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Defence diplomacy and the Australian defence force: smokescreen or strategy?

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ABSTRACT
The practice of military-to-military engagement has been strongly embraced in the last few decades as a central tool for strategic management. Many governments in the Asia-Pacific, including Australia, have accepted the practice as an instrument of statecraft to achieve comprehensive strategic outcomes: as a means of defusing tensions, reducing hostility and shaping the behaviour of states towards each other. This article examines Australia’s broad approach and practice, and argues that such transformative ambitions are overstated. The evidence suggests that the benefits from defence diplomacy are evident at the tactical and operational level. It is a mode to deal with precise and immediate security issues, as opposed to the moulding of major strategic settings. This indicates the need to better recognise the limitations and conceptual flaws of defence diplomacy, and to reformulate Australian defence channels and related engagement prescriptions towards a more cautious, pragmatic and ultimately security-related stance. Through the use of case-study analysis, this research identifies both opportunities and constraints in conducting defence diplomacy, while offering guidelines for its future implementation in the region.

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Introduction: thinking about defence diplomacy

There is a growing consensus in the Asia-Pacific that defence diplomacy can be used as a tool of ‘strategic’ persuasion, meaning the shaping of political relationships, military behaviour and the use of force by foreign states (Betts 1997; Strachan 2005). Australian policy documents promote the activity as ‘both a strategic necessity and a strategic asset’ (DOD 2013, 56 ). Many scholars agree that ‘defence international engagement will … be increasingly important for the advancement of Australian strategic interests’ (L’Estrange 2013, 28). As such, there is a persistent concern whether there is sufficient alignment of means and ways to meet this strategic end. In 1996, Ball and Kerr (1996, 91–92) worried that ‘even if the objectives and purposes of these cooperative activities were unambiguously clear, the means and processes by which they might be achieved are not’. Likewise, nearly two decades later, a major report on Australia’s defence diplomacy identified a missing connection between ways, means and ends, and set out to
offer ‘recommendations for reshaping our [defence] engagement activities to better serve Australia’s strategic interests’ (Bateman, Bergin, and Channer 2013, 9).

What advocates and critics of defence diplomacy share is a general notion that through a careful rebalancing of interlocked ideas, leadership, resources and defence postures, the practice of defence diplomacy can produce strategic-level benefits. This article examines these claims and argues that, based on the Australian middle-power experience, there is a lack of substantive evidence and solid empirical grounding for the claims. Arguments that defence diplomacy can result in overarching strategic outcomes are often untested and overstated. Instead, this article finds that such defence partnerships primarily operate in the realm of tactics, meaning that cooperative military footprints may enhance operational proficiency in dealing with specific developments and social tasks or addressing particular security problems (illegal fishing, piracy, search and rescue, and explosive-ordnance disposal), but they cannot be assumed to negate hard-power political considerations and the political differences between actors in arenas of ongoing competition.

This conclusion does not imply that defence diplomacy is without value or should be abandoned. Instead, this article recommends that Australia’s principles and processes for defence diplomacy be recalibrated to more effectively utilise limited military time and resources to achieve realisable goals. Both policymakers and analysts should not continually develop or judge defence diplomacy primarily based on assumed strategic imperatives, as this will result in overinflated and misleading expectations. A better targeted, more nuanced policy approach is therefore needed. This will help, in part, to direct a sustainable use of whole-of-government resources and military assets. Critically, such a revised approach will begin by fundamentally providing capacity-building and planning assistance directed at immediate security efforts, rather than elevating the possibility of longer-term strategic and geopolitical innovations.

A note on the terminology used in this article: The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy identifies ‘defence diplomacy’ as the ‘employment, without duress, in time of peace of the resources of Defence to achieve specific national goals, primarily through relationships with others’ (Cheyre 2013, 369). This provides a broad umbrella definition, which others, such as Cottey and Foster (2004, 6), have tightened by explaining it as ‘the peacetime cooperative use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defence ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy’. Winger (2014), meanwhile, identifies it as ‘the nonviolent use of a state’s defense apparatus to advance the strategic aims of a government through cooperation with other countries’. In practical terms, such objectives can entail contributions to conflict prevention and resolution. The mechanisms of defence diplomacy can include a myriad of activities such as military-to-military training exercises, port visits, education activities and programs, and the integrated use of militaries for the provision of material equipment and aid. Increasingly, its application also involves formal dialogues, conferences, forums and related institutional opportunities for the interaction of officials and military personnel across a variety of ranks. In line with the literature, this article prefers the use of the term ‘defence diplomacy’, though ‘military diplomacy’ and ‘defence engagement’ are generally used as direct synonyms.

The article begins by outlining the new logic of defence diplomacy in the post-Cold War era and the Australian government’s adoption of, and commitment to, these policy ambitions. It uses a case-study analysis of three commonly celebrated success
stories: Operation Pacific Partnership, the Pacific Patrol Boat Program and the Australian Defence Force’s (ADF’s) engagement agenda with Indonesia (as tested during the 1999 crisis). These are reviewed to give insight into and assess the historical record of Australia’s defence diplomacy against publicly stated objectives. In doing so, the article will address some of the drawbacks and weaknesses pertaining to viewpoints that cite defence diplomacy as a central building block for future strategic transformations. In contrast, the article will propose a revised blueprint to support national considerations, with the aim of a producing alternative policy designs that are centred on explicit, circumspect government priorities, as well as better harmonised mission frameworks to reform future military-cooperation programs.

Overall, in exploring the practice of diplomacy and the functions and relationships between armed forces, the main focus of our analysis is defence diplomacy as an institutionalised enterprise and its best practice as a strategy and policy (for example, finding the right mix of inputs and outputs and its effective delivery), rather than as a socialisation process (for example, social influence and how soldiers’ engagement may or may not create changed perceptions) (see Atkinson 2006; Johnston 2014)—that is, testing whether it functions as a ‘bridge that relates military power to political purpose’ (Gray 1999, 17), which is a claim we find to be questionable and problematic.

