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Strategic and Defence Studies Centre
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Australian National University

**The Characteristics of Australian
Policymaking in National Security
Crises**

(with special reference to East Timor, 1999)

A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy of
The Australian National University

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Abstract

This dissertation identifies the consistent and variable characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia, and identifies the reasons why characteristics may change. Importantly, this dissertation is about policymaking processes, not judgments about the success, morality or effectiveness of Australian policies.

The analysis is conducted through three main stages. The first involves identifying characteristics for national security policymaking through an examination of the literature of foreign and defence policy. The second stage refines these into characteristics of crisis policymaking through an examination of three crises for Australian policymakers and a study of the emergence of the modern crisis policymaking system. These tentative characteristics of crisis policymaking, which are organised using the Australian Policy Cycle, are tested through a case study of the East Timor Crisis of 1999.

The final stage involves reducing a list of twenty-two characteristics into an essential group of five. These five include recognising the centrality of the national security executive; the collegial nature of crisis policymaking; the relative importance of external over domestic actors; the closed and secretive nature of the process; and the complicated and complex nature of implementation. The dissertation also identifies political preference and the contingent nature of crises as the main factors driving change in this system.

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Table of Contents

Abstract.....	iii
Acknowledgments.....	iv
List of Tables.....	vi
List of Figures.....	vi
Annex.....	vi
List of Abbreviations.....	vii

PART I: DEVELOPING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISIS POLICYMAKING

Australian Policymaking In National Security Crises – An Introduction

Examining policymaking in crises.....	1
Objectives of this dissertation.....	2
Defining crisis policymaking.....	4
Research methodology.....	13
Structure of the dissertation.....	22
Conclusion.....	23

Chapter 1: Towards Characteristics of Australian National Security Policymaking

Characterising a practical art.....	25
National security policymaking.....	27
Tentative characteristics for national security policymaking.....	66

Chapter 2: Policymaking During Crises – Australian Experiences

Crisis vignette 1: Japan’s threat, 1941–42.....	71
Crisis vignette 2: Australia and ‘United Action’, 1954.....	80
Crisis vignette 3: <i>Konfrontasi</i> , 1963–64.....	89
Conclusion.....	103

Chapter 3: Emergence of the Modern Crisis Policymaking System 1963–99

Section I: Changes in the Crisis Policymaking System from 1963–96.....	107
Section II: The Crisis Policymaking System under Prime Minister Howard.....	128
Section III: Change, Continuity and Implications for the Characteristics of Crisis Policymaking.....	137

Summary of Part I: Proposed Characteristics for Crisis Policymaking..... 141

PART II: TESTING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISIS POLICYMAKING: THE CASE OF EAST TIMOR, 1999

Chapter 4: A Brief Outline of the East Timor Crisis—The View from Canberra

‘This is big’.....	151
A developing situation.....	156
Organising for the consultation.....	163
Acute crisis and response.....	166

Chapter 5: Developing Policy Advice in a Crisis	
Identify Issues.....	176
Policy Analysis.....	190
Policy Instruments.....	205
Chapter 6: Bringing Policy Advice Together	
Consultation.....	218
Coordination.....	235
Chapter 7: Decision and Beyond	
Decision.....	249
Implementation.....	257
Evaluation.....	267
Conclusion: Refining the characteristics of crisis policymaking	
The characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia.....	274
Insights from the empirical findings.....	283
References	
Books, Journal Articles and Theses.....	290
Australian Government Sources.....	304
Oral Histories.....	314
Collections.....	314
Newspaper articles and other mass media.....	315
Web pages and documents.....	319
Interviews.....	321
List of Figures	
Figure 1: The Australian Policy Cycle.....	11
Figure 2: Processes 1 and 2 for Developing the Characteristics of Policymaking in National Security Crises.....	14
Figure 3: The Consultation Continuum.....	47
Figure 4: The National Crisis Management Machinery, Showing the Department of Defence's Formal Structure – 1999.....	136
List of Tables	
Table 1: Characteristics of Australian Policymaking.....	26
Table 2: Tentative Characteristics of National Security Policymaking.....	68
Table 3: Australian Prime Ministers and their Formal Crisis Policymaking Committee 1960–96.....	109
Table 4: The National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) – 1999.....	129
Table 5: Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS) – 1999.....	132
Table 6: Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG) – Principal Members, 1999...	135
Table 7: Australia's Strategic Objectives, March–September 1999.....	193
Table 8: The Characteristics of Crisis Policymaking in Australia.....	275
Annex	
A. Interview Guide.....	325

List of Abbreviations

- AEC – Australian Electoral Commission
- ADF – Australian Defence Force
- ALP – Australian Labor Party
- AFP – Australian Federal Police
- ANZAM – Australia New Zealand and Malayan Area
- ANZUS – Australian, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty
- APEC – Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting
- ASEAN – Association of Southeast Asian Nations
- ASIO – Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
- ASIS – Australian Secret Intelligence Service
- AusAID – Australian International Aid Agency
- BSE –Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (Mad Cow Disease)
- CDF – Chief of the Defence Force
- CDFS – Chief of Defence Force Staff
- CINCPAC – Commander in Chief, Pacific Command (see USPACOM)
- COMAST – Commander Australian Theatre
- COSC – Chiefs of Staff Committee (became ‘Chiefs of Service Committee’ in 1997)
- DC – Defence Committee
- DEA – Department of External Affairs (1901–70)
- DEP SEC S&I – Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence (Department of Defence)
- DFA – Department of Foreign Affairs (1970–87)
- DFAT – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1987–)
- DGET – Director General East Timor
- DG ONA – Director General of the Office of National Assessments
- DIO – Defence Intelligence Organisation (1990–present)
- DDIO – Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation
- DOFA – Department of Finance and Administration
- DPA – Department of Political Affairs (United Nations)
- DPKO – Department of Peace Keeping Operations (United Nations)
- DPM&C – Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (1970–present. Formerly Prime Minister’s Department) – sometimes referred to as ‘PM&C’ by interviewees
- FADC – Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (1963–72; 1976–83)
- HIAM – Heads of Intelligence Agencies Meeting

HMAS –Her Majesty’s Australian Ship
HOCLEA – Heads of Commonwealth Law Enforcement Agencies
HQ ADF – Headquarters Australian Defence Force
IDC – Interdepartmental committee
IG ADF – Inspector General Australian Defence Force
IMF – International Monetary Fund
INTERFET – International Force in East Timor (UN abbreviation)
JIO – Joint Intelligence Organisation (1970–90, when it became DIO)
JIC – Joint Intelligence Committee
JPC – Joint Planning Committee
KOPASSUS – *Komando Pasukan Khusus* (Indonesian Special Forces Command)
L/CP – Liberal/Country Party Coalition
L/NP – Liberal/National Party Coalition
NSCC – National Security Committee of Cabinet (1996–present) (sometimes referred to as ‘NSC’ by interviewees)
NIWO – National Intelligence Watch Office
NGO – Non-government organisation
ONA – Office of National Assessments (1977–present)
OSIC – Office of Security and Intelligence Coordination
PM&C – see DPM&C
PMD – Prime Minister’s Department (1911–70)
PNG – Papua New Guinea
RA – Radio Australia
SAC–PAV – Standing Advisory Committee–Protection Against Violence
SCG – Strategic Command Group
SCIS – Secretaries Committee on Intelligence and Security (1983–96)
SCONS – Secretaries Committee on National Security (1996–present)
SES – Senior Executive Service
SPCG – Strategic Policy Coordination Group (1988–present)
SPPKF – South Pacific Peace Keeping Force (1994)
SWG – Strategic Watch Group
TNI – *Tentara Nasional Indonesia* (the Indonesian Army)
UK – United Kingdom
UN – United Nations

UNAMET – United Nations Mission in East Timor (11 June–25 October 1999)

UNTAET – United Nations Transitional Administration in East Timor (25 October 1999–
20 May 2002)

US – United States of America

USPACOM – US Pacific Command

VCDF – Vice Chief of Defence Force

BUREAUCRATIC CLASSIFICATIONS

In Australia, the Secretary is a department's senior official. The Secretary reports directly to the Minister and is responsible for all aspects of the department's performance. This official is usually a career public servant, not a political appointee in the American sense. Before 1984, the Secretary was appointed 'Permanently' by the Governor General, although cabinet advice was always central to that decision. Since then, Secretaries have been appointed by the government to fixed terms that carry over if there is a change in government. The equivalents in the Office of National Assessments (ONA), Australian Secret Intelligence Service (ASIS) and Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO) are called 'Director General'.

The classifications below the Secretary in most departments are (compared to equivalent Australian Army officer ranks):

- Deputy Secretary (Army equivalent: Lieutenant General)
- First Assistant Secretary (Army equivalent: Major General)
- Assistant Secretary (Army equivalent: Brigadier)
- Director (Army equivalent: Colonel)
- Deputy Director/Assistant Director (Army equivalent: Lieutenant Colonel)
- Policy Officer (Army equivalent: Captain or Major)

AUSTRALIAN POLICYMAKING IN NATIONAL SECURITY CRISES: AN INTRODUCTION

Examining policymaking in crises

Depictions of government actions in crises feature prominently in popular entertainment. They make great viewing, offering focused stories with heroes and villains, rapid action and razor-sharp tension. The academic community also pays significant attention to political crises, adding to the understanding of how governments operate under extreme pressure and uncertainty. However, the literature (and many popular representations) about crises tends to be dominated by work concerning the United States (US) political system¹, a focus on the top leadership group and the point of decision, and the interplay between competing nation-states.

Some authors think each crisis is unique or ‘context-dependent’², with its own physical characteristics, specific time and location, and impact upon history. Describing this as a ‘common misunderstanding’, Brändström, Bynander and ‘t Hart point to some underlying features that crises share, such as the recourse to history to make sense of events and the challenges policymakers and communities often face when confronted by crises.³ While these two characteristics may be correct, policymaking—which is defined as the process of providing advice to ministers and implementing their decisions⁴—in crisis has additional similarities and differences that can be identified and explored.

These gaps in the existing literature about crises offer two main opportunities for further study. The first is to examine policymaking inside a single government at three distinct levels of activity, simultaneously examining policy activity from its inception in issue identification through decision to the nominal endpoint of evaluation. This deeper study of crisis policymaking allows a detailed and comprehensive consideration of many

¹ Some excellent work on about crises outside the US exists includes the collection of papers in U Rosenthal, P ‘t Hart, and MT Charles (eds), *Coping With Crises: The Management of Disasters, Riots and Terrorism*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, 1989. See also treatments of specific crises such as J Bowen, *Six Days: How the 1967 War Shaped the Middle East*, Pocket Books, London, 2003; and R Gerodimos, ‘The UK BSE Crisis as a Failure of Government’, *Public Administration*, no. 82, no. 4, 2004.

² AL George, ‘A Provisional Theory of Crisis Management’, in AL George (ed), *Avoiding War: Problems of Crisis Management*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1991, pp. 23–4.

³ A Brändström, F Bynander, and P ‘t Hart, ‘Governing by looking back: Historical analogies and crisis management’, *Public Administration*, vol. 82, no. 1, 2004, p. 191.

⁴ I am grateful to my colleague, Bob Wylie, for his lucid contribution to this definition.

internal policy actors, so providing a better understanding of what characterises this specific type of policymaking. The second opportunity is to look at Australia's approach to managing past crises; this provides a way to think about how future Australian governments might approach the task of organising for and managing future crises.

Objectives of this dissertation

Aim and contribution

This dissertation addresses the two opportunities described above by identifying the consistent and variable characteristics of policymaking in Australian national security crises. It argues that the characteristics of Australian crisis policymaking are basically enduring, even though the system itself changes due to the contingent nature of crises and political preferences. The evidence to support this proposition is developed in two parts.

Part I develops characteristics for crisis policymaking by drawing on Australia's experience over the last seventy years. This experience includes an examination of the literature about national security, historical examples of crises and a study of how the modern crisis policymaking system emerged. These characteristics are tested in Part II through a case study of Australian policymaking during the East Timor crisis of 1999. This examination conducts further analysis of the characteristics of crisis policymaking, and offers explanation as to why they changed or remained consistent in this case.

This dissertation aims to make two major contributions to the knowledge of Australia's political system. The first is to the understanding of crisis policymaking in Australia. This will be achieved, in part, by analysing the literature on foreign and defence policymaking, earlier instances of crisis, and the emergence of the modern crisis (and national security) policymaking system. The second contribution will be made by understanding how the Australian Government and its agencies operated during 1999's East Timor crisis. Such a contribution is especially worthwhile because the policymaking aspect of this crisis has yet to receive detailed attention.⁵ The dissertation also aims to make

⁵ This problem was identified by J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 123. This is not to say that the issue of Australian policymaking in 1999 has gone totally unnoticed. Authors have paid considerable attention to the 'Howard Letter' of December 1998 and the creation of the International Force East Timor (INTERFET) in September 1999. Examples of the literature include D Greenlees and R Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, pp. 84–7; A Ryan, *Primary responsibilities and primary risks: Australian Defence Force participation in*

a small methodological contribution by combining a policy cycle with interviews and other sources in an analytical process that describes policymaking across multiple domains of activity.

Why is East Timor worth examining?

The 1999 East Timor crisis is worth examining because it changed Australia's relationships with regional nations and Australian policy in the early twenty-first century. This crisis brought a geopolitical transformation in Australia's region as independent Timor-Leste was born, creating a nation that will need international assistance for some time yet.⁶ The crisis also had negative implications for the Australia–Indonesia relationship, which still suffers some of the effects of this intervention.

This crisis is also worthy of study because it represented the beginning of new directions in foreign and defence policy under Prime Minister John Howard (1996–2007). In terms of foreign policy, the East Timor crisis re-shaped Australia's view of its regional role, culminating in assertive stances over terrorism and political instability in the South-West Pacific. The intervention into East Timor also showed the need to reconsider Australia's defence policy after a long period dominated by the Defence of Australia concept.⁷ The strengths and deficiencies of this policy were displayed as an Australian-led international military force deployed not to block an invading force but to stabilise the (still-Indonesian) province.⁸ This force, known as the International Force East Timor (INTERFET), involved a significant proportion of Australia's front-line combat troops in

the International Force East Timor, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2000; and T Fischer, *Seven Days in East Timor: Ballots and Bullets*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 2000, Chapter 1. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) produced a book explaining many aspects of policy around the crisis (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998–2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001). William Maley also wrote a sharp critique of DFAT's role (W Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis: Some Critical Comments', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2000). Some have reported the events inaccurately as well—for example, see I McPhedran, *The Amazing SAS: The Inside Story of Australia's Special Forces*, HarperCollins, Sydney, 2005, pp. 25–7.

⁶ For one analysis that identifies the major areas requiring assistance and reform, see International Crisis Group, *Resolving Timor-Leste's Crisis*, Asia Report N°120, 2006.

⁷ In simple terms, the Defence of Australia concept stresses defence of the sea-air gap to Australia's north and emphasises the importance of maintaining self-reliant forces to protect Australian territory. It provides an alternative to a 'forward defence' posture that involves basing outside Australia (mainly in Southeast Asia) and force structure priorities that emphasise coalition operations. For a discussion, see M Evans, *From Deakin to Dobb: The Army and the Making of Australian Strategy in the 20th Century*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2001, pp. 17–33.

⁸ These strengths and deficiencies are identified in Ryan, *Primary responsibilities* and Australian National Audit Office, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002.

an ongoing commitment.⁹ This intervention also highlighted important gaps in Australian military force structures and readiness that were eventually addressed by a significant increase in defence spending and an extensive program of capital equipment acquisitions.¹⁰ These points make this dissertation especially worthwhile because Australia's strategic environment continues to change in response to broader systemic forces and changes created by Australian foreign policy. The likelihood of new crises emerging in Australia's region makes it essential for the Australian Government to learn from its experience.

This introduction continues by defining the key terms of 'national security' and 'crisis', and distinguishing between the related concepts of 'crisis management' and 'crisis policymaking'. The research methodology is then discussed, before the dissertation's remaining chapters are outlined.

Defining crisis policymaking

National security and crisis

Although the term 'national security' is used frequently in Australian debate and practice, any attempt to define it is open to challenge. For example, past Australian political leaders often referred to national security as 'the first responsibility of government'.¹¹ These same Australian Governments made no attempt to define national security, or to discuss the relative merits of defining the referent for security as the amorphous 'Australian nation'. Australian Governments generally expect unified effort under the banner of national security, and this policy area attracts the 'close interest' of senior politicians.¹²

National security is also used frequently in organisational titles within the Australian Government. For example, the term is included in the titles of the modern Australian crisis policymaking system's two main structural components—the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) and Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS). The

⁹ It should be noted that the original Australian commitment of around 4500 in late 1999 (INTERFET) was gradually reduced to three staff officers by mid-2005 (Operation CHIRON). The numbers swelled again to over 1000 after violence broke out in April 2006 (Operation ASTUTE) (Department of Defence, 'Global Operations and Exercises', available <http://www.defence.gov.au>, accessed 28 September 2006).

¹⁰ See Department of Defence, *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000.

¹¹ For examples, see J Howard, 'Getting the big things right: goals and responsibilities in a Fourth Term', in Address to the Enterprise Forum Lunch, Adelaide, 8 July 2004, available <http://www.pm.gov.au>, accessed 12 July 2007; and Dr B Nelson, 'Australian Government Strengthens Defence Legislation', Media Release 13 February 2006, available <http://www.defence.gov.au>, accessed 12 July 2007).

¹² P Waters, 'At War with Terror', in N Cater (ed), *The Howard Factor: a decade that changed the nation*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2006, p. 165.

organisation charged with coordinating related policies in the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C) is called National Security Division. Other departments, including Attorney-General's and Immigration, have organisational units with 'National Security' in their titles. While the boundaries of this concept may be indistinct, there is no escaping national security in discussions about contemporary Australian politics.

As a result, this dissertation uses national security in a traditional and instrumental way. It is defined as protecting or advancing the nation-state's sovereignty, borders, interests and political system from perceived or actual threats, as defined by the government of the day.¹³ National security policy, therefore, attempts to coordinate and deploy the relevant instruments of national power—primarily those relating to diplomacy, information, military forces, law enforcement, and economic potential—to achieve the political ends desired by the government.¹⁴

National security policy is made in three modes. The first, deliberate policy, aims to shape the environment for Australia's security through changes to instruments such as military posture, trade relationships, diplomatic initiatives and foreign aid. This mode of policy is generally communicated through statements and documents. The second mode also unfolds over longer time-frames and involves the acquisition or development of capability. This capability mode primarily involves military, intelligence and law-enforcement equipment purchases, but other ingredients are also important—including changes to training programs, doctrine and organisational structures. The third mode, and the main focus of this dissertation, is crisis policymaking.

'Crisis' is another contested and ambiguous concept in political science—even if a crisis is readily identified in practice. The main differences between the various definitions

¹³ The traditional view of national security—which contrasts with 'global' and 'human' security—is not static. Today, traditional security concerns are broadening from the formerly military-dominant focus to include non-military challenges such as pandemics, transnational crime and terrorism (see CA Snyder, 'Contemporary Security and Strategy', in Snyder (ed), *Contemporary Security and Strategy*, Deakin University/MacMillan Press, Houndsmills, 1999; and D Mutimer, 'Beyond Strategy: Critical Thinking and New Security Studies', in Snyder, pp. 77–81). The conceptualisation of security taken in this dissertation also follows B Buzan, *People States and Fear: An Agenda for International Security Studies in the Post Cold War-Era*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, London, 1991.

¹⁴ Changes in the security environment since the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks and broader changes created by globalisation and technological advances make it harder to distinguish between national (or external) security and domestic (homeland) security. While the relationships between the external and domestic are acknowledged, it is still possible to consider the two separately because the policy processes, actors and instruments used in these two areas remain different, despite overlaps. The distinction is also warranted because it is consistent with practice during the period examined in this dissertation.

of crisis concern its constituent conditions, the linkage between effect and event, and the category of issues involved. In one definition, Michael Brecher lists the necessary conditions for a crisis as including a threat to basic values, a high probability of military hostilities and a finite response time.¹⁵ Others have added the conditions of surprise or unexpected events¹⁶, while some attempt to make a definition of crisis applicable to a range of calamitous situations by using a formula based on threat, urgency and uncertainty.¹⁷

While time, threat, surprise and uncertainty are candidates for a definitional list, it can be difficult to argue that all are necessary conditions. For example, time has an uncertain place in a definition. Some crises may indeed arise and dissipate quickly, as in the famous thirteen days of October 1962.¹⁸ Others may build over time, and last for a significant period, such as the twenty-year crisis described by Carr.¹⁹ Other crises might last for a long time, but have periods of greater and lesser intensity. In the case of East Timor, the crisis lasted for eleven months (from the Australian policymaking perspective) and contained a six-week period of acute crisis.²⁰

A further problem arises from the way 'crisis' can be applied to almost any relationship. As a result, situations as diverse as political contests²¹, the economy, public relations²², and social relationships have all received attention under the banner of crisis. While crisis is indeed a useful aid to understanding in many such instances, this broad usage threatens to make the concept highly subjective.

The possibility that a crisis might not actually involve military conflict should be considered, particularly where strained relations occur between parties without military forces or in situations where force is specifically excluded from one party's options.

¹⁵ M Brecher, 'State Behaviour in International Crisis', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, vol. 23, no. 3, 1979, p. 447. See also GH Snyder and P Diesling, *Conflict Among Nations: Bargaining, Decision Making and System Structure in International Crises*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1977, p. 6.

¹⁶ PJ Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises: Presidents, Advisers and the Management of Decision Making*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1997, p. 2; and CF Hermann, *Crises in Foreign Policy: A Simulation Analysis*, Bobbs-Merrill, Indianapolis, 1969, p. 414. Surprise may not always be a necessary condition. For example, see Brecher, 'State Behaviour in International Crisis', p. 448.

¹⁷ Rosenthal, 't Hart and Charles, p. 439.

¹⁸ This event has exerted a strong influence on the understanding of crisis, mainly through GT Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1st edn, Harper Collins, 1971.

¹⁹ It should be noted this characterisation was applied after the event. See EH Carr, *The Twenty Years Crisis 1919-1939: an introduction to the study of international relations*, 2nd edn, MacMillan, London, 1948.

²⁰ The Australian perspective is discussed in more detail in Chapter 4.

²¹ For example, CJ Morgan, *The first minister in Australia: studies of the office in crisis situations, 1920-1941*, unpublished PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1968.

²² Such as G Howell, *Description of the Relationship Between the Crisis Life Cycle and Mass Media Content*, unpublished thesis, Queensland University of Technology, 2003.

Indeed, military conflict may be averted precisely because of the actions of the parties in crisis. To this end, Coral Bell directs our understanding towards the repercussions of the crisis by introducing the idea of ‘transformation’ to the definition. She argues that the ‘essence of true crisis in any given relationship is that the conflicts within it rise to a level which threatens to transform the nature of the relationship’.²³ This focus on relationships and change is important because it promotes consideration of the long-term implications of crisis, and includes crises that do not necessarily involve armed conflict.²⁴ These main features—threats to values or goals, uncertainty, possibility that violence may be used, compressed timelines for decision and transformative potential—provide the specific context that makes crisis important and distinguishable from other political events.

Given the way crisis can interfere in many relationships, this dissertation limits its examination to *national security crises*. In this context, a national security crisis is a situation, as defined by a government, where sovereignty, international relationships or national interests are jeopardised by real or perceived threats from other actors. In response to a threat, governments invoke their responsibility to secure the nation’s interests to neutralise, remove or ameliorate that threat.

In the national security context, crisis creates a policy dilemma when neither side will concede and risk damage to its interests. This dilemma forms around decisions about the means employed and options that may or may not be pursued. The dilemma also appears when decision-makers must choose between actions that restrain conflict but do not bring success, and actions that lead to a favourable resolution but risk costs that exceed the value of winning.²⁵ After all, raw emotion can lead to inadvertent escalation and a fight over goals or values that are not crucial to one or both sides.²⁶ This potential for unwanted conflict and unwarranted costs makes careful management of this dilemma an essential task.

²³ C Bell, *The Conventions of Crisis: A Study in Diplomatic Management*, Royal Institute of International Affairs, London, 1971, p. 9.

²⁴ Karl Deutsch uses the idea of ‘turning points’ in a similar way. See K Deutsch, ‘Crisis Decision-Making: The Information Approach’, in D Frei (ed), *Managing International Crises*, Sage Publications, Beverly Hills, 1982, p. 15.

²⁵ George, p. 23.

²⁶ Clausewitz wrote of the spiral of emotion as having the propensity to push conflict to extremes of violence. See C von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans. M Howard and P Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976, p. 77.

The now-famous statement by Robert McNamara, then-US Defense Secretary, that 'there is no longer any such thing as strategy, only crisis management' helped to increase the visibility of crisis as a means of understanding politics.²⁷ While this statement is catchy and certainly relevant, 'crisis management' is not the best way to discuss the totality of how governments act in times of crisis. This is because crisis management, in general usage, refers to the process of managing potential conflict between states.²⁸ As a result, most literature about crisis management deals with how two states (one often being the United States) worked through difficult, often potentially violent, situations. There is also a significant focus on how crises move into armed conflict and the relationship between military forces, diplomacy and political objectives.²⁹ Others focus on crisis decision-making, effectively conflating the entire process with the actions of political leaders.³⁰ Some have tried to use crisis management as a blanket term for the process of dealing with a crisis³¹, but the term's preponderant meaning has settled towards relationships between governments, signals sent and missed, and the actions and counteractions that constitute the crisis.

Applying the established concept of crisis management therefore risks overlooking intra-governmental activity, which is the main subject of this dissertation. An examination of this activity requires a broader focus that includes important sub-processes within governments such as issue identification, policy analysis, consultation and implementation. As a consequence, this dissertation uses 'policymaking' to provide a conceptual basis for a study of the internal workings of government during a crisis.

²⁷ Quoted in C Bell, *Crises and Policy-makers*, Canberra Studies in World Affairs no. 10, Department of International Relations, Australian National University, Canberra, 1982, p. 29.

²⁸ For example, see Deutsch, 'Crisis Decision-Making'; CF Hermann, 'Types of crises and conclusions for crisis management', in D Frei (ed), *International crises and crisis management*, Saxon House, Westmead, 1978; and the essays in GR Winham (ed), *New issues in international crisis management*, Westview Press, Boulder 1988. Richardson notes other problems associated with linking the terms crisis and management, for this implies an element of control on the part of the parties (JL Richardson, 'Crisis Management: A Critical Appraisal', in Winham, p. 14–15).

²⁹ Much of this work followed Allison, *Essence of Decision* (1st edn). George codified the relationship between these agents (George, p. 25). Richardson also noted the pervasive influence of the Cuban case of subsequent crisis scholarship (see Richardson, p. 14).

³⁰ For example, Y Dror, *Policymaking Under Adversity*, Transaction Books, New Brunswick, 1986, p. 181; IL Janis, *Groupthink: psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*, 2nd edn, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1982; IL Janis, *Crucial Decisions: Leadership in Policymaking and Crisis Management*, The Free Press, New York, 1989; and Haney, p. 19.

³¹ An exception is Rosenthal and Pijnenberg, who discuss the internal workings of governments in their study of crisis management. See U Rosenthal and B Pijnenburg, 'Simulation-orientation scenarios: An alternative approach to crisis decision-making and emergency management', in U Rosenthal and B Pijnenburg (eds), *Crisis Management and Decision Making: Simulation Oriented Scenarios*, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Dordrecht, 1991, pp. 1–3.

Policymaking

Policymaking, as defined earlier, describes the structures and processes of a state that link advice and actions of appointed officials (in Australia's case, public servants) with their elected ministers. Thus the policymaking process is not concerned with the content or assessment of decisions *per se*. It is concerned with how advice supported decisions, how decision processes worked, and how decisions were translated into activities aimed to satisfy policy objectives.

It would be misleading to portray policymaking as an activity that is conducted in the same way, every time. Policymaking is a complex process that must account for the presence of competing and changing forces within a political system. This system is bounded by elements such as constitutions, party systems and bureaucratic institutions that remain relatively constant, or change only very slowly. Furthermore, policymaking processes can change between iterations, within these boundaries.

Different explanations have been offered to account for system change. Walcott and Hult, in their study of changes in governance structures by US presidents, identify three major groups of influences: environmental, presidential choice and organisational. These three represent a very broad range of factors. For instance, the environmental grouping incorporates changing technology and different roles for domestic, internal and foreign actors. Presidential choice brings presidential objectives and presidential strategy together, which subsume possible influences such as personal style. Organisational influences include factors such as previous structures, learning and 'turf' – that is, the different responsibilities and interests of different parts of the government.

This complexity makes a number of qualifications necessary before a policy cycle framework is used to organise analysis. Meredith Edwards summarised these qualifications well:

- Policy processes are non-linear, in that they can move backwards as well as forwards and stages might be executed in a different order from the model.
- Organisational structures are important to policy development and will influence the process.
- Players and networks operating in the process will influence policy outcomes.

- Political considerations are all pervading: ‘Good policy processes can tame, but only to a degree, the political process’.³²

With these caveats in mind, a policy cycle breaks the complex process of policymaking into separate, linked steps. These steps usually identify issues and gather information so insider experts can present policy options to leaders who, in turn, may make decisions. Once made, decisions are implemented—often by officials and sometimes by society at large. Other rational models include an evaluation stage, which allows for a return to the start of the cycle or process.³³ The strength of these models lies in their representation of sequential tasks that are conducted as policy is developed, decided and then implemented. Their cyclic design also highlights the process nature of government, describes how knowledge is synthesised, and provides a way to examine actual policy.³⁴

The examination of policymaking conducted in this dissertation will use the Australian Policy Cycle as an organising heuristic. As such, the policy cycle is used to structure the analysis and allow comparison, by phase, between different instances of policymaking. The Australian Policy Cycle presents these phases as issue identification, policy analysis, policy instruments, consultation, coordination, decision, implementation, and evaluation which—since this is a cycle—returns to the issue identification phase. This cycle is depicted in Figure 1, while the characteristics of each phase are outlined in Chapter 1.³⁵

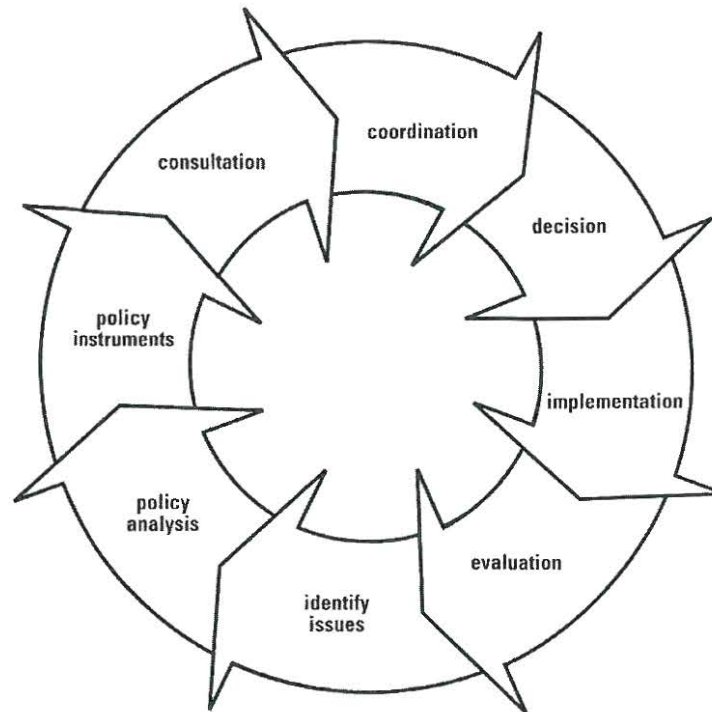
³² Meredith Edwards, *Social Science Research and Public Policy: Narrowing the Divide*, Academy of Social Sciences in Australia Policy Paper #2, Canberra, 2004, pp. 6–7.

³³ For an example of a rational comprehensive approach to policy see Y Dror, *Public Policymaking Reexamined*, Chandler Publishing Company, Scranton, 1968.

³⁴ P Bridgman and G Davis, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004, p. 22–3. Another example of a policy cycle can be found in B Jenkins, ‘Policy analysis: Models and approaches’, in M Hill (ed), *The Policy Process: A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1993, pp. 34–9.

³⁵ This dissertation groups the early phases of the policy cycle from identifying issues to policy instruments under the heading ‘Developing policy advice’, the middle stages of coordination and consultation as ‘Bringing advice together’, and the later phases of decision, implementation and evaluation as ‘Decision and beyond’. These groupings have been created to allow the discussion to be presented logically and concisely in Part II.

Figure 1: The Australian Policy Cycle³⁶



The Australian Policy Cycle is simplistic because it depicts a complex process containing equally complex sub-processes flowing from one starting point to the next. For instance, the singular policy analysis phase conceals competing sources of policy analysis and the range of possible methods, such as cost-benefit analysis and opportunity cost analysis. It is also difficult to capture the iterative nature of some policy events or show how feedback occurs at many points in the cycle. Furthermore, it would not be correct to assume that resources are distributed evenly within the policy cycle, for some areas to be given only limited attention when constraints—such as stated political preferences and deadlines—dictate.³⁷

It is also important to acknowledge other limitations of the policy cycle. The first and major limitation is that policy cycles do not provide causal explanations of how policy moves from one stage to another. Secondly, policy cycles have inherent limitations because they impose rationalism on an endeavour often described by non-rational terms such as

³⁶ Bridgman and Davis, p. 26.

³⁷ S Everett, 'The Policy Cycle: Democratic Process or Rational Paradigm Revisited?', *Australian Journal of Public Administration* vol. 62, no. 2, 2003, p. 70.

'incrementalism', 'satisficing' and 'muddling through'.³⁸ The third limitation is that policy cycles do not always fit examples of policymaking from real life, and ignore the multiple levels of government and interacting cycles.³⁹ They do not help us to understand who plays in the cycle or the relationships between these actors. As a result, the policy cycle alone is unable to help determine which explanations for policymaking behaviour are the most powerful.⁴⁰ These reasons make it important not to claim too much for the explanatory power of this model.

On the other hand, the simplicity and completeness of the Australian Policy Cycle makes it a good tool for teaching people about policymaking.⁴¹ The model is also very useful for comparing similar phenomena, including different instances of crisis policymaking and their related structures and processes.

Crisis policymaking, as used in this dissertation, is the mode of national security policymaking used when challenges (possibly unexpected and potentially very damaging) emerge to threaten to transform one nation-state's relationship with others, thereby creating a threat to existing goals or values.⁴² Crisis policymaking may involve efforts to 'prevent crises from occurring, to prepare for a better protection against the impact of a crisis agent, to make for an effective response to an actual crisis (including decision making), or to provide plans and resources for recovery and rehabilitation in the aftermath of a crisis'.⁴³ Crisis policymaking is concerned with decision processes rather than the substance of those decisions, and with the policymaking system rather than analysis of 'good or bad' policy.

³⁸ Ibid., pp. 66–7.

³⁹ Criticisms of policy cycles have been made in W Parsons, 'Not Just Steering but Weaving: Relevant Knowledge and the Craft of Building Policy Capacity and Coherence', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 63, no. 1, 2004, pp. 79–80. Specific criticisms of Bridgman and Davis' model are contained in C Howard, 'The Policy Cycle: A Model of Post Machiavellian Policy Making?', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2005; and Everett, pp. 67–68.

⁴⁰ For descriptions of policymaking behaviours see FW Hoole, DH Handley, and CW Ostrom Jr, 'Policy-Making Models, Budgets and International Organizations', *Journal of Politics*, vol. 43, no. 3, 1979; and MJ Smith, *The Core Executive in Britain*, MacMillan Press, Basingstoke, 1999.

⁴¹ This claim is disputed by Howard ('Policy Cycle'). While he makes valid criticisms of the Australian Policy Cycle, he does not provide an alternative in this paper.

⁴² Crisis policymaking differs from Dror's 'policymaking under adversity', although crisis is one type of adverse condition. For Dror, crisis is differentiated from everyday adversity by the time available, suddenness of imposing events and need for rapid decision-making (see Dror, *Policymaking Under Adversity*, p. 181).

⁴³ Rosenthal and Pijnenburg, 'Simulation-orientation scenarios', p. 3.

Research methodology

General outline

The methodology employed in this dissertation is based on three related analytical processes:

- The first process, conducted in Part I, develops characteristics for Australian policymaking in national security crises. This process requires four steps: the first identifies general characteristics of Australian policymaking across all policy areas, the second identifies characteristics of national security policy, the third narrows the focus to the crisis mode of national security policymaking, and the last describes the crisis policymaking system. This first analytical process is described below in the discussion of characteristics.
- The second process, which is conducted in Part II, tests these characteristics through a case study of 1999's East Timor crisis.
- The final process refines the characteristics of crisis policymaking into an essential group, and identifies a range of implications for the future of Australia's crisis policymaking system.

This methodology is supported by written sources and interviews. Where these sources have potential weaknesses, specific treatments—specifically those described below—are applied throughout the dissertation to promote confidence in the conclusions. The next section begins by explaining the analytical process before describing the main sources and their use in this work.

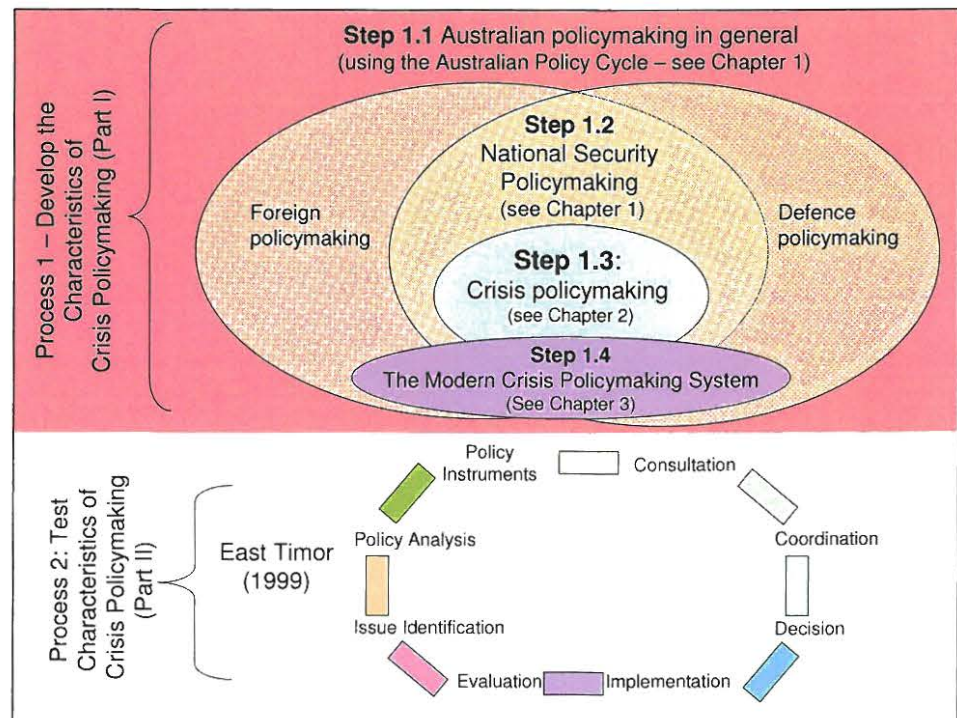
PROCESS 1: DEVELOPING CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristics are defined as features or attributes that typify a certain class of phenomena. Characteristics can identify, classify and compare events, and suggest relationships among different elements. At present, there are no models available to identify or examine the characteristics of crisis policymaking in an Australian setting, although others have produced models that describe the relationship between different stages of such a system or identified principles of crisis management.⁴⁴ The first process for developing

⁴⁴ For an example of a model describing crises in general, see the 'Unified Model of Crisis' in M Brecher and J Wilkenfield, *A Study of Crisis*, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1997, pp. 10–17. For an example of principles of crisis management, see Richardson, pp. 17–23.

the characteristics of crisis policymaking is undertaken in Chapters 1, 2 and 3 through four linked steps (see Figure 2).

Figure 2: Processes 1 and 2 for Developing the Characteristics of Policymaking in National Security Crises



Step 1.1 of Process 1 (conducted in Chapter 1) involves summarising Bridgman and Davis’s descriptions of the policy cycle. This is an important step because their description of the Australian Policy Cycle is too detailed to provide an analytical framework for a case study.⁴⁵ This is also a contestable step because, as discussed earlier, it is misleading to insist that all policies are made in exactly the same way. For every policymaking example that draws on empirical evidence, counter-examples will exist. Two approaches are taken to resolving this problem. The first is to acknowledge that every instance of policymaking has its own idiosyncrasies, and follow the weight of evidence. The second is to leave a characteristic open and explore it when instances of crisis are discussed.

Step 1.2 involves bringing foreign and defence policymaking together to describe national security policymaking.⁴⁶ These policy areas were selected because national

⁴⁵ Meredith Edwards goes through a similar process when using Bridgman and Davis’s model as an analytical framework for social policy case studies. See M Edwards, *Social Policy, Public Policy: From Problem to Practice*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2001, pp. 4–6.

⁴⁶ This is a different task to that tackled by authors such as TB Millar and Michael Evans, who analysed higher-order concepts that link foreign and defence policy in Australia. See TB Millar, *Australia’s*

security policy is often defined as a combination of foreign policy and defence policy. For example, Ross Babbage uses ‘security policy’ in favour of ‘defence policy’ because the former defines ‘a wide range of diplomatic, political, economic, military, social, and other pressures and threats to which nation states are potentially susceptible’—thus stating the ways in which security is an inherently broader concept than defence.⁴⁷ Further, the actors, processes and instruments involved in foreign and defence policymaking are often the same as those (but not the total sum of the available actors and instruments) for national security policymaking. Chapter 1 applies this approach by bringing together the literature on foreign and defence policymaking to modify Bridgman and Davis’s general characteristics into tentative characteristics of national security policymaking.

The tentative characteristics of national security policymaking are then examined in crisis mode in Step 1.3 (see Chapter 2) through three vignettes of past national security crises. The purpose of this step is to place crisis policymaking in its historical context and provide empirical evidence that shows why the crisis mode differs from national security policymaking in general. The vignettes for Chapter 2 were selected because:

- they occurred across a significant span of Australia’s modern history (from 1941 to 1964);
- a range of means were used to resolve the crises (two instances involved the use of military forces and one did not);
- the crises varied in duration from a few months to years;
- each involved different degrees of threat to Australia (one immediate, one proximate and one indirect); and
- crisis policy was made using different structures on each occasion.

Defence, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1965, Chapter 2 and 3; and M Evans, *The Tyranny of Dissonance: Australia’s Strategic Culture and Way of War 2001–2005*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2005, especially pp. 43–51.

⁴⁷ R Babbage, *Rethinking Australia’s Defence*, Queensland University Press, St Lucia, 1980, p. xxi, note 1. Brown also includes relevant aspects of trade, science industrial development and general economic policy as part of ‘national security policy’ (G Brown, *Australia’s Security: Issues for the New Century*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1994, p. 162). The difficulty of separating foreign and defence policy was highlighted by Prime Minister Bob Hawke, ‘The Way Ahead’, *John Curtin Memorial Lecture*, 1983, available <http://john.curtin.edu.au>, accessed 8 February 2007. See also P Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901–1949*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983, p. 136

Together, these vignettes arguably represent a broad cross-section of crises and inform our ability to generalise to other national security crises involving Australia.

The final step (Step 1.4) continues the task of identifying characteristics by describing the system for national security policymaking in Australia between 1963 and 1999. This step employs historical analysis and interviews to examine how structures and processes at three separate levels—the political, the policy and the administrative—changed over the period until it became the ‘modern’ crisis policymaking system.

Since an understanding of how and why the crisis policymaking system evolved over time is very important to the purpose of this dissertation, two questions will be asked of each characteristic. The first is ‘has this characteristic changed over time?’ The answer to this question will be determined by examining the literature that contributed to the formation of that characteristic, and by studying whether relationships, structures or norms surrounding that characteristic changed over the last sixty years. That answer will be provided in a yes–no–uncertain form. The second question, which is more subjective, asks ‘is there potential for future change?’ This judgement will be based on the history of the issue, and whether change in other areas, such as information technology and political leadership, could induce further change in that characteristic using the following categories:

- Possible (noticeable)—the characteristic could change noticeably in the future.
- Possible (limited)—limited change (between different models, for example) could occur.
- Unlikely—the characteristic is unlikely to change in the foreseeable future.
- Uncertain—no judgement can be made.

The final stage of the process brings the newly revised group characteristics together to produce a description of the crisis policymaking system and an understanding of why it changed over time. The product Process 1’s four steps is a list of proposed characteristics for crisis policymaking. This list is subsequently tested using the insights gained from the East Timor case in Process 2.

PROCESS 2: TESTING THE CHARACTERISTICS

The second process adopts a case-study method to test the characteristics using a detailed study of a major Australian crisis. The reasons for selecting the East Timor case were outlined above, with the recency and importance for Australia's relationships of this case being key factors in determining the value of this case to the dissertation's objective.

The case study was developed by concurrently interviewing a small number of key people with a broad knowledge of the East Timor case, and a review of the literature, official record and media reporting about the crisis (see below). This method of data collection allowed a detailed understanding of the events to be developed, before further interviewees were approached to provide their views of policymaking at the time. The actual case was then assembled by comparing the characteristics developed in the first analytical process against the evidence collected through the case research.

PROCESS 3: REFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS

The final process involves comparing the data collected for each characteristic in Processes 1 and 2, and assembling that information in a table. This table contains a description and a judgement about whether the characteristic is likely to vary or remain consistent. Next, the characteristics are refined into a smaller, essential group so these can be used under conditions where reference to the full group may be impractical. These essential characteristics were selected by looking for overlap, and where the weight of evidence from the research showed these to be the most critical for determining how the crisis policymaking system works in Australia. This process is conducted in the concluding chapter.

The three analytical processes are important for two reasons. First, it means that the characteristics of crisis policymaking have been extracted from literature concerning national security policymaking in general and the field of crisis policymaking in particular. Secondly, this process ensures that the selected characteristics have been derived from Australian experience. This provides some confidence for claims that any characteristics identified as consistent or variable are grounded in a longitudinal study that accounts for change in the broader political system. Taken together, the steps of this analytical method enhance the ability to generalise across crises (within the Australian context) over time.

Main sources

WRITTEN SOURCES

Two main types of written sources are consulted in this dissertation. The first includes official documents such as Cabinet minutes, departmental files and other government publications. It was possible to consult Cabinet papers and other archived material up to 1976, and this helped develop the crisis vignettes and trace the evolution of the modern crisis policymaking system. While the range of official sources about policymaking during the East Timor crisis is limited at present, some evidence can still be gathered from the public record. For instance, the Australian Government has produced one book on the East Timor crisis, which describes the role of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) in the events of 1998–2000. While this book includes a number of important and relevant documents and news releases, it cannot be considered authoritative because official Australian documents are not cited among its sources. A number of submissions and testimonies to a Senate Enquiry on East Timor and Senate Estimates hearings in 1999–2000 also form part of the official record, although they contain little about policymaking process.⁴⁸

The second group of written sources included media reporting, academic articles, and published accounts, including memoirs and theses. As expected, these sources represented a wide range of viewpoints and issues, each with a unique focus and bias. These sources included books that drew heavily on interviews with key actors⁴⁹, or were written by the actors themselves.⁵⁰ The vignettes of crisis policymaking also drew upon near-contemporary accounts and the later work by historians such as Horner, Edwards, Woodard, and Dee.⁵¹

⁴⁸ Requests were made to the Chief of the Australian Defence Force (2 May 2005) and DFAT (9 February 2006) for access to departmental files on East Timor. Both requests were refused.

⁴⁹ Such as Ryan, *Primary responsibilities*; and Greenlees and Garran, *Deliverance*.

⁵⁰ Such as A Alatas, *The Pebble in the Shoe: The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor*, Aksara Karunia, Jakarta, 2006; J Marker, *East Timor: A Memoir of the Negotiations for Independence*, McFarland and Co, Jefferson, 2003; and Fischer, *Seven Days*.

⁵¹ Primarily D Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort 1939–45*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1996; P Edwards with G Pemberton, *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asia Conflicts 1948–1965*, Commonwealth of Australia and Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1992; P Edwards, *Arthur Tange: Last of the Mandarins*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2006; G Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004; and M Dee, *In Australia's Own Interests: Australian Foreign Policymaking During Confrontation, 1963–1966*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of New England, 2000.

INTERVIEWS

The main source of new data for this dissertation was a series of sixty-six interviews conducted by the author with those involved in national security policymaking before and during the East Timor crisis. These interviewees represented a broad cross-section of the bureaucracy—including DPM&C, DFAT, the Department of Defence (Defence), Australian Federal Police (AFP), Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), and the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC)—and included officials who worked at different levels within these organisations. Interviews were also conducted with three ministers (all were members of the NSCC in 1999)⁵², other political figures, ministerial staff and two officials formerly of US Pacific Command.⁵³ Two interviewees provided work diaries used during this crisis, which contained valuable information about events and meeting agendas (including notes from 1999 meetings of the NSCC, the Strategic Policy Coordination Group, and Defence working groups).

These interviews represent an important source of information that future researchers may not be able to reproduce; people speaking even five or six years after the event often explained it was becoming harder to recall details. Sadly, it is also inevitable that some participants will pass away before the thirty-year rule for the release of documents is complete.⁵⁴ As a result, these interviews represent a unique source of information about this subject.

Since the interviews needed to concentrate on processes and events, and were narrowly focused in terms of time-span, an investigative style of interview was adopted. This style made the interviewees' stories and ideas the basis of data collection, although the interviewer interjected from time-to-time to maintain the focus on relevant matters. While different from other styles, such as those interested in meanings and frameworks⁵⁵,

⁵² While often called 'NSC' in Australia, this dissertation retains NSCC to differentiate it from the US NSC.

⁵³ While many interviewees agreed to be identified, some were reluctant because the East Timor crisis is still sensitive in Australia, particularly for those who are currently serving as government officials. These interviewees are only identified by an interview number in this dissertation.

⁵⁴ Under the *Archives Act 1983*, most Australian Government documents (including Cabinet papers) are released thirty years after the end of the year in which the papers were written (see NAA, *Fact Sheet 10: Access to records under the Archives Act*, 2006, available <http://www.naa.gov.au>, accessed 17 January 2007). Some documents relating to national security are withheld because they remain sensitive. Cabinet notebooks are among those documents excluded from the 'thirty year rule', and they remain closed for fifty years (see NAA, *Fact Sheet 34 Cabinet Records and Fact Sheet 128 Cabinet Notebooks*, 2006, available <http://www.naa.gov.au>, accessed 2 October 2006).

⁵⁵ HJ Rubin and IS Rubin, *Qualitative Interviewing: The Art of Hearing Data*, 2nd edn, Sage, Thousand Oaks, 2005, pp. 6–7.

investigative techniques are more suited to this study because they obtain explanations of a person's recollections of an issue and allow the interviewer to seek clarification and further detail.

Open-ended questions and informal probing were used 'to facilitate a discussion of issues in a semi structured manner'.⁵⁶ It was important to have a flexible interview guide because each interviewee saw a very different part of the policymaking process, and none saw the entire process. Therefore the early part of the interview usually identified which part of the crisis and which aspects of policymaking that the interviewee could and would talk about. There were times when questions could be more focused, however, especially where interviewees were already on the public record or where they could be used to verify comments by earlier interviewees. The interview guide (Annex A) was cleared by the Australian National University's Ethics Committee.⁵⁷

Overcoming challenges within the methodology

Despite this range of sources, there are still challenges with the methodology that warrant specific treatments to ensure confidence in the findings. Clearly, the full story of Australian policymaking during the East Timor crisis will be incomplete until the Cabinet papers from 1998–99 are declassified and released under the thirty-year rule and after the Cabinet notebooks are made public around 2049.⁵⁸ But while these sources are undoubtedly important, they may not provide a complete account because many relevant documents of the time (such as NSCC minutes) were reportedly very brief and often only contained statements of the decisions made.⁵⁹

Other documents will help complete the picture of the East Timor crisis when (and if) they are released. For instance, the numerous submissions made to Cabinet about East Timor during 1999 will be crucial to understanding how policy and decisions emerged throughout the year. These documents will clearly add authority and detail by unveiling the

⁵⁶ F Devine, 'Qualitative Analysis', in D Marsh and G Stoker (eds), *Theory and Methods in Political Science*, MacMillan, Basingstoke, 1995, p. 138.

⁵⁷ Australian National University Ethics Committee 2005/124, dated 8 June 2005.

⁵⁸ Cabinet notebooks are not transcripts of meetings, but they do contain valuable information about the way debates unfolded and the positions taken by members of Cabinet (I Hamilton, 'Interview with Sir John Bunting', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1983, p. 1/3/35). Sir John Bunting was Secretary to Cabinet from 1959 to 1975.

⁵⁹ Interview with Hugh White, Canberra, 14 April 2005. Professor White was an advisor to Prime Minister Hawke and Defence Minister Kim Beazley from 1985–91, and Deputy Secretary Strategy in Defence from 1995–2000. He acted as Secretary of the Defence Department during August–October 1999.

context of decisions and the options considered. However, many submissions to NSCC during the acute phase of the crisis in September 1999 were made verbally. This suggests detailed written Cabinet submissions might not be available, and make the Cabinet notebooks an essential reference. The public record may never be complete in any case, because some documents are unlikely to be declassified due to their significance to Australia's relationships with Indonesia and the United States—two states that Australia is unlikely to want to offend in the near or even distant future. As a result of the lack of access to Cabinet records, the analysis of policymaking in this dissertation is valuable but must be considered tentative at this time.

Naturalistic forms of data collection such as interviews can create other problems because interviewees can be unreliable: people's memories dim, they confuse important details including the sequence of events, individuals might naturally inflate the significance of aspects with which they were directly involved, and analysis conducted after the fact can result in misleading interpretations of the issues of the day. Some interviewees may want to obscure the record for their own reasons, particularly if the release of certain information might diminish their reputation or worse. Furthermore, interview data can be hard to apply with consistency, and may contain bad analytical seeds that lead to bias and inaccurate conclusions.⁶⁰

There are other considerations for interviewing high-profile or senior people, what Heclo and Wildavsky described as 'elite interviewing'. These include the need for the researcher to reassure ministers and officials 'that they are talking to fellow insiders who will understand what is being said' and establishing mutual trust—which they described as the 'leitmotif of all working relationships'—early in interviews.⁶¹ This trust was pursued by paying careful attention to gaining agreement about how the information would be used, offering options to go 'off the record' at certain points in the discussion, and asking interviewees to review their transcripts.

Despite these shortcomings, participant interviews have considerable advantages over structured or survey-type interviews because the experience of each individual is very different. To draw a basic distinction, the Chief of Defence Force's perspective on a crisis

⁶⁰ CM Judd, ER Smith, and LH Kidder, *Research Methods in Social Relations*, 6th edn, Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Fort Worth, 1991, Chapter 11.

⁶¹ H Heclo and A Wildavsky, *The Private Government of Public Money: Community and Policy inside British Politics*, MacMillan, London, 1974, p. xviii.

will be very different to that of a junior member of DFAT staff, but both have something worthwhile to say about policymaking. Since potential gaps remain, this research into the East Timor crisis needs to be reviewed when more of the official record becomes public, and other participants speak about their experiences.

While these challenges should not be overstated, this dissertation employs three techniques to minimise their effect and promote confidence in the validity of the conclusions. The first method used is triangulation, where multiple (preferably three) sources of information are used to support findings. These sources are usually written works or interviews with people who were present at the events or very closely connected. This leads into the second technique, which relies on interviews with people who played key roles in the Australian Government's response to the East Timor crisis. Interviewing these people now is certain to provide those who examine the official record with additional information on what the participants thought about their role in the crisis. These people's views provide this study with an overall strength that may be difficult to capture in the future. The last technique involved asking some of the interviewees, representing different backgrounds, to review chapter drafts. This technique added detail to the research and helped to ensure that positions or events were not misrepresented.

Structure of the dissertation

This dissertation is divided into two main parts. Part I, which develops characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia, contains three chapters and a summary. Chapter 1 examines the literature on Australian defence and foreign policy to identify the characteristics of the broad area of national security policymaking. Next, Chapter 2 starts the task of focusing these characteristics into context by examining three Australian crises. The analysis continues in Chapter 3, which traces the emergence of modern crisis policymaking from the 1960s through to 1999 under successive Coalition and Labor governments. Part I concludes by identifying and explaining a proposed group of characteristics.

Part II tests these characteristics using the East Timor crisis of 1999. Chapter 4 begins the case study with a description of the crisis from Canberra's viewpoint in four phases:

- From the NSCC meeting of 1 December 1998 through to Indonesia's 27 January 1999 announcement of the ballot;
- From the Australian Government's early responses to that announcement in February through to the Bali summit of 26 April;
- From the May 5 Agreement to deploy United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET) through to the completion of the ballot on 5 September; and
- The acute crisis phase from the declaration of the ballot results on 5 September 1999 until the deployment of INTERFET later that month.

The case is analysed in Chapters 5, 6 and 7 using the Australian Policy Cycle. The first phases, where the policy process is initiated, are analysed in Chapter 5. Next, Chapter 6 examines how policy is brought together through consultation and coordination, before decision-making and the subsequent phases of implementation and evaluation are analysed in Chapter 7. The analysis of each phase finishes with a summary, in lieu of a conclusion to the individual chapters.

The Conclusion identifies the characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia, and highlights the reasons for change and continuity in this system. It also applies these characteristics to discuss implications for Australia's future crisis policymaking system.

Conclusion

This introductory chapter has identified the aim of this dissertation, defined the concept of crisis policymaking and its relationship to national security policymaking, and described the methodology used herein. This methodology is essential because there is no organised body of knowledge about the detailed conduct of national security policymaking in Australia, and the existing theory about crises is mainly concerned with the relationships between the protagonists, rather than the operation of a protagonist's policymaking system. The next chapter seeks to build the basis for the later discussion of crisis by characterising policymaking in its superior field, national security.

PART I: DEVELOPING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISIS POLICYMAKING

Part I of this dissertation develops the characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia. This is achieved by firstly identifying characteristics for the broader field of national security policymaking in Chapter 1. These tentative characteristics are then reviewed in the context of Australia's experience of crisis (Chapter 2) and through the emergence of Australia's modern crisis policymaking system Chapter 3).

The product of this analysis is a group of proposed characteristics for crisis policymaking. This group is reviewed in a summary section to this Part.

TOWARDS CHARACTERISTICS OF AUSTRALIAN NATIONAL SECURITY POLICYMAKING

Despite the extensive literature on Australian defence and foreign policy—some of which is surveyed below—no single body of literature identifies the characteristics of either Australian national security policymaking, or its crisis mode. This chapter uses proximate sources to propose characteristics of national security policymaking, providing a starting point for the subsequent analysis of crisis policymaking.

Chapter 1 begins by identifying the characteristics of Australian policymaking using the Australian Policy Cycle. Next, literature about foreign and defence policy is examined to generate proposals for characteristics to represent national security policymaking. The questions of change and continuity are addressed by concurrently examining whether these characteristics change over time, and whether future change is possible. The product of this chapter is carried forward into Chapters 2 and 3, where actual crises and changes in the Australian system over time are used to develop characteristics for Australia's crisis policymaking system.

Characterising a practical art

Of the many descriptions of policymaking in Australia¹, the Australian Policy Cycle is the most comprehensive.² Although Bridgman and Davis did not identify any general characteristics themselves, it is possible to derive some from their descriptions for each phase of the policy cycle (see Table 1). These characteristics of policymaking are intended to act as a base-line for intermediate analytical steps taken in this chapter.

¹ The Australian policymaking system is often described in generalist political science texts, such as M Laffin, 'Public policy making', in R Smith and L Watson (eds), *Politics in Australia*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1989.

² P Bridgman and G Davis, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004.

Table 1: Characteristics of Australian Policymaking³

Policy Cycle Phase <i>(page ref)</i>	Characteristics
Identify Issues <i>(pp. 34–9)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues come to political attention through competitive agitation from domestic sources such as political parties, interest groups, Parliament and the media. • Issues might be identified to the administrative level by other domestic agents, such as government specialists or the courts. • External sources, such as economic change, foreign state or non-state actors, technology, demographic shifts, or legal change can also identify issues. • Issues enter the political agenda once there is sufficient mass appeal to demand political attention.
Policy Analysis <i>(pp. 47–57)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rational comprehensive analytical method is sought, but it may be accompanied by the extra-rational factors of experience and intuition. • While internal policy experts (including bureaucrats and ministerial staff) may still dominate, ministers increasingly use non-government sources for analysis. • The process is iterative because information is incomplete, people disagree over objectives and parameters shift. • Policy is analysed according to the dominant framework of the policy area.
Policy Instruments <i>(pp. 70–7)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instruments most used in Australia include financial, legal, advocacy and government action. • There are limitations on what the government can do with its policy instruments.
Consultation <i>(p. 78 and pp. 80–2)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens demand a say in policy between elections, and sometimes, consultation is mandatory. • Consultation occurs across a continuum from information to control.
Coordination <i>(p. 104)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments attempt to achieve tolerable compatibility, or at least minimise harmful inconsistencies, across government activities. • Governments seek consistency through structures and routines.
Decision <i>(pp. 106–9)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet is dominant. • Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the room before decisions are taken. • Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy, and recorded decisions.
Implementation <i>(pp. 119–21)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle. • The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes.
Evaluation <i>(pp. 131–3)</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented. • Policy advice is not systemically evaluated.

A number of these general characteristics of Australian policymaking are intuitively transferable to national security. For example, the use of policy experts and the difficulty of implementation are reasonably likely to characterise both the general and specific fields. However, a number of others are not immediately transferable. For example, while testing

³ Ibid.

ideas or allowing the community to comment on policy between elections might be applicable for areas such as social security or education, there are limits on national security consultation when decisions are time-critical and based on highly protected information.⁴ Even the seemingly straight-forward characteristic of Cabinet dominance over decision making is questionable as Cabinet sub-committees and even informal groupings of ministers and officials play major roles in decisions. It is therefore worth reviewing these general characteristics to see how they apply to the specific policy area of national security.

National security policymaking

Defining defence and foreign policymaking

Any consideration of national security as a separate policy area must begin with discussions of defence and foreign policy. This is because the broad concept of national security includes matters such as protection against threats, the promotion of selected values, and participation in agreements and alliances—issues which are generally managed by the structures, approaches and instruments of defence and foreign policy.

While foreign and defence policy overlap, they remain distinct policy areas. Defence policy pertains to the military measures taken to protect national sovereignty and achieve national objectives. The literature on defence policy in Australia is significant, but it tends to focus on internal issues such as defence organisation and equipment acquisition.⁵ However, defence policy has other aspects that attract attention, including threat assessment, national strategy, resource allocation, alliances, overseas basing and the

⁴ Ibid., p. 78. A similar point was made by Jenkins when he separated policy content from policy process in relation to welfare and national defence—see B Jenkins, 'Policy analysis: Models and approaches', in M Hill (ed), *The Policy Process: A Reader*, Harvester Wheatsheaf, Hemel Hempstead, 1993, p. 35. Exceptions may arise from time-to-time, as the later discussion of the Australian Government's 'community consultation' for the 2000 Defence White Paper shows.

⁵ For examples see G Cheeseman and DJ Ball, 'Australian Defence Decision-Making: Actors and Processes,' in DJ Ball and C Downes (eds), *Security and Defence: Pacific and Global Perspectives*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1990; and DE Kennedy, 'The Administration of Defence', in HG Gelber (ed), *Problems of Australian Defence*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1970. Some exceptions, which consider broader aspects of strategy and planning, include A Dupont, *Transformation or Stagnation? Rethinking Australia's Defence*, Working Paper No. 374, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2003; and R Babbage, *Rethinking Australia's Defence*, Queensland University Press, St Lucia, 1980.

employment of military forces.⁶ The overlap between defence and foreign policy is clearest here.

So what is foreign policymaking? Gyngell and Wesley, after noting that many authors choose not to define this field, characterise foreign policymaking as action taken by officials and politicians on behalf of their state on matters ‘directed in whole or in part outside the boundaries of the state’.⁷ In the early stage of the Department of External Affairs (DEA), these actions were mainly concerned with political and security matters, particularly as the world engaged in, and emerged from, the Second World War.⁸ The concerns of foreign policy have broadened since then to encompass a range of interdependent issues including trade, foreign aid, education, international image, quarantine, traveler safety, and defence assistance and operations—where those issues have an external dimension.

