



National security capability development for non-traditional security threats

Non-traditional security threats are beginning to dominate the national security environment. While military conflicts remain of critical importance, other threats are vying for as much attention. These non-traditional threats now pose massive risks to Australia's long-term strategic environment.

This is no better illustrated than in the case of climate change which the UK Government's chief scientific advisor, Sir David King, described as "a far greater threat to the world than international terrorism". Even Australia's own 2006 Commonwealth Budget Papers place pandemics and threats to energy security in the same category of "adverse external shocks" as terrorism.

Yet Australia's response to non-traditional threats is inadequate – it can be characterised as disjointed, haphazard and incremental. Most importantly, it lacks a whole-of-government, let alone a whole-of-nation, approach and has no structured capability development process essential to a rational, risk allocation. The exception is terrorism where the response has mostly been well regarded.

Non-traditional security threats are many and varied. Although most threats impact on countries overseas, they have huge potential to spillover and affect Australians and Australian interests. Threats include ethnic conflicts, mass migration, transnational crime, infectious disease, and maritime piracy.

The causes of the threats include collapsing states, coups, civil wars, resource depletion, food insecurity, pandemics, closing of shipping lanes, earthquakes and weather impacts due to climatic change.

All of these threats have significant impact on Australians and Australian interests. For example, if an influenza pandemic occurred of the same magnitude as the last major one, between 13,000

and 44,000 Australians would die. Likewise, a major disruption to oil supplies caused by Australia's failure to lock in supplies via long-term diplomatic and trade arrangements, will create massive unemployment and civil unrest overseas, leading to economic collapse.

An example of the failure to address non-traditional threats is the Australian Defence Force's limited focus on stabilisation capabilities.

Currently, many of the 2,500 ADF deployed overseas could be classified as undertaking stabilisation operations. Yet despite this, the ADF does not have detailed doctrine, capability needs analysis, force structure, training, education, exercises, material, personnel, and facilities for stability operations. In addition, the ADF's capability to run stability operations which requires engineering and logistics capabilities is actually far worse than it was 15 years ago when Defence accelerated the process of shedding resources from support areas and shifted them to frontline.

This lack of attention is even more surprising when the casualties and costs incurred from stability operations are considered. Based on the US experience over the last decade, for every 1 casualty in major military operations, 6 casualties occur in stability operations. And for every dollar spent on major military operations, 5 dollars are spent on stability operations. There is no reason to believe that this quantum would be different in Australia.

While it is important to note that Defence has taken some operational initiatives in this area such as establishing the ADF Peacekeeping Centre and publishing the Civil-Military Doctrine, in other key areas improvements could be made. An example of this is the failure of Defence to engage many key agencies (eg AusAID, NGOs and the private sector) in the planning phase of military and stabilisation

operations. The reasons for the lack of engagement is usually justified on operational security reasons but given the experience that security and reconstruction operations need to occur simultaneously, this failure to engage upfront needs attention.

Developing a more structured approach to address non-traditional security threats is becoming more urgent for three reasons.

Firstly, responses are more complex because the issues are invariably highly inter-related with other problems and require numerous strategies rather than one single bullet.

Secondly, responses require a much longer commitment for resolution as seen in stabilisation and reconstruction operations (eg AFP officers have been deployed in Cyprus for 43 years, and Timor-Leste for 8 years).

Finally, responses require many more groups than in the past due to the variety of work required. These include many agencies in the Australian Government, but many more outside including NGOs and the private sector.

Pressure to address non-traditional security threats will also come from politicians and the community as operational failures are exposed in real-time on 24 hour news channels.

The most effective way to implement a structured approach to respond to the large range of non-traditional security threats is via a formal capability development process.¹ This process consists of three phases - identifying capability needs, developing capability requirements, and acquiring and sustaining the capability.

This *Practice Note* focuses just on the first phase of the process, ie the *identifying capability needs*.