It is worth underlining that our conclusions are based only on a study of Australia’s recent experiences in seeking to increase security and stability, and it is recognised that there might be additional ways to conduct defence diplomacy which might be considered to shape the strategic order, especially over a long time horizon. However, Australian approaches offer a highly useful case-study coverage that provides a ‘most likely’ scenario (Flyvbjerg 2006, 231). Australia is seen as an ambitious middle power with a highly professional military and bureaucracy. It has a comprehensive range of programs that underpin the development of its defence diplomacy objectives. If it is unable to achieve its proposed strategic ends, then questions as to whether any other smaller or developing countries will be equally ineffective in changing or shifting underlying strategic settings must be raised. At the very least, efforts to clarify the implications and measurable impact of defence diplomacy and its cause-and-effect relationship in international settings remain a critical research agenda, to which this article seeks to contribute.

A post-cold war shift

Since the end of the Cold War, the purpose and practice of defence diplomacy have significantly expanded. As Cottey and Foster describe in their major work on the topic:

The key shift of the last decade is that defence cooperation is now being used not only in its longstanding realpolitik role of supporting the armed forces and security of allies, but also as a means of pursuing wider foreign and security policy goals … military cooperation and assistance are now being used to help build cooperative relationships with former or potential enemies (Cottey and Foster 2004, 7).

Cottey and Foster note that defence diplomacy in the post-Cold War era has been consistently rationalised as a strategic imperative for managing peacetime relationships between states by making significant inroads towards crisis management, conflict prevention and conflict resolution. This is expected to occur through progress towards changing norms
and attitudes, offering reassurances about intentions, supporting confidence-building measures, and building common interests within international social and military networks.

The US government has led the way in this use of the military as a tool of statecraft. It has linked defence diplomacy to ‘the ability to understand, engage, influence and reform key foreign audiences through words and actions to foster understanding of US policy and advance US interests and to collaboratively shape the operational environment’ (Cheyre 2013, 371). In an important contribution to the literature, Atkinson (2006, 515) claimed that ‘US military engagement activities have played a small but important role in the US government’s pursuit of democratic regimes around the world’. Facing growing challenges to national security, Cotter and Foster (2004) have detailed how many European countries have also adopted a defence diplomacy mission. And, since the late 1990s, the Asia-Pacific—in particular South-East Asia—has begun rapidly catching up. As Rolfe (2015, 2) noted, there is ‘more bilateral defence engagement between regional countries today than at any other time in the region’s history’.

Both this increased attention and expansion are widely interpreted by Asia-Pacific scholars as a deliberate response to the growing tensions and long-term potential for a more competitive, if not conflictual, environment. According to Gindarsah (2015, 1): ‘By and large, Jakarta views defence diplomacy as a strategic means to promote regional amity and cooperation, while helping the development of indigenous defence capabilities’. Ganesan (2005, 119) similarly views Singapore’s use of the practice as one of the country’s ‘instruments that nourish and sustain the state’s strategic interests and survival’. Focusing on New Zealand, Rolfe (2015, 3) argues that ‘the underlying assumption in defence diplomacy is that the interactions are positive for each participant and more beneficial than military force, hard power, in achieving political ends, whether those ends are stability, security, influence, status or something else’. Finally, in Australia, Dean (2013, 93) has noted that ‘one key element to Australia’s maritime strategy is the importance of military diplomacy and engagement to shaping our strategic environment’.

**Australia’s defence diplomacy program**

As a middle power keen to build partnerships and the normative foundations for a stable security community, Australian policymakers have embraced defence diplomacy. There is bipartisan agreement that expanded intraregional military cooperation is a low-risk practice that will contribute to burden-sharing, greater transparency and a form of forward defence. For instance, in 2012, the Labor Minister for Defence, Stephen Smith (2012), argued that ‘practical defence to defence and military to military cooperation … help [s] build habits of mutual respect, trust and cooperation between defence organisations, militaries and nations’. Similar attitudes were held by the former Liberal Party Minister for Defence, David Johnston, who told a Japanese media audience in 2014 of the importance of building deep, lasting and trusting defence links in the Asia Pacific and encouraging the development of habits of defence dialogue and cooperation that go further in underpinning regional security … we have a huge emphasis on military diplomacy (Bishop and Johnston 2014).

General David Hurley, the Chief of the Defence Force from 2011–14, was also fond of describing defence diplomacy as a form of ‘strategic engagement’ (DeSilva-Ranasinghe
As he told journalists in 2012: ‘We’re [the ADF] also working hard with Vietnam, Cambodia, putting a lot of effort into the strategic engagement in the region’ (McDonald and Snow 2012).

This view—that defence diplomacy has geopolitical outcomes and strategic effects—is likewise found in national policy and planning documents. The 2005–06 Annual Report for the Department of Defence lists one of the ‘aims and objectives of the Defence Cooperation Program’ as ‘working with allies, regional partners and others to shape the global and regional environment in a way favourable to Australia and the ADF’ (DOD 2006, 147). Along similar lines, the 2009 Defence White Paper, a document responsible for providing strategic guidance, identifies that ‘Australia’s defence relations will remain an important tool to promote our middle power influence; and to build support and capacity for peacekeeping, coalition operations, and other collective security activities in support of a stable global security order’ (DOD 2009, 100). This language is considerably strengthened in the 2013 Defence White Paper, which asserts that ‘Australia’s international defence engagement is a critical component of the Government’s approach to managing the strategic transformation occurring in our region’ (DOD 2013, 55). While placing it within a wider framework that includes Australia’s more traditional diplomatic engagements, defence diplomacy is stressed as a fundamental task in meeting global challenges, with high expectations attached to it.

The 2013 Defence White Paper devotes an entire chapter to defence diplomacy, stating that the purpose of ‘Australia’s defence international engagement [is] to build effective mechanisms to manage regional and transnational security issues and risks arising from rivalries and the possibilities of miscalculation’ (ibid.). In addition, the document sets out policy goals, including to ‘build deeper strategic partnerships and contribute positively to the region’s security and stability’, ‘grasping the opportunities of the Indo-Pacific region’, ‘defence industry cooperation’ and, perhaps most critically, the use of defence diplomacy to ‘consolidate habits of cooperation and dialogue as the norm’ (ibid.).

