

# Defence should be the concern and property of the Australian people

Superpower contention which almost daily increases the threat of world war, has stimulated a wide discussion on the best way to defend Australia against aggression.

The discussion and the growing literature about defence matters rather belies the idea promoted in some circles that there is no foreseeable threat to Australia.

This decade will be one of turbulence in world affairs. No one can predict in any detail how this growing turbulence will work out. We do know that superpower contention is intensifying as Soviet imperialism runs past its rival, U.S. imperialism, in military strength. The decline of U.S. imperialism is obvious. Diplomatic and military initiatives (challenge) have passed to the Soviet imperialists. This is another indication of their growing strength.

In this region of the world the Soviet "presence" is a fact. Its forces in the area are considered by the defence experts to be superior to the combined forces of the U.S. and Japan. Recently *Vanguard* reprinted sections of a report published in the *U.S. News and World Report* of recent date, which spoke of the "alarming build-up of Russian naval strength in the Indian and Pacific Oceans". It said:

*A steady build-up of Russian sea power confronts U.S. naval forces with an increasingly*

*formidable task in protecting vital Western trade routes across the Pacific and Indian Oceans.*

*From the Horn of Africa to the vulnerable sea lanes off Japan, to the shores of the U.S. itself, a modernised Russian navy is plying ocean expanses that only a decade or so ago were considered virtually a private domain of the powerful U.S. Pacific fleet.*

*Moscow also is buttressing Russian naval strength by lining up land, sea and air bases and supply depots in nations near maritime choke points in Africa, the Middle East and the Far East.*

*Russian ships and planes now range from facilities in Ethiopia, South Yemen and Vietnam, and from Russian-held islands just off northern Japan.*

*There is more to the build-up than just the visible projection of Russian sea power. Military experts say a prime object of the Kremlin is to enable the Russian navy to interdict critical Western trade routes in the Indian and Pacific Oceans if the need arises.*

*The Russian Pacific fleet, based at the port of Vladivostok on the Sea of Japan, is the largest of Moscow's four geographically divided naval forces. It surpasses even the northern fleet, which would combat Atlantic Alliance forces in the North Atlantic.*

*"The Russian build-up in the Pacific is more dramatic than at any other place in the world," says Admiral Robert Long, who commands U.S. Pacific forces from his headquarters in Honolulu. Says Long of the overall balance of naval forces in the region: "Right now, we are in a virtual standoff as far as having enough to win."*

*The reach of the Russian Pacific fleet extends even to the United States. Last year, a Kara class missile cruiser from the North Pacific port of Petropavlovsk led a task force on a cruise that skirted the Aleutians, swung south to near the Oregon coast, then passed the Hawaiian Islands before heading for home.*

*American military men say Russian nuclear-armed submarines, at least one of which operates within a few hundred kilometres of the U.S. West Coast, have missiles trained on American targets. Backfire bombers can fly missions as far south as the Philippines or as far east as the Aleutians.*

*They give the Russians what one U.S. official describes as a "significant new direction in their attack capability."*

The situation is causing much apprehension amongst the Australian bourgeoisie. There is a continuing debate on the efficacy of the ANZUS Treaty and a desire not to rely on Japan. There is a fear of a rebirth of Japanese militarism. Recent reports in the press indicate that Japanese response to U.S. overtures that Tokyo shoulder more of the defence burden against Soviet expansionism, has been more than enthusiastic. The attempts by some sections of the Japanese bourgeoisie to alter history regarding their aggression against China in the thirties is a signal indicating that there are powerful forces inside Japan which are hankering after a "more active and aggressive foreign policy."

