which I understand the commission has been doing some work with as well.

Mr Maley—Yes, that is an oversight on my part. I should have mentioned CDI. CDI has been involved with working with the political parties' international branches as they have become involved in working with counterpart parties overseas. We have taken part in a number of workshops that CDI has organised to try to help the parties to come to terms with the sorts of things they are going to encounter in an international environment. I think that has been useful. More generally, we maintain contact with CDI on a regular basis. The director of CDI is a former AEC officer and our commissioner, Mr Campbell, is a member of the consultative council of CDI ex officio and has been for a long time. We have a good relationship with CDI and we maintain that with enthusiasm.

CHAIR—Thank you for that. The other question I wanted to ask is about part six of your submission—that is, that whole of government cooperation pertains to any engagement that you might have with the Australian Federal Police. Obviously, in recent years in the region at least one has seen the Australian Federal Police—occasionally with other international policing organisations and occasionally by themselves—providing a level of security and support around the electoral process in addition to what they are doing in the peacekeeping environment. Do you have any comment to make about your relationship with the AFP?

Mr Maley—Our relationship with the AFP has always been a very cordial one and a good one. The nature of our work tends to be such that we are removed from the work the AFP is doing on the ground. For example, if we are working through our contacts with an electoral organisation in the Solomon Islands, it would really be for the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission to then liaise with the police authorities in the Solomon Islands in relation to security for the election process. We might advise on that, but we would not normally be going around the back of the Solomon Islands Electoral Commission to work directly with the AFP on that. We would be sharing information as necessary. We have had a very good relationship with the AFP over the years in looking at these sorts of issues and they have made a very good contribution to lots of operations, especially in Timor in 1999.

CHAIR—One of the things we are looking at is the whole of government engagement. It just seems to me that, with the almost exponential growth of the international deployment group at the AFP, it may have enhanced or grown contact in relations between your two organisations. Do you have a role in terms of the IDG's training processes or anything like that?

Mr Maley—No, not at the moment.

CHAIR—That is very interesting.

Mr Maley—I suspect the IDG has been focused very much on the emergency end of the deployments in a case like Timor or the Solomons, and normally electoral processes are not going to arise in that sort of environment until things have calmed down very considerably.

CHAIR—Indeed, but so has the ADF, and you have a relationship with the ADF which sees you working in conjunction with the Peacekeeping Centre and the command and staff college. It would seem to me to be a complementary process which we might end up pursuing. There are no further questions. I thank you both very much, Mr Maley and Mr Pickering, and I apologise again for the delay in the commencement of the proceedings.

Proceedings suspended from 12.57 pm to 1.33 pm

PURNELL, Mr David Lyle, National Administrator, United Nations Association of Australia

RAFALOWICZ, Mr Alex, National Vice President (Policy), United Nations Youth Association of Australia

CHAIR—Good afternoon. The committee will resume its deliberations on this inquiry into Australia's involvement in peacekeeping. I welcome representatives from the United Nations Association of Australia and the United Nations Youth Association of Australia to this hearing. I understand that a copy of today's opening statement has been provided to you for your information. Do you have any questions regarding that document?

Mr Purnell—No.

Mr Rafalowicz—No.

CHAIR—We have before us your submission, which has been numbered 3 and which is now a public document. Do you need to make any amendments or alterations to that?

Mr Purnell—No.

CHAIR—In that case, I will ask either or both of you—I am not sure how you plan to do this—to make an opening statement and then we will go to questions.

Mr Purnell—Thank you very much. I am very happy to introduce the submission on behalf of the two organisations. Alex will follow me with some additional comments as well. We have decided on this occasion to put in a joint submission, which we do not always do, but on this occasion we found there was a lot in common in the way we approached it.

The UN Association of Australia itself is particularly concerned with promoting greater awareness in the community of the United Nations as an agency and the ideals that it stands for. As part of that, we also see it as our role to check on the government's contribution as a member state of the UN. So that is part of what we see as our role. In fact, some of you may be aware that recently we produced a report card on Australia's role in the UN. If the committee would like a copy, I can provide an additional copy of that.

CHAIR—Thank you.

Mr Purnell—It includes a section on peacekeeping. The submission that we have written refers to the increase in peacekeeping activities under the UN aegis over the years and then quotes figures from the UN Department of Public Information about the over-80,000 military and police and 15,000 civilians that were serving in 2006. This all seems to indicate a greater willingness to use the UN for this kind of intervention. The creation of the Peacebuilding Commission seems to be a further indication that the UN was taking this whole issue of how to build peace after conflict, including the use of peacekeeping, as a very serious issue for the

international community. We see this as part of an overall strengthening of the UN's capacity to contribute to maintain peace and security.

We acknowledge that Australia has played a very constructive role in peacekeeping over the years, especially through defence and police involvement but also through civilians as well. We have noted in our submission the work of the AFP Peacekeeping Centre and the International Deployment Group of the AFP.

We supported the remarks by made by the AFP's Peter White in the paper that he delivered in May 2006 that effective peacekeeping occurs if all parties consent to the UN's role, there is Security Council support, the UN controls the operation and the forces are seen as impartial. We notice that the parliamentary Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in 2001 had also emphasised the need for this kind of legitimacy for peace operations.

Our overall view, not surprisingly, is that Australia should seek the most non-violent ways of intervening in situations in using its diplomatic resources to prevent violent conflict from escalating. But, where forceful intervention comes to be necessary, we see the need for clear goals and a multilateral framework, the UN or regional framework, as a preferable process or structure. Of course, we support the involvement of NGOs in the overall post-conflict peace building process.

The UN's Department of Peacekeeping Operations needs to be strengthened in terms of its command structures and resources, and we endorse the 2001 parliamentary committee's idea that 'there be a system of gratis personnel and specific funding of places from the regular budget for a deployable headquarters within the department'. We are pleased to see that Andrew Hughes has been appointed to a senior position within the Department of Peacekeeping Operations.

We have a general concern that there should be regular reporting by the Australian government to parliament about its peacekeeping activities as part of a general report on its work within the UN system—and we have taken up that more general issue in some of our lobbying with the government. We are very aware that there is some very valuable research being done, particularly at ANU most recently, on the impact of peacekeeping and peace building activities involving Australia, and in the report we have drawn attention to some of the work of John Braithwaite and Hilary Charlesworth in that connection.

In the recommendations of our submission, we have given some particular priority to supporting government action that would make clear its commitment to the work of the UN and multilateral agencies in peace building and peacekeeping and would seek to work with UN agencies to respond to crises, to allocate more resources for the training of participants in peacekeeping operations and to ensure that any intervention has a clear mandate, the support of all parties and adequate resources and exit strategies.

We support giving more resources to strengthening diplomatic work and to supporting the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations and working for better mechanisms regionally through ASEAN and the South Pacific Forum to increase capacity for multilateral responses in our region. To reiterate the point about research, we have restated our support for encouragement of further research on the impact of peacekeeping operations.

Since our submission was made, we have learned about the proposal for a UN Emergency Peace Service—UNEPS. I am not sure how much this has been mentioned during the hearings of the committee. Last week we had our national conference and one of the speakers talked about this proposal. The people at the Peace and Conflict Studies Centre at Sydney university have been doing an assessment of whether such a service would be valuable and they have been asking people in our region for their response.

There is a booklet about it—I have only one copy, which I could loan to the committee. I am sure we could get more copies. Essentially, the idea is of a standing force based on that concept of responsibility to protect. It would be a deployable force that could go out within 48 hours and would have up to 15,000 personnel from military police and civil sectors. It would have a unified command and gender and ethnic balance, would be financed by the UN budget and its members would actually be employed by the UN. This appears to be a very constructive idea worthy of exploration given the ongoing difficulty there seems to have been with the concepts of standby forces and so forth in the past. We are very happy to recommend to the committee that it might look further into this proposal and offer its own thoughts on the subject. I will let Alex take over from there.

Mr Rafalowicz—The United Nations Youth Association supports the entire submission, but we wanted to make a couple of further points from the perspective of young people, particularly in relation to the Australian Defence Force and its connection to peacekeeping. The three points relate to training, personnel and structure and readiness.

Regarding training, it appears that, although Australian Defence Force personnel are consistently sent overseas on UN mandated, UN authorised or even unilateral peace operations, it is not clear that a lot of the training for defence personnel has actually met the changing requirements. We see that a lot of the training is dominated by conventional warfare or at least high-intensity environments, and we think a concerted effort should be made to train personnel for the diverse challenges of peace operations, particularly focusing on familiarising the ADF with the different rules of engagement within peace operations and also their requirements under international humanitarian law and the different requirements in those situations.

That leads on to the type of personnel who are recruited to the Australian Defence Force. We think that, as peace operations place a greater responsibility and importance on the actions of junior soldiers, whose often perhaps irresponsible acts could compromise an entire deployment, these operations sometimes demand different interpersonal skills, different responsibilities and different emotional intelligence requirements. We suggest selection and recruitment processes that reflect that. But we also see this as an opportunity for the ADF to be able to recruit a different group of young people into the service—those who have a very strong sense of international social justice and a sense of an international community. We think there is a real opportunity to target those young people and engage them in the ADF when the ADF makes it clear that it has these responsibilities.

Finally, broader structure and readiness for the ADF is about the possibility of establishing an army battalion that specialises in peace operations. As the 3 Royal Australian Regiment specialises in airborne operations, this battalion would specialise in training for police actions, for civilian military liaison and then for reconstruction tasks.

The final point is the idea that has already been taken up of having a bit more of a whole-of-government, interconnected approach to peacekeeping responsibilities. That is the stage where intelligence, defence and foreign affairs are able to respond very quickly to emerging threats. That links into the UNEPS proposal but also into the really positive establishment of the Federal Police's International Deployment Group. That was all we wanted to add to the submission.

CHAIR—Thank you both very much. Let me start with one of your final points on the question of training. Have you had a look at the Department of Defence's submission to the inquiry which goes through an iteration of the training activities currently in place for those engaged in peacekeeping and peacemaking operations?

Mr Rafalowicz—I have not looked across that specifically, no.

CHAIR—I was going to ask you then, given the points that you made about training, what aspects of the training that were set out in that submission you regarded as inadequate. You probably cannot consider it?

Mr Rafalowicz—The information that we used to formulate our submission on that area was based on training that was received by people who particularly were involved in the Army Reserve, and it was through their involvement as members in that process that they saw possibilities for reform.

CHAIR—They saw gaps in their experience which have made their way into your submission?

Mr Rafalowicz—Yes.

CHAIR—You might want to have a look at that submission from the Department of Defence which talks about what they have actually done in terms of training.

Senator HOGG—In your submission you referred to the need for an exit strategy for an operation. I think one of the recommendations is that there needs to be a clear mandate and an exit strategy for an operation. How does one get an exit strategy for some of the operations that we become involved in? The exit strategy may well be not over just a 12-month or a two-year period but over 20 or 30 years, given the state that some of the places that were asked to intervene in are in. What do you mean by an exit strategy, and how does a government commit itself to a specific operation given the variety of factors that they will be faced with when they get there? Look at Timor, for example. It flared again. I do not think that was necessarily predicted by anyone, whereas there could have been an exit strategy to have been out of there totally by the time it flared again. Could you generally address that for us?

Mr Purnell—I suppose my general feeling is that, because it is seen as difficult, there seems to be a tendency to regard it as not worthy of addressing. My feeling is that we would like to see any operation have contingency processes worked into it so that it would be reviewed at certain points and choices would be made about what changes would be made—whether there would be a reduction in deployment, a rearrangement of deployment and all that sort of thing. Otherwise, it seems that there is a danger of things drifting. That was the reason for that point. Most of us are hoping that, as the UN Peacebuilding Commission develops its work, one of the things it will

be doing is developing protocols about that kind of thing—how do you structure something in a way that is consistent with the principles of what you are trying to achieve.

Senator HOGG—It would seem to me that there may well be, depending on the nature of the operation, a number of different exit strategies: one in terms of peace enforcing, one in terms of peacemaking; one in terms of peacekeeping and then so on, the establishment. Is that the sort of thing that you have in mind?