These are not ambitions or operational requirements merely to improve the ethos, understanding and capacity of the ADF in the regional environment. Rather, they are openly political and strategic goals. The final task listed above, which seeks a change to regional norms, explicitly links defence diplomacy to shaping the behaviour of other states in the region and how they approach questions around the use of force. As the White Paper states: ‘Australia’s defence international engagement is both a strategic necessity and a strategic asset’ (DOD 2013, 56).

Emerging from such aims, in recent years there has been a significant increase in funding and resources devoted to defence diplomacy. This includes a near doubling of formal education or training programs by foreign military officials in Australia for extended periods (Bateman, Bergin, and Channer 2013, 16). Likewise—although subject to seasonal and operation variability—there has been a flourishing series of multinational training and combined interoperability exercises planned and conducted by the ADF. These include Bersama Lima, Bersama Shield, Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC), Croix Du Sud, Suman Warrior and Pacific Partnerships—the last of which is discussed in detail later. For an extended list of recent defence-diplomacy-related exercises, see Appendix A. Further, Australia maintains a significant network of at least 36 ADF defence attachés stationed around the world, with a support staff that runs into the hundreds. Their role is to act as the primary point of contact between the military forces of Australia and targeted
countries, with the expectation that they can enable an active rolling exchange of ideas and information to help establish and maintain mutual, like-minded expectations. The region with the most posts is South-East Asia, with Europe and the Middle East following close behind. For a full list of attaché countries, see Appendix B.

At the same time, Australia has helped to create or participated in numerous bilateral and multilateral forum commitments involving senior defence officials and members of the ADF. The bilateral forums include a ‘Defence Strategic Dialogue’ with China, which involves the Secretary of Defence and Chief of the Defence Force, and regular meetings between Australia’s Chief of the Defence Force and India’s Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee, which former Minister for Defence Stephen Smith (2011) described as a ‘formal strategic dialogue’. Multilaterally, there are the Western Pacific Naval Symposium; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus; the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Senior Officials’ Meeting (Plus Eight); the Shanghai Leadership Dialogue; the Asia-Pacific Chiefs of Defence Force Conference; the Jakarta International Defence Dialogue; the Indonesia–Australia Defence Alumni Association—to name a few. Such forums bring together military and defence officials to help promote a basic level of understanding about pressing security issues, such as terrorism and transnational crime, through to shared regional problems, such as disputed ownership claims within the South China Sea.

Nonetheless, while there has been an impressive growth in the nature and extent of Australian defence engagement and its regional participation, there is often little explanation in official communication and policy documents of the relationship between ends and means—that is, how the particular design of resource allocations and various formats of defence diplomacy will achieve the national objectives identified, and do so in a deliberate and concrete fashion. As Frühling (2013, 48) has noted, this is a conceptual problem across the entire 2013 White Paper, with a failure explicitly to ‘link activity and desired outcomes through a strategic concept’.

Some critics might wonder whether any such link is possible for middle-power-sized states. Certainly, analysis of US-led state socialisation—and its impact on both the external and internal actions of other countries—often strongly emphasises hegemonic leadership and the effect of power asymmetries to explain change (Atkinson 2006, 514). Yet there is a small but growing body of evidence that middle-power states using martial capabilities, extended government resources and non-violent exchanges can promote institutional transformations and norms of strategic value (Carr 2015; Cooper 2002; Ingebritsen 2002). But it remains unclear whether defence diplomacy is sufficient, rather than merely supplemental to such changes and rules, and under what conditions and in what forms this task can be achieved in a competitive international relations environment.

Compounding this problem, Australia’s 2013 Defence White Paper fails to distinguish the key defence relationships to prioritise and consolidate. At least 28 states are named for direct attention, ranging from major powers like the USA and China to Pacific neighbours such as Tonga. Complete regions such as the Middle East, Africa and Latin America are also highlighted as useful locations to ‘develop bilateral defence relationships with key … countries and explore opportunities for further cooperation’ (DOD 2013, 66). Similarly, a range of regional institutions are identified as invaluable for the utilisation of Australia’s defence engagement. They include the Five Power Defence Arrangements, East Asia Forum, Association of Southeast Asian Nations Defence Ministers’ Meeting Plus,
European Union (EU), North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) and United Nations (UN). Another problem is that while general planning practices and risk assessments within the publicly released version are augmented by the classified Defence International Engagement Plan, the concern of former Cabinet Secretary and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade head Michael L’Estrange (2013, 26) that the document ‘sheds little light on how those expectations will be realised in practice’ does not inspire confidence that the classified planning and internal guidance are substantially better in their contextualisation.

The unanswered questions include whether all military officials will contribute to this goal or just a calculated, hand-selected, senior-level few. Is the interaction of petty officers and sergeants with their international counterparts in regional exercises as valuable as the formal or informal meetings of generals and admirals at major conferences? If not, on what grounds is that judgement about staff exchanges made, and which of these outlets and pathways for contact is more valuable to Australian policy concerns? In turn, how might the ADF prepare, plan and conduct its regional travel such as regular port visits to achieve the stated aims with partner states? And, with the inevitable time lags, diplomatic sensitivities and budgetary constraints, how do we best measure or assess the efficiency and effectiveness of such confidence-building measures given an all-embracing goal of changing threat perceptions and promoting regional peace and security?

Much greater clarity is therefore needed from advocates and policymakers as to the rationale, cost and specific outcomes of causal mechanisms of defence diplomacy, and what overall practices, out of the wide variety of types and forms cited, are likely to be most effective and why. As Ball and Kerr (1996, 91–92) warned two decades ago: ‘The logical basis of the security enhancement rationales of some of the most prominent cooperative activities is very presumptive’. Today, this connection between the ‘strategic’ ends identified and the ways and means available continues to be indistinct and underdeveloped.

**Defence diplomacy in practice**

In an effort to analyse whether defence diplomacy can result in strategic transformations to create a ‘long peace’ to support Australian national interests, this article turns to examine three case studies. All of the highlighted cases have been mooted by defence diplomacy advocates for their relatively high significance, impact and practical implications. Each of the three examples offers a variety in scope and complexity in order to provide a practical snapshot of overall ADF military-to-military activity. Critically, all have been upheld as best-practice examples that have advanced efforts towards enhanced compatibility, delivered influence and information-sharing, and built robust synergies between military forces and varied target populations. These three cases are Operation Pacific Partnership, the Pacific Patrol Boat Program and Australia’s engagement with Indonesia as tested during the East Timor crisis in 1999.