*Refuting the Japanese Education Ministry's attempts to whitewash Japanese militarism, the Honorary President of the Chinese Society of the History of World War II, Huan Xiang, pointed out that right-wingers have been resurgent in Japan in recent years: certain ministers are prepared to pay homage at the "Yasukuni Shrine" to military war dead, while other people advocate a change in the Japanese Constitution which would permit the Emperor to participate in government affairs; and over 30 motion pictures promoting Japanese militarism and defending Hideki Tojo, war leader of Japan, have been turned out.*

*Huan Xiang maintained that since Japan's economy ranks the second in the capitalist world, some people in the country, especially the right-wingers, are anxious to overcome the contradiction between "the economic giant and the political dwarf", whipping up the sentiment required for the revival of militarism. The Japanese Education Ministry's distortion of the history of Japanese aggression, he said, is a problem that should be taken seriously.*

In recent discussions in Australia, the fear of a resurgence of Japanese imperialism has also been expressed. This proposition by James R. Huntley, Battele Seminars & Studies Program,

Seattle, Washington, U.S.A. has gained some currency here:

*The United States has for many years been urging Japan to rearm, but the response was minimal. Now, Japanese opinion, elite and mass, is in the process of developing a wide, historic swing with respect to defence policy. Alarm at Soviet behaviour in the Western Pacific, plus grave concern for Japan's sea lanes, are forcing the Japanese to take a new look at the question of security.*

*At the same time, the force of the recession and the decrepitude of certain key industries in Europe and the United States are engendering a new wave of protectionism directed at Japanese consumer goods. Now, sensing growing international instability and direct political and economic threats, Japan's leaders are giving serious consideration, for the first time, to a much more active, independent political role in the world, backed up with military power, proportional to Japan's economic weight.*

*It is very much in the interests of the United States and of her other democratic allies in the Pacific and in Europe that Japan not undertake a form of rearmament which would provide her with obviously independent offensive military capabilities of magnitude.*

*If, coupled with political and economic estrangement from the West, the Japanese were to develop such capabilities, the effects could be highly unsettling in the Far East, the entire Pacific, and indeed worldwide. An independent course of this kind for Japan is to be avoided at all costs. Certainly China and the USSR would look on such a development with great foreboding, not to mention Japan's other neighbours.*

*What is to be done?*

*It is recommended that the United States offer to replace the present Japan-U.S. Mutual Security Treaty and the ANZUS Treaty with a new five-nation Pacific security pact, modelled on NATO. Canada, Australia, New Zealand, Japan, and the United States would be members, with provision for later accession by other nations.*

*A joint command, analogous to SACEUR, plus other appropriate multilateral organs, would be set up. Hawaii might be a good headquarters.*

*Insofar as possible, the mistakes of NATO should be avoided; e.g. a standardised weapons and equipment programme should be put in place from the beginning, and a sensible division of military tasks worked out.*

*This would reduce the concerns and uncertainty of other powers in the Far East, and lend stability and balance to that area. Above all, the knowledge that Japan was being well-protected from herself would quiet the fears that lurk in the minds of a good many Japanese (probably a majority) as to the consequences for their nation of major unilateral rearmament.*

*Such a treaty would obviate the unfair unilateral guarantees of the present U.S.-Japan Mutual Security Treaty, so far largely unnoticed by the U.S. public. Instead, not only would the U.S. accept a commitment to go to the aid of Japan if it were attacked, but the other Pacific democracies would share. In turn, the Japanese would be obligated to do the same for us — and for the Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders.*

*Many pitfalls and problems could arise — among them Canadian lethargy, Australian fears, historic concerns in the Far East. But the end result — much more stability and an enhanced sense of security in the entire Western Pacific — would seem worth the effort.*

Imperialism always lacks any clear-cut, coherent defence policy because of conflicting interests. In Australia the dominant defence line is dictated by the U.S., but within the U.S. there are conflicting views, particularly on how to defend the Pacific Basin which runs second place to Europe where most of the U.S. investment is situated. These contradictions are reflected in Australian discussions. Moreover, amongst capitalist powers there is not much trust. The history of the operations in this region during World War II shows what conflicting trends run under the surface even during actual hostilities. There is growing distrust of the U.S. in certain circles of the Australian bourgeoisie. Sometimes it is freely expressed. Those who nurture that distrust consider the U.S. to be ineffective. They recognise its decline and are wary of its real intentions. They consider that there has been some change in relations with Australia. What the “changes”

are, are never described in detail. However, there are indications that what is meant is an increased fear of the “expendability” of Australia.