Despite its malleable definition, it is possible to identify some main characteristics of foreign policymaking. Gyngell and Wesley, for example, identify four characteristics: congeniality, strong executive influence, less political consensus and professionalism.⁹ Hugh Smith would probably agree with this list while adding secrecy, interrelated issues and the need for immediate reaction.¹⁰ Nancy Viviani offers enduring features of the foreign policymaking environment, where the annual budget, major policy reviews and the management of crises are arenas for competition. Some might say short-term thinking is another characteristic.¹¹ While these are supportable as characteristics, they do not provide

⁶ For example, TB Millar, *Australia's Defence*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1965, focuses on these issues.

⁷ A Gyngell and M Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 21.

⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Submission to the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration*, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 1974, p. 2.

⁹ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 253–54.

¹⁰ H Smith, ‘Foreign Policy and the Political Process’, in FA Mediansky and AC Palfreeman (eds), *In pursuit of national interests: Australian Foreign Policy in the 1990s*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1988, pp. 20–2.

¹¹ The problem of ‘short termism’ has been mentioned as a critical problem for Australian policymaking in general (See D Beveridge, ‘Australia's Future Threat Space: Strategic Risks and Vulnerabilities’, *Security Challenges*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2006, pp. 54–5). This view draws some support from one senior DFAT official, who was quoted as saying ‘Defence looks very much to the long term, looks to contingencies that are not immediately obvious. The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade tends to offer advice about more immediate events’. (Mr J Dauth in Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Legislation Committee, *Consideration of Estimates (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)*, 11 February 1997, p. 256). This statement is supported by the very limited reference to any time-frame beyond 2005 in DFAT's recent White Paper (see Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing the National Interest*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, Chapters 10, 11 and 12).

a broad explanation of policymaking. In some cases, they tend to neglect important sub-processes such as implementation, evaluation and issue identification.

One way to build on this work is to analyse the characteristics of defence and foreign policymaking, using the policy cycle to organise the discussion. This analysis will develop tentative characteristics to represent national security policymaking as a specific public policy field.

Identify Issues

The Identify Issues phase is the nominal start of the Australian Policy Cycle. In this phase, 'issues are selected for attention from the myriad of matters pressed on government'.¹² These issues could be fresh, they could have some sort of track record, or they could arise from the Evaluation stage of the policy cycle. Bridgman and Davis identify four characteristics of this phase:

- Issues come to political attention based on competitive agitation from domestic sources, such as political parties, donors, interest groups, Parliament and the media.
- Issues might be identified to the administrative level by other domestic agents, such as government policy specialists or the courts.
- Issues can be created by the influence of external sources, such as economic change, foreign state or non-state actors, technology, demographic shifts, or legal change.
- Issues enter the political agenda once there is sufficient mass appeal to demand political attention.¹³

This phase is about determining which issues attract government attention, and how responses are framed in the latter phases of the policymaking process.

COMPETITIVE AGITATION AND DOMESTIC ACTORS

In Australia, foreign policy issues may be identified by a range of domestic actors, but the importance of each differs from the order implied by Bridgman and Davis. Similarly, the idea of competitive agitation is more difficult to apply because defence and

¹² Bridgman and Davis, p. 34.

¹³ Ibid., pp. 34–9.

foreign policymaking are not straight-forward examples of pluralist models, as neither DFAT nor Defence's influence is equal outside their formal spheres of responsibility. Nor does defence and foreign policy follow strictly corporatist models because interest groups do not play dominant roles in either.¹⁴ Instead, actors at the centre in the national security executive (the prime minister, his national security ministers and their bureaucracy) and foreign governments have the major bearing on the shape of this and subsequent phases of policymaking.¹⁵

Prime ministers use their authority, access to information and bureaucracy to exert a strong influence over the foreign and defence policy agenda.¹⁶ The major factors that help prime ministers establish this influence—which can result in dominance on occasions—is their leadership of the government, control of the Cabinet agenda and their participation in all major policy decisions. Examples of how dominance is used (within the constraints of electoral acceptability and personal energy) to pursue personal causes and interests include Billy Hughes' deep interest in trade issues and reparations after the First World War; Sir Robert Menzies' interest in Defence organisation; Malcolm Fraser's interest in dismantling apartheid; Bob Hawke's interest in Israel; and Paul Keating's interest in economic engagement with Asia.¹⁷ Given the persistence of the prime minister's position, which is theme that will be returned to throughout this dissertation, it is reasonable to assume this dominance will remain a characteristic of foreign and defence policymaking.

¹⁴ See Laffin (pp. 38–41) for a discussion of these approaches to policymaking.

¹⁵ Greenwood describes this as the 'executive bureaucratic system' consisting of the prime minister, foreign minister and senior officials. See G Greenwood, 'Australian Foreign Policy in Action', in Greenwood and N Harper (eds), *Australia in World Affairs 1961–1965*, FW Cheshire, Melbourne, 1968, p. 23. The idea of a 'core executive' is also similar—see RAW Rhodes and P Dunleavy, *Prime minister, cabinet, and core executive*, St. Martin's Press, New York, 1995; and MJ Smith, *The Core Executive in Britain*, MacMillan Press, Basingstoke, 1999.

¹⁶ J Beaumont, 'Making Australian Foreign Policy, 1941–69', in Beaumont, et al. (eds), *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941–1969*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, p. 11; P Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901–1949*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983, pp. 6–12; Millar, *Australia's Defence*, pp. 93–5; G Evans and B Grant, *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1991, p. 47; G Smith, D Cox and S Burchill, *Australia in the world: an introduction to Australian foreign policy*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1996, pp. 43–4. Further support for prime ministerial dominance comes from A Renouf, *The Frightened Country*, MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1979, p. 25. There are exceptions to this pattern. Edwards notes how Prime Minister Joseph Lyons delegated authority to his external affairs minister (Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 137); while Smith makes a similar observation about the early years of Prime Minister Hawke's tenure (Smith, 'Foreign Policy', p. 25).

¹⁷ See Smith, 'Foreign Policy', pp. 25–6; and G Megalogenis, *The Longest Decade*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2006, Chapter 7. Other factors that promote the prime minister's dominance will be discussed in the Decision phase.

The main national security ministers, especially the foreign minister and defence minister, also have significant assets that make them highly influential in issue identification. This influence starts with their political ‘responsibilities’ to reflect public concerns, and extends to their ability to act on the specialised advice from their bureaucracies. Ministers too may champion issues where they have a strong personal interest, in much the same way as the prime minister might.¹⁸ A minister’s significant responsibilities for routine decision-making, role in day-to-day policy activity, and discretion over some senior appointments also contribute (sometimes indirectly) to their ability to identify issues.

The national security bureaucracy is important to issue identification today, but this was not always the case.¹⁹ Sir Arthur Tange observed that, in the 1950s, Australian ministers tended to take more notice of British and American leaders and official sources than their own bureaucrats. According to him, this changed in the 1970s as Australia improved its intelligence and analytical capacity.²⁰ This allowed the bureaucracy to assert its advantages of subject expertise, access to information and proximity to political leaders to influence policymaking. Now this position has been achieved, it is unlikely to change without some major crisis of confidence between political leaders and their officials.

Other actors tend to have a more haphazard and less direct influence on issue identification for defence and foreign policy.²¹ Parliament’s role could be discussed at many points in the policy cycle—in theory. In reality, its influence is constrained by four factors: the paucity of information provided to it, party discipline that allows the government to conduct most of its foreign policy business with some assurance of its

¹⁸ The effect may not always be positive. One 1951 cable from the British High Commission in Canberra noted how ‘Australian foreign policy, since it became a native product, has been largely governed by the personal predilections of the Minister for External Affairs ... This accounts for the inconsistencies in Australian foreign policy’ (quoted in Beaumont, ‘Making Australian Foreign Policy’, p. 14).

¹⁹ The main national security policy departments are Department of External Affairs (DEA)/Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Department of Defence, Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C)/Prime Minister’s Department (PMD) and the Attorney General’s Department. DEA was renamed Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) in 1971, and renamed again when it was merged with the Department of Trade and the Australian Information Service to become DFAT in 1987. Similarly, DPM&C was known as the PMD until 1971. The titles DFAT and DPM&C will be used in this dissertation unless DEA/DFA or PMD is required for clarity.

²⁰ Tange had earlier described the information flow where Australia’s external relations were conducted between the prime minister and British leaders, while the bureaucratic link was maintained between PMD and Commonwealth Office. According to him, this linkage impeded the flow of information to DEA. See JDB Miller, ‘Transcript of Interview with Sir Arthur Tange, AC, CBE’, National Library of Australia – Oral History Unit, Canberra, 1981, p. 91 and pp. 112–3.

²¹ Cheeseman and Ball, p. 253.

position in the lower house, the ability to manage many foreign policy issues without legislation, and the need to concede to the executive the right to make rapid decisions on day-to-day issues.²² Of course, it is possible for parliamentary committees and individual members to identify issues and conduct the analysis needed to develop policy options, but such activity has little influence.²³ Instead of looking at Parliament's role in this and the early phases, it is (only slightly) more profitable to look at Parliament in the last policy cycle phase, evaluation.

While the media, academia and interests groups—including business, producers, single-issue groups and those interested in particular overseas countries—have a better chance of influencing the defence and foreign policy agenda than the public, their influence remains constrained.²⁴ The most noticeable of this grouping, the media, plays a reflective role where outlets communicate the debate and ultimately select the issues presented to the public, and an input role where they ignite issues through criticism.²⁵ While the media's part in issue identification may be changing as other forms of media (such as blogs and on-line journals) become cheaper and easier to use, these two roles are likely to endure for some time yet. Business and producer lobbies also have an enduring role but they generally tend to bypass public debate and take their concerns directly to the executive and parliamentarians.²⁶ Academics and some issue groups tend to have a foot in both camps; they can seek influence through the media or publish papers directly in the hope of gaining ministerial interest. However, these actors' influence is largely determined by their means of communication with their target audience. The advantage of a mass market gives the media a significant edge, while academics and issues groups must find ways to have their work noticed by policymakers or even the public.

Of course, decision-makers also use these avenues to promote their policy views and create the constituency needed to initiate policy proposals. For instance, then-Minister for Air, Peter Howson, said he used the media and academia to explain the case for the

²² See A Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, London, 1967, p. 31; and Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 24. Evans and Grant have a slightly different view, and they focus on Parliament's strengths in probing and infrequent debate (p. 49).

²³ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 173–178.

²⁴ Watt, p. 298 and pp. 314–15. Edwards also shows how the institutes allowed interested people to meet and sometimes to allow officials to air competing views (Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, pp. 93–7). Bergin credits interests groups with little influence (A Bergin, 'Pressure Groups and Australian Foreign Policy', *Dyason House Papers*, vol. 9, no. 3, 1983, p. 14).

²⁵ Evans and Grant, p. 51.

²⁶ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 182–91; Evans and Grant, p. 50; and Smith, Cox and Burchill, p. 46.

purchase of F-111 aircraft in 1967.²⁷ Other ministers think national security is basically different in this regard. One noted:

... you did not have to create a series of political circumstances to get people to sit up, which you do have to in the other portfolios ... With national security, you can generally go in there and say, 'OK we need to have a second brigade bought up to readiness'— which happened in Timor. You did not have to go out and jazz up the press, and jazz up the others ...²⁸

Despite their relative strengths and weaknesses, all of these additional domestic actors are likely to remain important in national security policy, but their influence will be sporadic and difficult to measure.²⁹

EXTERNAL ACTORS

Foreign governments, and the external environment more generally, tend to be dominant actors in issue identification.³⁰ This was especially so prior to 1942, when Britain had a central—but sometimes contested—role in identifying Australian foreign and defence policy issues.³¹ British dominance was also reinforced by the importance of its official and media sources to the Australian Government and people.³² As a result, Australia tended to see the world through British eyes, especially at a number of crucial times.³³ Six years after the war, the new alliance with the United States became central to Australian thinking. Cheeseman and Ball think this dependence saw Australian national security policy 'abrogated to our principal ally' until the mid-1960s³⁴, but there is now

²⁷ P Howson, *The Life of Politics: The Howson Diaries*, D Aitken (ed), Viking Press, Ringwood, 1984, p. 321.

²⁸ Interview with the Hon John Moore, Sydney, 29 November 2006. Mr Moore was Defence Minister, and a member of NSCC, from 1998–2001.

²⁹ Gyngell and Wesley, p. 190.

³⁰ Smith, Cox and Burchill would disagree, arguing that internal factors shape Australian policy as much as external ones (p. 25 and p. 27). This point has merit, but the limitations of domestic actors regarding foreign policy is discussed later.

³¹ S Encel, *Cabinet Government in Australia*, Melbourne University Press, Parkville, 1962, p. 324. Agreements developed at meetings such as the 1911 Imperial Defence Conference had a strong influence the development of Australian military capacity and plans to employ Australian forces in war. See G McGinley, 'Divergent Paths: problems of command and strategy in Anglo-Australasian naval operations in the Asia-Pacific (August–November 1914)', in D Stevens and J Reeve (eds), *Southern Trident: Strategy, History and the Rise of Australian Naval Power*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2001. This role and its attendant priorities have since become widely accepted, including by Babbage, *Rethinking Australia's Defence*, p. ix.

³² Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats*, p. 67; D Day, *The Politics of War: Australia at War 1939–45 from Churchill to MacArthur*, HarperCollins Publishers, Pymble, 2003, p. 27; and Encel, pp. 322–3.

³³ For example, Watt notes how the British Government was Australia's primary and predominant source of official information during the 1938 Munich Crisis (p. 21).

³⁴ G Cheeseman and DJ Ball, 'Australian Defence Decision-Making: Actors and Processes', in Ball and Downes, p. 250.

significant evidence to show that the Australian Government was attempting to build a more independent policy line, even if alliance considerations were paramount.³⁵

While many issues are shaped by the actions of other governments, non-state actors (such as terrorist groups and transnational companies) and even more amorphous forces (such as globalisation and climate change) also have the ability to create issues. In the 1950s, for instance, the threat of communism was a strong influence on Australia's domestic and international security agenda. Illegal immigration, pandemics and regional terrorist groups have significant effects today, and into the immediate future.

MASS APPEAL

Many authors think the Australian public generally pays little attention to defence and foreign policy outside war and elections.³⁶ As a result, the public generally plays a minor role in issue identification, primarily by supporting issues raised by the media and interest groups, and by identifying the implications of issues and defining the electoral acceptability of policy.³⁷ Another view is that it is the government's responsibility to identify national security issues:

In my time, and I think in Menzies' time, we believed it was the government's duty to work out what the issues were and persuade the public to support us. And I think that's what was done.³⁸

Neither view says that political leaders do not consider domestic issues as they develop foreign policy; nor does it mean that the Australian public is totally uninterested. Both highlight the responsibilities of leadership, based on the advantage that political leaders have in respect to access to relevant information and their perspective on national interests.

³⁵ Edwards provides a balanced description of Australian Government attempts to steer a defence and foreign policy course between the competing positions of two major allies, and a growing recognition of the need to base policy on national interests. See P Edwards (with G Pemberton), *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asia Conflicts 1948–1965*, Commonwealth of Australia/Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1992.

³⁶ ANOP Research Services, 'Public Attitudes to Defence: Report of the 1987 National Study on Community Attitudes', Crows Nest, 1987, p. 5. Others who cite opinion polls and other authors to support this view include H Smith, 'Foreign Policy and the Political Process', pp. 34–66; and Gyngell and Wesley, p. 191. Smith, Cox and Burchill note that foreign policy issues were important in elections during the period 1945–72, but not for the period 1972–96 (p. 35). McAllister thinks public views are less well-formed because 'the issues themselves aren't regularly and publicly debated by political elites.' (I McAllister, *Attitude Matters: Public opinion in Australia towards defence and security*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 2004, p. 10).

³⁷ N Viviani, 'The Official Formulation of Foreign Policy', in Mediansky and Palfreeman, p. 47. Gyngell and Wesley identify three types of public whom pay some degree of attention to the issues, while not being a part of the issue identification process itself (pp. 196–202).

³⁸ Interview with the Rt Hon Malcolm Fraser, Melbourne, 2 July 2007. Mr Fraser was Australia's Prime Minister from 1975–83.

But the consequence is that 'governments are much less constrained by voters' opinions about them when it comes to national security issues'.³⁹

However, it is important to note that information is becoming more pervasive in the community, and this may erode one mode of operation for future governments.⁴⁰ Even without the benefit of new technology, public opinion had influence from time-to-time by creating pressure for change on issues such as immigration, defence preparedness and overseas aid.⁴¹ Recent concern over illegal immigration has also generated significant public pressure, generally in support of the government.⁴² Despite these instances, the cause and effect relationship is not entirely clear, for the sway of public opinion often coincides with the government's preferences. It is also reasonable to point out that public opinion is often presented in other ways, which empowers groups such as the media and lobbies to claim a representative mandate. It is possible to see a challenge to this as political polling becomes a more direct influence on policy positions.

PROPOSED CHARACTERISTICS

Bridgman and Davis's characteristics of issue identification seem broadly applicable to defence and foreign policy. However, there are differences between their pluralist view of issue identification and the more closed influences on national security policy; and questions about the ability of mass appeal to influence government perspectives and agendas. These characteristics have been broadly consistent in the literature, although there are questions about the way new sources of information will change the interaction between society and its government. The proposed characteristics of issue identification for national security policymaking are:

- The prime minister, the national security ministers and their bureaucracy tend to be the dominant internal actors in issue identification and, by extension, problem definition.
- Foreign governments have the ability to place issues on the national security policy agenda when they intend to harm Australian interests, when the

³⁹ See McAllister, p. 10.

⁴⁰ For a discussion of this trend and its implications, see I Marsh, 'Governance in Australia: Emerging Issues and Choices', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 61, no. 2, 2002, p. 4.

⁴¹ Watt, p. 299.

⁴² The influence of public opinion during the Tampa Crisis of 2001 is discussed in D Marr and M Wilkinson, *Dark Victory*, 2nd edn, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, pp. 123, 132, 194 and 234.

interests of Australia's allies and friends are threatened, and when high levels of interdependence mean that threats to others' interests are viewed as threats to Australia.

- Other domestic actors can identify issues for national security policy, but their ability to do so is uneven and constrained by the position and information of the dominant actors.
- Mass appeal plays an uncertain role in issue identification for national security policy.

The first two characteristics have not changed much over the last hundred-or-so years, and without major changes in Australia's political system the national security executive is likely to retain its advantage in issue identification for national security policy. The role of foreign governments has been, and is likely to, remain consistent. This reflects the ability of overseas actors to initiate national security problems and define the subsequent 'problem space'. One emerging change is the increasing importance of non-state or transnational actors, such as terrorist groups, for issue identification. The role of other domestic actors could change over time too, especially if they find the means and will to shape the national security agenda. Similarly, the ability of mass appeal remains uncertain, but once mobilised would unquestionably play a role in shaping the agenda and options for political leaders. At this stage, however, it is best to leave open the judgement about whether this characteristic will change.

Policy Analysis

The second phase of the cycle involves analysis of the policy issue, which is defined by Bridgman and Davis as 'using research and logic to develop options for decision makers'. The Policy Analysis phase has five main characteristics:

- A rational comprehensive analytical method is sought, but it may be accompanied by the extra-rational factors of judgement, experience and intuition.
- The process is iterative because information is incomplete, people disagree over objectives and parameters shift.

- While internal policy experts (including bureaucrats and ministerial staff) may still dominate, ministers increasingly use a range of non-government sources for analysis.
- Policy is analysed according to the dominant framework of the policy area.⁴³

This phase is therefore about the way policymakers define, evaluate and then present alternative courses of action for refinement in the next phases of the policy cycle.

RATIONAL AND COMPREHENSIVE?

Both foreign and defence policy can be characterised as rational, iterative processes influenced by extra-rational factors. At least in theory, Defence uses a structured policymaking process that starts from top-level policy documents such as white papers, and ends with decisions to buy equipment, develop different kinds of combat units or execute military operations.⁴⁴ While this is a neat view, it is highly misleading.

There are concurrent influences working within the formal process, including inter-service rivalry, competition between civilians and uniformed staff and different views about the way to achieve strategic objectives.⁴⁵ Cheeseman and Ball describe the different groups working within the processes as interest groups that conduct analysis through adversarial contest rather than reasoned argument.⁴⁶ These adversaries find it easier to block policy than to create effective policy, which Paul Dibb described as ‘institutional intransigence’.⁴⁷ Changes within Defence over the last fifty years have been designed to minimise the impact of internal competition, increase the range of considerations that guide defence policy, create a logical system for analysis and, lately, enhance ministerial control. The lack of

⁴³ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 47–7.

⁴⁴ The most recent white paper is Department of Defence, *Defence 2000 – Our Future Defence Force*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000. Policy is frequently reviewed through documents such as Department of Defence, *Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update 2007*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2007. Defence’s modern, structured policymaking process is described in Department of Defence, *Strategy Planning Framework Handbook*, Defence Publishing Service, Canberra, 2006.

⁴⁵ H Smith, ‘The Determinants of Defence Policy’, in FA Mediansky (ed), *The Military and Australia’s Defence*, Longman Cheshire, Melbourne, 1979, p. 14; Cheeseman and Ball, p. 263; and D Evans, *A Fatal Rivalry: Australia’s defence at risk*, Macmillan, South Melbourne, 1990, p. 2. For a flavour of the most recent defence debate about strategic objectives compare Dupont, *Transformation or Stagnation?*; with P Dibb, ‘A Reply to the Critics of the Defence of Australia’, in *Essays on Australian Defence*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2006, pp. 83–5.

⁴⁶ Cheeseman and Ball, ‘Australian Defence Decision-Making’, pp. 263–5.

⁴⁷ Cited in Evans, *Fatal Rivalry*, pp. 19–20.

success in achieving this is best illustrated by the frequent changes to the structures and processes for providing capability advice within Defence.⁴⁸

Despite being a smaller department, analysis in DFAT is also hierarchical and defined by institutional roles that determine authority and responsibility.⁴⁹ Others have a different view, emphasizing how a small and agile department brings key people together (often with the minister) to analyse policy.⁵⁰ It is also worth noting the importance of individuals, particularly the ministers and secretaries who will use various means, including ideological precepts, to filter and analyse issues.⁵¹

ITERATIVE AND CLOSED

The iterative nature of defence policy can be inferred from Defence's committee structure. In highly ordered processes, individual submissions are drafted and modified as the proposal moves up the decision-tree. Ball claims this process leads to major policy documents, which are supposed to provide the underlying rationale for policy choices, being politically motivated or influenced. This results in alterations between iterations that can be explained in terms of the 'changing power/political relations between many of the senior defence planners and decision-makers'.⁵²

The flow of work also contributes to the iterative nature of policy analysis, particularly where new issues emerge and influence an existing problem.⁵³ This can be seen in the way senior officials frequently work on more than one policy issue at a time, and in the way developments in related areas force re-assessments to other issues. For example, changes in the internal or domestic environment can make yesterday's good idea look unsound, or change may offer opportunity. Given the human aspect of policymaking and

⁴⁸ For a brief history of these changes, see Capability Development Executive, 'A Potted History of Defence Capability Development', Department of Defence, Canberra, 2007, available <http://www.defence.gov.au>, accessed 28 January 2007).

⁴⁹ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 42–6.

⁵⁰ For example, see G Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004, p. 74–5.

⁵¹ Known predispositions, sometimes described as 'ideology', can influence policy analysis by setting limits for what will probably be acceptable by the minister or Cabinet. See Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, (p. 182), for his discussion of Sir John Burton, Permanent Head of External Affairs 1947–50.

⁵² DJ Ball, *The Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, Reference Paper No. 183, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 1991, p. 11.

⁵³ Gyngell and Wesley, p. 39.

the potential for conflict between different groups, the iterative nature of policymaking is likely to persist.⁵⁴

Analysis within defence policy has been closed and a domain of insiders since Federation⁵⁵, but there has been room for three types of outside experts: ministerial consultants (such as Sue Hamilton, Paul Dibb, and Malcolm McIntosh)⁵⁶, consultants from the private sector⁵⁷, and ministerial staff. This last group is becoming especially important as they adopt broader roles.⁵⁸ At other times, external advice might be needed to break internal deadlocks on policy, provide fresh ideas (or perhaps just ideas acceptable to ministers), and offer ministers independent sources of advice.⁵⁹ The reliance on expert advice is an increasing trend within national security policymaking,⁶⁰ with one recent review explicitly calling for improving the availability of external advice for the intelligence community.⁶¹ Given the history and likelihood that ministers will desire flexibility in their sources of advice, there is some room (but not much) for the national security advice system to be less closed in the future.

⁵⁴ Ball, *Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, p. 46.

⁵⁵ For critiques of the dominance of inside expertise, see BD Beddie, 'Some Internal Political Problems', in J Wilkes (ed), *Australia's Defence and Foreign Policy*, Angus and Robertson, Sydney, 1964; and Bruce Haigh, *Pillars of Fear*, Otford Press, Otford, 2001.

⁵⁶ Professor Sue Hamilton reviewed service families' needs in 1986; Professor Paul Dibb reviewed Defence capabilities and strategy in 1986; and Dr Malcolm McIntosh reviewed Defence management and financial processes in 1997. For commentary, see Cheeseman and Ball, p. 255; and Evans, *Fatal Rivalry*, pp. 68–70. The Secretary of DPM&C used a similar method to obtain 'outside' perspectives on Defence acquisition processes (see M Kinnaird, *Defence Procurement Review 2003*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, available <http://www.defence.gov.au>, accessed 27 January 2007).

⁵⁷ H Dent, 'Consultants and the Public Service', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 61, no. 1, 2002, p. 112, mentions the use of public consultants in Defence. The author has worked with consultants and has been employed as a consultant on various aspects of defence policy analysis.

⁵⁸ M Maley, 'The Growing Role of Australian Ministerial Advisers', *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, no. 110, 2003. See also Chapter 3.

⁵⁹ Ball, *Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, p. 33. WL Morrison, Australian defence minister from 1974–75 addressed the importance of providing a minister with political advice about departmental proposals (see WL Morrison, 'The Role of the Minister in the Making of Australian Defence Policy Since the Re-organisation of the Department of Defence', in R O'Neill (ed), *The defence of Australia – fundamental new aspects*, Australian National University, Canberra, 1977, pp. 80–2).

⁶⁰ This trend is displayed in Defence, where expenditure on consultant expenses rose from A\$5.9m in 2000–1 to A\$47.3m in 2006–07 (Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2001–02*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 268; and Department of Defence, *Annual Report 2006–07*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2007, p. 261). Conversely, DFAT spent less on consultants over the same period, falling \$1.5m to A\$3m (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2000–2001*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 12 November 2007; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2006–2007*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2007, p. 327).

⁶¹ P Flood, *Report of the Inquiry into Australian Intelligence Agencies*, Australian Government, Canberra, 2004, p. 91.

DOMINANT FRAMEWORKS

It is difficult to determine whether a dominant framework or an ‘official mind’ exists in either defence or foreign policymaking. Beaumont argues against the existence of one in foreign policy, but nevertheless describes a transition from the ‘cold war liberalism’ of the 1950s to the ‘cold war mentality’ of the 1960s.⁶² Gyngell and Wesley note how the world view of DFAT officers strongly follows the logic of realism, but many officers hold liberal conceptions about international cooperation and the role of values.⁶³ The realist view also dominates Defence, but this does not represent a shared official mind with foreign policymakers. Significant differences on substantive issues and a marked difference in self-image between the departments prevent such a convergence.⁶⁴ According to Tange, one reason was Defence’s inability to acknowledge defence as an aspect of foreign policy.⁶⁵

Clear, and different, concepts also guide thinking in defence and foreign policy. Brabin-Smith describes a group of major concepts that played a dominant role in defence thought. This ‘heartland’ was based on the concepts of self-reliance, levels of conflict and warning time, the limitation of Australia’s military resources, and a regional focus for operations. These were supported by the US alliance, the importance of Indonesia, and the relationship with New Zealand.⁶⁶ While DFAT officers display some coherence in their world views⁶⁷, Wesley and Warren identify at least three currents of foreign policy thought in traditionalism, seclusionism and internationalism. They argue such currents inhibit a unified view of Australian foreign policy.⁶⁸ Indeed, these differences cause some friction between the two departments, particularly in the way Defence members tend to view

⁶² Beaumont, ‘Making Australian Foreign Policy’, p. 9. Tange supports this view when he notes that DEA officials ‘were by no means cold warriors’ and held positions such as support (or sympathy) for the Non-Aligned Movement. See Sir Arthur Tange, ‘Recordings of a Personal Narrative’, in *A supplement to the 1981 Interview with Professor JDB Miller*, National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1989, p. 36.

⁶³ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 74–6.

⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 80. Waters describes the main policy conflicts between Defence and DEA after 1945 (such as differing views of the United Nations and the sources of threat to Australia) and the reluctance to share classified information (C Waters, ‘The Great Debates: H.V. Evatt and the Department of External Affairs’, in Beaumont, p. 56).

⁶⁵ Tange, ‘Personal Narrative (1989)’, pp. 25–6.

⁶⁶ R Brabin-Smith, *The Heartland of Australia’s Defence Policies*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Working Paper 396, Canberra, 2005, p. 1. Conversely, Gyngell and Wesley cannot identify a ‘distinct strategic policy culture in [Defence]’ (p. 80).

⁶⁷ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 73–7.

⁶⁸ See M Wesley and T Warren, ‘Wild Colonial Ploys? Currents of Thought in Australian Foreign Policy’, *Australian Journal of Political Science*, vol. 35, no. 1, 2000, pp. 13–19.

themselves as ‘warriors’ and see DFAT officers as ‘wimps’.⁶⁹ Tange also notes how Defence officials often think foreign affairs advisers are ‘sometimes distracted from international action best suiting Australia’s enduring security interests by more ephemeral issues’.⁷⁰ These differences seem to ensure attitudes that divide defence and foreign policy will be stronger than those that unite.⁷¹

There are strongly held opinions that ministerial views—and not departmental—dominate the analytical framework in the Westminster system.⁷² For instance, Porter notes how assumptions shared by ministers about Chinese communism and alliance relationships shaped Australia’s path to Vietnam. These assumptions made further analysis into the causes of the Vietnamese conflict unnecessary, which made bureaucratic opinions less influential in policy.⁷³

Bipartisan agreement may contribute to a dominant framework, but even this assumption of recent Australian political discourse is challenged today. Of course, there have been significant political disagreements over security issues across time, including those favouring imperialist over nationalist preferences⁷⁴, multilateral approaches to security issues⁷⁵, over whether Britain or the United States should be Australia’s principal ally, and eventual disagreement over the conflict in Vietnam. Differences have also emerged more recently, particularly over the ongoing Iraq War.⁷⁶ But these differences have been ameliorated since the 1970s by the dominance of the Liberal and National/Country Party Coalition and the Australian Labor Party (ALP). This has seen

⁶⁹ Gyngell and Wesley, p. 80.

⁷⁰ Sir Arthur Tange, *Defence Policy Administration and Organisation: Selected Lectures 1971–1986*, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1992, p. 75.

⁷¹ For other examples over time, see Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 53–66 on the immediate post-1945 period; D Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 2000, pp. 316–19, for difficulties in the mid-1950s.

⁷² Evans and Grant, p. 48; R Trood, ‘Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy’, in FA Mediansky (ed), *Australian Foreign Policy into the New Millennium*, MacMillan Education Australia, South Melbourne, 1997, p. 47.

⁷³ R Porter, *Paul Hasluck: A Political Biography*, University of Western Australia Press, Nedlands, 1993, pp. 278–80.

⁷⁴ H Smith, ‘Politics of foreign policy’, in Mediansky, *Australian Foreign Policy*, p. 13.

⁷⁵ HV Evatt, the leader of the opposition, argued strongly for greater UN involvement in Southeast Asia as the Australian Government focused on US proposals for intervention in Vietnam in 1954 (see ‘Review of Geneva Talks Proposals’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 8 April 1954, p. 5).

⁷⁶ P Edwards, ‘History and Foreign Policy’, in Mediansky (ed), *Australian Foreign Policy*, pp. 11–12; H Smith, ‘Politics of foreign policy’, p. 19; and Gyngell and Wesley, p. 23. Hugh Smith also notes how both sides are likely to claim they are bipartisan, whereas their opponents are not (Smith, ‘Foreign Policy’, p. 26). Some question whether Australian foreign policy remains bipartisan today (for example, see C Ungerer, ‘Issues in Australian Foreign Policy’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 50, no. 4, 2004, p. 573).

Australian positions on national security remain relatively stable, with the continuity being underwritten by an agreed set of assumptions about Australia's regional security environment⁷⁷, a creed that holds national security above politics, and a tendency for the major parties to seek the middle ground.⁷⁸ Bipartisanship may reduce the room for debate, but it is also clear that consensus is perishable.

PROPOSED CHARACTERISTICS

The characteristics of the Policy Analysis phase of the Australian Policy Cycle look robust when viewed through the lens of national security policymaking, although slight modifications are needed:

- Departments are structured to adopt rational comprehensive approaches to analysis, but this is modified in practice by extra-rational influences such as group loyalty and identity, power relations, competition, and appeals to professional judgement.
- Policy issues are rarely analysed as individual, discrete problems, and the nature of competition between issues and interests, and the consequent influence on the issue at hand, makes analysis iterative.
- Internal policy experts (insiders) dominate, but external sources of analysis are available. Where external sources are used, these tend to be former insiders or consultants sympathetic to the government of the day.
- The existence of a dominant framework is contestable and its influence can be difficult to identify. No dominant framework links defence and foreign policy.

The majority of these characteristics have been consistent over time, particularly the approaches to analysis and its iterative nature. However, change has been experienced in the dominant framework—but just what constitutes the framework remains an open question. Perhaps the direction of change could be from separate foreign and defence frameworks to an inclusive national security one. The broader range of internal policy experts, which now includes ministerial advisers and consultants, has also occurred and further change is conceivable.

⁷⁷ G Fry, 'Australia's Regional Security Doctrine: Old Assumptions, New Challenges', in G Fry (ed), *Australia's Regional Security*, Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1991, pp. 9–10.

⁷⁸ Smith, 'Politics of foreign policy', p. 18; and Gyngell and Wesley, p. 23 and 256.

Policy Instruments

The third phase involves developing and assigning means, called policy instruments, to achieve the government's ends. The characteristics of this phase are:

- The instruments most used in Australia include financial, legal, advocacy, and government action; and
- There are limitations upon what the government can do with its policy instruments.⁷⁹

This phase is about identifying what means a government may apply to advance a given policy objective, and how those means may be used.

MAIN INSTRUMENTS

While diplomacy and military force have been considered the main instruments of Australia's national security policy, other instruments—such as international law, foreign aid, information, and social and economic levers—have also become important. Together, these represent a close match with those identified by Bridgman and Davis, and reflect a standard inventory of instruments available to most governments.

As a policy instrument, diplomats advise and implement policy as they convince others to accept the government's position. This includes traditional state-to-state diplomacy and public diplomacy to influence domestic opinion in the target population.⁸⁰ Diplomacy may involve preferences for bilateral engagement at times, or it may involve strategies of coalition-building and multilateral action.⁸¹ Regardless of the means, a high degree of individual competence is expected among diplomats, who continue to develop their influence through professionalism and the value ascribed to their mission.⁸² However, as Sir Garfield Barwick noted, diplomacy does not stand alone: 'If you don't back up your diplomacy with some [military] show, then your diplomacy is always weak'.⁸³

The primary reason for maintaining military forces is to apply lethal force against the state's enemies. But the ways to implement defence policy are more subtle and varied. As

⁷⁹ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 70–7.

⁸⁰ Evans and Grant, pp. 67–72.

⁸¹ Smith, Cox and Burchill, Chapter 5.

⁸² Viviani, 'Official Formulation', p. 49; and Beaumont, 'Making Australian Foreign Policy', p. 17.

⁸³ JDB Miller, 'Transcript of Interview with Sir Garfield Barwick', TRC 499/1-4, National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1988, p. 63.

the Royal Australian Navy notes, '[naval] forces possess considerable utility in a wide range of situations that span not only the spectrum of conflict, but also much peaceful human activity'.⁸⁴ This view sees military force as a flexible instrument that can contribute to a range of different operations, including disaster relief, border patrols and combat. Gyngell and Wesley also acknowledge the contribution of defence forces to other aspects of foreign policy, such as alliances, arms control and capacity building for neighbours.⁸⁵ While ultimately flexible, defence forces are not always seen as the best instrument to achieve policy outcomes.

SITUATIONAL UTILITY

Instruments can be useful at different times. For example, economic instruments such as foreign aid were used to introduce post-colonial Asia to Australia through the Colombo Plan, while international law and agreements have been used to advance human rights.⁸⁶ Australia has used military instruments under a wide variety of circumstances in support of allies and to promote stability in the Southwest Pacific, showing utility on humanitarian and peacekeeping missions beyond their destructive or occupying power.⁸⁷ However, no instruments have universal utility; what might be suitable for one situation can be disadvantageous for others. Military force may be useful in some operations where foreign governments have lost control (such as Solomon Islands in 2003), while at other times military intervention can increase violence (as was the anticipated result of an Australian intervention into Fiji after the 1987 coup).

Instruments are rarely employed in isolation, and better strategies employ more than one at a time. Military force may therefore be used in concert with diplomacy or alliance partners as a means of convincing others to accept one's will, while 'soft' instruments such as economic inducements, education, and public diplomacy may be sufficient at other times. Combining instruments and creating consistent plans has not been an easy task. An adventurous Australian attempt to bring non-military elements of national power together

⁸⁴ Royal Australian Navy, *Australian Maritime Doctrine*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000, p. 55.

⁸⁵ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 80–1.

⁸⁶ Evans and Grant, pp.144–51.

⁸⁷ See Department of Defence, *Australian Defence Doctrine Publication—1, Foundations of Australian Military Doctrine*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, pp. 2-10 to 2-11.

to fight Asian communism in the 1950s faltered because officials could not imagine different ways to combine the available instruments.⁸⁸

PROPOSED CHARACTERISTICS

This view of Australia's policy instruments refines the initial list of characteristics:

- The instruments most used by the Australian Government in national security policy are diplomacy, alliances, international law, military force, foreign aid, information, and economic and social levers.
- The utility of national security policy instruments is highly situational.

While the first characteristic has been relatively enduring, this could change as the conception of national security broadens, and new thinking emerges about the application of national power.⁸⁹ Instruments used rarely or tentatively in the past (such as education and information) could become important national security policy tools in the future. If this is the case, then the second characteristic is likely to be enduring because the utility of each instrument will be even more situational.

Consultation

The Consultation phase of the Australian Policy Cycle involves testing policy with a wider range of stakeholders. The phase has two characteristics:

- Citizens demand a say in policy between elections, and sometimes consultation is mandatory; and
- Consultation occurs across a continuum from information to control.⁹⁰

SECRETIVE CONSULTATION

The characteristics of consultation in foreign and defence policy are very different to those of domestic policy. Instead of reaching out to citizens, consultation in defence and foreign policy generally occurs with interlocutors overseas. This consultation is often opaque, a condition usually desired by both parties. Camilleri sums up this attitude by

⁸⁸ A case made in C Waters, 'A failure of imagination: R.G. Casey and Australian plans for counter-subversion in Asia, 1954–1956', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999.

⁸⁹ D Connery, 'Effects-Based Approaches and Australia's Security: Headed for the "Too Hard Basket"?' *Security Challenges*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2006.

⁹⁰ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 78 and pp. 80–2.

observing that foreign policy is highly secretive.⁹¹ Millar goes further by arguing that ‘no Australian Government has taken the view that foreign policy is a subject on which the public should be well informed’.⁹² This does not mean that all politicians avoid informing the public about foreign policy, but it became increasingly common in the 1960s for major decisions to be announced after a closed policymaking process.⁹³ There is constant pressure regarding secrecy and, although breeches occur, this characteristic appears durable.⁹⁴

There will be exceptions. Governments may use the media to explore how their policies might be received, make ‘domestic consumption’ statements or have fuller discussions about issues at specific times such as elections. Watt, for one, identifies efforts by foreign ministers to explain policy and influence public opinion.⁹⁵ Watt noted, however, an increasing trend towards a more secretive approach by Menzies and his later foreign ministers, such as Sir Paul Hasluck.

A CONSULTATION CONTINUUM

Bridgman and Davis present a continuum of government consultation spanning information (the minimum where people are simply told of decisions), through increasing interaction between government and stakeholders, to control where governments allow citizens to make decisions through referenda.⁹⁶ While defence and foreign policymaking clearly differs from this model, it is possible to identify a range of consultative activities

⁹¹ JA Camilleri, *An Introduction to Australian Foreign Policy*, Jackaranda Press, Milton, 1973, p. v.

⁹² TB Millar, *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations Since 1788*, Australian National University Press, Botany, 1991, p. 2.

⁹³ Watt (p. 299) noted an absence of consultation as the government committed troops to Borneo and Vietnam in the mid-1960s, even as the power of the media and popular opinion was increasing. The description of a closed process is supported by Babbage, *Rethinking Australia's Defence*, p. xvii; Cheeseman and Ball, p. 250; Ball, *Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, p. 6; and G Pemberton, ‘An Imperial Imagination: Explaining the Post-1945 Foreign Policy of Robert Gordon Menzies’, in F Cain (ed), *Menzies in Peace and War*, Allen and Unwin/Australian Defence Studies Centre, St Leonards, 1997, p. 168–70.

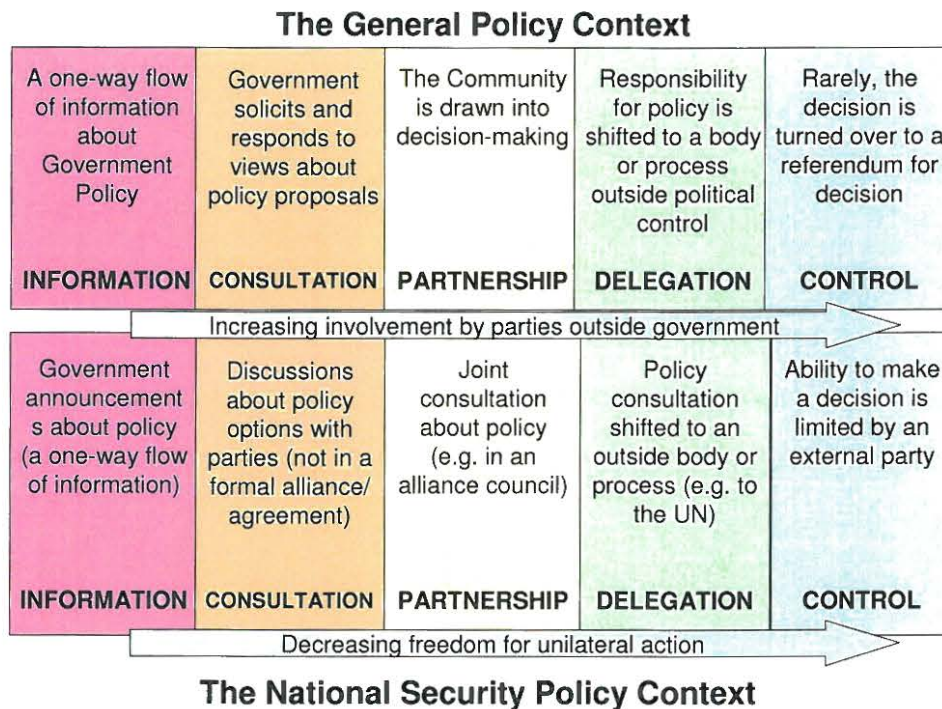
⁹⁴ Gyngell and Wesley (p. 256) observed how DFAT were obliged to explain how travel warnings are developed after the second Bali Bombing in 2003. See also Cheeseman and Ball, pp. 253–4. For a case-study of the problems of secrecy, see R Pitty, ‘Way Behind in Following the USA over China: The Lack of any Liberal Tradition in Australian Foreign Policy, 1970–72’, *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 51, no. 3, 2005.

⁹⁵ Watt, pp. 300–2.

⁹⁶ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 80–2.

that governments undertake when making national security policy.⁹⁷ The original model, and the refinement for national security policymaking, is shown in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3: The Consultation Continuum⁹⁸



The information mode is most commonly used in Australia for defence and foreign policy. As the earlier section on issue identification notes, governments often announce defence or foreign policy decisions after the fact, and sometimes after the event has occurred.⁹⁹ The second phase of the continuum, consultation with the domestic audience, is also not unknown. As mentioned above, it was used during the process to develop the 2000 Defence white paper.¹⁰⁰ Despite the community involvement, Cheeseman and Smith thought ‘there is little evidence that the consultation process will have anything other than a marginal effect ... what the [consultation] did was to garner public support for policies

⁹⁷ For example, Defence used a public consultation during the 2000 Defence White Paper process (A Peacock (Chairman), *Australian Perspectives on Defence: Report of the Community Consultation Team September 2000*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 2000).

⁹⁸ Adapted from Bridgman and Davis, pp. 82–7.

⁹⁹ For a recent example, see the discussion about the 1995 security agreement with Indonesia in R Pitty, ‘Strategic Engagement’, in P Edwards and D Goldsworthy (eds), *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Canberra, 2003, pp. 74–6.

¹⁰⁰ G Cheeseman and H Smith, ‘Public consultation or political choreography? The Howard Government’s quest for community views on defence policy’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 55, no. 1, 2001, p. 85 and p. 97.

already in train'.¹⁰¹ While that may represent the end of domestic national security consultation, it is possible to see another line of consultation occurring internationally.

Australia consistently consults with close allies, and other relevant parties, before committing to a policy position. For example, the Cambodian peace negotiations¹⁰² and External Affairs Minister Sir Percy Spender's efforts to create a security framework for Australia in the early 1950s demonstrated these efforts.¹⁰³ Mandatory consultation with other governments has also been written into two of Australia's security treaties.¹⁰⁴

Partnership is another option for consultation with close allies. Australia's agreement with Britain and New Zealand in 1949 to create the Australia, New Zealand and Malayan Area (ANZAM), for example, included close partnership arrangements for joint intelligence assessments and military plans.¹⁰⁵ Evidence of partnership can also be found in the arrangements for managing the Australia–US Joint Defence Facilities in Australia.¹⁰⁶ However, partnership cannot be taken too far as not all partners are equal and decision-making remains, in most cases, a sovereign prerogative.

Delegation can be seen when Australia consults others through multinational fora such as the United Nations. Multilateralism has a strong history in Australia, to the point where some place multilateral forums at the centre of Australia's approach to diplomacy.¹⁰⁷ The last option, control, can also be seen in Australia's historical experience. Australia's decision to go to war in 1914 was not made suddenly; earlier Imperial Defence Conferences determined the Australian Government's actions when the Empire was threatened.¹⁰⁸ Later problems throughout the war, such as manpower issues and the British decision to evacuate

¹⁰¹ Ibid., p. 98.

¹⁰² See Evans and Grant, pp. 214–18 and Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 90–1.

¹⁰³ D Lowe, 'Percy Spender, Minister and Ambassador', in Beaumont, p. 91.

¹⁰⁴ For examples, see Department of External Affairs, 'Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America (ANZUS)', Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1951, Article III; and (the now abrogated) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Agreement with Indonesia on Maintaining Security', Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1995, Article 2.

¹⁰⁵ This agreement was not made public at the time—see Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 61–2 and p. 164.

¹⁰⁶ See Commonwealth of Australia, 'Exchange of Notes, done at Canberra on 4 June 1998, constituting an Agreement between the Government of Australia and the Government of the United States of America to further extend in force the Agreement relating to the Establishment of a Joint Defence Facility at Pine Gap of 9 December 1966, as amended', (available <http://www.austlii.edu.au>, accessed 20 December 2006). Working arrangements and modes for setting agreed priorities are discussed in Desmond Ball's evidence to Joint Standing Committee on Treaties, 'Pine Gap', Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 9 August 1999, pp. 3–4.

¹⁰⁷ See Evans and Grant, pp. 61–4; and Smith, Cox, and Burchill, p. 110.

¹⁰⁸ EM Andrews, *The Anzac illusion: Anglo-Australian relations during World War 1*, Cambridge University Press, Melbourne, 1993, pp. 24–30.

Gallipoli, were also marked by limited consultation with the British Government. This level of control remained until the Imperial War Cabinet was established in March 1917, which slightly increased Australia's involvement in decision-making about the war.¹⁰⁹ Another example of control can be seen in the recognition of China, when the Australian Government was surprised by US actions in 1972.¹¹⁰

PROPOSED CHARACTERISTICS

The Consultation phase for national security policy contains some major differences from that described by Bridgman and Davis. The proposed characteristics are:

- A one-way passage of information from government to the public is the option generally used with domestic audiences. Consultation may be used on rare occasions.
- All options are used with overseas interlocutors, primarily other governments and major international organisations, with information, consultation, partnership and delegation being common.
- Much consultation occurs in secret.

These characteristics have been consistent within national security policy. It is quite conceivable that a future Australian Government would conduct another consultation process around a security-related white paper, but the prospects for sudden and increased levels of consultation are limited. One possibility is that increased transparency may be forced on governments by the ever-increasing flow of information in the public domain. However, major change would probably require greater political openness, a shift in attitudes about the classification of national security information, or dramatic alterations to the freedom of information laws.¹¹¹ Foreign governments, and indeed the Australian Government, will continue to value discretion and opacity in their dealings with others on national security issues.

¹⁰⁹ Prime Minister Hughes' attendance at the British Cabinet and Imperial War Cabinet provided one way for Australia to influence British decision-making. See Encel, pp. 327–28; and Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 35 and pp. 42–6.

¹¹⁰ See Pitty, 'Way Behind', especially pp. 441–2 and p. 449.

¹¹¹ At present, the *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Commonwealth)*, s33 allows the Australian Government to withhold documents that would 'affect national security, defence or international relations' (Commonwealth of Australia, *Freedom of Information Act 1982 (Commonwealth)*, available <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>, accessed 12 April 2007).

Coordination

The Policy Analysis phase identified instances where different proposals created competitive tensions among policy actors. But not all competition among actors is harmful. Indeed, debate between competing ideas during the Policy Analysis phase can lead to better policy and a higher degree of acceptance among stakeholders. Yet once preferred options are identified (and, ultimately, decisions are made), harmful competition undermines policy. As a result, a coordination phase is included in the Australian Policy Cycle. This phase is generally characterised by:

- Governments attempt to achieve tolerable compatibility, or at least minimise harmful inconsistencies, across government activities.
- Governments search for consistency through structures and routines.¹¹²

ACHIEVING TOLERABLE COMPATIBILITY

There are two schools of thought about how tolerable compatibility is achieved in foreign and defence policy, with the use of power being the main point of difference. The first considers foreign policymaking as an arena of bureaucratic politics where interested departments compete over resources, influence and jurisdiction.¹¹³ Descriptions of bureaucratic politics call upon an extensive body of thought, primarily based on literature about US politics, which relies on structural determinism and an indivisible view of power to define relationships and decision-making. Policy made under competitive conditions is likely to be influenced by compromise as the main participants bargain to get the best deal for their organisation.¹¹⁴ It also sees salvation from this competition in structural terms,

¹¹² Bridgman and Davis, pp. 93–7. See also G Davis, *A Government of Routines: Executive Coordination in an Australian State*, Centre for Australian Public Sector Management/MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1995.

¹¹³ Proponents of the bureaucratic politics view in Australian defence and foreign policymaking include Trood, 'Bureaucratic politics'; Viviani, 'Official Formulation'; Waters, 'The Great Debates', pp. 54–8; G Hawker, RFI Smith, and P Weller, *Politics and Policy in Australia*, Queensland University Press, St Lucia, 1979, Chapter 7; Smith, Cox, and Burchill, p. 45; and Ball, *Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, p. 46.

¹¹⁴ DA Welch, 'The Organizational Process and Bureaucratic Politics Paradigms: Retrospect and Prospect', *International Security*, vol. 17, no. 2, 1992, p. 128. The literature on bureaucratic politics is extensive. For examples, see GT Allison, *Essence of Decision: Explaining the Cuban Missile Crisis*, 1st edn, Harper Collins, 1971; MH Halperin, *Bureaucratic politics and foreign policy*, The Brookings Institution, Washington, 1974; and U Rosenthal, P 't Hart, and A Kouzmin, 'The Bureau-Politics of Crisis Management', *Public Administration*, vol. 69, no. 2, 1991. For an early challenge to bureaucratic politics, see DJ Ball, 'The Blind Men and the Elephant: A Critique of Bureaucratic Politics Theory', *Australian Outlook*, vol. 28, no. 1, 1974.

whereby new coordinating committees or bodies are established to bring different areas together and ameliorate conflict.¹¹⁵

Coordination under conditions of bureaucratic politics is therefore about dominating other departments and having one's view prevail.¹¹⁶ In this view, DFAT's role has been constantly challenged by Defence, DPM&C, Trade, and sometimes Immigration.¹¹⁷ Within Defence, bureaucratic politics results from three rivalries: among the uniformed services, among uniformed officers and civilians, and among Defence and other departments, particularly DFAT.¹¹⁸ Despite this, efforts to improve interdepartmental coordination included the creation of a Defence Liaison Branch within DEA.¹¹⁹ Attempts to improve interdepartmental coordination through committees were also tried, but these proved unsatisfactory if agencies adopted institutional positions or sought consensus.¹²⁰

The second school describes Australian foreign policymaking as highly collegial. In this view, Australian policymaking is consensual rather than conflictual and actors play complementary roles, with most policy work involving ongoing issues rather than new decisions or initiatives. Actors therefore exercise influence within overlapping policy processes, rather than seeking to dominate one particular argument at a time. It also recognises the authority of expertise, and each area's functional responsibilities.¹²¹

¹¹⁵ An example of this thinking is seen in a memo explaining how the Joint Staff within Defence and DEA's Defence Liaison Branch were 'the key(s) to cooperation' within Defence and between departments (see NAA A1945, CS 134/7/1/ Part 1, J King Minute to Mr Campbell, 'Coordination of Military and Civil Branches of Government', c. May 1966).

¹¹⁶ This is often described as 'defending the departmental line,' ensuring that agreed policy preferences or responsibilities are protected. See M Painter and B Carey, *Politics Between Departments: The fragmentation of executive control in Australian government*, University of Queensland Press, Brisbane 1979, p. 103.

¹¹⁷ Edwards emphasises this point as he charts the emergence of the specialised foreign policy bureaucracy (see Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 188 and p. 191). See also Waters, pp. 55–6; and Pemberton, 'An Imperial Imagination', p. 161. DJ Ball and D Horner, *Breaking the Codes: Australia's KGB Network*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1998, pp. 153–5; and Horner, *Defence Supremo*, p. 193–4, reminds us that the original challenge to leadership in foreign policy came from DEA to Defence. Conversely, Gyngell and Wesley think Defence has relatively little influence over foreign policy (p. 80).

¹¹⁸ See Babbage, *Rethinking Australia's Defence*, pp. 125–37; Defence Review Committee, *The Higher Defence Organisation in Australia (the Utz Review)*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1982, pp. 42–6; and Cheeseman and Ball, p. 265 for views on bureaucratic politics and conflict within Defence. The lack of trust between DEA and Defence was virulent when DEA officers came under suspicion for leaking classified information to the Soviets in 1944 and were considered as 'left-wing' (Tange, 'Personal Narrative', p. 25). Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 108, also notes the lack of coordination between EA and PMD at the same time.

¹¹⁹ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Submission to the Royal Commission on Australian Government Administration*, Department of Foreign Affairs, Canberra, 1974, p. 20.

¹²⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Submission*, p. 16.

¹²¹ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 40–2 and p. 253.

Consensual coordination is assisted by the institutional structure of rules, norms, communication patterns and procedures.¹²² Hierarchy and responsibility then determines who can act (either in institutional or individual terms), who issues direction, and ultimately who is accountable. Coordination then proceeds through established modes of communication. These modes serve to guide action (by providing shorthand descriptions of the preferred action or outcome), by determining who is and who is not involved, and who has influence over the process.¹²³

This explanation can be used to account for collaboration between officials and political leaders, such as that between Dr HV Evatt and his diplomats, and between the 'official family' of senior bureaucrats who worked closely during the Second World War and after.¹²⁴ There is also a significant amount of coordination among ministerial staff, between ministers, and between the prime minister and his senior ministers.¹²⁵

Other explanations also support the view of a consensual policymaking process in Australia. The first is the influence of political control over the contemporary bureaucracy, which in the case of the Howard Government was facilitated by its long tenure, discipline, 'network of loyalists' and centralisation of bureaucratic control.¹²⁶ This trend towards what Paul Kelly describes as 'prime ministerial government' limited debate and promoted support for the government's policy preferences.¹²⁷ When linked to an increasing range of successful cooperative ventures¹²⁸, changed attitudes and other initiatives such as the

¹²² Management Advisory Committee, *Connecting Government: Whole of Government Responses to Australia's Priority Challenges*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2004, pp. 11–16 and Figure 11, describe the components of a best practice for coordination and the 'whole-of-government' approach.

¹²³ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 50–5.

¹²⁴ Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 187; and Painter and Carey, pp. 99–100.

¹²⁵ Evans and Grant, pp. 46–7.

¹²⁶ J Cotton and J Ravenhill, 'Radical Conservative', *Diplomat*, vol. 5, no. 5, 2007, p. 42.

¹²⁷ P Kelly, 'Re-thinking Australian Governance: The Howard Legacy', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 65, no. 1, 2006, pp. 7–8. The influence of the 'ministerial view' and 'bipartisanship', as discussed in the earlier section on Policy Analysis, is also active here.

¹²⁸ Some examples of close cooperation between Defence and Foreign Affairs were cited in Department of Foreign Affairs, *Submission*, p. 20. Tony Ayers, a former Secretary of the Department of Defence, also identified reduced competition and more partnerships with DFAT during his tenure (1988–98) in J Farquarson, 'Transcript of Interview with Tony Ayres, AC', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1998, p. 47.

whole-of-government approach¹²⁹, there is less space for bureaucracies to fight over turf and incentive to settle disagreements before reaching Cabinet.¹³⁰

STRUCTURES AND ROUTINES

Australian Governments have used different structures and routines to manage national security policy. Committees are the most common form at the interdepartmental level, with more recent innovations including multi-agency task forces on specific issues.¹³¹ These committees are supported by routines that describe how work is done and who is involved. While routines vary over time (and in earlier times, these were *ad hoc* at best), most governments define procedures, provide formats for submissions, and issue agendas for Cabinet. Examples of declared processes include the minutes of Prime Minister Holt's first Cabinet meeting in 1966, the Department of Foreign Affairs Administrative Circular of 1971, and recent editions of the *Cabinet Handbook*.¹³² Taken together, these documents show a trend towards increased formality in policymaking processes.

It is possible to identify why Australian structures and routines, or processes, change. For one, there is the nature of the task at hand. Thus, the design dictum of 'form follows function' can apply to policymaking, and it is supportable when the influence of information—especially classified information—determines who participates in national security policymaking. Leaders also demand structure and processes to suit their preferences. This is seen in the composition of committees, as well as rules set for what might go into submissions. Actors from outside the executive might also influence structures and routines. For example, the ALP's National Conference and the special position of Caucus explain why Labor Governments adopt different structures to their conservative counterparts. Decisions to use multilateral forums, such as the United Nations, to achieve particular policy outcomes also change the system's participants.

¹²⁹ See Management Advisory Committee, pp. 3–6.

¹³⁰ Sir Geoffrey Yeend said bureaucratic politics was much worse in the 1950s than the 1970s (R Hislop, 'Record of Interview with Sir Geoffrey Yeend, AC, CBE', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1990, p. 5).

¹³¹ For example, DFAT established a multi-agency 'Iraq Task Force' in September 2002 to coordinate national policy on the impending conflict. See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2002–2003*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, p. 54.

¹³² See NAA, A5839 Vol. 1, First Holt Ministry Cabinet Decisions, Cabinet Decision No. 1, 'Without Memorandum – Cabinet Procedure', 26 January 1966; also NAA, A1838, CS 661/2/2/1, Department of Foreign Affairs, 'Administrative Circular No. A176/71 – Cabinet Submissions and Decisions', 30 April 1971, which outlined a number of requirements that departmental officers were to observe when preparing Cabinet submissions; and Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Cabinet Handbook*, 5th edn, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2004.

TENTATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

At this stage, the characteristics of the Coordination phase are especially tentative because it is difficult to identify whether the bureaucratic politics or collegial position prevails. As a result, the original characteristics have been modified as follows:

- Coordination is basically competitive, but it shows some propensity for greater collegiality.
- Governments describe structures and routines that suit their preferences, the best thinking of the time, the task at hand and external factors.

Both the 'bureaucratic politics' and 'collegiality' views of coordination have some strong proponents. It is possible that Gyngell and Wesley have overturned a considerable weight of opinion and correctly identified consensual policymaking as a new norm in foreign policymaking. However, it is also plausible that the Australian form of bureaucratic politics is less severe than the American and so harder to identify on every occasion. This characteristic will be left open for now, and considered again in subsequent chapters.

The existence of structures and processes in national security policymaking are somewhat clearer, with elements of both becoming more formal over time. Further change is likely, particularly to the actual structures and nature of the processes, although the direction of change is not necessarily towards increased formality.

Decision

The Decision phase is the point of the cycle where the officials' work is formally considered by Cabinet. The main characteristics of this phase are:

- Cabinet is dominant.
- Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions.
- Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the room before decisions are taken.¹³³

¹³³ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 106–9.

DOMINANT PRIME MINISTER

Aside from its external orientation, the most significant characteristic attributed to foreign and defence decision-making is the dominance of the executive arm of government, but not necessarily the Cabinet, in the process.¹³⁴ The change to this norm is founded in institutional power and the nature of foreign and defence (and thus, national security) policy as a distinct field.

Of those wielding institutional power in decision-making, the defence and foreign ministers have natural advantages. Both control substantial bureaucracies that provide specialist advice and information that others lack. Both ministers have statutory responsibilities for day-to-day decisions, while legislation and accepted practice gives them considerable latitude over policy execution.¹³⁵ In addition, few foreign or defence policy issues are decided in the full Cabinet and most cabinets generally (but not always) have a formal or informal subcommittee to consider relevant questions.¹³⁶ These advantages usually make the defence and foreign ministers very influential.

While these advantages provide both ministers with significant decision-making power, other forces balance their dominance. For one, both are likely to be highly reliant upon advice, and their lack of specialised knowledge leaves room for decisions to be shaped by the options presented to Cabinet. On the defence side, another factor relates to the size of the portfolio, which is large by Australian standards and has an unusual degree of inherent complexity.

However, the main institutional check on these ministers' influence is the prime minister. The prime minister's dominance is neither new nor unique. Nearly every incumbent since Sir Edmund Barton has taken an active role in foreign and defence policy and a number held a relevant ministerial portfolio.¹³⁷ Intra-party fights are also unlikely to diminish that position. As one political leader put it:

¹³⁴ Cabinet, the prime minister or even the defence minister were not always dominant in the early days of the Australian Government because strong Naval and Military Boards provided alternate loci for authority over Defence policy until the 1926, when the Defence Committee was established (see Encel, pp. 330–1).

¹³⁵ Interview with John Moore.

¹³⁶ Smith, 'Politics of foreign policy', p. 17. This issue is explored further in Chapter 3.

¹³⁷ A number of prime ministers have been external affairs/foreign minister or defence minister at some stage of their terms of office (including many early leader including Barton, Deakin, Reid, Hughes, Bruce, Scullin, Lyons, Menzies, Curtin, and later, Whitlam). On the prime minister's dominance of foreign policy see Edwards, *Prime Ministers*; D Lee, 'The Origins of the Menzies Government's Policy

... the prime minister is always strong in national security. Both Hawke and Keating were, even when they were fighting with each other. You tended to find in the area of defence policy and national security policy that the sources of party brawls or intra-government policy fights were not there. Consensus would be reached quickly. The prime minister would basically watch what the defence and foreign ministers were doing and engage himself ...¹³⁸

The prime minister's role is enabled by responsibility for setting the strategic direction for government, for articulating a vision, and for interpreting the nation's interests and values in a way much broader than ministers.¹³⁹ The prime minister also sets expenditure, influences relationships and can reject calls for policy reviews. The prime minister can also act unilaterally.¹⁴⁰ These factors are significant advantages and can make it difficult for either the defence or foreign minister (or indeed, any minister) to oppose the prime minister's preferences.¹⁴¹

The executive's dominance over national security decisions is further assisted by the Constitution, as only the Commonwealth Government has the power to make laws relating to external relations and has the sole responsibility for defence. The party room also gives the executive some freedom, although Labor's Caucus and National Conference have a bearing on policy positions when in government.¹⁴² Other factors contributing to this latitude include the domestic focus of parliamentary parties, while the need for fast

on Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia', in Cain (ed), *Menzies in Peace and War*; Watt, p. 303–10; D Lowe, *Menzies and the 'Great World Struggle': Australia's Cold War 1948–1954*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 1999; and Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 97–100.