The focus in each case study is not to question whether these military diplomatic efforts have merit or usefulness, but to understand the type of value they possess, the specific conditions and confines in which they operate, and their overall impact in shaping the behaviour of states. In this sense, the article seeks to question whether a central problem is the inability of current planning to match ends and means and to identify the preconditions
that will act to better harness particular strategic ends—as Ball and Kerr (1996), L’Estrange (2013) and Frühling (2013) suggest is the problem—or if there is a less monocausal and more nuanced, underplayed or even irreconcilable orientation between the ends and ways and means of achieving strategic outcomes from various defence diplomacy practices.

**Operation pacific partnership**

Operation Pacific Partnership is an annual Humanitarian Assistance and Disaster Response (HADR) joint exercise by the US Navy and the ADF. Pacific Partnership began in 2006 following the success and goodwill of the US response to the 2004 Boxing Day earthquake and tsunami. The focus of each year’s mission is broadly based around infrastructure development, medical training and improvements in the interoperability of regional forces in response to natural disasters and humanitarian emergencies. Different programs are designed to conduct humanitarian assistance and support capacity-building arrangements in order to strengthen resilience to natural disasters, including working with host populations located in Papua New Guinea, Vietnam, Cambodia and the Philippines. Pacific Partnership is currently the ‘largest annual multilateral humanitarian and civic assistance mission conducted in the Asia-Pacific region’ (DOD 2014, ).

While the USA selects the route for Pacific Partnership each year, Australia can decide which other host nations it will support, and directed the overall operation in 2010 and 2013. Each location is at the request of the host nation, which will also have input in determining what work needs to be done (for example, building new roads or refurbishing schools). While initially the ADF’s commitment to Pacific Partnership was modest, it has grown over time, and today involves several hundred staff along with equipment such as the landing craft HMAS Betano and the larger landing ship HMAS Tobruk (Mitchell 2013). Some advocates have added that Australia’s two new landing helicopter docks (which have cost over AU$2 billion to build) should be deployed to deliver medical assistance and support-related functions in similar humanitarian operations (Blaxland 2013, 38).

In nearly a decade, the Pacific Partnership exercise has visited 17 nations, treated approximately 435,000 patients and completed 240 engineering projects. For instance, Pacific Partnership 2013 treated 16,679 medical and dental patients and 4925 animals, completed 49 civil engineering projects, and undertook 102 community-service events in the six host nations, including Tonga and the Marshall Islands (Zoellick 2013). Admiral Cecil D. Haney, Commander of the US Navy’s Pacific Fleet, backed the benefits of Pacific Partnership, claiming: ‘ultimately, missions such as Pacific Partnership strengthen relationships that are critical to deter conflict. They build trust, enhance cooperation, and open dialogue between leaders, a multilateral approach that benefits all nations including the United States’ (US Pacific Fleet Public Affairs 2013). Additionally, by being able to work directly with large sections of society (civilian, military and government), Pacific Partnership aims to foster nimble networks that can reduce red tape while creating avenues to political progress potentially faster than the standard diplomatic methods. This was acknowledged by the US Ambassador to Cambodia, William E. Todd, who declared after the Pacific Partnership 2012 leg to Cambodia that: ‘this type
of mission builds the US relationship here ten-fold over a lot of other things we do’ (quoted in Regan 2012). Others have pointed to China’s decision to kick-start similar multinational military activities in the Indian Ocean in 2010 as evidence of the appeal of Operation Pacific Partnership in cultivating regional ties and maintaining and enhancing state-to-state relationships (Mitchell 2013).

**Pacific patrol boat program**

Australia’s Pacific Patrol Boat Program is a robust expression of the tied prospects and support between Australia and Pacific Island nations. The Pacific Patrol Boat Program has been described as ‘the cornerstone of Australia’s strategic influence in the region’ (Bateman and Bergin 2011, 2). It was first announced in 1983, with the original patrol boat delivered to Papua New Guinea in 1987. The program has been widely seen as fruitful in providing Pacific Island nations with a capacity to enforce their exclusive economic zones. It has been portrayed as containing functional benefits, such as working with partner countries to boost resource protection and improve regional surveillance, as well as having the more general value of contributing to nation-building in the South-West Pacific and consolidating Australia’s influence as a ‘regional leader’.

In June 2014, the Australian government reaffirmed the achievements of the Pacific Patrol Boat Program with an AU$2 billion injection of funding to build new boats: ‘the construction of more than 20 steel, all-purpose patrol vessels that will considerably enhance the maritime security of our Pacific and regional partners … Australia has a fundamental strategic interest in the security and stability of Pacific island nations’ (Johnston and Bishop 2014). The government added that such a key initiative would be led by the Department of Defence and be part of a longer-term strategic naval plan for maritime approaches and regional security. This was interpreted by some as reflecting a mindset, not uncommon within the ADF, that the Pacific Patrol Boat Program can function to restrict a destabilising influence by foreign powers in the region and forestall challenges to Australian leadership and its ability to meet longer-term strategic objectives.