In recent times the intentions of Indonesia vis-a-vis Papua New Guinea have been publicly discussed. The newspaper *Vanguard* has warned for some time that there are stirrings in Irian Jaya, a territory that was annexed by Indonesia. A West Papuan liberation movement does exist. How active it is and what connections it has with the people of both territories are hard to gauge because of the paucity of information received. It is known that the movement has an office abroad. Its last location was London and it is a certainty that the Soviet imperialists have established a connection with OPM as the Free Papua Movement is called. Be that as it may, the reality is that the Soviet imperialists have powerful naval forces nosing about which like to fish in troubled waters. This causes tensions. It is well known that there is really no love lost between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia because of the latter's annexation of what was once known as West Papua. There is sympathy in PNG for OPM which, on some occasions, has been expressed openly at government level. In *The National Times* of August 14, the position was clearly spelt out. It reported that last month (July) the then Secretary of Defence, Vincent Eri, told a public audience at the University of Papua New Guinea that he considered the threat of Indonesian aggression real and not a mere possibility.

A separate seminar held at the university last month, ostensibly on a proposal to merge the military and the police force, was dominated by discussions of Indonesian activities and whether or not Indonesia has expansionist aims in relation to PNG.

The seminar, organised at the request of the military, was attended by the Commander of the PNG Defence Forces, Brigadier-General G. M. Mamai, and representatives of the PNG foreign affairs and defence departments. The seminar was held under Chatham House rules — no participation can be directly quoted.

Some speakers declared that as Australia could not be expected to assist PNG in the event of an Indonesian invasion, the best deterrent was

to start shooting Indonesian troops now whenever they can be found crossing the border.

Provocative statements of this nature horrify security advisers to the PNG Government.

They have been urging the government to institute stronger border controls to prevent the OPM using PNG territory. The advisers' rationale is that the basis for complaints about Indonesian military incursions — which reached their height in June when the PNG Ambassador to Jakarta was withdrawn temporarily — will be strengthened if PNG can be seen to be sincere in its stated policy that it prohibits harbouring of OPM guerrillas.

These advisers are concerned that Indonesia bashing can only be detrimental in the longer term and that concerns about Indonesia's *transmigrasi* policy (which has seen the once predominantly Melanesian population of Irian Jaya swell 50 per cent with Javanese immigrants) are irrelevant in international terms because the fact remains that PNG has recognised that Irian Jaya is part of Indonesia and has recognised Indonesia's takeover of East Timor.

But the invasion fears remain supported by the perhaps simplistic analysis that, having annexed two Melanesian territories, Irian Jaya and East Timor, Indonesia is now determined to colonise a third, Papua New Guinea.

Their fears are strengthened by the widespread belief in Port Moresby that Australia could not be counted upon to come to PNG's aid in the event of an invasion and that public opinion in Australia, which is presumed to be sympathetic to PNG, would be its only hope. Australia does not have a defence treaty with PNG and does not even supply it with intelligence data.

Australian intelligence exchanges, however, do occur with Indonesia.

The PNG Defence Force is pathetically weak and the commander, Mamai, in a lengthy interview with *The National Times*, made it clear that he did not want to devote what little military resources he might have to the border area. The state of the defence forces is best demonstrated in a speech given by Mamai at the recent university seminar on the merging of the country's security forces.

Mamai noted that Budget allocations to the Defence Force had dropped by 14 per cent in real terms in the six years since independence. He then went on to describe the magnitude of the problem.

"The Defence Force has been living on the fat (of the Australian Administration's hand-over of equipment worth \$A74 million at independence) but now it cannot repair facilities and replace aging equipment such as mortars, machine guns, rifles, radios, aircraft and ships. In actual fact, the PNGDF faces a major problem of 'block obsolescence' in the 1980s and 1990s."