¹³⁸ Interview with the Hon Kim C Beazley, MP Canberra, 10 October 2006. Mr Beazley was Defence Minister from 1984 until 1990, and Opposition Leader in 1999.

¹³⁹ Pemberton, 'An Imperial Imagination', pp. 165–8.

¹⁴⁰ For examples, see Pemberton, 'An Imperial Imagination', p. 166, on Menzies and atomic testing; HS Albinski, *Australian External Policy Under Labour*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977, p. 150, on Whitlam; G Greenwood, 'The Political Debate in Australia', in Greenwood and N Harper (eds), *Australia in World Affairs 1966–1970*, FW Cheshire, Melbourne, 1974, p. 62, and Sir Alexander Downer, *Six Prime Ministers*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1982, p. 114, on Gorton's unilateral decision-making.

¹⁴¹ In recent times, Prime Minister Howard is thought to have over-ruled Defence Minister Robert Hill's less-traditional views on Australian defence policy (G Barker and L Tingle, 'Canberra toughens pro-war stance despite protests', *Australian Financial Review*, 18 February 2003 (Factiva version); A Dupont, 'We have to bring out the big guns', *Australian*, 29 November 2005, p. 12; and A Hawke, 'Speech at the book launch of *Essays on Australian Defence*', Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2005, p. 3, available <http://rspas.anu.edu.au>, accessed 12 July 2007. For another example of prime ministerial dominance over his ministers see Gyngell and Wesley, p. 100.

¹⁴² Smith, 'Foreign Policy', pp. 27–8; Albinski, *Australian External Policy*, p. 314; and Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, especially p. 26.

decisions and the executive's information advantage also contribute.¹⁴³ The nature of the bureaucracy also helped extend that autonomy:

A smaller number of people, a smaller number of decision-makers, a general acceptance that national security was important; after all, historically there were only three portfolios that counted: Treasury, Defence and Foreign Affairs ... and that still really applies ...¹⁴⁴

CONVENTIONS

For the most part, Cabinet conventions concerning collective responsibility and secrecy are accepted as essential to the functioning of Cabinet government. While these conventions are breached from time to time, they are unlikely to be formally abandoned because they provide Cabinet, and individual ministers, with the confidence to accept collective responsibility.¹⁴⁵ Some conventions have changed. One, which occurred largely in response to the needs of national security, was Cabinet's move from informally produced minutes to recorded decisions.¹⁴⁶ Another was the change in patterns of attendance by officials at Cabinet. While it was considered improper for officials to attend early Cabinets, this attitude changed during the Second World War.¹⁴⁷ During this time it was common for both Cabinet and the War Cabinet to invite high-ranking public servants, distinguished visitors, representatives of foreign governments and other experts to consult with them.¹⁴⁸ This practice continued after the war and was frequently used by Menzies.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴³ Edwards notes the freedom given to prime ministers at early imperial conferences, and the freedom of action accorded to successive leaders in their dealings overseas. See Smith, 'Foreign Policy', p. 30 and pp. 42–52, on Hughes at the Versailles Treaty negotiations. Smith notes how backbenchers sometimes influence the executive by banding together, but these efforts are often mounted after decisions have been made (Evans and Grant, pp. 45–6). On the issue of time and decisions, see Encel, pp. 285–93.

¹⁴⁴ Interview with John Moore.

¹⁴⁵ HV Emy, *The Politics of Australian Democracy: Fundamentals in Dispute*, 2nd edn, MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1978, pp. 259–60 and pp. 312–5; G Singleton, D Aitken, B Jinks and J Warhurst, *Australian Political Institutions*, 6th edn, Longman Australia, South Melbourne, 2000, pp. 157–61; and P Hasluck, *The Government and the People: 1939–41*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, p. 422 (cited as Hasluck, 1939–41 below).

¹⁴⁶ The move from the informal to formal systems for recording decisions is noted in Encel, p. 256 and p. 332; and Horner, *Defence Supremo*, pp. 74–5.

¹⁴⁷ Encel, p. 337; and Hasluck, 1939–41, pp. 422–3.

¹⁴⁸ The Australian Cabinet held frequent meetings with senior US officials in the 1960s. For examples, see the references to the discussions between Cabinet and Averell Harriman of the US State Department on 7 June 1963 in Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 265; and the meeting between Cabinet members and the senior US officials, General Maxwell Taylor and Mr Clark Clifford in 1967 (NAA, A5840, Second Holt Ministry Cabinet Decisions Volume 2, 'Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee', 28 July 1967. One exception to this convention, which occurred during the crisis of 1942, will be discussed in Chapter 2.

¹⁴⁹ On Menzies' attitude to inviting national security officials to Cabinet, see D Horner, *Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia's Asian Wars*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005, p. 202.

TENTATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The Decision phase for national security is strongly consistent with other policy areas, but some adjustment needs to be made for the actual locus of decision. As a result, the tentative characteristics are:

- The prime minister is dominant.
- Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions.
- Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the Cabinet room before decisions are taken.

These characteristics have remained largely consistent, with the main period of change coming during the Second World War. However, future change is possible in all of these. For one, the place of decision can move between Cabinet, a committee of Cabinet and less formal groupings. While each of these will be centered on the prime minister, at least a few other ministers and (under some circumstances) one or a few senior officials may be included. The characteristics of Cabinet conventions and official participation have also changed, and further change could be dictated by shifts in political preference or exceptional circumstances, such as crises.

Implementation

Implementation is the penultimate phase of the policy cycle, where ‘the machinery of government smoothly implements the Cabinet’s wish—in theory’.¹⁵⁰ The two main characteristics of implementation can be described as:

- Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle.
- The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes.¹⁵¹

CONSIDERED THROUGHOUT

While defence policy tends to be implemented after decision and foreign policy implementation tends to occur constantly, both consider implementation throughout the cycle. Defence policy implementation requires attention to practical issues such as force

¹⁵⁰ Bridgman and Davis, p. 119.

¹⁵¹ Ibid., pp. 119–21.

readiness, logistics and international agreements.¹⁵² For the most part, this means defence policy implementation is considered early in the policy cycle when the availability of forces and their utility are weighed up in the policy instruments phase. Furthermore, Cabinet must give permission to use these assets, which is often followed by a formal announcement. More time usually lapses as forces prepare and then deploy to the area of operations. For example, the decision to commit forces to the First World War occurred in early August 1914. From there, it took six weeks to embark the first Australian Imperial Force and another six months before the force saw combat at Gallipoli in April 1915. In the 1990–1 Gulf War, there were two days between Cabinet’s decision and the departure of the first ships for operational service.¹⁵³ This need for planning, decision and preparation means defence policy usually follows the prescribed linear path of the policy cycle.

The nature of diplomacy lends itself to being applied in fast and flexible ways. While a linear progression from phase-to-phase may be followed at times, there is room for greater variety because foreign policy can be made by a statement, without a Cabinet decision or a legislative process.¹⁵⁴ Authoritative—or at least consequential—announcements can be made by ministers or senior officials without consultation and before Cabinet considers its preferred response. The clearest example of this is the way Prime Minister Whitlam took most foreign policy decisions and then ‘ratified’ them in Cabinet.¹⁵⁵ Thus implementation can occur in a variety of ways, including using signals to influence debates and attitudes and, on occasions, acting before decisions are made.¹⁵⁶

Coordination mechanisms, the involvement of other departments in policy analysis and the maintenance of collegial relations are useful for promoting consistency in advice and implementation.¹⁵⁷ Earlier examples of such mechanisms included interdepartmental committees and standing committees that have permanent representation from other

¹⁵² Accounts of planning for ADF deployments can be found in B Breen, *Mission Accomplished—East Timor*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2000; and D Horner, *The Gulf Commitment: The Australian Defence Force’s First War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 27.

¹⁵³ Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 28. The government may conceivably deploy forces on covert operations without an announcement, but this too would usually be preceded by planning activity.

¹⁵⁴ Smith, ‘Foreign Policy’, pp. 16–17. Evans and Grant, *Australia’s Foreign Relations*, p. 45–7.

¹⁵⁵ Smith, ‘Foreign Policy’, p. 24. Whitlam would refute this, as he says all major policy decisions taken in 1972–73 were long-standing ALP policy (EG Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975*, Viking, Ringwood, 1985, pp. 25–6). Trood notes other examples, including situations where conflict occurred between ministers over policy positions (R Trood, ‘Prime Ministers and Foreign Policy’, in P Weller (ed), *Menzies to Keating: The Development of Australian Prime Ministership*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 163).

¹⁵⁶ Smith, ‘Foreign Policy’, p. 24; Renouf, p. 504; and Gyngell and Wesley, p. 33.

¹⁵⁷ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 95–97.

departments.¹⁵⁸ In more recent times, task forces have been used to guide both implementation and, as a consequence of the dynamic nature of events, further policy development.¹⁵⁹

COMPLICATED AND COMPLEX

Difficulties are created when more than one department is involved in implementing either foreign or defence policy. This case was clearly stated by the Department Foreign Affairs (DFA) in their 1974 submission to the Coombs Royal Commission: 'Unless there is one ministry ... given responsibility for coordinating and controlling the country's foreign relations, there will be wasteful duplication of effort, conflict or inconsistency in aims, and confusion and uncertainty about government policy—all detrimental to the national interest'.¹⁶⁰ This also makes it possible for the work done by diplomats to be spoilt by others with a 'clumsy or insensitive utterance' by one ministry to another.¹⁶¹

The involvement of other departments in dealings with foreign countries has only increased since then. Gyngell and Wesley note that 'Almost all Australian Federal Government departments acknowledge the importance of the international dimension in their work', but their involvement is 'sporadic and rarely profound'.¹⁶² Now it is common for other departments to contribute to capacity-building missions in the region, as many have done in the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI) and the Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP) in Papua New Guinea.¹⁶³ The increasingly broad range of participants in implementation also needs to be mirrored by their participation in other phases of the policy cycle, particularly in the Policy Development, Policy Instruments and Coordination phases.

¹⁵⁸ For a discussion of interdepartmental committees, see Painter and Carey. Example of standing committees with interdepartmental representation such as the Joint Planning Committee (JPC) are discussed in Chapter 3.

¹⁵⁹ For examples, note the Gulf Task Force of 1990 (Horner, *Gulf Commitment*, p. 24); the multi-agency Emergency Response Team established to manage the Douglas Wood kidnapping in 2005 (AAP, 'Kidnapped Aussie's plea to PM', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 2 May 2005); and the Bougainville Watch Group, an interagency forum that monitored the Australian contribution to the Peace Monitoring Group mission from 1998–2002.

¹⁶⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs, *Submission*, p. 4.

¹⁶¹ Tange, 'Personal Narrative', p. 37.

¹⁶² Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 78–9.

¹⁶³ See M Fullilove, *The testament of Solomons: RAMSI and international state-building*, The Lowy Institute, Sydney, 2006; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Enhanced Cooperation Program (ECP)', 2005, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 18 December 2006.

Defence generally does its best to exclude agencies from implementation, especially during military operations, by delineating between strategic, operational and tactical matters through different layers of command.¹⁶⁴ This does not always work, and close political guidance of operations should be expected.¹⁶⁵ The military is also adjusting to the presence of other departments on operations, especially where nation building is required. According to one Australian officer, cultural distinctions between the police and military, difficulties with information exchange, different work practices and even social attitudes all hinder close cooperation.¹⁶⁶ While there are suggestions for overcoming these differences, including more exchanges and common operating procedures, the pervasiveness of this problem suggests that implementation is unlikely to become less complex in the future.

TENTATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The literature on defence and foreign policy tends to support the two characteristics of implementation presented above. The first, where implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle, looks to be entrenched and unlikely to change. The effect of organising a multi-agency commitment, where different agencies are required to plan and conduct implementation, are well known.¹⁶⁷ So while the complexity of multi-agency activities is not new, the greatest emphasis on this has come over the past decade with Australian-led operations in Bougainville (1998–2002) and the Solomon Islands (2003–ongoing) being cases in point. This characteristic is likely to become more pronounced as constitutionally demarcated roles are sometimes blurred, and hierarchical organisation and specialisation remain the most likely structure for future national security

¹⁶⁴ Australian Army, *The Fundamentals of Land Warfare*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2006, pp. 32–4.

¹⁶⁵ See the description of the conflict between Generals Blamey and Rowell during the Kokoda Campaign of 1942 in D Horner, *Crisis of command: Australian generalship and the Japanese threat, 1941–1943*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978. Cohen challenges the ‘normal’ view of civil-military relationships which seeks to keep politicians away from operations (E Cohen, *Supreme Command: soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime*, Simon and Schuster, London, 2003, especially Appendix A). Modern theorists think advances in information technology will allow political leaders to influence tactical actions from a distance. For a discussion, see Lieutenant Colonel D Schmidtchen, *Eyes Wide Open: Stability, Change and Network-Enabling Technology*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2006, pp. 22–24.

¹⁶⁶ J Hutcheson, ‘Helping a Friend: An Australian Military Commander’s Perspective on the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands’, *Australian Army Journal*, no. 2, 2005. The Australian Federal Police Commissioner recognised similar problems: see M Keelty, ‘Policing in a Foreign Policy Space’, Address to the National Press Club, Canberra, 11 October 2006.

¹⁶⁷ For one discussion on the problems of implementation in contemporary government, see Management Advisory Committee, Chapter 2.

policymaking—rather than implementation through a multifaceted national security super-department that incorporates Defence and DFAT under the same roof.¹⁶⁸

Evaluation

The Evaluation phase provides the nominal end of the policy cycle because it represents the point when the utility of policy must be questioned and a new cycle begins.¹⁶⁹ Two characteristics of evaluation derived from Bridgman and Davis are:

- Policy advice is not systemically evaluated.
- Evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented.¹⁷⁰

The impatience with review, and the desire to avoid the political recriminations that may follow, means that policymaking processes and policy outcomes are rarely, if ever, directly evaluated by the government. Thus the evaluation phase remains somewhat opaque, with dissatisfaction with policy usually being inferred by new policy initiatives or changes to the structure of policymaking processes.

NOT SYSTEMATICALLY EVALUATED

One slogan from the 1943 election campaign sums up the Australian attitude to evaluation: ‘No time for bitterness. We’re too busy’.¹⁷¹ This displays impatience with going over past events and the expectation that any evaluation will be subjectively political rather than objective. As Sir Arthur Tange noted:

There has been enthusiastic acceptance of the idea that, because Cabinet Ministers cannot be expected to be on top of all the managerial decisions which occur ... a way must be found for Parliament and the media to get at what the administrator is doing, how he is doing and why he is doing what he does ... The answer to ‘why’ often lies in the obscurities of party politics ...¹⁷²

The consequent lack of discussion about policy evaluation in the literature reduces the available evidence to define this characteristic of defence and foreign policymaking.

¹⁶⁸ A precedent for the amalgamation of numerous departments and agencies exists with the 1987 reorganisation of DFAT, and more recently in the US Department of Homeland Security (DHS). In the instance of DHS, the size of the organisation and mixing of different organisational cultures has delivered sub-optimal results. For a detailed discussion of problems confronting DHS, see TH Stanton (ed), *Meeting the Challenge of 9/11: Blueprints for More Effective Government*, ME Sharpe, Armonk, 2006.

¹⁶⁹ Evaluation is another phase—in addition to coordination and consultation—that could be undertaken at any time during a cycle.

¹⁷⁰ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 131–3.

¹⁷¹ P Coorey, ‘Poll loss the end for ALP, unions’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 January 2007.

¹⁷² Sir Arthur Tange, ‘Accountability’, in Tange (ed), *Defence Policy Administration and Organisation: Selected Lectures 1971–1986*, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra 1992, p. 61.

However, some evaluation does occur and this provides a limited body of work to consider questions about policymaking.

The bodies most likely to conduct evaluation are the Australian National Audit Office (ANAO), Parliament, academia and independent reviews appointed by the government. While this is a formidable range of potential evaluators, the work of bodies and individuals such as these do not amount to a systematic evaluation of national security policy. This observation is supported by the way ANAO is excluded from examining the political aspects of performance, meaning that most of the seventy ANAO evaluations of Defence and fourteen evaluations of DFAT over the last ten years have focused on the mechanical or administrative aspects of performance.¹⁷³

Parliament also attempts to evaluate policymaking through its committee system. While there is some tradition of examining major crisis events in the United Kingdom¹⁷⁴, Parliamentary inquiries into national security generally focus on capability issues and foreign policy questions.¹⁷⁵ In addition, there were two enquiries in matters related to disaster management, in 1989 and 1994, and one into the 'Lebanon Crisis' of 1976 which examined humanitarian issues.¹⁷⁶ However, committees face significant obstacles when reviewing policy, such as working in an environment that is more about politics than security.¹⁷⁷ In this view, the executive does what it can to prevent evaluation (and

¹⁷³ Of these eighty-four reports only three relate to policy formulation and advice. These included one about the implementation of bilateral relations in DFAT, and reports about the East Timor operation and Australian industry for Defence. ANAO also reported on domestic security coordination for DPM&C (see Australian National Audit Office, 'Publications', available <http://www.anao.gov.au>, accessed 31 March 2007). On the scope of the Auditor-General's responsibilities, see Commonwealth of Australia, 'Auditor-General Act 1997 (Commonwealth)', Part 4, available <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>, accessed 18 October 2007.

¹⁷⁴ For examples, see Lord Oliver S Franks, *Falklands Island Review: Report of a Committee of Privy Counsellors*, HMSO, London, 1983; and Lord N Philips, *The BSE Inquiry: The Report*, 2000, Chapter 15, available <http://www.bseinquiry.gov.uk>; accessed 20 December 2006.

¹⁷⁵ The Parliament's various committees on foreign affairs and defence often called for officials to provide briefings on topical matters, and sometimes developed policy themselves (such as on the Omega navigation system in the 1970s). early iterations included the Government Members Defence Committee of the early 1960s (NAA, A1946/14, CS 70-1701) and the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs of the late 60s (NAA, A1838, CS 561/1/2).

¹⁷⁶ Senate of Australia, 'The First 20 Years – Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade', 2007, available <http://www.aph.gov.au>, accessed 16 June 2007. The 1999 senate enquiry into East Timor will be examined in Part II.

¹⁷⁷ K Burton, *Scrutiny or Secrecy? Committee Oversight of Foreign and National Security Policy in the Australian Parliament*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2005, pp. 37–40. Recent examples of evaluations include work by the Parliamentary Joint Committee on Intelligence and Security on intelligence agency powers and the review of decisions to list various groups as terrorist organisations; inquiries by the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade in the Asia tsunami response and others into immigration detention centres.

participation in policymaking) by refusing vital information to committees. This can involve a range of tactics, such as refusing to appear in person, prohibiting appearances by advisors, and privileging information through the public interest immunity clause that applies to much national security information.¹⁷⁸

However, Kate Burton also notes that when evaluation does occur, it is likely to be conducted under a form of self-censorship by members of the major parties. These members choose not to demand changes to procedure or push too hard on security issues because they want to maintain a degree of bipartisanship in the area, exclude minor parties, be considered responsible on national security issues, and avoid establishing precedents that might cause harm once government changes hands.¹⁷⁹ As a result, the actual influence of Parliament in evaluation is minimal.¹⁸⁰

Other bodies, such as royal commissions or ministerial inquiries, can also be appointed to review foreign and defence policy. There are many reasons for establishing inquiries (to use a generic name) including fact-finding, incident investigations, and synthesising views on issues. Other types of inquiry may simply attempt to educate, while others may be formed to show concern about a problem or provide a forum for grievance. The common factor is that all inquiries work within strict terms of reference that are approved by the government. The most notable of inquiries relating to defence and foreign policy have included royal commissions into the intelligence community by Justice Hope in 1977 and 1985, and an enquiry into intelligence about Iraqi weapons of mass destruction by Philip Flood in 2004.¹⁸¹ The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade has also been involved in inquiries, including the recent 'Oil for Food' inquiry into the Australian Wheat Board.¹⁸² It is difficult to generalise about the influence of such inquiries. To some, the terms of reference will skew the inquiry and prevent a full examination of the issues.¹⁸³ In

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., pp. 26–37.

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., pp. 37–40.

¹⁸⁰ Gyngell and Wesley, p. 176.

¹⁸¹ See R Hope, 'Intelligence and security, abridged findings and recommendations', *Royal Commission third report*, Australian Government Printing Service, Canberra, 1978; R Hope, *Royal Commission on Australia's Security and Intelligence Agencies*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1985; and Flood, *Australian Intelligence Agencies*.

¹⁸² The Hon TR Cole, *Report of the Inquiry into certain Australian companies in relation to the UN Oil-for-Food Programme*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2006.

¹⁸³ This charge was laid at the Australian Government during the Cole Commission by KC Beazley, MP, of the ALP. See M Colvin, 'Truth hidden beyond inquiry's narrow terms of reference: Opposition', *PM*, ABC Radio (Australia), 13 April 2006, available <http://www.abc.net.au>, accessed 30 January 2007.

other cases, the choice of inquirer will prejudge the results as their bias affects the questions asked (and not asked).¹⁸⁴

This characteristic may be changing as departments conduct internal reviews and evaluations on a more regular basis. DFAT has an executive planning and evaluation branch that reviews each division's performance on an annual basis.¹⁸⁵ Defence too has a management audit branch, and it also employs the Defence Science and Technology Organisation and individual departmental officers to conduct reviews of various issues.¹⁸⁶ While the details are scant, there is some evidence that interdepartmental reviews have been conducted into Operations BALI ASSIST in 2002 and TSUNAMI ASSIST in 2004–5.¹⁸⁷ The latter was based on extensive debriefing of participants, with the results collated by Emergency Management Australia.¹⁸⁸

EVALUATION AFTER IMPLEMENTATION

Like other areas, foreign and defence policy evaluation (when it is conducted) is likely to occur after implementation is complete. In some ways, this is understandable as the perspective afforded by time is important to understanding the full scope of events and the results of policy. While uncommon, some forms of evaluation can occur during an event. A recent evaluation of Australia's relief performance after the 2004 Asian tsunami was conducted in the midst of ongoing recovery efforts, although it must be noted that the disaster response phase being reviewed had given way to the recovery phase.¹⁸⁹ Other opportunities to evaluate policy-in-progress exist, especially when parliamentarians disrupt the *post facto* evaluative norm by asking questions of ministers in Parliament or in the party

¹⁸⁴ For example, some claimed Flood's background influenced his findings on the very controversial issue of intelligence agency performance before the Iraq War of 2003 in AAP, 'Flood report diplomatic in its criticism', *Age*, 22 July 2004 (internet edition). Others disagree with this assessment. For example, see the compliments paid by Senator R Trood, 'Speech for the Second Reading of the Intelligence Services Legislation Amendment Bill (2005)', 5 October 2005, available <http://www.senatortrood.com>, accessed 29 January 2007.

¹⁸⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2005–2006*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2006, Chapter 3.

¹⁸⁶ A tactical 'lessons learnt' function is also employed at the service and joint levels within the ADF, but these efforts do not consider policy or political level issues (author's observations).

¹⁸⁷ Operation BALI ASSIST was a multi-agency response supporting Indonesian authorities after the October 2002 terrorist bombings in Bali. Operation TSUNAMI ASSIST was another multi-agency response to the Asian tsunami of December 2004.

¹⁸⁸ S Gilding, 'Delivery of Government Policy in Times of Crisis – A Specific Reflection', paper presented at the *Government Policy and Evolution Conference*, Canberra, 27 July 2005.

¹⁸⁹ *Ibid.*

room. These questions can provide useful information to evaluate implementation and hold ministers accountable for their actions as events unfold.¹⁹⁰

TENTATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

The limited literature on the evaluation of Australian foreign and defence policy leads to a tentative acceptance of the original characteristics. However, both propositions require qualification. Firstly, official evaluation can occur during implementation, but the avenues for this are limited to parliamentary questions or *ad hoc* internal deliberations. Secondly, the sources of evaluation also may have some space to expand as new threats emerge. For example, health information will be needed to respond to pandemics, while law enforcement information is required to respond to terrorism. Pressure for change may also come from the media and internet users, and the courts if judicial intervention is adopted as a way to hold the government accountable for their response to threats.

Tentative characteristics for national security policymaking

There are similarities between foreign and defence policymaking—as the areas used to define national security—and the characteristics of policymaking in other areas. Should we be surprised? Smith, Cox and Burchill argue that ‘foreign policy is not substantially different from other policy areas in terms of the array of domestic pressures that come to bear on its formulation’¹⁹¹, but most acknowledge that foreign and defence policy differs from other areas to the point of being ‘a remote, elite and secretive activity’.¹⁹² The differences arise, in the main, from the heightened secrecy that restricts the flow of information about national security, and the dominance of the executive and departmental experts in this field. These two differences lead to a relatively closed policymaking process where potential actors are usually excluded and the flow of information is restricted. Additional differences are created by the largely external (international) focus of both

¹⁹⁰ Albinski describes the role and successes of Opposition efforts to unsettle the Whitlam Government in 1975 (Albinski, *Australian External Policy*, p. 280).

¹⁹¹ Smith, Cox and Burchill, p. 49.

¹⁹² Millar emphasised the ‘difference’ of defence from other areas when he wrote how the Australian Government had ‘almost convinced the average Australian that he cannot expect to know too much about defence’ (Millar, *Australia’s Defence*, pp. 2–3). The notion of difference is formalised in one primer on Australian policymaking, where foreign policy is discussed in a second, wholly separate part of the book (D Jaensch and M Teichmann, *Australian Politics and Foreign Policy: An Introduction*, Longman Cheshire Melbourne, 1987). The description of the ‘elite’ process was provided by Gyngell and Wesley, p. 122.

policy areas and the crucial roles played by substantially independent external actors.¹⁹³ These differences make it necessary to modify the characteristics for some phases to provide a more accurate reflection of national security policymaking (see Table 2).

The most noticeable differences between policymaking in general and the specific area of national security arise in the early phases of the policy cycle. The national security executive and foreign governments tend to be the most dominant actors in the issue identification phase. While these actors may weigh domestic considerations when framing policy, other domestic agents—such as the courts, lobby groups, the media and the public—only have a sporadic influence over national security policy. Rational comprehensive methods of policy analysis may be adopted, but this approach often gives way to extra-rational ‘professional judgement’. Analysis in these policy areas also tends to be more closed and reliant on insiders, but this may be changing. The existence of a dominant framework is contestable, for both foreign and defence policy tends to operate today within politically set boundaries. The importance of external actors also extends to the Consultation phase, to the point where some Australian governments have attempted to exclude the public from the entire process.¹⁹⁴

The Coordination phase is an interesting example of where Bridgman and Davis’s characteristics are modified the most. Coordination in national security policy aims to reduce friction, while structures and routines are imposed to assist (as they are in other policy fields). But more can be said about the nature of power and the coordination of national security policy. Firstly, this characteristic may be changing, with relationships between the different agencies of the Australian bureaucracy moving from a competitive to a cooperative basis. Secondly, it is possible that the crisis mode of national security policymaking may induce behaviour in bureaucratic actors that is different from the deliberate or capability modes. At this stage, both the bureaucratic politics and consensual explanations will be carried forward to the next phase of analysis.

¹⁹³ Albeit many of the issues of defence policymaking are internally focused and deals with equipment procurement and ‘interservice politics’. For examples, see DJ Ball, *The Politics of Defence Decision-Making in Australia: The Reorganisation of the Defence Group of Departments*, Reference Paper 7, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1975.

¹⁹⁴ For example, the 1995 Australia–Indonesia security agreement was negotiated in secret in order to prevent public discussion of the proposal (Burton, pp. 7–8).

Table 2: Tentative Characteristics of National Security Policymaking

Phase	General Characteristic	Tentative Characteristics of national security policymaking	Has the characteristic changed?	Is there potential for change?
Identify Issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issues come to political attention based on competitive agitation from domestic sources, such as political parties, donors, interest groups, Parliament and media; • Issues might be identified to the administrative level by other domestic agents, such as government policy specialists or the courts; • Issues can be created by the influence of external sources, such as economic change, foreign state or non-state actors, technology, demographic shifts, or legal change; and • Issues enter the political agenda once there is sufficient mass appeal to demand political attention. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prime minister, the national security ministers and their bureaucracy tend to be the dominant internal actors in issue identification and, by extension, problem definition. 2. Foreign governments have the ability to place issues on the national security policy agenda when they intend to harm Australian interests, when the interests of Australia's allies and friends are threatened, and when high levels of interdependence mean that threats to others' interests are viewed as threats to Australia. 3. Other domestic actors can identify issues for national security policy, but their ability to do so is uneven and constrained by the position and information of the dominant actors. 4. Mass appeal plays an uncertain role in issue identification for national security crises. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. No 3. No 4. Uncertain 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unlikely 2. Possible (limited) 3. Possible (limited) 4. Uncertain
Policy Analysis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A rational comprehensive analytical method is sought, but it may be accompanied by the extra-rational factors of judgement, experience and intuition. • The process is iterative because information is incomplete, people disagree over objectives and parameters shift. • While internal policy experts (including bureaucrats and ministerial staff) may still dominate, ministers use an increasing range of non-government sources for analysis. • Policy is analysed according to the dominant framework of the policy area. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Departments are structured to adopt rational comprehensive approaches to analysis, but this is modified in practice by extra-rational influences such as group loyalty and identity, power relations, competition, and appeals to professional judgement. 2. Policy issues are rarely analysed as individual, discrete problems, and the nature of competition between issues and interests, and the consequent influence on the issue at hand, makes analysis iterative. 3. Internal policy experts dominate, but external sources of analysis are available. Where external sources are used, these tend to be former insiders or consultants sympathetic to the government of the day. 4. The existence of a dominant framework is contestable and its influence can be difficult to identify. No dominant framework links defence and foreign policy. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. No 3. Yes 4. Yes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible (limited) 2. Possible (limited) 3. Possible (limited) 4. Uncertain
Policy Instruments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The instruments most used in Australia include financial, legal, advocacy, and government action. • There are limitations upon what the government can do with its policy instruments. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The instruments most used by the Australian Government in national security policy are diplomacy, alliances, international law, military force, foreign aid, information, and economic and social levers. 2. The utility of national security policy instruments is highly situational 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. Unlikely 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible (limited) 2. Unlikely

Phase	General Characteristic	Tentative Characteristics of national security policymaking	Has the characteristic changed?	Is there potential for change?
Consultation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens demand a say in policy between elections, and sometimes, consultation is mandatory. • Consultation occurs across a continuum from information to control. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination is basically competitive, but it shows some propensity for greater collegiality. 2. Governments describe structures and routines that suit their preferences, the best thinking of the time, the task at hand and external factors. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. No 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible (limited) 2. Unlikely
Coordination	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Governments attempt to achieve tolerable compatibility, or at least minimise harmful inconsistencies, across government activities. • Governments search for consistency through structures and routines. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Coordination is basically competitive, but it shows some propensity for greater collegiality. 2. Governments will describe structures and routines that suit their particular preferences and best thinking for the time; the task at hand; and external factors 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Uncertain 2. Possible (noticeable)
Decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cabinet is dominant. • Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions. • Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the room before decisions are taken. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The prime minister is dominant. 2. Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions. 3. Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the Cabinet room before decisions are taken. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. Yes 3. Yes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible (noticeable) 2. Uncertain 3. Uncertain
Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle. • The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle. 2. The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. No 2. Yes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Unlikely 2. Unlikely
Evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy advice is not systemically evaluated. • Evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented. 2. Policy advice is not systemically evaluated. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Yes 2. Yes 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Possible (limited) 2. Possible (limited)

In the later phases, national security policymaking shares many of the characteristics described by Bridgman and Davis. The Decision phase retains most of the same conventions, although the prime minister has the ability to dominate this phase. The Implementation and Evaluation phases are also very similar, particularly in terms of the complexity of implementation and the lack of willingness to evaluate policy advice.

Yet the policymaking system is not stagnant—it has changed and it will continue to do so. Gyngell and Wesley explain the reasons for this in terms of anarchy, but this suggests a total absence of control over actors pursuing their own self-interest.²⁵⁶ This description is difficult to sustain because armed forces might conduct operations independent of government direction in an anarchical system. This is clearly not reality in the Australian situation. Instead, change should be expected in the system because it is under constant pressure to adapt to existing conditions. This has been a major driver for an increasingly independent national policy by Australian governments since 1942, and for the creation of suitable structures to facilitate that independence.²⁵⁷ Thus the evolving role, function and prestige of External Affairs/DFAT is one expression of deliberate adaptation.

Change is a constant. However, newly elected governments may not be the major reason because they rarely make sweeping foreign or defence policy changes on coming to office. While some may act quickly once elected, most tend to implement change that has already been discussed and accepted. Thus, and in contrast to New Zealand's Lange Government's stand on nuclear ships²⁵⁸, the policy initiatives of the Whitlam Government were largely concerned with catching up with changes already accepted in the party and society.²⁵⁹ This view will be tested further, as the evidence presented in this chapter shows the importance of political leaders in determining how policymaking is conducted.

This chapter has used one interpretation of the general characteristics of Australian policymaking to derive, through an examination of defence and foreign policymaking, a tentative group of characteristics to describe national security policymaking. The next chapter takes this analysis further by examining the extent to which the tentative characteristics need to be modified for the more specific mode of crisis policymaking.

²⁵⁶ Gyngell and Wesley, p. 22.

²⁵⁷ Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 189.

²⁵⁸ David Lange's Labour Government refused permission for the USS *Buchanan* to enter New Zealand ports in 1985 (see R Thakur, 'Creation of the Nuclear-Free New Zealand Myth: Brinkmanship without a Brink', *Asian Survey* XXIX, no. 10, 1989).

²⁵⁹ Whitlam, p. 26; and Smith, 'Foreign Policy', p. 26.

POLICYMAKING DURING CRISES – AUSTRALIAN EXPERIENCES

This chapter refines the tentative characteristics of Australian national security policymaking to describe the specific mode of crisis policymaking. It identifies how crisis differs from national security policymaking and continues the process of identifying characteristics for testing in Part II.

Chapter 2 examines three vignettes of crisis involving Australia during the last century. Each begins with an outline of the crisis before discussing policymaking (using the Australian Policy Cycle to organise that discussion). The chapter's final section summarises the similarities and differences between the tentative characteristics identified in Chapter 1 (see Table 2) and those in the vignettes. These insights will be incorporated into those from the next chapter, which examines the emergence of the modern crisis policymaking system.

The main sources used to construct the vignettes include archival material, official histories, and published accounts and memoirs. While these are strong sources, they do not always capture the intimacy of crisis policymaking. This makes it difficult to document the relationships between actors and the political arena. Therefore, this section illustrates the main aspects of crisis policymaking but does not represent a comprehensive account of events.

Crisis vignette 1: Japan's threat, 1941–42

A new war

While Australian policymakers faced important challenges during the 1914–18 war, the crisis faced after the Japanese invaded Southeast Asia and the Pacific in late-1941 was the first (and only) occasion where an invasion of Australia was considered possible.

There had been sufficient time to prepare the policymaking system. A functioning body for directing the war effort, the War Cabinet, had been established in September 1939. A second body composed of ministers and senior opposition figures, known as the Advisory War Council (AWC), was formed a year later.¹ The main issues at this time

¹ The AWC was a compromise to ensure unity of decision-making after the Opposition declined the invitation to join a 'national government' (see D Day, *The Politics of War: Australia at War 1939–45*

concerned Australia's contribution to the war in Europe and economic mobilisation, but the looming Japanese threat was felt among Australian leaders from October 1940. Both Australian and British leaders based their strategy on defending Singapore from Japanese attack until reinforcements arrived.

John Curtin of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) became prime minister on 3 October 1941. Curtin made minimal changes to the structure of decision-making, and the two political groups essentially changed sides in the AWC. This established committee structure allowed the government to adapt to 'a new war' after the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbor, Malaya and Philippines on 7–8 December 1941, and to agree on the essential points of a course of action within two weeks.²

The situation deteriorated over the next three months as Singapore fell on 15 February 1942, Darwin was bombed on 19 February, and the Japanese landed in the Australian protectorates of Papua and New Guinea in March. The sense of crisis, already palpable in the nation's senior decision-making bodies, was reinforced when the Japanese advanced to Port Moresby along the Kokoda Track in July 1942.³

The policy cycle

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

While the Japanese attacks generated the crisis, the Australian Government's continued reliance on Britain for information and policy direction shaped issues and options. This influence was reinforced by Australia's longstanding connection to Britain, and the Australian reliance on British information sources. This 'virtual monopoly on information'—using resources including the Dominions Office, the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) and Australia's representative in London—'ensured that Australia

from Churchill to MacArthur, HarperCollins Publishers, Pymble, 2003, p. 86; and D Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet: Directing Australia's War Effort 1939–45*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 1996, pp. 20–1).

² D Horner, *Defence Supremo: Sir Frederick Shedden and the Making of Australian Defence Policy*, Allen and Unwin, St Leonards, 2000, p. 128.

³ P Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness: Australian Foreign Affairs 1941–47*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1980, pp. 42–3.

looked at the world through British eyes'.⁴ It was not until the Japanese attacked that all opposition to putting the defence of Australia ahead of Imperial commitments ceased.⁵

POLICY ANALYSIS

Defence analysed the war situation through formal, written strategic appreciations. These appreciations were characterised by their overwhelmingly military focus, limited consultation and significant high-level involvement in their drafting. In one example the Chief of the General Staff, Lieutenant General Vernon Sturdee, produced a new assessment soon after the fall of Singapore without input from the other service chiefs.⁶

Despite these characteristics, strategic assessments (and military appreciations) remained an imprecise art. David Horner noted:

... unlike later campaigns, the government closely scrutinised and at times sought to influence the conduct of the [Papuan] campaign ... the main reason for the interest was that it soon became obvious that the campaign had been shaped by inaccurate strategic assessments.⁷

Even attempts at rigorous analysis can become clouded in a crisis, and considerations other than objective fact play an important part in ostensibly professional advice.

POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The main policy instrument considered in this case was military action and most of the nation's resources were directed towards supporting the armed forces. At the time, Australia's diplomatic instruments were limited in their size and role, with representation in only London, Washington and Ottawa. The main job of these representatives was to provide support to the government's desire to obtain more British and US reinforcements to defend Australia. The Department of External Affairs (DEA) also sought a closer relationship with the Soviet Union, in the hope of increasing the pressure on Japan.⁸ That

⁴ Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 11.

⁵ See Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, Chapter 10 (especially p. 99) for a discussion of the disagreement within the AWC over the recall of 1st Australian Corps to Australia in early 1942.

⁶ Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 99. The other service chiefs were both seconded British officers.

⁷ D Horner, *High Command: Australian and Allied Strategy 1939–1945*, Allen and Unwin Australia, North Sydney, 1982, p. 215.

⁸ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, pp. 40–2.

the DEA was also reduced in size by labour regulation in 1942 also shows that Australia's priority was on the armed forces and economic mobilisation.⁹

CONSULTATION

Despite the limited consultation during military appreciations, there was still a strong norm of consultation within government elsewhere in the policy development process. The AWC was the strongest manifestation of this—it brought both sides of Parliament together to reduce the chance of direct opposition to government policy over the war. Consultation, of sorts, also occurred as different business people were co-opted to official committees in support of the war effort. However, engagement with the public was limited to information (see Figure 2 earlier), although elections did occur at regular intervals throughout the war.¹⁰ The government placed a high value on secrecy, to the point of having secret sessions of Parliament during the crisis.¹¹

The Australian Government tried to improve its ability to consult with its British and US allies in a number of ways. This extended from gaining a seat in the British War Cabinet, to less-successful initiatives such as the Pacific War Council.¹² Despite these efforts, the Australian Government exerted only patchy influence with the British, and was unable to shape US policy in any meaningful way. As a result consultation occasionally reached the partnership level, but the normal mode was delegation or control as the American and British governments decided on the major issues (such as 'beat Hitler first'¹³), and on the allocation of resources to theatres.¹⁴

⁹ The Manpower Directorate was responsible for regulating Australia's labour force for the war effort (see Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, Chapter 9; and Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 43 for its effect on the DEA).

¹⁰ P Hasluck, *The Government and the People: 1942–45*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1970, pp. 233–43.

¹¹ These sessions met on 20 and 21 February 1942. Parliament's regular meetings were disrupted during February through to June, but it was still able to consider bills to finance the war and debate measures to raise money for war (see Hasluck, *1942–45*, pp. 307–9).

¹² The Pacific War Council was established in 1942. Its members included the United States, Britain, China, the Netherlands, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

¹³ 'Beat Hitler First' summarises the agreed British and US grand strategy decided in March 1941 and confirmed in December 1941. As a result, the priority of US resources generally went towards the European theatre at the expense of the Pacific theatre (see Horner, *Defence Supremo*, p. 125; and J Beaumont, *Australia's War 1939–45*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 1996, pp. 171–2).

¹⁴ Hasluck, *1942–45*, pp. 227–9. Hasluck did not place emphasis on the relationship between Curtin and MacArthur. In his opinion, their relationship did not necessarily bring Australia any greater influence in Washington, but it 'placed Australia in the role of one who was backing one side in an American debate (over military resources) rather than in the role of an ally stating its views as one nation to another' (Hasluck, *1942–45*, p. 631).

COORDINATION

The difficulty with coordinating policy advice was exacerbated by aspects of structure and interdepartmental relations. On the structural side, war brought a significant increase in the number of departments, committees, boards and directorates overseeing the national effort. Most of these were responsible for resource planning and implementing policy, and all held specialised knowledge. Many structures, especially committees, were established on the basis of transitory conditions or to accommodate individual personalities. In other cases, the smaller structures became redundant as the war progressed and the government became more 'authoritarian'.¹⁵ Defence epitomised this phenomenon. By 1941, it comprised ten separate ministers and departments that were linked at the very top—on matters of higher defence policy—through Sir Frederick Shedden's Department for Defence Coordination.¹⁶ The physical separation of departments was another factor, with the Defence group located in Melbourne, while DEA and the Prime Minister's Department (PMD) were based in Canberra.

Relationships between departments were another factor in coordination. In 1942, PMD was not a major policy force, mainly because it lacked the capability to develop policy advice and possibly because Prime Minister Curtin was also Defence Minister (just as Menzies had been).¹⁷ DEA was also marginalised and weak, especially because the crucial relationship with Britain was maintained by PMD and Defence was a major influence on external relations.¹⁸ As a result, Defence—particularly Shedden—was the dominant force in policy advice. It became largely responsible for initiating action on war policy issues, examining (and so coordinating) the War Cabinet agenda, and ultimately as the authoritative voice of War Cabinet decisions.¹⁹ The lack of coordination was also seen in the relationships between the economic and war departments. According to Hasluck, the

¹⁵ P Hasluck, *The Government and the People: 1939–41*, Australian War Memorial, Canberra, 1952, p. 436–8 (cited as Hasluck, *1939–41*).

¹⁶ Hasluck, *1939–41*, p. 436 and 442–3. The Department's title reverted back to the 'Department of Defence' in April 1942. Sir Frederick Shedden was Secretary of the Department of Defence/Department of Defence Coordination from November 1937 to October 1956.

¹⁷ Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 7.

¹⁸ This weakness was also seen in the way the External Affairs Minister did not sit on the War Cabinet and AWC between October 1940–October 1941. See Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 43; and P Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901–1949*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983, p. 154.

¹⁹ Hasluck, *1939–41*, pp. 443–4.

economic departments did not follow direction and the war departments regarded 'the details of economic administration as subordinate matters'.²⁰

DECISION

The decision structure at the political level was based on a series of linked committees, all of which involved Curtin as the chair and Shedden as secretary.²¹ The Cabinet and War Cabinet were the highest decision-making bodies.²² The War Cabinet was formed to allow a small number of selected Cabinet ministers (between seven and eleven) to make decisions about strategy and the war effort, with only the most important issues referred to full Cabinet.²³ Senior military officers and officials were called to attend meetings as necessary, and Shedden acted as War Cabinet secretary throughout. Despite this central position, the War Cabinet did not retain its primacy and authority soon moved to the AWC.

Curtin promoted the AWC's role after the Japanese attacks in December 1941; he felt this body could manage the crisis more effectively than the War Cabinet. To achieve this, Curtin expanded the AWC membership by two ministers, decided that AWC decisions would be treated as Cabinet decisions, and increased the AWC's authority to include international questions, strategy and 'war policy generally'.²⁴ With these changes, the government and opposition became jointly responsible during the crisis of December 1941–September 1942²⁵, but not necessarily in the highest decision-making forum.

That position was taken, for a time, by the Prime Minister's War Conference (PMWC), which exercised decision-making authority for a short time after US General Douglas MacArthur arrived in Australia in March 1942. Curtin originally wanted to hold meetings between his senior ministers and the senior operational commanders. However, MacArthur convinced him to conduct a meeting between the two of them, and any others

²⁰ Hasluck, *1942–45*, p. 245, cited the effect upon 'manpower' allocations during and after the crisis.

²¹ For a discussion of this relationship and Shedden's role, see Horner, *Defence Supremo*, chapter 7.

²² As noted earlier, Parliament met in 1942 but it was not influential in the crisis. See Hasluck, *1942–45*, p. 307–9.

²³ The full Cabinet was consulted on major policy issues and received updates from the War Cabinet. Day-to-day direction of the war was delegated to the War Cabinet and AWC. Cabinet's other sub-committee, the Production Executive, needed to refer policy decisions to full Cabinet or the War Cabinet. See Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, pp. 2–3 and p. 132, and pp. 92–6.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 87, quoting a report in the *Sydney Morning Herald* of 18 December 1941.

²⁵ HV Evatt noted that 'in the dark days of 1942 when the threat to Australia was very grave, all the important decisions taken were really decisions of the Council' (*ibid.*, p. 196). The AWC continued to meet through to the end of the War, although much of the authority for decisions returned to the War Cabinet after August 1943.

whom the prime minister might summon. This was accepted and Shedden became a participant, rather than just the secretary. This arrangement excluded General Thomas Blamey (the senior Australian military officer) from decision-making for a time, and meant that MacArthur became the senior military adviser to Curtin. The PMWC met fortnightly in May and June 1942, and discussed strategy, priorities and war effort.

Once the threat receded and MacArthur moved his headquarters to Brisbane in July 1942, the PMWC became less important in the policymaking system. The remarkable story of this structure, however, was that it existed at all. It was highly irregular, particularly when considered against the concept of sovereignty. As Peter Edwards noted, 'A body comprising a prime minister, a public servant and a foreign general flouts almost every constitutional convention'.²⁶ The PMWC did, however, put military considerations at the forefront of decision-making in a very close partnership between a civilian leader and his principal military and policy advisers.²⁷

Decision-making in this crisis therefore revolved around a number of key people, such as Curtin, Shedden, MacArthur, Blamey and the members of the AWC. That these identities, and therefore the relationships among the key people, remained reasonably stable throughout the crisis helped to make decision-making smoother. However, these relationships were probably more critical than the formal structures described above for determining the decision path.²⁸

A number of Cabinet conventions can be identified in this period. Joint responsibility within the AWC was one, and it is certain that all members felt bound by decisions made there.²⁹ This convention was sometimes difficult to honour because the prime minister

²⁶ P Edwards, 'Another look at Curtin and MacArthur', paper presented at *Remembering 1942*, Australian War Memorial, 2002, available <http://www.awm.gov.au>, accessed 29 August 2006.

²⁷ See D Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, pp. 121–3 for further commentary on that relationship.

²⁸ See Horner, *High Command*, pp. 137–8; Horner, *Defence Supremo*, p. 59, p. 150 and p. 234; Hasluck, *Diplomatic Witness*, p. 7; and C Waters, 'The Great Debates: H.V. Evatt and the Department of External Affairs', in J Beaumont, C Waters, D Lowe, G Woodard (eds), *Ministers, Mandarins and Diplomats: Australian Foreign Policy Making 1941–1969*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, p. 52; and Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 346–7, for discussions of these personalities and their influence on policymaking.

²⁹ See the comments attributed to KA Beasley, an ALP member of the AWC, in Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, p. 196.

feared that briefing opposition members on operational matters increased the chances of leaks and political attacks.³⁰

Accountability norms were subdued but they were not extinguished. While joint responsibility acted to prevent public criticism, the opposition still used the AWC to question ministers and officials. Access to good information facilitated this.³¹ It also remained the convention for all officials (less the secretariat) to retire while decisions were made by the War Cabinet and AWC (but not the PMWC), and for significant debate to occur in their absence.

IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of policy decisions in this crisis fell mainly upon the military, particularly those forces in New Guinea. However, there was a significant lack of confidence in these forces, especially those conducting the fighting withdrawal along the Kokoda Track. This lack of confidence heightened the sense of crisis and drew political leaders and generals such as Blamey directly into the campaign's management.³²

Diplomacy played a supporting role in implementation, with its main task being to secure more resources from the United States and Britain.³³ Diplomats could also undermine those efforts, especially when representatives had different opinions. In one example, Australia's High Commissioner to London, Stanley (Lord) Bruce, ignored his government's direction to request more military resources during discussions with British Prime Minister Churchill.³⁴

Implementation also needed to flow into the civilian economy in this crisis. This was attempted through a range of means, including bodies to oversee economic policies, legislation and resource allocation.³⁵ The coordination of this effort was complicated by the

³⁰ Menzies was concerned about leaks during the 1941 Greek campaign. See Horner, *High Command*, p. 84.

³¹ For example, Curtin used information gained in the AWC to criticise government plans and offer alternatives for the defence of Australia in September 1941. See Horner, *Inside the War Cabinet*, pp. 72–3.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 134 and pp. 136–9; and D Horner, *Crisis of command: Australian generalship and the Japanese threat, 1942–1943*, Australian National University Press, Canberra, 1978, for political reactions to the Kokoda campaign.

³³ For example, External Affairs Minister Evatt went to great lengths to obtain more Spitfire aircraft for Australia's defence. See Edwards, *Prime Ministers*, p. 155; and Day, *The Politics of War*, p. 388.

³⁴ Day, *The Politics of War*, pp. 386–9 and 393.

³⁵ See Hasluck, *1942–45*, pp. 233–43.

divergence between departments and by the public's apathy towards the need for a unified war effort.³⁶

EVALUATION

There is no evidence of any formal evaluation of the policymaking system during or after this crisis. Evaluation did occur elsewhere, such as the review conducted in 1942 into the role and performance of the Department of Information.³⁷

Analysis against the tentative characteristics

This crisis provides broad support for the characteristics of national security policymaking presented in Table 2. This vignette shows the prime minister's dominance in decision-making, particularly in the way Curtin changed decision structures during the crisis. On one level, the changes to the AWC's role from December 1941 were logical; they streamlined the decision process and increased the chances of political consensus. However, the PMWC reflected a preference for reducing the number of people involved in decision-making. Furthermore, Shedden's role was unusual at a time when the norm ran against official participation in decision-making, while MacArthur's deep involvement was unheard-of.

It is possible to interpret this as a case of pre-bureaucratic politics where Defence triumphed over less-powerful rivals. Indeed, DEA staffing was reduced significantly in 1942, and PMD played its usual communication role. This lack of competition may be explained by the overwhelming focus on the war and Defence's control of the War Cabinet agenda and submissions. It also shows the immaturity of DEA (as an institution) at this time, and the acceptance of traditional roles in a time of crisis.

The influence of this crisis was felt for some time in direct terms, particularly in the post-war settlement Australia sought. The influence also continued indirectly, as some members of the pre-Curtin Government War Cabinet and AWC during this crisis returned to government in 1949. It was these leaders—including Robert Menzies, Harold Holt, Percy Spender, John McEwan and Richard Casey—who were charged with guiding Australia through a number of security challenges during the 1950s and 1960s.

³⁶ Hasluck, *1939–41*, pp. 235–8 and pp. 374–86, recounts the difficulty of channeling public concerns to create an effective national response to the war before 1942.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 383–5; and Hasluck, *1942–45*, p. 397.

Crisis vignette 2: Australia and ‘United Action’, 1954

Dominoes and decisions

Peter Edwards described Australia’s post-1945 involvement in Southeast Asian conflicts as one of ‘crises and commitments’.³⁸ While some of these crises were ultimately of minor importance for Australia, others had far-reaching consequences for the region, for Australia’s place therein, and for the very nature of Australian society. Edwards observes that the government handled some crises well, but Australia was left exposed and vulnerable at times because solutions to past crises were applied ‘as if they were irrefutable truisms’.³⁹

The United Action Crisis of 1954 provides an example where Australian crisis policymaking was successful to a degree, although good fortune played a part in avoiding significant political or military costs.⁴⁰ This fortune was notable because Australia’s formal crisis policymaking system was not always followed. According to Edwards:

... policy on these and other external crises was often decided in meetings in Menzies’ office in Parliament House, bringing together three ministers—Menzies, Casey and McBride—and two departmental secretaries, Allen Brown of the Prime Minister’s Department and Tange.⁴¹

Edwards also noted how Shedden, still Secretary of the Department of Defence, was now ‘separated by physical distance and intellectual disengagement’ and did not play a major role. Instead, Menzies relied heavily on the experience of the ministers involved in this group, while using the full Cabinet as a vehicle to legitimise his actions.⁴²

The crisis of March–June 1954 developed as the Vietnamese communist (Viet Minh) forces closed on the French military operating base of Dien Bien Phu.⁴³ Fearing the worst, US Secretary of State John Foster Dulles proposed ‘united action’ by European nations, the United States and others such as Australia to prevent the (Chinese) communist threat

³⁸ P Edwards (with G Pemberton), *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia’s Involvement in Southeast Asia Conflicts 1948–1965*, Commonwealth of Australia and Allen and Unwin, North Sydney, 1992.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 385.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 386.

⁴¹ P Edwards, *Arthur Tange: Last of the Mandarins*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2006, pp. 71–2. In 1954, Casey was Minister for External Affairs, Sir Philip McBride was Minister for Defence, and Sir Arthur Tange was Permanent Head [Secretary] of DEA.

⁴² Edwards, *Arthur Tange*, pp. 71–2; and Horner, *Defence Supremo*, pp. 316–18.

⁴³ The French army established a forward operating base at Dien Bien Phu in Vietnam as part of their campaign against the Viet Minh. This base was besieged and became a symbol of the faltering French position in their colony. For the definitive account of this battle see B Fall, *Hell in a Very Small Place: The Siege of Dien Bien Phu*, JB Lippincott, Philadelphia, 1967.

undermining Southeast Asia. Dulles warned this might 'involve serious risk', but such risks were necessary to 'win peace'.⁴⁴ President Eisenhower also promoted the policy in his speech about the 'falling domino principle'.⁴⁵ Others noted calls for nuclear weapons to be used.⁴⁶

Australia's response to this crisis did not involve the deployment of forces, as in the 1941–42 crisis. Instead, this crisis was managed in Cabinet and played out through diplomacy by Australia's overseas missions. The two institutions provided, in different ways, the locations for the Australian Government to determine its response to the conflicting solutions offered by the cautious Great Britain and more bellicose United States. This crisis therefore contained a sub-text about reconciling the Australian Government's emerging sense of national interests in a rapidly changing world with its long-held and new-found commitments to external powers.

The policy cycle

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

Once again, the dominant issues for the Australian Government were identified overseas. While the deteriorating situation around Dien Bien Phu was the immediate trigger, contributing issues included the French Government's military and political difficulties, the approaching Geneva Conference⁴⁷, and the US Government's determination to act against Chinese aggression.

Despite improving indigenous diplomatic and intelligence capabilities, British sources of information remained important to the Australian Government. Sir Arthur Tange noted how Australia's 'independent sources of information (were) very slender indeed' in

⁴⁴ JF Dulles, 'Indochina – Views of the United States on the Eve of the Geneva Conference: Address by the Secretary of State, March 29, 1954', available <http://www.yale.edu>, accessed 20 October 2006. This speech was widely reported in Australia—see AAP, 'U.S. Urges United Asia Action', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 March 1954, p. 1. Similar stories were carried in the *Melbourne Herald* on 30 March 1954 (p. 5) and *Adelaide Advertiser* on 31 March (p. 3).

⁴⁵ President DD Eisenhower, 'President Eisenhower's News Conference, April 7, 1954', available <http://www.mtholyoke.edu>, accessed 20 October 2006.

⁴⁶ Noting this crisis was emerging in the midst of US hydrogen bomb testing at Bikini Atoll. See TC Schelling, 'The Legacy of Hiroshima: A half-century without Nuclear War', 2000, available <http://www.publicpolicy.umd.edu>, accessed 20 October 2006.

⁴⁷ This multi-national peace conference was held from 26 April to 21 July 1954. It produced a series of accords that agreed on free elections in Vietnam for 1956.

the 1950s.⁴⁸ Consequently, Australian officials and politicians paid ‘some price in objective judgement’, but they recognised that policy would have been ‘bereft of the kind of information which was necessary’ without British support.⁴⁹ This reliance made exchanges among Britain, New Zealand and Australia important, particularly because these supported the cautious approach favoured by Australian leaders.⁵⁰ Indeed, the contrast was stark between the American position promoting action and the British preference for a diplomatic solution.

Another complicating factor for issue identification was geography. Prior to this crisis, the main focus for Australian security attention was not Asia. Rather than looking at the Chinese threat, both the prime minister and Defence envisaged contributions against possible Soviet expansionism in Iran and the broader Middle East.⁵¹ Despite this, External Affairs Minister Casey and his department, under Tange, were making a case for Australia to look more closely at Asia and to make the United States more interested in this region.⁵²

While the press followed this crisis closely, Edwards notes how they did not initially have a unanimous position. A sample of capital city daily newspapers supports this view. At first, *The Sydney Morning Herald* expressed ‘heartfelt relief’ in the determination expressed by Mr Dulles, and a warning of its military implications for Australia. Further, the editorial warned that ‘no Australian Government could hang back if it were called to help’.⁵³ Conversely, *The Melbourne Herald* urged caution and diplomacy ahead of action.⁵⁴ The press did tend, however, towards a more ‘British’ line later in the crisis, which clearly accorded with the instincts of most Cabinet members.⁵⁵ There was also strong support for

⁴⁸ JDB Miller, ‘Transcript of Interview with Sir Arthur Tange, AC, CBE’, National Library of Australia – Oral History Unit, Canberra, 1981, p. 111.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 126–8.

⁵¹ D Lowe, ‘Menzies’ National Security State 1950–53’, in F Cain (ed), *Menzies in Peace and War*, Allen and Unwin/Australian Defence Studies Centre, St Leonards, 1997, pp. 43–4.

⁵² Ibid., p. 43; and Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 53–6.

⁵³ *Sydney Morning Herald*, ‘Warning to Red Axis – and to Australia’, 31 March 1954, p. 2. The *Advertiser* adopted a similar position (‘Safety in the Pacific’, 1 April 1954, p. 2), and extended it by declaring that atomic weapons should be used to defeat the communists.

⁵⁴ *Melbourne Herald*, ‘Warning to China?’, 7 April 1954, p. 4.

⁵⁵ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 128 and p. 133. The *Advertiser* was somewhat equivocal. One editorial supported the desire for a broader security pact in Southeast Asia, but was concerned for its implications for ANZUS (‘Mr. Dulles’s Defence Plan’, 5 May 1954, p. 2). Later, the editor was more concerned for taking positives from the French defeat and US reconsideration of its position, noting how the ‘American Secretary of State has clearly profited from his recent setback [in Geneva]’ because events gave a new impetus to talks about a security pact in Southeast Asia (*Advertiser*, ‘Mr. Dulles starts again’, 11 May 1954, p. 2).

Foreign Minister Casey's speech on 30 April at Geneva and optimism expressed at the outcomes of the conference.⁵⁶ This support worked to the government's political advantage, as it helped prevent United Action from becoming an election issue.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The main issues for policy analysis included Australia's alliance with the United States, the potential for war with China, further treaties with Southeast Asian states, the impending election, the Geneva conference on Korea and Vietnam, and the influence of Chinese and communist successes on regional stability. The choices for policy analysis also came down to following either a 'British' or 'American' line, as noted above. Each of these issues worked together to create high risks, time pressure and transformative potential.

Analysis was conducted within individual departments, and there appears to have been only limited links between them. Defence policy analysis was conducted as a cooperative task between the Joint Intelligence Committee (JIC) and Joint Planning Committee (JPC), and their work was presented as an appreciation for the Defence Committee about the military aspects of United Action.⁵⁷ The advice from DEA stressed caution. In their submissions to Cabinet, DEA pointed to the dangers of Western military intervention, concern for relations with Asian countries, and the potential to provoke a Chinese reaction.⁵⁸ Despite these differences, it is clear that all—including Cabinet—were seized of the importance of this issue to Australia's security and the problems it presented for Australia's external relationships.

One complicating factor, aside from the time pressure created by the tactical situation at Dien Bien Phu, was the imprecise meaning of the US proposal (even by 27 May).⁵⁹ Despite this, assertions of Indochina's importance by American leaders were 'broadly in line with agreed Commonwealth appreciations', with the only point of

⁵⁶ AAP and Staff Correspondent, 'Casey Praised at Geneva', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 1 May 1954, p. 3; and *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Some Progress has been made at Geneva', 6 May 1954, p. 2.

⁵⁷ See NAA, A1838/269, TS652/3/2 Part 2, Joint Intelligence Committee Minutes, 13 and 14 April 1954. The JIC was tasked to conduct analysis on 18 March 1954, and it met in session with the JPC twice on 13 and 14 April. Both groups had invited members or observers from other departments including DEA and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO). The JPC is discussed in more detail in Chapter 3.

⁵⁸ Edwards, *Arthur Tange*, pp. 74–5.

⁵⁹ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Casey to Visit Indo-China and Washington', 8 April 1954, p. 1. Also, Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 127.

departure being the assessment of Indonesia's vulnerability to communist subversion.⁶⁰ This shows how governments use external sources of advice—in this case, from allied governments—to shape or confirm their own thinking about a particular problem.

POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The Australian Government had a full range of policy instruments available during this crisis. While the US Government was keen to explore military options, the Australian Government went to some lengths to ensure these were not discussed in Cabinet. Indeed, one suggestion to consult with the Chief of the General Staff was explicitly rejected in order to prevent any discussion of military action before the election.⁶¹

Part of the government tried to find other, more novel tools to achieve its goals. Instruments such as aid, education and information were being considered as important tools around this time, but not strictly in relation to the United Action crisis. In early 1955, External Affairs Minister Spender was given the task of creating a non-military response to communism that would involve aid, education, visits and shaping trade unions. The use of information through radio, books and magazines was also being considered to counter communist propaganda, and to create an aspiration for democracy and prosperity in Southeast Asia. The Australian Government also looked at how it could work with other governments towards the same objectives. However, the Overseas Planning Committee, which was responsible for planning and coordinating these measures, ceased meeting by the end of 1956—perhaps because its role had been subsumed by international groups, perhaps because bureaucrats were skeptical of its usefulness, and perhaps because its political advocate was losing his power in Cabinet.⁶²

CONSULTATION

Consultation with its allies was essential to establishing Australia's position in this crisis. Consultation began with a discussion between US Secretary of State Dulles and Casey on 26 March, and continued in various meetings between Casey and British, French,

⁶⁰ NAA, A1945/42, Defence Committee Minutes, 'Indo-China – United States' Proposals for United Action', 15 April 1954, p. 1951 and Annex A1953.

⁶¹ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 126.

⁶² For a detailed explanation of the measures considered and the effect of this initiative, see C Waters, 'A failure of imagination: R.G. Casey and Australian Plans for counter-subversion in Asia, 1954–1956', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, pp. 360–1.

New Zealand and American leaders throughout April and May.⁶³ The importance of consultation with Australia's allies was emphasised by Menzies in Cabinet⁶⁴, and the form of such consultation eventually included meetings aimed at identifying possible troop commitments. These meetings led to detailed military-to-military discussions in June 1954 and in the margins of the Geneva Conference.⁶⁵ Consultation efforts also included close monitoring of major US–British meetings and representations to other nations by Australia's diplomatic staff.⁶⁶

COORDINATION

The differences in analytical perspectives between departments may have contributed to a lack of coordination. This problem was made clear in an exchange between the Permanent Secretaries of Defence and DEA from 1 April 1954, in which each complained of the other's lack of responsiveness and unwillingness to cooperate. While one of the main reasons for this acrimony was the principle that each permanent head was responsible for giving independent advice to his minister, the differing personal views of Shedden and Tange were probably important.⁶⁷ A similar lack of coordination was shown when the important submission to Cabinet by DEA on 4 June was presented for the first time at the actual meeting.⁶⁸ Coordination was better when departments had permanent seats on committees, or sent observers to them.⁶⁹

⁶³ See TB Millar (ed), *Australian Foreign Minister: The Diaries of R.G. Casey 1951–60*, Collins, London, 1972, pp. 123–69; and Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 122.

⁶⁴ NAA, A11099, Cabinet Notebook, Notes of Meetings 12 February 1954 to 27 April 1954, p. 27/85.