Mr Purnell—Yes.

Senator HOGG—How can that be arrived at when the real situation on the ground is not necessarily known? It may be known anecdotally or by intelligence, but not really until you get onto the ground do you know what is happening and the forces that are at play.

Mr Purnell—I suppose that feeds into the general question that there seem to have been numerous complaints about, for example, the inadequate command processes from the UN end, for example, in terms of lots of peacekeeping operations and people feeling as though they do not really know what is going on. I suppose we would see the strengthening of that whole structure as a way of helping to answer your question. I sort of feel that if it is left to individual countries it will be a bit haphazard. But if you bring the coordination together and you get the intelligence coming back and you can make those sorts of decisions at various points along the way, I feel that people will understand more clearly what you are trying to do and it can be explained to the people on the ground and there will be a closer connection then between what is happening in the field and what is happening back at headquarters, as it were. So that is the sort of thing.

Mr Rafalowicz—And if there is an exit strategy that is clearly defined—requirements for when we are going to exit after these requirements have been met—that is much more easily assessed through a centralised command as well. That is, I think, how the two connect.

Senator HOGG—Are you saying at this stage that there is a poor definition in the first instance when we go into a number of these operations and that, whilst I am not doubting the generosity and the goodness with which we enter these operations, you are saying that that should be better defined to start off with? Really, there should be milestones against which progress can be measured so that there is an idea as to the actual resources that are going to be allocated in the longer term to some of these interventions.

Mr Purnell—Yes. I think if there were a clearer, more transparent analysis of what was needed and what the stages might be so that everybody understood what we were committing ourselves to then we could assess, as you say, what was going on—

Senator HOGG—Who should do that analysis? Where would that lie?

Mr Purnell—If the UN processes are used and if resources are given to that, that could be done at that level particularly and then, depending on what sort of force it is, I guess it could be managed from there. If it is one of these new sorts of forces that is brought into operation, the UN would be able to control that directly, but if it is not, if it is a mixture of different countries,

then they would have to work out protocols as to how that would be done in consultation with the countries receiving and the countries sending people into the operation, yes.

Senator TROOD—You have a proposal in your recommendations, 9.3, with regard to the expansion of the peacekeeping centre at Williamtown. We have had various submissions in relation to that matter and some suggestions that in fact it be substantially expanded. But you seem not to be so much in favour of an expansion of that activity into other areas as the creation of yet another facility which focuses on something else—and I am not entirely clear but perhaps the non-military dimensions of peacekeeping. Is that the intent? What I would like you to do is to expand on that proposal, please.

Mr Purnell—I am just looking for the part of the submission where we have actually said that. I can see the recommendation; I am just trying to find out what we based it on. I think in general terms we are happy to support—

Senator TROOD—There is a reference in 5.1.

Mr Purnell—Thank you. I think there has been a sense that we have picked up at various times that the ADF is nervous about expanding the role of the centre too far beyond the military. Therefore, we felt that if it was not going to be an easy thing to do, maybe there could be an alternative place that would do for police, civilians and other groups. But if there were a way of coordinating all of them, I do not think we would have a problem with that.

Mr Rafalowicz—To answer the second part of the question about what we mean by 'non-military'—we meant that we see a place for NGOs in all peacekeeping operations. As I said in my opening statement about personnel and the possibility of recruiting people to the ADF with a different idea of peacekeeping, we think there are people in the Australian community who are very interested in doing this type of work and it would be beneficial to provide them with the support to do it. So that was the vision for that centre. It was our understanding that it would be unlikely you would allow civilians into an ADF centre for training of that type, mainly because of the security reasons, and that is why a new, different centre would be required.

Senator TROOD—I must say that my instinct is to see some value in trying to consolidate the existing institutions and centres rather than proliferating them to different purposes. Of course, a proposal of this kind raises the question about funding and who would support it. I wonder whether you have turned your mind to that question.

Mr Purnell—Obviously a number of our suggestions involve additional commitments of expenditure to strengthen some of this work. I agree with you in principle that if some of the people going into the peacekeeping centre could also have access to civilians, and the military and civilian components could actually hear the same sort of information from the Red Cross or the humanitarian law people, that would probably broaden everybody's perspective. So I think we would certainly not object to that. We have not really given detailed thought as to where money comes from for these things, I have to admit.

Senator TROOD—That is a matter that tends to concern the committee from time to time.

Mr Purnell—Yes, fair enough.

Senator TROOD—In relation to training, you make a reference in 9.5 to enhancing the role of Australian diplomats and enhancing their approaches. Would you expand on that particular proposal. I am not sure whether you are speaking about the foreign service in general requiring some wider training in peacekeeping operations or whether it is an observation about those foreign service officers or Australian diplomats who might be deployed on particular missions who, in your view, might be found to be wanting. I would be grateful if you could refine that suggestion for me.

Mr Purnell—I think the overall point, which I probably should have made a bit more clearly at the beginning, is that we see the whole peacekeeping thing as part of the total picture of how we approach building peace in the world. So the use of diplomacy seems to us to be an absolutely critical part of that picture. Putting a phrase like that in there is intended to encourage the committee to ensure that it supports the concept, if you like, of maintaining the amount of diplomatic effort that is already available to us and enhancing the skills of those people. I am sure that, if we look at the budgets of the respective government agencies, we would find that DFAT is probably in need of a good deal of further funding for that sort of thing.

At 2.5 in the submission we mentioned the UN Institute for Training and Research, where diplomats and others working in UN activities, including peacekeeping, are trained. If more Australian diplomats could be given that sort of training, I think that would help to broaden the way in which we as a nation could contribute to peace building. So it was in that wider context, in a sense, although your other point about people going into particular situations being given additional support would also be valid.

Senator TROOD—So this proposal does not reflect a need, in your view, to create a more specific functional capability within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in relation to peacekeeping; it is a more general observation about the need for wider and more experienced people in the field.

Mr Purnell—Yes, I think so. I do not know whether Alex wants to comment on that.

Senator TROOD—Is that right?

Mr Rafalowicz—Yes.

Senator TROOD—I will stay on this theme of training with one more question in relation to the ADF. Mr Rafalowicz, you had an interesting observation about the foundations of Defence Force participation and a proposal—which I must say is at odds with most of the evidence we have received with regard to the ADF—that we have a dedicated battalion for peacekeeping. I wonder whether you might say something a bit more about that and why you think that is necessary. The argument has been made quite consistently—and it was made again this morning—that the advantage of using the forces and the training regime which already exist within the Australian Defence Force is that, particularly in areas where there is potential for violence, it is easier for people trained as war fighting machines, if you will, to train down than it is for others to train up to acquire the skills they might need to provide force protection in the context of a peacekeeping operation.

Mr Rafalowicz—I think, while the idea that it is easier to train down to do peacekeeping roles is possibly true, once you train down people whose primary responsibilities are conflict to do peacekeeping operations, their effectiveness at doing those peacekeeping operations will never be as good as those of a group who have been trained specifically for performing the tasks directly connected to peacekeeping. That would be the difference. I understand that there are situations where you say, 'What if they come into a situation where they need to be combat ready, conflict ready?' There you do not necessarily have to deploy solely from the battalion that is specifically focused on peacekeeping skills and on developing peacekeeping readiness. I think that would be how that would work. The reason we would advocate it is that our capability to contribute to all types of different peacekeeping concerns across the world increases our standing in terms of our contribution to the United Nations generally, which we think is a beneficial thing and a thing that Australia should be doing as a respected international citizen.

Finally, I would make the point again about the potential for recruiting service personnel who have an interest in that particular area. Then, undoubtedly, there is a possibility of them continuing in other roles within the Defence Force, which I think is a broader aim of the Australian government—engaging very skilled and capable people into the Defence Force.

Senator TROOD—I suspect the Defence Force has a different perspective on that—that recruiting specifically for that function rather than recruiting people who would be available to undertake all the roles that might be expected of them in the Defence Force may affect their capacity to recruit. However, that is a matter we can pursue a bit later. I wanted to explore something with you with regard to the role of the United Nations itself in relation to peacekeeping activities. The proposition that seems to be contained in your submission is essentially that these peacekeeping operations should largely be the responsibility of the United Nations. That is your preference, not surprisingly. I assume that is your position on this—that the peace enforcing operations around the world should be under UN mandates. Is that—

Mr Purnell—Yes, a UN one, or a multilateral one if it cannot be a UN one.

Senator TROOD—You refer specifically to the possibility that were a UN mandate not available in the Pacific, where Australia clearly has some interests, then we might make better use of regional organisations of some kind.

Mr Purnell—Yes, that is what we thought.

Senator TROOD—Do I take it that, in putting that view, you are suggesting that existing regional structures are inadequate for the purpose? If so, how might you see those being adequately expanded to undertake that role?

Mr Purnell—In a sense, there is no reason why that could not be done with the support of the UN itself to strengthen the sorts of mechanisms that could be used. I have the feeling that quite a few of these operations have been done through using, say, the South Pacific Forum as an ad hoc arrangement, where it is really an Australian initiative. If it were seen that organisations such as ASEAN and the South Pacific Forum actually saw this whole peace-building, peacekeeping role as a very important part of their work, then I think they could get advice from the UN and work cooperatively to work out processes that could be used. In that way, obviously more resources would have to be put in, but I think it would protect a country like Australia more in terms of its

image in the region if it could be seen to be serving a wider unit and at least potentially be less open to the charge that it is just following a particular line for its own advancement.

CHAIR—I do not think we have time to adequately deal with this. I think there are some significant problems with the theory that you are advancing there, specifically in relation to RAMSI, but we do not have time to pursue it in the way that I would want to. Senator Trood, do you have further questions?

Senator TROOD—Not at this stage.

CHAIR—Senator Forshaw, do you have questions?

Senator FORSHAW—I do. Could you clarify for me the distinction between the UN Association of Australia and the UN Youth Association of Australia? Is there a difference?

Senator HOGG—One is younger.

Senator FORSHAW—Steve and I used to be in Young Labor once, too! It is just so I can understand the specific roles, if they are distinct roles.

Mr Purnell—From a constitutional point of view they are linked under the one framework but, in practical terms, the Youth Association plots its own course and keeps us informed about what it is doing. We keep them informed about what we are doing, and there is interaction because their president is on our executive.

Senator FORSHAW—I am not critical of that. Is this an international thing as well, in that other countries have youth forums?

Mr Rafalowicz—Yes, it is internationally done. There is a World Federation of United Nations Associations and a World Federation of United Nations Youth Associations, which are also linked. The idea is that there should be specific youth-run youth organisations that are about engaging other young people to discuss the United Nations. So we have a very specific mandate in that regard. We have our own policy agenda that is separate to the UNAA's agenda but then at times they coincide and we work together.

Senator FORSHAW—That is fine. As I said, I was not being critical; I was trying to understand the reasons why. Again, either of you or both of you might like to comment on something I note in the submission. At 4.3—and this is following your primary view, which I think people generally subscribe to, that where possible there should be UN sanction of peacekeeping operations and if possible done under the UN Security Council's mandate—you stated:

> Recent interventions by Australian forces in the Pacific region have lacked that UN support and have accordingly generated unexpected resistance. This has reflected Australia's dominant political and economic position in the Pacific region, making its interventions more easily characterised by opponents as self-serving.

I would like you to expand on that assertion. I then want to ask you some questions, particularly about the responsibility to protect and the role of countries such as Australia and many other

countries where you just have an impasse in terms of the UN's ability to make a decision or indeed where its resources are so stretched that it looks to a regional association to take action, and that action may be one where the parties to the dispute do not welcome the intervention but the surrounding region does. Could you comment on that?

Mr Purnell—It is obviously a complicated matter. Like many people, we have picked up some of the vibes from places like the Solomons, East Timor and so on, where incidents have occurred which appear to have placed Australia as the focal point for a hostile reaction from local people—on the grounds that it has not been sensitive enough to what has been going on.