The stages in the *identifying capability needs* phase are:

1. capability needs analysis
2. understanding the nature of the future national security threats
3. capability goals are defined that meet the government needs
4. capability gaps are identified between these goals and the current capabilities of organisations

1 Capability needs analysis

A significant impediment to undertaking the needs analysis for non-traditional threats is the lack of detailed guidance by government of its needs. At the highest level, the key documents defining our strategic position are *Australia's National Security: A Defence Update 2007*, *Protecting Australia Against Terrorism 2006* and *Advancing the National Interest (2003)*. Other key documents include the *National Counter Terrorism Plan* and the *White Paper on Transnational Terrorism*.

The first two provide foundation guidance for two key threats - military and terrorism threats respectively. The *Advancing the National Interest* white paper discusses a larger range of threats (eg proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, people smuggling, transnational crimes, resource security) and identifies key government priorities which are:

- Countering specific security threats
- Building prosperity through market liberalisation
- Engaging with Asia
- Strengthening our alliance with the United States
- Helping our Pacific neighbours consolidate their future
- Developing deeper relations with Europe
- Promoting good governance, human rights and development
- Protecting Australians abroad
- Projecting a confident Australia



The Australian Homeland Security Research Centre undertakes independent, evidence-based analysis of domestic security issues.

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Threat	Quality of information on the priorities of the Australian Government	Quality of information on the understanding the nature of the future national security threats	Quality of information on the capability goals	Quality of information on the gaps identified
State-on-state	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed
Terrorism	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed	Detailed
Pandemics	Sufficient	Sufficient	Sufficient	Inadequate
International energy supply	Inadequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Climate change	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Cyber attacks	Adequate	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Resource security	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Demographic trends in Asia-Pacific area and Muslim world	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate
Human Security	Adequate	Inadequate	Inadequate	Inadequate

Figure 1: Selected threats and the identification of the quality of existing information required to undertake capability analysis.

While the foreign affairs white paper provides some information, its limited depth provides little information on the government needs. Consequently few agencies have referred to this document in their priority settings and instead, have used other policy documents. A notable exception is AusAID which has key responsibilities in responding to non-traditional threats. AusAID's objective is "to assist developing countries to reduce poverty and achieve sustainable development, in line with Australia's national interest". In order to achieve this objective, the aid program is organised around four themes:

- 1) accelerating economic growth
- 2) fostering functioning and effective states
- 3) investing in people
- 4) promoting regional stability and cooperation

For a range of non-traditional threat areas, the quality of information identifying the priorities of the Australian Government is identified and this information is listed in the Figure 1.

2 Understanding the nature of the future national security threats

The key step in the capability needs assessment stage is understanding the nature of the future national security threats. While certain agencies have developed detailed assessments on the threat (eg

ONA, ASIO, DIO, DOTARS and AFP), this information is not widely available to most strategic planning staff in the numerous agencies and non-government organisations that would have some involvement in developing their capabilities in a whole-of-government response.

For example, the assessment on climate change threat needs to be widely disseminated to the following agencies:

- Law enforcement and financial regulatory groups need to know that new crime types appearing include selling carbon off-sets from forests which do not exist, and claiming carbon credits for reductions after inflating CO2 generation figures.
- Health groups need to know that climate change will result in the spread of tropical diseases into Australia's formerly temperate regions.
- Aid and community groups need to know that there may be mass migration, potentially to Australia, of pacific islanders as the sea level rises.
- Procurement groups in Defence need to know the potential for carbon costs to be factored into fuels which would change the priority given to fuel efficiency and ability to use alternative energy supplies when evaluating competing platforms.

3 Capability goals are defined that meet the government needs

The third step in capability needs analysis is defining the capability goals. For some non-traditional threats, this is done well by certain agencies. AusAID in particular has articulated its capability goals in a number of areas as identified in the box. Health has done so with pandemics to a lesser degree, but in many areas, such as stabilisation operation and energy security, there are no goals formally identified.