⁶⁵ NAA, A1838/346, 661/2/2/1 Part 2, Cabinet Submission 360, 'Report of the Five Power Military Conference in Washington, June 1954', c. June/July 1954.

⁶⁶ Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 136–7. Edwards, *Arthur Tange*, p. 75, highlights the role of diplomatic cables in coordinating action.

⁶⁷ Horner discusses these differences, which could be categorised simplistically as a 'British focus' and emphasis on containing the Soviets on Shedden's part, and an 'Asian focus' on Tange's (*Defence Supremo*, p. 316–19). The Permanent Head of a department (now known as the Secretary) is an appointed career official.

⁶⁸ This was the first meeting of Cabinet after the 29 May 1954 election, and the first Cabinet consideration of the crisis since 27 April. When discussion turned to Indo-China, Casey read from a DEA submission that had not been circulated prior to the meeting. He stated the basic, and continuing, dilemma for Australia in these terms: 'We have to steer between letting the US believe we will fight our battles and letting the US uncautiously get into a ground war in Asia' (NAA, A11099/1, Cabinet Notebook, Notes of Meetings 4 June 1954 to 27 October 1954, pp. 2–3/164).

⁶⁹ For example, ASIO sent a liaison officer to JIC meetings. While the Defence Committee brought officials from Defence, DEA, PMD and Treasury together, the 'outsiders' only had the status of 'invited' members in 1954. See NAA, 'Defence Records', (available <http://www.naa.gov.au>, accessed 14 November 2007).

DECISION

Australian Cabinets often form sub-committees to consider specific problems, as seen in the vignette described above. Despite this experience and practice, this crisis was discussed—and managed—in the full Cabinet.

Cabinet's dominance was refined in three ways. In the first, Menzies used his political skills and credibility to be the central decision-maker and major figure. While some dispute whether Menzies established a 'prime ministerial' style or not, his dominance over defence and foreign policy issues was not in question.⁷⁰ In the second refinement, Menzies made best use of the existing conditions and institutions to promote his position. These included the increasingly influential PMD, the low-levels of currency in foreign affairs among most of the Cabinet, and Second World War-era images and analogies including references to appeasement, the Spanish Civil War, the need to resist aggression, and previous war roles.⁷¹

The third refinement can be seen in the way few firm decisions were made in the full Cabinet. Instead, it seems likely that Menzies gave a great deal of latitude to ministers to make decisions and then back-brief Cabinet.⁷² This meant Cabinet was a place for ministers to air their views and set parameters for action, rather than a decision-making body. As a result, some personalities were allowed to dominate the discussion even though they did not have portfolio responsibilities related to the issues. Menzies would often conclude meetings with a short summary, without necessarily committing the government to one course or another.⁷³ Once done, the real decisions were probably made in the smaller

⁷⁰ D Lee, 'Cabinet', in S Prasser, JR Nethercote and J Warhurst (eds), *The Menzies Era: A Reappraisal of Government, Policy and Politics*, Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1995, pp. 125–9. See also R Trood, 'Prime Ministers and Foreign Policy', in P Weller (ed), *Menzies to Keating: The Development of Australian Prime Ministership*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 157.

⁷¹ Lowe, 'Menzies' National Security State 1950–53', pp. 43–6. Tange also describes appeasement as one of the four 'strong beliefs' guiding coalition policy at this time. See Sir Arthur Tange, 'On leading horses to water', in Tange (ed), *Defence Policy Administration and Organisation: Selected Lectures 1971–1986*, Australian Defence Force Academy, Canberra, 1992, p. 85.

⁷² I Hamilton, 'Interview with Sir John Bunting', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1983, p. 1/4/51–53.

⁷³ In practice, the Cabinet notebooks show that everyone in Menzies' Cabinet was able to contribute to discussion, but some personalities tended to dominate (Cabinet Notebook, 12 February – 27 April 1954). Of the 20 ministers, only half of these really participated in discussions about the crisis with Hasluck, Casey, McMahon, Kent Hughes, Holt, McBride and HL Anthony being the most frequent speakers. A few others made one or two remarks, mainly to ask a question or to support another's view. Interestingly, Menzies was recorded as saying very little in some meetings (such as the Cabinet meeting of 19 April, pp. 58–59/85), sometimes speaking just to outline the broad policy (27 April 1954, pp. 82–84/85). In the

grouping centered on Menzies, Casey, McBride and their senior officials.⁷⁴ While Weller reported the strong involvement of officials in Cabinet in the early 1950s⁷⁵, there is no record of their attendance during this crisis. If these records are correct, then the absence of officials from Cabinet goes against the prevailing norm.

IMPLEMENTATION

Unlike the previous vignette, the government tried to avoid using military force to implement policy in this crisis. Instead, the External Affairs Minister and diplomats were left to determine the positions of the other major actors and to communicate Australia's views to others. Yet not every minister was confident about such a reliance on diplomacy to stabilise the region. Postmaster-General Anthony countered Casey's long presentation on the situation on 4 June by stating his lack of confidence in Asian countries to 'stop communism' and stressed reliance on the United States. Defence Minister McBride spoke of Chinese ambitions over the Red River Delta and the need to get local support for ground operations. He warned that 'things will go badly and then the US will be forced to use atom bomb'. He thought Australia was the only state that could influence the United States on this. Minister for the Interior Kent Hughes wanted the prime minister to go to Washington and London because 'Nothing is more vital to us than Indo China'. He tried to promote this conflict as a 'holy war' against atheism in order to attract Asian support.⁷⁶

EVALUATION

There is no evidence to indicate that the policymaking process was evaluated in this crisis. Menzies did institute a number of changes to his Cabinet system soon after, however by establishing the Prime Minister's Committee and the General Administrative

4 June meeting, Menzies did not speak until late and did not commit himself to a course of action (recorded in Cabinet Notebook, 4 June–27 October 1954, pp. 2–11/164).

⁷⁴ One instance of the importance of this smaller grouping can be seen in the events of 25 April 1954, when a misleading report led Australia to fear that the United States was about to launch a massive air strike to support the French. Rather than calling Cabinet together, Menzies, Casey and McBride agreed to convey Australia's opposition to any such strike—see Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 132. Lee ('Cabinet', p. 125) supports the importance of this small grouping to Menzies, and he notes Hasluck's opinion of Menzies' policymaking style. In contrast, Trood does not think Menzies and Casey were close, and he downplays the latter's influence (Trood, 'Prime Ministers', p. 167).

⁷⁵ P Weller, *Cabinet Government in Australia, 1901–2006*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007, pp. 100–3.

⁷⁶ Cabinet Notebook 4 June–27 October 1954, pp. 6–7/164. Sir Wilfrid Kent Hughes was a long-serving Australian parliamentarian and minister. He was also Minister for Works in 1954.

Committee.⁷⁷ Even this arrangement failed to satisfy Menzies and he instituted a new system of an 'inner' and 'outer' ministry in January 1956.⁷⁸

Analysis against the tentative characteristics

This vignette provides strong evidence to validate many of the tentative characteristics of national security policymaking and to support their application to the crisis mode. Once again foreign countries were important to issue identification, while domestically the prime minister, the external affairs and defence ministers, and the bureaucracy were dominant. While the print media covered the crisis and Geneva Conference extensively, the general line presented by the major outlets studied earlier was supportive of the government's preferred position. This does not deny the importance of domestic considerations, especially since this crisis occurred during an election campaign. Nor should this crisis be considered in isolation, because a number of other local and international issues—especially the Korean War settlement, the Petrov Affair⁷⁹, the new US alliance, and generally strong anti-communist feelings—were entangled in the issues and analysis of the United Action crisis.

Another feature of the analysis was the lack of considered study of the issues by Cabinet ministers. Many with domestic portfolios were vocal in Cabinet, but since the major submissions were presented at the actual meeting, most of their opinions were likely based on their quick reading and personal experience. This example supports the importance of extra-rational factors in policymaking, particularly where the time for analysis is relatively short. This vignette also demonstrates the situational utility of policy instruments and the way Cabinet attempts to isolate instruments—in this case, the military—they do not wish to use.

Bureaucratic politics is evident in the conflict between Defence and DEA. This caused a lack of coordination and drew Cabinet, especially the Prime Minister, into the policymaking process. This conflict also helped PMD to establish its credentials as a source

⁷⁷ Weller, *Cabinet Government*, p. 98.

⁷⁸ LF Crisp, *Australian National Government*, Longmans, Green and Co, Croydon, 1965, p. 347–8, and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *The Development of Cabinet Procedures in Australia (Extract from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Annual Report 1983–84)*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1984, p. 18.

⁷⁹ Vladimir Petrov was a Soviet secret police officer who was posing as an embassy official when he (and his wife, who was also a secret police officer) defected to Australia in April 1954—see R Manne, *The Petrov affair: politics and espionage*, Pergamon Press, Sydney, 1987.

of advice.⁸⁰ The tension between Defence's 'British' and DEA's 'regional' or 'independent' view also demonstrated the existence of competing dominant frameworks within the bureaucracy.

While Cabinet may have been nominally in charge, it was clearly an ineffective crisis manager.⁸¹ This assessment would be disputed by the Official Historian, Peter Edwards. He thought Cabinet played a canny game by using the May Federal election to conceal its preference for a negotiated solution, thus avoiding a strong American rebuke and the equally unpalatable need to choose between the US and British positions.⁸² Indeed, it must be said that the best decision was probably not to make one, especially as any initiative on Australia's part was unlikely to have been decisive.

But Edwards' assessment is not supported by the meandering discussions recorded in the Cabinet Notebooks of April–May 1954, where many ministers contributed to the discussion regardless of their portfolio. Some contributions were emotive (such as Kent Hughes' desire to wage 'holy war' against the communists), while others contained fanciful assumptions (such as McMahon's view that action could bring 'Asian opinion' around).⁸³ At best, Cabinet provided the parameters for the smaller grouping, based on Menzies, Casey, McBride, Tange and Brown, to establish the more detailed policy line. That Menzies changed his Cabinet structure soon after this crisis, and again in 1956, hints at a level of dissatisfaction with Cabinet as a forum for decision. These structures were tested over the next eight years, but they did not last long enough to face Australia's next major international crisis.

Crisis vignette 3: *Konfrontasi*, 1963–64

The other crisis

Australia faced two major national security crises in the 1960s. The one which attracted most attention was the commitment to the Vietnam War from 1962–72, which saw regular (professional volunteer) and national service (conscript) troops serve in an

⁸⁰ Trood, 'Prime Ministers', p. 168.

⁸¹ Tange thought Cabinet (and DEA) would not have the capacity to handle more than one crisis at a time (JDB Miller, 'Transcript of Interview with Sir Arthur Tange, AC, CBE', National Library of Australia – Oral History Unit, Canberra, 1981, p. 101).

⁸² Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 138.

⁸³ Cabinet Notebook, 4 June–27 October 1954, pp. 6–7/164; and Cabinet Notebook, 12 February–27 April 1954, pp.82–4/85.

ultimately unpopular defeat.⁸⁴ This larger war overlapped with a smaller conflict that had significant implications for Australia's relationships with its major allies and its neighbours. This final vignette examines the conflict, now known by its Indonesian name *Konfrontasi*, from early 1963 to the initial commitment of Australian military units to Borneo in April 1964.

The events of 1963 developed after a proposal to federate the peninsular Malay states, Singapore and the Borneo territories of Sabah and Sarawak as 'Malaysia' by the Malayan Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman.⁸⁵ This proposal was eventually rejected by the Indonesian and the Philippines Governments, who shared rival claims to these territories with Malaya and a growing distrust of 'Western' intentions in Southeast Asia. The mix of issues turned into a heated situation when a small but still significant revolt in the Sultanate of Brunei was suppressed by British and Malayan troops and police in December 1962.⁸⁶ This revolt was followed in January 1963 by provocative statements by Indonesian leaders, who described the proposed federation as 'neo-colonial' and 'neo-imperialist'.⁸⁷

Australia's leaders and officials watched this growing dispute closely, with their main policy objectives being to support Malaysia's right to exist, to obtain a peaceful solution, and to protect Australian (indeed Western) interests in the region.⁸⁸ These

⁸⁴ A total of 50 000 Australians served in Vietnam during this time (Australian War Memorial, 'Encyclopedia: Vietnam War 1962–1972', available <http://www.awm.gov.au>, accessed 10 July 2007). For discussions of Australian policymaking around the Vietnam War see Edwards (with Pemberton), Chapters 15 to 19; G Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam*, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 1987; and G Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004.

⁸⁵ This proposal, made on 27 May 1961, gained initial acceptance from Singapore, the Sultanate of Brunei and Indonesia (all three later changed their positions). The proposal to include the Sabah revived a territorial claim from the Philippines. For a discussion of the early events surrounding the creation of Malaysia see G Poulgrain, *The Genesis of Konfrontasi*, Crawford House Publishing, Bathurst, 1998; J Subritzky, *Confronting Sukarno: British, American, Australian and New Zealand Diplomacy in the Malaysian-Indonesian Confrontation 1961–5*, MacMillan Press, Houndsmills, 2000, Chapter 1; and M Dee, *In Australia's Own Interests: Australian Foreign Policymaking During Confrontation, 1963–1966*, unpublished PhD thesis, University of New England, 2000, pp. 58–64. The latter two provide summaries and analysis of the events leading up to the Indonesian declaration of January 1963.

⁸⁶ JAC Mackie, *Konfrontasi: The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963–1966*, Oxford University Press, Kuala Lumpur, 1974, pp. 112–22; and Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 77.

⁸⁷ Mackie, pp. 126–7. See also NAA, A6364, CS JA1963/01, External Affairs Cablegram to Canberra, 21 January 1963 in Moreen Dee (ed), *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia 1961–1966, Documents on Australian Foreign Policy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2005, p. 33.

⁸⁸ Most of these interests were articulated in the first Cabinet submission on the issue—see NAA, A4940, CS3389, Cabinet Decision No. 1543 (HOC), 'Submission No. 1304 – Political and Economic Association of Singapore, the Federation of Malaya and the Borneo Territories', 16 August 1961, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 1–9. This position remained fairly consistent over the next

outcomes were preferred as Australia needed to balance its defence agreement with Malaya and support for Britain against relations with its increasingly assertive Indonesian neighbours. On 16 January 1963, the British Government asked for consultation with the United States, Australia and (eventually) New Zealand to assess 'Indonesia's expansionist intentions' and hostility to Malaysia.⁸⁹ This invitation was accepted, and led to a series of consultations over the next nine months.⁹⁰

The crisis became acute as the Malayan Government proclaimed Malaysia Day for 16 September 1963. This announcement, made by Malayan Prime Minister Tunku Abdul Rahman on 29 August 1963, was considered especially provocative as a UN consultation process was still underway in the Borneo territories. This announcement brought strong condemnation by the Indonesian Government and protest action against British interests in Jakarta.⁹¹ The Australian Government offered immediate political support for Malaysia, consulted the United States and Britain, and adopted a 'less conciliatory' attitude towards the Indonesian position.⁹²

Discussions about possible outside military commitments continued, with the British Government making formal approaches concerning Australian military aid and troops in September and November 1963.⁹³ These requests were rejected by the Australian Government because there was no assessed military need for additional troops and no

five years, with additional concerns such as the peaceful solution and the maintenance of the Indonesian–Australian relationship, being identified soon after the commencement of *Konfrontasi* in 1963 (see NAA, A4940, CS 3725, Cabinet Decision No. 675, 'Submissions 552, 560, 575 and 576', 5 March 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 71–2).

⁸⁹ NAA, A4943 Vol. 7, Cabinet Decision 632, 'Indonesia: Quadripartite Talks', 5 February 1963. Cabinet also allowed two naval ships, then operating in waters near Borneo, to assist British forces.

⁹⁰ Some other examples of the formal consultations between Australia and its allies include NAA, A1838, CS 270/1/1 Part 1, 'Extract from the 1963 ANZUS Record', c. June 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 119–20; and NAA, 1209/80, CS 64/6071, D I4637, Department of External Affairs Inward Cablegram, 'Quadripartite Talks–Indonesia/Malaysia', 12 February 1964. Bilateral consultations also occurred. For example, note the series of Australia–US consultations in June–July 1963 noted in Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 263–7.

⁹¹ For one account of the protests, see Mackie, pp. 183–94.

⁹² The Australian government extended the existing Australia–Malaya Defence Agreement to cover Malaysia (see NAA, A1209, 196/6554 Part 2, Cablegram to Critchley, 'Future Association with British–Malaysian Defence Treaty', 11 September 1963; in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 158–9.

⁹³ NAA, 1209/80, CS1963/667, Message to Sir Robert Menzies From Mr Harold MacMillan, 20 September 1963; and NAA, A1209, CS 1964/6040 Part 1, Minute from Bunting to Menzies, 'Australian Assistance to the Defence of Eastern Malaysia', 5 December 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 192–3. A Malaysian letter brought a serious reconsideration of the Australian position in early 1964 (see NAA, A1209/80, CS 1965/6154 Part 1, Defence Committee Agendum, 'Malaysian Request for Defence Assistance', 31 December 1963).

formal request was received from the Malaysian Government.⁹⁴ Further British requests followed in early 1964, which led to small and incremental changes to Australia's commitment.⁹⁵ It was not until intelligence identified regular Indonesian forces in Sabah and Sarawak that the Australian Government decided, on 9 April 1964, to commit non-combat forces (including engineers, helicopters and minesweepers) to assist British and Malaysian security forces in Borneo.⁹⁶ Despite further requests⁹⁷, Australia did not commit combat troops to operations against Indonesian forces in Borneo until 3 February 1965.⁹⁸

The policy cycle

ISSUE IDENTIFICATION

The genesis of this crisis can be found in the rise of the concept of Malaysia in 1961, and the main challenge for Australia revolved around maintaining Western influence in a region undergoing significant political change. These priorities were articulated in Australia's defence policy, where the Australian Government was convinced that the best way to defend Australia was to cultivate alliances and maintain a 'forward' presence in Southeast Asia.⁹⁹ Consequently, the issues of nationalism, political contests and social

⁹⁴ NAA, A1209, 1964/6040, Cablegram 951 from Barwick to Critchley, 27 December 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 209–10; which replied to the Malaysian Prime Minister's enquiries concerning assistance. See also Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 285–6. Barwick's decision to send a mission to assess the aid requirements was re-affirmed by Cabinet on 15 January 1964—the Cabinet's first meeting since the election in the previous October (see NAA, A5828 Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 15, 'Indonesia and Malaysia', 15 January 1964).

⁹⁵ For example, see NAA, A5828 Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 122(FAD), 'Australian Forces for the Defence of Malaysia', 19 March 1964.

⁹⁶ NAA, A5828 Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 134(FAD), 'Australian Forces for the Defence of Malaysia', 9 April 1964.

⁹⁷ Army engineers commenced operations in Borneo on 4 June 1964. In the mean time, the FADC re-affirmed their earlier decision not to commit infantry and Special Air Service (SAS) units to Borneo as there was still 'no pressing military requirement' (NAA, A5828 Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 232(FAD), 'Australian Forces for the Defence of Malaysia', 12 May 1964).

⁹⁸ Having discussed the additional British requests at length (see, NAA, A5828, Menzies Eighth Ministry Vol. 2, Cabinet Decision No. 675(FAD), 'Malaysia and Vietnam', 18 January 1965, pp. 2–5), a Malaysian request was received soon after and considered by the FADC. It was decided at this meeting to use 3rd Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment and Special Air Service troops in Borneo (see NAA, A5828, Eight Menzies Ministry Vol. 2, Cabinet Decision No. 690(FAD), 'Possible Use of Australian Forces in the Defence of Malaysia', 27 January 1965).

⁹⁹ D Lee, 'The Origins of the Menzies Government's Policy on Indonesia's Confrontation with Malaysia', in F Cain (ed), *Menzies in Peace and War*, Allen and Unwin/Australian Defence Studies Centre, St Leonards, 1997, pp. 75–6; and D Horner, 'Security Objectives', in FA Mediansky (ed), *Australian Foreign Policy into the New Millennium*, MacMillan Education Australia, South Melbourne, 1997, pp. 77–81.

change in Southeast Asia became important to Canberra, almost regardless of the relationship between Australia and individual states.¹⁰⁰

Intense public interest also helped to identify this issue.¹⁰¹ According to Edwards, the public perceived Australia's relative weakness *vis-à-vis* Indonesia at that time.¹⁰² This popular feeling needed to be directed away from hostility or condemnation of Indonesia if Australia's preferred policy was to be successful.¹⁰³ Despite this, the media reflected public concerns about the British withdrawal from the region, and of Indonesia's 'naked and cynical self interest' in opposing Malaysia.¹⁰⁴ Reporting often adopted negative language about Indonesian actions, and provided perspectives of the story from the British and Australian point of view.¹⁰⁵ When the time came to commit non-combat troops in April 1964, the print media was sympathetic to the diplomatic aspects of Australia's announcement and supportive of the commitment.¹⁰⁶

POLICY ANALYSIS

The different forces and interests present in this crisis increased the difficulty of creating unified Australian policy. These factors—which included Indonesian intentions¹⁰⁷,

¹⁰⁰ The two 'crises' involving Laos in 1959 and 1961 are cases in point—see Edwards (with Pemberton), Chapter 12.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 263. This opinion was shared by Woodard (*Asian Alternatives*, p. 91) and Dee (*In Australia's Own Interests*, p. 147).

¹⁰² Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 263.

¹⁰³ Public support for Malaysia grew over the (election) year of 1963, ending with 62 per cent support for and 17 per cent against Menzies' announcement of support for Malaysia on 25 September 1963 (Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 276). The differing public views, as reflected in the major newspapers, is also mentioned in NAA, A1838, 3034/1/1 Part 18, Department of External Affairs, 'British/Malaysian Request for the Use of Australian Forces', c. 10 December 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 193–9.

¹⁰⁴ *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'The Proclamation of Malaysia', 16 September 1963, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵ Note the headlines, and how they privilege the non-Indonesian perspective. For one, the Indonesians were accused of threatening British aircraft in AAP, 'We'll Shoot!', *Sun Herald* (Sydney), 15 September 1963, p. 1 and p. 4; and D Wilkie, 'Fighting For Malaysia', *Advertiser*, 16 September 1963, p. 2. In others, Indonesian actions are given negative connotations: AAP-Reuters, 'U.K. Embassy Stormed by Rioters', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 17 September 1963, p. 1; *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Deliberate Distortion by Dr Subandrio', 20 April 1964, p. 2; and B Grant, 'External Affairs Minister Due in Djakarta: Difficulties over Subversion', *Age*, 13 September 1963, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶ For examples of supportive press opinion, see *Sydney Morning Herald*, 'Significance of New Aid to Malaysia', 18 April 1964, p. 2; *Advertiser*, 'Australians For Borneo', 20 April 1964, p. 2; and *Age*, 'Australia Honors A Commitment', 20 April 1964, p. 2.

¹⁰⁷ The differences in analysis about Indonesian intentions can be seen in NAA, C3736, Department of External Affairs Cablegram, 'Indonesia', 11 January 1963; and NAA, C3736, Department of External Affairs Cablegram, 'British Paper on Indonesia', 16 January 1963. Indonesia's intentions are reviewed in Mackie, pp. 326–33; and with a slightly different emphasis in J Chinyong Liow, *The Politics of Indonesia-Malaysia Relations: One kin, two nations*, RoutledgeCurzon, London, 2005, pp. 103–6.

the US position on Indonesia and Malaysia¹⁰⁸, and the significant defence and commercial interests in the region—led to two competing policy approaches in government. The first, championed by PMD and the military chiefs and following Britain’s preferences, was to actively oppose the Indonesians and provide a security guarantee to Malaysia. The second line preferred an independent policy that protected Australia’s relationship with Indonesia.¹⁰⁹ This approach, favoured by DEA and Secretary of Defence Sir Edwin Hicks, was concerned about the Indonesia–Australia relationship and Indonesian perceptions of an Australian military commitment. The result was a ‘minimalist compromise’ between the two approaches, where Australia became committed to support Malaysia under terms similar to the previous agreement.¹¹⁰

These differences were exacerbated by friction in some key relationships. Senior officials, such as Sir John Bunting of PMD, regularly criticised other departments. Bunting’s comments concerning External Affairs Minister Barwick taking positions that did not follow his department’s line (instead following Cabinet’s line) would have been aimed at reducing the authority of DEA officers in the policy debate. Another time, Bunting’s description of DEA as ‘over sensitive’ towards Indonesia and ‘too hard’ on Britain seemed intended to further undermine DEA’s position.¹¹¹

The process of analysis within DEA provides another insight into crisis policymaking. Woodard describes a highly informal analytical process—which he called ‘cooperative decision-making’—within DEA during this time.¹¹² No papers would be tabled before the face-to-face meetings between minister and departmental officials, and

¹⁰⁸ For discussion, see Lec, ‘The Origins’, p. 72; and Pemberton, *All the Way*, pp. 166–91 and pp. 232–4.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 168.

¹¹⁰ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 276; and Dee, *In Australia’s Own Interests*, pp. 168–74.

¹¹¹ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 262 and p. 267. See another example of Bunting’s efforts to reduce External Affairs’ credibility in NAA, A1209, 1964/6040 Part 1, ‘Submission from Bunting to Menzies’, 19 December 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 208–9, where he paints the External Affairs position on sending forces to Malaysia as overly cautious and inconsiderate of Britain’s position.

¹¹² Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 74.

coordinated recommendations were not expected.¹¹³ The discussion was described as frank, and the officials had the opportunity to persuade the minister.¹¹⁴

Senior advisers were careful to provide advice to government that would not lead to open-ended commitments. For example, when responding to the 20 September 1963 enquiry about military support from Britain, the service chiefs provided options for support, while also noting the absence of a direct request to do a specific task. Furthermore, the service chiefs did not see a military need for more forces and advised against making commitments without a sound military basis.¹¹⁵ This line of analysis remained dominant until April 1964, when it was softened to allow a contribution of support troops to Borneo.

The importance of diplomatic cables, and the contribution made by the diplomats who drafted them, can be seen in the flow of traffic between Canberra and the posts in Jakarta and Kuala Lumpur. This information was supplemented by signals intelligence, gathered by Australian agencies and exchanged with the British under an existing agreement.¹¹⁶

POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The differing views of Indonesia's intentions influenced the choice of policy instruments. These differences became apparent in early 1963 when Bunting disagreed with the DEA recommendation against Australia attending proposed three-party (later four-party) talks about Indonesia. Bunting argued that Australia should attend if invited, and described DEA's position as flawed. He used this divergence to support his case for

¹¹³ Tange used 'morning meetings' to coordinate his senior officials and give direction to them. He was the first Permanent Head to do this in External Affairs, and the practice was discontinued after Sir James Plimsoll replaced him April 1965. In Tange's meetings, 'Discussions were always frank and officers did not dare, as they sometimes did in later years, to hold some cards close to their chests' (ibid., p. 71).

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p. 74.

¹¹⁵ See NAA, 'British/Malaysian Request for the Use of Australian Forces'; and NAA, A1945, 245/3/6, 'Minute from Blakers to Hicks', 10 December 1963, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 199–200. Further consideration by FADC confirmed that 'military contributions at this stage would be ahead of need' (see NAA, A5828, Menzies Eighth Ministry Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 3(FAD), 'Military Implications for Australia of the Malaysian Situation', 19 December 1963, p. 1. See also D Horner, *Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia's Asian Wars*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005, p. 214).

¹¹⁶ Many of these cables have been collected in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*. On the role of intelligence, see Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, pp. 84–5.

forming a Cabinet sub-committee to guide government policy on security issues.¹¹⁷ In another example of internal differences over instruments, DEA's suggested non-aggression pact was rejected by the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (FADC) (presumably also by PMD), as a successful pact could have compromised British, Australian and US bases in the region.¹¹⁸

Agreement could turn to disagreement at other times. For instance, the departments and the FADC were united behind the decision not to send troops to Borneo in late 1963. As a result, military advice supported the government's preference to use troops only in peninsula Malaya, while providing other aid and non-combat support. By April 1964, differences of opinion began to emerge as Barwick and DEA remained against committing troops while Defence and PMD, and ultimately the FADC, came to support direct military assistance (although still not infantry units).¹¹⁹

Information was another policy instrument available to the Australian Government. At this time, Radio Australia (RA) was broadcasting into Indonesia, but there was a significant conflict between its role as a foreign policy tool and its management's demand for editorial independence. This conflict led, at various times, to attempts by DEA to influence RA broadcasts into Indonesia so the information presented conformed to Australian policy.¹²⁰ The Australian Government acknowledged the value of this service, and the need to compete with other international broadcasters, when it decided to increase the power of RA's signal into the region in August 1963 and the number of hours broadcast in Indonesian in 1964.¹²¹

ANZUS proved to be another useful, but hard to direct, instrument in the crisis. At times, US policy in this crisis ran counter to Australian preferences, particularly over

¹¹⁷ Bunting used his minute proposing the FADC to describe the 'jarring tone' used by DEA in their correspondence about Indonesia to Washington and London (see NAA, A4940/1, C3736, 'Minute to the Prime Minister from E.J. Bunting', 15 January 1963).

¹¹⁸ NAA, A4943, Menzies Seventh Ministry Vol. 8, Cabinet Decision No. 976(FAD), 'Malaysia', 12 August 1963.

¹¹⁹ Edwards notes the pro-commitment stance of the Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff, Sir Frederick Scherger and officials from PMD, such as AT Griffith, during this crisis—see Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 383.

¹²⁰ E Hodge, *Radio Wars: Truth, Propaganda and the Struggle for Radio Australia*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1995, pp. 174–5.

¹²¹ K Najjarine and D Cottle, 'The Department of External Affairs, the ABC and Reporting of the Indonesian Crisis 1965–1969', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 49, no. 1, 2003, pp. 50–1.

Indonesia.¹²² On the positive side, the alliance provided Australia with a degree of insurance by sitting in the background during the search for diplomatic solutions.¹²³

Other potential instruments were explicitly rejected. DEA thought the imposition of economic sanctions was ‘undesirable’ because it might reduce Australia’s and America’s influence in Indonesia. Similarly, Australia was against offering further aid to Indonesia, since this might only encourage ‘brigandage’.¹²⁴

CONSULTATION

One notable feature of *Konfrontasi* was the continued and close consultation between Australia and a range of main and secondary international actors. Notably, Australia maintained diplomatic relations with Indonesia throughout, which kept open an important avenue for discussion. Australia also consulted closely with Britain and the United States in bilateral discussions, and together through ‘quadpartite’ discussions (including New Zealand).¹²⁵ The four nations worked to establish a response, and manage the implications of their individual commitments to avoid broader conflict with Indonesia. These discussions generally helped Australia to impress its views and have some influence on British and US thinking, without actually reconciling the two.¹²⁶

The government did little to consult with the Australian people during this crisis, despite the desire of some ministers to develop an informed public.¹²⁷ While the initial reactions to the acute crisis of September 1963 were tested at a general election soon after,

¹²² For example, the attempt by Robert Kennedy, the US Attorney General, to broker a deal in early 1964 was not welcomed by the Australian Government (see NAA, 1838, 3006/4/9 Part 2, Cablegram from Beale to Menzies and Barwick, 22 January 1964, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 220–1; and NAA, A1838, 270/1/1/ Part 2, Cablegram to Washington, ‘Kennedy Mission’, 23 January 1964, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 221–2).

¹²³ Dee, *In Australia’s Own Interests*, p. 147 and pp. 187–8. Although the differences over Indonesia did not threaten to rupture this relationship, the inability to obtain direct support against Indonesia caused doubt within Australia as to the strength of the American commitment (see Pemberton, *All the Way*, p. 332).

¹²⁴ NAA, A183, 3006/4/9 Part 3, Savingram, ‘The Problem of Indonesian Hostility towards Malaysia’, 6 February 1964, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 242–3; and NAA, A1209, CS 1964/6071, PMD minute covering DEA brief for Washington, ‘Bilateral policy objectives in respect to Malaysia and Indonesia’, 5 February 1964.

¹²⁵ NAA, A4943 Vol. 7, Cabinet Decision 632, ‘Indonesia – Quadripartite Talks’, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 45–6.

¹²⁶ For examples of consultation over time and its importance to policymaking, see NAA, 1838, CS3034/10/1 Part 12, Submission from Tange to Barwick, ‘Indonesia-Quadripartite Talks in Washington’, 4 February 1964 in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 37–41; and Minute from Bunting to Menzies, ‘Australian Assistance to the Defence of Eastern Malaysia’.

¹²⁷ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 380. Woodard (*Asian Alternatives*, pp. 83–4) argues that Barwick wanted to increase the Australian public’s understanding of Asia and did his best to deliver informative speeches.

Peter Edwards noted the increasing tendency for the government to deliberate in secret and only announce policy after the decision had been made.¹²⁸ Public support was also demonstrated in the Australia–Malaysia Association that began meeting (with some limited government support) in 1964.¹²⁹

COORDINATION

Interdepartmental coordination during this crisis was conducted mainly through the high-level Defence Committee (DC). This committee was chaired by the Permanent Head of the Department of Defence (then Sir Edward Hicks) and included the service chiefs, and the Permanent Heads of External Affairs, Treasury and PMD (in a change since 1954, as permanent members).¹³⁰ The DC's role was broad (in national security terms), for it was charged with advising the defence minister, coordinating all inputs to the defence program, and joint service and interdepartmental defence matters.¹³¹ The main advantage of this grouping was that the defence minister received advice that had been considered by the major national security departments. Another advantage came in the way defence ministers tended to present most, but not all, DC advice directly to Cabinet.¹³² Most importantly, the DC aggregated military judgement to support the preference for a diplomatic solution. It did this by not automatically accepting that military forces would make a difference in the early stages, thus giving more space for diplomatic initiatives to be tried.¹³³

A lower-level interdepartmental committee (IDC) was also established in early 1964 to examine the question of both military aid to Malaysia and 'practical and constructive

¹²⁸ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 254, p. 276 and pp. 379–80. Edwards also notes the increasing levels of public support for a commitment to Malaysia during 1963.

¹²⁹ The Australia–Malaysia Association began a private initiative. It later received some limited support from the Department of External Affairs (NAA, A1838, C/S 553/1/17/1, External Affairs Minute, 'Australia–Malaysia Association', 14 January 1965).

¹³⁰ NAA, A4940, CS3811, Minute by Defence Committee, 'No. 50/1963: Australian Association with the Malaysian Defence Agreement', 9 August 1963, p. 104; in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 146–7.

¹³¹ NAA, A1838, TS661/2 Part 2, Department of External Affairs, 'Letter from Minister for Defence, Higher Defence Machinery', 26 March 1957. This letter became the basis for the DC's formalised role and membership (see Commonwealth of Australia, *Defence Committee Regulations, Statutory Rules 1960, No. 91*, pp. 162–5).

¹³² For example, see NAA, A5827 Vol. 6, 'Submission No. 188 from Paltridge to Cabinet', 8 May 1964, in Dee, *Australia and the Formation of Malaysia*, pp. 286–90.

¹³³ This committee will receive more attention in Chapter 3.

assistance by Australia'.¹³⁴ This demonstrates the importance of looking to, but also beyond, military instruments in a crisis.

While it would have been possible to note a number of peoples' contribution in that first year of the crisis, Woodard thinks Tange's strong chairmanship was important to coordination, not just internally, but to ensuring government got the best policy advice.¹³⁵ This included Tange's direction to the DEA to consult widely outside the department on forward planning, and his decision to retain an officer in the policy planning role throughout the crisis. The DEA also remained well connected to Defence through their Defence Liaison Branch.¹³⁶ Defence too remained well connected to the DEA by using the Joint Planning Committee and Joint Intelligence Committee (both of which contained External Affairs representatives) to develop military advice.

DECISION

When reflecting on decision-making in this period, Edwards encourages readers to consider the broader context of the time, rather than just the decision to go to Vietnam. He notes, for instance, that Indonesia was 'a subject of much greater attention' after the 1962 annexation of West Papua and the pronouncement of *Konfrontasi*. On top of that, crises in Malaya (the 'Emergency'), Laos and Thailand during 1955–62 created a 'climate of fear' that 'forced the Australian Cabinet to face the issue of possible involvement in a difficult and probably unpopular war in Indochina, a war which could conceivably lead to the use of nuclear weapons'.¹³⁷ So when Cabinet considered its response to the Indonesian threats in January 1963, this group had been considering the possibility of Asian conflict for some time.

Cabinet's consideration of the Indonesian stance towards Malaysia on 5 February 1963 noted the US desire for Australia to take more policy initiative in the region. While probably attractive to some, Cabinet was concerned that a proactive Australian course could have been perceived by Indonesia or others as adversarial.¹³⁸ The desire to avoid a rupture of relations with Indonesia led to the subsequent decision to

¹³⁴ Cabinet Decision No. 387(FAD), 'Review of Malaysia/Indonesia Situation and Malaysian Paper on Defence Planning and Finance'.

¹³⁵ Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 71.

¹³⁶ NAA, A1838/361, Department of External Affairs, Policy planning–Planning papers, 6 June 1963.

¹³⁷ Edwards (with Pemberton), pp. 379–80.

¹³⁸ Cabinet Decision 632, 'Indonesia - Quadripartite Talks', p. 3.

maintain ‘the greatest available degree of mutual understanding’ with Indonesia.¹³⁹ Persuasion, not threats, would be the primary tool for seeking Indonesian and Filipino acceptance of Malaysia.¹⁴⁰ These directions remained a strong influence on subsequent advice and decisions, even after the acute crisis of September 1963, until February 1965.

Of the ministers involved early in the crisis, External Affairs Barwick seemed the most influential. Woodard acknowledges the considerable work done by Barwick to understand the issues and the rhetoric, and explains how this allowed him to secure personal carriage of the issue, bypassing the newly formed FADC and the prime minister’s traditional primacy in matters involving Britain and the United States for a time.¹⁴¹

The story of how and why the FADC was formed is given detailed attention in Chapter 3, as its formation represents the ‘birth’ of Australia’s modern crisis policymaking system. However, this committee became increasingly important to decision-making on 1963–64 as it allowed Menzies to narrow the group of ministers involved for many decisions.¹⁴² FADC could act independently of officials, such as when the DC’s recommendation to withdraw Sabre fighters from Thailand was rejected¹⁴³ and when it rejected the DEA’s proposal for a regional non-aggression pact. This shift in influence over the security agenda allowed Edwards to comment on the shift in power that had occurred towards this committee.¹⁴⁴ Menzies included officials in deliberations, with around half of the FADC meetings in 1963–65 having one or more officials in attendance.¹⁴⁵

IMPLEMENTATION

The task of implementing policy in this crisis was given, in the main, to the military and the diplomats. The DEA, particularly during Barwick’s tenure as minister, was especially active in putting proposals to all sides in the conflict. This can be seen in the way Australia’s key emissaries in the region, Tom Critchley in Malaya and

¹³⁹ See Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 77; and Cabinet Decision 632, ‘Indonesia – Quadripartite Talks’.

¹⁴⁰ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 259.

¹⁴¹ Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, pp. 74–8. This view was supported by Interview 060–07, a former senior official in Defence who was serving in External Affairs at the time of *Konfrontasi*.

¹⁴² Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 264.

¹⁴³ Australia sent a squadron of Sabre fighter aircraft to the Ubon Base in Thailand in mid-1962. The DC advised against retaining these fighters in Thailand as Britain and New Zealand had already withdrawn their air forces from Ubon—see *ibid.*, p. 272; and NAA, A4943 Vol. 8, Decision No. 705(FAD), ‘Australian Military Assistance to Thailand’, 28 March 1963.

¹⁴⁴ Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 279.

¹⁴⁵ Horner, *Strategic Command*, p. 202. The attendance notes for a number of FADC meetings show attendance by officials. See NAA, A5830, Seventh and Eighth Menzies, Holt, McEwen and First and Second Gorton Ministries – Cabinet Attendance Sheets.

KCO Shann in Indonesia, gathered information and presented their views on the conflict while using their personal contacts to pass messages from the Australian Government to key decision-makers in the region. Woodard describes the significant latitude given to these diplomats, but he also notes how they ‘were implementers, not makers, of policy’.¹⁴⁶ However, the expert views held by the individual ambassadors allowed them to have a strong influence on the policy they would implement.

On the military side, implementation began in January 1963 when two frigates were tasked to patrol the waters around Borneo. After this, the government was very careful about the signals being sent as a result of their decisions about military forces, which extended from announcements about equipment purchases and force expansion to the eventual (and progressively more combat-oriented) deployment of troops.

Yet Cabinet did not always provide clear direction for the use of military forces. In one example, Cabinet directed that Australian military assistance:

... should be in a form which can readily be identified in Malaysia as Australian, and that attention should be given to some items which can be made available relatively quickly to make an immediate impact ... the central objective should be to give effective and quiet assistance to Malaysia’s own defence capacity rather than to seek dramatic or ‘advertising’ Australian intervention [sic].¹⁴⁷

Such constraints highlighted the sensitivity of this conflict, and the government’s desire to balance a range of competing objectives without creating a wider regional war.

EVALUATION

There is no evidence to indicate that policy advice was formally evaluated during or after this crisis. However, there were a number of reviews during this crisis concerning the military instruments available to government.¹⁴⁸ These reviews culminated, by the end of 1963, in decisions to purchase a range of new equipment, including the experiential TFX bomber (later known as the F-111). The government also decided, based on the situation across the entire region, to support the re-introduction of national service. Few (if any) of these decisions provided the government with immediate assistance in this crisis, but they were probably only made politically palatable by the situation of the time.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁶ Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, pp. 71–2.

¹⁴⁷ NAA, A5828 Vol. 1, Cabinet Decision No. 39, ‘Defence Assistance for Malaysia’, 28 January 1964.

¹⁴⁸ See Dee, *In Australia’s Own Interests*, pp. 157–8.

¹⁴⁹ For example, Cabinet decided to introduce a compulsory selective national service scheme in 1964 as both *Konfrontasi* and Vietnam were becoming more troublesome—see NAA, CRS A5828 Vol. 2,

Analysis against the tentative characteristics

This crisis provides strong support for the tentative characteristics of national security policymaking. The prime minister's crisis role is clearly demonstrated, as is the leadership advantage that allows him to shape issues, bound policy choices and determine the structure for policymaking. The role of public opinion can also be seen, and that undoubtedly helped Menzies to assert his preferences over those who wanted to give more consideration to Indonesia. This vignette further shows that Menzies' decision to create the FADC was crucial to determining which ministers contributed to policymaking. Menzies continued to use his leadership advantage by making ministerial appointments to suit his preferences, such as the way in which Hasluck was appointed Minister for External Affairs after Menzies encouraged Barwick to move to the High Court in April 1964.¹⁵⁰

The Policy Analysis phase contained a mix of rational and extra-rational processes. Woodard's insight into DEA briefings shows how trusted experts can provide advice without prior coordination. This vignette also demonstrates the importance of intelligence to policy analysis, and the difficulties faced when a relatively unprepared bureaucracy is required to handle classified information.

Aside from the increased role for foreign aid, the policy instruments available in this crisis were similar to earlier times. However, not all instruments were considered useful under all conditions. Thus the military was introduced gradually as Indonesian provocation increased, while economic sanctions were rejected altogether. Other instruments, such as information, were double-edged swords because the government could only make them work in support of policy if it was prepared (and able) to provide close guidance all the time and interfere with editorial independence.

Policymaking in this crisis was marked by a clear division in opinion between DEA and other national security departments, and within Defence between the civilian secretary and senior uniformed officers. These divergences support both the idea of competitive policymaking and provide some evidence of dominant frameworks. That PMD was able to

Cabinet Decision No.596, 'Services Manpower Review', 4–5 November 1964; and Edwards (with Pemberton), p. 331.

¹⁵⁰ Hasluck resigned from DEA when Evatt was the minister in the late 1940s, and was unlikely to be captured by the department. He conducted his relationships with DEA officials in a very formal manner. While he would give due recognition to advice, Hasluck was unlikely to engage his departmental officers in policy debate (see G Woodard and J Beaumont, 'Paul Hasluck and the Bureaucracy: The Department of External Affairs', in T Stannage, K Saunders and R Nile (eds), *Paul Hasluck in Australian History*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1998, pp. 144–37 and pp. 148–9).

convince the prime minister of the problems with DEA's position shows how much the respect for PMD's policy skills had grown since 1945.

The main decisions of this time generally revolved around whether or not to commit forces. There is no indication that Cabinet tried to influence either the British or Malaysians about the military strategic aspects of the conflict. Of course, Australia did try to influence many parties through diplomatic representations. It also followed its own policy line of support for Malaysia while maintaining links with Indonesia. But this did not amount to a strong influence over the conduct of the conflict, which shows the limits of Australia's ability to consult as a partner with larger powers.

In Woodard's estimation, this period represented 'best practice in ... the then fashionable concept of crisis management'.¹⁵¹ But the significant change in the crisis policymaking structure at the beginning of the crisis and the waxing and waning of different voices in policymaking points to the absence of an established practice. Since Menzies, at the prompting of his officials, clearly decided that running this crisis through the full Cabinet was sub-optimal, we can assume that he learned from the experience of 1954 and was willing to change the structures and processes of crisis policymaking when needed.

Conclusion

Chapter 2 examined three vignettes of crisis during the mid-twentieth century. This approach builds on Chapter 1's observations of policymaking from the literature by making further observations about Australia's experience over a period of time. The combined insights allow for informed generalisation to other cases by providing a longitudinal view of both crisis and policymaking.

This chapter shows that the tentative characteristics of national security policymaking are broadly applicable to crisis, although there are enough differences to warrant describing 'crisis' as a distinct mode of national security policymaking. Of the similarities, the central roles of the national security executive in the Issue Identification, Policy Analysis and Decision phases are the most striking and consistent. Not surprisingly, the prime minister's role emerged as critical in setting parameters for action, and for

¹⁵¹ Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 71.

deciding how crises will be handled. The prime minister also played an active role in all crises, particularly when he dealt with allies as the national leader.

Other national governments also played significant roles in issue identification and (under limited conditions) policy analysis, while the Australian Government went to great lengths to consult them during each crisis. Indeed, these vignettes show that consultation often tends towards the 'control' end of the spectrum because the Australian Government has trouble influencing more powerful (and more closely involved) nations in many situations.¹⁵² The secrecy of policymaking is also reaffirmed in these vignettes, as was the importance of Cabinet conventions. The absence of evidence about evaluation is even starker in crisis situations than for national security policymaking in general.

However, there are sufficient differences to distinguish crisis as a separate mode of national security policymaking. In some cases, extra-rational factors are more prominent in crises than carefully prepared analysis, even to the point where policy options are constrained by factors such as time and institutional preferences. Another difference can be seen in the way informal groups sometimes appeared more important to decision-making than Cabinet or its sub-committees. At times, these informal groups included ministers, public servants and even foreign generals. This wider membership was particularly remarkable at a time when it was unusual for officials to attend Cabinet at all. There was also less room during crises for other domestic groups, or outsiders, to influence issue identification and policy analysis than in national security policymaking.

It is not worth creating a new list of characteristics of crisis policymaking at this stage because some important aspects of policymaking still warrant further examination. For one, the role of 'mass appeal' in issue identification remains uncertain, although the public's view is often aligned with the government. This raises questions about whether governing bodies seek optimal outcomes during a crisis, or whether they remain beholden to the most uncertain force of public opinion.

These vignettes also contained instances where the structure for crisis policymaking changed during or just before an incident. The reasons for this change are not yet entirely clear, but two possible explanations are emerging. The first can be found in the way every

¹⁵² Neil James expresses this point differently when he observes that 'Australia is not skilled in maximizing its position in coalition warfare' (N James, *Reform of the Defence Management Paradigm: A Fresh View*, Working Paper No. 59, Australian Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2000, p. 9).

crisis involves different policy actors and instruments. This ‘contingent nature of crisis’ means that established structures, processes and perhaps norms may not be suited to managing the events present at any given time. Political preference may provide a second explanation. Political leaders have different personal styles, varying requirements of advice, and different ‘power bases’ within government. As Chapter 3 will show, they also operate within a constitutional structure that places only some basic constraints on the policy process (for example, by vesting certain powers with the Commonwealth) and relies on convention to bound many key parts of the system. Given these significant sources of variety, differences in each prime minister’s requirements and approaches should be expected.

Lastly, the related areas of dominant frameworks and coordination also warrant further examination. There is some evidence to suggest that dominant frameworks emerged during the 1950s and 1960s which defined DEA, Defence and PMD as separate bureaucratic personalities. There is also considerable evidence to suggest this—along with other factors such as ‘turf’ and differing viewpoints—created friction between these departments during crises. On the other hand, there was a level of cooperation at times that lends credence to the collegiate view identified by Gyngell and Wesley. Also, significant division can be seen within Defence, which provides evidence to refute the existence of dominant frameworks. These continued uncertainties make it worthwhile to consider crisis policymaking in further detail, and across an even broader period of time. This examination will continue in Chapter 3, which refines the characteristics further by examining the crisis policymaking system from the early 1960s through to 1999.

EMERGENCE OF THE MODERN CRISIS POLICYMAKING SYSTEM, 1963–99

Australia experienced periods of tension in its security environment between *Konfrontasi* in 1963–66 and the East Timor crisis in 1999. However, no events in this thirty six-year period warrant the label ‘national security crisis’ because Australia’s sovereignty, international relationships or national interests were not seriously jeopardised by real or perceived threats from other actors.¹ Despite this, an examination of this period will improve the understanding of the characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia because its supporting system changed considerably.² This examination will also increase the level of confidence in the final group of characteristics of crisis policymaking because it describes experience accumulated over a considerable period of time.

While Chapters 1 and 2 examined the policymaking system as a whole, Chapter 3 explores the structures supporting crisis policymaking in three sections. Section I looks at the changing structure of Australia’s national security policymaking system during the period 1963–96. This discussion is conducted through an examination of change in the political, policy and administrative domains.³ Section II provides a detailed examination of the crisis policymaking system as it developed from 1996 through to the East Timor crisis of 1999. The final section draws insights for the characteristics of crisis policymaking by identifying why the system’s structure changed during this time.

¹ Since the policymaking system used by the Australian Government to manage the Vietnam War from 1962–73 was essentially the same as that for *Konfrontasi*, this conflict is not mentioned as a stand-alone factor in the evolution of the crisis policymaking system.

² It is worth recalling from the Introduction and Chapter 1 that ‘crisis’ is one mode of national security policymaking. Thus changes to the broader system will be significant for the usually latent crisis policymaking system.

³ The political domain includes Cabinet, Cabinet committees and smaller grouping of ministers and their personal advisers. The policy domain is based on senior officials from ‘traditional’ national security departments such as Defence, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C), Treasury and the intelligence community. The administrative domain comprises a variety of interdepartmental and intra-departmental mechanisms. These domains overlap (see G Davis, *A Government of Routines: Executive Coordination in an Australian State*, Centre for Australian Public Sector Management/MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1995, pp. 136–40).

Section I: Changes in the Crisis Policymaking System from 1963–96

Australia experienced four major changes of government between 1963 and 1996, and nine changes of prime minister. Each prime minister had to manage an evolving security environment throughout this period: earlier incumbents needed to adjust to the British and US withdrawal from Southeast Asia, most had to deal with the implications of the Cold War for Australia, and all managed an alliance with the vastly more powerful United States. Yet no prime minister approached these, and other related challenges, in the same way. This section outlines the formal roles for national security policymaking in Australia during this period and then traces the broad outline of how the system changed, providing a greater understanding of the crisis policymaking system used in 1999.

The Political Domain

FORMAL ROLES AND INFORMAL REALITIES

The formal view of national security (and crisis) policymaking in the political domain is based on a constitutional division of responsibility, a hierarchical structure of committees that ultimately advises the prime minister and Cabinet on policy, and a range of supporting processes and norms. A discussion of these formal elements is necessary to tell the story of Australian policymaking, but it is insufficient because prime ministers used four methods to consult their colleagues and make decisions.

The authority for the Commonwealth Government to conduct the nation's external affairs and to defend the states from invasion is drawn from Sections 51 and 119 of the Constitution⁴, and amplified in legislation such as the *Defence Act 1903*. From this point forward, the policymaking process develops a parallel life between the formal view and conventions used in practice. This is illustrated in the way decisions are made officially by the Governor-General and the Executive Council, but in practice

⁴ Section 51 of the constitution gives the Parliament the right to make laws for the naval and military defence of the nation and the states, including the ability to use the nation's defence forces to maintain the law (vi); external affairs (xxix); and relations with the islands of the Pacific (xxx). Section 119 makes the Commonwealth Government responsible for protecting the states against invasion and, on the application of executive government, domestic violence (Commonwealth of Australia, *Commonwealth of Australia Constitution Act (The Constitution) 1900*, available <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>, accessed 4 April 2007.

these decisions do not vary from those made by the Cabinet—a body not mentioned in the Constitution.⁵

Cabinet is the preeminent decision-making body in Australia. Its members, led by the prime minister, are ministers responsible for a department of state and the conduct of a specified policy area. Cabinet meets formally and regularly to discuss policy submissions and monitor implementation, which means it has an exceptionally large and diverse agenda. Outside this, ministers also have a significant workload administering their departments, attending to their duties as representatives of their individual constituencies and acting as senior members of a political party. They are supported by advisers who are employed at the discretion of these same ministers.

While not mentioned in the Constitution, the prime minister plays a vital role in government as a minister in his own right, as the leader of the governing party, as the leader of Cabinet, and, usually, as the most influential person in all these bodies. This role and position is similar across governments regardless of party. As a result, the prime minister's preferred method of consulting his ministerial colleagues and taking decisions shapes the structure of crisis policymaking in the political domain. The following sub-sections describe the four methods used by prime ministers for decision-making on national security issues between 1963 and 1996. The section concludes with a brief look at ministerial advisers.

CHANGE AND CONTINUITY IN THE POLITICAL DOMAIN

The actual structure for crisis policymaking in the political domain is derived from the broader system for national security policymaking. Significantly, the broader system changed between and within governments during the period 1963 and 1999 (see Table 3) despite the stable constitutional base. Change was most clearly shown in the four methods used by prime ministers to consult with ministers and take decisions on national security matters.

All prime ministers consult their Cabinet frequently because collective responsibility is a major norm of Cabinet government, and this method offers the most efficient way to establish structure and process during decision-making. As a result, prime ministers generally discuss major national security decisions in Cabinet,

⁵ For a discussion of the formal role of the Constitution and Australian political institutions, see DW Lovell et al., *The Australian Political System*, 2nd edn, Longman, South Melbourne, 1998, Chapter 2.

including initial troop deployments, major equipment purchases and major policy changes.⁶

Table 3: Australian Prime Ministers and their Formal Crisis Policymaking Committee 1960–96

Prime Minister	Party	Tenure	Cabinet members	Formal committee and usage
Menzies	L/CP	1949–65	13–15	Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (FADC) (active from January 1963)
Holt	L/CP	1965–7	12–13	FADC (active and met more frequently later in his tenure)
McEwan	L/CP	1967–8	11	Nil (his was a short tenure between Holt's death and Gorton's selection)
Gorton	L/CP	1968–71	11–13	FADC (rarely used, became inactive)
McMahon	L/CP	1971–2	14	FADC (inactive throughout)
Whitlam	ALP	1972–75	27	FADC (rarely used but became inactive after mid-1974)
Fraser	L/CP	1975–83	13–17	FADC (active), Intelligence and Security Committee (from December 1976)
Hawke	ALP	1983–91	15–22	International and Defence Committee (inactive, disbanded 1987) International and National Security Committee (active, became known as the 'Security Committee')
Keating	ALP	1991–6	17–21	Security Committee (active)
Howard	L/NP	1996–2007	18–20	National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC)

The operation of Cabinet is influenced by the prime minister's preferences, the frequency of meetings, the number of members and the relationship between Cabinet and its parliamentary party. Cabinet generally meets weekly, and always have a full agenda. These conditions can make it difficult to get timely decisions, meaning that some will be 'cleared' only in retrospect. At other times, the prime minister may take the decision outside a formal meeting, sometimes to the point where Cabinet becomes a rubber stamp for decisions by the prime minister or a committee.⁷ An example of this can be seen in Whitlam's Government, where Cabinet tended to ratify his decisions and

⁶ P Weller, *Cabinet Government in Australia, 1901–2006*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007, especially Chapter 12, describes Cabinet practice and the development of its process.

⁷ *Ibid.*, pp. 254–8.

overrode him infrequently.⁸ Menzies could also adopt a more flexible approach to the locus of decision, because he too was sure of his position in Cabinet, being 'dominant without being domineering or authoritarian'.⁹ The 1954 crisis (described in Chapter 2) provides one example of how Menzies operated both within an outside Cabinet.

Other prime ministers could not be certain of prevailing, which meant that Cabinet and party-room debate over national security issues could sometimes be substantial and significant to the ultimate decision. Hawke's experience in the lead up to the Gulf War of 1991 presented one such situation; it was essential for him to be sensitive to the wider parliamentary party and not propose a divisive commitment.¹⁰

Cabinet's size can make decision-making during crises unwieldy and a recipe for indecision (the case of 1954, which was described in Chapter 2, is noteworthy here). Former Defence Minister Lance Barnard noted the difficulty of getting decisions through Whitlam's large Cabinet, but thought this was workable.¹¹ Since most prime ministers appoint a Cabinet committee for national security issues rather than use the full group, Barnard's confidence may have been situational or overstated.¹² Indeed, managing national security matters through the full Cabinet was the least-used method in this period.

Given the obstacles to managing fast-paced and often technical matters in Cabinet (within its consistently crowded agenda), most prime ministers created one or more formal committees to manage national security issues—but not all used these consistently. This second method had its genesis in Menzies' Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee (FADC), and continued through later incarnations such as Hawke's Security Committee. Despite the differing scope and authority of these committees, each generally made decisions on behalf of Cabinet when managing agreed policy or

⁸ HS Albinski, *Australian External Policy Under Labour*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1977, p. 287.

⁹ Weller cites Sir Paul Hasluck's opinion of Menzies in Weller, *Cabinet Government*, p. 118. Lee also describes Menzies dominance in D Lee, 'Cabinet', in S Prasser, JR Nethercote, and J Warhurst (eds), *The Menzies Era: A Reappraisal of Government, Policy and Politics*, Hale and Ironmonger, Sydney, 1995.

¹⁰ D Horner, *The Gulf Commitment: The Australian Defence Force's First War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 201.

¹¹ R Hurst and B McAvoy, 'Transcript of Interview with Lance Barnard', Australian Parliament Oral History Project, Canberra, 1987, p. 6:7. The Cabinet Office disagreed—see M Codd, 'Cabinet Operations of the Australian Government', in B Galligan, JR Nethercote, and C Walsh (eds), *The Cabinet and Budget Processes*, Centre for Research on Federal Financial Relations, Canberra, 1990, p. 29.

¹² Weller, *Cabinet Government*, pp. 123–4.

the prime minister wanted this.¹³ The committee method was not used consistently in this period, and it could be bypassed if the prime minister desired. Prime ministers took different attitudes to attendance by officials at these meetings. While key officials would be invited to provide advice on relevant matters, the committee was strictly ‘ministers only’ at other times.¹⁴

Menzies was advised to create the FADC early in 1963 due to the increasing number and scope of security issues on the horizon, including impending trouble in Vietnam and between Malaya and Indonesia.¹⁵ The idea was to bring a small group of ministers with key portfolio responsibilities together, including the prime minister, his deputy, the treasurer, the defence and foreign ministers and the attorney-general at a minimum.¹⁶ Menzies’ (and subsequently, Holt’s and Fraser’s) committee would consider most defence and foreign policy issues separately from Cabinet, and act as the body for crisis decision-making if required.¹⁷

Labor governments made patchy use of their committees. Whitlam started with a Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, with a broad membership of national security and economic ministers. This committee met a few times in 1973 but not at all after mid-1974, due partly to Whitlam’s ascendancy over foreign policy and

¹³ Coalition committees are authorised to take decisions on behalf of Cabinet; part of the prime minister’s skill was to know when a matter needed to be referred (Interview with Malcolm Fraser). ALP committees do not generally have this authority, which makes Hawke and Keating’s Security Committee an exception.

¹⁴ As mentioned in Chapter 2, Menzies invited senior officials regularly. For confirmation of this in the FADC of the mid-1960s, see D Horner, *Strategic Command: General Sir John Wilton and Australia’s Asian Wars*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2005, p. 202). Whitlam did not, as a general rule, invite officials at all (NAA, A5925 Volume 1, Second Whitlam Ministry – Cabinet Decision No. 1, 20 December 1972, p. 3). Fraser often invited the Secretaries of Defence and Foreign Affairs and the Chief of Defence Staff to his FADC when required. These officials would leave the Cabinet room when minister commenced their discussions (Interview with Malcolm Fraser).

¹⁵ There was a sub-text of helping the prime minister to assert his control over the Department of External Affairs. See NAA, A4940/1, C3736, Minute from AT Griffith to the Secretary, 8 January 1963; and NAA, A4940/1, C3736, Minute to the Prime Minister from EJ Bunting, 15 January 1963. Bunting made his recommendation even more forcefully in a subsequent minute (see NAA, A4940/1, C3736, Minute to the Prime Minister from EJ Bunting, 17 January 1963). The decision to form the FADC was taken on 22 January 1963 (NAA, A4943 Vol. 7, Cabinet Decision No. 609, ‘Cabinet Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence Questions’, 22 January 1963).

¹⁶ The first FADC included the Ministers for External Territories and Civil Aviation. FADC membership was hotly contended. For example, there was early pressure for pressure for service ministers and others, such as the Minister for Labour (W McMahon) to be included as well—see NAA, C3736, Minute to the Prime Minister from E.J. Bunting, ‘Committees to be Appointed’, 5 February 1963, p. 1. Other committees did not always include ministers with portfolio responsibilities; for example, Kim Beazley retained a seat in Hawke and Keating’s Security Committee, regardless of his portfolio.

¹⁷ The FADC took routine and non-routine decisions under these prime ministers, and these would be considered Cabinet decisions. This was made possible by prior Cabinet agreement, the seniority of the ministers and the scope of their responsibilities (Interview with Malcolm Fraser).

the overwhelming focus of his Government on domestic economic issues.¹⁸ He did, however, make an annual report to the ALP Federal Conference on behalf of the committee.¹⁹

This experience was repeated the next time the ALP won government. Hawke started his term with two committees: an International and Defence Committee, which does not seem to have been used before its disbandment in 1987²⁰, and a National and International Security Committee (later abbreviated to the 'Security Committee'). While initially conceived to consider matters relating to intelligence oversight, the Security Committee eventually became the main body used by Hawke and Keating for all national security matters and was their major crisis policymaking group.²¹ This small committee reflected the initial requirement of strict secrecy, with membership extending only to the prime minister, deputy prime minister, foreign minister, attorney general and communications minister.²² Public servants frequently attended Security Committee meetings but, unlike the Expenditure Review Committee, there was no permanent official presence.²³ Also unlike other committees in the Hawke Government, decisions of the Security Committee did not normally go to Cabinet for endorsement and other ministers did not have a standing invitation to attend.²⁴ It was also conducted in an

¹⁸ EG Whitlam, *The Whitlam Government 1972–1975*, Viking, Ringwood, 1985, p. 689; R Trood, 'Prime Ministers and Foreign Policy', in P Weller (ed), *Menzies to Keating: The Development of Australian Prime Ministership*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992, p. 167; and Hurst and McAvoy, 'Interview with Lance Barnard', pp. 5:12–13. Whitlam's FADC differed from coalition arrangements in that his committee only made recommendations to Cabinet (Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, *The Development of Cabinet Procedures in Australia*, extract from the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet Annual Report 1983–84, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra 1984, p. 28).

¹⁹ For example, see EG Whitlam, 'Presentation of report of the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee of the Executive to the Federal Conference', Australian Labor Party, 1975, available <http://www.whitlam.org>, accessed 8 February 2007.

²⁰ The International and Defence Committee nominally included ministers from the traditional national security portfolios, and economic ministers including those for sport, communications and industry and commerce (see Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Annual Report 1985–86*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1986, p. 46).

²¹ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Development of Cabinet Procedures', pp. 25–6; and P Weller, 'The Cabinet', in C Jennett and RG Stewart (eds), *Hawke and Australian Public Policy*, MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1990, p. 46. Fraser also created an intelligence and security committee in December 1976 (in accordance with the Hope Royal Commission recommendations), but he continued to use the FADC for most defence and foreign policy issues (see Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'The Development of Cabinet Procedures,' p. 34; and NAA, A 12909, CS 929, Cabinet Submission 929 – 'Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security: Implementation of the Third Report', 3 December 1976).

²² It is interesting to note that Communications Minister Beazley had a seat but not Defence Minister Scholes (Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, *Annual Report 1985–86*, p. 46).

²³ Interviews with the Kim Beazley and General Peter Gratton (Queanbeyan, 29 June 2007). Peter Gratton was Chief of the Defence Force from 1987 to 1993.