Senator FORSHAW—But does it necessarily follow that that is because they did not have a specific UN mandate? My understanding is that the UN does not really mind that Australia and other members of the South Pacific group have acted to attempt to restore order and deal with civil unrest et cetera in the Solomons and other countries. I read your assertion that it might somehow have been different if there was a specific UN mandate. We can all pick examples, but we all know that there are some pretty classic examples of where, unfortunately, the existence of a UN mandate made absolutely no difference. Rwanda is the classic case, as was central Europe.

Mr Purnell—It is an ongoing learning experience, I suppose, as to the best way to do it. My impression, from reading some of the reports of, say, Australia's involvement in East Timor, is that they were quite relieved that the UN presence there enabled them in some cases to use the UN as a mediating point for resolving issues—for example, between Australia and the East Timorese leadership. So I guess it is a matter of seeing what the possibilities are for strengthening that capacity to have a structure in place that will make it less likely that you will be seen as Big Brother and that kind of thing. It is not an easy situation. I think getting experiences on the ground, relating them back to the program that has been worked out and then modifying the policy—all of that—has to be done. I suppose our feeling is that it is better done within the multilateral context, as far as possible, because you have more experience internationally about what can be done.

Mr Rafalowicz—As you pointed out, the UN is happy for Australia to be running these things—and I think that is absolutely correct. But we need to make a distinction between that and the perceptions of the people on the ground who are involved with the missions about who is doing it and why. What we believe is very beneficial in having a UN sanctioned mission is that it has unquestionable impartiality. That is less possible if there is a specific national force—of any nationality—with their national emblem on all the uniforms and in all of the places. That is the thing we are concerned about. You used the analogies of Rwanda and Bosnia. Undoubtedly there were massive failures by the UN peacekeeping forces there, but their failure was not due to a lack of impartiality; it was due to a lack of specific orders to actively engage.

Senator FORSHAW—In the case of Bosnia, it was also, I would suggest, the roles of NATO and the EU that complicated that scenario. I concede that we can always pick examples of where it has not worked and then say, 'What does the world do, what does Australia do and what does the US do in some of these situations?' The US is often looked upon as the intervening Big Brother but, at the same time, it is regarded as one of the few countries that can, in certain circumstances, take specific action—which is what ultimately happened in Bosnia. President Clinton determined that the US would act irrespective of what the UN and the EU were doing—or because they were doing nothing.

But the point you make about one of the criteria is that there should be an acceptance of intervention by the parties to the dispute. That would seem to be increasingly a major hurdle. Many of these situations today and into the future are not like the classic disputes that occurred in Cyprus or Korea, where you had competing national forces, particularly from countries outside the particular area, so you got an agreement among those countries to a UN force coming in. Where you have got guerrilla groups, terrorist groups, internal civil disputes between political factions and tribal groups and so on, increasingly it is hard to envisage that in all situations you would get an acceptance by the parties to intervention. How do we address that impasse? I think that is one of the issues that the UN is trying to deal with, through responsibility to protect.

Mr Purnell—A responsibility to protect does seem to move us a little bit further along that step of balancing those different factors and seeing where you have to intervene in spite of the fact that the local people are not all onside.

Senator FORSHAW—Does your association support reaching a situation in all disputes where that becomes necessary, where the need for intervention overrides the sorts of criteria that you feel should be addressed before a force can go in?

Mr Rafalowicz—The youth association certainly does. We have done a bit of work and we are trying to do a little bit more work on responsibility to protect and getting a key outline of how we think it should function, the best ways it should function and the way Australia should participate in it. We have not finished that work yet, but, from what we are aware of from the work that we have done so far, the key requirement is the right authority. The requirements are: right intention, last resort, proportional means, reasonable prospect and then right authority. So if you cannot get agreement from the parties on the ground, if that is just not a possibility because of all the situations you point out, what can we say is the next legitimate authority to say that we should go in? Our general fallback is Security Council approval.

Senator FORSHAW—Do you envisage what would happen if the Security Council increasingly devolved that responsibility to regionally based groups, whether it is EU, ASEAN or African states, as a formal measure?

Mr Rafalowicz—If the Security Council were to do that, and if that were an effective way of doing things, then I think that could be supported, but you would still find there would be a fair amount of work that would have to go into ensuring the justness of the cause of any intervention, which I think is a good thing and an important part of the doctrine.

Senator FORSHAW—Just one other thing, you mentioned the UNEPS. Can you just comment a little bit more about that. You mentioned it, you said it is a developing potential force and then we left it. Do you have a position on it or is it still very much a work in progress?

Mr Purnell—It is very much a work in progress. It is being launched by three groups: Global Action to Prevent War and Armed Conflict, Nuclear Age Peace Foundation, and the World Federalist Movement. That is where it has come from. We had a presentation last week from some people from the University of Sydney who are studying this report and looking into what its regional implications are. At the moment, the actual proposal estimates that the Security Council would be involved in authorising the use of such a force. They estimate the cost of it

would be less than it is costing at the moment to mount all the different forces that have to be put together each time.

As I said before, its brief would be to restore and enforce peace using conflict resolution, humanitarian assistance and law enforcement. So I gather it is intended mainly as a short-term thing to operate very quickly and to use the expertise that is available from within its own resources.

Senator FORSHAW—That is the military wing of the responsibility to protect principle, is it?

Mr Purnell—I think that is where it has come from. It is not only that; it says that military police and civil sectors would all be involved—15,000 people would be employed. So it is a big concept. I am happy to leave it with the committee for it to have a look it.

CHAIR—Thank you both very much for appearing and thank you again for your submission. Mr Purnell, thank you for that additional material.

[2.22 pm]

APTHORPE, Professor Raymond James, Private capacity

CHAIR—I welcome Professor Apthorpe to the hearing. Professor, would you please state the capacity in which you appear before the committee today?

Prof. Apthorpe—I appear in a private capacity. I teach at the ANU for one semester a year.

CHAIR—We have a submission from you and Mr Townsend, which we have numbered 32. It is now a public document. Do you need to make any amendments or alterations to it?

Prof. Apthorpe—No. I apologise that my young colleague is not here. He is out of the country.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. I invite you to make a brief opening statement, and then we will go to questions.

Prof. Apthorpe—Thank you very much for receiving our submission. I will make a few comments on it. From listening to the last discussion, there are certain elements that come up again, I expect, from submission to submission. I teach international humanitarian assistance, and sometimes I have to struggle to make the case for assistance, now that there is international responsibility to protect. Each year the themes in the course are different. But this year the strong theme was that, yes, there is a responsibility to protect. There is also a responsibility to assist. How do you do the two together? It is not as easy as it sounds, because protection casts a shadow over the role of assistance. In the UN-endorsed responsibility to protect document there is very little reference to assistance. It is assumed but not directly addressed, whereas a lot is addressed at protection and the ways in which protection could be achieved. But there is no addressing of the tensions between doing both at the time in the same operation, even if by different wings of the same operation. So that became an issue.

It is not only about peacekeeping; it is about broader issues as well, and some of the issues that are specific to peacekeeping are not specific to peacekeeping. They come up more generally, whatever aspect of international aid one is talking about. One of those issues that come up in peacekeeping but also more generally came up in the hearing just now: the question of exit strategy. In our paper we call it ‘transit strategy’ rather than ‘exit strategy’ because, presumably, the whole point of an international involvement is to create good relationships which do not end when whatever the specific purpose of the first phase of the intervention ends. Particularly when these interventions are multifaceted and multipurpose, you might exit from one while entering another. So, more broadly, it is ‘transit’ rather than ‘exit’.

Also, more broadly still, this is an exit or transfer strategy question. In aid studies, strategy—whether it be exit or entrance strategy—is neglected. If one makes a standard distinction between aid policy, strategy, program and project, there is a lot on general policy, there is a lot on particular projects, there is quite a bit on programming but there is almost nothing on strategy.

So, yes, we do not know very much about intervention strategy, whether it be exit strategy or not, where a major international bilateral or multilateral involvement is involved.

The last point to make by way of introduction, which I thought came over rather strongly in the paper when I re-read it this morning coming here, is how little we know either about the specifics of peacekeeping or peace-building, or whatever aspect it is, or about international aid intervention in general. The main sources we have if we are interested in outcomes, in what actually happens and in whether they achieve their objectives or not, are evaluations, particularly evaluations by independent teams. Over the last 50 years, which is the time that I have been spending on aid matters, I have been involved in several of these teams. More importantly, when I teach I have to use the evaluations as my main sources. These main sources are about what is achieved or not through an intervention. When you look at these evaluations quite carefully, they always end with a section on 'lessons learnt', which really is on 'lessons to be learnt' so that next time things will be better than they were this time or last time.

I have got hundreds of examples; I saw some more this morning. When you look at the nature of those lessons to be learnt, they are much closer to the wisdom you find in fortune cookies. Do you know what a fortune cookie is? You open a little piece of paper in the food, and there is a proverb in it. But, like all proverbs, they are not specific and they are very often contradictory. 'Many hands make light work' and 'too many cooks spoil the broth': which is it? For every proverb there is an opposite one. If you look at the lessons learnt or to be learnt, which are usually on the back pages of an evaluation, they are usually the weakest part of the whole document. This is quite often because, if you are on such a team and you have to deliver your product by a deadline, you do it on the last night and when you are most tired and most pressed. So there could be a technical reason as well as an intellectual reason why the 'lessons learnt' parts of these evaluations tend to be the weakest.

If that is the case, then it is no wonder that we know very little about what kinds of interventions achieve what kinds of outputs, outcomes and even impacts. That is partly because the atmosphere in aid studies is to find best practice. 'Best practice' is a phrase that always comes up, but not 'best outcomes'. Exactly how a so-called 'best practice' can lead to a 'best outcome' is not given. If one is interested in these documents when teaching to find what does happen, what outcomes follow, even under best practice, I am afraid you do not find that information from those sources. I think that is a kind of negative note. In a way it is a positive as well a negative note. It is not there, and it ought to be there, so clearly—at least in some ways—a different approach is needed to make these evaluations more useful than they are.

Specifically with regard to policing—the specifics of which my colleague would have talked about, but he is not here—I think policing, in all its various forms, is right between assistance and protection, and you might say it is where assistance and protection overlap. If that is the case, then we should consider issues about policing—in the broadest sense—from a protection angle and from an assistance angle. That is not done, as far as we know. There is I believe no information on that.

Finally, I would like to comment on the concept 'civil-military relations' that is used in the literature. Part of my personal experience was in Kosovo a long time ago. I went in under a humanitarian assistance ombudsman project chaired by the UK Red Cross when NATO went in. Everyone was talking about civil-military relations. There must be some, and they must be got

right. The police were there, but nobody was talking about the police. The police were seen more functionally, perhaps, but not in relation to the broader theory and picture of the intervention. It is since then—around 1999—that it has become very obvious to people in this area that the police are in the field and are important in the situations but they are not in the literature; and particularly they are not in the conceptual literature.

So in this little paper, which is mainly from lectures given this year, we propose a CIMPIC rather than a CIMIC—putting the police into the picture. It is terribly important because when you think of civil and military relations, and when you think about the way in which some military have construed the civil, where the civil is seen as a force multiplier, for example, this really cuts the ground completely from under the feet of the civil—particularly if they are NGOs and particularly if they are concerned with assistance rather than protection.

To wind up these opening remarks, assistance can fall under the shadow of protection. We know very little about protection. We know a lot about assistance per se but not in relation to military and not in relation to the police. So this rather disappointing paper which we prepared for you, instead of telling you exactly what should be done in practical terms, is saying, 'We don't know what should be done'—so you probably hate this kind of paper for this kind of meeting. But there it is. It is not clear to us that there is any reliable information out there that we can bring into class which is supposed to teach a little bit about how these things should be done. I hope that even from that angle it was of some interest to you.

CHAIR—Thank you very much, Professor. I was going to thank you for that aspect of the paper. It is a very useful stimulus for us in our considerations in this inquiry. I particularly liked your observations about the proverbs. That works particularly well for us. The preventative approach exacerbating the situation by reducing a government's incentive to do it for themselves is one of the challenges we have had difficulty discussing in recent hearings. Let me ask you to expand further on your experience in the evaluation process, because it sounds to me as though you have a wealth of information from that involvement, to which you refer early in your submission. Can you give us some idea of how that has come about, where you have played that role and whether you would identify any of those experiences as ones that mark either best outcome or best practice, or lessons learnt?