**Australia’s intervention in East Timor, 1999**

Perhaps the most celebrated case of defence diplomacy producing a strategic outcome was when the long-standing defence relations between the ADF and Indonesia’s Tentara Nasional Indonesia (TNI) were called upon to manage the peaceful arrival of a UN mission in East Timor. After a successful referendum for independence in 1999, the Timorese people were attacked by anti-independence militia, precipitating the UN-endorsed International Force for East Timor (INTERFET) to restore order. This action was led by the Australian government and required it to put troops on the ground in East Timor—an area which, since 1975, had been occupied by Indonesian. The basic groundwork for crisis management that involved the successful arrival of the UN mission and avoidance of direct conflict between Indonesia’s TNI and the UN forces has been attributed to the pre-existing personal relationships between the ADF and the TNI (Floyd 2010, 7; Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade 2008, 35–36).
For example, in the days before the first ADF personnel landed, the head of the INTER-FET, Major General Peter Cosgrove, was warned that the planned pre-dawn helicopter insertion of Australian Special Air Service troops could cause confusion amongst the Indonesian troops stationed around Dili’s airport. It was feared that this might lead to shots being fired and casualties (Fischer 2011). In order to prevent this, Australia’s defence attachés to Jakarta helped mediate with the TNI about the components and conditions of the INTERFET’s arrival (Connery 2010, 72). Colonel Ken Brownrigg suggested that the troops arrive via a Hercules aircraft, as the Indonesian forces were used to seeing those types of aircraft arriving during past partner capacity-building exercises. Such a deployment was predicted to help facilitate an arrival that would not appear suspicious or gratuitously confrontational. Further, Brownrigg briefed the Indonesian troops surrounding the airport in Indonesian about the particular mobilisation that would be happening, assuring them that it had been approved by Jakarta. According to Floyd (2010), multiple years of conducting defence diplomacy had allowed the ADF to better identify Indonesia’s behaviour and intentions related to territorial disputes, and gave Australia valuable leverage in negotiations. Further, such interactions had enhanced the ADF’s best practices by strengthening its access to decision-makers, alongside shaping its insight and understandings regarding the reactions and dispositions of the Indonesian military. This view was shared by Major General Jim Molan, Australia’s defence attaché to Indonesia at the time, who argued that ‘Australia’s access in Indonesia through our military engagement gave us great understanding, strategic leverage with our allies and increased Australia’s overall strategic credibility’ (quoted in Floyd 2010, 7).

**A strategic or security tool?**

Across the Australian government, as represented in policy documents and official remarks, there is an assumption that defence diplomacy is an effective asset for changing perceptions and shaping how states think about the use of force, and in turn will reduce the likelihood of hostility and misunderstanding in the wider region. These claims and correlated side effects are regularly used to support expanded military procurements, budget demands and the prestige of the diplomatic aspects of defence regional engagement (Taylor et al. 2014, 7, 16). Nonetheless, unpacking these cases tends to point towards a fundamental pattern of security protection, rather than providing evidence of an extensive strategic contribution. In each case, lower-level security challenges are clearly addressed, such as avoiding accidents and misunderstandings or expanding the capacity of partner nations to monitor their environments against specific threats. However, despite such benefits, an assessment of the available evidence does not fortify a theoretical position asserting a definable relationship between a rolling series of tactical interactions with the larger strategic behavioural shifts and the overcoming of political faultiness and other deep-rooted differences in the competitive affairs between states.

Beginning with the example of the INTERFET in 1999, we see the strongest example of defence diplomacy being viewed as a crucial part of resulting decisions around political thinking, confidence-building and the use of force by nations. However, when explaining the unfettered arrival of a UN-backed mission in Indonesia, Australia’s defence diplomacy in the preceding years should only be considered as one small variable linked to shaping a state’s positioning and behavioural pattern. In terms of substance, attention to other
significant causes would include the intensified military posturing and the sustained external political pressure on Indonesia during the crisis from the USA and the Australian government, along with the status of the UN’s authorisation to avoid the outbreak of conflict. For instance, counter-insurgency expert David Kilcullen (2009)—who was serving in the ADF at the time and participated in the INTERFET—has pointed to the build-up of a strong US Marines presence off the Indonesian coast, which gave pause to Indonesian policy planners and remained a considerable factor in explaining the record of Australia’s uncontested arrival for the peacekeeping operation.

The Indonesian government’s decision to provide concessions and acquiesce to international pressure is hard to tie directly to long-standing military interactions between the TNI and ADF, even in a country like Indonesia where the military continues to be politically influential. At best, the specific organisational challenges of the arrival were made easier by the TNI’s communication and engagement with Australian troops. But this only suggests that past defence engagement might have smoothed a specialised operation and provided tactical benefits, rather than affecting the strategic decision-setting by Indonesia of whether to resist the forthcoming troop arrival or not. Or, to turn this around, it is highly questionable whether the ADF’s defence diplomacy would have been able to diffuse or mitigate differences with Indonesia’s leadership in a hypothetical situation where they had chosen to resist the INTERFET’s presence. In general terms, as neatly captured by Cottey and Forster (2004, 18): ‘nor will contacts between professional soldiers necessarily prevent armed conflict if this is the direction in which political and military leaders wish to go’. Perhaps more broadly, the unique circumstances of this occasion—an Indonesia which had just begun a transition to democratic leadership and an unquestioned US ‘polar moment’—cast doubt as to whether they are likely to be repeatable in a different regional setting, such as one characterised by a regional country with a more stable leadership, deep-rooted divisions in the regional security architecture, and a USA that is unable or unwilling to maintain maritime supremacy and its leadership position.

Cottey and Forster (2004, 19) have equally argued that, if defence diplomacy is as beneficial as many supporters claim, the worst of the 1999 crisis might have been avoided. They note that, despite years of military engagement with Indonesia, the TNI still had a very patchy human rights record, particularly with regard to issues linked to national autonomy and territorial integrity. Had past incentives and arrangements been effectual as a platform to tie military diplomacy to international statecraft, it can be argued that the TNI might have done more to stem its initial hard-line preferences and the worst of the abuses—and thus avoided a UN mission. Instead, the TNI actively aided and abetted militia groups who showed no concern for human rights, and expressed an unequivocal instinct for its own pressing domestic needs. It should be highlighted that placing blame on the ADF and defence diplomacy for not having achieved suitable military reform and changes, such as instilling accountable norms in the TNI, strikes the authors as unfair. Yet achieving similar or even larger shifts in attitudes and doctrine, without giving adequate attention to habitually sensitive issues of national interest or the reality of non-aligned aims, is regularly expressed as a goal for advocates of defence diplomacy.

Similar questions can also be asked about Operation Pacific Partnership and the Pacific Patrol Boat Program. Again, there is no doubt that these operations contribute to improving operational-manoeuvre, logistic-support and preparedness levels, which might
incorporate the benchmarking of standards ahead of natural disasters that demand a multi-
national response. But such benefits should be balanced with the fact that nations request
Pacific Partnership to drive planning and parallel deployments in developing and under-
sourced areas—deployments that are often far from the capitals and key power relations-
ships. This could be interpreted as suggesting that such activity is not so much about
shaping strategic thinking and setting up the regional order, but is, rather, indicative of
the growing importance of non-traditional security issues, and is embraced because it pro-
vides much-needed access to resources which help to solve immediate domestic human-
security concerns.