²⁴ Codd, 'Cabinet Operations', p. 6; and Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Development of Cabinet Procedures', p. 37. Keating appeared to continue Hawke's methods in this area.

informal matter at times. During the 1987 Fiji coup, for example, one attendee was surprised by the level of informality:

I wasn't sure whether it was formally constituted or whether it was an informal gathering ... No one was obviously taking minutes, and we were informally sitting around talking.²⁵

The third method for prime-ministerial consultation and decision-making involved a smaller grouping of key ministers (and sometimes key officials) that took decisions and presented these to Cabinet or the relevant committee whenever convenient. This method was often employed during fast-moving events, but some (such as Hawke) used it as a standing method.²⁶ This small grouping would usually include the ministers with national security responsibilities, especially foreign affairs and defence.²⁷ There was room for individuals (other ministers or senior officials) considered especially knowledgeable or competent to be included in this group—Kim Beazley played such a role in the Hawke and Keating Governments.

This method can emerge when the prime minister is unable to dominate either Cabinet or the formal committee. For example, Gorton's FADC met a few times—and McMahon's not at all—leading both to manage national security issues directly with the relevant ministers (or unilaterally). There were many reasons for this divergence from established practice; for one, both had a small Cabinet so committees did not necessarily improve the speed of decision-making. But both had strong political enemies in Cabinet and the FADC: for Gorton, these included an external affairs minister and defence minister who did not share his view on Australia's defence posture²⁸; while Gorton (now a political enemy) started as McMahon's Defence Minister. Furthermore, Gorton's political style did not lend itself to committees or consultations with bureaucrats; he was more presidential than previous prime ministers and was notorious for making decisions without consultation.²⁹ That neither built a

²⁵ Interview with Peter Gratton.

²⁶ On Hawke's preference for operating in this way see interview with KC Beazley and Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 174.

²⁷ Interview with Derek Woolner (Canberra, 13 December 2006), who served on Barnard's staff, thought Whitlam would have been likely to manage a crisis through the defence and foreign ministers rather than a committee. Hawke also used a very small group to handle 'operational issues' during the first Gulf War (B Mahlab, 'Daily briefings keep PM in touch with war', *Sunday Mail*, 27 January 1991, p. 8).

²⁸ Gorton's preference for a defence of Australia posture ran counter to the 'forward defence' view held by External Affairs Minister Hasluck and Defence Minister Fairhall (see I Hancock, 'Events and issues that made the news in 1968', 1998, available <http://www.naa.gov.au>, accessed 15 July 2007).

²⁹ I Hancock, *John Gorton: He did it his way*, Hodder, Sydney, 2002, p. 154, quoting ABC Television's 'Monday Conference', 22 January 1968. Gorton's 'presidential' style was commented upon by Sir Alexander Downer, *Six Prime Ministers*, Hill of Content, Melbourne, 1982, p. 114;

successful Cabinet lends support to the view that Cabinet processes are ultimately important to securing the prime minister's position.³⁰

The last method was also used infrequently, whereby prime ministers either made unilateral decisions or consulted with small groups of ministers or other politicians about issues that fell outside these ministers' formal responsibilities. Prime ministers often used this mechanism to gain political advice from trusted and respected sources (that, on occasions, may have been restricted to themselves), rather than advice based on the formal division of ministerial responsibility or technical input.³¹

Prime ministers may limit consultation, and so appear to act unilaterally, for a number of reasons. Some prime ministers acted in this way if a proposal was likely create a Cabinet fight, if it was an issue of intense personal conviction, or if time was perceived as short. Examples of apparently unilateral decisions can be seen in Hawke's decision to honour the Fraser Government's commitment to supporting MX missile testing in 1983³², and Fraser's decision concerning the boycott of South Africa.³³ As described earlier, Gorton was accused by many of acting unilaterally and displaying a lack of trust in his Cabinet and officials and a belief in his 'right' as prime minister to make decisions.

Despite the stigma of such a charge, it was rare for prime ministers not to consult at all. Sometimes, they may argue they are implementing agreed policy if charged with acting unilaterally.³⁴ At other times, consultation may occur through an informal discussion with especially trusted colleagues, advisers or officials. Such a 'kitchen' or 'cocktail' cabinet may involve a standing group. In Fraser's Government for example:

G Greenwood, 'The Political Debate in Australia', in Greenwood and N Harper (ed), *Australia in World Affairs 1966–1970*, FW Cheshire, Melbourne, 1974, p. 62. Gorton himself rejected charges that he was 'dictatorial' (M Pratt, 'Interview with the Rt Hon John Gorton', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1976, p. 3:2/130).

³⁰ Weller, *Cabinet Government*, p. 285.

³¹ Trust, experience and judgement weighed heavily in the selection of these confidants (Interview with Malcolm Fraser).

³² JA Camilleri, 'Nuclear Disarmament: A Emerging Issue in Australian Politics', Working Paper no. 9, Australian Studies Centre, La Trobe University, May 1986, p. 8. However, some consultation may have occurred—another author wrote of Treasurer Paul Keating's involvement in the decision (Gerald Henderson, 'World order – from the old to the new', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 57, no. 3, 2003, p. 480).

³³ Tony Ayers (interview in Canberra, 21 March 2007) thought Fraser did not take the matter to Cabinet because 'he would not have got two votes for it', such was Cabinet's lack of desire to be involved. Mr Ayers was Secretary of the Department of Defence from 1984 to 1994. He also served as a Deputy Secretary in DPM&C in from 1976–9.

³⁴ Interview with the Hon EG Whitlam, AC, QC, by telephone, 5 December 2006.

... There were a few ministers who met constantly, and if anything happened [the committees would be called together]. Most of the information was discussed outside in the first instance, so it meant that when committees were formally convened they were three-quarters of the way to a decision being made. The degree to which Cabinet then just ratified it depended to the degree to which [key] people were involved ...³⁵

The inappropriate or overuse of this method was, however, bound to attract the opprobrium of the responsible ministers and could lead to a fractious Cabinet.

Given the variety of methods used to make decisions, it is the prime minister who provides continuity to the national security policymaking system. The prime minister always appears as the main decision-maker, and no evidence was found to suggest that he could be bypassed on national security matters. The prime minister's influence also extends further, as he is very influential in determining which ministers are assigned to portfolios, and who is selected to sit on the national security-related committee of Cabinet. It would be insufficient to see the political domain as only containing ministers, however. They are supported by staff that assist them in the day-to-day running of their offices—and often in roles beyond that.

MINISTERIAL ADVISERS

The practice of employing advisers from outside the public service began in the late 1960s, and became common during the Whitlam Government.³⁶ While the initial aim of appointing advisers was to 'strengthen the elected component of the machinery of government'³⁷, this innovation created a new and formidable policymaking actor by the 1990s whose role sometimes complemented, and sometimes conflicted with, that of the public service.

While little has been written about ministerial advisers in national security areas during this period³⁸, we can assume that their roles followed similar patterns to that of the broader group of advisers in each government.³⁹ These ranged from supporting

³⁵ Interview with the Rt Hon Ian Sinclair, Canberra, 4 October 2006.

³⁶ DJ Ball, *The Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making: Ministerial Assistance and Defence Decision Making*, Reference Paper No. 14, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1977, p. 7.

³⁷ DJ Ball, *The Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, Reference Paper No. 183, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 1991, p. 33.

³⁸ A brief exception was N Ryan, 'Ministerial advisers and policy-making', in J Stewart (ed), *From Hawke to Keating – Australian Commonwealth Administration 1990–1993*, Centre for Research in Public Sector Management, Canberra, 1994.

³⁹ More has been written about the interaction between ministers, officials and ministerial staff during the 'Children Overboard Affair' of 2001. In this case, asylum seekers were inaccurately portrayed as casting their children into the sea as a way of promoting intervention by the Royal Australian Navy. For further analysis, see A Tiernan, *Power Without Responsibility*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007, Chapter 8; D Marr and M Wilkinson, *Dark Victory*, 2nd edn, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002; and P Weller, *Don't Tell the Prime Minister*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2002. Anne Tiernan extended her

roles, such as personal assistance (including time management), political advice and communication or media liaison. But advisers also help their ministers to steer policy and coordinate departmental activity.⁴⁰ All of these roles can be seen in the national security sphere:

[Another adviser] and I would go over to Defence and talk to people ‘about the way the minister was thinking’. There was no paper and no minutes, but you’d get submissions that would give you options [based on those conversations].⁴¹

[The minister] had a view that his advisers within the office needed to be over in the department, talking to people, working on submissions and policy initiatives well before they arrived at the minister’s office—one, so we could be informed and operate on the basis of no surprises, and two, so we could actually give the department the minister’s thinking, in the broadest possible sense. We were always careful to make the point that [we] don’t direct, or tell them [officials] what to do. But [we] ensured that the minister gets a range of options, and they have at least an initial inkling [about the minister’s views]
...⁴²

... a key role, the absolutely fundamental one, was making sure that the prime minister knows where everyone stands on issues ...⁴³

While these views demonstrate some continuity between governments, differences also occur. For example, ministerial advisers in one Coalition foreign minister’s office did not provide any policy advice or recommendation on departmental briefs, unlike his counterparts under the previous Labor foreign minister who were expected to use yellow notes to comment on each submission.⁴⁴

The relationship between advisers and officials, and their relative influence over ministers, has varied over time. Some observers pointed to the way ministerial advisers could influence some decisions without having a dominant impact on every decision.⁴⁵ General Peter Gration, for one, made the point that he never felt advisers were getting between he and the minister, or telling the minister anything different to what he was saying.⁴⁶ Nor did every ministerial adviser want to be seen as a countervailing force to

views on Howard’s national security advisory systems in ‘The Learner: John Howard’s System of National Security Advice’, *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 4, 2007.

⁴⁰ See Tiernan, *Power Without Responsibility*, pp. 23–4; and Maria Maley, ‘The Growing Role of Australian Ministerial Advisers’, *Canberra Bulletin of Public Administration*, no. 110, 2003.

⁴¹ Interview with Derek Woolner.

⁴² Interview with Aldo Borgu, Canberra, 1 August 2005. Mr Borgu was a former ministerial adviser in the Howard Government.

⁴³ Interview with 051-06, by telephone, 31 August 2006. Interview 051-06 was a former ministerial adviser.

⁴⁴ Interview with 064-07, Canberra, 5 July 2007. Interview 064-07 is a former ministerial adviser and government official.

⁴⁵ Ball, *The Politics of Australian Defence Decision Making*, p. 33–4, quoting J Jenkins, *Explaining Two Major Procurement Decisions: The DDL Destroyer and the Mirage Replacement*, University of Sydney, 1974.

⁴⁶ Interview with Peter Gration.

the department or establish a conflictual relationship with senior departmental officials; many wanted to return to their departments after their appointment in the minister's office.

Other senior officials portrayed ministerial advisors and their roles differently. These advisors owed their primary loyalty, and future, to their ministers. They could be both protective and assertive, and so end up in conflict with officials. According to one description provided in a court affidavit:

I would ask a question of the minister and get an answer from [the minister's adviser]. Frequently [the adviser] would talk across the minister. An outside observer would have difficulty discerning who was the minister and who was the adviser ...⁴⁷

The need to balance their relationships with departmental officials (who were sometimes their past and future employers) could create friction between advisers and those operating in the policy domain.⁴⁸

The Policy Domain

The policy domain involves interaction between senior officials, and comes into contact with the political domain when these senior officials engage with their individual ministers and ministerial offices. The main structure for crisis policymaking in this domain was the Defence Committee (DC) earlier in the period, but this committee gave way later to the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) and the Secretaries Committee on Intelligence and Security (SCIS). Importantly, this period also saw an increasing tendency towards bilateral coordination, informal groupings and *ad hoc* structures after 1985. Despite these attempts, the Australian bureaucracy did not settle on an agreed structural solution, with stable membership and authority, to act as an effective body to support crisis policymaking throughout this period.

A lower-level body, known as the Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG), was created in 1988 to improve coordination between the main departments. This group, which operated in a flexible and informal manner, did much to bring the main national security departments together—but these strengths also contributed to its weakness as a policymaking body.

⁴⁷ Quoted in P Malone, 'Tough talkers steering faithful party lines', *Canberra Times*, 24 November 2007, p. B2.

⁴⁸ See Tiernan, *Power Without Responsibility*, pp. 220–1 for a description of friction between advisers and officials.

THE DEFENCE COMMITTEE

The DC was the pre-eminent interdepartmental structure for national security policymaking in the policy domain from 1949 to its effective demise in 1985, but it did not exist solely for the purpose of crisis policymaking.⁴⁹ The DC met with great frequency in the late 1950s and 1960s (usually more often than monthly), and it played a significant role in developing advice about Australia's possible responses to crises such as *Konfrontasi* and the many major defence and security issues of the time.⁵⁰

Views varied on the effectiveness and perceived utility of the DC. According to Sir Frederick Scherger, the DC was essential to ensuring that service advice was heard by the defence minister.⁵¹ While time consuming, Sir Henry Bland considered the DC 'a very useful instrument' while he was Defence's secretary.⁵² Others had less positive views. Sir Arthur Tange, for one, was known to be frustrated with what he regarded as the DC's inability to look forward and innovate.⁵³

While the DC was preeminent for a time, its influence began to wane in the 1970s. The story of its decline can be told, in part, by the volume of business it conducted. The DC considered at least forty-one items in 1969 when Bland was its chair. In 1970, after Tange became Secretary of the Department of Defence, the number of items dropped to twenty-two in 1970, nineteen in 1971 and twelve up to July 1972.⁵⁴ This was a taste of what would happen after the change of government in 1972, when the service departments were amalgamated into an enlarged Department of Defence and budget issues were removed from the DC's charter. From then on, the DC met with decreasing frequency—only five meetings were held in 1973 (after the Defence

⁴⁹ The DC was originally formed in 1927 and formally established in 1929 under the *Defence Act (1903)* as an advisory and consultative body, with members consisting of the service board heads and a departmental officer. In 1949, the secretaries of External Affairs, Treasury and PMD became invited members—see NAA, A1946, CS 69/2327, Letter Wilton to Minister, 'Attendance of Minister at Defence Committee (Attachment)', 17 November 1969. The DC would co-opt others where needed. Its role was described in Chapter 2, and included coordinating military, strategic, external and financial aspects of defence policy, and advising the minister about defence policy as a whole.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 2, and P Edwards, *Arthur Tange: Last of the Mandarins*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest 2006, pp. 103–4.

⁵¹ See M Pratt, 'Transcript of Interview with Sir Frederick Scherger', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1973, p. 2:2/26. Scherger was a DC member during his tenure as the Chief of Air Staff and Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee from 1957–66.

⁵² M Pratt, 'Recorded Interview with Sir Henry Bland', National Library of Australia – Oral History Section, Canberra, 1975, p. 3:1/126A. Sir Henry served as Secretary of the Department of Defence from 1968–70.

⁵³ Edwards, *Arthur Tange*, pp. 181–2. According to Sir Henry Bland, Tange showed his contempt for DC by describing it as 'Fred Shedden's performing animal show' in 1952 (Pratt, 'Interview with Sir Henry Bland', p. 3:1/123).

⁵⁴ Figures derived from Australian War Memorial, AWM 122, 70/100, Defence Committee Minutes 1969–72.

reorganisation), no more than six times per year in the mid-1970s, and even less frequently until 1980.⁵⁵

Tange's determination to change the DC was tied to a broader agenda for Defence reform. This involved reducing external influences on the department, particularly the Treasury's control over Defence's budget and equipment acquisition process. His desire for internal reform was equally strong, extending to decreasing the influence of the three uniformed services over policy and strengthening Defence Central's role in the committee system.⁵⁶ The extent of reform was, however, tempered by the reality of policymaking. Tange understood the need for coordination, and noted that the DC had 'proved particularly important in the handling of advice on international defence policies, not least at times of tension or danger abroad.'⁵⁷ The DC was also expected to play a significant role in wartime as it was the most senior committee with direct links to Cabinet through the Minister of Defence.⁵⁸

The DC was somewhat revitalised in the early 1980s; it met ten times in 1980 and four times in the first five months of 1981. Importantly, these meetings dealt more with the formulation of policy advice on major national issues rather than being 'mainly just to acquaint the non-Defence members with matters under consideration at the highest levels of the Department of Defence'.⁵⁹ Des Ball credited a number of factors for this change, including new attitudes towards the committee among its (non-Defence) members, 'a more open disposition to the receipt of outside advice on the part of current secretary of the Department of Defence compared with his predecessor', prime ministerial interest in defence issues and the role of the DC, and an increasing number

⁵⁵ On the frequency of DC meetings, see FW Mahler, LG Poysner, and JM Moten, *Report on Secretarial Procedures to the Higher Defence Committee*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1974, Enclosure 3; and DJ Ball, 'The Machinery for Making National Security Policy in the 1980s', in R O'Neill and D Horner (eds), *Australian Defence Policy For the 1980s*, University of Queensland Press, St Lucia, 1982, p. 150.

⁵⁶ Defence Central was the main policy arm of the department. After the 1973 reorganisation, it remained separated from the uniformed services and under the joint control of the departmental Secretary and the senior military officer (see Sir Arthur Tange, *Australian Defence: Report on the Reorganisation of the Defence Group of Departments*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1973, p. 134). Similar points concerning desire to realign power within Defence were made in EM Andrews, *The Department of Defence*, Oxford University Press, South Melbourne, 2001, p. 261; and Interviews with 060-07 and Tony Ayers.

⁵⁷ Tange, *Australian Defence*, p. 134.

⁵⁸ Defence Review Committee, *The Higher Defence Organisation in Australia (the Utz Review)*, Australian Government Publishing Service, Canberra, 1982, p. 184.

⁵⁹ Ball, 'The Machinery (1982)', p. 150; and Interviews with 060-07 and Tony Ayers.

of relevant issues such as a more turbulent international scene and questions over the ANZUS alliance.⁶⁰

But the rejuvenation was not to last. By 1984 the DC was meeting only annually⁶¹, and even then it was not well accepted:

I went along to one of the Defence Committee meetings and I had two problems. We were talking about whether reservists could be used to defend the Northwest Shelf, and I said that was a political question, and not one for the Defence Committee ... I felt the same way about a separate [DC] discussion concerning Chinese activities in Tuvalu ...⁶²

The DC was eventually scuttled by Defence Minister Beazley in 1985, who wanted less involvement by Foreign Affairs, Treasury and the services in defence policy.⁶³ New mechanisms and processes would be needed as Australia entered a more active phase in foreign policy and minor regional crises became more frequent.

FILLING THE VOID

The DC was never the only policy-domain method for developing national security advice. Ministers always received advice from their own departments, and these views were not necessarily filtered through a coordinating mechanism before reaching Cabinet. Under some limited circumstances, prime ministers also received advice directly from the policy departments as Whitlam did from DFA even after he relinquished the foreign minister's role to Senator Willesee.⁶⁴ An 'Officials Committee' to shadow the FADC was also formed in 1976, but this grouping only included the Permanent Heads of DPM&C, Defence and Foreign Affairs.⁶⁵

One group that may lay claim to replacing the DC was the Secretaries Committee on Intelligence and Security (SCIS). The SCIS dates from the early 1970s, and its members included the Secretaries of the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C), Foreign Affairs, Defence, Treasury, Attorney General's, Chief of the Defence Force (CDF) and the heads of Australia's intelligence organisations—the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), the Joint Intelligence

⁶⁰ Ball, 'The Machinery (1982)', p. 150. The secretary of the Department of Defence he referred to was William Pritchett, who replaced Tange in 1979.

⁶¹ Interviews with Tony Ayers and Peter Gration. The latter observed how the DC's demise made his job harder because 'we did not have the confidence at the senior public service level that (our) views were going to be considered in a coordinated fashion before they were put to government'.

⁶² Interview Professor Stuart Harris, Canberra, 27 March 2007. Professor Harris was Secretary of DFAT from 1984–88.

⁶³ Interviews with Tony Ayers and Peter Gration mention one or more of these factors.

⁶⁴ Albinski, *Australian External Policy*, pp. 298–9.

⁶⁵ NAA, LC 295, Minute from JM Fraser to Mr Anthony, 16 March 1976.

Organisation (JIO), and eventually the Office of National Assessments (ONA).⁶⁶ This committee had a narrowly focused intelligence coordination and policy function during the 1970s and early 1980s, particularly after the Hope Royal Commission recommended significant reforms to the intelligence system. The SCIS continued into the Hawke Government and remained focused on intelligence issues.⁶⁷ By the mid-1980s, the SCIS was considering a wide range of security issues including matters such as Korea, the fall of the Soviet Union, and the reunification of Germany.⁶⁸ This role and function continued after the Howard Government came to office.

Other measures were also used to promote coordination in the policy domain during this time. The usual practice of bilateral and multilateral consultation between departments continued.⁶⁹ The coordinating and advisory role of DPM&C was enhanced during the late 1970s, which was enabled by its closeness to the prime minister, increases to its size, and broader changes to the conception of why this department existed.⁷⁰ Structures also changed within Defence, particularly through the augmentation of the COSC with additional senior Defence officials.⁷¹ This committee replaced some of the DC's functions, but since it only included service and Defence officials, it could not act as an interdepartmental committee like the DC did.⁷²

The body charged with improving interdepartmental links was the Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG). This group was formed in 1988 to 'ensure effective consultation among departments on strategic and security policy issues in peacetime, and to provide a mechanism for coordinating advice to government in times of crisis'.⁷³ The SPCG consisted of four senior officials: a Deputy Secretary of DFAT, Defence's Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence, the Vice Chief of the Defence Force

⁶⁶ This committee was reinvigorated in a new context under the Fraser Government and included the secretaries of the Departments of Finance and Overseas Trade (see NAA, A12909, CS 929, Cabinet Submission 929, 'Royal Commission on Intelligence and Security: Implementation of the Third Report', 3 December 1976, p. 239).

⁶⁷ Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet, 'Development of Cabinet Procedures', p. 32; and PN Grabosky, 'Caught in the act: the ASIS raid', in Grabosky (ed), *Wayward governance: illegality and its control in the public sector*, Australian Institute of Criminology, Canberra, 1989.

⁶⁸ Interview with Tony Ayers and Peter Gration.

⁶⁹ Interviews with Tony Ayers and Stuart Harris.

⁷⁰ Interview with Tony Ayers; and FA Mediansky and J Nockels, 'Malcolm Fraser's Bureaucracy', *Australian Quarterly*, vol. 53, no. 4, 1981, p. 395.

⁷¹ Interview with Peter Gration. The Augmented COSC played a major role in advising the CDF and Secretary during the Fiji coup of 1987 and the first Gulf War in 1990–1. See A D'Hage, 'Operation Morrisdance: An Outline History of the Australian Defence Force in the Fiji Crisis of May 1987', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, vol. 80, January/February 1990, p. 6; and Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 22.

⁷² Interview with Tony Ayers. While there was no official barrier, Peter Gration could not remember ever inviting officials from outside Defence to an augmented COSC.

⁷³ Andrews, *Defence*, p. 261.

(VCDF), and the First Assistant Secretary International Division of DPM&C. Each member was accompanied by at least two subordinate officials (one of whom was a relevant First Assistant Secretary) who would take notes, provide detailed advice, and ensure the agreements were communicated within the Department.⁷⁴ Again, senior officials from other departments (and additional officials from the member's departments) were co-opted as required.

There was another subtext about the formation of the SPCG. According to Hugh White, who was an adviser to Prime Minister Hawke at this time, the SPCG was 'a very deliberate attempt by ministers and others involved in the business ... to improve the quality of [interdepartmental] dialogue'.⁷⁵ According to Interview 054, 'I suspect the actual committee meetings [of the SPCG] encouraged them to get themselves together so they could have a say in what was going on, or at least some oversight of it'. According to Alan Dupont, SPCG's ability to consider broader security issues was reduced by the weighting given to Defence's participation.⁷⁶ Regardless of these factors, the SPCG clearly played a role in linking the main departments at time when coordination was conducted bilaterally, in *ad hoc* interdepartmental committees, or in Cabinet.

The Administrative Domain

The administrative domain describes the lowest strata of the policymaking structure, where officials develop detailed proposals. The structure for crisis policymaking in this domain exists on two main levels. The first is the interdepartmental level, where two or more departments come together to provide policy advice (or supervise implementation) under the general direction of their respective departmental heads. The second level exists within departments, usually with designated staff areas that have a special responsibility for policy development (as opposed to administrative or program management matters). The following sub-section begins by describing the defence-based mechanism known as the Joint Planning Committee (JPC), which acted as the main interdepartmental planner for most of this period. The discussion then moves to intra-departmental mechanisms and shows how this level came to dominate the first by the mid-1990s.

⁷⁴ Interview with Rear Admiral Peter Briggs, Canberra, 31 August 2005. Rear Admiral Briggs was Head, Strategic Operations Division in Defence from early 1997 to May 1999.

⁷⁵ Interview with Hugh White.

⁷⁶ A Dupont, *A National Security Policy for Australia*, unpublished, copy in author's possession, 1998, p. 6. This view is not shared by Interview 051-06, who stressed the importance of aligning military activities and plans with broader political considerations through the SPCG.

THE JOINT PLANNING COMMITTEE

The JPC advised the DC and COSC on military strategic issues, the operational aspects of defence planning, plans for combined operations and inter-service training until the early 1990s.⁷⁷ This remit meant the JPC provided advice on politico-strategic matters, including advice about alliance relationships⁷⁸, long-range planning (such as the ‘Strategic Basis of Defence Planning’ papers), and short-term or crisis issues. It did not necessarily control the entire planning agenda, for many issues could and did bypass JPC and go directly to the DC or Cabinet through *ad hoc* arrangements.⁷⁹ JPC was usually headed by the Director of Joint Service Plans, a major general (or service equivalent)⁸⁰, and included representatives of Defence and the armed services, as well as a member of the Department of External Affairs (DEA).

The JPC usually played a role in crisis policymaking, receiving its tasks directly from the DC and COSC,⁸¹ such as during Operation MORRISDANCE in 1987.⁸² By the early 1990s, the JPC’s functions were becoming increasingly redundant as the operations staff of Headquarters Australian Defence Force (HQ ADF) worked more directly to COSC.⁸³ This committee was formally disbanded when Strategic Command Division was created in the 1997 restructure of HQ ADF.

INTRADEPARTMENTAL ARRANGEMENTS: FOREIGN AFFAIRS

External/Foreign Affairs used three major mechanisms for national security policymaking in the administrative domain. The first was based on the Defence Liaison Branch.⁸⁴ While initially a communication link between the geographically dislocated Defence and External Affairs Departments, this branch became responsible for all

⁷⁷ NAA, A1945, CS 134/7/1/ Part 1, J King Minute to Mr Campbell, ‘Coordination of Military and Civil Branches of Government’, c. May 1966. This role was still largely valid in the early 1990s, although DFAT was no longer represented (see RAAF Staff College, *Australian Defence Management*, Commonwealth of Australia, Point Cook, 1992, Annex M).

⁷⁸ Defence Attachment to J King Minute to Mr Campbell, p. 2.

⁷⁹ Interview with 060-07.

⁸⁰ The other invited members were Director Joint Staff, First Assistant Secretary Defence Planning, Director General Policy and Plans (Air Force), Director Military Operations (Army), Director General Operations and Plans (Navy), a DEA representative and Head Policy and Equipment Requirements Division.

⁸¹ For example, see NAA, A4311/13, CS 672/4, Report by the Joint Planning Committee at Meetings Concluding on 9 September 1969; and Horner, *Strategic Command*, p. 133. By 1974, JPC was reporting directly to COSC and did not have a direct link to the DC (Mahler, Poyser, and Moten, Attachment 2 and p.126).

⁸² The ADF launched Operation MORRISDANCE after the 1987 military coup in Fiji. The response included positioning four warships and a company of troops off the coast of Fiji for a two-week period in May 1987. ACOPS BD24787/1987, Operation MORRISDANCE Post Action Report, dated 3 June 1987; and D’Hage, p. 6.

⁸³ Interview with Peter Gratton.

⁸⁴ The names of these organisations changed during this period. By the mid-1990s, the functions of the Defence Liaison Branch had been subsumed by International Security Division.

aspects of that relationship except intelligence coordination.⁸⁵ Thus Defence Liaison's role ranged from administration to providing DEA/DFAT representatives to support Defence planning.⁸⁶ Defence Liaison Branch did this by maintaining an oversight of Defence processes, preparing policy papers for the DC and JPC, and maintaining close relations with Defence personnel.⁸⁷

External Affairs' second mechanism involved a centralised policy planning branch (at various times). This branch was tasked to conduct longer-range planning within the department, but this did not always work due to the difficulty in getting senior officials and the minister interested in events that may (or may not) occur three or five years into the future.⁸⁸ The third distinguishable method used in DFAT was to develop policy using less formal groupings that relied on responsibilities and personal competence to develop advice for the minister. This method effectively flattened the hierarchy and brought the secretary, and often the minister, in touch with subject experts.⁸⁹ This range of methods shows DFAT's flexibility when developing policy in the administrative domain. It also shows how individuals, and the nature of the problem, influence policymaking processes and structures.

One foreign policy 'mini-crisis' of 1986 gives an insight into how DFAT might have organised itself to handle larger crises in the mid-1980s. The 'Jenkins Crisis' involving Australia and Indonesia was a small-scale and short-lived affair that arose when the Australian journalist, David Jenkins, published criticism of the Soeharto family on 10 April 1986.⁹⁰ The story sparked a range of retaliatory measures by Indonesian officials, most publicly as a planeload of Australian tourists were refused permission to land in Indonesia on 22 April.⁹¹ Other measures, including official condemnation of Australia, suspension of the Timor Gap negotiations and a ban on

⁸⁵ Intelligence coordination was conducted through a coordinating committee (called the Joint Intelligence Committee from 1946–70 and then the National Intelligence Committee from 1970–7). The function of intelligence coordination was assumed by the Office of National Assessments in 1977.

⁸⁶ J King Minute to Mr Campbell.

⁸⁷ DEA attachment to *ibid.*, and Interview with 060-07.

⁸⁸ TB Millar, 'The Making of Australian Foreign Policy', in BD Beattie (ed) *Advance Australia – Where?* Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1975, p. 151. See also G Woodard, *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on Going to War*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004, pp. 178–9 for a description of how this one-person branch operated during the 1960s.

⁸⁹ Interview with Stuart Harris and Woodard, *Asian Alternatives*, p. 74.

⁹⁰ D Jenkins, 'After Marcos, Now for the Soeharto Billions', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 1986.

⁹¹ RW Liddle, 'Indonesia in 1986', *Asian Survey*, vol. 27, no. 2, 1987, p. 217.

Australian journalists, continued to linger for some time after and the affair created significant strains in the Australia–Indonesia relationship.⁹²

The immediate tension was quickly diffused, but not before the Australian Government initiated a crisis response. The main political actor was the acting foreign minister, Gareth Evans, as Cabinet itself did not meet to discuss the matter. Faced with a situation of great uncertainty, DFAT officers briefed the acting minister, who decided that a crisis group should be established. This group was based on DFAT’s International Security Division and the relevant senior officials from the department. There was some early consultation at the working level with other government departments, but an interdepartmental committee (IDC) was not established.⁹³

The task force did not last long. In this case, it became clear that Australia’s preferred course was to cool the situation rather than retaliate. However, this example of a mini-crisis showed the role of political preference in determining structures, and the way a department might react to establish new structures or initiate processes in uncertain situations. These processes included identifying a lead department, direct briefing of political leaders by departmental officials, and standing arrangements for managing crises.

DEFENCE

Defence’s primary task in the administrative domain during crisis revolves around making plans for military operations. The main trend in military planning during this period was a move away from a committee-based, interdepartmental process represented by the JPC toward a formal, permanent staff for military planning that worked directly to the Chief of Defence Force and Secretary of the Defence Department.⁹⁴

Prior to 1968, the central policymaking areas of Defence relied upon seconded officers from the service headquarters to devise military plans on behalf of the DC or COSC. Such officers were usually accommodated within their service headquarters, remaining responsible to their service chiefs, and came together as part of the JPC or its

⁹² D Goldsworthy, ‘Regional Relations’, in Goldsworthy and P Edwards (eds), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, pp. 155–6.

⁹³ Interview with Stuart Harris.

⁹⁴ In the Australian system, the Chief of the Defence Force (also known previously as the Chief of Defence Force Staff) and Secretary of the Department of Defence share the responsibility of advising the Defence Minister. They also have separate accountabilities, for command of the ADF and management of the department respectively.

sub-committees when required. The former part of this arrangement was altered in 1968 when a joint staff was instituted. This staff, under the Director Joint Staff, was responsible to the Chief of Defence Force Staff (CDFS) and Secretary for functions including joint operational planning, equipment requirements, joint policy and logistics. Officers were also assigned to the Joint Staff from Defence and Foreign Affairs.⁹⁵ Despite this increasing resource at the department's centre, military plans continued to be developed (as described above) in the JPC.⁹⁶

Functional reorganisations and appointment changes continued. By 1976 (after the 1973 reorganisation), a delineation between joint operational planning (under the CDFS) and strategic policy (under Defence's Secretary) was formalised, leading to friction in the relationship between service personnel and civilians.⁹⁷ Further changes were made in 1984 when Defence Central became Headquarters ADF.⁹⁸ By the Gulf War of 1990, the committee-based system of military planning had been eclipsed by the centralised staff. This change was prompted, in part, by the need to make very fast decisions and to maintain secrecy over intentions (a condition reinforced in 1994 with leaks about the creation of the South Pacific Peace Keeping Force [SPPKF] during Operation LAGOON).⁹⁹

Despite major reorganisations of Defence during this extended period, questions about the organisation's ability to cope with war or periods of intense activity were raised in the 1970s and persisted into the 1990s. This criticism was disingenuously deflected by Tange's insistence that the department should not be structured for 'total war'.¹⁰⁰ Others also thought the existing system was capable of managing the additional workload created by operations. Adrian D'Hage (then Director Joint Operations in HQ ADF) reported that the Chief of Defence Force's command centre worked well during the 1987 Fiji Coup, and provided an effective link to other departments. He also noted how the JPC provided early warning to the troops by informing the Chiefs of Staff of

⁹⁵ FW Mahler, *Defence Reorganisation in Australia 1970–79*, Department of Defence, Canberra, 1980, pp. 20–2; and M McIntosh, *Future Directions for the Management of Australia's Defence: Report of the Defence Efficiency Review*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997.

⁹⁶ See p. 129 above.

⁹⁷ Mahler, *Defence Reorganisation*, pp. 76–77; and Utz Review, pp. 42–6.

⁹⁸ Inspector General ADF, *Strategic Operations and Plans – Program Evaluation*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1995, pp. 2-7 and 2-8; and D'Hage, pp. 5–6.

⁹⁹ Operation LAGOON was launched to support the 1994 Bougainville peace talks and its associated South Pacific Peace Keeping Force (SPPKF). For an account of Operation LAGOON, see B Breen, *Giving Peace a Chance*, Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2001.

¹⁰⁰ Mahler, *Defence Reorganisation*, p. 183; and Department of Defence, 'The Organisation of the Department of Defence in Time of Defence Emergency and War', in *Submission 30 to Joint Committee on Foreign and Defence Sub-Committee*, 1987, pp. S388–S389.

Land, Maritime and Air Commands of impending operations, and how the augmented COSC provided fast direction to the component headquarters.¹⁰¹ The Defence Minister and the CDF were also happy with the performance of their command arrangements during the 1990–1 Gulf War.¹⁰²

Despite this confidence, Defence's ability to manage short-notice contingencies attracted criticism. The Inspector General of the ADF found that Operations Division was stretched when preparing for the relatively minor Bougainville Peace Conference of 1994 (supporting the SPPKF). The evaluation also asked whether delegation rules existed to separate strategic issues from operational ones, because the lack of clarity could lead to 'confusion and misunderstanding in crisis'.¹⁰³

Summary

This section traced the development of Australia's crisis policymaking system over thirty-six years. Yet, aside from the experience of *Konfrontasi*, and to a lesser extent the commitment to Vietnam, no major national security crises occurred. Even so, the system changed a number of times during this period.

These changes occurred in all three policymaking domains. Prime ministers used at least four different ways to gain advice on national security matters. The major bureaucratic committee, the DC, changed function and eventually disappeared. It was replaced, over time, by a committee led by DPM&C. Change was also experienced in the administrative domain, which moved from a Defence-based committee system with some external representation to a more insular staff-based system that relied upon *ad hoc* interdepartmental groups.

Further change came when Howard's Liberal–National Coalition was elected in March 1996. The next section examines the changes made to the national security policymaking system after 1996, and describes the major components of the system that would eventually manage the East Timor crisis in 1999.

¹⁰¹ D'Hage, pp. 6–7 and 12–13.

¹⁰² Interview with Peter Gratton. Conversely, this deployment was described as 'enormously taxing' on Defence's command arrangements by an opposition defense adviser (see Horner, *The Gulf Commitment*, p. 207).

¹⁰³ Inspector General ADF, p. 4-5.

Section II: The Crisis Policymaking System under Prime Minister Howard

The modern crisis policymaking system came into being when John Howard created the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) and associated structures in 1996. This change was not surprising as such a committee had been part of the Liberal's election platform since 1989. This platform criticised Labor's national security policy arrangements claiming defence, foreign, economic and trade policy were not integrated, and that the existing process for strategic planning resulted in *ad hoc* Cabinet decision-making. The subsequent election policy declared an intention to create a small Cabinet committee, supported by a 'national security unit under the Prime Minister' to control national security policy and coordinate departments.¹⁰⁴ Nor was the change implemented in 1996 revolutionary, as the system took pieces that Menzies and Holt would have recognised and kept some of the structures developed under Hawke.

Howard came to office with views about the failings of the previous government to manage national security, and some suspicions about the bureaucracy:

... he wanted to avoid a situation where the prime minister was running and determining everything. He did not think that was healthy. And second, the idea that officials should be running things and have such a strong influence, I think he was suspicious about that, especially because the people who had been working in SPCG and key areas to do with foreign and defence policy had been there for a while under Labor.¹⁰⁵

I think that the prime minister, in a substantial way, felt that Treasury had been too dominant in closing down policy development in the government
...¹⁰⁶

Howard had clear ideas about policymaking in his government. He wanted ministers to have authority and be responsible for implementing policy in their area. He also he wanted to assert a high degree of political control over policymaking, without asserting complete personal control over everything.¹⁰⁷ According to another interviewee, Howard was not in favour of networks of committees either within the Cabinet or the bureaucracy in most areas of policy:

¹⁰⁴ Liberal Party and National Party, 'Defence Policy', 1989, copy with author, pp. 2 and 4.

¹⁰⁵ Interview with 051-06. A similar view was expressed by Hugh White (Interview, 21 December 2005).

¹⁰⁶ Interview with 052-06 (Sydney, 27 September 2006). 052-06 is former senior government official with direct knowledge of NSCC, SCONS and the East Timor case).

¹⁰⁷ Interview with 051-06.

But national security and defence he regarded somewhat differently. Because of the structured nature of the military and because of the way they dealt with issues we looked separately at the way in which coordination was handled.¹⁰⁸

What developed over the next three years was a more formalised crisis policymaking system that retained some of its previous flexibility. This section explores this evolved system and how it worked in the immediate lead-up to the East Timor crisis of 1999. This discussion is again conducted by analysing the formal structures for crisis—and national security—policymaking in the political, policy and administrative domains. The discussion also shows how the formal model needed adapting when the Australian Government was faced with a significant national security crisis.

The Political Domain under Howard

Howard created the NSCC immediately upon becoming prime minister. Like previous committees, NSCC was small and its formal membership was limited to six ministers: the prime minister and his deputy, the treasurer, the attorney general, and the foreign and defence ministers (see Table 4).¹⁰⁹ The presence of these senior ministers allowed the NSCC to make important decisions without reference to Cabinet. NSCC was therefore the ‘bridge’ of national security policymaking because it was the place where decisions were made and a link between different positions within government.

Table 4: The National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) – 1999

Members	
Prime Minister	<i>John Howard</i>
Deputy Prime Minister	<i>Tim Fisher</i>
Foreign Minister	<i>Alexander Downer</i>
Defence Minister	<i>John Moore</i>
Treasurer	<i>Peter Costello</i>
Attorney General	<i>Daryl Williams</i>
Officials	
Secretary, DPM&C	<i>Max Moore-Wilton</i>
Chief of the Defence Force	<i>Admiral Chris Barrie</i>
Secretary, Dept. of Defence	<i>Paul Barratt (Jan–Aug)</i> <i>Hugh White (Aug–Sep, Acting)</i> <i>Allan Hawke (Oct–)</i>
Secretary, DFAT	<i>Ashton Calvert</i>
DG Office of National Assessments	<i>Kim Jones</i>

¹⁰⁸ Interview with 052-06.

¹⁰⁹ Other ministers were co-opted as necessary. Today, the Minister for Transport and Regional Services also has a permanent seat on NSCC. The Minister for Immigration (who also holds other portfolio responsibilities, often including Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs) and Minister for Justice and Customs are regular attendees, but not permanently invited.

Ministers would generally make attendance at NSCC a priority¹¹⁰; it was an acknowledged decision-making body about important issues, and it was ‘a very good way of doing business’:

... it enabled you as minister to put the story in the political sense, and have the technical back-up available at the time. So there could not be any of this stuff that you get in the other portfolios, of ‘well that’s a great idea but let’s have the officials look at it’—that’s a great way to defer a decision and it all goes back to square one ... So in these circumstances decisions could be made at the time.¹¹¹

Consequently, the senior officials responsible for the advice—and also generally the implementation—became more important to NSCC as time went on.¹¹² In the period before 1999, attendance by officials was more along the Cabinet model, whereby they would be invited for specific items and leave the room while the ministers debated points.¹¹³ This mode was changing by 1999, by all accounts due to the influence of the East Timor crisis.

By then, attendance by officials and ministerial advisers was becoming more frequent. With this increased and more diverse presence, NSCC meetings were conducted in a semi-structured way—much like a well-directed seminar.¹¹⁴ The prime minister, who would always chair meetings unless he was overseas, would start by asking for an intelligence update from the Director General of the Office of National Assessments (DG ONA)¹¹⁵, and he would ask the Secretary of DFAT and CDF for their views. From there, discussion would turn to the formal agenda or issues of the day, and this would flow until (usually) the prime minister summarised the discussion and sought agreement or made a decision. This format was generally conducive to broad discussion. As one former attendee noted, ‘it was always a very open environment for people to have their say’.¹¹⁶

¹¹⁰ Interview with the Hon Tim Fischer, Canberra, 1 August 2006. Mr Fischer was Deputy Prime Minister from March 1996 until July 1999. He headed the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to East Timor in August 1999.

¹¹¹ Interview with John Moore.

¹¹² Interview with 051-06.

¹¹³ John Moore gave one example where discussions were ‘going to become political’ and that a decision could not be made in front of the public servants (Interview, 29 November 2006). Interview 051-06 said that the prime minister often ‘cleared everyone out’, leaving the ministers and maybe his International Adviser in the Cabinet Room.

¹¹⁴ Interview with Paul Barratt, Melbourne, 23 December 2005. Mr Barratt was Secretary of the Department of Defence from 1998 to August 1999. Dr Ashton Calvert described NSCC as ‘business-like’ (Interview in Canberra, 19 May 2006). Dr Calvert was Secretary of DFAT in 1999 and attended NSCC and SCONS.

¹¹⁵ When domestic security matters are discussed, this briefing is given by the Director General of the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO).

¹¹⁶ Interview with Paul Barratt. Ashton Calvert also described the atmosphere of NSCC in a similar way.

Longer and more contiguous opportunities to attend NSCC allowed the officials present to get a better understanding of NSCC deliberations than could be obtained from minutes and debriefings by their ministers. According to one participant in the NSCC, ‘the great benefit was we all knew just what part of the jigsaw puzzle was being played with at the time’.¹¹⁷ The ability to hear the entire debate, judge the mood of the meeting and see the non-verbal signals helped in this regard.

In normal circumstances, NSCC agenda items would be discussed beforehand at the secretaries’ level, or sometimes in the lower-level SPCG. Formal, written submissions would also go through a ‘coordinating comments’ process like other Cabinet business. This process reflected the very strong norm of ‘no surprises’, the desire to present agreed recommendations to NSCC, and the need to reduce complexity so that decisions could be made by the ministers.

The frequent meetings of NSCC also helped to make it into an effective committee. Tim Fischer explained that familiarity with communication processes, good support from the bureaucracy, the atmosphere of the Cabinet room and ‘a couple of drills’ all helped to ensure that when NSCC was called together quickly it could function effectively.¹¹⁸

This description of Howard’s NSCC presents a picture of a well-run, cohesive and focused group—and this is reasonably accurate. However, it was also clear that NSCC was a place of politics. Ministers kept an eye on the political importance of issues, and they also played out some (apparently limited) competition among themselves. The way NSCC operated was also clearly dependent upon personalities and the prime minister’s authority. While Howard had created this machinery so that he did not have to run everything, the NSCC put him in the position where he could be the dominant political figure in crisis, if he so chose.

The Policy Domain: SCONS and SPCG

Despite the wider trend of change in the public service after Howard came to power in 1996, the national security policymaking structure in the policy domain changed little. While those responsible ‘looked very closely at whether [the existing arrangements] were desirable’, the existing secretaries-level committee (SCIS) was

¹¹⁷ Interview with Admiral Chris Barrie, Canberra, 5 April 2005. Admiral Barrie was Chief of the Defence Force from 1998–2002. He was an invited official at NSCC and a member of SCONS in 1999, and had attended SPCG when he was Vice Chief of the Defence Force.

¹¹⁸ Interview with Tim Fischer.

retained in the broad shape of Keating's time and renamed as the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS). The previous government's SPCG was also retained.¹¹⁹

The SCONS membership generally reflected the NSCC ministers, including the secretary of DPM&C, CDF, DG ONA and the secretaries of Defence, DFAT, Attorney General's and Treasury (see Table 5).¹²⁰ This grouping allowed the key senior officials responsible for policy development and implementation to discuss issues in a closed environment before taking their views to the NSCC. It was also a venue where agreement could be reached on some issues, thus relieving the NSCC of some of its workload and taking some of the heat out of interdepartmental disagreements.¹²¹ Just which decisions could be taken at this level was reliant upon a keen awareness of what their respective ministers would accept, and the relationship between the prime minister and secretary of DPM&C.¹²²

Table 5: Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS) – 1999

Secretary, DPM&C	<i>Max Moore-Wilton</i>
Chief of the Defence Force	<i>Admiral Chris Barrie</i>
Secretary, Department of Defence	<i>Paul Barratt (Jan–Aug)</i>
	<i>Hugh White (Aug–Sep)</i>
	<i>Allan Hawke (Oct–)</i>
Secretary, DFAT	<i>Ashton Calvert</i>
Secretary, the Treasury	<i>Ted Evans</i>
Secretary, Attorney Generals Dept	<i>Tony Blunn</i>
DG Office of National Assessments	<i>Kim Jones</i>

SCONS was typically a monthly meeting in 1999, but it did meet on an *ad hoc* basis as well. Its role varied, but generally SCONS considered important, long-term issues with broad impacts on national security and the government. These included complex issues such as security for the 2000 Olympic Games, discussion about defence projects, and white paper considerations.¹²³ Thus SCONS played a major role in determining spending priorities and highlighting the impact of policy options across portfolio areas. SCONS could also become a rehearsal for NSCC, as it had the ability to review items going forward to the ministerial group. This served to 'prevent debate in

¹¹⁹ Interview with 052-06.

¹²⁰ Although the Secretary of the Treasury and Secretary of Attorney General's Department did not usually attend NSCC. Interview 052-06 thought there were clear expectations that the departmental secretary, and not a deputy, would attend. In contrast, Chris Barrie did not think there was any obligation to attend SCONS all the time.

¹²¹ Interview with 052-06. Others thought SCONS could do more. For example, Ashton Calvert described it as 'an energised and lively forum' that would 'break new ground'.

¹²² Interviews with Paul Barratt and Chris Barrie.

¹²³ Interviews with Hugh White and Ashton Calvert.

NSCC and [avoided] presenting an untidy picture for ministers to try and pick through'.¹²⁴

Despite its key position in the formal national security policymaking structure, SCONS would not be a main player in crisis. There were good reasons for this. For one, SCONS could not meet often enough to handle the workload created by a crisis because most of its members would be heavily committed to the NSCC, their internal departmental processes and essential routine departmental work. Secondly, the members themselves—similar to the political leaders—would not consider themselves experts on the details of the issues. They need briefings and submissions from their staff to make sense of the cable traffic and intelligence reports, and time to talk to important stakeholders. Thus, using SCONS during a crisis would impose a substantial workload on already-pressed staff and risked having senior leaders spend unnecessary time in meetings.¹²⁵

STRATEGIC POLICY COORDINATION GROUP

The SPCG of 1999 continued to play its established role. It remained the only body—short of SCONS—where the senior officials from the major national security departments could come together and work through security issues. In doing so, SPCG often reconciled positions and built consensus before proposals were submitted to SCONS or NSC, which meant this group often acted like a 'policy clearing house' for the more senior levels.¹²⁶

There are different views on what SPCG could do and how effective it was. For some, SPCG was a useful and flexible grouping of senior officials. It derived some strength from the ability to call the members together at very short notice, and for its ability to be an action-oriented—rather than deliberative—body. This was possible because its members were sufficiently senior to carry their departments once agreement was reached in the meeting (see Table 6).¹²⁷ Similarly, SPCG members often deputised for their secretaries at NSCC and SCONS, and some played important roles in other committees, such as Defence's Strategic Command Group (SCG). The informal nature

¹²⁴ Interviews with Paul Barratt, 052-06 and Hugh White.

¹²⁵ Interviews with Ashton Calvert and Hugh White. SCONS' limited utility in crisis was also noted by A Dupont, 'Taking out policy insures country against trouble', *Australian*, 7 November 2000, p. 15.

¹²⁶ Interviews with Air Vice-Marshal Kerry Clarke (Canberra, 2 August 2005), Martin Brady (Canberra, 16 August 2005) and 014-05 (Canberra, 5 July 2005). Air Vice-Marshal Clarke was Director General Joint Operations and Plans in Strategic Operations Division in 1998-9. Mr Brady was Director, Defence Signals Directorate in 1999, and acting Deputy Secretary Strategy in August-September. Interview 014-05 was a former senior government official with direct knowledge of SPCG.

¹²⁷ Interviews with Hugh White and 032-05 (identity protected), by telephone, 29 September 2005).

of SPCG was considered a strength because different departments could come together as equals in terms of policy responsibility. This allowed the discussions to roam widely, without creating the angst about responsibilities that might be experienced if such a discussion occurred in more formal settings. It also allowed the agenda to change as the situation demanded.¹²⁸

According to this view, the SPCG's ability to function was based upon strong relationships and trust between its principals. Indeed, one former participant described SPCG as 'more like a community than a committee'.¹²⁹ Members were expected to refrain from 'silly games' when dealing with each other and state their positions clearly. Potentially acrimonious discussions were taken outside the meeting so that a consensus could be achieved wherever possible.¹³⁰

This same level of familiarity, informality and norm of consensus led some to see SPCG quite differently. One interviewee implied that this familiarity could create something like groupthink, as some personalities dominated the discussion.¹³¹ Informality had other limits as well. It was difficult to create a working agenda and dealing with increased numbers in times of crisis. At times, the committee's collegiality could be tested by clashes due to departmental culture.¹³² Some interviewees also thought the high degree of informality made SPCG almost meaningless:

... it was never allowed to be anything more than where a discussion took place. No policy came out of it, people presented their views and that was the end of it. There were no minutes or records of conversation. It was just an exchange of views ...¹³³

The lack of a clear agenda or mandate could also make SPCG appear dysfunctional:

¹²⁸ The Australian Government carefully allocates policy responsibilities, and under normal conditions any attempt by one department to 'meddle' outside their portfolio will provoke a reaction from the custodian. The description of the informal nature of SPCG was provided in interviews with Ashton Calvert and 032-05.

¹²⁹ Interview with Hugh White.

¹³⁰ Interviews with 032-05, Hugh White and Kerry Clarke. Andrews described an earlier SPCG as 'a joint team' that worked 'with great amicability' to produce a major policy document (Andrews, *Defence*, p. 261).

¹³¹ Interview with Major General Michael Keating, Canberra, 25 August 2005. Major General Keating became Head, Strategic Operations Division in Defence in May 1999.

¹³² Interview with Michael Scafton, Melbourne, 5 August 2005. Mr Scafton was Assistant Secretary Regional Engagement, Policy and Programs at the start of 1999. He became Acting Head International Policy in August 1999, and attended the SPCG at times.

¹³³ Interview with 046-06, Canberra, 6 May 2006. Interview 046-06 is a former senior ADF officer with direct knowledge of the SPCG.

The reason why I say it was slightly dysfunctional, and did not work as well as it could, was that the broader grouping came to be dominated by the headline issues of the day ...¹³⁴

The implication of this focus on the news of the day was that SPCG could have trouble planning ahead and aligning departmental efforts.

Table 6: Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG) – Principal Members, 1999

Deputy Secretary, DFAT	<i>John Dauth</i>
Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence, Defence	<i>Hugh White (Jan–Aug) Martin Brady (Sep–Oct)</i>
Vice Chief of Defence Force	<i>Air Marshal Doug Riding</i>
First Assistant Secretary, International Division DPM&C	<i>Peter Varghese</i>

Departmental Machinery

Individual departments had structures to support national security policymaking. The general focus of these included internal decision-making about the allocation of resources and priorities, representing views of the different components of the department or agency, and preparing senior leaders and ministers for their committees.

DFAT changed little after 1996, maintaining a formal group that managed departmental responses to crisis (now called International Security Division).¹³⁵ On the other hand, Defence changed its formal structure to make operational planning smoother. This included making Strategic Command Group more responsive and better focused, raising a subordinate Strategic Watch Group (SWG) to monitor potential crises, and establishing a Strategic Command Division to support the CDF and conduct interdepartmental liaison (see Figure 4).

STRATEGIC COMMAND GROUP

The Strategic Command Group (SCG) was an innovation introduced by CDF Admiral Barrie to replace the ‘operational’ or ‘augmented’ COSC.¹³⁶ The SCG included the CDF, VCDF, the service chiefs and the head of Strategic Command Division; and civilian officials including the departmental secretary, Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence (DEP SEC S&I), Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation

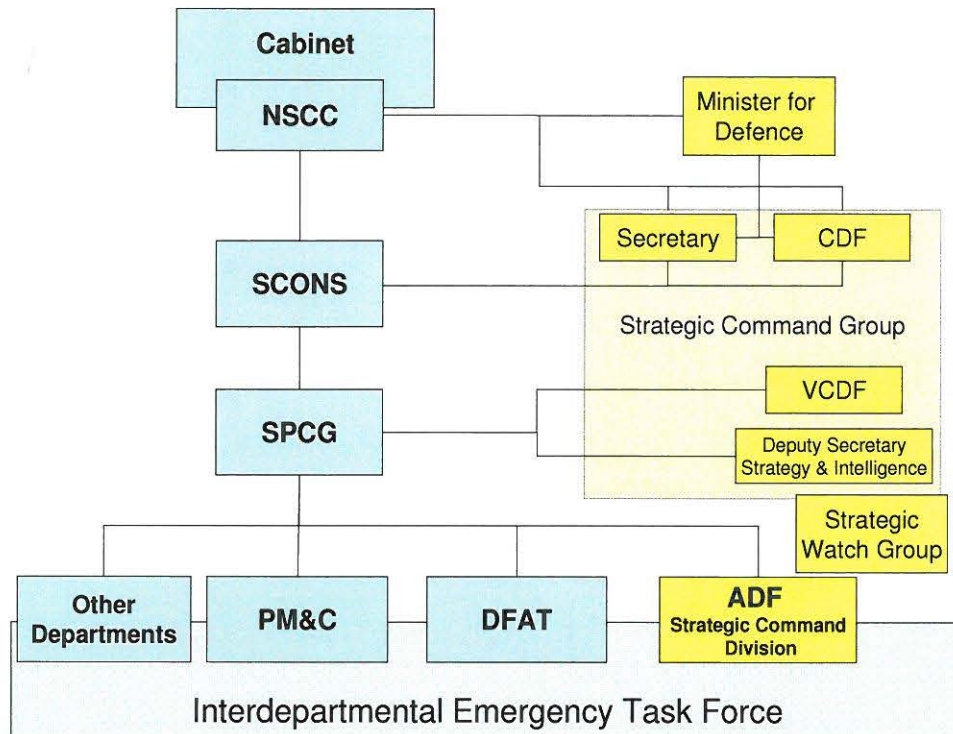
¹³⁴ Interview with Michael Scrafton.

¹³⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Annual Report 2006–2007*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2007, pp. 111–13.

¹³⁶ Interview with Chris Barrie.

(DDIO), and First Assistant Secretary International Policy. It was also normal for the senior operational commander, known as Commander Australian Theatre (COMAST), to participate by video link from Sydney and other officers would be invited as necessary.¹³⁷ The membership of this group could also be expanded if needed.

Figure 4: The National Crisis Management Machinery, Showing the Department of Defence's Formal Structure, 1999



The SCG was given a formal structure and role in 1998, which separated it from the more management-focused Chiefs of Service Committee and Defence Executive.¹³⁸ This role was to provide operational advice to CDF, in his capacity as commander of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) and in his shared role as principal adviser to the Minister for Defence. The SCG also helped the CDF (and the Secretary) to prepare for the NSCC, and for other officials such as the DEP SEC S&I and VCDf to prepare for the SPCG. The SCG could be called together quickly and would meet as the situation required.

¹³⁷ In the Australian system, COMAST is responsible for managing operations using forces assigned from the ADF.

¹³⁸ The Chiefs of Service Committee was a meeting of the senior uniformed officers to discuss military matters (usually, the departmental Secretary and a few other senior officials were invited to attend). The Defence Executive was an internal committee, consisting of the senior uniformed and civilian officers, which considered administrative and budgetary matters.

The conduct of an SCG meeting was highly dependent upon the CDF's personal preferences and style.¹³⁹ These preferences extended from the selection of attendees to the way decisions were recorded. The SCG rarely had a formal agenda in 1999. Instead, the CDF would start with an intelligence brief from DDIO and then go to the major issues of the day or take points from attendees.¹⁴⁰ The minutes were generally circulated in the form of a brief list of decisions and not subjected to a review or acceptance process.

The SCG was supported by the Strategic Watch Group (SWG). The SWG's purpose was to identify potential crises or issues that might be of sufficient concern to elevate to the SCG. This group included a range of policy and intelligence officials at the Colonel level who met regularly, or as needed, to consider situations that may become concerns. Once the SCG began to meet regularly about a crisis, the SWG generally ceased to meet on that issue, being either folded into the SCG itself or waiting until the signs of another crisis emerged before convening again.

The committees mentioned here can be considered as the main bodies that formed the formal crisis management machinery in 1999, but they were by no means the only elements. For example, it was common to form interdepartmental committees or task forces to provide advice to the secretaries. Other committees and working groups, such as the Heads of Intelligence Agencies Meeting (HIAM), the Standing Advisory Committee-Protection Against Violence (SAC-PAV) and the Heads of Commonwealth Law Enforcement Agencies (HOCLEA) might also be considered as part of the national security and crisis policymaking machinery. However, the three government-level committees identified—NSCC, SCONS and SPCG—had central roles in the process and were the critical forums for decision-makers and advisers.

Section III: Change, Continuity and Implications for the Characteristics of Crisis Policymaking

The modern national security policymaking system, which provided the structural starting point for policymaking in any crisis, did not emerge through a smooth or linear evolution. While some key continuities were discernable over the period examined in this chapter, significant change also occurred. These changes tended to

¹³⁹ Interview with Allan Behm, Canberra, 5 May 2005. Mr Behm was First Assistant Secretary (FAS) International Policy in 1998 and FAS Strategic Policy in 1999–2000.

¹⁴⁰ Interviews with Chris Barrie and Michael Keating.

mirror the factors identified by Walcott and Hult¹⁴¹, including the lower-level of influence for organisational factors. This final section examines the reasons behind the observed change and its implications for the characteristics for crisis policymaking.

Explaining changes in the crisis policymaking system

This period shows how the structures and processes for national security crisis policymaking can vary greatly at times where there is no pressing external impetus for change. It also shows that despite considerable experience, no single best practice for national security policymaking had emerged by 1999. There were two reasons for this.

The first can be summarised in terms of the personal preferences of different prime ministers. The prime minister had significant discretion in choosing which of the four mechanisms available—full Cabinet, committee, informal grouping, or key ministers—would be used on any given occasion. In most cases, these choices were influenced by considerations such as time, the likelihood of opposition within the Cabinet or party, or the value prime ministers placed on the advice and support of others. This explains how and why prime ministers such as Gorton, McMahon and Whitlam routinely bypassed existing committees, and often made national security decisions unilaterally or with only limited consultation. The flexibility also explains how a ‘Cabinet-centric’ prime minister such as Fraser employed all four means at different times.

In other cases party rules or Cabinet norms influenced the prime minister’s preferred method for consulting his colleagues, but these were minor constraints as long as the norm of collective responsibility was observed for major decisions. While the utility of a Cabinet committee was accepted wherever Cabinet dynamics permitted, the prime minister gained significant flexibility from being able to choose between, or mix, the four modes of consultation and decision. While this factor may appear to overlap Walcott and Hult’s ‘presidential choice’, strategy and objectives seem to be less influential than the need to ‘win the decision’. In other words, the changes observed in Australia’s system during this period seemed more about ensuring the prime minister got a favourable political resolution, rather than met a long-term goal.

The second reason for change is an environmental meta-factor, best identified as the ‘contingent nature of crisis’ for this purpose. Every crisis involves different policy interests, actors, responsibilities and instruments. This can be seen in two of the

¹⁴¹ CE Walcott and KM Hult, *Governing the White House*, University of Kansas Press, Lawrence, 1995, pp. 16–18.

examples cited above. For instance, the 1986 ‘mini crisis’ was perceived as a foreign policy crisis that required de-escalation. The Australian Government, represented by acting Minister for Foreign Affairs Gareth Evans, framed this problem as a threat to the Australia–Indonesia relationship that would be best served by calming inflamed Indonesian passions. Military action was never contemplated, there were no gatherings of Cabinet, and the bureaucratic team developed to manage the matter came from within established organisations in DFAT.

The 1990–91 Gulf War was handled differently. This event was framed as a military problem with significant domestic political implications—especially for relationships within the governing ALP. Hawke and a small circle of senior ministers watch the situation closely for more than three months. No additional committees were established, and intelligence information and advice for the leadership group was channelled through senior military officers. The level of Australian commitment to the coalition and the lack of a direct threat to national interests allowed a mini-crisis like this to be handled in a compact way. Indeed, the main relationship that may have been transformed in this instance was not between nation-states, as is the case in so many other crises, but in the (far from realised) potential to create division within the governing ALP itself. Policymaking in this instance lent itself to small and unified decision-making group, tightly controlled information and a low-key approach.

The structures for policymaking at the policy and administrative domains were more fluid during this period, with a trend towards fragmentation by the 1980s. After the demise of the DC, bilateral consultation, often at the ministerial level, was the usual form of coordination. That the SCIS broadened its focus to more general national and international security matters after 1987, and the SPCG formed after the Fiji Coup of that year, shows the importance of having a policy domain forum to analyse national security issues. Fragmentation in the administrative domain tended to be addressed by *ad hoc* interdepartmental committees or task forces. Such groups often formed late in events, as in the case of the 1994 SPPKF. These groups became practiced at operating together as the events of the mid- to late-1990s unfolded.

Implications for the characteristics of crisis policymaking

While numerous events during this period were important and received Cabinet attention, none after *Konfrontasi* and Vietnam really deserves the description ‘national security crisis’. However, it is still possible to see how the national security executive remained the main arbiters of what was a crisis issue, and what was not. The

examination of this period also shows the dominant position of the prime minister in decision-making. As the first section showed, prime ministers employ a variety of methods to make decisions, and none decided that embarking upon a full crisis policymaking process was needed during this period. This makes it difficult to identify any implications for policy instruments, consultation, implementation or evaluation during this period.

It is possible to identify some changes to the sources of policy advice as ministers developed personal staffs, but this does not represent a major diversion from the characteristic dominance of ‘insiders’ in this phase. There is also some evidence to show that a more collegial approach to national security policymaking—and by extension, crisis policymaking—was developing, especially after the 1980s. While the reasons for this change are not entirely clear, factors such as increasing role clarity within the bureaucracy, changes to the way senior public servants were recruited, and an increasing role for ministerial staff may have contributed to increased cooperation between key national security departments.