Prof. Apthorpe—They are not all equally bad, but very few come up with any context-specific recommendation or lesson to be learned. The last two examples I saw this morning come from a very important paper that is about to be released by a very important international agency. It gives these two a clear and achievable mandate, with resources to match, as best practice. Is that not obvious? One says, firmly, 'Leadership is important.' The other one says, 'The parties on the ground must be genuinely committed to resolving the conflict through a political process.' Well, of course—is that a lesson or is that a proverb? One of the answers to your questions concerns the political process. Most of the evaluations that I have been involved in are commissioned by agencies which do not see themselves as political agencies. Anything in such an evaluation that can look like being dangerously political is quickly removed, even if you are brave enough to put it in. I think one problem is that those evaluations—of which there are thousands and they are all in a database now in London; they are quite accessible—are not allowed at that stage to be political, yet everybody says that peacekeeping, in particular, is a political, as well as a technical, process. The way in which evaluations are handled is that the

political is not allowed. If this is a political situation which is particularly political or seen to be particularly political, and the political is not addressed, then that is a problem.

Secondly, I think that most of these evaluations, as commissioned, are commissioned as management studies by another means, the means of evaluation. So the evaluating team is reporting to management, not other stakeholders, if you like to use that term. So I think that is part of the reason. The times I have had on my teams! If I go to a conflict zone, I hope I have a team of people interested in conflict and conflict resolution and aid in conflict situations. Always some people on the team will say, 'But we're not really conflict people; we're development people.' That, of course, reflects in the nature of the evaluations. They address government issues, governance issues and development issues. Even many conflict evaluations do not address conflict, let alone peace. One assignment I had two years ago for the OECD was to look at all the peace and conflict evaluations that the member countries sent in. We looked at about 400 or 500. One of the conclusions we had to draw was that, although they are called 'conflict evaluations', they have mostly gone down other ways. If you like, they have been twisted into other directions—anything to escape or prevent them addressing conflict.

So the causes of conflicts are not addressed; the processes of conflicts are not addressed. Solutions are addressed but not the problems—hence the phrase: aid is solution in search of problem. In any case, it is usually the aid world that defines the problems for the aid to address. There is very little of what is called 'local ownership' in problem identification, let alone anything else. Those are some of the reasons. I think they could be addressed by not banning politics from the evaluations and recognising that in certain cases a political dimension is essential. Therefore, these should probably be commissioned not by ordinary management but by particular kinds of management or even particular kinds of agencies which are separate from management and are not afraid to address the political side—perhaps commissions of inquiry rather than contracted evaluations.

Senator TROOD—You allude, in both your opening remarks and your submission, to shortcomings, failures, an inability to process lessons learned, et cetera. Do you think the central cause of these weaknesses or shortcomings may be institutional in some way—whether it reflects failures to establish adequate, as has been suggested to us, whole of government processes for dealing with peacekeeping missions; whether it reflects a failure to adequately develop training mechanisms; whether it reflects an inability to, in general, create an institutional structure which allows the issues to which you refer to be adequately synthesised in the light of the experience in the field.

Prof. Apthorpe—Yes is the answer to all of those questions.

Senator TROOD—If the answer to those questions is yes, then may I ask you how you think we could solve these problems?

Prof. Apthorpe—By addressing them to begin with. An evaluation comes up with a lesson to be learned; it does not address how the lesson can be learned. It tells you what it thinks the lesson is to be learned; it does not address the learning process. That is the first thing. The second thing is that it may be the case that some organisations are better at learning than others, but all organisations have learning problems. So, yes, there is a certain amount that certain kinds of training can do, as long as they address learning rather than what needs to be learned. That is a

different thing. The constitution of the teams, normally in an independent team, means that they are external to the organisation. Mixed teams are very rare, where you have outsiders and insiders, but, if the organisation has to learn, it might be that you need mixed teams to come up with what is learnable in an organisation. I think that is all I could say about that. Learning is itself quite different from learning what should be learned. Is that not the case?

Senator TROOD—I appreciate that point. The question then is: does one learn during the process of the exercise—that is to say, you specifically appreciate the need to learn during the course of the exercise—or is it something that one does afterwards?

Prof. Apthorpe—Faute de mieux it has to be done afterwards, except where we have a real-time evaluation which is done at the height of the problem or in the thick of the fire—which is perhaps a little more interesting learning. But most of the evaluations are done after the event. The event has passed. The organisation is still there but is less interested in learning now than it might have been last year when the shooting was going on. So I think mostly it comes afterwards, and therefore one needs particular kinds of education and training programs which address the learning side as well as what is to be learnt. That of course necessarily goes into the politics of organisations. Non-government organisations, when compared with government organisations, have their learning problems as well. I do not know if one is better than the other. So I do not think there is an easy answer that one can give for government or non-government organisations. The whole-of-government approach is also a bit different. It leaves out the civil element. I will put it another way. If the whole-of-government approach—which sounds perfect; it sounds very nice indeed—leaves out the civil element while it brings in the military, the official and perhaps the police elements then that is not going to help by itself either. There is a lot of discussion at the moment about the whole-of-government approach. That, I think, is not enough to address this problem.

Senator TROOD—I see that point. Whole-of-government is obviously referring to the capacity of agencies to cooperate with each other. But the need in relation to peacekeeping operations when non-governmental organisations are involved, and they frequently are—

Prof. Apthorpe—And they are particularly involved on the assistance side. What is needed in Darfur, for example, is not only protection but also assistance. It is not clear to me from what I have seen so far that both objectives are going to be achieved by the present policy.

Senator TROOD—You have been collecting examples of shortcomings, but I am wondering whether or not you have collected any examples of what might be regarded as best practice. I know that you are sceptical of that phrase.

Prof. Apthorpe—I am afraid I will have to say no. I would like to put my neck on the block and say that there are no best practices that I would want to pass on to this committee. I have given you these examples. What do we make of them? They are not context specific, for one point. The other thing is that they are dominated by an idea that somewhere else there is a model to be replicated—not only in this area but in all areas of aid. That is a mistake. You should at least understand the model first before you try to replicate it. Even the East Asian development model was misread by the World Bank. If there is an agency which really has the resources not to misread this, but which did misread it, then it is that one. That is a big example and it was very important at the time.

Senator TROOD—So we have no examples that might serve as a guide or they are few and far between?

Prof. Apthorpe—The best examples would be examples of principles, but in reality you have paradoxes and ironies—complicated contexts. Unless these good principles address those, although I will not say that they are worthless, they are not going to tell you either what to do or what might happen depending on what you do. There is to be a meeting in Britain actually on what is wrong with best practice around the world. I think it is to be held next week. It is a kind of first meeting to hit at best practice and perhaps find something else—some other kind of encouraging thought. The idea of best outcomes might be better than best practice. But you would still have to address outcomes in context not just in design issues, not just in a policy way and not just in a program way. Context is very important.

Senator TROOD—Thank you for that.

Prof. Apthorpe—It is a bit negative, sorry.

Senator TROOD—I think you have alerted the committee to the need to be cautious about its recommendations.

CHAIR—When you talk about training and preparedness, and training capacity particularly, is it specific experience in Australia with either the Australian Federal Police or members of the ADF that leads you to make those observations that you have some concerns about the capacity to train?

Prof. Apthorpe—Yes, but it is my colleague rather than me who has experience of those particular cases. But this is what one is finding: that where there is a technical issue, you might put a technical person there somehow to transfer—it is called capacity building in the aid language—but it is not enough. You also need to address the whole situation. You need to know how to teach. That, at the moment, is not happening, I believe, in those two areas.

CHAIR—Do you think if Mr Townsend had anything he wished to add on that matter, you might—

Prof. Apthorpe—I think he would hammer that very hard.

CHAIR—I am sure he would. But he might perhaps also respond to a question if we were to pass that to him on notice?

Prof. Apthorpe—I am sure he would, yes. He is at the Australian Strategic Policy Institute, so he has very day-to-day experience of that.

CHAIR—Thank you. There being no further questions, I thank you very much, Professor, for your submission, your assistance to the committee and your attendance here this afternoon.

Prof. Apthorpe—Thank you very much.

Proceedings suspended from 2.51 pm to 3.04 pm

BREEN, Dr Bob, Research Fellow, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University

CONNOR, Dr John Stephen, Volume Author, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations*

HORNER, Professor David Murray, Professor of Australian Defence History, Australian National University; and Official Historian, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations*

LONDEY, Dr Peter David, Military History Section, Australian War Memorial; and Author, *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations*

CHAIR—I welcome to the hearing our next witnesses, who are collectively described as the authors of the *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations.* Do you have any comments to make on the capacity in which you appear?

Mr Connor—I am a senior lecturer at the University of New South Wales at the Australian Defence Force Academy.

Dr Breen—My volume of the *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations* covers Australian peacekeeping in the South Pacific. I am appearing here to provide information in respect of that volume.

CHAIR—I understand that a copy of today's opening statement has been provided to you. Do you have any questions regarding that document?

Prof. Horner—No.

CHAIR—The committee has before it a submission from Professor Horner, which we have numbered 6. It is of course now a public document. Do you need to make any amendments or alterations to that submission?

Prof. Horner—No.

CHAIR—Professor Horner, I was going to invite you to make a brief opening statement and then we would go to questions, unless others of your colleagues would also like to make opening statements.

Prof. Horner—I had intended that we jointly would speak for 10 minutes. I hope we all stick to the time—

CHAIR—Not nearly as much as I do.

Prof. Horner—under threat of death to my colleagues! We will give an opening statement and then we will be open to questions.

CHAIR—Thank you very much.

Prof. Horner—Thank you for the opportunity to appear today. For the past three years, I and my colleagues—Dr Breen, Dr Connor and Dr Londey—have been working on the four-volume *Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations*. This does not mean, however, that we are in a position to answer all the questions set out in your terms of reference. As we are required to research more than 50 peacekeeping type missions, we have begun at the beginning and, while we have made excellent progress, we have not yet begun examining the most recent missions. Furthermore, we have not necessarily researched all of the questions you have posed.

With that qualifier, I still think we might have something to offer the committee. As historians, we have set out to determine the shape of Australian peacekeeping over the past 60 years. We wanted to find out why Australian peacekeeping has waxed and waned. We have tried to work out whether the Australian missions have been successful and we have tried to determine why the government approved the missions. While we have a clear view on what is and what is not peacekeeping, we have not been rigid in deciding what missions to include. In any case, the catch-all phrase ‘post-Cold War operations’ allows us to cover just about anything.

Australia has been involved in many missions overseas that do not quite fit the narrow definition of peacekeeping but which need to be considered nonetheless. Some examples would be the training team in Uganda in the 1980s, the mine clearance training teams in several countries, the humanitarian mission in northern Iraq, the Maritime Interception Force in the Gulf region and the weapons inspectors in Iraq. These were generally arduous missions in difficult cultural, political and at times military environments.

I am now going to ask each author briefly to summarise the sorts of conclusions they have drawn from the period they have been researching. Dr Londey, the author of the first volume, will begin.

Dr Londey—My volume of the official history begins with 1947, when the first Australian peacekeepers went to Indonesia. It covers all Australian peacekeeping for the 40 years to the end of the Cold War and continues the story in the Middle East and Cyprus through to today. The story of peacekeeping in this period is a story of both innovation and failure. Despite the Cold War and the odd proxy war to which it gave rise, most conflicts in this period grew out of decolonisation issues. Today’s issues of so-called ‘failed states’ also often have their roots in decolonisation.