Mamai said: "We are now undermanned in fighting units. . . Although we should have 3,500 we actually have slightly less than that figure because we have restricted recruitment. Our wastage rate is 120 per year so we really have problems.

"The mobility of the force is limited to the use of DC3s and two LCHs; we have no helicopter capability. Our reaction time is too long because our aircraft are slow and restricted to few airstrips and our ships are well over 13 years old so they are unable to maintain speed and the force has no endurance in terms of supplies.

"The hiring of civilian aircraft and ships is expensive. Weapons and equipment are old and mainly small arms. We can react in reasonably good time but our forces are not well balanced for independent major confrontation. Therefore, we need outside support.

"With the amount of money we have we will not last two weeks of operations because the lead times to procure essential items are too long — nine to 18 months in Australia, and six to nine months in Singapore for some commodities only."

The picture by Mamai is grim indeed and combined with the belief that Australia or any other major power cannot be expected to assist, there is little wonder that the fear temperature is rising in Moresby, reports *The National Times*.

Not published by *The National Times* was the view that U.S. imperialism is behind the new moves of Indonesia. The gathering of fairly large Indonesian forces on the border of Irian Jaya with Papua New Guinea is also causing some concern in Australia, especially amongst those

who hold the view that Australia could become expendable as far as the U.S. is concerned, provided the deal (either with the Indonesians or Japan) guarantee support for the U.S. in its contention with Soviet imperialism. It is noted by the holders of this view that Japanese industrialists have recently been more outspoken about the "industrial situation" in Australia and the Indonesian Government has clamped certain restrictions on the Australian press. The pro-Japanese activities of the former Premier of West Australia, Sir Charles Court and the Queensland Premier, are not overlooked. In this context the extraordinary Japanese project at Yeppoon, near Rockhampton in Queensland, is viewed with growing suspicion.

In a TV interview a week or so ago the Defence Commander in Papua New Guinea, M. Mamai, also warned of the threat posed by an expanding Indonesia to Australia. He said many strange and wonderful things had been done in the name of security. This prompted *Vanguard* on August 18, to comment: "We can understand that it may be necessary to forestall any moves by Soviet imperialism in the area. But the way to do this (as *Vanguard* has pointed out many times) is to develop united and friendly co-operation against the common enemy; not to use the Soviet threat to indulge in imperialist annexation. The logical and obvious question that is raised by all this (Indonesian threat to PNG) is: What about Australia?"

Australia's defence is a serious matter and it is a very important front in the general struggle for greater national sovereignty. While we may not agree with the ideas expressed in bourgeois circles about defence matters, we should read and study them. Only by doing this can we make a proper contribution to the discussion which must not be allowed to go past us. The world is a very unstable place; only the people have power to restore its stability. The defence of Australia should be the concern and property of the Australian people. We cannot rely on others and we have to be prepared for all eventualities.

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## Individualism has no place in Communist movement

**In all fields of scientific investigation certain individuals are remembered by their outstanding work in making initial discoveries that have led to great developments in the struggle against nature and the general advance of mankind.**

One or two examples may be quoted. In the field of radio communications the name of Marconi is still familiar. Faraday is another name that will be forever linked with the development of man's understanding of electricity and how to generate it. The German Ohm discovered certain laws governing the flow of electricity. Thus we have Ohm's law, still an essential part of electrical engineering. Dr. Diesel's name is used every day. He discovered how combustion can be achieved without the use of an electrical ignition system in an internal combustion engine. There are hundreds of other names associated with scientific discoveries that will live forever but whose lustre fades as new discoveries are made by scientists, the number of whom throughout the world are counted now in hundreds of thousands, perhaps millions. Things that were once a mystery are no longer so to the masses of the people.

Scientific investigation within the laboratory, however, is a vastly different matter to the scientific investigation into how people live, into historical development, into economics, how human knowledge is acquired, how people can change the world and become masters of their own destiny. In such investigation, the world