So while untested during this period, the Australian Government was not unprepared for crisis by the late 1990s. As 1999 began, the structures and processes involved in national security policymaking were well understood. This understanding had been promoted in the previous two years where security issues had been constantly on the agenda and some of the mechanisms for crisis policymaking seemed to be in almost constant operation:

We’d had Sandline, which got Customs and Attorney-General’s Department involved—unusually. We’d had the Soeharto succession, where we had positioned ourselves to evacuate up to 10 000 foreign nationals [from Indonesia]. We’d had the coup in Cambodia and the evacuation implemented there. We’d had the running problem of PNG, and the Bougainville Peace initiative ... So it was a pretty well-rehearsed DPM&C, DFAT and Defence core team that ran with the management of that stuff. The links between ADF Headquarters and the minister and DFAT and so on had been well sharpened.¹⁴²

But wire diagrams and formal views only tell part of the story of how national security policy is made in a crisis, and the extent of that difference will be highlighted when the case of East Timor in 1999 is presented in Part II. Before this occurs, a short summary of Part I will be presented to propose characteristics for crisis policymaking.

¹⁴² Interview with Peter Briggs. The Bougainville peace initiative (known as the Lincoln Agreement) saw a regional peace monitoring group inserted into Bougainville province of Papua New Guinea (PNG) in 1997. Australia mounted a small evacuation operation during the Cambodian Coup of July 1997.

SUMMARY OF PART I: PROPOSED CHARACTERISTICS FOR CRISIS POLICYMAKING

Developing characteristics for crisis policymaking

Part I bridges a gap in the literature about Australia's national security by identifying characteristics to describe crisis policymaking. The analytical process followed in this part was needed because many authors are content to study either foreign or defence policy, without recognising how the two overlap in operation. Still fewer have examined crisis from a policymaking perspective. Consequently, no body of work could be used to compare different instances of how Australian governments made policy during national security crises before this dissertation.

The analytical process began by accepting the characteristics of policymaking developed by Bridgman and Davis. These characteristics were used without significant testing because the source work is considered authoritative, and because these characteristics only provide a start point for analysis. Further testing would be needed if the aim was to prove that national security is a policy field in its own right and that it differs from the norm described by Bridgman and Davis.

Since this dissertation aims to examine the characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia, Chapter 1 analysed the literature on foreign and defence policymaking to produce a tentative list of characteristics for the broader field of national security policymaking. The vignettes described in Chapter 2, and Chapter 3's examination of the crisis policymaking system from 1963–99, developed the tentative characteristics further and provided an empirical grounding for understanding crisis policymaking in Australia. This section summarises these chapters to propose a list of characteristics of crisis policymaking for testing refinement in Part II.

The proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking

IDENTIFY ISSUES

The characteristics of issue identification in a crisis follow those proposed for national security, although the central role of the national security executive—the prime minister, his national security ministers and their senior officials—is heightened in crisis situations. Indeed, the space for others such as Parliament, political parties, lobby groups and even the media to identify issues in crises is less than that for national security issues in general. The task here is not only to identify the problem; these actors

must define the problem and how to manage it. This is a critical step with important ramifications for analysis, structures, instruments and consultation.

There remains space for foreign actors, particularly foreign governments, to identify issues and define the problem. This provides a clue to the importance of information and agency in a crisis. When time is critical, those who can actually have an impact on the government's immediate interests attract priority and attention. Governments need to listen to these actors' views and understand the implications of their activities, knowing both may influence subsequent events and national interests.

The importance of mass appeal is more difficult to determine, however, for public opinion generally followed the government's preferred course in the examples of crisis examined thus far. This may support the view that the government keeps one eye on public opinion during a crisis and shapes public opinion to accept its view. It might also speak to a notion that when a crisis occurs, the public tends to support the government—especially since the government is likely to be providing authoritative information on the issues at stake.

The proposed characteristics of the Identify Issues phase in crises are:

- The prime minister, his national security ministers and their senior officials are the dominant domestic actors in issue identification and, by extension, problem definition.
- Foreign actors (especially governments) and events have the ability to place issues on the crisis policy agenda when they intend to harm Australian interests, when the interests of Australia's allies and friends are threatened, and when high levels of interdependence mean that threats to others' interests are viewed as threats to Australia.
- Other domestic actors have a limited ability to identify issues in a crisis.
- Mass appeal plays a limited role in issue identification.

These characteristics appear unlikely to change as the Australian Government, which is represented by the executive, is likely to maintain its dominance over issue identification. However, other actors may become more influential as access to new information sources and an increasingly pervasive media increase the range of voices that can contest the government's view. Other external players, including non-state actors such as terrorist groups, can also be influential. These changes may serve to make mass appeal or public opinion influential, but since the Australia public has generally

supported the government in national security crises, this development is unlikely to have a dramatic effect.

POLICY ANALYSIS

The Policy Analysis phase incorporates extra-rational methods during a crisis, particularly when timeframes are limited. One reason for this change is that political leaders rely heavily on trusted, expert bureaucratic and political advisers. This means political decision-makers often narrow their sources of information in crisis; they will generally listen more to their established insiders and intelligence agencies rather than find different sources of information. This narrowing of advice also changes the structure of policy analysis, empowering some individuals and sections of the bureaucracy above others. The description of 'insiders' as the policy experts should not be seen in a sinister light; nearly all are either elected politicians, appointed officials, or advisers appointed under an act of Parliament. Foreign governments, and their officials under some circumstances, can become quasi-insiders in a crisis as they use their access to information and resources to influence policy options.

Some evidence, albeit still inconclusive, shows a role for dominant frameworks in policy analysis. Diplomats and defence officials have subscribed to different 'world views' at times; this includes differences between the uniformed and civilian elements of Defence. The influence of frameworks is most pronounced where there is no clear lead in crisis and Defence, PMD/DPM&C or External/Foreign Affairs offer different policy options.

The proposed characteristics of policy analysis in a crisis are:

- Where the ability to conduct rational comprehensive analysis is limited in a crisis, decision-makers turn to trusted sources of advice. This can change the structure of policymaking and identify which actors will be influential.
- Policy issues are rarely analysed as individual, discrete problems, and the nature of competition between issues and interests, and the consequent influence on the issue at hand, makes analysis iterative.
- Internal policy experts dominate.
- Where dominant frameworks exist, they are likely to be noticeable where there is no clear lead for a crisis.

Only limited change is expected in the broad definition of these characteristics, but change should be expected in the specifics. Thus the degree to which rational and extra-rational factors may dominate changes from instance to instance, as can the location of the policy experts—at least in theory. The nature of the dominant framework is also likely to change, just as the prevailing framework may shift.

POLICY INSTRUMENTS

The instruments available to a government during crises follow those already developed as part of national security policymaking. This is logical because there is often little time to develop new instruments and, more importantly, develop champions for them. In addition, the use of policy instruments remains highly situational, to the point where some will be deliberately ignored to avoid sending the wrong (or right) signals about one's capability or intent.

The proposed characteristics of the Policy Instruments phase are:

- The instruments most used by the Australian Government in crises are diplomacy, alliances, military force, economic levers (including foreign aid), information, international law, and (sometimes) social levers.
- The utility of foreign and defence policy instruments is highly situational in a crisis.

Only limited change can be expected to these characteristics, perhaps where additional instruments are added to existing ones. For example, health care is being perceived as a critical national security capability today, just as the customs and financial tracking agencies are seen integral instruments for counter-terrorism.

CONSULTATION

Government consultation is likely to be limited in crisis situations. Once again, the constraints of time and the sensitivity of information allow political leaders to provide information after decisions are made, and to limit their consultation to this level. The government's deliberations are generally conducted in secret. Consultation with foreign governments in a crisis is broader, and may extend from information through to partnership and delegation—where control over decisions is vested elsewhere.

The proposed characteristics for consultation in a crisis are:

- All options are used with overseas interlocutors (who are primarily other governments and major international organisations) with information, discussion, partnership and delegation commonly occurring.
- Consultation between the government and the public usually takes the form of a one-way passage of information.
- Much consultation occurs in secret.

Both the options for consultation, and the preferred modes, are unlikely to change significantly over time. However, there may be more times where delegation becomes the actual method of consultation in a world that is increasingly interconnected and national governments are limited in what they can achieve alone. The secrecy aspect of consultation is also likely to prevail, although better access to information may make secrecy harder to maintain.

COORDINATION

While the bureaucratic politics view of government activity in a crisis is persuasive and influential, a strong case can be made for ascribing a greater sense of collegiality to coordination since the 1990s. This divergence was not always observable, for earlier crises (such as 1941–42) did not show signs of either approach because bureaucratic activity was dominated by one department (Defence). This situation changed in the 1950s as crises became more complex and other departments began to develop their own policy analysis capabilities and frameworks.

There were instances in the case of *Konfrontasi*, such as the November 1963 advice about Australian troop commitments to Borneo, where interdepartmental coordination was good and provided unified policy advice to Cabinet. However, there was divergence at other times. Importantly, PMD and DEA differed over the approach towards Indonesia, and a clear divergence existed between the pro-Britain line of PMD and the military, and DEA's independent viewpoint. These differences displayed some features of bureaucratic politics.

Some instances of competition remained into the 1990s, but it is also possible to see more cooperation. Three factors may be responsible for this change: bureaucratic roles had greater clarity, there was more ministerial involvement in selecting senior officials, and ministers had personal staff that could provide alternatives to the

bureaucracy as sources of advice. There could be other factors, such as the pressure of events, which also promoted cooperation over competition in crisis.¹⁴³

Governments used certain structures and routines to manage crises, but these changed significantly over time and sometimes in the midst of a crisis. There were significant changes during 1941–42, while Menzies created new committees after the 1954 crisis and made an important structural change at the start of 1963. Changes to the policymaking system also occurred between the 1960s and the 1990s, even though Australia did not face a national security crisis in this period. There were two main reasons for this change: political preference and the contingent nature of crises. This is important to understand because future changes to the policymaking structure should be expected. Consequently, the resulting system must cope with these influences, lest it become inflexible and unable to adapt to the political and organisational conditions of the day.

The proposed characteristics of coordination in crisis policymaking are:

- Governments describe structures and routines that suit their particular preferences and best thinking for the time, the task at hand, and external factors.
- Coordination is basically competitive, but it shows increasing propensity for collegiality.

While the first characteristic is likely to remain consistent, the second may vary because individual preferences remain important to this fundamentally human form of interaction.

DECISION

While Cabinets influence national security policymaking and will be consulted about major issues, it is the prime minister who emerges as the dominant decision-maker in crises. Furthermore, the prime minister decides his sources of advice and the circumstances under which he shares that advice. This characteristic may see prime ministers go beyond formally appointed committees and defined ministerial

¹⁴³ A point emphasised by current Secretary DPM&C, Dr P Shergold, 'Keynote Address', at the *Governing Through Collaboration Conference*, Hyatt Hotel, Canberra, 28–29 June 2007. This broad position has been challenged by R Gerodimos, 'The UK BSE Crisis as a Failure of Government', *Public Administration*, vol. 82, no. 4, 2004, pp. 920–1; and A McConnell and A Stark, 'Foot-and-Mouth 2001: The Politics of Crisis Management', *Parliamentary Affairs*, vol. 55, no. 4, 2002, pp. 667–9.

responsibilities. It may see officials closely involved in decision-making, although officials are never credited with taking decisions that rightly belong to elected politicians. It was still normal for officials to leave the Cabinet or committee room when decisions were taken during the period examined, except in the very unusual situation of the Prime Minister's War Conference in 1942.

Despite the prime minister's dominance and strong influence over the decision-making processes, normal Cabinet conventions of collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions are usually followed in a crisis. However, adherence to some, especially collective responsibility, may not be honoured in a strict way. This is especially the case where the prime minister is the dominant figure.

Both the prime minister's dominance and the basic conventions of this phase are likely to continue, although fundamental changes to the national security structure may change the influence of other players. For example, the appointment of a national security adviser in a future government may qualify the foreign or defence minister's existing influence. The role of officials in Cabinet has already changed over time, so further change should be expected. Given this, the proposed characterises for the Decision phase of a crisis are:

- The prime minister is dominant.
- Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions.
- Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the Cabinet room (or committee room) before decisions are taken.

IMPLEMENTATION

Implementation in a crisis follows the characteristics described for policymaking in general and national security policymaking in particular. It is usual for decision-makers and those analysing policy to think about the instruments they may use in implementation very early in the crisis. Implementation issues may even set the timing for the policy process at times, as it does with most military deployments because not all instruments are ready to use all the time. Implementation also continues throughout the process as leaders and diplomats test messages and reactions with protagonists, allies and other parties. These features of implementation are unlikely to change.

The complexity experienced when two or more agencies are involved in implementation is also shown in crisis. The example of *Konfrontasi*, and the efforts to

create a unified approach to dealing with communism in Asia in the mid- to late-1950s¹⁴⁴, shows how implementation can become more complex when agencies representing instruments disagree on a course of action, and how much easier implementation can be when they agree. Again, this characteristic is likely to be enduring.

The proposed characteristics of implementation in a crisis are:

- Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle.
- The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes.

EVALUATION

The final phase, Evaluation, shows significant continuity with other policymaking fields in that it is rare during or after a crisis in Australia. While two Royal Commissions were held into major aspects of the First World War, no similar enquiries were held after any of the other crises examined. Parliamentary enquiries, only a feature of Australian politics since 1970, had never examined policymaking in a crisis until 1999. No situations can be found where Cabinet ordered a review of policymaking processes in a crisis before 1999.

These characteristics are unlikely to change since evaluation can expose the government, or individual ministers, to significant political risks. Given this, governments are unlikely to allow evaluation of their own performance in a crisis, and are likely to resist calls for any type of enquiry by the Parliament or other body. Future governments may find resistance difficult, especially if judicial means are used for evaluation.

The proposed characteristics of the evaluation phase in a crisis are:

- Policy advice is not systemically evaluated.
- If conducted at all, evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented in full.

Part II tests these characteristics through the seminal case of the East Timor crisis of 1999. This study adds depth and a degree of currency to the characteristics, and provides further reassurance that the characteristics identified can be applied to other instances where an Australian Government reacts to a national security crisis.

¹⁴⁴ See C Waters, 'A failure of imagination: R.G. Casey and Australian Plans for counter-subversion in Asia, 1954-1956', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999.

PART II

TESTING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISIS POLICYMAKING IN AUSTRALIA: THE CASE OF EAST TIMOR, 1999

Part II tests the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking through the seminal case of East Timor in 1999. The part begins with a narrative of the case from the perspective of Australian Government policymakers in Canberra. Three subsequent chapters examine the proposed characteristics in greater detail. The first of these, Chapter 5, describes the early stages of the policy cycle involving issue identification, policy analysis and policy instruments. Chapter 6 looks at bringing policy together through consultation outside the Australian Government and coordination within it. The final chapter examines decision and the phases beyond—implementation and evaluation—which complete the policy cycle.

The examination of each policy phase uses the characteristics developed in Part I to provide the framework for discussion. Evidence will be assembled to support or refute each characteristic, and the conclusions will be used to modify these. The aim remains to develop a robust set of characteristics that can be used to help policymakers understand the nature of crisis policymaking in Australia.

A BRIEF OUTLINE OF THE EAST TIMOR CRISIS—THE VIEW FROM CANBERRA

‘This is big’

There have been a number of books published about East Timor’s history during the period 1945–99¹, and this dissertation will not repeat those efforts. Instead, the main focus falls on the seat of Australia’s Government, Canberra, during the period after December 1998 when Prime Minister John Howard wrote to Indonesia’s President BJ Habibie concerning the status of East Timor.² This event represents the case’s beginning as more Australian government agencies become increasingly involved in developing, and then managing, new policies concerning East Timor’s future. The case study period concludes in late-October 1999, as this marked the transition from crisis policymaking to a ‘steady state’ of operations in Canberra. This steady state began when most *ad hoc* groups—established to manage or coordinate policy with regard to East Timor—were disbanded or incorporated into formal departmental and agency structures.

Although December 1998 has been chosen to start this case study, it is important to recognise that the East Timor issue had taken an important place in the Australian policy agenda before this time, especially after Indonesia’s President Soeharto was replaced by Habibie on 20 May 1998.³ In one of his first major policy statements after assuming the presidency, Habibie announced that his government

¹ For example, see JG Taylor, *Indonesia’s Forgotten War: The Hidden History of East Timor*, Pluto Press, Leichhardt, 1991.

² It should be noted that Howard made his first public appeal to Habibie on 26 May 1998. See R Rose, ‘Howard Urges Habibie To Act On East Timor’, *West Australian*, 26 May 1998, p. 4.

³ While the fate of East Timor had been on Australia’s political agenda since 1974, it did not have a impact upon Australian politics until 1997 with the start of the debate within the Australian Labor Party about East Timor policy that began in November-December 1997 (see A Burke, ‘Labor Could Be Set For A Backflip on East Timor’, *Canberra Times*, 22 December 1997). However, this change did not appear to have a significant effect upon policy until May 1998. It is also important to note that Australia was also engaged in East Timor on the official side before 1998, primarily through the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), which had been involved in humanitarian and development projects in East Timor.

would consider granting 'special autonomy' to East Timor.⁴ Australian policymakers saw an opportunity to achieve three interwoven outcomes in these new conditions.

The first and most important outcome desired by Australian policymakers in 1998 was a better relationship with Indonesia. Perhaps more than any other single issue in recent times, Indonesia's conduct in East Timor had been viewed negatively by many in Australia and this had implications for the entire Australia–Indonesia relationship. From the Australian perspective, healing this 'running sore' was one way to correct this problem.⁵

The second desired outcome was to see Indonesia's economy recover from the 1997 economic crisis, while maintaining a degree of stability during its transition from dictatorship to democracy.⁶ At the time, Australia was concerned that instability in Indonesia would have a negative effect on Australia's own prosperity, and saw assistance as a way of showing Australia's value as a friend in the region.⁷ Support for democratic change was less pronounced, perhaps because it implied criticism of the

⁴ Habibie vacillated over this point for a few days. Compare his position as cited in D Greenlees, 'Habibie rules out Timor referendum', *Australian*, 4 June 1998, to the announcement reported by J Solomon, 'Habibie Offers East Timor Special Status', *The Wall Street Journal Europe*, 10 June 1998.

⁵ The difficulty caused to the bilateral Australia–Indonesia relationship by the ongoing conflict within Indonesia's East Timorese province is described in Department of Defence, *Australia's Strategic Policy*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997, p. 22. Contemporary analysis of the East Timor issue also stressed the irritant issue as a motive for Australian action in 1999 (see C Thayer, 'Australia-Indonesia Relations: The Case of East Timor', paper presented at the *International Conference on Australia and East Asian Security into the 21st Century*, Department of Diplomacy, National Cheng Chi University Taipei, Taiwan, 8 October 1999, p. 4. The logic of 'solving the running sore' is strongly criticised by W Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis: Some Critical Comments', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2000, p. 153 and p. 155, who finds the notion of brekaing the relationship to fix it absurd; and J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 213.

⁶ This point is made by Foreign Minister Downer, 'CEDA Luncheon Address', 20 July 2000, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 12 April 2006. It was also mentioned as being 'interwoven' with the issue of Australia's medium-term relationship with Indonesia in an interview with Dr Ashton Calvert, who was Secretary of DFAT in 1999.

⁷ Speeches such as A Downer, 'Indonesia's Challenges: How Australia Can Help', (paper presented at the *International Conference on Indonesian Economic Stabilisation and Recovery*, Australian National University, Canberra, 23 November 1998, available <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au>, accessed 12 April 2006) and A Downer, 'Australia—Stability in the Asia Pacific' (speech to the Harvard Club, New York, 8 June 1998, available <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au>, accessed 27 July 2007), which emphasise the economic imperatives of Australia's interests at this time. Downer used another speech in July 1998 to suggest changes that could be made to East Timor's relationship with Indonesia, which show how the Australian Government saw room to discuss Timor without being accused of interference in Indonesia. See A Downer, 'A Long Term Commitment: Australia And East Asia', (speech to the Indonesian Council on World Affairs and the Indonesia–Australia Business Council, Borobodur Hotel, Jakarta, 9 July 1998, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 12 April 2006).

former Indonesian president.⁸ The third outcome—and arguably lowest priority—was the desire to improve the humanitarian situation in East Timor, which was still a significantly underdeveloped province. Senior officials thought that a different political arrangement offered some chance of ending the guerilla conflict, and perhaps the opportunity to develop the economy and obtain more international aid.⁹

While the most visible discussions about East Timor’s future were being conducted through the United Nations (UN)–Portugal–Indonesia ‘Tripartite Talks’,¹⁰ Australian diplomats soon began consulting a number of influential Timorese about acceptable political arrangements.¹¹ Australia’s internal policymaking process also increased in tempo. Foreign Minister Alexander Downer began taking weekly briefings on East Timor from June 1998¹² and a small, informal meeting of senior Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT), Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C) and Defence officials convened to discuss Australian policy options.¹³

Significant events occurred on other fronts. East Timor experienced further violence in October and November 1998, which increased international attention on the situation. At the same time, the Tripartite Talks appeared to falter as Indonesian claims about troop withdrawals were discredited in the media¹⁴ and the parties found common ground elusive.¹⁵ Support for ‘action’ was also gaining momentum in

⁸ Downer, ‘A Long Term Commitment’.

⁹ Interview with Ashton Calvert and D Goldsworthy, ‘East Timor,’ in Goldsworthy and P Edwards (eds), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, p. 225.

¹⁰ These talks recommenced in June 1997. See A Alatas, *The Pebble in the Shoe: The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor*, Aksara Karunia, Jakarta, 2006, Chapter 9, for an account of their progress to mid-1998.

¹¹ The major efforts included those by Nick Warner, then First Assistant Secretary (FAS) Southeast Asia Division in DFAT to consult identified East Timorese leaders, and by the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia, John McCarthy, who consulted the noted East Timorese resistance leader and future President, Xanana Gusmão (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998–2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, pp. 26–7).

¹² Interview with Ashton Calvert. See also D Greenlees and R Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor’s Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, p. 80.

¹³ Interview with Hugh White, who was Deputy Secretary Strategy in Defence in 1999.

¹⁴ The ‘shuffling’ of Indonesian combat troops in East Timor was widely reported. See D Greenlees, ‘Leak shows no E Timor troop cuts’, *Australian*, 30 October 1998, p. 1; and Australian Associated Press, ‘Downer denies Aust intelligence wanting’, *AAP Information Services Pty Ltd*, 1 November 1998.

¹⁵ While Alatas argues that the talks were proceeding ‘at an encouraging pace’, they were suspended for a short time in November 1998 before an agreement was reached to recommence in January

Australia as new evidence about the killings of journalists at Balibo in 1975 was uncovered in October 1998.¹⁶ Finally, it became known to officials that the Australian Government wanted to develop an initiative to start their new term. Interview 052-06 recalled how ‘... the government recognised that, to some extent, Indonesia was falling into a dangerous vacuum and Australia needed to express some views which would help, from our point of view, to crystallize the situation’, although there was no agreed way forward among the major national security departments.¹⁷ These conditions presented an opportunity for a policy initiative.¹⁸

The exact form of the initiative came to be known as the ‘Howard Letter’.¹⁹ It is almost certain, based on interviews with Hugh White, 051-06 and 032-05 (the latter being a senior officer in a key department in 1999) that the letter was developed by the Prime Minister’s international adviser, Michael Thawley; Peter Varghese, then First Assistant Secretary in DPM&C; and Deputy Secretary of DFAT, John Dauth. The draft of the letter was discussed with the Secretary of DFAT Dr Ashton Calvert, a senior analyst from the Office of National Assessments (ONA), and the Ambassador in Jakarta, John McCarthy. The letter was then cleared through Prime Minister Howard and Foreign Minister Downer.

Further knowledge of the letter probably extended only as far as the Secretary of DPM&C, Max Moore-Wilton and DFAT’s Nick Warner.²⁰ Some claim that the

1999 (Alatas, pp. 145–6). These difficulties are noted in the text of the Howard Letter and the analysis contained in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 29 and 31. See also NJ Wheeler and T Dunne, ‘East Timor and the New Humanitarian Intervention’, *International Affairs*, vol. 77, no. 4, 2001, p. 812.

¹⁶ See J Holmes, ‘East Timor - Balibo: A Special Report’, *Foreign Correspondent*, ABC Television (Australia), 20 October 1998, available <http://www.abc.net.au>, accessed 21 January 2006). This report led to a re-opening of the Sherman Enquiry into the Balibo killings of 16 October 1975. This atrocity involved the murder of five Australian-based newsmen by Indonesian forces and some Timorese militia.

¹⁷ Hugh White recalls a discussion in June 1998 where the prospect of changing Australian policy to calling for an act of self-determination was discussed, but ‘no clear conclusion was reached ... in that discussion’ and the proposal was not raised again with Defence (H White, ‘The Road to INTERFET: East Timor – 1999’, unpublished paper, copy in author’s possession, 2007, p. 2).

¹⁸ Greenlees and Garran, pp. 84–5. The idea of ‘opportunity’ was expressed in interviews with Ashton Calvert and 064-07, a former ministerial staffer and government official.

¹⁹ The full text of the Howard Letter is reproduced in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, pp. 181–2.

²⁰ Goldsworthy claims this letter was instigated by DFAT, through a ministerial submission on 30 November 1999 (NAA, A9737, 92/051651 part 17, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, ‘Ministerial Submission’, 30 November 1999, cited in Goldsworthy, ‘East Timor’, p. 227). It is more likely the text was drafted as stated above and presented formally to the foreign minister through this submission, so he could present it ‘below the line’ to NSCC on 1 December.

letter was discussed at the 1 December 1998 meeting of National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC)²¹; indeed, Howard is said to have grabbed Alexander Downer by the arm after the meeting and said ‘This is big, this is very big.’²² However, key officials within Defence and the Defence minister’s office said they knew nothing about it.²³ Given the limited circle of senior politicians and officials involved, it is not surprising that this initiative caught sections of the Australian national security policy community by surprise.

The letter stressed Australia’s respect for Indonesia’s territorial integrity and continued sovereignty over East Timor, but it encouraged President Habibie to see East Timor as a political—that is, domestic—problem rather than as a foreign policy issue. This letter also recommended building a review mechanism into the autonomy package, similar to the 1988 Matignon Accords in New Caledonia, thus delaying a Timorese vote for independence by ten years at least.²⁴ The Australian Government intended to deliver the letter directly and quietly to Habibie, so giving the Indonesian President the time and space to consider its proposals without external pressure.²⁵ In total, this letter revised important elements of Australia’s position on East Timor’s future and provided a catalyst for the events of 1999.²⁶

²¹ Interview with 052-06, a former senior government official with direct knowledge of the East Timor crisis. See also Greenlees and Garran, pp. 85–6; Goldsworthy, ‘East Timor’, p. 221; and J Cotton, ‘East Timor and Australia – Twenty–five years of the policy debate’, in Cotton (ed), *East Timor and Australia*, Australian Defence Studies Centre/Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra, 2000, p. 13.

²² Greenlees and Garran, p. 86.

²³ Interviews with John Moore (Defence Minister in 1999), Paul Barratt (Secretary of the Department of Defence until August 1999) and Chris Barrie (Chief of the Defence Force in 1999), and Hugh White. Other well-placed interviewees who also claimed that the letter caught Defence by surprise included Aldo Borgu (an adviser to Defence Minister John Moore in 1999) and Allan Behm (Canberra, 5 May 2005). Behm was FAS International Policy in 1998 and FAS Strategic Policy and Plans in 1999–2000.

²⁴ The 1988 Matignon Accords between France and the people of New Caledonia included provisions on legal status of citizens, customary law, land, devolution of powers, economic development and political representation. Most importantly, these accords allowed for a poll to determine whether the people of New Caledonia would convert ‘citizenry into nationality’ in 1998 (Embassy of France in Australia, ‘The Noumea Accord’, no date, available <http://www.ambafrance-au.org>, accessed 28 December 2006).

²⁵ Interview with 051-06, who is a former senior government official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case.

²⁶ A DFAT submission described the policy suggestions contained in the letter as a ‘major shift’ (see Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID, *Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into East Timor*, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Additional Information, vol. 5, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, p. 046). Alatas agreed with that assessment, describing the letter as an ‘unmistakable shift in [Australian] policy’ (Alatas, p. 144).

However, that plan went awry almost immediately as the letter's contents, particularly the reference it contained to the Matignon Accords (so comparing East Timor with a colonial situation), angered Habibie.²⁷ Ultimately, however, this letter changed Habibie's thinking on East Timor in a substantive way about its future status.²⁸

The situation became difficult to control once the existence of the letter was leaked sometime in late-December 1998²⁹, even before the story of Howard's letter broke in the Australian press on 12 January 1999. This news story was followed quickly by an official statement that confirmed Australia's preference for 'an act of self-determination at some future time, following a substantial period of autonomy'.³⁰ On 27 January, Habibie consulted his Cabinet and decided to offer East Timor 'regional autonomy plus' in a referendum. If that offer was rejected, his government would recommend that the Indonesian Parliament 'release East Timor from Indonesia'.³¹

A developing situation

The events and decisions of January 1999 sent the Australian national security policy community into overdrive. The meeting of the Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG) on 15 January highlighted Defence's disappointment with the lack of internal consultation, and provided a negative prognosis for what might happen next. One participant at that meeting recalled:

²⁷ This reaction was reported by Australia's Ambassador, John McCarthy (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 32) and recounted in Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', pp. 228–9. See also K Polgaze, 'PM's Timor letter "angered Habibie"', *The Canberra Times*, 3 November 1999, who quotes an interview with Alatas; a view repeated in Alatas, pp. 148–51. This is also how Tim Fischer, then Australia's deputy prime minister and a member of the NSCC, understood Habibie's reaction.

²⁸ Greenlees and Garran, pp. 89–95; and Alatas, p. 144. Goldsworthy notes other forces on Habibie's decision-making at the time, including pressure from the European Union, US Congress and influential Indonesians (Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 230).

²⁹ Interview with 051-06. Another interviewee (identity protected) confirmed the period of the leak, recalling that a journalist called to ask for background on the letter. Goldsworthy implies Indonesian officials were responsible for the leak (Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 229).

³⁰ The story was reported in D Greenlees, 'Howard reverse on Timor', *Australian*, 12 January 1999; and A Downer, 'Australian Government Historic Policy Shift On East Timor', Media Release, 12 January 1999, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 12 January 2006.

³¹ J Head, 'East Timor Breakthrough', *BBC News* (United Kingdom), 28 January 1999, available <http://news.bbc.co.uk>, accessed 20 January 2006, quoting Information Minister Yunus Yosfiah's announcement on 27 January.

Hugh White was very forthright, and questioned the DFAT representatives on the process and intentions of the letter. Hugh said something like ‘Do you know what the f... is going to happen?’ They were taken aback at Hugh’s language and expression: ‘Habibie is going to accept the offer, there will be a process of self-determination which the Indonesian military will resist, and the local militias will be the tool they will resist it with, and we will end up with the ADF [Australian Defence Force] on the ground between the Indonesians and the East Timorese. We could well end up with body bags coming back to Australia.’ It was an extremely strong event.³²

Other agencies in Canberra were also working to prepare information on Australia’s options by late January. Defence intelligence was providing analysis of the situation in East Timor and Indonesia, including reports that pointed to Indonesian military support for militia violence.³³ Defence’s Strategic Operations Division produced a paper that explained what forces might be needed to conduct different types of missions, ranging from small observer missions to larger, combat-capable forces.³⁴ Other work was undertaken within Defence to examine the state of ADF readiness and the costs involved in preparing air and naval assets and another brigade group (of around 3500 people) for possible contingencies. While the potential for strife in East Timor was a factor, this planning seemed especially prudent given the ongoing problems of instability and unrest across the northern archipelago, including in Solomon Islands, Papua New Guinea and Bougainville, and sporadic violence in Indonesia in 1997 and 1998.³⁵ The proposal for increased readiness was made at the February 1999 meeting of the NSCC, and subsequently announced on 11 March.³⁶

DFAT was also busy. Aside from increased consultation with both Indonesian leaders and East Timorese groups by Ambassador McCarthy³⁷, consultation with

³² Interview with Rear Admiral Peter Briggs, who was Head, Strategic Operations Division in Defence from early 1997 to May 1999.

³³ DJ Ball, ‘Silent Witness: Australian Intelligence and East Timor’, in Ball, J Dunn, G van Klinken, D Bouchier, D Kammen and R Tanter (eds), *Masters of Terror: Indonesia’s Military and the Violence in East Timor in 1999*, Canberra Paper 145, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2002, pp. 246–7.

³⁴ Interviews with John Moore, Allan Behm and 035-05 (Canberra, 14 October 2005, identity protected).

³⁵ Interview with Chris Barrie.

³⁶ Interviews with John Moore, Chris Barrie, 051-06 and Aldo Borgu. It is interesting to note that the increased readiness was attributed to savings from the Defence Reform Program—see Defence Public Affairs, ‘The Hon J Moore, Progress on the Implementation of the Defence Reform Program’, Media Release 067/99, Canberra, 11 March 1999.

³⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID, *Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into East Timor*, p. 047.

other countries included specific discussions about East Timor. In one example, Ashton Calvert visited Washington to consult the US Assistant Secretary of State, Stanley Roth. DFAT also established its own policy unit, headed by Nick Warner and managed by Chris Moraitis, to coordinate the diplomatic aspects of national policy.

DPM&C also began to look more closely at the issue. Having taken a leading role in drafting the Howard Letter, it left most of the subsequent policy development work to 'implementation departments' like DFAT and Defence. Its focus remained on keeping the prime minister informed of developments and ensuring that agency activity was coordinated.³⁸

There was, however, a significant divergence of opinion between DFAT and Defence about what Australia should be doing. DFAT argued that the Indonesians were responsible for security; they were keen to avoid the perception that Australia was making military preparations to intervene in East Timor.³⁹ To this way of thinking, such a perception could create tension with Indonesia, or allow others to assume that Australia would take the lead and 'bankroll' the process.⁴⁰ A perception such as this may also discourage the Indonesians and Timorese from coming to their own compromises about the process.⁴¹ Others saw a danger in being proactive, thinking overt pressure on the Indonesians or clearly visible defence preparations may force Habibie to renege on the consultation plan.⁴²

On the other hand, Defence visualised multiple scenarios that could occur in the region, and East Timor in particular, ranging from a monitoring mission up to the need to conduct an evacuation protected by ADF troops.⁴³ As mentioned earlier, the NSCC identified a need to increase force readiness to ensure that the ADF would be

³⁸ Interview with 052-06.

³⁹ This position was expressed in the leaked cable from Calvert to Roth, and was supported by interviews with Hugh White and 012-05 (Canberra, 30 June 2005), who is an official with direct knowledge of the East Timor ballot. Maley also makes note of DFAT's adherence to this position, see Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis', pp. 155–8.

⁴⁰ According to Carl Thayer, this view was expressed by Peter Varghese, FAS International Division in DPM&C. Thayer does not state his source or the remarks' context. See Thayer, 'Australia–Indonesia Relations', p. 9.

⁴¹ This reason was attributed to a DPM&C official, and is criticised by William Maley ('Australia and the East Timor Crisis', p. 157). It is not inconceivable to think that a 'Machiavellian' East Timorese element may see advantage in acting so to inflame tensions and encourage foreign intervention.

⁴² Interview with Tim Fischer.

⁴³ Interview with Air Vice-Marshal Bob Treloar, by telephone, 4 November 2005. Air Vice-Marshal Treloar was appointed Commander Australian Theatre in May 1999.

in a position to respond to a major crisis, while being prepared for a separate, additional contingency should one occur. These preparations required the overt movement of troops and equipment, increased training and increased spending on logistic support—activities that are difficult to hide and would be difficult to attribute to anything other than preparations for East Timor in the prevailing climate. There would also be a need to engage potential coalition contributors and the United States to ensure that Australia had international support and appropriate capabilities to conduct an operation offshore.⁴⁴ The Defence minister decided (after consultation with the prime minister) to ignore DFAT's concern and agree to Admiral Chris Barrie's (Australian Chief of the Defence Force—CDF), recommendation to go ahead with readiness planning and consultation with US Pacific Command (USPACOM). This was fortunate because it took nearly five months to prepare a second brigade group for peacekeeping operations.⁴⁵

Defence also took the step of appointing Brigadier Mike Smith to manage part of its input to the East Timor policy process. Given the title 'Director General East Timor' (DGET), he reported directly to the CDF through the Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence (Hugh White). While the initial thinking was for DGET to focus on the relationship with Indonesia, it was eventually decided to use Smith to develop an understanding of the United Nations and its processes. Brigadier Smith would also be made available to command a UN peacekeeping force if one was required in East Timor, even though the idea of an intervention force (what became INTERFET) was still not being contemplated.⁴⁶ This proved to be a worthwhile foresight when the time came to work with the United Nations on the eventual peacekeeping operation.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Interview with 052-06.

⁴⁵ Interview with John Moore and Allan Behm. The second brigade group was declared ready by the end of June (see R Garran, 'The military masses for its biggest march in 30 years', *Australian*, 3 July 1999, p. 7).

⁴⁶ Interview 007-05, Canberra 17 June 2005. Interview 007-05 is a former senior ADF officer who was closely involved with Defence planning for East Timor, including knowledge of liaison activities with the United Nations.

⁴⁷ After the post-ballot violence, Smith was promoted to Major General and deployed to New York (for four months) where he and his small team assisted the Military Planning Staff in DPKO in preparing for the transition from INTERFET to a UN peacekeeping force (PKF). This team subsequently deployed to Dili in late 1999 as the advance party for the PKF, and Smith was appointed as the Deputy Force Commander of the PKF in December.

Brigadier Smith established himself in a key position linking, in part, Defence, DFAT and the Department of Peacekeeping Operations at the United Nations. This 'small office' approach was selected by Defence because there was an imperative to protect information about Australia's intentions. There was also a need to avoid agitating the Indonesians, and probably DFAT, by creating a new, large policy and planning organisation. The small office also allowed Brigadier Smith to move nimbly between different organisations and ensure a single ADF view was presented to key stakeholders.⁴⁸

Other agencies were involved in planning. In addition to its mission of organising aid, AusAID (the Australian Agency for International Development) was tasked by the foreign minister to conduct an assessment of the humanitarian situation in East Timor and investigate claims that Indonesian officials were preventing food from moving around the province.⁴⁹ The Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) was asked to provide advice on electoral methods, draft an election manual and directions, and advise on whether Australia could provide further support to the popular consultation process.⁵⁰

Activities by the United Nations also involved the Australian Government. In late March, a UN assessment mission visited Jakarta, East Timor and Canberra to scope the requirements for the proposed referendum. The Australian Government saw this visit as an opportunity to influence the UN team's thinking on East Timor.⁵¹ This meeting was soon followed by a delegation to UN Headquarters in New York, led by DFAT, which included Defence representatives.⁵²

⁴⁸ Interviews with Chris Barrie, Kerry Clarke (Canberra, 2 August 2005); 007-05 and Mr Matthew Skoien (by telephone, 22 December 2005). Air Vice-Marshal Clarke was Director General Joint Operations in Strategic Operations Division in 1998–9. Mr Skoien was Director Indonesia Section in International Policy Division in Defence from December 1998 to September 1999.

⁴⁹ Interview with Steve Darvill (Canberra, 5 July 2005) who said the April 1999 assessment eventually blamed the delays on routine logistic problems, rather than deliberate action by any party. Darvill was involved in operational planning as part of AusAID's Humanitarian Emergencies section in 1999. For the text of the fact-finding mission's report, see AusAID, *Report of the AusAID Fact-Finding Mission to East Timor, 10–20 March 1999*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999.

⁵⁰ Interview with 012-05 and Australian Electoral Commission, *Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee: Australian Electoral Commission Support for the East Timor Consultation Ballot*, Canberra, 1999, pp. 2–3.

⁵¹ Interviews with Hugh White and 012-05.

⁵² Interviews with Hugh White and 007-05.

Other diplomatic initiatives were underway. Closer to home, Prime Minister Howard requested a summit with President Habibie to discuss the security situation after violence occurred in Liquiçá on 6 April and Dili on 17 April.⁵³ At this meeting, Howard sought—gently and unsuccessfully—to obtain Indonesian acquiescence for an international peacekeeping force. He had to settle for an increase in the number of police advisors within what was to become the United Nations Mission in East Timor (UNAMET), and for permission to open an Australian consulate in Dili.⁵⁴

A new committee was added to the interdepartmental policymaking structure in mid-April 1999. Led by Bill Paterson, an assistant secretary in DPM&C, this semi-formal grouping met fortnightly from 16 April to discuss issues of day-to-day importance between the departments and discuss ‘options and implications’.⁵⁵ This meeting included relatively senior representatives (assistant secretary–level) from DFAT, Defence, AusAID, the Australian Federal Police (AFP), AEC, and the ONA. The main agenda items at each meeting included updates on the situation in East Timor and overseas, and briefings on each agency’s activities. Representatives also had the opportunity to discuss issues such as funding, Australian capabilities and interaction with the United Nations. The topics broadened later, as these meetings began to focus on Australian support for the popular consultation. The group never considered issues concerning military operations, such as the evacuation.⁵⁶

Much of the Paterson committee’s work was, therefore, process oriented: it provided a chance for representatives to identify issues that would be discussed at forthcoming meetings by more senior committees such as SPCG and NSCC, and coordinate the timing and content of submissions. Interestingly, the early meetings seemed to be a way of bringing DPM&C into the picture, as their officers had played

⁵³ Interview 052-06 described the relationship between the Australian Government and President Habibie as ‘quite testy’ during this time, which meant the timing of the meeting was up to Habibie.

⁵⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, pp. 78–81. By the time of the summit, Australian policymakers had already come to the conclusion that Habibie could not agree to peacekeepers (interviews with Ashton Calvert and Hugh White). Therefore, Prime Minister Howard is not likely to have pushed too hard for peacekeepers in his 90-minute private meeting with President Habibie. Further, Interview 052-06 did not think Habibie’s ability to carry agreements with the Army and his ministers was assured either. Interview 051-06 also expressed the concern that the military might throw Habibie out if he gave way on military peacekeepers in April. See also Alatas, p. 173.

⁵⁵ Interviews with 052-05, Matt Skoien and 012-05.

⁵⁶ Interviews with 012-05, Kerry Clarke, 020-05 (by telephone, 11 August 2005) and 035-05. Interview 020-05 is a former senior member of DPM&C with direct knowledge of the East Timor case.

little part in the detailed planning thus far.⁵⁷ It also provided another channel—in addition to contacts between departments and the existing working groups—to improve coordination at lower levels.⁵⁸

By the end of April, in terms of establishing the mechanisms for handling the emerging crisis in East Timor, Australian policymakers had moved from being concerned observers to active participants. For one, Australia had undertaken a range of significant meetings with United States, United Nations, Indonesia, Portugal and representatives from East Timor either to shape those groups or seek their support. Next, a range of government agencies—including the ADF, the intelligence community⁵⁹, the AEC and AusAID—began preparations to provide services or options to government. DFAT had also been in contact with the Indonesian Government to, among other things, lobby for permission to open a consulate in Dili.⁶⁰ Thirdly, interdepartmental interaction became more formalised at lower levels, with Paterson's committee being established to improve information sharing between different agencies. Interaction was also facilitated by standing invitations to meetings (such as Defence's East Timor Working Group), joint delegations and individual consultations between officials.

However, there was also 'a sense [among policymakers] that events were getting out of control'.⁶¹ The Indonesian army (in Indonesian, *Tentara Nasional Indonesia*, or TNI) was being blamed for supporting militia violence in East Timor by the media and witnesses who had been in East Timor.⁶² Given the TNI's importance to securing the next phase of the crisis, this development was disconcerting for many of those watching the unfolding events.

⁵⁷ Interview 035-05.

⁵⁸ Interviews with 012-05, Kerry Clarke, 020-05 and 035-05.

⁵⁹ On intelligence activities, see P Daley, 'Spy effort stepped up in Timor', *Age*, 20 March 1999, p. 5; and Ball, 'Silent Witness', pp. 248–52.

⁶⁰ As noted earlier, AusAID already had an ongoing assistance program to East Timor. AusAID planned to deliver A\$6 million in aid in Financial Year 1998–99—see Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Consideration of Additional Estimates (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)*, 11 February 1999, p. 240; and Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Economic, social and political conditions in East Timor*, 13 August 1999, p. 219.

⁶¹ Interview with Hugh White.

⁶² Ball, 'Silent Witness', pp. 251–2. Taudevin also provides his interpretation of what he told DFAT about the violence in East Timor (L Taudevin, *East Timor: Too Little Too Late*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1999, pp. 230–4).

Selected key events for December 1998–April 1999

19 December 1998: Howard's letter is delivered to Habibie.

12 January: Details of new policy towards East Timor announced by the Australian Government.

27 January: Indonesian Government announces its intention to allow the East Timorese people to vote in a popular consultation on their future status.

9 February: NSCC meets and decides its initial approach to the East Timor situation.

11 February: Xanana Gusmão transferred from prison to house arrest.

Late February: US Assistant Secretary of State Stanley Roth meets Dr Ashton Calvert, Secretary of Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.

9–11 March: ADF and Indonesian military seminar discusses the military's role in a democracy.

11 March: Agreement-in-principle reached in the UN–Indonesia–Portugal Tripartite Talks, with the main feature being a popular consultation for East Timor.

11 March: Defence Minister Moore announces increased ADF readiness.

29–30 March: UN Assessment Mission, led by Francesc Vendrell, visits Canberra.

6 April: Liquiçá massacre.

17 April: Rampage in Dili.

21–23 April: Completion of negotiations by Indonesia, Portugal and the United Nations.

27 April: Howard and Habibie meet in Bali.

Organising for the consultation

The period of the UNAMET mission, starting with the May 5 Agreement and ending with the declaration of the consultation results on 4 September, marked the next phase of the crisis.

Once the May 5 Agreement was announced, more agencies, notably the AFP, became involved in the Australian response. AusAID began to fund Australian agencies to prepare for, and then participate in, UNAMET activities. Australia also agreed to provide A\$20 million in cash and 'in kind' support so the operation could commence quickly.⁶³

Events started to move at pace once the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1246 to establish UNAMET on 11 June 1999.⁶⁴ Just prior to the

⁶³ Testimony by Mr John Dauth of DFAT in Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Economic, social and political conditions in East Timor*, 13 August 1999, p. 220.

⁶⁴ This resolution provided a mandate to 'organize and conduct a popular consultation to determine whether the people of East Timor accepted or rejected the Indonesian proposal to grant special

resolution, the first group of UNAMET staff and a small number of AFP officers arrived in Dili. Within a week the Australian contingent to UNAMET had grown to nearly 50 police and six military liaison officers, and voter registration started within four weeks. However, this process was marred by violence and intimidation within East Timor, to the point where some already doubted this would be a ‘free and fair election’.⁶⁵

Activity at the AFP was intense during this period, with the main activities—outside the normal anti-crime operations⁶⁶—revolving around monitoring the operation and preparing the next rotation:

There were a range of other issues—whether the security situation was getting better, and secondly, our capacity to actually rotate people through. The three month deployment meant we were advertising for the next group while we were still training a group to go ... We had to move to bringing state and territory police in then as AFP secondees to build our capacity.⁶⁷

The AFP was also involved in frequent meetings with other departments, and regularly attended DFAT meetings (and eventually, the task force formed to manage consular matters) to provide advice on operational matters during the deployment.

Defence managed one particularly sensitive diplomatic issue in this period, when the Vice Chief of the Defence Force (VCDF) Air Marshal Doug Riding and First Assistant Secretary Strategic Policy Allan Behm were dispatched to Jakarta on 21 June. This delegation was instigated by a Cabinet decision,⁶⁸ and a tightly-worded script was developed by the ONA and DFAT that was written to protect the sources used. Riding’s task was to inform senior TNI officers—including Generals Sugiono

autonomy to the territory, or failing that, ‘separation from the state of Indonesia’ (United Nations, ‘UNTAMET Fact Sheet’, 1999, available <http://www.un.org>, accessed 24 November 2007).

⁶⁵ See C Scheiner, ‘Grassroots in the Field—Observing the East Timor Consultation’, in R Tanter, M Selden and S Shalom (eds), *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the World Community*, Rowman and Littlefield, Lanham, 2001, pp. 115–18.

⁶⁶ Interviews with Assistant Commission Adrien Whiddett (Canberra, 29 June 2005) and Assistant Commissioner Andrew Hughes (Suva, 9 September 2005) both noted their involvement in a range of normal policing issues, which meant the East Timor operation was a major additional task for them. Assistant Commissioner Whiddett was responsible for Australian Federal Police Operations in 1999, and Assistant Commissioner Hughes was Director International and Operations for the AFP in 1999.

⁶⁷ Interview with Federal Agent Tim Dahlstrom, Canberra, 16 August 2005. Federal Agent Dahlstrom was member of the UN and Other Overseas Commitments Coordination team for AFP in 1999. As part of this team, he was responsible for the detailed planning of AFP’s involvement (especially contingent preparation) in East Timor.

⁶⁸ Goldsworthy, ‘East Timor’, p. 241.

and Yudhoyono—that Australia had detected evidence of the Indonesian Army’s involvement in equipping and directing a number of existing civil defence units and newly-formed militias to intimidate the East Timorese people.⁶⁹ It was a blunt, but diplomatically-conducted conversation between ‘close military partner[s]’,⁷⁰ although not one that had much influence.⁷¹ The Indonesian view of the security situation was far different, and General Yudhoyono represented strongly for TNI’s neutrality.⁷² Further meetings were conducted with the Indonesian Government and with key East Timorese to convince them to maintain their promises about security before and after the ballot.⁷³

By August, activity levels in other parts of Canberra appeared to decline from the levels of March and April. With UNAMET now in its implementation phase, some of the policy attention began to turn to encouraging Southeast Asian nations to be more active in the process, and to maintaining a close liaison with the United States.⁷⁴ Defence also attempted to solve a number of important logistic issues and prepared contingencies for an evacuation.

This focus on Canberra is not intended to neglect the very real bravery and skill of UNAMET and the East Timorese people themselves. UNAMET’s overall success in fulfilling its mandate is a testimony to the qualities of those involved. That the consultation delivered a fair reflection of the East Timorese peoples’ will served to reinforce the shock felt by many—but expected by others—when serious violence erupted in Dili and other parts of East Timor on 4 September.

⁶⁹ Interviews with Allan Behm, Kerry Clarke and 046-06, a senior ADF officer with direct knowledge of the East Timor case. See also J Lyons, ‘The Secret East Timor Dossier’, *Bulletin*, 12 October 1999, p. 25; P Daley, ‘Gunning for the General’, *Bulletin*, 30 June 2004; and Ball, ‘Silent Witness’. Greenlees and Garran reproduced some of Riding’s script in their book (see pp. 167–8). Interview 046-06 is a former senior ADF officer with direct knowledge of the East Timor case. General Sugiono was TNI’s Chief of Staff for General Affairs and General Yudhoyono was Chief of Staff for Territorial Affairs in 1999.

⁷⁰ Greenlees and Garran, p. 167 and p. 168.

⁷¹ Interview 046-06.

⁷² Interview with Allan Behm, and Greenlees and Garran, p. 168.

⁷³ See Goldsworthy, ‘East Timor’, p. 242–3; and M Riley, ‘UN Backs Downer Plan to Beef Up Timor Force’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 6 August 1999, p. 1.

⁷⁴ Matt Skoien and Interview 062-07 (Canberra, 29 June 2007) described a number of meetings with US military officials from USPACOM. Interview 062-07 is an ADF officer with knowledge of the East Timor case, including knowledge of planning for UNAMET, INTERFET and UNTAET.

Selected key events for May–August 1999

- 5 May:** Tripartite agreement to establish UNAMET signed (May 5 Agreement).
3 June: Headquarters UNAMET opens in Dili.
11 June: UN Security Council passes Resolution 1246 authorising UNAMET.
Late June: 1st Australian Brigade declared 'ready' for operations.
29 June–4 July: Violence in Maliana, Viqueque and Liquiçá.
16 July: Voter registration starts in East Timor.
20 July: *The Age* reports ADF evacuation plans for Australian and UN personnel from East Timor.
6 August: Voter registration concludes, having been extended by three days.
9 August: Code of Conduct Agreement signed between Timorese factions.
August: Violence in Viqueque (10 August), Maliana (18 August) and Dili (26 August).
12 August: FALINTIL (pro-independence militia) cantonment complete.
24–27 August: Election campaign period.
28–30 August: Downer visits Jakarta and Dili.
30 August: Popular consultation held. 98.6% of registered voters cast ballots.

Acute crisis and response

Once the extent and severity of violence became known, the plan to evacuate UNAMET personnel from East Timor (Operation SPITFIRE) commenced⁷⁵, contingency planning for a peace operation began, and intense lobbying was conducted to muster support for an international coalition. It was also clear that UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan did not believe that the Indonesian military could maintain control of the situation. This concern resulted in a phone call to Howard on 6 September, and a query as to whether Australia would be prepared to lead a force into East Timor if invited to do so by the Indonesians and the UN Security Council. According to accounts, the prime minister readily agreed.⁷⁶

These events led to activities at many levels within the Australian Government. Crucially, the prime minister and foreign minister were lobbying their counterparts in the region for support—a task helped by having many regional leaders

⁷⁵ 1500 UN and other personnel were evacuated in the period 3–14 September 1999 (Defence Public Affairs, 'Hon. John Moore – East Timor Update', MIN 271/99, 14 September 1999, available <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au>, accessed 12 December 2007).

⁷⁶ Ashton Calvert said that Australia made a 'realistic assumption' about who was both best placed and willing to lead a coalition. See also Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 133; Greenlees and Garran, p. 238; and Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 248.

meeting together at the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting in Auckland during 9–12 September.⁷⁷ Howard was also dealing directly with Annan on a frequent basis.⁷⁸ At the diplomatic level, DFAT—often with direct assistance from Defence—worked to gather support for the mandate at the United Nations and among Southeast Asian states. Getting the appropriate mandate for the mission was an essential task, as the Australian Government wanted to conduct this operation under Chapter VII of the UN Charter so it would not be a ‘helpless bystander when violence broke out between factions on the ground’.⁷⁹

Yet getting authorisation for the intervention was not complete, as Indonesia still needed to acquiesce before the UN would even consider a mandate. Once again, pressure was applied to President Habibie and other Indonesian leaders from a variety of sources, including Kofi Annan, ambassadors representing the UN Security Council, US President Clinton and, indirectly, from the World Bank.⁸⁰ Despite this effort, Habibie did not change his mind until 12 September.

At this stage, international military preparations became overt but the size, leadership and role of such a force was still to be finalised. It was, however, certain that the United Nations would be unable to raise and deploy a force quickly—it would need at least five months to do so.⁸¹ Australia confirmed its willingness to lead the force, to be known as INTERFET, soon after UN Resolution 1264 was passed on 15 September.

⁷⁷ Interview with 024-05 (Canberra, 18 August 2005), and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, pp. 132–9. Interview 024-05 is a DFAT official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case.

⁷⁸ Interview with 051-06. Greenlees and Garran said Howard and Annan talked five times on 5 and 6 September alone (p. 235).

⁷⁹ Interview with Kerry Clarke. Interview 051-06 recalled that the Australian Government was not united on the need for a Chapter VII mandate, but Howard was eventually convinced by US advice. Chapter VII of the UN Charter authorises the use of force, sanctions or other means to ‘maintain or restore international peace and security’ (Article 42). In circumstances where the United Nations acts to help parties maintain an agreement, Chapter VI is used and the peacekeeping force is only allowed to use force in self defence. See United Nations, *Charter of the United Nations*, New York, 1945, available <http://www.un.org>, accessed 2 February 2006.

⁸⁰ See K Annan, ‘Secretary-General urges Indonesia to accept international help to restore order in East Timor at a moment of “great crisis”’, *United Nations News*, New York, 10 September 1999, available <http://www.ess.uwe.ac.uk>, accessed 3 February 2006; AAP, ‘Clinton calls on Indonesia to let UN restore peace in East Timor’, *St Louis Post-Dispatch*, 12 September 1999, p. A7; and S Mufson, ‘World Bank Chief Warns Indonesia On Militias’, *Washington Post*, 12 September 1999. See also Greenlees and Garran, pp. 251–4.

⁸¹ Interview with Kerry Clarke.

Significant planning for operations in East Timor had been conducted by USPACOM in 1999, but this assumed US leadership of the peacekeeping force.⁸² This assumption was out of step with the Washington-based political and military leadership, and so of limited utility when the crisis broke. The ADF had also conducted its own planning, but this was for a protected evacuation (Operation SPITFIRE). The evacuation task was quantitatively different in terms of size, logistic needs and the potential duration of the operation from that required for a large-scale intervention. This meant rapid planning was needed to design, prepare and deploy INTERFET.⁸³

Any one of the three main tasks presented to Defence and the ADF in early September—the evacuation, deploying Australian troops overseas, and developing a coalition—would have been demanding on its own. When the three came together under conditions of tight political and media scrutiny, Defence soon found its normal working structures to be both overwhelmed and insufficient to manage the crisis.⁸⁴

Defence responded to the increased demands for policy advice and coordination in three ways. The first was to make the Strategic Command Group (SCG) more responsive to the CDF's needs by increasing the frequency of its meetings and expanding its membership. This meant the SCG began meeting daily (and sometimes twice daily) in September, at a time that allowed the CDF Admiral Chris Barrie and Acting Secretary Hugh White to brief the Defence minister before the now-daily NSCC meeting.

⁸² Interviews with Lieutenant General Earl Hailston, USMC (by telephone, 28 March 2006), and Lieutenant General John Castellaw, USMC (by telephone, 14 February 2006). General Hailston was the lead planner (J5) for USPACOM until 31 May 99. He moved to Command III Marine Expeditionary Force in June and became responsible for deploying III Marine Expeditionary Brigade to East Timor in September 1999. General Castellaw was the commander of III Marine Expeditionary Brigade in 1999 and deployed to East Timor. In his interview, General Hailston recalled being directed to prepare a contingency for East Timor by the Commander USPACOM, Admiral Denis Blair, in June 1999. The resulting plan included options for a US-only task force, and a coalition task force. This recollection of US planning is consistent with another well-placed interviewee and some press reporting of the time: see P Daley, 'Timor: We Snub Offer To Send In The Marines', *Sunday Age*, 1 August 1999, p. 1. However, this planning has been downplayed by some interviewees and described as the normal activities of military forces.

⁸³ Cotton also draws this conclusion from his evidence (*East Timor, Australia and Regional Order*, p. 116).

⁸⁴ The actual conduct of Operation SPITFIRE (the evacuation) and Operation STABILISE (the deployment of INTERFET) are described in B Breen, *Mission Accomplished—East Timor*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2000); and A Ryan, *Primary responsibilities and primary risks: Australian Defence Force participation in the International Force East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2000, pp. 68–76.

Selected key events—September to October 1999

4 September: Polls return showing 78.5% reject 'autonomy' and so vote for independence. Violence intensifies, some evacuation flights begin.

5 September: Integrationists (pro-Jakarta militia) violently reject the ballot result; Indonesian Government begins evacuation from East Timor.

6 September: ADF evacuation starts (called Operation SPITFIRE). UN Secretary-General Kofi Annan asks whether Australia would be willing to lead a multinational force to restore stability in East Timor, if invited by Indonesia.

7 September: Pro-Jakarta forces begin forced evacuations of East Timorese people to West Timor and nearby Indonesian islands.

9–12 September: The APEC meeting in Auckland is used to canvass international support for, and Indonesian acceptance of, an intervention into East Timor.

12 September: President Habibie agrees to the international force.

15 September: UN Resolution 1264 provides Chapter VII mandate for INTERFET.

20–27 September: INTERFET arrives in East Timor with an advance group of 2000 Australian, British and New Zealand troops. Onset of severe humanitarian crisis in East Timor.

21 September: 'Taylor Committee' established in Australia.

12 October: INTERFET deployment complete.

25 October: UN establishes mandate for United Nations Transition Administration in East Timor (UNTAET).

The expanded membership was also important to making the SCG more effective. By September, the Canberra-based group was joined by the Commander Australia Theatre, Air Vice-Marshal Bob Treloar, and his four component commanders by video-link from Sydney. This link allowed the most senior operational commanders to hear what the strategic leadership was saying about events and intentions. In addition, representatives from the Defence minister's office and DFAT were sometimes present. This went some of the way to ensure that information could be passed first-hand, and that different views were available at the meeting. Such representation was also important, according to ministerial adviser Aldo Borgu:

... so they could get a sense of what the minister was thinking on different issues, and I could report back to the minister in terms of the particular things and the logic behind the things they were looking at.⁸⁵

Defence's second response was to create two new policy groups to deal with the crisis. The first, known as the 'East Timor Policy Unit' (ETPU) was created to

⁸⁵ Interview with Aldo Borgu.

focus Defence's policy work into a dedicated organisation. Under the circumstances, it made sense to pool expertise to deal with the increased volume of work. Centralisation near the senior decision-makers would also cut down on the time taken to deliver that advice and make the group more responsive:

Basically, we needed our own mini-SPCG. We needed someone to pull all of this disparate stuff together, to ask some hard questions about things that had not been thought of, and provide a bit of focus. Asking desk people to do that on top of the day-to-day [is a little much]. So there comes a time when you have to say, 'hang on, this is not going to do it and I need someone full time on this'.⁸⁶

Others pointed the need to create a stronger basis for coordinating policy advice than could be achieved through the normal structure.⁸⁷ Not coincidentally, ETPU also provided a way of reducing the number of people in Defence who needed to know about the operation, and so helped to control leaks.⁸⁸

It was also clear that such a group would need to sustain a high work tempo for a considerable period of time. In anticipation of this, Mike Scafton was appointed to lead ETPU and Peter Jennings was appointed as his deputy on 7 September. Both were promoted to First Assistant Secretary so the unit could operate on a twenty-four hour-a-day basis. Having an official of this rank available also meant there would be 'someone senior enough to be there to talk to senior people around the place at any point in time, and to make the right judgement calls ...'.⁸⁹ At its height, ETPU was a group of about twelve policy officers from various parts of the department, including the Defence Intelligence Organisation, International Policy, Strategic Policy, Defence Public Affairs and the uniformed services. ETPU's role was cloudy at first, but it soon began to provide a new link between senior Defence management, other departments and the ministers' offices. Its role became clearer as the intervention approached and

⁸⁶ Interview with Chris Barrie.

⁸⁷ Interviews with Martin Brady (Canberra, 16 August 2005), 009-05 (Canberra, 20 June 2005) and Michael Scafton (Melbourne, 5 August 2005). Mr Brady was Director, Defence Signals Directorate in 1999, and was acting Deputy Secretary Strategy in August–September 1999. Interview 009-05 is a former ministerial adviser and senior Defence official. Mr Scafton was Assistant Secretary Regional Engagement, Policy and Programs at the start of 1999. He became Acting Head International Policy in August 1999, and was appointed to head ETPU in September 1999. He was also Defence's representative on the Taylor Committee.

⁸⁸ Interview with Chris Barrie.

⁸⁹ Interview with Michael Scafton.

other whole-of-government mechanisms were established to manage the crisis, such as the 'Taylor Committee' (described below).⁹⁰

The task of assembling a multinational military coalition was complex, sensitive and—given the pressing operational tasks that needed to be monitored—beyond the capacity of Defence's Strategic Command Division (SCD) to manage.⁹¹

The big thing that got our attention was having to form a coalition. We hadn't put anything into that and ... [we] did not have the brain space to be able to do that ... it was probably one of the biggest learning curves we had ...⁹²

As a result of this new need, the CDF created a second organisation within Strategic Command Division called INTERFET Branch to act as a 'strategic coalition manager'.⁹³ Once again, the main task of INTERFET Branch was not immediately clear, nor was there established doctrine for how to manage this delicate process—but these shortfalls were quickly addressed in discussions between Defence and DFAT.

The process to get a contribution actually deployed in East Timor was sometimes lengthy. At the start, INTERFET Branch provided advice about the forces needed so that DFAT and the ETPU could canvass possible contributors. Once interest was signaled by a government (or their embassy), INTERFET Branch provided operational information to military attachés through daily briefings.⁹⁴ If the relationship progressed to an in-principle agreement to contribute, the next step involved the branch and DFAT negotiating the role, size and deployment timings for the contingent. INTERFET Branch also conducted extensive liaison on behalf of contributing nations with other Strategic Command Division planners on logistic issues like personnel and health policy. Once a commitment was made, INTERFET Branch assumed management responsibility for the contribution from DFAT, and maintained a link with the representatives of troop contributing nations in Australia throughout the operation. This also included working with Headquarters Australian

⁹⁰ Interviews with Michael Scrafton and Matthew Skoien.