The United Nations charter set up a collective security regime to fight aggression of the sort seen in the 1930s. The messy conflicts of decolonisation do not fit this model at all. The rights and wrongs were often blurry and member states were not willing to commit large forces to this sort of conflict. Peacekeeping was an ad hoc development by people on the ground, who could see that even small numbers of military personnel, disciplined and well trained, impartial and committed to the UN ideal of the minimum use of force, could make a difference disproportionate to their cost. The idea was pioneered in Indonesia, where Australians were by chance the first UN military observers 60 years ago next week. Observers were next used in Greece, Kashmir, the Middle East and Korea. In 1956, the Canadians suggested a UN buffer force in the Sinai, and larger forces followed in the Congo, Cyprus and elsewhere. Australia was

a consistent but small-scale peacekeeper, mainly sending reserve officers and civilian police until after Vietnam. Their contribution was valued but little attempt was made at home to learn from their experience. Peacekeeping developed organically as people on the ground worked out the problems they could solve and the best way to do it—and generally I suspect that Australians have worked well with this system because they come from a culture which encourages individual initiative and values solving problems more than following rules.

Prof. Horner—I will continue on, because mine is the next volume. My volume covers those missions that began at the end of the Cold War. These include the observers in Iran who went there in 1988, the engineers in Namibia in 1989, the engineers in Pakistan training Afghan de-miners, and the signallers in the Western Sahara. My volume also covers the Gulf War and all its ramifications. The Gulf War was not itself peacekeeping but the ships that deployed as part of the maritime interception force were a form of peacekeeping. After the war, Australians became part of the United Nations team of inspectors that went into Iraq, and also a humanitarian mission went into northern Iraq.

This period saw a major expansion in Australian peacekeeping from just 23 police and 13 military observers in 1988 to more than 2,300 military personnel during the next three years. There were several reasons for this: first, the thawing of the Cold War meant that the United Nations was able to begin more peacekeeping missions; second, there was a gradual change in government policy caused partly by the 1987 white paper, partly by the appointment of Senator Gareth Evans as foreign minister, who wanted Australia to act as an international good citizen, and partly by the passage of time since the Vietnam War. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union, President George Bush Snr and Prime Minister Bob Hawke spoke of a new world order in which the nations together would bring peace to the world. Of course this soon proved to be an illusion, and the breakdown of the new world order would lead to more conflicts and even more peacekeeping missions. In the period covered by my volume, Australia's approach to peacekeeping had been transformed, but its response had been ad hoc. Procedures had yet to be developed and lessons learned. Australia had gone well beyond the old notions of peacekeeping and had discovered that it was hard to separate the desire to be a good international citizen from the imperative of adhering to the Western alliance.

Mr Connor—My volume covers the 1990s, when Australian peacekeeping operations broadened to include more complex missions and humanitarian interventions. Many of these missions took place in the aftermath of long running civil wars or genocide, or sometimes both. The three main Australian deployments in the 1990s examined in this volume are Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda. Three main themes arise in examining peacekeeping in this period. The first is the concept of humanitarian intervention. In April 1999, then British Prime Minister Tony Blair made a speech outlining what he called a new doctrine of international community, in which he argued interventions in Kosovo and elsewhere combined the humanitarian urge to help people in need with the national interest to ensure regional and international stability. To this end, Australia played an active role in the Cambodian peace process and the subsequent UN missions and promptly sent an infantry battalion to Somalia to ensure distribution of humanitarian aid but was slow to respond to the Rwandan genocide.

The second theme is that peacekeeping in the 1990s became a more complex operation. In Cambodia, Australian Electoral Commission staff helped run the country's first free and fair election in 40 years. In Somalia, Australian soldiers helped restore the legal system in Baidoa,

and Australian Federal Police officers tried to rebuild the Somali police force. In Rwanda, the Australian medical contingent helped re-establish the Kigali Central Hospital.

The final theme is that these peacekeeping missions took place in the aftermath of civil war and genocide. Peacekeepers do need to go to countries in which massacres have taken place or may be still taking place. How can they be prepared for these missions? When peacekeepers return to Australia, how can they be helped to come to terms with their memories?

Dr Breen—My volume covers Australian peacekeeping in the South Pacific. After the Second World War, Australia did not plan to be a regional peacekeeper or peace enforcer. We set up for neighbourhood watch, not neighbourhood intervention. In the past 15 years, after receiving short-notice invitations, Australians have intervened eight times with regional neighbours to help other neighbours to keep or enforce peace. What have we learned? Policy: Australia is and will continue to be the lead peacekeeper and peace enforcer in the South Pacific. We should encourage regional self-help. We should always include neighbourhood partners in our good neighbour operations. Peacekeeping operations are tools for emergency response and stabilisation as well as good offices for peace processes, but intervening forces should not become garrisons. Good offices should be patient but not permanent.

Training preparedness and coordination: a permanent South Pacific peacekeeping force is not needed; rather, just well thought out, practised neighbourhood responses. Most trouble occurs in cities and towns. Our disciplined forces need to train and prepare themselves and neighbourhood partners to secure urban areas. Our disciplined forces and government agencies should train to plan and deploy simultaneously, not sequentially.

The key lessons: success and the morale and effectiveness of Australian peacekeepers correlate directly with the level of cultural sensitivity and linguistic competence. Success is about engaging local civil society, especially women, clergy and traditional leaders in facilitating the peace process or creating the preconditions for one. Finally, the future of Australian neighbourhood peacekeeping should be police driven and community based, not ADF driven and intervention based.

CHAIR—Thank you very much. Is there anything further?

Prof. Horner—That is the end our short statement.

CHAIR—I will ask Senator Trood to begin, and then we will go to questions from other members of the committee.

Senator TROOD—I think this is for you, Professor Horner, to begin with. My question is about the scope of your project before I explore some of the very interesting themes that you have exposed. What about the more recent activities in which Australian defence forces have been involved overseas? You alluded to your having a very clear idea of what you meant and understood by ‘peacekeeping’, but are Australia’s activities in East Timor, Afghanistan and more recently in Iraq normally a part of that?

Prof. Horner—The title of our project, ‘Australian peacekeeping and post-Cold War operations’ was deliberately written in that way to allow us to do two things: to tell the story of

Australian peacekeeping that goes back to 1947 and to deal with a whole range of operations that the ADF has been involved in since the end of the Cold War. When the cabinet submission was prepared, we gave the cabinet a great big long list of all the missions. Rather than go through and tick every mission, the cabinet gave us permission to do all peacekeeping missions since 1947 except for Iraq—which was then Iraq 2003—recent operations in Afghanistan, and East Timor. We can do missions which do not quite fall within a rigid definition of 'peacekeeping', so long as we do not do the three that were mentioned in that cabinet minute.

Senator TROOD—I see. I suppose it is none of our business or yours to speculate as to why that may have been the case.

Prof. Horner—I think a reasonable and perhaps non-controversial view would be that all three missions were ongoing missions at the time we went to cabinet, which was in the first part of 2004.

Senator MARK BISHOP—Which three missions are you not analysing?

Prof. Horner—Iraq from 2003 onwards—in other words, the present operations in Iraq—operations in Afghanistan from 2001 onwards and East Timor.

Senator MARK BISHOP—East Timor from 1997?

Prof. Horner—We have not been given permission to do East Timor from INTERFET 1999 on to the present.

Senator MARK BISHOP—Thank you.

Senator TROOD—So no part of the East Timor mission is included?

Prof. Horner—We have not been given permission to do any part of East Timor at all.

Senator TROOD—Do you have an expectation that there might be an opportunity?

Prof. Horner—East Timor is the largest peacekeeping mission that Australia has been involved in. We have been involved in larger operations, but in a pure peacekeeping sense the INTERFET operation and the subsequent operations are certainly the largest mission we have been involved in. It certainly leaves a huge gap in what we hope is a very comprehensive history of Australian peacekeeping, and it is one which I would have thought that the public would have an expectation of reading about. Writing official histories takes a fair bit of time, and, if we were given permission to work on East Timor now, it would be perhaps five years before anything would appear. So that would be something in the order of 12 or 13 years from the time of INTERFET, and that certainly is a fairly reasonable period of time to have passed.

Senator TROOD—Maybe we will contemplate that matter in preparing our report. You obviously have a wealth of knowledge in relation to a long period of time in Australia's peacekeeping activities. The committee is interested in a wide range of themes, like training, the impulse to intervene, the effectiveness of missions and the extent to which there has been effective, or shortcomings in, interagency coordination. Things of that kind occur to me

immediately as being themes which would be of interest. I am wondering whether you, Professor Horner, or your colleagues have been able to discern any broad themes in those general areas. We could just take, for example, the matter of agency responsibility in peacekeeping and the extent to which over this period of time there may have been a shift in responsibility from one agency to another, higher or lower levels of cooperation or more effective cooperation or integration in their activities. Do you or your colleagues have any observations on that broad theme?

Prof. Horner—I will try my colleagues in a minute. Undoubtedly there has been improvement in interagency cooperation over what, for us, is a very long period of time for research. Remember that, although the history is 60 years, it really did not crank up until about 20 years ago, so we are really only looking at about the last 20 years. Initially it was the ADF going off to do things on almost an ad hoc basis. We have seen over the last 20 years an improvement in interagency cooperation, particularly with the involvement of the Australian Federal Police—Dr Breen may be able to talk about that in relation to the Pacific in particular—and other agencies such as the Australian Electoral Commission, which went into Namibia; AusAID; and so on. These peacekeeping missions have grown not just in size and complexity but also in the number of Australian government and non-government organisations that have been involved in them. It is almost in some ways hard to keep ahead of the game. Every time it seems as though procedures have started to be worked out, the next mission is one step more complex than the one beforehand. Maybe Dr Breen would like to talk about the police in the Pacific.

Dr Breen—I guess we started our interest in the Pacific in reacting to a crisis in Vanuatu in 1980. The option considered by government in 1980, when there was a secessionist rebellion on the island of Espiritu Santo, was to hold back and reflect but not to actually introduce the possibility of an Australian military intervention. At a Pacific forum conference, Sir Julius Chan, Prime Minister of Papua New Guinea, and Walter Lini, the new PM elect of the soon to be independent Vanuatu, presented the fait accompli that the PNG DF were going to provide a force to go in. The Australian government was presented with this fait accompli and was forced then to look at its loan personnel and how they might logistically support such an intervention, and did so. So it was indirect military assistance only.

Subsequently, the responses to the Fijian coups in 1987—there were two coups in 1987—again saw the Australian government looking at its options and quickly ruling out a military intervention and effectively just putting forces on standby for evacuation. That, I guess, became a crisis response from then on to the prospect of a breakdown in law and order that might affect Australian nationals—again purely a military response.

In 1987, however, a thought went through government that the ADF was a fairly heavy, conventionally trained instrument for the sorts of problems that might arise in the South Pacific, that maybe a lighter touch was needed and that the use of conventional military forces, albeit probably largely heavily armed light infantry, might not be a good look for Australia. Ideas were put forward that this might be an opportunity for the then Federal Police to muscle up and maybe present a sort of riot control capability for government. But in 1987, that idea went nowhere.

In 1994, after four frustrating years of getting no substantial progress in the Bougainville crisis—you will recall that was triggered by the closure of an Australian-owned mine in Panguna

in Bougainville; the PNG government responded to that with security forces that proved to be part of the problem, due to their behaviour, rather than part of the solution—Australia, in conjunction with New Zealanders, who had unique abilities to deal with the problem because they were not as closely involved with Bougainville or Papua New Guinea's history, put a military force on the water that went to protect a peace conference—once again a purely military response.

However, a new dimension entered whereby at the operational tactical level diplomats first appeared. James Batley spent his time confined in rather austere conditions on *HMAS Tobruk*. Political advice was handy to the commander, so this became a partnership that then matured when later on—in this particular case led by the New Zealanders—in Bougainville in 1997 when an Australian diplomat was there at the tactical level providing advice immediately to the military commander.

At that time there was another experiment: the inclusion of civilian monitors trained at the last minute for peace monitoring roles. I was involved in the preparation of those first groups, who were public servants from Canberra who would go from information rich and first world Canberra to a monitoring site near a Bougainville village. They were from AusAID, the Federal Police, Defence and Foreign Affairs. Mixing those groups in and getting them to work cohesively with the military marks the first attempt by a number of agencies to take a more than crisis time interest in longer term commitments to work together to get an effect on the ground. So there I would place, as a historian, when we first saw—by the fact that that mission lasted for not months but years—people starting to get to know each other. I think the Australian government then benefited from those longer term contacts between departments and those cooperative arrangements. It came to be seen as an improved model of whole-of-government response, which was the response to the Solomons in 2003.