4 Capability gaps are identified between these goals and the current capabilities of organisations

The final step is identifying gaps. For military and terrorism threats, the gap analysis has been done, and capabilities continue to be developed to address them. For other threats, the gap analysis has yet to be undertaken.

The analysis would identify where capabilities can be obtained from, and if they are not available, how they can be developed. The gap analysis has the potential to shape force structures. For example, if the ADF did a gap analysis for high risk, stability operations and identified that NGOs and the private sector did not have the capability to operate in this environment, it may indicate that the ADF needs to develop this capability itself. Alternatively, the ADF may wish to work with NGOs and private contractors who are willing to provide services but require assistance to work in high risk environments. This would require the ADF to engage them in planning requirements, provide pre-departure training and induction, and supply in-country security overlay. It would also require the ADF to give them sufficient time to “harden” their operation and possibly support this cost.²

There appears to have been little work done by agencies, outside of AusAID and Health, in identifying the capability of NGOs and the private sector. It is significant to note that the ADF has yet to carry out such an audit of stability capabilities of Australian companies.

Conclusion

As the security threats become more complex, so does the response. Joint operations between Australian agencies, NGOs and the private sector have become the norm but joint capability

development has yet to occur. Organisers which already have capability development processes, such as Defence, AusAID, Border Protection Comman and AFP's International Deployment Group, are an important start but what is required is a top-level focus on whole-of-nation national security capabilities for dealing with non-traditional security threats broader than terrorism.

Which ever party wins government, developing such a process will be essential.

Capability identified in non-traditional threats by AusAID

AusAID's food security strategy consists of implementing policies and practices to:

- alleviate poverty and improve access to food
- ensure agricultural trade fosters food security
- promote rural development
- assist developing countries to meet international food standards
- enhance women's access to resources
- ensure children and other vulnerable groups have access to food
- prepare for disasters and emergencies
- undertake agricultural research and development

AusAID's climate change objectives are:

- to build knowledge of regional climate systems and support adaptive planning and adaptive measures (focusing primarily on the Pacific)
- to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in significant emitting countries through energy efficiency and clean energy technologies (focusing primarily on Asia), and
- to reduce greenhouse gas emissions through reforestation and avoided deforestation (focusing on countries where deforestation is an issue)

AusAID's water objectives are:

- to improve access to safe water and sanitation (especially in the Pacific and South-East Asia), and
- to strengthen integrated water resources management, particularly through planning and allocation processes (in key river basins and islands)

Footnotes

- 1 An alternative is to let a response incrementally evolve such as the response to major international events involving Australians. This response is coordinated by the Inter-departmental Emergency Task Force (IDETF) whose role is to manage events overseas which have a significant impact on Australian or Australian interests. It has an operational response rather than a focus on political or strategic aspects. It is chaired by DFAT and has representatives from PMC, AG, ASIO, Defence, AFP and ASIS. The IDETF success in managing the Lebanon evacuation, Bali bombing and several other crises is well recognised. It does not have any standing committees for improving its processes (eg a capability committee), nor does it have an exercise regime for testing and building its response (although it has been involved in an avian influenza exercise and will be involved in a counter-terrorism exercise). While the IDETF response capability has been successful to date, this may be more due to the willingness of parties to make operations happen and the nature of the operations to date.
- 2 It is significant to note that in the US Department of Defence *Directive 3000.05 Military Support for Stability, Security, Transition, and Reconstruction (SSTR) Operations*, it states that "Stability operations are a core U.S. military mission that the Department of Defense shall be prepared to conduct and support. They shall be given priority comparable to combat operations and be explicitly addressed and integrated across all DoD activities including doctrine, organizations, training, education, exercises, materiel, leadership, personnel, facilities, and planning." It noted that while "many stability operations tasks are best performed by indigenous, foreign, or U.S. civilian professionals... nonetheless, U.S. military forces shall be prepared to perform all tasks necessary to establish or maintain order when civilians cannot do so."