⁹¹ The normal staff of Strategic Command Division was about 30–35 ADF officers (Interview with Major General Michael Keating, who became Head of Strategic Operations Division in Defence in May 1999).

⁹² Interview with Kerry Clarke.

⁹³ Interviews with Brigadier Steve Ayling (Canberra, 14 April 2005) and Kerry Clarke. Brigadier Ayling was Director General INTERFET Branch in 1999. This branch was responsible for managing contributions to the INTERFET coalition.

⁹⁴ A Ryan, p. 60–1.

Theatre to manage contingents during their pre-deployment training in Australia prior to their actual deployment to East Timor.

Defence's third response involved obtaining support for INTERFET through direct and indirect representations to regional governments.⁹⁵ One aspect of this effort involved sending the VCDF, Air Marshal Riding, on a rapid tour of the region to solicit troop contributions for INTERFET. Building upon the discussions between Howard and regional leaders at the Auckland APEC meeting, Riding and a team of three staff officers set out to conduct detailed discussions in Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines and Brunei. The visit started poorly when the Malaysian Government changed its mind about contributing to INTERFET and Singapore offered a much smaller group than anticipated.⁹⁶ The mission was not looking promising at that stage: one interviewee recalled: 'We were batting 0 from 2, and we did not think the Thais were going to make a big contribution'.⁹⁷ However, an early promise from the Philippines Government and a positive decision by the Thais demonstrated regional support for INTERFET, and secured important military capabilities.⁹⁸

Another aspect of supporting INTERFET involved the very practical issue of financial management. UN operations are often characterised by their torturous financial process, arguments over funding responsibilities and long waits for reimbursement.⁹⁹ Australia sought to short-circuit similar problems by agreeing to reimburse the costs of some contingents before the formal UN trust fund was in place,

⁹⁵ Interview 046-06 was also keen to point out DFAT's important contribution, especially that by Australia's regional ambassadors and their staff.

⁹⁶ Having just promised to increase the number of police and observers for UNAMET, the Malaysian Defense Minister Abang Abu Bakar Mustapha was quoted as saying that Malaysia was ready to contribute forces to a peacekeeping force in East Timor (see *Associated Press newswires*, 'Report: Malaysia ready to send peacekeeping troops to East Timor', 6 September 1999). Some in Riding's party thought that Malaysia might make a sizable contribution (perhaps an infantry battalion and a command element) and were surprised when the decision to make only a token contribution was relayed to them by Malaysian officials—Interviews with 046-06 and Matthew Skoien (who accompanied Riding on the tour); and Ryan, p. 47.

⁹⁷ Interview with Matthew Skoien.

⁹⁸ Interviews with 046-06 and Matthew Skoien. The team cancelled the visit to Brunei because the Bruneian Government sent word of their decision not to commit troops beforehand. The Chief of Army, Lieutenant General Frank Hickling, also used a conference of Pacific Army commanders in Singapore on 5–8 September to develop a better understanding of regional perceptions of the issue and present Australia's views on East Timor.

⁹⁹ For a summary of the main financial issues concerning UN peace operations, see J Daudelin and LJM Seymour, 'Peace Operations Finance and the Political Economy of a Way Out', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 9, no. 2, 2002, pp. 100–1.

and underwrote death and disability compensation for some contingents. The use of Australian funds, and the capacity to absorb some costs in the short term, played an important role in reducing the risk to a few contributing nations and increasing their willingness to participate.¹⁰⁰

The rapid increase in workload experienced at Defence was mirrored at the national level. The NSCC began meeting almost every day, with a sole focus on the crisis and emerging response. The effect of the frequency and high-level composition of these meetings will be discussed later in this dissertation.

Despite the increased interaction with officials, the prime minister—probably on the recommendation of Max Moore-Wilton or Michael Thawley—directed Allan Taylor (a former deputy secretary in DPM&C and then Director General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service, ASIS) to form a new body to help coordinate national policy and report on policy development to the NSCC. This *ad hoc* body consisted of two components. The first comprised a small secretariat of middle-ranking (Executive Level 1 and 2 or their military equivalent) officials seconded from DFAT, Defence, Immigration, AusAID and DPM&C.¹⁰¹ The second group contained more senior officials representing their departments and agencies at daily committee meetings.¹⁰²

The decision to establish the Taylor Committee reflected the prime minister's desire to streamline policy advice and a level of concern about interdepartmental coordination. However, when interviewees were asked for explanations for the new committee, they offered a variety of responses. Some thought the NSCC wanted to ensure that neither Defence nor DFAT became the lead agency, fearing this would skew Australia's responses towards these department's favoured instruments. Others thought a new body was needed because DFAT lacked the authority to coordinate the other departments, and Defence lacked the capability to do so. Another thought the

¹⁰⁰ Brigadier S Ayling and S Guise, 'UNTAC and INTERFET – A Comparative Analysis', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 150, 2001, p. 51; and A Ryan, pp. 43–5. The issue of finance will be discussed in more detail during the 'Policy Instruments' phase.

¹⁰¹ The secretariat was also referred to as a 'task group', so the Taylor Committee was also known as the 'East Timor Task Group' by some.

¹⁰² Attendees at the inter-departmental meetings were generally at the FAS or Deputy Secretary level. This varied according to the department's role, size, and the level of interest shown by departments—Interviews with Michael Scrafton, 028-05 (Canberra, 1 September 2005) and 033-05 (Canberra, 29 September 2005—identity protected). Interview 028-05 is a DFAT official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case.

Taylor Committee was a way to refocus the government on the Indonesia relationship, and improve coordination between the Australian Government and the range of UN agencies now involved in East Timor. Others saw bureaucratic motives, and thought that Moore-Wilton recommended the new structure as a way of asserting DPM&C's leadership.¹⁰³

The Taylor Committee's secretariat assembled on 21 September, the day after INTERFET began to deploy, and the full committee met for the first time on 27 September.¹⁰⁴ The committee had three important functions: reporting, policy analysis and coordination. In the first function, Taylor would attend NSCC meetings and provide reports about issues his committee had been working through. In the second function, members of the committee secretariat drafted answers or policy submissions from a 'whole-of-government' perspective based on the questions and issues raised by the NSCC. While some of these briefs related to national security, many concerned Australia's views on the basic structures and modes of East Timor's future government and institutions. Taylor was firmly of the view that the work produced by the group was his responsibility (that is, the recommendations were not necessarily a consensus view from the broader committee), and this gave the secretariat an ability to produce work that did not have to reflect departmental positions.¹⁰⁵ Lastly, the coordination function involved deconflicting, prioritising, monitoring and convincing departments to take the lead on specific issues. This function was performed in daily meetings where the departmental representatives would discuss the issues of the day and any papers being drafted by the secretariat.

The first four to six weeks after its establishment were hectic for the Taylor Committee—an experience reflected in the DFAT Crisis Centre¹⁰⁶, INTERFET Branch, ETPU and among the wide range of officials involved from other departments and agencies. By late October, some of these people went back to their

¹⁰³ This range of opinions was discussed during interviews with Chris Barrie, Hugh White, Ashton Calvert, Allan Behm, 014-05 (Canberra, 5 July 2005), Kerry Clarke, 020-05, Michael Keating, 028-05, 051-06 and 052-06. Interview 014-05 is a former senior government official with first-hand knowledge of the Taylor Committee.

¹⁰⁴ The creation of the Taylor Committee was flamboyantly announced by T Wright and P Daley, 'PM sets up secret unit on Timor', *Age*, 22 October 1999, pp. A1–2.

¹⁰⁵ Interviews with 014-05, 028-05 and 033-05 (Canberra, 29 September 2005, identify protected).

¹⁰⁶ As the DFAT Crisis Centre was responsible for consular issues, it has not been examined in this case study.

normal work, while others migrated to become the 'East Timor Desk' within their respective departments and agencies. These changes returned the government to a steady state for policymaking, and so represented the end of the crisis for Australia.

This chapter outlined the events of 1998–9 and described how the policymaking system changed during this crisis. The next three chapters use the Australian Policy Cycle to structure an in-depth examination of how the system worked in 1999, and the degree to which this activity reflect the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking.

DEVELOPING POLICY ADVICE IN A CRISIS

Previous chapters identified proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking, and provided a brief outline of the East Timor crisis from the perspective of Australian policymakers. This chapter examines policymaking during this crisis through the first three phases of the policy cycle, where policy is initiated. Each section examines one phase—starting with issue identification, then moving to policy analysis and policy instruments. The subsequent discussion is organised according to the characteristics of crisis policymaking identified in Part I. Each section includes a short summary identifying the degree and location of continuity and change between this case and the proposed principles. These judgments will be presented after the discussion of each phase, in place of an overall conclusion for the chapter.

Identify Issues

The Identify Issues phase represents the nominal start of the Australian Policy Cycle. In this phase, ‘issues are selected for attention from the myriad of matters pressed on government’¹ and the problem is defined for the later stages. Four characteristics were proposed for this phase at the end of Part I:

- The prime minister, his national security ministers and their senior officials are the dominant domestic actors in issue identification and, by extension, problem definition.
- Foreign actors (especially governments) and events have the ability to place issues on the crisis policy agenda when they intend to harm Australian interests, when the interests of Australia’s allies and friends are threatened, and when high levels of interdependence mean that threats to others’ interests are viewed as threats to Australia.
- Other domestic actors have a limited ability to identify issues in a crisis.

¹ P Bridgman and G Davis, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004, p. 34.

- Mass appeal plays a limited role in issue identification.

This phase is therefore about determining which issues the government pays attention to, and how those issues are framed as they enter the latter phases of the policymaking process.

Dominant core

The core of the Australian Government, represented by the prime minister, his national security ministers and their senior officials, were the dominant domestic actors involved in issue identification in this crisis. In most cases, this group—more so than other domestic actors such as Parliament, interest groups or the media—categorised events and determined their significance for the national interest. In one important instance, the action taken by part of this group to develop the Howard Letter provided a catalyst for the eventual acute crisis in September 1999. This letter also (unintentionally) shaped the problem into one of rapid political change, and ultimately into a situation with significant potential for instability and violence.

East Timor was not, however, a new issue in 1998–99 and its history led this dominant core to consider East Timor through the prism of the Australia–Indonesia relationship. After noting the fundamental importance of this relationship, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade’s (DFAT) white paper of mid-1997 included this statement:

Developments in East Timor will remain important in shaping Australian public attitudes towards Indonesia and Indonesia’s standing internationally ... While the overall administration of the Province is primarily a matter for the Indonesian Government to determine, the Australian Government considers that an improved human rights situation and a greater role in the administration of the Province for indigenous East Timorese would contribute to an overall resolution of the issue.²

As a primary policy document, this statement was a high-level call by Australia for the Indonesian Government to do something—for the good of the bilateral relationship—about the situation in East Timor. It is therefore unsurprising that the Australian Government would be very interested in developments that might lead to a resolution of this ‘running sore’. In this sense, Soeharto’s fall in May 1998 was both

² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *In the National Interest – Australia’s Foreign and Trade Policy White Paper*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1997, p. 62.

an opportunity and a risk for Australia. Consequently, the National Security Committee of Cabinet's (NSCC) interest increased during 1998, and Foreign Minister Downer took regular briefings from his senior officials and made several visits to Indonesia throughout 1998 and 1999.³

Ministerial engagement was also important to promoting agenda issues. Downer's statements and actions in the period after June 1998, which included a visit to Jakarta to promote dialogue with East Timorese leaders, were important to shaping policy actions in the early period.⁴ Not all of this activity was driven by external events. Indeed, the engagement with Indonesia over East Timor may have reflected institutional preferences within DFAT⁵, but these preferences may not have surfaced without the newly re-elected Coalition government (as of October 1998) wanting to start their second term with a positive initiative.⁶

Some government agencies had been involved in East Timor for a long time, although not as intensely as later in 1999. On the practical side, the Australian Electoral Commission (AEC) had been preparing for involvement in East Timor as part of the support for the 1999 Indonesian elections, while AusAID had provided support to Red Cross activities in the province for some time. The Indonesia Section of AusAID was also busy gathering information about development indicators in East Timor throughout 1999, which put the agency in a strong position to respond later.⁷ In contrast, Defence and the Australian Federal Police (AFP) had not given much consideration to East Timor in terms of potential operations. Indeed, the East Timor

³ The prime minister also called the secretary of DFAT on a number of occasions to receive briefings on the situation in Indonesia (Interview with Ashton Calvert); and D Greenlees and R Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, p. 83.

⁴ Interview with Ashton Calvert; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, pp. 44-51. Cotton describes Downer's involvement as 'activism'; see J Cotton, 'East Timor and Australia – Twenty-five years of the policy debate', in J Cotton (ed), *East Timor and Australia*, Australian Defence Studies Centre/ Australian Institute of International Affairs, Canberra 2000, p. 12.

⁵ Hugh White recalled in an interview that DFAT was 'interested in pursuing the East Timor issue' in late 1998, which may indicate that the Department was 'in tune' with its minister.

⁶ Greenlees and Garran, pp. 84-5. Others, such as Interview 064-07, saw greater continuity in government policy throughout 1998 and suggest that opportunity, rather than the election, was the impetus behind the Howard Letter.

⁷ Interviews with Steve Darvill and Scott Dawson, Canberra, 4 April 2006. Dawson was Assistant Director General East Asia Branch in AusAID from June 1999, with responsibility for East Timor. In the post-ballot period, he headed the AusAID Task Force that dealt with the immediate emergency response and then worked on the longer-term program for East Timor.

issue did not become prominent for the AFP until the Bali summit of 27 April 1999 and the actual May 5 Agreement.⁸

New issues were often identified to the administrative level by policy statements and ministerial announcements, the actions of other departments, and the media. Policy statements are usually crafted within departments, either at the behest of the minister or as a departmental initiative concerning a policy-in-progress. When issues are raised in this way, departments are better able to manage the issues as they have the initiative and frequently have time to prepare. But when issues are raised unexpectedly, such as when media stories gain political significance, departments will be reactive. It will take time for them to work through the implications and align their policy messages.

The Howard Letter was the most dramatic example of how challenging reactive policymaking can be. While starting as an initiative, Australia clearly lacked a fully-developed policy on how it would approach East Timor in mid-January 1999. As a result, departments such as Defence did not have any understanding of what the government might want from it when the surprise announcement about the letter was made. This gap gave other actors—such as the media and lobby groups—time to provide advice to government and launch criticism in an effort to shape the agenda.⁹ The problems with this reactive posture continued to mar the government's preparations well into March 1999, which was shown in the way Defence's need for planning lead-time continued to run at cross purposes to DFAT's view of how to manage the relationship with Indonesia.¹⁰

Intelligence agencies also played a role in identifying issues, particularly when they provided information not available in the public domain. In this case, Australian intelligence agencies correctly identified Indonesian military support for pro-integration militias and provided 'detailed, accurate, relevant and timely reporting to

⁸ Interview with Adrien Whiddett. The Bali Summit was a meeting between Prime Minister Howard and President Habibie that discussed the situation in East Timor (see Chapter 6).

⁹ For example, see J Dunn, 'Righting our Past Wrongs', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1999, p. 11; P Cleary, 'A policy that's a bit light on detail', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 January 1999, p. 7; and Australian Associated Press, 'East Timor committee asks Howard to take stronger stance', 26 January 1999.

¹⁰ The later section on policy instruments returns to this issue.

policymakers.¹¹ The influence of such reporting is demonstrated in the way intelligence about military activities and sponsorship of the pro-integration militia led directly to the government's decision to send the Riding/Behm delegation to Jakarta in June 1999.¹² But the possession of intelligence does compel the government to act. Indeed, this case shows a clear example where the government knew about the emergence of a disturbing factor, namely the increasing involvement of sections of the Indonesian Army (TNI) with militias after January 1999, but judged that overtly confronting this fact would place the entire consultation process in jeopardy, risked a direct confrontation with Indonesia's foreign minister, and risked compromising sensitive intelligence assets.¹³

Official domestic agents can identify issues in indirect ways when they release, or 'leak', sensitive information without authorisation to agents such as the media. A number of leaks were recorded throughout 1999, including disclosures about US military intentions and TNI involvement in violence by pro-integration militia.¹⁴ Some of the leaks involved classified reports from the Defence Intelligence Organisation and DFAT cables, which were subsequently circulated in media and academic circles. These reports lead to opposition pressure on the government and a

¹¹ This opinion was expressed by a critic of the overall use of intelligence in policymaking. See DJ Ball, 'Silent Witness: Australian Intelligence and East Timor', in *Masters of Terror: Indonesia's Military and the Violence in East Timor in 1999*, Canberra Paper 145, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra, 2002, p. 179. Interviews with the Hon Daryl Williams, Canberra, 17 March 2007; and 048-06, Canberra, 5 June 2006, also mentioned the importance ministers placed upon intelligence. Williams was Attorney-General (a ministerial position in Australia) and a member for NSCC from 1996–2003. Interview 048-06 is a former ministerial adviser.

¹² Interviews with 046-06 and Allan Behm. See also Ball, 'Silent Witness', p. 252.

¹³ Ball, 'Silent Witness', pp. 246–9 cites three Defence Intelligence Organisation reports identifying TNI involvement with militias from January 1999 and predicting the consequences for security in East Timor. DFAT says Australia was concerned about the deteriorating security situation after late-1998, and it 'applied consistent pressure on Indonesia' (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, pp. 61–2). According to Allan Behm, the Office of National Assessments (ONA) was against a direct approach to the TNI because it could compromise intelligence sources and methods (Behm interview).

¹⁴ Jason Brown, Assistant Secretary Security for the Department of Defence, advised Senate Estimates that 28 cases of unauthorised disclosure of information about the East Timor operation were being investigated as at 10 February 2000. See Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Consideration of Additional Estimates (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade)*, 9 February 2000, p. 165.

number of critical press reports about Australian policy throughout 1999 and into the next year.¹⁵

While the motivations of ‘leakers’ vary¹⁶, the release of information had important effects on policymaking. For one, leaked information that contradicts government policy might embarrass the government, and so change or undermine a bargaining position or allow critics to direct the agenda. The unauthorised disclosure of classified information may compromise intelligence capabilities and sources, which could allow targets of collection to take steps to protect their information. Leaks also have a corrosive effect on relationships by causing investigations (with their attendant additional work) and reducing trust between different agencies:

There were the times when we had huge debates about [an intelligence agency] passing us information that they got from the Americans – [it became a question of] whether we could be trusted or not.¹⁷

This view is critical to the effective operation of intelligence agencies, for it shows how leaks can have broader implications for cooperation and ultimately policymaking.

While this section has shown the important role of the core, an examination of other domestic actors is needed before the claim for dominance is supported. This point will be reviewed after the important role of external actors is considered.

Essential external actors

The available evidence points to the prominence of external actors and influences in both creating and then promoting East Timor as an issue for Australian policymakers in 1998–99. Some of these were macro-forces such as the Asian Economic Crisis and the emergence of humanitarian intervention as a norm in

¹⁵ A few examples include P Dalcy, ‘Armed with information, now what?’, *Age*, 29 May 1999, p.4; J Lyons, ‘The Secret East Timor Dossier’, *Bulletin*, 12 October 1999; J Lyons, ‘The Timor Truth Gap’, *Bulletin*, 30 November 1999, pp. 24–32; and L Brereton, MP, ‘East Timor: Revelations on Four Corners’, News Release, 15 February 2000.

¹⁶ On the motivations of ‘leakers’ or ‘truth tellers’, see L Collins and W Reed, *Plunging Point: Intelligence Failures, Cover-ups and Consequences*, 4th Estate/Harper Collins, Sydney, 2005, Chapter 10; G Terrill, *Secrecy and Openness*, Melbourne University Press, South Carlton, 2000, pp. 222–227; and BW Marcus, ‘There’s a leak in my firm’, *The Marcus Letter*, (no date) available <http://www.marcusletter.com>, accessed 11 May 2006.

¹⁷ Interview with Mr Frank Lewincamp (Canberra, 4 July 2005). Mr Lewincamp was Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation from 1998–2005.

international relations. Other influences, such as the notion that Australia was now living within an 'arc of instability' and thoughts that the United States wanted its allies to do more in the wake of the Kosovo war, added to the broad range of reinforcing external drivers.¹⁸ However, it remains difficult to identify the exact influence or importance of influences such as these for identifying issues for Australian policymaking, except in so far as they establish the context for events of the time.

It is much easier to establish the importance of proximate external actors and influences such as the attitudes and actions of the Indonesian Government, and the location of East Timor and its long history as an issue in Australia and internationally. One change had an unmistakable impact on what was to occur—the resignation of President Soeharto in May 1998 and the subsequent statements by President-designate Habibie about his willingness to reconsider East Timor's status within Indonesia.¹⁹ While Howard began to shift ground on Australian support for Soeharto during the lead-up to the latter's resignation on 20 May, the prime minister had not made any public statements calling for a reconsideration of the East Timor issue to that point; indeed, calls by others to do so were explicitly rejected by government leaders.²⁰ It was not until 24 May that Downer broached the issue of change in East Timor, and Howard repeated that call a day later.²¹ Further, it was not until after President Habibie made public comments about re-thinking the issue on 9 June 1998 that the

¹⁸ On US attitudes towards alliances post-Kosovo, see LD Kozaryn, 'US, NATO Allies Plan New, Improved Alliance', *American Forces Information Service*, 21 September 1999; R Haas, 'Kosovo: U.S. Policy at Crossroads', 10 December 1998, Brookings Institute, Washington, DC available <http://www.brookings.edu>, accessed 25 January 2006; and Strobe Talbot, who was quoted as saying 'Many Americans are saying: Never again should the United States have to fly the lion's share of the risky missions in a NATO operation and foot by far the biggest bill ...' in MC Hertkorn, 'The relevance of perceptions in foreign policy: a German-U.S. perspective', *World Affairs*, vol. 162, no. 2, 2001, p. 62. The 'arc of instability' was an expression coined to describe Australia's fractious neighbourhood as it appeared in 1999. Its genesis is discussed in R Ayson, 'The "Arc of Instability" and Australia's Strategic Policy', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 61, no. 2, 207, pp. 217-21.

¹⁹ Howard also made use of the changed situation in Jakarta to call for 'movement by the Indonesians in relation to East Timor', in R Rose, 'Howard Urges Habibie To Act On East Timor', *West Australian*, 26 May 1998, p. 4.

²⁰ G Barker, 'Australia Bends To People Power', *Financial Review*, 16 May 1998, p. 25. However, Howard remained firm that the 'problem of East Timor' was best solved by using Australia's good standing to promote 'gradual change'. See J Cordeaux, 'Transcript of the Prime Minister, The Hon John Howard MP', Radio 5DN (Adelaide), 18 May 1998, available <http://www.pm.gov.au>, accessed 12 February 2006.

²¹ See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, p. 24; and Agence France-Presse, 'Australia urges Indonesia to tackle irritant of East Timor', 25 May 1998.

Australian Government took active measures to support the policy change, including offering DFAT to facilitate intra-Timorese dialogue and survey East Timorese opinion about their future status.²²

The main stumbling point to a better understanding was the Indonesian Government's identification of East Timor as a diplomatic issue. This perspective meant the Indonesian Government was more concerned about dealing with their problems through international negotiations, rather than focusing on the domestic aspects of the problem such as discontent among the East Timorese. Indonesia's acknowledgement of this point led to their acceptance of Australia's offer to canvass East Timorese opinion on the situation, although the differing perspective continued well into early 1999.²³ As such, the external factors based around the political changes in Jakarta were instrumental to bringing this issue from 'watching brief' status to the fore of the Australian Government's agenda.

Australia was, however, still a long way from committing to a military operation. But once again, issues generated overseas—and particularly in East Timor—influenced the policy agenda throughout late 1998 and 1999. For example, the violence in Alas (a town in East Timor) and Jakarta in November 1998, and stalling of the Tripartite talks, were almost certainly on the government's mind as the Howard Letter was sent. Continuing violence early in 1999, especially in Liquiçá and Dili was central to the Australian request for the Bali Summit in April. Even the May 5 Agreement itself, which had such a dramatic influence on Australian policy and action for the following few months, was only indirectly influenced by Australia. This influence was exercised by visits to the United Nations by the combined DFAT and Defence delegation, and by impressing the importance of issues such as security to UN interlocutors.²⁴

The pattern whereby external actors were important for agenda setting continued right up to the deployment of the International Force in East Timor

²² See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, pp. 24–6.

²³ A problem recognised by DFAT in an un-referenced cable mentioned in D Goldsworthy, 'East Timor,' in Goldsworthy and P Edwards (eds), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, p. 225 and p. 232.

²⁴ Interviews with 007-05 and Hugh White; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, p. 72–5.

(INTERFET). While domestic actors exerted some pressure²⁵, the Australian Government was more concerned about the Indonesian Government's views because their permission was needed before action could be taken in East Timor (without potentially serious consequences and with international support). This permission was essential because the Australian Government wanted to avoid provoking conflict with Indonesia, and for pragmatic reasons such as an inability to forcibly enter East Timor without undue risk. The Australian Government also identified the need to influence other UN members to support action, and was very mindful of US attitudes. However, once the external conditions were set by Indonesia's acquiescence, the UN mandate and US support for the mission, the Australian Government was able to harness the considerable domestic support for intervention.

Marginal domestic actors

Australian interest in East Timor's future was clearly driven by a number of sources, and competitive agitation from domestic sources featured among them. However, these sources were not the most important in this case—while the East Timor issue could create political costs, those costs were manageable and not electorally significant.²⁶

Indeed, the issue had been given energy once again after agitation by the Australian Labor Party's (ALP) spokesperson, Laurie Brereton, in late 1997. This led to a consequent shift in ALP policy toward recognising the right of self-determination for the East Timorese in early 1998.²⁷ The impact of the ALP intervention on government thinking is difficult to judge from the public record, but it is unlikely that

²⁵ For examples of this pressure, see A Dupont and A Bergin, 'UN Force Critical to Peace in East Timor', *Australian Financial Review*, 29 March 1999; P Robinson, 'Unions Plan Action On Timor Violence', *Age*, 3 May 1999, p. 6; B Toohey, 'PM's Dilemma on Timor Peace Force', *Sun Herald*, 1 August 1999, p. 49; and S Aylmer, 'Timor: Downer Says There's No Rift With US', *Australian Financial Review*, 2 August 1999, p. 7, which mentions the parliamentary pressure being applied by opposition spokesperson Laurie Brereton.

²⁶ Interview with Hugh White.

²⁷ S McKenzie, 'Tough Line on Timor', *Herald-Sun*, 22 November 1997, p. 4; and A Burke, 'Labor Could Be Set For A Backflip on East Timor', *Canberra Times*, 22 December 1997.

government ministers would acknowledge this agitation as a factor in their ultimate actions.²⁸

A number of groups in Australia were vociferous in their support for East Timorese independence throughout 1998 and 1999, including the Catholic Church, academics and non-government organisations (NGO).²⁹ The attempts to raise East Timor as a human rights policy issue took many forms. There were some protests involving low levels of violence against the Australian prime minister and foreign minister during the period February–May 1998, and strident calls from East Timorese emissary Jose Ramos Horta for greater Australian attention and aid.³⁰ Local interest in East Timor increased after Habibie’s June announcement on special autonomy, and again after the ‘Balibo Five’ issue re-surfaced in October 1998 (leading the government to re-open the Sherman Inquiry in November that year).³¹ In addition, the Senate ran a public enquiry throughout 1998 and 1999 in an attempt to examine the social and political conditions in East Timor. As the crisis developed, this committee—along with meetings conducted as part of the Senate Estimates process—often quizzed officials about events and positions and heard testimony from a variety of (private) witnesses that contradicted government policy.³²

²⁸ Greenlees and Garran think Brereton’s pressure—and the pressure of Gareth Evan’s legacy—was felt by Downer, although they do not identify whether this was a direct influence (pp. 80–81).

²⁹ A good summary showing the variety of groups and individuals which agitated for East Timor’s independence in 1998–99 can be found in Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee, *Final Report into the Inquiry into East Timor*, Senator J Hogg (Chair), Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000.

³⁰ *Australian*, ‘Timorese demand better effort’, 2 April 1998, p. 7.

³¹ A Downer, ‘A Long Term Commitment: Australia And East Asia’, Speech to the Indonesian Council on World Affairs and the Indonesia–Australia Business Council, Borobudur Hotel, Jakarta, 9 July 1998, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 12 April 2006. This enquiry—the second conducted into the 1975 Balibo murders by Mr Sherman—was sparked by a media report that interviewed a reported eyewitness to the atrocity. For that report, see J Holmes, ‘East Timor – Balibo: A Special Report’, *Foreign Correspondent*, ABC Television (Australia), 20 October 1998, available <http://www.abc.net.au>, accessed 21 January 2006.

³² For example, Transcripts of Senate Estimates from 2 December 1999 record departmental officials being questioned extensively about the effect Mr Barratt’s sacking from the position of Defence Department Secretary, just prior to the East Timor operation (see Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Consideration of Budget Estimates: Supplementary Hearings (Defence Portfolio)*, 2 December 1999, available <http://www.aph.gov.au>, accessed 2 December 2007, pp. 4–10). For an example of a private witness testimony, see Mr William Fisher in Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Economic, social and political conditions in East Timor*, Hearing of 9 September 1999, available <http://www.aph.gov.au>, accessed 6 December 2006, pp. 464–73.

While these groups had some influence on political leaders and public opinion about Indonesia, this agitation did not have a major impact on the Australian Government's position. This lack of impact was displayed in the government's high priority on showing positive support for Soeharto and the crisis-affected Indonesian economy in early 1998. This record of political and practical support made it difficult for the Australian Government to accede to any demand for a rethink on East Timor—until the situation changed dramatically in May of that year.

It may be possible, however, to identify how an emerging consensus made it easier for the government to act on East Timor when the acute crisis occurred in September 1999. Richard Woolcott made an interesting point that a range of different groups—including the Labor left, Catholic groups and the One Nation party—who generally opposed the government's foreign policy were supportive of the new populist-nationalist line on East Timor.³³ When this support was added to mainstream (and sometimes nationalistic) opinion that favoured action, a strongly supportive media and bipartisan parliamentary support, competitive agitation disappeared as a factor in issue identification. As a result, the government found itself with fewer constraints and some room for manoeuvre when it came to East Timor policy.

Mass appeal

Just as most domestic actors had only a marginal influence on issue identification, the mass appeal of the Timor issue in both the domestic and international spheres was patchy until September 1999. But when the public came to be fully behind intervention, mass appeal supported and enabled the Australian Government's policy preferences.

While Indonesia's actions in East Timor after 1975 had been debated and condemned by some sections of the Australian community, East Timor's status remained an obscure issue for the Australian public until the Santa Cruz massacre of

³³ R Woolcott, 'The consequences of the crisis over East Timor', in B Brown (ed), *East Timor – The Consequences*, New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Wellington, 2000, p. 28. Woolcott was a former Secretary of DFAT and Ambassador to Indonesia. Interviewee 048-06 described this convergence of opinion as 'incredibly ironic' given the usual 'left wing' opposition to the use of military force.

November 1991.³⁴ One explanation for its lack of prominence was that successive Australian Governments tried to separate East Timor from the broader Indonesia relationship.³⁵ While violence and other acute events resuscitated the issue from time to time, the ensuing protest or discussion occurred without East Timor becoming a mainstream political issue in Australia.³⁶

Pressure mounted on the Australian Government throughout 1999, and there were times when it had to act, despite its preferences. For example, the decision to break military ties with the TNI, largely because of suspected KOPASSUS³⁷ involvement with the militias, was not supported by the Department of Defence:

... but it was literally a government-directed edict. I can remember ... others [in Defence] trying to argue that we should not go down that path, but Moore's office, the Prime Minister's Office and to an extent [Foreign Minister] Downer realised that we had to go along with it because the wider Australian public just would not stand for maintaining that relationship—and there was also a need to send a message to the Indonesians as well.³⁸

While other calls were made to intervene, the government resisted these until their conditions for military action were satisfied.³⁹ This was a close-run thing:

It appeared as if Indonesia was becoming unacceptable to the Australian people as a governing force in East Timor, so I think politically the pressure was on the government to ensure that the government was registering its concerns with the Indonesians, showing that it had a plan to deal with the issue, and I think

³⁴ It is difficult to register the place of East Timor in Australian public consciousness. Moreen Dee, for instance, thinks the East Timor issue was 'generally unregarded' until 1991 and the Santa Cruz (or Dili) massacre, where the TNI killed at least 250 people. Further, it is difficult to judge whether this incident had a lasting impact on popular consciousness – see M Dee, "'Coalitions of the Willing" and Humanitarian Intervention: Australia's Involvement with INTERFET', *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 8, no. 3, 2001, p. 3. One indicator may be the way perceptions of the 'Indonesian threat' among Australians changed after major events in East Timor. As McAllister showed, the perception of Indonesia as a threat rose after its 1975 invasion of East Timor and again after Santa Cruz (to around three in ten). In both instances, the threat had been relatively low for the period before the events. See I McAllister, *Attitude Matters: Public opinion in Australia towards defence and security*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 2004, Figure 5, p. 20.

³⁵ N Viviani, 'Australia Indonesia Relations – Past, Present and Future', Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Additional Information, vol. 2, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, p. 3.

³⁶ McAllister, p. 10.

³⁷ KOPASSUS – *Komando Pasukan Khusus* (Indonesian Special Forces Command).

³⁸ Interview with Aldo Borgu. See also AAP, 'Moore defends joint military ops with Indonesia', 28 March 1999.

³⁹ For a sample of the pressure from international NGO, see S Jones, 'East Timor: Stop the Violence', *Human Rights News*, 6 July 1999.

that when one sees violence on the streets then that has a negative impact on the government ...⁴⁰

In this case, the public's 'sense of collective morality, justice or responsibility'⁴¹ saw a great number of people take interest in the issue after the September violence, and around 90 per cent of Australians eventually either supported or strongly supported the intervention.⁴² This high level of support meant that the government was not constrained in its action, and was able to point to significant public backing to justify its actions. This was important later, when the government floated its preferred way of raising extra money to pay for the intervention force.⁴³

It is difficult to attribute the government's action solely to public opinion. As one interviewee remarked:

Sure public opinion was significant in that made it a big political issue, but that was not what was driving them [the Cabinet] ... they all thought, this is an outrage, particularly since Australia had invested the amount of money and diplomatic capital and personnel in this process. To see these thugs go in there, and to see the military stand aside and let it happen, I think people [in the Cabinet] were genuinely really disgusted ... [so] how do you separate public opinion from the outrage of people in Cabinet?⁴⁴

While domestic public opinion might be important, there is also a case to be made for the effect of international opinion and its influence on events and government options. When asked about this, Ashton Calvert thought that the 'lack of an appetite' for earlier action among the international community was another important influence on events:

And why was it possible to have INTERFET after the vote and after the violence and why it wasn't possible to have it before? ... Simply because international opinion was so appalled at the spectacle of what was unfolding after there had been a vote ... The mood in Australia would not have been sufficient by itself. It was the broader international focus, the media and in the

⁴⁰ Interview with 052-06.

⁴¹ One Roy Morgan poll described the East Timor situation as the 'dominant issue' of September 1999 (Roy Morgan Research, *L-NP Draws Closer On Primary Vote As ALP Support Eases*, Finding No 3228, 28 September 1999, available <http://www.roymorgan.com>, accessed 26 August 2006). See also A Gyngell and M Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, p. 193.

⁴² This data was taken from a poll of 1164 people in 2000 (see McAllister, Table 6, p. 24).

⁴³ Australians earning over A\$50 000 would pay an additional 0.5% 'Timor Levy' to help fund the intervention. See Reuters News, 'Howard would consider one-off tax for Timor troops', 28 October 1999; and Agence France-Presse, 'Affluent Aussies to fund peacekeeping in East Timor', 23 November 1999.

⁴⁴ Interview with 064-07. Ashton Calvert also noted public pressure in September 1999, but said the Australian Government remained focused on getting policy 'on a better basis'.

bigger countries like the United States and the bigger countries of Europe, demanding that something had to be done.⁴⁵

Regardless of the actual effect or where the weight of opinion is generated, at least one political leader acknowledged that informed public opinion is difficult to ignore in a crisis:

Nowadays there can be mass sentiment about human rights abuses anywhere in the world because of information technology. And you know the communities of the world demand that action be taken against cruelty, against human abuse. And governments have to work out ways of doing that and my point is that in the case of East Timor we did find a way of doing so.⁴⁶

So while political leaders might promote an issue when popular support is ambivalent or divided, or bury an issue when it runs against their preferred course of action, it is difficult to ignore mass appeal if it arises. That the mass appeal of the East Timor issue suited the government's preferred course of action was undoubtedly a factor that gave the government significant room to move in September 1999.

Observations about Identifying Issues

This examination of the Identifying Issues phase in the East Timor crisis shows a strong degree of continuity with the proposed characteristics. In terms of actors, the prime minister and a very small group of ministers and senior officials were the most important, particularly for the way they defined the problem. There is little evidence to support the prospect of significant change in the future, given the high likelihood of the central role of these players continuing.

The lack of general public interest in defence and security—much less human rights or violence in East Timor—as issues in Australia's 1998 general election could explain why domestic actors and public opinion were not decisively influential in the Identifying Issues phase of the policy cycle.⁴⁷ While mass appeal developed later in the crisis, it is likely that the government would have acted in much the same way without that massive level of support (except perhaps in the way they announced the

⁴⁵ Interview with Ashton Calvert.

⁴⁶ A. Downer, 'International Crisis Resolution: The Example of East Timor', Oxford, 26 January 2000, available <http://www.dfat.gov.au>, accessed 23 January 2006.

⁴⁷ For example, none of these issues were mentioned in this analysis of voter issues in Roy Morgan Research, 'The Mood of the People & the Election – Listen Carefully', Finding No 1001, 1 September 1998, available <http://www.roymorgan.com>, accessed 14 February 2006.

'Timor Tax'). The government's probable course can be inferred from the planning and discussions underway with the United Nations and United States since February (and especially March) 1999, and from the range of official statements about East Timor that year.

External actors were more important than domestic actors for identifying issues in this case. Whether foreign governments, international institutions or the nebulous international opinion, these actors enabled and constrained action. In one sense, international actors have some similarities with domestic lobby groups: they can change their minds quickly, get caught in their own internal politics and influence some people. Unlike domestic lobby groups, external actors may have significantly more military, diplomatic and financial resources available to them. Some of them also have the potential to deploy these resources quickly to protect or advance their interests. This highlights national security policy as a multi-actor international game, where the actions of one have consequent effects on others.

Policy Analysis

The second phase of the policy cycle involves analysis of the policy issue, which is defined by Bridgman and Davis as using research and logic to develop options for decision-makers.⁴⁸ The four proposed characteristics identified in Part I were:

- Where the ability to conduct rational comprehensive analysis is limited in a crisis, decision-makers turn to trusted sources of advice. This can change the structure of policymaking and identify which actors will be influential.
- Policy issues are rarely analysed as individual, discrete problems, and the nature of competition between issues and interests, and the consequent influence on the issue at hand, makes analysis iterative.
- Policy insiders dominate.
- Where dominant frameworks exist, they are likely to be noticeable where there is no clear lead for a crisis.

⁴⁸ Bridgman and Davis, p. 47.

This phase is about the way policymakers define, evaluate and then present alternative courses of action to the decision-makers in Cabinet.

Anything but a rational comprehensive method

The earlier discussion on national security policymaking identified how departments are structured to conduct rational-comprehensive methods of policy analysis in Australia, while the discussion of crises showed this ideal was rarely achieved. Indeed, even Bridgman and Davis argue that such a process is rare in general policymaking because it is difficult to achieve agreement on the aims and a clear understanding of the means available.⁴⁹ The East Timor case confirms the tenuous position of the rational-comprehensive method, and clearly shows how analysis is influenced by a range of extra-rational means when policymakers are dealing with a crisis and are hampered by shifting national objectives.

Most of the major policy analysis in the East Timor case was conducted by small groups of very senior officials and a few working groups or task forces that formed just for this crisis. The influence of small groups of senior officials was clearly seen in the production of the Howard Letter. In this instance, only about ten people had any real knowledge of the letter or input to its contents.⁵⁰ While this act of policy was developed and then implemented with speed and secrecy, the full range of possible consequences was not anticipated before the letter was sent. As a result, the implications for the full range of policy instruments—particularly for the Australian Defence Force (ADF)—were not canvassed beforehand.⁵¹

Other small groups of more junior officials had important roles in managing the crisis (as outlined in Chapters 3 and 4), and most of these were formed and structured to promote rational-comprehensive consideration. Thus Defence's East Timor Working Group and the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPM&C) Paterson Committee were designed to ensure that expertise and

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 48–9.

⁵⁰ See Chapter 4. It is important to note that the overall policy direction toward East Timor was canvassed among a wider group of officials in mid-1998. However, the entire group was not directly consulted on the actual detail of the subsequent letter to President Habibie (Interview with Hugh White), and Defence was not permitted to produce papers on East Timor around this time without the express permission of its minister (Interview with Paul Barratt).

⁵¹ Interviews with John Moore, Chris Barrie, Paul Barratt, Hugh White and Allan Behm.

information could be pooled from all the major stakeholders, and work could be conducted under the auspices of different authorities. For example, Defence's working group met frequently up until the election (noticeably, with shorter meeting durations as time went on), and these helped to work through different opinions among agencies.⁵² However, these meetings were also mainly information exchanges and tasking opportunities rather than policy discussions.⁵³

Despite these structural attempts to unify analysis, policymaking could scarcely be described as comprehensive or rational in that it followed known or repeatable processes toward agreed objectives:

I think you would have to say that it was not a rational process that started with a clear set of objectives and then took an orderly set of steps towards achieving those objectives. It was a process that aimed to manage the consequences of events as they broke over us, with a very broad sense of a few long-term preferences ... so I don't think it was a structured or formal policy process, nor was it a tightly documented process either. There is no doubt about that.⁵⁴

More junior officials within Defence and DFAT confirmed this view:

My sense was the decision-making and reaction to the announcement was made between individuals at high levels, and that a lot of us in policy development and planning were pretty much playing catch-up. We were pretty much in the dark. In the first few weeks after the [Howard] Letter, we provided advice on some of the planning issues and implications, but the actual policy decisions that lay behind were made hurriedly, in corridors and by telephone calls among key people.⁵⁵

... but I got this sense throughout, certainly over at DFAT, that we were never working to a grand strategic plan or meeting grand strategic objectives, other than general stability in the region—which is an overriding objective—and facilitating the process with least cost to Australia ...⁵⁶

⁵² Interview 035-05.

⁵³ Interview with Andrew Hughes, who had direct involvement in AFP planning for UNAMET. Hughes described how some operational issues were discussed openly and forcefully in interdepartmental meetings around September 1999.

⁵⁴ Interview with Hugh White.

⁵⁵ Interview with Matt Skoien.

⁵⁶ Interview with 062-07.

Table 7: Australia's Strategic Objectives, March–September 1999

Date	Objectives	Source
Aug-Sep 1999	Ensure a painless divorce	Interview with 032-05
September 1999	<p>'Don't go to war with Indonesia</p> <p>'Try to undertake this in a way that keeps relations with Jakarta on an even keel.</p> <p>'[Lead] the operation, at least in the early phases, but not in a high profile or public way [and] not get people killed'</p>	Interview with 009-05
September 1999	<p>'The military had to get in, deliver the Security Council Resolution, get out and get a UN blue helmet operation in ...</p> <p>The other objective was to minimise the regional damage from leading a regional coalition [into East Timor] ...'</p>	Interview with Michael Scrafton
1 August 1999	<p>'It makes sense for us to be neutral and let the people of East Timor make up their own minds without us influencing them'</p>	Interview with Alexander Downer (c)
March 1999	<p>Continued recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor.</p> <p>Support for close involvement of the people of East Timor in decisions about their future...</p> <p>Support for an act of self-determination ... preferably following a long period of autonomy, while accepting the possibility of independence.</p> <p>Reconciliation among East Timorese.</p> <p>Support for a peaceful and orderly transition ...</p> <p>Support for the long-term development of East Timor</p>	DFAT (b)
March 1999	<p>Seek engagement with Indonesia to develop a sense of shared strategic interest.</p> <p>Enhance Indonesia's self-defence capabilities and interoperability between the ADF and TNI in key areas.</p> <p>In relation to an 'independent' Timor: For East Timor not to develop close military ties with a country hostile to Australia.</p> <p>For East Timor not to disrupt the territorial integrity of Indonesia</p>	Department of Defence (a)
March 1999	<p>East Timor would remain a part of Indonesia.</p> <p>East Timor does not disrupt Australian–Indonesian relations.</p> <p>East Timor does not disrupt ADF–TNI relations.</p> <p>Australia does not have large parts of the ADF deployed in East Timor.</p>	Interview with Hugh White

References for Table 7

- (a) Department of Defence, 'Department of Defence Submission', *Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Additional Information, Volume 5*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, p. 111.
- (b) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Submission*, p. 046.
- (c) Murdoch, L, 'We're Neutral On Timor: Downer', *Sun Herald* (Melbourne), 1 August 1999, p. 35.

A major main reason why policy analysis unfolded in this way was the continued change in Australia's strategic objectives throughout the crisis. As Table 7 shows, Australia's strategic objectives around this crisis went through numerous iterations in 1998 and 1999, to the point where none of the four main objectives from December 1998 and March 1999 had been achieved by September 1999. While most interviewees referred to the relationship with Indonesia, including Australia's overriding interest in avoiding conflict and ensuring Indonesia's stability and transition to a democracy as priority objectives throughout the year, other objectives changed throughout.⁵⁷ Those changes were not peripheral. They included, for one, a change in the desired future status of East Timor from autonomy within Indonesia (held until at least June 1999) to 'painless divorce' by September. They also changed from not wanting to involve the ADF in operations in Indonesian territory, to leadership of an international coalition. In other words, the objectives for policy analysis—the bedrock of the rational-comprehensive approach—kept shifting.

Policymakers were also under significant time pressure at different points during the crisis. For example, issues would sometimes be raised in NSCC for decision that day. There was simply no time to go through formal processes or to seek other opinions. The NSCC, which comprised the political decision-makers and their senior official advisers, needed to apply what they knew of their objectives in a largely intuitive way to the new situation to produce a decision.⁵⁸

In some instances, the range of inputs for policy analysis might have been deliberately restricted for tactical reasons. Hugh White noted, in an interview, that warning of the Howard Letter might have jeopardised the process, either by giving Indonesia time to refuse the initiative or by giving critics enough time to rally potential opposition. Maley and Taudevin also point to this issue, but they ascribe it to a view that the officials involved in policy analysis do not listen to dissenting views.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ This view of Australia's interests was supported in interviews with Hugh White, 024-05, Aldo Borgu and 032-05 (by telephone, 29 September 2005, identity protected). Another who supported this view was Woolcott, p. 29. A number of other interests were also mentioned during interviews, including the desire to avoid refugee flows from East Timor and Indonesia, and the importance of perceptions of Australian leadership credentials in the region.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Hugh White and Paul Barratt.

⁵⁹ See W Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis: Some Critical Comments', *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, vol. 54, no. 2, 2000, p. 159; and L Taudevin, *East Timor: Too Little Too Late*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1999, pp. 247–50.

The desire to maintain secrecy by using a compartmentalised planning process also restricts the number of people involved in policy analysis. This control became more pronounced after policy and intelligence information was leaked in mid-1999.

The concept of judgement, or having a sense of the issues, was mentioned by a number of interviewees:

... in these situations you just have to make a judgement about what the appropriate way is ...⁶⁰

There was a sense in which to some people, I think Habibie himself and some of his advisers, they were sort of weary of East Timor ...⁶¹

The first is that very early on, they had a sense this was getting out of control.⁶²

While these quotes are given in different contexts about different aspects of the case, they demonstrate the importance of *coup d'oeil*—the ‘inward eye’ or intuition⁶³—that senior leaders reputedly use to come to quick judgments about complex situations:

It [analysis] was much less formalised than the equivalent military deliberate planning process, where someone writes down the aim, situation and the constraints and the rest of it. There is a bit of a cultural point there. That’s not the way a civilian policy culture tends to work.⁶⁴

While decision-making will be discussed in Chapter 7, these examples show the importance of the extra-rational factors of experience, intuition and individual critical skills in policy analysis.

While forgoing a rational-comprehensive analytical process may have advantages in terms of speed and security, less-thorough analytical processes can have less than satisfactory consequences. For instance, the process for developing the Howard Letter shows how implications can be overlooked; while the ability to influence the May 5 Agreement was criticised as a missed opportunity to shape policy in Australia’s favour:

⁶⁰ Interview with 048-06.

⁶¹ Interview with Ashton Calvert.

⁶² Interview with Hugh White.

⁶³ This concept is drawn from Clausewitz’s writings about military genius (C von Clausewitz, *On War*, trans M Howard and P Paret, Princeton University Press, Princeton, 1976, pp. 102–3).

⁶⁴ Interview Hugh White.

We also failed to recognise—which we would have if we had run through a more formal policy process—that the critical pressure point ... [was] the negotiations in New York that led to the Tripartite Agreement. The fact that we failed to make any significant attempt to make an impact on those negotiations beyond the conversations we had with Vendrell when he was here in March meant that the opportunity to press for a full-scale military peacekeeping operation in the pre-popular consultation was lost, and it was lost by the lack of an appreciation that such a force was strongly in Australia's interests. That was a position we ended up pushing, but we failed to recognise that soon enough or recognise what to do to bring it about soon enough ...⁶⁵

An iterative process

National security policymaking in this crisis tended to follow an iterative process. In this case, the main issues for iteration included the government's position on the future status of East Timor and the ADF's prospective roles in the event of a military commitment.

As Table 7 showed (above), the government's preferred position on the future status of East Timor started as 'an act of self-determination in a manner which avoids an early and final decision on the future status of the province' in December 1998.⁶⁶ By March 1999 this preferred status had been modified to 'support for an act of self-determination ... preferably following a long period of autonomy, while accepting the possibility of independence'.⁶⁷ By late September 1999, the preferred outcome had become a highly pragmatic 'painless divorce'.⁶⁸

The changes in national objectives had a significant impact on Defence and the ADF. In January, when the mission was still unclear, the ADF produced a discussion paper covering a broad range of military options to explain the types of forces that could be assembled, their broad military capabilities (from peace monitoring to combat operations), and the indicative cost of each option. Political direction soon settled on a mid-range option, where the intervention would take the

⁶⁵ Interview with Hugh White. Others would disagree and argue that Australia was formally excluded from the Tripartite process and had been asking the Indonesians to accept international help to maintain security during the ballot since January (Interview with Ashton Calvert). Francesc Vendrell was the Director, Asia and the Pacific Division, UN Department of Political Affairs.

⁶⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, p. 182.

⁶⁷ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID, 'Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into East Timor', Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Additional Information, vol. 5, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, p. 046.

⁶⁸ Interview with 032-05.

form of a services-assisted evacuation—a mission of short duration that involves only a minimum level of offensive combat capability. With this tasking, Defence increased the readiness of 1st Brigade for peace operations and leased a fast catamaran (named the HMAS *Jervis Bay* once in service).⁶⁹ However, after the violence of early September and firming of the US position against taking a leadership role, the assumed commitment of providing 2000 troops to an international mission or even fewer to an evacuation grew to over 5000 troops, and included the new and unexpected role of leading that coalition.⁷⁰

These two instances show that the ability of strategic objectives to change and the importance of external factors in national security policymaking make an iterative process almost mandatory. Events that create surprise, such as Habibie's offer of a referendum, introduce new dimensions that force previous decisions to be reviewed. On the military side, the continuing deterioration of the security situation and the changing nature of the task meant Defence had to create new planning organisations, and the ADF had to bring additional units to operational readiness. The broader international interest in events (especially in September 1999) meant DFAT and Defence had to conduct more careful consultation with potential coalition partners in a very short period.

Policy insiders dominate ... period

This case supports the general proposition that national security and crisis policymaking are dominated by internal policy experts—with expertise being largely defined by official roles. As the preceding section noted, only a small number of people were closely involved in policymaking: namely ministers and their advisers, appointed career officials drawn from the main national security policy departments, senior officials of agencies with immediate involvement as policy instruments (such as the AFP and AEC), and the intelligence community. Although external parties attempted to have an influence (as noted in the section on issue identification), these had minimal impact. One such example was noted by William Maley, who lamented

⁶⁹ Interviews with 035-05 and Bob Treloar, who led ADF operational planning in 1999.

⁷⁰ Greenless and Garran, p. 239. The figure of 2000 troops was given by Defence Minister John Moore, and quoted in J Nelson, 'Australia ready to go to Timor without US', *Reuters News*, 9 September 1999.

his failed attempt to convince DFAT officials about the need for preparations for the 'worst case'.⁷¹ Another example was an attempt by the Centre for Democratic Institutions to identify the main issues concerning the forthcoming ballot. This workshop had official involvement, but little emphasis was placed on getting information from it.⁷² These examples show how domestic groups or individuals outside government have difficulty when trying to influence the Policy Analysis phase in crises.

However, not every department or agency gets to play equally in the policy analysis phase for national security issues. It is possible to identify four groups in this case, although there is some flexibility in this taxonomy. The first was the policy-driving group consisting of DFAT and Defence, where the former was first among equals. These departments used key committees such as NSCC and Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG), and their authority over policy submissions, to control the major bureaucratic initiatives in 1999.

The second group consisted of advice agencies such as AFP, AEC and AusAID. Each group was widely consulted on the details of its involvement, but generally the advice agencies would only provide information on their specialist area or comments on submissions drafted by the lead agency.⁷³ One response was typical of those from advice agencies:

I wasn't expected to advise much on issues of national policy. Mine was more a technical role ... I'd also give updates on how we were tracking, training our people, and the logistics of that.⁷⁴

Advice agencies might also do analysis of their own, but this was often in response to a request by others. For example, AusAID conducted an assessment of the humanitarian situation in East Timor in March 1999 at the request of the foreign minister.⁷⁵ Intelligence agencies play a different role, primarily due to the strict

⁷¹ Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis', p. 160, note 167.

⁷² While this workshop was a 'second track diplomacy' (officials-to-officials) meeting, it helped officials within the Australian Government to identify potential problems with the ballot process. While two Australian Government officials spoke at the workshop, there were no others listed among the participants despite the wide range of East Timorese participants. See Centre for Democratic Institutions, *Managing Transition in East Timor Workshop*, Australian National University, 26–29 April 1999; and Interview 012-05.

⁷³ Interviews with Steve Darvill and Andrew Hughes.

⁷⁴ Interview with Andrew Hughes.

⁷⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID, 'Submission', pp. 076–085.

doctrinal separation between policy and intelligence. As a result, one may expect to find that the Australian intelligence agencies played no role in policy analysis—but that would underestimate the individuals who represented their agencies and their ability to present information in a way that shaped policy discussion.

DPM&C falls into its own category. This department played a central role in setting the broad direction of policy, and also a coordinating role. Thus DPM&C was a key player on the main committees, and individuals within it could be—and reportedly were—influential in discussions. The department could also exercise an informal veto over policy proposals.⁷⁶ But the small size of DPM&C and vast range of issues to be covered in 1999 meant its officers tended to play a background role, speaking up where they needed to, but leaving the main analytical work to the other departments.

Lastly, some groups could have played a role in this crisis but did not. Foremost among these were the Treasury and the Department of Finance and Administration (DOFA). In the Australian system, the Treasury provides economic policy advice to government and DOFA manages the Commonwealth's budget (among other responsibilities). Aside from DOFA's routine advice on budgets, neither department appeared to play a significant role.⁷⁷ The implications of their absence will be discussed in the next section on policy instruments.

Dominant frameworks

Discussions of 'dominant frameworks' or 'paradigms' in policymaking are often loaded and vitriolic—loaded in the sense that dominant paradigms are considered inherently bad and a limit on creative thought, and vitriolic in that policymakers who follow the dominant framework are often accused of being narrow-minded and inflexible.⁷⁸ The discussion of frameworks also touches on the structure/agency debate, for it implies people are unable to think or act beyond the structurally mandated assumptions of their organisation. This discussion tries to avoid a judgmental position, noting instead that DFAT and Defence made different

⁷⁶ Interview with Michael Keating.

⁷⁷ No person interviewed for this dissertation could remember a significant instance of involvement by either Treasury or DOFA.

⁷⁸ For example, see Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis', pp. 158–60.

assumptions about what Australia should be preparing for in 1999, and arguing that these different assumptions took on the character of dominant frameworks.

Based on the evidence gathered during the interviews, DFAT's actions concerning East Timor in 1999 could be characterised as adopting 'best case' position. This view contributed to a policy preference of pressuring the Indonesian Government to keep its word and maintain security which, in turn, made it essential to minimise activity that might betray that position.

The reasons for taking such a position may not be related to a dominant framework. Avoiding situations that would antagonise Indonesia, and perhaps lead to a disruption of ties before the popular consultation, made policy sense to many. Viewed another way, this focus on the best case may have also been necessary because DFAT has relatively few resources to assign to problems. DFAT probably only had around fifteen to twenty policy officers assigned to the East Timor issue before mid-September 1999.⁷⁹ Such paucity of resources usually leads to planning that is focused on limited, most likely options.

However, a number of interviewees (notably from outside DFAT) felt this tendency to plan for the best case represented DFAT's preferred way of thinking:

DFAT is inclined to think optimistically (so their) focus was therefore on avoiding conflict ...⁸⁰

DFAT has a kind of 'beautiful idealism' that is its main operational paradigm. That is, you can negotiate your way out of everything and that diplomacy will always solve the problem.⁸¹

... it was you [Defence] take a dim view, we'll [DFAT] take the rose-tinted view and never the twain shall meet ...⁸²

While empirical work by Gyngell and Wesley would dispute the presence of an idealistic streak in DFAT's culture⁸³, Defence's approach was noticeably different

⁷⁹ This figure should be compared to the resources devoted by Defence to this crisis at the strategic level. In addition to the nearly 30 people involved in the East Timor Policy Unit, many of Strategic Operations Division's thirty staff were working on crisis issues. The author observed at least 15 policy officers working on this crisis within Army Headquarters—a number probably replicated in Air Force and Navy Headquarters as well. The Defence Intelligence Organisation also had a small, 24-hour crisis action team.

⁸⁰ Interview with Hugh White.

⁸¹ Interview with Allan Behm.

⁸² Interview with 046-06.

⁸³ Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 73–7.

because it revolved around planning for a broad range of contingencies before focusing on the worst case, which is often defined in terms of levels of violence or resources.⁸⁴ But even Defence was not planning for the worst case before September 1999, because—as mentioned earlier—it has been directed to prepare for a services-assisted evacuation only.

Defence's own difficulty with seeing problems through its dominant framework of operations was demonstrated by the way little planning was conducted for the nation-building aspects of the intervention. According to one interviewee:

My area ... started to see some of the operational planning coming out of Defence, and we saw what we thought were some gaps in that—in terms of aid to the civil power when there was no civil power. And we started asking questions about how the 'civilian' side was going to be managed. Who was going to be doing the electricity supply, water and administrative tasks? We had a strong sense that Defence's planning up to that stage had not considered those questions. Very good [operational] planning to get troops on the ground and to get control and establish order, but the next step did not seem to us to have been well-considered.⁸⁵

This view of events was supported by other interviewees, who acknowledged little had been done to prepare for the post-intervention phase of the crisis.⁸⁶ Then-CDF Chris Barrie acknowledged that the intervention was always going to involve more than just stabilizing the situation, but stressed that Defence's priority was to restore law and order:

Our mandate was to provide security. The actual nation-building and stuff belonged to the UN, but blind Freddie could have seen that was going to come out of Australia. It had to. And the sooner we can hand the whole thing off to the UN the better.⁸⁷

The curious issue here is that Australia led INTERFET because the United Nations could not have organised its own force in time to prevent more destruction in Timor.⁸⁸ Why would anyone have thought that the United Nations could organise a

⁸⁴ This view was also expressed by John Castellaw. His comments show that the 'worst-case' view is a trait held by more than one nation's military.

⁸⁵ Interview with 028-05.

⁸⁶ Interviews with Chris Barrie and Michael Scrafton.

⁸⁷ Interview with Chris Barrie.

⁸⁸ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, p. 133. Geoffrey Robinson wrote that he was told it would take three months to deploy a UN peacekeeping force ('With UNAMET in East Timor – An Historian's Personal View', in R Tanter, M Selden and S Shalom (eds), *Bitter Flowers, Sweet Flowers: East Timor, Indonesia and the World Community*, Rowman and

nation-building operation any faster? A related issue concerned the idea that operations and nation building would occur sequentially—that is, the force would restore order, then others would come in to restore services and ultimately develop national institutions. As the experience of Timor and elsewhere shows, this is faulty thinking because people will become impatient while the follow-on organisations prepare themselves—some will try to seize political power themselves, while others may resort to new forms of violence to assert their position. This type of thinking shows the difficulties of working within dominant paradigms and provides some evidence for the benefits of adopting a more integrated, ‘national security’ approach to policymaking.

Despite this, there were a number of instances where the dominant paradigm was overthrown, while others think it does not matter anyway. Examples of where the dominant paradigm was sidelined included the way DFAT allocated some diplomatic tasks to Defence officials, and the way officials cooperated in a range of committees. This shows a significant pragmatic (and often cooperative) streak in national security policymaking, and also shows that dominant frameworks may be shaped or resisted by individuals. One interviewee also argued that, at the very top level, the NSCC proved successful at bringing convergence in thinking which made dominant frameworks unimportant.⁸⁹ This convergence was assisted by the presence of a very influential prime minister and strong ministers, and also the situation itself. The presence of ministerial advisers in the analysis phase adds another element that can break the dominant framework down.

Observations about policy analysis

The East Timor case study provides evidence to support the proposed characteristics of policy analysis in crisis. This evidence also shows a large degree of durability within these characteristics. Some continuity, particularly the limitation on rational comprehensive analysis and its iterative nature, is caused by the time pressure and ambiguity normally associated with crisis. However, this continuity may also indicate a bias against long-term thinking, and greater comfort with managing issues

Littlefield, Lanham, 2001, p. 62). See also the earlier discussion about how the United Nations needed five months to deploy a peacekeeping force.

⁸⁹ Interview with Ashton Calvert.

individually within departmental confines. The role of national security policy insiders is also likely to endure, even in crisis, given the importance of information and proximity to decision-makers. One aspect that may change, over a long period of time, is that of the dominant framework. There is clearly some flexibility in this characteristic, which will be explored further in Chapter 6.

This discussion of the policy analysis phase highlights a number of other key issues, with the first being the importance to analysis of extra-rational factors, such as judgement. The way key policy advice appears to have been generated—in this case—by the top layer of officials, and the limited attention paid to formal analysis of the options through methods such as cost benefit analysis, military appreciations or the like, supports observations by other observers of policymaking. For example, Dror argued that the limited knowledge of policymakers, and indeed the changing nature of goals, limits the ability to conduct rational processes. He went on to argue that rational processes must be replaced by something else, such as judgement, intuition or heuristics.⁹⁰ This phenomenon has been observed in the East Timor case, as key decisions such as the Howard Letter were taken without a strict reliance on a rational-comprehensive analytical method. Experience, judgement and understanding of somewhat intangible national objectives seem to have played the dominant role in this instance.

There is also an argument that process is not important in policymaking, only results.⁹¹ After all, it is possible for an individual to conduct this phase alone and come up with a suitable answer. However, reliance on the ‘heroic individual’ has limits and represents a significant gamble. In this case, the flaws were shown in missed opportunities to influence the Tripartite Talks, and unforeseen implications of policy action such as the Howard Letter. These shortcomings echo Janis and Haney, who identify a strong relationship between poor process and unfavourable outcomes.⁹² It

⁹⁰ Y Dror, *Public Policymaking Reexamined*, Chandler Publishing Company, Scranton, 1968, p. 158.

⁹¹ This is probably an argument that Howard himself would make. In his analysis of Howard’s leadership style, Paul Kelly notes that ‘he thinks like a practitioner who judges governance more by its policy and political outcomes than as a system in its own right’. See P Kelly, ‘How Howard Governs’, in N Cater (ed), *The Howard Factor: A Decade that Changed the Nation*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2006, p. 4.

⁹² IL Janis, *Crucial Decisions: Leadership in Policymaking and Crisis Management*, The Free Press, New York, 1989, pp. 126–34; and PJ Haney, *Organizing for Foreign Policy Crises:*

would therefore seem that it is best to design and use a good analytical process, and then adapt it to fit the situation. This must include ensuring that the process can be adapted to the requirements of crisis situations.