There—and this was very much a surprise, and I was there to see it first-hand—the government had decided to lead with a sort of UN-like SRSG, a civilian, with a police led operation with the ADF in support. That formula, though again forged in necessity, was inspired by good work from the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in their paper, which was written by Ellie Wainwright, suggesting that our response to the Pacific needed to be a multi-agency one and that just having a military option for evacuation was probably only a limited thing to have within the government's range of options.

I would think again that, similar to the initial entry into Bougainville, the habit not only of Australian agencies working together well and improving through habit their arrangements for peacekeeping but also of involving our regional neighbours—which was brand new and only recent—led to a more neighbourhood approach to peacekeeping or law and order issues and other issues related to keeping the peace in the Pacific.

Lastly I should mention that it was AusAID coming in amongst this group with targeted aid that helped a lot. If you are trying to improve the circumstances of people on the ground in a post-conflict situation it is difficult to do it without the ability to assist their immediate living conditions and circumstances. AusAID was a very valued partner in Bougainville in providing that sort of leverage, influence and incentive for people to stick with the peace process, which was producing results for them.

Senator TROOD—I cannot wait for your volume, Dr Breen, because I am sure that the detail that you have just elucidated will be there in all of its glory. That will be a very interesting volume indeed. The picture that emerges from your remarks is one of missions becoming increasingly complex and increasingly demanding on the Australian government and requiring increasingly sophisticated responses from Canberra. But the picture that also seems to emerge is one of evolutionary responses—adaptations to circumstance—rather than anybody sitting down at any one time and saying: 'We seem to be doing more of this. We should be asking ourselves a question about whether or not we are going in the right direction or whether or not cobbling and muddling through'—or whatever particular phrase suits the circumstances—'is the right way to proceed.' Is that a fair assessment of the evolution of Australian peacekeeping experience?

Dr Breen—In terms of both personal experience and historical research, we have been making it up as we have been going along since we first struck our initial problems in the South Pacific, and it has been necessity and quite often, thankfully, the application of focused attention by smart people at the time that have drawn together new elements to suit a new situation. But, no, from the late 1980s there has not been a top-down guidance on how these things were to come together. I think the government has responded and the instruments of power have responded to circumstances as they arose. To a degree there is a reticence because every time you move into the area of a multi-agency engagement with the region that is more lasting and deeper than, say, being a bit of a fire brigade when things break down, neo-colonialism is often put forward. And there are certainly elites in the South Pacific who see us as a big brother, with all that that may allude to, for our efforts to assist them forward as they meet their challenges.

The short answer is that we have, so far, been making it up as we are going along. Fortunately, our circumstances now are that there is broad experience in a number of these agencies of government—the ADF, AusAID, Foreign Affairs and the Federal Police—which means that we now are at a point where it is business that we can do in a much better coordinated manner.

Senator TROOD—Setting aside the question of Australia's relations with the Pacific region and just focusing on the interagency cooperation and the extent to which we have built up a capability which seems in many cases not to have failed us—we have managed to find ways and mechanisms for addressing problems and in many ways the record is not a bad one, although some of these missions are incomplete—does your assessment or conclusion necessarily preclude the possibility that it is time to think top down or to look at these missions more broadly and ask ourselves: are we in fact doing it right? Do we have the kinds of capabilities we need? There is a premise here that the necessity for this might be provoked by the expectation that we are going to continue to do this kind of thing or that the tempo of these kinds of missions is going to increase. If we could be confident that that was not going to be the case then I suppose the need is not pressing. If, however, we thought we were going to continue more or less as we are or, indeed, have more of these expectations put upon us in the future, then I wonder whether or not you share the view that there is a need to address this whole question of peacekeeping and the way in which we respond to it more comprehensively and in detail than we have thus far been able to do outside the operational environment.

Dr Breen—When you consider the trajectory of the South Pacific, and Australia's role, this is where you get into the semantics of: when does peacekeeping finish and the whole business of engaging with your region in a whole lot of other ways begin? I think I will confine my comments, especially given the inquiry's scope, to the fact that our instruments for

peacekeeping, which range from our engagement with our region to what is called peace building, are as good as they have ever been. Our diplomats do a fine job. On our knowledge of the region, I would probably feel, with my contact with Foreign Affairs, that including the South Pacific in a career should be an enhancement to that career. Sometimes it is felt that the main game is elsewhere on the globe, but I think our region is important enough to warrant a weighting being given to diplomats who have been there. On peacekeeping, when required and when agreements have been reached after conflict, again I think our instruments are in good shape.

The response to putting people on the ground—and we have good young people who we end up putting on the ground who have done us very well over the years—is as good as it can be. I personally would feel that, over time, our emphasis should be on culture and language. I see in most of the submissions you have received thus far that no-one is missing that point about culture and language. If we are going to go to someone else's country it is like going to someone else's home for dinner: you would like to speak the language and you would like to know how to behave. That should apply.

On peace enforcement, we have shown quite recently that we can do that. If we keep ourselves confined to what we are endeavouring to do as a nation, it settles things down, it stabilises. But concurrently, not sequentially, we should make sure we engage as soon as possible with civil society, which has often been hit for a six in these settings, in order to reassure and build confidence. I think it goes beyond peacekeeping, peace enforcement and peace building to the area of engagement—as neighbours, we should engage with our neighbourhood to try to look at the deeper problems. Our emphasis is probably a little more towards the security and emergency response area. More broadly than this inquiry, I guess, I would suggest that we need to engage with civil society in a deeper way, to go to the problems that cause us to need to go and do these things. But in terms of the instruments that we choose to use, and the combining of those, I think we are in quite good shape.

Dr Londey—In some ways, making it up as you go along can be a good way to approach these problems because every situation is different. It is going to be very hard to set up a body of doctrine which exactly tells you how to cope with situations which are always complex situations of conflict in societies with very deep roots and which are very deeply rooted in the nature of that individual society. It is very important to learn from experience but I think a lot of the innovations in peacekeeping have over the years happened from the people on the ground seeing a need, trying something out and finding out that this does not work but that does work.

The basis on which military observers have worked for the last 60 years was more or less set out at a meeting in March 1948 when the observers had been in Indonesia for six months and they had a meeting, obviously swapped notes, discussed what they were doing and came up with a set of guidelines. It was not in a vacuum. It was not somebody in New York saying, 'How should military observers work?' It was people in Indonesia saying, 'This is what we can see is going to work in this situation.'

This is the sort of thing that General Nimmo did in commanding observers in Kashmir. Similarly, I think, he responded to the situation and saw what would work with the parties. The UN tried out civilian police in the Congo, thought that worked quite well and then used them in Cyprus. Often what is important is that individuals are in these situations, gain the experience

and see things that work or, in some aspects of the Congo, things that do not work such as getting dragged into the local civil war.

One of the reasons I would perceive us as having been successful in East Timor was that we had a lot of people who had been in Somalia, Cambodia and Rwanda. They had seen a lot of things; they had a lot of experience of things working and not working and they, as individuals, were able to bring that experience to the situation. Presumably now, we still have a large body of people who will be able to carry their experience forward. But the pressure is always going to be on them as individuals to see what is working, for example somebody such as David Hurley making decisions in Baidoa in Somalia about what level of disarmament should be tackled. It is hard to see that somebody in New York, Washington or Canberra could have been making those decisions as well as somebody in Baidoa who is in daily contact with the leaders of clans and understands the situation intimately. So it seems to me there are dangers in trying to set out a very prescriptive format for how these operations will work. It is great to have a databank of knowledge and experience and partly that is carried in the heads of the individuals, the people who have been in the operations, and partly it will be in things such as the official history, which will be a great set of information about what has and has not worked in the past.

Prof. Horner—Could I comment on your proposition, Senator?

Senator TROOD—Yes.

Prof. Horner—There might be something in it. I do not really have the expertise to know fully how it would work in relation to the Pacific but it is quite a different matter for missions further afield. In the Pacific or in our near region we are likely to be the principal power and therefore we can make those plans. Elsewhere, beyond our Australian region, we are going to be fitting in to a UN or other coalition in which our best laid plans will be quite irrelevant as they ask us for something and we provide that. So it only really applies to close to home operations.

Senator TROOD—I agree with your observations, Dr Londey and Professor Horner, about not being too prescriptive. I recognise the fact that each of these missions is different and they make different demands on the Australian community broadly defined. I think there would be a danger if we were to become prescriptive and create capacity which has certain expectations built into it. It has to be a capability which is adaptable to the circumstances, I agree with that; save for the fact that one of the things that do emerge—and I think Dr Wainwright made this point in her evidence to the committee—is that in many of these cases prevention is much better than responding after the event. Insofar as having capabilities for seeing the problems that you referred to, Dr Breen, in relation to the broader questions of governance et cetera, and insofar as the Australian government can develop that kind of capability, then it might preclude the need for more severe and intrusive commitments later on. Perhaps I could leave it there for the moment.

Senator HOGG—Thank you, Senator Trood. That was the very point I was going to raise.

CHAIR—This brain thing we have going here is very disturbing!

Senator HOGG—We seem to be at one! It is the issue of prevention rather than cure. Whilst I accept your point, Professor Horner, that it varies as you get further away from the Australian

region, are you in your research looking at the causes and whether peacekeeping or peacemaking was preventable by addressing the causes in the first instance? In other words, are we addressing this the wrong way around? Are we looking at setting up a reactionary set of force and circumstances rather than something that is proactive in the first instance to eliminate the situation from occurring? If so, what should we be doing?

Prof. Horner—Again, the same principle that I talked about applies. There is not very much that we in Australia can do about some internal conflict in Africa, but there is plenty that we might be able to do about things closer to home. It really depends on what capacity the Australian government has to influence—

Senator HOGG—But there may well be policy failures in terms of the direction of our aid. There may well be policy failure in terms of—and I am not talking about direct intervention—the type of assistance that we give in terms of governance and a whole range of issues. Are you trying to identify those issues as part of your study of the causes—particularly in your case, Dr Breen, in our closer region—and thereby see if there have been policy failures previously that we need to address rather than focus solely on the peacemaking, peacekeeping, peace enforcement or whatever else it might be?

Dr Breen—Part of my responsibility for the reader is to set a context in which the Australian government takes action, and typically a history is the story of its actions. But the opportunity I also have is to look at what has gone on before: to look at some of the relationships that we have had with what becomes a trouble spot to see whether there were warning signs, whether these troubles could have been anticipated, whether political leaders and leaders of other agencies—for example, our intelligence agencies—were picking up on these difficulties and whether something preventative could have been done. It is interesting because, looking through files, you see that we have actually been very preventative over our history. Our diplomats and on occasions, directly eyeball-to-eyeball, our politicians have been quite forthright with our near neighbours and members of the elites of our near neighbours, telling them frankly and clearly about the sorts of things that were being done that could lead to further complex problems.

We come now to the issue of sovereignty: advice given by a neighbour and whether or not it is taken. In our history of being, if you like, the superpower, or the power in the Pacific, I do not think that we have left much unsaid that needed to have been said to those who have been, by virtue of their circumstances, elected and given responsibility to run their sovereign countries. So, in terms of the history of advice, I think Australia has done as best as it could and, in some instances, has been quite blunt, and appropriately so, in anticipation of things that could have gone worse. However, once you have taken a position on sovereignty, how do you shape events before crisis when that leadership has basically said, ‘Thank you for your advice,’ and then continued on? That is the tough bit of business.

History will show, my volume will show, that there were certainly preventable things. The problems in Bougainville, for example, originated well and truly before the first peacekeeping operation and the milestones to that tragedy and a decade’s worth of a civil war on our doorstep are all signposted. Hindsight, an exact science, shows what could have been done. I have not seen anything of a major nature that can inform us now on how we might do something differently in the future, except for an element that emerged at a symposium recently. We have been correct in our professional friendships at the higher level in our region. But where was the

love and where was the heart that came with being a neighbour? We had some dialogue on that and the message was: if it is not in Australia's interests, we do not care. If it is not in Australia's direct national interest in the South Pacific, why should we make that extra effort to do something about it?