Other advocates of defence diplomacy, such as Blaxland (2014, 8), have stated that
defence engagement provides transnational benefits and lasting positive perceptions by
earning ‘immense goodwill while materially assisting the needy’ in Asia. Yet it is hard
to see how this development assistance would then translate into changes in the way
many Asian countries view the context of the region and manage wider relations. Only
certain sections of the local population will realise the direct benefits, while the effect
on long-term attitudes (and their leaders’ views about these attitudes) is likely to be
diffuse and unpredictable. Identity politics in different country environments that exist
alongside any increased feelings of trust with foreign publics do not take place in a
vacuum. There are substantial cultural, historical, political and linguistic barriers which
mean that any assumption that defence diplomacy will automatically provide an unme-
diated message of lasting positive reinforcement is too simple. As we will argue later,
when forged within a whole-of-government targeted approach, defence diplomacy may
offer an important supporting role. But its mission should not be burdened with transfor-
mative strategic tasks that are unlikely to result and, if causally elevated, might distort pri-
orities and reduce or interrupt the many real tactical and operational benefits that a
rethought defence diplomacy program can provide.

The Pacific Patrol Boat Program likewise shows the difficulty of achieving even the
basic tactical and security outcomes that defence diplomacy’s strategic effect is supposedly
built upon. In 2008, the Australian Department of Defence recommended against con-
tinuing the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, pointing to low and inconsistent levels of support
from partner states. There had been a rundown in the equipment, the diversion of the
boats for non-security tasks, far less avenues to employ the vessels than had been expected,
and rising costs for Australian projects (Pearlman 2008). While the Department of
Defence was later forced to recant some of its criticisms (Nikolic 2009), this mixed
record does suggest that such programs need careful oversight to ensure value for
money and preclude misuse. While such an attitude is progressively evident in Australia’s
handling of its foreign aid budget, a similar hard-headed logic should apply to its defence
diplomacy practices as well. Like the aid budget, care should be taken to separate immedi-
ate tactical changes—improved resources and capacity in a target country—from strategic
changes—improved relationships, trust and confidence, and, in its most fundamental
meaning, aligning national decisions around the threat or use of force (Strachan 2005).

This sort of analysis is further strengthened when examining the case of Fiji as another
consequential example. In 2006, Fiji’s participation in the Pacific Patrol Boat Program was
suspended following a coup led by Frank Bainimarama. This was embarrassing, as Baini-
maram had a long record of military exchanges and training programs with the ADF and
around the region. Some scholars have suggested that this was no mere coincidence,
arguing that the participation of the Fijian military in international peacekeeping had encouraged a ‘self-image as mediator of political tensions’, which in turn led to the military establishment’s expanded role in the state’s politics and participation in coups (Wallis 2012, 9). Despite losing access to the Pacific Patrol Boat Program, along with a number of other sanctions, Fiji did not change its ways and instead worked to build support for a rival multilateral institution (the Melanesian Spearhead Group), which has arguably contributed to a deterioration of Australia’s leadership in the region (Lal 2012, 87).

Again, the inability to prevent this outcome is far from the Department of Defence’s responsibility alone. But when a program viewed as ‘the cornerstone of Australia’s strategic influence in the region’ (Bateman and Bergin 2011, 2) does not seem to influence a substantially smaller country to moderate its behaviour, real questions must be asked about its rationale as a comprehensive strategic shaping exercise. In this light, in unpacking other possible scenarios for future complexities, if fears about a growing, assertive Chinese presence in the South Pacific are treated as a first-order issue, defence diplomacy must not be expected to spearhead or carry unwarranted expectations for managing regional leadership, political disagreements and specific concerns, such as challenges to freedom of navigation.

In determining the value of the recent proliferation of defence structures for security in the Asia-Pacific, the counterfactual of how the region would operate in their absence might be raised. Certainly this is worth considering, but ultimately it remains unpersuasive as a justification of the modern-day all-embracing defence diplomacy mission. To take a major issue of the day, disputes in the South China Sea long predate the embrace of defence diplomacy, with many similar dynamics at play (Hayton 2014). More importantly, such an argument reverses the onus of proof. National policy, especially when involving significant resources and diverting the time and attention of armed forces from their core missions, must be evidence-based. On this score, there is plenty of proof that defence diplomacy has real benefits, but these are found at the level of redressing practical, persistent security concerns, rather than grand strategic realignments. As a consequence, how, then, should we better guide and manage ambitions to use defence diplomacy to ‘manage regional and transnational security issues’ (DOD 2013, 55)?

**A revised defence diplomacy blueprint**

In light of the findings of this article, the Australian government’s consideration of defence diplomacy and the ADF’s engagement frameworks must be carefully rescrutinised. The development of a more fruitful, sustainable agenda should be underpinned by four interrelated questions. First, what does the conduct of defence diplomacy pathways seek to create, under what conditions and where (in specific terms)? Second, how does the performance of these activities complement existing domestic concerns and broader national interests? Third, how can the implementation, management and expansion of defence diplomacy be undertaken in an efficient and resilient manner, and how can we best evaluate and scrutinise such investments and outcomes? And, finally, what are the potential risks and supplementary regional consequences that such defence outreach activities and outlets will pose?

In order to address the first two questions, it is worth focusing on the general continuation of defence engagement programs, but with the adoption of more limited security
expectations targeted at the country-specific circumstances of neighbouring states and less generalised strategic goals in order to reach their full potential. So long as Australia has highly professional armed forces, service personnel will need training and support to understand their primary operating environment, and the command processes, capabilities, working relationships and logistics required to master such an environment. To the extent that defence diplomacy supports those goals, the practice should be embraced. At the same time, an indispensable part of forward planning will be contingent on expectation management and keeping a focus on practical security-oriented outcomes with short to medium time horizons.