I think that caring, although it sounds a bit naive in the hard world of diplomacy and politics, is a dimension that is worth exploring. At the community level—speaking of prevention—there is a lot of outreach, for example, into East Timor. A lot of Australians are making bridges into East Timor, yet we find that at the higher levels things are pretty sour considering our neighbourly gesture towards East Timor at the end of the nineties. So maybe in a preventable sense our greatest assets in Australia, in a broad sense, are our community values and attitudes and outreach. It is not the business of government to tell our citizens what to do in respect of the neighbourhood but maybe they could encourage certain things that might start reinforcing a lower and community level contact with the South Pacific that we had in certain ways in the past but do not have as much now.

If I were to offer this afternoon a suggestion of something new in terms of prevention, I would suggest that we look more closely at how peace can be kept in a neighbourhood sense by neighbouring families, neighbouring communities, neighbouring shire councils and neighbouring parishes. That appears to be one of the noticeable things in East Timor—which does not have a large population. Community-level Australians are recognised for their generosity, yet sometimes our lack of care further up is noticeable.

Senator FORSHAW—I would have said, and I think it has been said by many, that one of the things that we as a country have been doing for quite some time is trying to assist in developing better systems of governance within our region. I would suggest that this is so more in the Pacific and the island states than, say, in East Timor simply because East Timor has gained its independence more recently. Countries such as Fiji and the Solomons have a long history of programs, both government and non-government funded and run. If you look at the countries that have had some problems in recent times, they are all ones where we have made a big effort over the years, which suggests that that work has not been terribly successful in filtering down from the political and organisational leadership in those countries to the community level. We bring many people here and we send people over to those countries to run training programs, whether about elections or governance et cetera. I am just interested in your observations. How do you do it at the community level other than through aid groups if the systems have broken down despite all this effort that has been put in? The UNDP has done a fair amount of work in this regard too, I think.

Prof. Horner—We could certainly chance our arm at some of those things but it is really a bit beyond what we are into with our official history and the period we are researching.

Senator FORSHAW—Yes, I appreciate that. A valid thing is if you notice that the political structures are changing, and more rapidly changing, in some of these countries. I have met politicians who have come to Australia, and then two years later they come again and they are in a different party. Without reflecting on any particular country, they might have 17 or 20 parties and there might be one or two people in each, which is certainly a bit foreign to our way of thinking. We are putting in a lot of support effort. There has been more money allocated in recent budgets to do this work. If civil order breaks down, it is essentially because the system of

governance is not working, the parliament is not working or whatever the authority structure is is not working.

Dr Londey—Sometimes we are trying to introduce a culture of government which is just completely alien, in a sense, to the local culture. It seems to me that one of the problems of peacekeeping, in a way, is that it gets caught up where there is a bit of an intersection between what we count as breakdown, which may just be one society working the way that that society works, and that breaking out into actual physical conflict. Then we feel, ‘Well, there should be peacekeepers there to at least end the conflict.’ Obviously we can go and try to influence people to run their societies the way we would like to, but I think it gets a little blurry at times.

The peacekeepers have to create a space to allow the local people to set things up the way they want to, but at the same time, clearly, not just Australia—we have our own view about how nearby societies should run—but the United Nations go and try to set up structures, and those structures may or may not work easily in that society. There is a very blurry line between the different levels of peacekeeping. I am not saying that peacekeepers should not go beyond simply creating a secure area, and they will go and start setting up institutions, especially in societies where institutions have been broken or damaged by the conflict, but it is easy then to drift, in a sense, beyond that into trying to set up institutions which have not ever existed in that society or institutions which will work in a way different from how they have in the past. It is a problem for the United Nations, which in some ways is meant to represent a sort of global view of how society should operate and has lots of formulations of that view, but often those formulations are at odds with how the particular societies they are working in naturally operate. There is a problem of a very enormous blurry line there.

Senator MARK BISHOP—I have just a quick question for you, Dr Breen. In your introductory comments, you referred to the correlation between linguistic, cultural and community capabilities and the success rate of the mission. Firstly, can you just develop that point. Secondly, in that comment, how do you define ‘success rate’? Thirdly, is the recent attention by both ADF and AFP to language, culture and gender issues that they have outlined in their submissions sufficient, and are they on the right track?

Dr Breen—The correlation—and that is almost a statistical term—comes from research that I did on the morale of peacekeepers. Sending so many young people away, often into cultures and circumstances that they would be unfamiliar with, the question was: how did they maintain their morale? I found—and I will be short—that, if an individual had some form of understanding of the culture and therefore knew initially how to interact, they felt better about it and certainly those who saw them arrive, fully armed, for example, had a better attitude to them. Secondly, it goes without saying that there is no more persuasive and useful way to make contact than through language.

Success is at what I call the ‘cultural cutting edge’. If you are creating a secure environment—for example, after you have had to go in with your military forces or police forces—then success will be when the local people have the confidence in you to continue on and rebuild their lives from whatever has been the setback. Therefore I would see that the measure of success in our neighbourhood, in the Pacific area and East Timor, is whether our peacekeepers make contact in a way that quickly restores the public’s confidence in their security and therefore has the knock-on effect of getting them back to being productive, to going home, to planting crops, to getting

the kids off to school. From the peacekeepers' end, if they are culturally sensitive and linguistically competent they facilitate that process much faster.

On the other side of it, I guess, is the morale of our people. Peacekeeping can be a shock and there can be trauma as a result of peacekeeping, and that should be always understood. In East Timor, although casualties were minuscule, the after-effects on people's mental health have been significant. If, firstly, they have cultural and linguistic capabilities and also they are able to relate back to their families at home that what they are meeting and engaging with is worthy, just and commendable then, in the separation from their families, their morale and the morale of their families is much higher. The sense of it comes from their contact with families—if, in a way, their family contacts them through other families in the area of operations. I have a quick anecdote. If a peacekeeper shows photographs of his or her family to a local, the door opens immediately—that is, if there is that understanding that this person actually comes from a family. Quite often there will be a genuine gratitude—and I found this in East Timor and Bougainville—that you have come so far from your family to do this. The rapport culturally is immediately quite substantial. It sounds a bit corny, I know, but it is quite substantial and real. And that actually improves the demeanour and morale of the peacekeeper, the peacekeeper's family and those whom they have been sent to help.

I have been following the action, so to speak, from the early nineties, when I was quite lonely talking about peacekeeping and the need for language and culture and these sorts of things and started to design programs for the ADF before they went overseas, and I think that, certainly in terms of the literature and what is written about the intent of organisations now, it is routinely understood. This is part of what I talked about before. The groups coming through now have been on operations. They know you have to have the language and they know you have to have the cultural understanding—they know from experience. Some of the young majors that I got to know in Somalia are now the brigadiers of the ADF. They have no problem in being convinced of the need for culture and language. So we have a generational improvement of itself, if you see what I mean.

Senator MARK BISHOP—So that language familiarity, gender awareness, cultural training and community participation are, in your assessment, becoming part and parcel of the routine work of both ADF and AFP?

Dr Breen—Yes, very much so. We have recently been out to the IDG and received a brief out there. I have known through my contact with AFP monitors in Bougainville, and through seeing them again and keeping in touch, that the AFP have been on a very steep learning curve, and they are to be congratulated on how far they have come in such a short amount of time. I can say, hopefully without fear of being criticised by my ADF colleagues, that they have been faster than the ADF in coming to terms with the working parts required to engage the region in a way that is coercive but certainly culturally appropriate and therefore has a chance of being more successful than some of the abrupt interventions that have characterised approaches in other parts of the world to what you do with peacekeepers and how they interact.

The last point I would make about culture is that you really have to behave yourself on these operations. If you look at the history of the Australian armed forces, our behaviour at a social level in some of the places we have gone to has not been all that endearing to the local population. When it was decided that we would have dry operations—no alcohol on

peacekeeping operations—that was a terrifically positive decision. It meant that internally our forces behaved themselves. It meant that externally they behaved and interacted positively with the local population.

As for fraternisation, there was none of that. Again, that is a departure from the history—if you have read it—of our overseas troops. These operations emphasised being a guest in someone's country and behaving appropriately. I think it has to be understood by our troops that that is a winning card, a very positive thing. It requires a certain amount of discipline but, again, it goes back to family respect. You are there to help families, so you behave yourself. You are not there to party on in nightclubs.

Senator MARK BISHOP—No. But your conclusion is that, over the last 10 or 15 years, right through the officer cadre these lessons have been learnt, they are being applied and they are put into practice in the field.

Dr Breen—Yes. And though my knowledge of the AFP is more recent due to this project, I am very confident that they have come to understand—on my last point, for example—that the elite lifestyle of partying on in front of an impoverished population is not a good look. There has to be a better balance, if you are a guest in a country, as to how you behave. Though I would be reluctant to generalise, I might add that I worked for six months inside the UN as a volunteer and got to understand from the inside the culture of what they call 'mission hoppers'—people who are part of the international community who do good work but, in my view, could be more effective if they were more attentive to the look they create for the local peoples.

Senator MARK BISHOP—They are not perfect.

Dr Breen—No-one is.

Senator MARK BISHOP—Thank you, Dr Breen, that commentary is very useful.

Senator HUTCHINS—During the course of the inquiry, we have had concerns expressed by non-government organisations about the blurring line between peacekeeping, peace building and all that. They are concerned about their role vis-a-vis the ADF and the AFP. Have you seen how this is playing out in the field? Is this becoming more of a difficulty for both the NGOs and the ADF and the AFP when they go in and do these missions? The ADF and the AFP are servants of the state whereas the NGOs are not.

We have also heard evidence that there is growing use of security contractors, particularly in Iraq at the moment. Is that changing the nature of how we should be keeping an eye on our own forces? I am not sure if we have security contractors, but I understand that the Americans do. Is this going to become an increasing situation in peacekeeping operations?

Prof. Horner—I will look at the security contractors first. I am not sure that there are very many places where security contractors are being used in peacekeeping situations—as distinct from what is going on in, say, Iraq at the moment. There are a multitude of security contractors in Iraq, but I am not sure you would say that what is going on in Iraq is peacekeeping.

Senator HUTCHINS—For some it might be.

Prof. Horner—In very simple terms, peacekeeping is about going into a situation where there has been conflict and where a peace of sorts has been brokered. It is the job of the peacekeepers to stand between the two sides to observe and make various things happen. Those activities need to be done by disciplined people who are operating under certain rules of conduct. I am not sure that they are things that are necessarily done by security contractors.

Having said that, proposals have been put forward that the United Nations itself might put together a United Nations military force. However, while those proposals have been put forward many times, they really have not come to very much at this stage. In terms of security contractors, there is not a huge amount to be said there in respect of the pure peacekeeping function; on the other hand, there is a huge amount to be said for contractors providing a whole range of services. In fact, many of the services that are provided in peacekeeping-type missions are provided by contractors. So that is a fairly routine and normal activity. That is happening not just in peacekeeping but in other military operations as well.

Mr Connor—In respect of NGOs and peacekeepers, it is a very difficult situation. On the one hand NGOs want to have neutrality, which is understandable; on the other hand, in certain situations when you get to that issue of security, NGOs may not be able to do their work in providing humanitarian aid without the assistance of peacekeepers. A very good example of this is in Somalia, where the security situation had become so bad before the UNITAF—a non-UN mission that came in there—arrived. The harbour in Mogadishu was unusable because of piracy. If you are trying to move food aid into inland areas, you could not do it by road, which is the sensible way of doing it if you are trying to carry a lot of material. We were having to do it by air because stuff would be hijacked on the road. Once the UNITAF force arrived—which an Australian battalion was involved in—that security was there and those troops were able to escort convoys, which made a difference.

The International Red Cross at first did not want to have anything to do with this because of the issue of neutrality but, after a month or so, actually changed their minds because, if you transport food by road, you can get more stuff in and you can get it cheaper than if you have to transport it by air. So it is a very difficult situation. Sometimes there is a desire for neutrality, but sometimes there is a practicality if you are trying to help people.

Senator HUTCHINS—In the end, who makes that call—the NGO, the ADF, the cooperation?

Mr Connor—A point that is made all the time is about the ad hoc nature of a lot of these things. It is individual circumstances on the ground. The local heads of NGOs talking to local military commanders and local police commanders seems to be the way it happens.

Dr Breen—Normally the link between NGOs and an arriving peace enforcement force is security. NGOs will come to meetings for all those good reasons of being told how secure certain areas are for them to operate, but it is certainly a relationship of necessity and not perceived to be a shared role. At that cutting edge where, at the tactical level, in practical terms there is a military force in a village and there are NGOs wishing to work there—and I have been involved personally on these operations—there has not been much tension. In Bougainville, for example, local peace monitors engaged with AusAID-funded contractors in a most positive and productive way.

There are institutionally, though, NGOs who approach the military as one-size-fits-all. The military is composed of people with different attitudes to us: ‘Their being here is an unfortunate necessity; the sooner they go the better.’ That obviously is not a welcoming approach. Australian peacekeepers felt a great degree of disappointment—especially if they wanted to be part of the team that was fixing up the circumstances of local people who have had a tough time—because they wanted to respond in a human way rather than just having their guns cocked ready to shoot. So it goes both ways. I am not prescribing anything to NGOs but, in respect of Australia’s role in peacekeeping—whether our uniform be police or military—there is a very different mindset from some years ago. I have not read the submissions from the NGOs, except for some very pleasing information there about the style of outreach and complementarity they see with peacekeeping, but if they have current concerns I would hope that they can see that things are changing in a positive way.

The other area they may be concerned in—my last point—is: who gets the money to do things? I do not think the military want money to do things. They are in the emergency humanitarian relief area when the necessity is immediate and it is in a hostile environment where getting aid and sustenance to people is difficult; therefore the military will be the conduit. The military are not setting up another uniformed NGO empire there. I know that, with medical facilities that the military often bring, there is a feeling by medical NGOs that they intrude in areas that they should be contracted to do. I do not get the impression that that is a real issue, if you know what I mean, in the sense that NGOs can provide it. I have always seen Australian peacekeepers and the ADF step aside to allow them to do the job if they are up to it and they are prepared to deploy their people under the same austere conditions under which the military work.

CHAIR—Professor Horner, may I just follow up on a question that Senator Trood asked about the East Timor issue. This brochure on the official history says, in relation to East Timor, ‘if approved later’. Does that mean that you have made a further application to examine East Timor or you are awaiting further—

Prof. Horner—I believe we did make a second application for East Timor and it was denied.

CHAIR—I see.

Prof. Horner—We have not updated that sheet yet, because it was fairly recent, and we have some considerable changes to make to that sheet which are not really relevant to what we are talking about today.

CHAIR—I understand. But, in relation to that, are those rejections made with or without reasons provided?

Prof. Horner—I was told that the reason was the same reason as previously. Since I had not been told what the first reason was—

CHAIR—That left you as much in the dark as we are. Indeed. Thank you for that. That does give us something that we may follow up. I note from your submission, though, that you do indicate that you have approval for the writing of a fifth volume—

Prof. Horner—Yes.

CHAIR—which is to cover offshore humanitarian operations.

Prof. Horner—What I have called overseas humanitarian operations. That is one of the changes that need to be made to this. We have engaged a historian, Dr Steve Bullard, to start work on the project, and he began 10 days ago. He is presently trying to work out what the task is. His first task is to make a list of all these missions, and I think he is up to 40 at the moment. That volume will cover overseas deployments of the ADF and/or the police to deal with natural disasters: tsunamis, earthquakes, cyclones and those sorts of natural disasters.

CHAIR—Operation Sumatra Assist, Operation Pakistan Assist, and those sorts of things.

Prof. Horner—Yes, exactly.

CHAIR—You will certainly have to extend the title, then, to 'Official History of Australian Peacekeeping and Post-Cold War Operations and Overseas Humanitarian Operations'.

Prof. Horner—We have already talked about this.

CHAIR—That will be a mouthful!

Prof. Horner—We might have to revamp this. The problem is that this is the title that has been approved by cabinet, and we need the cabinet approval because that makes it the official history.

CHAIR—Yes, I understand. Thank you for that.

Senator MARK BISHOP—Each witness, I think, read from a formal statement. Are hard copies of those statements available?

Prof. Horner—We can make them available, yes.

CHAIR—Thanks, Professor Horner, that would be helpful. Senator Trood looks as if he is languidly champing at the bit. I am not sure whether that is a contradiction in terms or not.

Senator TROOD—I am languidly champing at the bit, Madam Chair.

CHAIR—I should not use horse analogies at the moment, of course, but do go on.

Senator TROOD—No, it is a very inopportune time to do that. Mr Connor, I was struck by your opening remarks in relation to the tumultuous 1990s and by the observation you made about Cambodia, Somalia and Rwanda. In particular, we were involved in two of those and not in another. I was just wondering whether or not you have been looking at the reasons why we chose one operation and not another. I suppose it applies to all of the work that you are doing—whether or not there is a common theme running through here in relation to what I would regard, from my own work, as the strategic culture of Australia's peacekeeping activities; whether or not there are common determinants of the occasions when we become involved; whether, as you

said, Dr Londey, most of them are unique—they are different kinds of circumstances; or whether or not there is something that frequently unites the motivations that are behind Australian policy in getting involved in any of these actions. I would be grateful if one or all of you could address that theme for me.

Prof. Horner—I would just like to reiterate the last couple of sentences of my opening presentation: that is, in the period I am dealing with, and I think it applies beyond the period I am dealing with, there are these two thoughts, which are not quite competing because they can run together, about being an international good citizen—in other words, doing good around the world—and about the imperatives of the Western alliance. These can overlap. So you can find the United States encouraging Australia to be involved in a peacekeeping mission for some reason or it can work the other way where there might be something to do with the Western alliance that we want to be involved in that has aspects of a peacekeeping mission about it. So it can work back the other way. Perhaps my colleagues might like to talk further about that.

Dr Londey—I would like to say something about the earlier period. In the several decades that my work covers the motivations vary. Under the Labor government until 1949—and then I guess again under Gareth Evans later on—there was a tremendous interest in working with the United Nations. So Australia in the 1940s got involved in the United Nations efforts to solve problems in Indonesia, Kashmir, Palestine and Korea. So we were involved in all of those things because we believed in the multilateral approach. Our sending of peacekeepers tended to follow our political involvement in the problem. In the case of Indonesia it was a local problem. In Kashmir it was a Commonwealth problem—and especially under the Menzies government the fact that it was a Commonwealth problem made it an Australian problem too.

Under the Whitlam government, again we were keen to get involved in peacekeeping. Although, because of the needs of force balance and so forth, we did not actually get into any, we were putting our hand up and asking to get involved. Then under Malcolm Fraser, because of his tremendous interest in southern African issues, we ended up in missions to both Rhodesia in 1979-80 and then 10 years later, really as a sort of result of that, to Namibia. So, by and large, we have consistently ended up in peacekeeping missions that have followed on from the political interests of the government. Perhaps in the nineties more abstract concerns came in.

Senator TROOD—I think we are talking about the political interests of the time for whichever government might have been in power.

Dr Londey—Yes, that is right. It varies from government to government. Very often, to follow up a much earlier question, we were involved in the diplomatic efforts to solve conflicts before we ever sent peacekeepers there. We actually provided the UN special representative in Kashmir, Sir Owen Dixon. He tried to negotiate a settlement before we had peacekeepers there. So peacekeeping almost always followed other political interest in these situations.

Senator FORSHAW—So were they bipartisan commitments, do you recall?

Dr Londey—The only commitment which was really a matter of conflict between the parties was the helicopters we sent to the Multinational Force and Observers in 1982. That was a non-UN operation. It was an American led operation which followed the Camp David accords between Israel and Egypt. Because the other Arab states opposed the Camp David accords and

the Russians wanted to maintain favour with the Arab states, the Russians said that they would veto a UN force. There had been a UN force in the area which people assumed would just continue, but instead the Americans set up a thing called the Multinational Force and Observers. They were very keen to make it multinational to make it look like it was not just an American intervention. The Fraser government was keen to contribute to that. The Labor opposition painted it in effect as following the Americans into what could be another Vietnam or something—and possibly some rather lurid analogies were drawn in that—so it became a matter of enormous public debate. There was an *Age* poll that showed that 92 per cent of the population had an opinion on whether we should send some helicopters to the Sinai. That was an astonishing level of public involvement in an issue of peacekeeping, I think. Apart from that it has been more or less bipartisan all the way.

Senator FORSHAW—Who ended up going into that multinational force?

Dr Londey—We did, and various South American countries did—Colombia, Venezuela and Argentina, I think. We sent a joint Australian and New Zealand unit. There had been Italian boats there, and I think the French also contributed. The force had its administrative headquarters in Rome and its operational headquarters in the Sinai. I think in that case they needed Australia in a way because, unlike UN forces—which often have, say, 20 countries involved and thus clearly become an impartial expression of multinational will, in a sense—the MFO was running on a dangerously low number of countries in a dangerously low spread, so they were very, very keen for Australia to get involved.

Mr Connor—To follow the story into the 1990s, there was an echo of that political dispute over the sending of the MFO to Sinai in the early days of the Cambodian mission, when the then Liberal opposition raised concerns about the dangers of sending peacekeepers to Cambodia. At that stage there were some polls with concern about Cambodia because of the fear of what the Khmer Rouge would do. Would they abide by any peace agreement or would there be a war which Australians would be caught up in? It was an echo of that earlier dispute. There might have been a bit of tit for tat, perhaps. Generally, even in the 1990s, it was a case of government foreign policy interest and regional interest—and with Cambodia that is an obvious thing. You can see the desire to get rid of the main security concern in the region—this long-running civil war. Australia has a long-running involvement in trying to get the peace sorted out there and then being an important part of the peacekeeping mission.

Somalia is that aberration where you cannot see how Australia had any interest, apart from a humanitarian interest. But I think that was the case with people who were involved in that mission. It was that aberration, as it were.

With Rwanda and Bosnia, which were the other big peacekeeping missions of the 1990s, you can see a reluctance on the part of the Australian government to get involved in things outside Australia's region. In Rwanda, there was a delay in the Australians deciding to go, but that is something that the rest of the world was doing as well. There was a reluctance to get involved in a peacekeeping mission after the disaster in Somalia. Unfortunately, we do not know how many people died as a result of the delay in sending a peacekeeping mission into Rwanda. Then you come to Bosnia. We sent a small number who were involved there, but the Australian government made the decision that this was outside Australia's region of interest and that it was really a thing for the European Union and NATO to do, to look after. So there was no shortage of

peacekeepers in Bosnia. There were other issues involved there, but whether or not Australia sent peacekeepers to Bosnia was not a reason for the lack of peace in that area.

Senator FORSHAW—Chair, could I just make a request? Would we be able to get copies of papers that are being delivered at the conference you are having next week? That is, if it is acceptable to the authors and so on.

Dr Londey—We would rather you came to the conference!

CHAIR—Unfortunately, Dr Londey, we are rather constrained by the sitting timetables.

Senator FORSHAW—Parliament is sitting, and it just seems to me that there may well be some very interesting things at the conference. The chair's address would be—

CHAIR—Riveting, I am sure.

Prof. Horner—Obviously, I cannot speak for the authors of the papers, but with their agreement, yes.

Senator FORSHAW—That is what I mean. I just think that there might be some very interesting material presented that would be useful for us. We will not plagiarise it.

Prof. Horner—I might need to talk to the secretariat about that, because I am conscious of the status of papers that are given to the committee. They then become publicly available—

Senator HOGG—They can be confidential.

CHAIR—It depends on the context.

Senator FORSHAW—I am not wanting you to do anything that embarrasses the conference. If they become publicly available—

Senator TROOD—They do not have to.

Senator FORSHAW—But the conference may make them publicly available at some stage.

CHAIR—I now conclude the proceedings. I thank our witnesses for appearing this afternoon. It has been of great interest to the committee, and we appreciate both your submission and your attendance here today.

Committee adjourned at 4.29 pm