Equally, as exposed in the 1999 crisis in East Timor, ADF officers do need the openings to develop skill sets in relationship-building, diplomacy and negotiations that defence diplomacy can provide. Just as significantly, defence diplomacy offers a way to tackle existing security challenges facing Australia and its region. Operation Pacific Partnership provides important aid and humanitarian relief in the region, helping to offset threats such as natural disasters or pandemics. The Pacific Patrol Boat Program supports better environmental management of fish stock, reduces the threats of piracy, and helps tackle drug crime and smuggling. All are valuable security outcomes where a clear, obvious link can be drawn from the conduct of the operation to the desired policy goal.

In an age of budgetary constraints, cuts and savings might be directed towards those broad-brushed operations which current policy settings claim are operating ‘at the strategic level … [including] regular talks between the Australian Defence organisation and the national defence organisations of many regional countries’ (Bateman, Bergin, and Channer 2013, 10). These types of official military-led talks between Asia-Pacific governments within regional architectures are still very ad hoc and have been created to serve a variety of purposes (Capie 2013; Tan 2012). This leaves them prone to political interference and subject to deeper balance-of-power disputes—disputes that will not be diffused by exchanges between military personnel.

While defence diplomacy is seductive in promising a relatively inexpensive way to expand diplomatic posture, it should also be recognised that such discourse and gesturing can just as easily stall or be misused, withdrawn or rejected. It may well be that part of the ongoing appeal of such dialogues is ‘based on the idea that plain-speaking military men, talking soldier to soldier, can resolve differences and build trust and understanding where civilian diplomats and politicians become mired in half-truths, evasions and circumlocutions’ (White, in Taylor et al. 2014, 11 ). The evidence, however, suggests that this idea only has a flimsy empirical foundation when related to organisational evolutions and the shaping of the foreign policy of states. The premier regional defence diplomacy forum, the Shangri-La Dialogue, is prone to the whims of opportunism, expediency, secrecy and status-seeking by its participants (Bisley and Taylor 2015). Australia should therefore be wary of putting an overemphasis on an approach to regional military discussions that is still finding its form, could send mixed messages, and may not have much leverage or value in a time of serious crisis or dispute, including in areas of core concern such as the South China Sea.

Indeed, while defence diplomacy significantly rose in popularity over the first decade of the twenty-first century as a heightened response to the region’s underlying tensions, there does not seem to have been a corresponding decline in these competitive crises (such as those underwritten by clashes in US–China hegemonic ambitions) in recent years,
despite the value attached to regular forums. Key military concerns, such as codes of
conduct at sea, can help to facilitate the management of uncertainties, but there has
been little progress towards a definitive conclusion, despite many years of collective
efforts. Given that developing regional military dialogues and contacts are still reasonably
newfound, with an escalation of power plays coupled with economic malaise and/or
ongoing political divisions, defence engagement could conceivably develop into a highly
skewed and expedient pattern. It is not unrealistic to suggest that it could become a
crude self-serving option for covering up day-to-day hedging strategies—a build-up of
military arrangements and forward basing that could conceivably raise alarm about inten-
tions and increase competition in the region. Unquestionably, this is China’s central criti-
cism of the defence engagement part of the USA’s ‘rebalance’ strategy (Blanchard 2013).
Like any diplomacy, defence engagement remains vulnerable to competing national
imperatives; geostrategic shifts; domestic political, economic and social turbulence; and
misinterpretation or misrepresentation by other actors.

After identifying the goals and ambit of defence diplomacy, the third question emerges
as to how a more viable implementation and effective management of the practice can be
provided. Based on its limitations, we argue that defence diplomacy activities should be
judged against a set of criteria which focus on operational and tactical proficiency. In
other words, does the activity build the skills or knowledge base of ADF personnel or
the forces of key partner countries? What is the emphasis and for what reasons? Does
the activity contribute to addressing interoperability and capacity concerns regarding an
unambiguous security issue? The answers to such questions will then need to be carefully
considered in light of the opportunity costs, in terms of both money and time, of those
stakeholders involved. For instance, how might the available resources be more produc-
tively spent in raising, training and sustaining defence forces, especially given the com-
plexity and outlay of multilateral exercises? Amidst these complexities, what assurances
are there that those resources will be available later down the track to sustain the project’s
achievements, given that this benign preliminary military planning can often begin years
in advance?

If power asymmetries are a key variable in the effectiveness of the practice, how might
regional coalitions be built around particular aims in order to achieve sufficient weight?
Rather than looking for the military to promote change across the full spectrum of
issues, one approach, borrowing from the early 1990s, might be ‘niche’ diplomacy on
specific issues where the interests of the region’s middle and small countries overlap
(Cooper, Higgott, and Nossal 1993). These countries could decide that a maritime code
of conduct is their primary concern, and build an issue-based coalition around this one
issue. In such a push, defence diplomacy could serve as a vital front line of the effort, bring-
ing in deep technical expertise and domain knowledge to strengthen the case, just as econ-
omists and policy intellectuals offered on trade liberalisation in the 1980s and 1990s (Carr
2015). Other issues, such as establishing dispute mechanisms for contested territory, might
similarly bring in other areas of expertise, such as legal professionals and scholars. In order
to be successful, such diplomacy would have to be a guided, whole-of-government, multi-
national effort. This targeted—specific-issue and direct—approach is quite distinct from
current fuzzy efforts to simply wear away at all regional problems simultaneously via an
endless series of engagements and occasions, and a haphazard rotation of state representatives.
In order to help Australia clarify and filter the framework for its approach, future White Paper should direct their focus towards a selective set of geographic priorities for consideration. This will most likely presume a focus on its neighbours in the South Pacific and South-East Asia, such as Indonesia, Solomon Islands and Papua New Guinea, or perhaps be targeted over the medium term towards a particular area of instability, such as the Indian Ocean Rim. Regardless of the focus, as far as possible, any military engagements should be subject to coordination of resources both within the Department of Defence and across the Australian government. A longer view of the issue can suggest that while the employment of defence diplomacy in itself cannot result in direct strategic outcomes, it may help to contribute to broader strategic goals via integration with various aspects of Australia’s regional outreach, not least the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (not only its diplomatic and cultural, but also its trade and aid sections), as well as the Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the Attorney General’s Department and other departments with relevant expertise or capacity. As a resourcing and management issue, if a more centralised approach is desired, the UK’s model of government integration has been widely praised as offering an integrated architecture to enhance national interests, which could serve as a useful exemplar (Cottee and Foster 2004, 11). Alternately, the USA might offer some direction-setting via its creation of a Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Security Cooperation position, with responsibility for ‘aligning security cooperation resources to defence strategy’, alongside boosting inter-agency consultation and the identification of core priorities around resource constraints (Kostro and McCormick 2015, 11).

Finally, in response to the fourth question, risk assessments involving ongoing challenges such as technology gaps, domestic blowback and language barriers should be acknowledged and much more openly discussed. In managing accelerated expectations, a preoccupation with an unrealisable pursuit of ‘strategic’ goals will lead to wasted resources and high opportunity costs, and damage public confidence in the ADF if it is seen as unreliable in meeting such aims. In focusing defence diplomacy activities on practical peacetime efforts, guided by selective, case-by-case security objectives and aligned carefully to a national ‘whole-of-government’ approach as well as current fiscal situations, the risks will become less common and the geopolitical relativities less consequential.

**Conclusion**

There are important benefits from defence diplomacy arising from tactical and operational orbits, but, to the extent that ADF officials are diverted from their core task to become camouflage-clad diplomats, it should be on a limited and circumspect basis. This article has argued that, based on the Australian experience, defence diplomacy should be regarded as operating at a security rather than strategic level. Such a framework should focus on areas where there is a clear relationship between the ways and means, combined with a planning environment that is characterised by distinct and direct policy objectives and related preconditions.

We take issue with the grandiose post-Cold War trend which assumes that, where diplomats have failed, ‘plain-talking’ soldiers can fill the breach, provide solutions to long-running regional anxieties and circumvent major power clashes. This article represents a negative finding to such claims in using a ‘most likely’ (Flyvbjerg 2006) template for
middle-power influence via this practice. Defence diplomacy is not a ‘strategic asset’ on its own. Rather, it is valuable in directly addressing security issues in the region. If well coordinated and built on country-specific knowledge, the results of these actions, along with the repetition of messages and themes that are advanced by the whole spectrum of Australia’s international engagement, could help achieve national strategic aims. For these reasons, this objective will require far greater coordination between the Department of Defence’s guidance and other national strategic planning, such as National Security Statements and, ideally, foreign policy White Papers.

At the same time, Australia’s defence diplomacy tasks must complement traditional diplomatic efforts, while not being seen as a creeping substitute for the main responsibility of the ADF—the security of Australia and contributing to the influence of the country by enhancing regional assessments about Australia’s capabilities and relative strategic weight. Further, such an approach would still enable a significant contribution to stabilisation, peacekeeping and related security operations, yet without the overblown promises and regular scholarly criticism when the claimed strategic reprioritising fails to appear or efforts produce only restricted or illusionary outcomes.

Despite the recent surge in buoyant attention to the merits of defence diplomacy, Australia’s investment in regional cooperation and the impact of its military engagement must avoid any political cycle that inexorably overstates these discussions. The utility of military-to-military engagements will remain highly dependent on and vulnerable to major power plays and shifting geopolitical landscapes, as well as domestic political imperatives and related social needs and economic circumstances. As such, expectations management will remain a crucial component in navigating any official and unofficial progression of defence diplomacy engagements. Well-meaning models or ‘can-do’ frameworks that fail to distinguish (and prioritise) between improving existing security concerns and more future-oriented, dynamic strategic goals that hope to transform wider regional settings are likely to produce disjointed, overly simplistic, and potentially counterproductive policy initiatives and prescriptions.

References


Appendix A

Table A1. Recent Australian defence engagement exercises and operations.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Operation</th>
<th>Countries involved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>Talisman Saber</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific Partnership 15</td>
<td>Australia, Canada, East Timor, Fiji, Japan, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Solania</td>
<td>Pacific Island countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Gateway</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>Operation Gateway</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Solania</td>
<td>Pacific Island countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bersama Lima</td>
<td>Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, U K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Suman Warrior</td>
<td>Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, U K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Croix Du Sud</td>
<td>France (in New Caledonia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>RIMPAC 14</td>
<td>Brunei, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific Partnership 14</td>
<td>People’s Republic of China, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of the Philippines,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Singapore, Tonga, UK, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Gateway</td>
<td>Cambodia, East Timor, Republic of the Philippines, USA, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Bersama Shield</td>
<td>Republic of the Philippines, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, U K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>Bersama Lima</td>
<td>Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore, U K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Solania</td>
<td>Pacific Island countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Gateway</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Red Flag Alaska</td>
<td>Japan, South Korea, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cope North Guam</td>
<td>Japan, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pacific Partnership 13</td>
<td>Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Talisman Saber</td>
<td>USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>RIMPAC 12</td>
<td>Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, India, Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico,</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Peru, Republic of Korea, Republic of the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Philippines, Russia, Singapore, Tonga, UK, USA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Solania</td>
<td>Pacific Island countries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operation Gateway</td>
<td>Malaysia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Pitch Black</td>
<td>Indonesia, New Zealand, Singapore, Thailand, USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Appendix B

Table B1. Number and location of Australian defence attachés as of October 2015.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region</th>
<th>Number of attachés</th>
<th>Location of attachés</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pacific</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Dili, Honiara, Nuku’alofa, Port Morseby, Wellington</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South-East Asia</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Bangkok, Hanoi, Jakarta, Kuala Lumpur, Manila, Naypyidaw, Phnom Penh, Singapore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Beijing, Seoul, Tokyo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South Asia</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Colombo, Islamabad, New Delhi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Middle East</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Abu Dhabi, Amman, Ankara, Baghdad, Kabul, Riyadh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>African Union (based in Addis Ababa)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Berlin, Kiev (run out of London), London, Madrid, NATO/EU, Paris, Senior NATO/</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>EU (based in Brussels)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North America</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>New York (UN), Ottawa, Washington, DC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South America</td>
<td>–</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Defence attachés stationed in Washington, DC and senior NATO/EU attachés are at the rank of major general. There are brigadier-level attachés in London and Jakarta, with colonel’s filling the rest of the positions, except for NATO/EU, Ottawa, Honiara and Nuku’alofa, which are staffed by lieutenant colonels.