It is also difficult to overlook the central role played by ministers in analysis during a crisis. While decision-making will be discussed later in Chapter 7, it is possible to see ministers act as analysts at times. In this case, there were occasions where the prime minister brought newly-emerging issues straight to NSCC, and the ministers themselves became analysts as they discussed the latest occurrences. They did so based on their general knowledge of the situation and their detailed knowledge of the most recent events. This involvement should not be seen as an aberration:

It's the PM [prime minister] who has been onto the phone to Kofi Annan overnight, and while someone would have written up a record it won't have been widely distributed. So the people down lower won't know about what the PM said to Kofi Annan, and they certainly won't know what ministers said to each other ...⁹³

Ministerial advisers are another important group of insiders in policy analysis. At times, ministers are briefed by their advisers on important proposals, which allow them to identify the political and policy implications and merits of each. The proximity of advisers also gives them an opportunity to influence the minister's thinking, often at critical times. How advisers use their position is often up to the minister's preferences, their own personality and the confidence between departments and the advisers.⁹⁴

The earlier discussion of bodies such as Defence's East Timor Policy Unit and the Taylor Committee, and the discussion of iterative and fast-paced nature of policymaking in this section also show that structures and systems designed to conduct policy analysis in routine situations are not necessarily suited to coping with crises. Instead, organisations may prefer to establish small groups to focus on the issue and provide analysis directly to senior leaders.

Presidents, Advisers and the Management of Decision Making, University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1997, pp. 124–5.

⁹³ Interview with Hugh White. Eliot Cohen also demonstrates the importance of political leaders in analysis (*Supreme Command: soldiers, statesmen and leadership in wartime*, Simon and Schuster, London, 2003).

⁹⁴ Interviews 051-06 and Aldo Borgu. The role of advisers was not consistent across ministerial offices. One described his minister's disdain for advisers trying to 'second guess' the department (Interview 064-07).

Policy Instruments

The third phase of the policy cycle involves considering the means, called policy instruments, to achieve the government's ends. Two proposed characteristics of this phase were identified in Part I:

- The instruments most used by the Australian Government in crises are diplomacy, alliances, military force, economic levers (including foreign aid), information, international law, and (sometimes) social levers.
- The utility of policy instruments is highly situational in a crisis.

The range of policy instruments identified in Part I captured most of those used in the past by Australian policymakers. Of these, it should be no surprise that diplomatic and military instruments remained the most visible and important. However, this case also shows how the Australian Government used instruments that are not usually considered in the context of national security, such as the electoral commission. This case study also confirms that policy instruments are highly situational, not least for their potential to precipitate detrimental consequences if used. More worryingly, some parts of the military instrument were not ready or sustainable for offshore operations had they been needed.

Australian policy instruments

Diplomacy was again an essential policy instrument, and the Australian Government used both DFAT and Defence extensively for diplomatic purposes during this crisis. As on other occasions, DFAT used its embassies, delegations and informal contacts with a number of agencies to advocate Australia's position. DFAT was also the most prominent Australian organisation used in consultations with East Timorese, Indonesian and UN leaders in the early period. These consultations included the work by DFAT officials in June 1998 and the visits to Jakarta, New York and Washington by Foreign Minister Downer and his senior officials.⁹⁵ DFAT also

⁹⁵ These were some of the 120 representations made to the Indonesian Government over East Timor during 1998–99, according to Mr John Dauth in his testimony to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Economic, social and political conditions in East Timor*, 13 August 1999, available <http://www.aph.gov.au/hansard>, accessed 6 December 2006, p. 220.

facilitated a range of other forums, such as intra-Timorese reconciliation meetings and later a 'Group of Friends' on East Timor.⁹⁶

While DFAT played the major role in planning and executing the diplomatic effort, Defence's part was important in terms of engaging the Indonesians and regional neighbours in 1999. These activities included indirect advocacy during a joint Australia–Indonesia forum from 9–11 March⁹⁷, and direct approaches by Air Marshal Riding and Allan Behm to senior TNI leaders in June. Defence's diplomacy also extended to practical areas, such as the efforts made in September 1999 by acting Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence (DEP SEC S&I) Martin Brady to establish cooperative modes between the TNI and ADF, and VCDF Riding's regional tour to build support for INTERFET. In addition, Defence's attachés in Indonesia, Brigadier Jim Molan and Colonel Ken Brownrigg, played key roles in putting Australia's position to the TNI and establishing a relationship with TNI forces in East Timor so that INTERFET could operate there without coming into conflict with Indonesian units.⁹⁸

Other instruments make direct contributions to diplomatic efforts—and they can detract from diplomacy as well. For example, cash donations to UNTAET and financial support for intra-East Timorese dialogue supported the broad diplomatic messages of reconciliation, while demonstrations of ADF units and equipment displayed Australia's will and capability to use force if necessary.⁹⁹ But as the intra-

⁹⁶ Further aims and results of diplomacy will be discussed later in the section on 'Consultation'. The Group of Friends was an informal meeting of concerned UN member states. This group, which included Japan and New Zealand, began meeting after the ballot announcement in an attempt to build a coalition for intervention (see J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 95).

⁹⁷ This forum, known as the CDF–Pangab Forum after the respective military leaders, was instituted after the 1995 Agreement on Maintaining Security between Australia and Indonesia. The March 1999 forum was held in Jakarta, and discussed the role of military forces in democratic societies—see B Singh, *Defense Relations Between Australia and Indonesia in the Post-Cold War Era*, Greenwood, Westport, 2002, p. 126; and Defence Public Affairs, 'Australian/Indonesian Bi-lateral Military Forum', Media Release DPAO 062/99 dated 5 March 1999, available <http://www.defence.gov.au>, accessed 17 November 2007.

⁹⁸ See A Ryan, *Primary responsibilities and primary risks: Australian Defence Force participation in the International Force East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2000, p. 40; Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order*, p. 121; P Daley, 'Gunning for the General', *Bulletin*, 30 June 2004; and interviews with Allan Behm and Martin Brady. See also B Breen, *Mission Accomplished – East Timor*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2000, pp. 7–14 for the role of Defence's attachés in Operation SPITFIRE and the initial deployment of INTERFET.

⁹⁹ For example, Allan Behm mentioned the way senior Indonesian officers were reminded of the Australia's long-range bomber capability during visits to Australia, while sensitive intelligence

departmental controversy over increasing ADF preparedness in February and March 1999 showed, actions deemed necessary by one organisation may not suit others. It is also important to note the role of political leaders in diplomacy. Aside from Downer's efforts, the prime minister was involved in some direct diplomacy through the December 1998 letter to President Habibie, the Bali Summit of April 1999, the APEC meeting of September that same year, and the negotiations to establish INTERFET.

Australia's alliance with the United States was another important policy instrument. While there no evidence of consultation between the Australian and US Governments about the Howard Letter, developing a shared policy line was clearly important to Australia by February 1999. This imperative was reflected in the visit by DFAT secretary Ashton Calvert to Washington for talks with his US counterparts in the State Department. Australian political leaders and officials also continued to promote the need for US engagement, most notably with USPACOM and through counterparts in the US Government.¹⁰⁰ The US Government also used its weight to gain Indonesian acceptance for the intervention at a critical time. Once the decision to commit forces was made, the United States provided important support to the mission, most visibly the strategic lift and Marine force positioned off Timor.

While its role in diplomacy was clearly valuable, the ADF's main contribution in this crisis came through its ability to deploy and sustain combat forces offshore as part of an international coalition. The added responsibility of leading the force and providing significant logistic and intelligence support allowed the Australian Government to act quickly and decisively. But Defence and the ADF do not act alone, and the potential cost of preparing a force can interfere with other efforts. The preparation of 1st Brigade had the potential to convey messages that ran counter to other efforts; in this case, to DFAT's preferred policy line that Indonesia would be trusted to manage security and the East Timorese would be encouraged to

was 'sanitised' (had its source hidden) so blunt messages could be conveyed to senior TNI officers (see also Daley, 'Gunning'; and Interview with 005-06, a former senior ADF officer).

¹⁰⁰ Interview with Bob Treloar. He also noted how many of the talks with USPACOM were conducted relatively informally, as 'staff talks' rather than as 'policy talks'. Earl Hailston (the former senior planner for USPACOM) also noted the close relationship between USPACOM and Defence, and stated that he was allowed to maintain closer contact with the Australians than he might have been allowed to do with the military forces of other nations. Recounting his discussions with US Defense Secretary Cohen, John Moore recalled being told that 'Timor was your [Australia's] baby' and that ANZUS did not automatically apply, although consultation did occur without a formal invocation of the treaty.

compromise.¹⁰¹ That Defence went ahead with preparing 1st Brigade for deployment was a risk, but one that proved worthwhile given the events of September 1999.

While Australia chose not to employ all of its economic instruments in this crisis (a discussion that will be taken up later in this section), development aid and financial assistance were prominent. As mentioned earlier, AusAID directed funds to meeting short- and longer-term humanitarian problems, as well as funding immediate initiatives to support policy. These initiatives extended to providing financial and technical assistance to NGOs working in East Timor. AusAID also provided technical assistance to policymaking by dispatching assessment teams when requested and organising direct humanitarian assistance on occasions.¹⁰²

The willingness to accept some financial risk to fund the mission was another significant element of Australia's policy response in September. Under normal circumstances, the United Nations establishes elaborate measures to determine funding arrangements for contributions to peacekeeping forces. But these mechanisms take time to build and some nations were reluctant to commit without confirmed funding arrangements. In this case, the Australian Government accepted the risk and paid the deployment costs of some participants, and underwrote a range of other costs until the UN Trust Fund was fully operational. This move was instrumental in keeping negotiations going with a number of countries during INTERFET's early days, and helped to ensure that the force included a broad range of nationalities.¹⁰³

Australia's willingness to bear additional costs also helped to allay concerns and avoid potential ill-feeling with contributing nations. The value of this approach was shown when some contributing nations delivered their forces to Australia without essential military equipment.¹⁰⁴ The necessary equipment was duly loaned by the ADF, and the contingents were able to deploy with minimal delays. When the time

¹⁰¹ See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, pp. 44–5, for the coordinated ministerial response to Indonesia's announcement about the ballot, and the desire to avoid discussing a potential peacekeeping effort.

¹⁰² Interview with Steve Darvill. These assessment missions also included one to Darwin to assess its ability to support UN operations.

¹⁰³ Interview with Steve Ayling. See also Brigadier S Ayling and S Guise, 'UNTAC and INTERFET – A Comparative Analysis', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 150, 2001, p. 51; and Ryan, *Primary responsibilities*, pp. 43–5.

¹⁰⁴ A Ryan, p. 52.

came to reconcile the loans, these stores were given as a gift to avoid creating animosity between Australia and the contributing nations.¹⁰⁵

The list of possible policy instruments developed in Part I is not complete, however. This crisis shows how a number of departments and agencies contribute different abilities to create additional policy instruments. For example, the AEC helped the United Nations to establish the legal and procedural framework for the electoral process, established systems for voter registration, developed and procured ballot materials, developed training courses and briefing packages, and facilitated voting for East Timorese expatriates in Australia.¹⁰⁶ According to Corina Perelli, these services made a significant contribution to the ballot's outcome.¹⁰⁷ The AFP was important to providing UNAMET with an ability to diffuse problems through the moral authority of international police.¹⁰⁸

Other instruments that the government might want to call upon are owned and operated by the private and community sectors. For example, Australia's main telecommunications company, Telstra, assisted the ADF and fledgling authority in East Timor by providing on-the-ground communications support in Dili.¹⁰⁹ Other examples included the use of commercial shipping to support the INTERFET deployment and the use of a commercial provider for aeromedical evacuation during UNTAET.¹¹⁰ Further examples are found in the way commercial and non-government organisations helped AusAID to implement its humanitarian program as suppliers and providers of goods and services.¹¹¹ These few examples show that the ownership of

¹⁰⁵ Australian National Audit Office, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, paragraphs 2.61–2.

¹⁰⁶ Australian Electoral Commission, 'Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee: Australian Electoral Commission Support for the East Timor Consultation Ballot', Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, pp. 2–8.

¹⁰⁷ Corina Perelli was the senior UN election official for UNAMET. Her view was quoted in Australian Electoral Commission, pp. 1–2.

¹⁰⁸ Andrew Hughes thought the AFP's mechanisms for getting support were satisfactory, but spoke of the difficulty with balancing his personal responsibilities for domestic and international crime tasks and this crisis (Interview, 5 September 2005). Tim Dahlstrom spoke of the strain creating the second and subsequent rotations were (or would have been) for the AFP, and the importance of being able to draw upon state police forces to expand their own resources (Interview, 16 August 2005).

¹⁰⁹ Air Vice-Marshal R Treloar, in evidence to Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Consideration of Additional Estimates (Department of Defence)*, 6 December 1999, p. 67.

¹¹⁰ Breen, *Mission Accomplished*, p. 150; and interview with Kerry Clarke.

¹¹¹ Interviews with Steve Darvill and Scott Dawson.

some policy instruments had clearly moved from government hands by 1999, but the government could—at a price—harness more instruments for policy than it actually owned.

Limitations on instruments

Some Australian policy instruments were not used in this crisis. In some instances they were not perceived as useful, or their use would have created significant negative repercussions. On some occasions, the instruments were not suited to the specific task, perhaps because they have limitations or lack the ability to deal with conditions as they exist. Taken together, these reasons show why the utility of policy instruments will always be highly situational in a crisis.

In the first instance, the government did not view information as a vital element of national power or think deeply about how to employ this instrument systematically.¹¹² While there were some specific instances where information was applied to achieve national objectives, such as the Riding/Behm visit to TNI leaders, the government missed others. According to Defence, an opportunity to shape the opinion of regional audiences about the intervention was missed, and many people were left to develop a negative perception of Australia's actions.¹¹³ These perceptions were also influenced by an anti-INTERFET media reporting in Indonesia¹¹⁴, and a

¹¹² The application of information operations is discussed in J Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre: The Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Canberra Working Paper 118, 2002; and K Beasley, *Information Operations during Operation Stabilise in East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Working Paper 120, Canberra, 2002. Defence's use of the media in 1999 is discussed in more detail in Chapter 7.

¹¹³ Australian National Audit Office, paragraphs 5.85–6. This claim was refuted by DFAT (in the same ANAO report) and Interview 066-07 (Canberra, 18 December 2007), but a number of articles in regional newspapers provide support. For a sample of the negative reaction, see Z Arifin, 'Asean should take the lead in East Timor peacekeeping, says PM', *New Straits Times*, 1 October 1999; K Seneviratne, 'Australia casts an eye on Timor's oil', *Straits Times*, 24 September 1999; A Jemadu, 'Can Australia sever ties with Indonesia?', *Jakarta Post*, 20 September 1999; and more neutral statements in newspapers such as *Nation*, 'Editorial – Howard must clarify foreign-policy goals', 29 September 1999. In contrast, some in the region supported Australia's role in the mission—for example, see *Bangkok Post*, 'Editorial – Distractions in the Timor issue', 30 September 1999. Interview 066-07 is a Defence official with knowledge of public affairs activities in 1999.

¹¹⁴ Indonesian press reaction to INTERFET, and especially Australia's role in it, included references to Australian brutality and motivation, and asked questions about whether Australia would attack other parts of Indonesia. This reaction is summarised in KJ Brahney, 'East Timor: INTERFET Mission Sparks Continued Debate', United States Information Agency – Foreign Media Reaction, 15 October 1999, available <http://www.globalsecurity.org>, accessed 2 January 2008.

magazine article that appeared on 24 September 1999 where Howard did not dispute a journalist's assertion that Australia was the US' 'deputy sheriff' in the region.¹¹⁵ This story (and image) was roundly criticised in the regional media and created credibility problems for Australia.¹¹⁶

There were also differing perceptions about the efficacy of applying broader economic instruments to force the Indonesian Government to accept peacekeepers before or after the ballot. While Foreign Minister Downer and Defence Minister Moore made mention of the international community's involvement in the Indonesian economy in media interviews¹¹⁷, sanctions were not seen as a viable instrument by Australian policymakers at any time in 1999. This attracted significant criticism from academics who argued that economically vulnerable Indonesia was in no condition to resist international pressure, and gave credit to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and World Bank for eventually convincing Indonesia to accept INTERFET.¹¹⁸ Maley takes this further by arguing that economic pressure might have convinced the Indonesian Government to accept a neutral military force in East Timor before the popular consultation.¹¹⁹ There were some forceful responses to this proposition by Australian policymakers:

We tested the waters as much as we could, and what economic levers did we have? We wanted to bring the Indonesians along, we didn't want to get their backs up and have problems ...¹²⁰

These points were made by people who had never met President Habibie. We didn't have levers on him. Sanctions are traditionally pretty ineffective and we didn't have available to us more refined 'smart sanctions'. Habibie's mind was not going to be changed by such measures, in any case, or by Australia.¹²¹

... Indonesia was on its knees as a result of the Asian Economic Crisis at the time, they were reacting badly to the IMF intervention ... but at the time we

¹¹⁵ See F Brenchley, 'The Howard Defence Doctrine', *Bulletin*, 28 September 1999, pp. 22–4.

¹¹⁶ For examples of regional reactions, see T Datson, 'Australian PM popular at home, blasted in Asia', *Reuters News*, 28 September 1999; Agence France-Presse, 'Malaysian politicians slam "Howard Doctrine"', 24 September 1999; and Agence Presse-France, 'Thailand pans Australian PM over plan to be America's "deputy" in Asia', 24 September 1999.

¹¹⁷ Defence Public Affairs, 'Transcript, Hon John Moore, MP & Hon Alexander Downer', Commonwealth Offices, Melbourne, 6 September 1999, available <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au>, accessed 12 December 2007.

¹¹⁸ Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis', pp. 157–8; and J Cotton, 'Against the Grain: The East Timor Intervention', *Survival*, vol. 43, no. 1, 2001, pp. 132–3.

¹¹⁹ Maley, 'Australia and the East Timor Crisis', p. 157; and his testimony to Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *East Timor*, 13 August 1999, p. 863.

¹²⁰ Interview with 024-05.

¹²¹ Interview with 032-05.

were getting ready to deploy INTERFET, people were actually dying in large numbers on the ground. How long do economic levers take to work?¹²²

I would be skeptical about the economic levers argument, as I am not sure what levers we had. Economic levers tend to work [only] in the long-term, and they work on everybody—not just the government—when you apply them. It would have been very hard to change short-term Indonesian policies with economic means ... Indonesians have always been happy to take the hit and wait it out.¹²³

When asked whether Australia had considered asking the IMF to pressure Indonesia into allowing a peacekeeping force before the consultation, or whether this option was even discussed, one well-placed interviewee responded:

Not that I am aware of ... in the Asian meltdown we had sought to ameliorate the worst excesses of the IMF. Downer went into bat on behalf of Indonesia, and I think that was the right way to play it.¹²⁴

This exchange shows that Australian policymakers clearly thought that bringing economic pressure on Indonesia was either impossible or potentially detrimental, or both. What is interesting is that the potential experts on economic power, the Treasury or DOFA, were not engaged in policymaking about East Timor. When asked about their participation, no interviewee described even a minor role for either department, except for their role in managing funding. This example, in particular, shows that governments make judgments about when and where to apply their instruments. It also shows that just because a government has certain instruments, these instruments are not necessarily available to further policy objectives. Nor will instruments—in this case, using diplomacy alone to convince the Indonesians to accept peacekeepers—always achieve the intended results.

Defence did not use its entire range of military options during INTERFET. Some weapons, such as tanks, were not justified by the level of threat and were potentially damaging to East Timor's underdeveloped road network. Others, such as Australia's F-111 strategic bombers, were used only as a subtle threat. According to one report, these aircraft remained fuelled and armed at the Royal Australian Air

¹²² Interview with Michael Scrafton.

¹²³ Interview with Frank Lewincamp.

¹²⁴ Interview with Paul Barratt. These institutions eventually played a role when World Bank President James Wolfensohn expressed concern about the violence to President Habibie (see S Mufson, 'World Bank Chief Warns Indonesia On Militias', *Washington Post*, 12 September 1999). The IMF also expressed concern about the violence before cancelling their planned visit (see W Murray, 'The Situation in Indonesia and the IMF', International Monetary Fund, 16 September 1999, available <http://www.imf.org>, accessed 6 February 2006).

Force base Tindal, near Katherine in northern Australia.¹²⁵ While this move was not announced, it is an example of how not using an instrument can still have an effect if the adversary detects the signal.

Policy instruments can also be limited by political decisions. Although the evidence to identify exactly why is not yet publicly available, there are strong indications that the Australian Government chose not to use economic sanctions because it did not want to start a war or a lasting conflict with Indonesia over East Timor, or jeopardise Indonesia's move towards democracy. It is also possible that the Australian Government may have shied away from overt pressure in order to preserve the bilateral trade relationship. While Indonesia was only Australia's tenth-largest trading partner in 1999, any break in the economic relationship might have caused economic discomfort in Australia as well as Indonesia. These types of political, economic and electoral factors weigh heavily upon political decision-makers, potentially more than the risk of violence in a foreign jurisdiction.¹²⁶

Foreign governments might also restrict the use of some policy instruments. For example, the Australian Government's ability to sponsor NGO activities in East Timor before September 1999 was constrained by the Indonesian Government:

... there were fairly strict controls about who could work in East Timor which were run out of the foreign ministry and state security apparatus in Jakarta, and that kind of limited the sorts of partnerships that we could make with Australian non-government organisations. None of that [control] existed post-ballot, and ... we were able to make more use of the linkages between church-based NGOs in Australia and church-based NGOs in East Timor.¹²⁷

This type of constraint is a usual limitation imposed by the dictates of sovereignty—donor countries are within their (political) rights to determine who enters their borders

¹²⁵ A Fowler, 'Flying Blind', *4 Corners*, ABC Television (Australia), 29 October 2007.

¹²⁶ The imperative for preventing any major disruption can be extrapolated from the level of bilateral trade (then A\$5Bn), in the amount of Australian investment in Indonesia (A\$6Bn), in the loans made by the Australian Government to Indonesia after the 1997 economic crisis (A\$1Bn), and in the number of Indonesian students who travel to Australia to study (17 000 people in 2000). See Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Direction of Trade Time Series, 2000-01 One Hundred Years of Trade*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002, p. 2 and p. 4; S Sherlock, *Indonesia's Dangerous Transition: The Politics of Recovery and Democratisation*, Australian Parliamentary Library Research Paper 18, Canberra, 1999; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Advancing the National Interest*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2003, Chapter 5.

¹²⁷ Interview with Scott Dawson.

and, once there, what those people do. Accepting these conditions is sometimes the price of operating in such situations.

Policy instruments also have physical limits such as reach, sustainability, survivability and readiness. The ability to use a given instrument at the place or time where it will achieve the desired effect—described as ‘reach’—is especially relevant to this case. While Australia has police, military forces, election officials and aid workers, these capabilities must move outside their normal operating areas and be able to work in the appropriate location if they are to contribute as a policy instrument. For example, it was soon apparent that the AFP’s communications, air transport and logistics were very limited—although these shortcomings were ameliorated by other agencies or commercial contracts. Other AFP limitations included difficulties with preparing and training large groups of police for peacekeeping duties; however, these shortcomings were overcome through cooperation with other agencies.¹²⁸ The ability to protect instruments while deployed may be another limitation, which was seen in the way the AEC was unwilling to send staff into East Timor due to safety concerns.¹²⁹

Deficiencies in logistics, lift, combat equipment and communications were also identified within Defence.¹³⁰ Significant concerns were raised about the amount of body armour and night vision equipment available to the deploying forces¹³¹, and about the ability to rotate infantry units.¹³² However, other possible deficiencies did not become obvious because the operation’s scale and intensity prevented ‘survivability’ from coming to attention. It should also be noted that the ADF did not deploy its full range of military capabilities to East Timor. Tank units, medium artillery and strike bombers all remained outside the territory and its airspace. These units were not deployed for a range of reasons, including the absence of a real military need. Despite having some ability to contribute more to the mission, there seemed to

¹²⁸ Interviews with Kerry Clarke and Tim Dahlstrom.

¹²⁹ Interview with 012-05.

¹³⁰ For more detailed accounts of ADF deficiencies, see Australian National Audit Office, Chapter 4; and A Ryan, Chapter 3.

¹³¹ D Snow and P Cole-Adams, ‘Army Borrows Uncle Sam’s Flak Jackets’, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 September 1999, p. 1.

¹³² Other problems with sustaining enabling components, such as Army’s Training Command, were also observed—see Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade, *From Phantom to Force: Towards a More Efficient and Effective Army*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000, pp. 73–5.

be some consensus that the ADF was lucky it did not have to face a more heavily armed or determined enemy.¹³³

‘Readiness’ also relates to the physical limits of capability. However, it is a separate issue because some instruments may have appropriate physical characteristics, but not be employable immediately. This limitation is especially apparent with military forces. While the ADF showed itself to be a flexible instrument, different elements within the force required a considerable lead-time to prepare for missions. This need complicated the relationship between DFAT and Defence in early 1999 because military preparations ran against the preferred policy position that Indonesia was trusted to maintain security.¹³⁴

Readiness limitations are also apparent with aid instruments. For example, AusAID did not fund NGOs to maintain capabilities in 1999—they only provided funding in return for service when the crisis broke. As a result, it often took valuable time to bring NGO relief capabilities to a state where they could be deployed, while it also took time to negotiate the terms of AusAID support.¹³⁵

Observations about policy instruments

This discussion of the Policy Instruments phase shows a significant degree of continuity with the examples presented in Part I, and the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking. Two factors may explain this continuity. The first is the way many national security crises are perceived in terms of military threats. As a result, there is a strong and consistent role for DFAT and Defence. This view could change as more concerns are considered first-order national security issues—such as protection from non-physical threats and recovery from terrorist attacks (‘consequence management’)—and a closer link is created between governance and security. The second factor, which was discussed in relation to changing structures in Chapter 3, is the contingent nature of crisis. Again, while every crisis has the common feature of marking a potential transformation in a relationship, the points of friction within those relationships are likely to be at least subtly different every time.

¹³³ A Ryan, p. 76.

¹³⁴ Interviews with Chris Barrie, Paul Barratt and Hugh White.

¹³⁵ Interview with Scott Dawson, who also noted that AusAID now funds some NGOs to maintain emergency relief capabilities at high readiness.

As no two crises will be exactly the same, the Australian Government maintains a range of instruments to achieve national security goals. Indeed, the use of many different departments and agencies, and the attempt to coordinate their activities, makes East Timor an example of a modern, whole-of-government approach to crisis.¹³⁶ In this case, the front-line instruments went beyond the traditional diplomatic and economic means to include the technical expertise of the AEC (and later Customs), and the authority of the AFP. It was also notable that one of the main instruments, the ADF, only provided background intelligence, logistic support, and a role in the diplomatic effort until the crisis became acute. Another interesting factor was the way commercial assets were integrated into the response, albeit in a limited way and only after significant policy effort. This adds another dimension to the understanding of the means available to pursue national objectives.

Of course, just because a government has a viable instrument does not mean that instrument should be used. For example, economic sanctions might have forced the Indonesian Government to accept a peacekeeping force before the ballot. However, there was real potential for sanctions to create negative economic and political consequences for Australia. Officials need to identify the chances of negative consequences when they develop options to recommend to government.

In other cases, governments may need to accept limitations imposed by other sovereign governments to maintain the ability to work on issues. In this case, Indonesia's limitations on which NGOs could or could not work in East Timor may have been objectionable, but acceptance was the price of providing other forms of Australian assistance. In situations such as this, governments might need to use other instruments as levers to remove or reduce those restrictions.

The practical limitations on instruments also mean that policymakers must consult closely with operators and specialist advisers when options are being developed. This is especially important where there is a difference between what an instrument can do in theory, and what it can do when factors such as survivability, readiness, sustainability and reach are considered. A case should be made for

¹³⁶ The Bougainville operation of 1997 pre-dates Timor and provides some portent of the way policy instruments could be used together, although it was on a smaller scale and few instruments were marshalled.

including Treasury on key committees, such as the SPCG, and of including the Secretary of Treasury on NSCC. Such representation would ensure that important policy instruments are included in national planning at the earliest possible time.

This chapter reviewed the first three phases of the policy cycle, and found significant continuity with the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking. The next chapter examines how the Consultation and Coordination phases bring advice together to ensure that policy is comprehensive and acceptable.

BRINGING POLICY ADVICE TOGETHER

While advice may be well-developed by this stage of the cycle, policymakers generally see advantage in exposing that advice to others before seeking decisions. Chapter 6 examines how international and domestic audiences are brought into the policy cycle through consultation, and other internal government actors through coordination. This chapter follows the format used in Chapter 5, and tests the characteristics developed in Part I against the case of East Timor. Once again, each section is drawn together by a short observation covering the main points about that phase in lieu of a conclusion for the chapter.

Consultation

The Consultation phase involves testing policy with audiences outside the originating policymaking department. For Bridgman and Davis, consultation responds to democratic pressure because people ‘want a say between elections’.¹ Consultation is expected to increase public involvement and, in turn, increase policy legitimacy.

Crises, including East Timor, are somewhat different because there are few instances of discussions between the government and domestic parties. This is because the information needed for consultation, such as Cabinet submissions and decisions, committee minutes and agenda papers, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) cables and defence planning documents are carefully guarded secrets and only released after a considerable period of time has elapsed. This often makes any genuine consultation (beyond information) very difficult because the public do not have sufficient data to develop informed positions. In the East Timor case, discussions between Australian politicians and officials and the US Government and armed forces, leaders and departments of the United Nations, neighbours such as New Zealand and the Southeast Asian states, and even Timorese leaders, were numerous and influential in the policymaking process.

¹ P Bridgman and G Davis, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004, p. 78.

However, it is still possible to identify a number of consultative measures that the Australian Government takes in crises. The characteristics of this consultation were proposed in Part I as:

- All options are used with overseas interlocutors (who are primarily other governments and major international organisations) with information, discussion, partnership and delegation commonly occurring.
- Consultation between the government and the public usually takes the form of a one-way passage of information.
- Much consultation occurs in secret.

This section outlines the details of Australian Government consultation during the East Timor crisis, and places each effort alongside a modified version of the Bridgman and Davis consultation continuum (see Figure 3 in Chapter 1). This continuum shows both the intent of consultation and the degree of freedom that each party has afterwards. This has especially important implications in crisis policymaking, as the increasing depth of consultation with external actors tends to constrain the options available to government. In this sense, governments can actually forego flexibility in decision-making as they increase their interaction with external parties.

Consultation with international actors

The Australian Government consulted a range of parties in 1998–99, with different entities being important at different stages. Early in the crisis, most consultation was conducted with the Indonesian Government, East Timorese leaders and Portugal. In all three cases, the Australian Government was operating at the ‘discussion’ point along the Bridgman and Davis continuum—there was an attempt to identify the positions of the various parties and convince them to change their policy preferences. Australia adopted a similar position with other major actors early in 1999, particularly those who might provide support to the popular consultation and future nation-building operation in East Timor. This position moved further to the right on the continuum as the crisis became acute, before reaching ‘delegation’ and ‘control’ as the international community decided on action to restore stability. This

section explores how the modes of Australian consultation changed during 1999, before moving to consultation during the period of acute crisis.

Prior to September 1999, Australia's consultation with Indonesia was aimed at firstly determining the attitudes of the key Indonesian actors—such as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, the military and the new president—and then towards convincing the Indonesians to uphold their agreement to maintain security during the popular consultation. These discussions were conducted by Australia's embassy in Jakarta, and included a number of visits by Foreign Minister Downer and meetings with Indonesian leaders. Other ministers, including Defence Minister John Moore and Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer, also engaged Indonesian leaders and sought to exchange opinions on the situation.² The main thrust of these discussions went towards convincing the Indonesian Government to undertake a more meaningful dialogue with East Timorese leaders.³

After the Howard Letter was leaked and the Indonesian Cabinet decided to conduct the ballot, Australian consultation was mainly about security in East Timor. This ran on two tracks. The first concerned convincing the Indonesian Government to accept their responsibility for security in East Timor, while the second involved occasional attempts to get the Indonesians to agree to accept a peacekeeping presence for the ballot. This second track culminated with the 'Bali Summit' between Prime Minister Howard and President Habibie on 27 April 1999. This meeting, which occurred during the period where the Indonesian Government was considering the final tripartite agreement, marked the last time Australia pressed for peacekeepers before the consultation.⁴ After this, the main theme of Australia's formal and informal representations switched to reminding the Indonesians of their commitment to maintain security.⁵

² Interviews with Tim Fischer and John Moore. These exchanges included a round of formal ministerial discussion on 24–25 February 1999.

³ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998–2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, p. 25–6.

⁴ See Chapter 4, footnote 54.

⁵ D Goldsworthy, 'East Timor,' in Goldsworthy and P Edwards (eds), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003, p. 232–3; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, pp. 98–99 and pp. 109–111.

While DFAT's efforts to consult with Indonesia were covered in the Policy Instruments phase (see Chapter 5), there were also informal and 'off-line' consultations throughout the crisis. These contacts provided an advantage in this sensitive situation, largely because they could be explained as second-tier or unofficial.⁶ The Australian Federal Police (AFP) had good relations with Indonesia's police, and they were able to use these links effectively in 1999 and in later situations.⁷ Significant discussion at the military-to-military level also occurred. These included a formal seminar about civil-military relations in March 1999, which allowed the apolitical Australian military to discuss the role of military organisations in democracies with their Indonesian counterparts. Informal contacts were also important. One interviewee recalled one such exchange with high-ranking Indonesian officers in 1998:

There was always that issue of Australia's apparent support for the freedom of East Timor and agitation was going on in Australia at the time. We talked about it, typically off line. They were concerned that we had a predilection for supporting various groups ...⁸

These military-to-military discussions became sharp at one point, when a senior military leader and Defence official were dispatched to Jakarta to provide their counterparts with evidence of Indonesian military complicity with the East Timorese militias.⁹ Consultation like this provided ways to pass diplomatic messages, and to effect important coordination.

DFAT also met with East Timorese leaders from mid-1998. These included visits by Ambassador John McCarthy to the province during 12–16 June, informal consultations about the future of East Timor from June 1998 and financial support to intra-Timorese reconciliation.¹⁰ Other contacts between senior Australians and influential Timorese also occurred, such as the meeting between Downer and Bishop

⁶ For example, note the representations by Downer to the Indonesian Government, as recorded in Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 109 and p. 114.

⁷ Interview with Adrien Whiddett.

⁸ Interview with 046-06.

⁹ This meeting was discussed above in Chapter 4.

¹⁰ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, pp. 20–3, pp. 26–9 and pp. 101–102.

Bello in Melbourne in February 1999.¹¹ These discussions were, on one level, simply attempts to gauge the opinion of potentially influential people. However, the manner in which the consultation occurred, and the central proposition expressed to Xanana Gusmão during this time¹², indicated that Australian consultation was designed to shape East Timorese opinion toward a more moderate and unified position that would (unsurprisingly) accord with Australia's preferred policy position—acceptance of Indonesia's autonomy offer before undertaking a long transition to independence.

Portuguese leaders were also consulted in an attempt to persuade them towards Australia's views. As the former colonial power, Portugal was a member of the UN-sponsored Tripartite Talks, and a *de facto* representative of East Timorese opinion. On one occasion in early 1998, Downer rebuffed the demand for an immediate recognition of East Timorese independence by Portuguese Foreign Minister Jamie Gama. Instead, Downer argued for a staged process, citing the examples of other peace processes in the region.¹³ Further meetings were held between the foreign ministers, with the aim being to coordinate the two nation's positions on East Timor. During a meeting on 27 February 1999, Downer stressed the need to convince the East Timorese to support the process, clearly hoping the Portuguese would use their influence toward this end.¹⁴

The Australian Government also consulted intensively with the United Nations, especially with those officials responsible for organising the popular consultation. These consultations included the March 1999 discussions with Francesc Vendrell's UN assessment team. While this meeting was an exchange of views at one level, the Australian delegation took it as an opportunity to influence the United Nations views on East Timor and Indonesia. Australia–United Nations consultation

¹¹ Bishop Carlos Bello, a Nobel Laureate, was the Catholic Bishop for Dili in 1998–99. Interview with 064-07 recalls that Bishop Bello accurately predicted the result of the popular consultation at that early stage.

¹² In 1998, Xanana Gusmão was an imprisoned but influential East Timorese resistance leader. He later became independent East Timor's first President. Australia's ambassador to Jakarta had 'regular contact' with Gusmão in 1998, and this helped the Australian Government to obtain a clearer picture of Gusmão's views (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 27).

¹³ G Hunt, 'Timor peace plan more palatable after dinner', *Australian*, 14 January 1999, p. 1.

¹⁴ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 46–7. See also Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 233 who cites NAA, A9737, 92/051651, Cablegram O.PA6346, Paris to Canberra, 2 March 1999 for detail of this discussion.

continued throughout 1999, with frequent visits to UN Headquarters by a DFAT–Defence team and a series of policy ‘non-papers’. These ‘non-papers’ were provided to the United Nations for use in their own processes:

... non-papers ... did not have a heading or footer, and no title. They were pages of information, advice and policy options that were consistent with Australia’s interests that he [Brigadier Smith] would send off to New York. They would often come back as a UN document ... That was one way we were able to walk that line of not being formally involved but still influencing heavily ...¹⁵

These were all common techniques within the UN system to help talks progress without implying commitment¹⁶, and were clearly useful in a situation where considerable sensitivity was required during consultation.

Contact between Australia and the UN Department of Peace Keeping Operations (DPKO) and Department of Political Affairs (DPA) had very subtle and sensitive aims. Significant work was done to convince these departments to use Darwin (rather than Denpasar in Bali) as the key logistic base for UNAMET (the United Nations Mission in East Timor)—a decision that proved beneficial when the peacekeeping force was subsequently required.¹⁷ It was clear to Australian policymakers that the DPKO did not have the staff to conduct detailed appreciations of the situation or design the necessary force for an operation. In addition, the DPKO was operating in an uncertain environment where pre-emptive contingency planning for a peacekeeping force, in the absence of an assured mandate, created diplomatic challenges with no assurances of troop commitments. In order to reduce this problem, Australia sent a group of defence planners to assist the understrength Military Planning Staff at DPKO in September 1999 to design a potential structure for a follow-on peacekeeping force, so they could gauge potential troop contributions from member states. This cooperation was not only about consultation; it was also done to ensure that Australia did not maintain the lead in East Timor for longer than necessary.¹⁸

¹⁵ Interview with Matthew Skoien.

¹⁶ A Alatas, *The Pebble in the Shoe: The Diplomatic Struggle for East Timor*, Aksara Karunia, Jakarta, 2006, p. 113.

¹⁷ Interview 007-05.

¹⁸ Interviews with 007-05 and 062-07.

AusAID also tried to engage the DPA (and the US State Department) to discuss post-ballot structures for governance around mid-1999, possible international contributions, and Australia's role in that contribution. However, the discussions lacked the specificity of detailed planning and were constrained by the inability to prejudge the outcome. As a result, AusAID 'spent a fair bit of time around those sort of issues—not all of which were very productive at the end of the day'.¹⁹ These discussions with the United Nations were more than attempts to convince; they began to take on characteristics of partnership as UNAMET was launched and the popular consultation drew closer.

Australia also conducted discussions with other potential partners. In the case of New Zealand, the main aim was to maintain their interest in supporting Australia with forces at a later date. The purpose of these discussions was to create a sense of partnership, because the New Zealanders were considered valuable coalition partners due to their willingness to engage in offensive military operations under a UN mandate.²⁰

The most important line of consultation, from both the Australian Government and Australian Defence Force (ADF) point of view, was occurring with the United States. Formal consultation started early in 1999 with an exchange of views between DFAT's Secretary, Dr Ashton Calvert, and Stanley Roth of the US State Department. This meeting, the contents of which were leaked in 1999, provides an insight into the aims of Australian consultation at this time, and the differences in American and Australian views about the likelihood of the need to conduct a peacekeeping mission and the utility of different options to influence the situation.²¹ The similarities in policy positions were still strong, however, especially on key points such as alerting the Indonesians to their security responsibilities and their assessment of Habibie's 'unreal' deadline.²² Occurring early in the crisis, this conversation shows how the Australian Government was clearly moving towards the 'partnership' point of the

¹⁹ Interview with Scott Dawson.

²⁰ Interview with Allan Behm.

²¹ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Calvert Roth Meeting, February 1999', copy in author's possession, paragraphs 10–12. The divergence is somewhat ambiguous in this account of the conversation as Dr Calvert and Mr Roth were discussing the same hypothetical situation in different timeframes.

²² Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Calvert Roth Meeting', paragraphs 7–9.

Bridgman and Davis continuum as it sought to influence the US Government to develop a position that was complementary to Australia's view.

Consultation between Australian ministers and officials and their US counterparts continued throughout the year. This consultation was complicated because different parts of the US Government held different views on the how the United States would act if the situation in East Timor required intervention. One interviewee provided an insight into how Washington—meaning the US Departments of State and Defense—were thinking at the time:

I had the opportunity to host John Hamre, who was the Deputy Secretary [of Defense] and he gave an insight into how [the United States viewed the East Timor situation]. I would say that we viewed this very reluctantly. If you look at that period there we are talking about, 1999, we had come out of Desert Storm and we were still doing no-fly zones in Iraq. We'd done Bosnia-Herzegovina and Kosovo ... So Hamre said, quite frankly, we were tired by this time in the decade and the Clinton Administration was [tired] too. It became apparent to me, as we were getting pressure to reduce the numbers involved that the policymakers and senior leadership were very reluctant to get involved in the effort.²³

Despite this indicator, the key US military arm in the Pacific, USPACOM, continued to conduct contingency planning for a large involvement in East Timor.²⁴ For some in Australia, this gave the impression of there being two US positions—one of wholehearted support in Hawaii, and the other of significant reluctance in Washington. This difference was noted by senior ministers and it became the subject of media speculation after mid-year leaks.²⁵ However, others took USPACOM's activities in a different context:

It was pretended, in terms of some of the media commentary, they [the United States] were ready to do peacekeeping ... and with just a bit of extra urging

²³ Interview with John Castellaw. This view was consistent with that expressed by Earl Hailston and a number of Australians including Chris Barrie and Bob Treloar. See also Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 234–5.

²⁴ Interviews with Earl Hailston, John Castellaw, Bob Treloar and Ashton Calvert. The contingencies considered at this time by USPACOM ranged from low-level evacuations up to a multinational peacekeeping intervention—the figure of 15 000 US troops was mentioned in the Australian Parliament (Mr S Martin, MP, House of Representatives, *Votes and Proceedings*, vol. 55, 11 August 1999, p. 8419).

²⁵ Interview with John Moore. For examples of how the media portrayed this difference, see P Daley, 'Timor: We Snub Offer To Send In The Marines', *Sunday Age*, 1 August 1999, p. 1; and P Daley, 'Rift Denied With US Over Timor', *Age*, 3 August 1999, p. 3. D Greenlees and R Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002, pp. 240–8, describe the reluctance of influential leaders in Congress to commit troops.

[the Australian Government] would have gotten them there. My understanding was this was not the case. They [USPACOM] certainly had no authority from Washington for peacekeeping. What they were doing was doing military contingency planning for one or both of those scenarios.²⁶

Consultation can be politically dangerous when confidential information is leaked. In this case, the revelations contained in the Australian press were politically embarrassing because they created the perception of difference between the US Government's position and USPACOM.²⁷ Leaks also made future consultation harder, as governments tend to reduce the number of people who know about the policy and launch internal investigations to find culprits. Senior officials generally try to pre-empt compromises by 'compartmentalising' planning so that very few people know the complete details of a planned policy or operation. However, this only serves to create further problems:

But [the leaks about USPACOM planning] caused some grief and severe compartmentalisation of our planning processes. Compartmentalisation is an anathema to good planning and preparedness of the troops. It undermines confidence ... and morale ...²⁸

The discussions between Australian and USPACOM staff were conducted through liaison officers, videoconferences and visits. These exchanges had a number of aims including comparing each party's understanding of the situation, reviewing the type of contingencies that might arise, and outlining possible military options. The power of this consultation at the operational level was built on very strong bonds between senior USPACOM officers and their ADF counterparts, and resulted in a close and shared understanding between the two organisations by the middle of 1999.²⁹ One interviewee expressed the relationship this way:

We understood completely how the Australian Army operated, and they understood how we operated. We trained together, planned together, played together ... We were friends and we enjoyed working with each other. We had a shared view of how planning and operations were conducted. I think you are

²⁶ Interview with Ashton Calvert.

²⁷ Recall the article cited early by Daley, 'Timor: We Snub Offer', which broke this story. This report drew a denial from Foreign Minister Downer (S Aylmer, 'Timor: Downer Says There's No Rift With US', *Australian Financial Review*, 2 August 1999, p. 7). Give the absence of access to US planning documents, it is difficult to determine whether an actual difference between Washington and PACOM existed.

²⁸ Interview Bob Treloar.

²⁹ Interviews with Bob Treloar, Allan Behm and John Castellaw.

looking at one of the very, very few situations where US forces were willing to subordinate themselves to another country's military leadership.³⁰

However, consultation across the political and military levels was not always so easy to manage despite the alliance and a high degree of familiarity among many of the key leaders. The size and complexity of the US Government seemed to be one contributing factor. For one interviewee, this crisis exposed a lack of understanding of among Australian officials of the US political system. While the relationships were strong, particularly with US PACOM and the US intelligence community, there was a lack of understanding about how Washington worked—particularly the US Department of Defense.³¹

Other factors complicated Australia–US consultation too. Wilkinson reports the difference of opinion about the Indonesian military's capacity to maintain security throughout the ballot, and Australia's reluctance to provide the United States with intelligence due to a need to protect 'sensitive Australian intelligence sources'.³² So while there was clearly some level of misunderstanding between the Australians and their US counterparts, the work done throughout 1999 still resulted in a high degree of cooperation between Defence and USPACOM in particular. This work was to prove beneficial once the crisis became acute in September 1999.

As the situation in East Timor grew into a violent crisis, Australia's consultation—often led by Prime Minister Howard—aimed to secure international support for an intervention force with an appropriate mandate.³³ The trend for consultation was clearly now towards 'partnership', although it could be argued that Australian consultation had become 'delegation' as the UN Security Council's decision became crucial to Australian policy in mid-September.³⁴

³⁰ Interview with John Castellaw. He was referring to Major General Peter Cosgrove, then Commander of the 1st Australian Division and future commander INTERFET, and Colonel Mark Kelly, Cosgrove's Chief of Staff.

³¹ Interview with 051-06.

³² M Wilkinson, 'Why we kept Timor secrets from the US', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 13 August 1999, p. 1. The view of separation between Australia and the United States was taken up in Parliament by opposition member Mr L Brereton and challenged by Foreign Minister Downer (*Sydney Morning Herald*, 'What force in East Timor', 11 August 1999, p. 14).

³³ J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 121.

³⁴ Figure 3, 'The Consultation Continuum' (p. 47) defines these forms of consultation.

The Australian Government continued to make use of its good relations with key UN bodies as the crisis developed. John Howard was in direct contact with Kofi Annan, which was crucial because the aim of Australian diplomacy at the time was to create support for a robust Chapter VII mandate. It is easy to forget that such a mandate was not assured, even after significant international opinion came to favor intervention. One interviewee talked about the importance of continuing to consult with UN members, such as the Russians, who may have vetoed any UN operation.³⁵ At this point, Australia's consultation almost became 'delegation' as the government refused to be part of a peacekeeping force without a UN mandate, clear US support and Indonesian permission.³⁶

Given these conditions, and the rising public support for intervention described in Chapter 5, it is possible to see a situation where the desire for consultation could have unhinged Australia's preferred policy line during the acute crisis. For instance, if a permanent member exercised their veto against the Chapter VII mandate, Australia (and others in the international community) would have needed another mechanism to legitimise any operation into East Timor. Of course, that did not happen and, given the support of all permanent members, this scenario was most unlikely.

The form of US support was only assured after a series of meetings between Australian and US officials from 6–9 September. These meetings included at least two video conferences which discussed the detailed concept for the operation and the likely US contribution.³⁷ While there was clear political support for ending the violence (the president and a number of senior officials made direct approaches to their Indonesian counterparts during this time)³⁸, the United States was unwilling to

³⁵ Interview with Michael Scrafton. In the end, the Russian Federation indicated a willingness to 'expeditiously consider additional measures to resolve the situation in East Timor.' (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition*, p. 252).

³⁶ These conditions (or close variations) were described in numerous public statements, including Defence Public Affairs, 'Transcript, Hon. John Moore, MP & Hon. Alexander Downer', Commonwealth Offices, Melbourne, 6 September 1999, available <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au>, accessed 12 December 2007; Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor*, p. 133; and Interview with Chris Barrie.

³⁷ Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 248–9.

³⁸ These approaches are outlined in Greenlees and Garran, pp. 240–8, and included calls by Secretary of State Madeline Albright, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs and General Henry Shelton. Commander USPACOM Admiral Denis Blair also made a short and reputedly pointed visit to General Wiranto on 8 September. President

commit combat troops to the mission unless the situation turned dramatically worse.³⁹ This surprised ministers who thought they knew US leaders well and thought they understood the Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS):

... I spoke to Bill Cohen, who I knew before ... The answer from Cohen was 'it is your baby'. I said that you need to help—it's part of ANZUS. But he said it is all yours. I asked what he would do, and he said he'll have to think about it. He said they would give us intelligence, and he would get back to us. But he said precisely, 'no troops' ...⁴⁰

This sparked further consultative efforts on multiple fronts:

When I spoke to Howard about the fact that we were getting absolutely nowhere with Cohen on the matter, I said I was astonished. He said that APEC [the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation meeting] is on in Auckland, and I'll speak to Clinton. Downer went off to New York, and he was going to chase around there. Nothing came of that. When Howard spoke to Clinton, Clinton said he would have to do something for us. So I rang Cohen again and Cohen rang back. He said he'd come out to Australia to meet me in Cairns ...⁴¹

The importance of obtaining support for INTERFET from Southeast Asian nations was quickly understood, and Australia used a range of methods to ensure such consultation occurred quickly. The 9–12 September APEC meeting in Auckland was critical to this effort, as it brought many key regional leaders together. But as the earlier discussion of Air Marshal Riding's regional tour in September shows, not all consultation was successful to the extent initially envisaged. In Malaysia's case, early discussions with Australian diplomats indicated that a significant leadership role and a sizable troop contribution would be forthcoming.⁴² Malaysia's ultimate decision not to participate provides an example of where domestic political issues and concern for

Clinton made a number of approaches to President Habibie, including the direct call for Indonesia to accept a peacekeeping force on 10 September (Associated Press, 'U.S. Suspends Military Relations with Indonesia', *The Augusta Chronicle*, 10 September 1999, p. A09).

³⁹ Interview with John Castellaw. John Moore recalled how he asked Cohen for an assurance that US troops would provide additional support if the situation became 'murky', which the US Defense secretary agreed to do. Goldsworthy claims the US decision not to deploy combat troops on the ground with INTERFET was made clear to the Australians on 9 September ('East Timor', p. 249).

⁴⁰ Interview with John Moore.

⁴¹ Interview with John Moore.

⁴² Some have also pointed to the importance placed in not 'offending' Indonesia and to the Association of Southeast Asian state's (ASEAN) doctrine of 'non-interference' (Interview with Ashton Calvert, and A Ryan, *Primary responsibilities and primary risks: Australian Defence Force participation in the International Force East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2000, p. 41).

international relationships intrude on consultation.⁴³ Other ASEAN nations also needed to balance competing concerns. Singapore's decision calculus included local sensitivities about sending conscripts overseas, and a desire to avoid offending Indonesia or Australia.⁴⁴ The Philippines Government were concerned for the danger to their Catholic neighbours, but also wanted to maintain a good relationship with Indonesia. This led to the dispatch of a 'humanitarian task force' from the Armed Forces of the Philippines to East Timor, and a medical team to West Timor.⁴⁵ That twenty-two nations eventually joined the coalition speaks for a significant success of this consultation, even if it did not achieve exactly what might have been hoped for.

Consultation continued with Indonesia, with the aim of establishing the modalities for deconflicting INTERFET and TNI operation in Dili:

We wanted to de-conflict their operations, so we had three days of talks [at the United Nations in New York] to manage the matter in great detail. It also gave them a sense of partnership, and might have even helped in the long run. We never talked about it publicly, and it never came up.⁴⁶

On the aid front, consultation moved quickly once the humanitarian task became clear and the need to create a new government from scratch was known. In this case, AusAID was able to provide immediate assistance and create an interim development strategy. Their work before the popular consultation provided a springboard for this. Established links with the United Nations and United States also helped, even though new players from these organisations entered the scene.⁴⁷

Domestic consultation

Consultation on national security policy is not unknown in Australia. As Chapter 1 explained, the government conducted consultation during the process for developing the 2000 Defence White Paper. More recently, a reference group was formed to improve communication with Australia's Muslim community, while the

⁴³ It is hard to separate this outcome from other factors, such as the poisonous relationship between then-Prime Minister Mahathir and Australia and concern over command and funding arrangements (Interviews with 051-06 and 046-06. See also A Ryan, pp. 40-2 and Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 251)

⁴⁴ Interviews with 051-06 and 046-06; and Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', pp. 251-2.

⁴⁵ Goldsworthy, 'East Timor', p. 252.

⁴⁶ Interview with Martin Brady. Interview 007-05 also recounted the importance of these talks, and of the important work done by Australia's mission to the UN during the crisis.

⁴⁷ Interview with Scott Dawson.

Trusted Information Sharing Network provides a useful link between government and business in the field of information infrastructure security. However, no comparable forums existed in 1999 where the government could consult with the community about the East Timor crisis.

At best, there were two indirect methods of consultation. The first, which has been mentioned earlier and will be taken up again in Chapter 7, was Parliament's Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee enquiry into East Timor.⁴⁸ This committee heard testimony from many individuals, community groups and officials during its hearings, and these provided a broad picture of what the Australian community thought about the situation in East Timor. Furthermore, the government had access to polling data about the crisis at frequent intervals.⁴⁹ However, because neither constitutes a solicitation of opinion by the executive, or discussions before decisions are taken, they cannot be considered consultation in the sense proposed by Bridgman and Davis.

While falling well short of the consultation efforts made in 1941–42 (see Chapter 2), the government still provided information directly to the opposition about their policy on East Timor. This contact followed convention where the government seeks to create a bipartisan view of policy by discussing major commitments, such as the deployment of troops, with the opposition. This may also extend to allowing opposition leaders to read intelligence reports and receive briefings from officials. However, these briefings took the form of one-way discussions according to then-opposition leader, Kim Beazley:

The opposition is not consulted on national security. The opposition is often quite intensively briefed, but we are not seen as part of the decision-making process. On some occasions, such as when it is necessary for us to facilitate a piece of legislation [through Parliament] you get engaged, but that's up to the prime minister ... [with regard to East Timor specifically] ... I was briefed occasionally [as opposition leader], but our defence and foreign affairs

⁴⁸ Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Final Report into the Inquiry into East Timor*, 2000.

⁴⁹ Newspoll conducted a survey on 12 September that asked voters directly about the government's handling of the crisis (<http://www.newspoll.com.au>, accessed 26 August 2006). Roy Morgan Research also asked voters about their perceptions of the government and the opposition three times during September–October 1999, and made comment on voter's positive views of how the prime minister was handling the crisis ('Labor Stretches Two-Party Preferred Lead As Troops Go In To East Timor', Finding No. 3240, 12 October 1999, available <http://www.roymorgan.com>, accessed 26 August 2006).

spokesmen were briefed all the time. Very regularly. It was much more intense than now ...⁵⁰

Despite this, the opposition was given advance notice of the major deployments, such as the commitment of UNTAET and INTERFET, but not other major initiatives, such as the Howard Letter. Beazley's final remark shows that this convention may not be applied consistently, or at least applied as consistently as the alternative government might like.

Secrecy and consultation

The principle of strict secrecy was applied in this crisis, although, as the comments above about leaks showed, it was not always maintained. Despite these breaches, four main reasons for maintaining secrecy can be identified in this case. The first involves protecting a policy position while it is being developed. The Howard Letter was a good example of how well secrecy could be applied, and how secrecy can prevent an initiative from being pre-empted by other parties or derailed by opponents. A second, related reason is to allow one side to make preparations for an activity without alerting possible opponents or the public. This helps to maintain the element of surprise; it may also allow the government to act without scrutiny during sensitive activities. A third reason for secrecy involves protecting confidences; this is why the Calvert–Roth cable was classified, and why its leaking embarrassed the government. Lastly, secrecy helps protect intelligence sources and methods.⁵¹ This need explains why Air Marshal Riding's mission to Jakarta in June 1999 was very risky, for it involved an admission that Australian intelligence had access to sensitive Indonesian information.⁵²

These advantages allow governments to feel justified about maintaining secrecy in crises. However, it may be more difficult to maintain secrecy in the future. While measures can be taken to avoid leaks, these are not foolproof and come at a cost for efficiency and internal cohesion. More importantly, the public's increasing

⁵⁰ Interview with Kim Beazley.

⁵¹ For instances where information about intelligence activities came into the public domain, see P Daley, 'Spy effort stepped up in Timor', *Age*, 20 March 1999, p. 5; P Daley, 'Armed with information, now what?', *Age*, 29 May 1999, p.4; and I Hunter, 'Elite forces scouted island from April', *Sydney Morning Herald*, 11 October 1999, p. 11.

⁵² Greenlees and Garran, pp. 166–8.

access to information, analysis and opinion is likely to place pressure on the government's narrative in a future crisis. While some activists and the media tried to produce a different story to promote immediate intervention during the acute crisis, the Australian Government was not forced to act and the public remained overwhelmingly satisfied with the government's actions in September 1999.⁵³

Observations about consultation

This examination of the Consultation phase presents strong evidence to support the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking and shows continuity with the past. However, some characteristics may change in the future as the public gains access to more information and provides instant feedback through polls.

In this case, consultation efforts did not involve the government engaging the public in any real way. Instead, the main consultation was between the Australian Government and foreign entities, especially the governments of the United States, Indonesia, Portugal and New Zealand; and non-government agencies including the United Nations and East Timorese leaders. Most of this consultation took place in the space between information and partnership on the Bridgman and Davis continuum. The Australian Government used this space to obtain views about policy options (generally in terms of others' aims and positions), convince others of the merits of the Australian case and develop aligned positions with important actors.

Interaction with specific entities later in the crisis showed consultation in the form of delegation, verging on control. In this case, the Australian Government was only willing to act decisively to stabilise East Timor if their desired conditions for intervention were met by Indonesia, the United Nations and others. This movement along the consultation continuum showed the real limits of the Australian Government's agency in this crisis, and demonstrated the importance of creating space for future activity through constant attention to relationship building. Space was

⁵³ For examples of media encouragement, see P Kelly, 'From the Lips of Prime Ministers: Diplomacy at the Crossroads', *Australian*, 15 September 1999, p. 13; and A Bolt, 'Don't Expect Praise', *Herald Sun* (Melbourne), 16 September 1999, p. 18. Of course, critics also assailed the government for its handling of the crisis (for example, see G Sheridan, 'The Burden is Here to Stay', *Australian*, 17 September 1999, p. 15). For the public's reaction, as judged in Newspoll's 12 September 1999 questions shows opinions evenly split between support for the government's actions and opinion that the government was not doing enough (see <http://www.newspoll.com.au>, accessed 26 September 2006).

needed because the Australian Government was unwilling to create a deeper conflict with Indonesia by pressing ahead unilaterally. It therefore had to rely on bringing others to a similar way of thinking about the problem, which meant providing support for an intervention while satisfying a domestic public that was calling for action to stop the violence. While there was a clear and timely coincidence of agreement in the international community about what needed to be done in East Timor, developing the intervention force still required significant consultation and persuasion. The Australian Government's ability to do both was assisted by the violence and the pattern of diplomatic contact that had been developed over the previous year—and indeed, in previous years.

Bridgman and Davis consider consultation as intrinsically good for policy development because it increases policy legitimacy and acceptance, and this case provides examples where consultation was beneficial to Australia. It is clear, for instance, that consultation reduces friction in policymaking because it allows the government to understand the policy positions of others and provide opportunities to devise strategies to overcome possible friction. For example, the limited consultation between the government and the opposition served to build sufficient consensus for the government's action without letting the opposition share the credit for the decisions. While this consultation may only come late in the crisis or appear perfunctory, it remains an important step for winning bipartisan support, especially for military action, in a crisis. The value of consulting with international leaders was also shown in this crisis. Even though the consultation undertaken at APEC in Auckland imposed a short delay in the process, it was clearly worth using this opportunity to gain international support for intervention.

The Howard Letter shows the risk when consultation is not undertaken. After the government's new policy position became known, wider and more focused consultation began with a broader range of actors. Since some actors held opinions that differed from Australia's, the government found that it needed to do significant work to close the gaps in views (notably with the United States over the likely outcomes and the applicability of the ANZUS Treaty) as the pressure to act increased throughout the year.

Regardless of the potential for gains and cost avoidance, consultation is not automatically beneficial in crises because it can actually decrease the chances of

success. Firstly, consultation increases the time it takes to make a decision by increasing the number of actors involved, potentially allowing other parties to take the initiative or resulting in missed opportunities. Consultation also gives opponents time to take pre-emptive action or marshal opinion against a policy. This desire to limit the potential for damaging criticism or debate was one reason why knowledge of the Howard Letter was confined to a very small group and not shared with allies. Lastly, consultation also increases the chances of allowing other parties to know one's intentions. Thus the compromise of policy intentions during consultation can jeopardise surprise and reduce trust among potential partners. These reasons provide support for anticipating a continued role for the characteristic of secrecy in crisis policymaking.

Does this mean the public is more likely to be consulted beyond the current level of information in a crisis? While formal consultation remains unlikely, the proliferation of opinion polls through the Internet, television and conventional polling methods means that governments will be made constantly aware of the public's mood in any future crisis and may need to respond.

Coordination

The Coordination phase aims to achieve 'tolerable compatibility' across government activities in an attempt to minimise harmful inconsistencies. This phase is characterised by the way coordination is institutionalised through structures and routine processes.⁵⁴ However, there is more to coordination than this, and it is possible that other influences—often described as bureaucratic politics—can also interfere.

Two characteristics for the Coordination phase were identified in Part I:

- Governments will describe structures and routines that suit their particular preferences and best thinking for the time, the task at hand, and external factors.
- Coordination is basically competitive, but it shows increasing propensity for collegiality.

⁵⁴ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 93–7.

This section examines how the structures and routines described in Chapter 4 actually worked in this crisis, while pointing to the importance of informal practices that bind this system together. The thorny question of bureaucratic politics is then broached, for this case provides evidence to support a collegiate view of modern policymaking.

Structures and routines for coordination

Structure is often used to promote coordination where tasks are complex and require different types of specialised knowledge, or where conflicts of interest can occur.⁵⁵ In this case structural changes were made to clarify roles, to improve dialogue between departments and to meet the tangible challenges of this crisis. However, opinions about the role of central agencies—which Bridgman and Davis see as essential to coordination—and the effectiveness of those changes were varied. The role of political leadership in coordination is also underplayed and deserves separate consideration.

Early interdepartmental dialogue became formalised in a number of different ways by April 1999. Further to existing committees and forming new ones (such as Bill Paterson's group), departments extended standing invitations to others to attend internal planning meetings (such as Defence's East Timor Working Group and Strategic Command Group—SCG), and joint delegations travelled to places such as the United Nations and Washington. DFAT helped to tie these structural changes together by exercising a leading role in the period before INTERFET's deployment. This involved being the focal point for Cabinet submissions, leadership of a variety of interdepartmental delegations, raising a consular crisis centre with *ad hoc* staffing that provided information to a range of agencies, and retaining the chair of the Strategic Policy Coordination Group (SPCG).

The nature of the acute crisis in September tested these existing coordination structures and created the need for new ones. One of the main changes to interdepartmental coordination came as the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) began to operate on a daily basis, and the main coordinating role of the

⁵⁵ A Downs, *Inside Bureaucracy*, RAND/Little, Brown and Company, Boston, 1968, pp. 50–3.

SPCG passed to the Taylor Committee.⁵⁶ While it could be argued that such arrangements could have been put in place before the crisis, some interviewees remarked that it was either difficult to foresee some aspects of what happened (such as leading the international force), or that the need to create new bodies would not have arisen if the violence had not triggered a rapid international intervention.⁵⁷

Opinions varied on the effectiveness of the new arrangements, particularly the Taylor Committee. While the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet's (DPM&C) role in coordination was widely acknowledged, many also recognised that existing coordination mechanisms were not delivering as well as they should. But some close to the committee (but outside it) were sceptical about its role and effectiveness. Some commented that the Taylor Committee became too bureaucratic and inflexible, or that it existed on the fringe of the action.⁵⁸ Others did not consider *ad hoc* solutions suitable in any case:

... and it seemed to me that the establishment of this new mechanism under PM&C, to replace other mechanisms that I think were working satisfactorily, was a mistaken move and a move that was made more about bureaucratic politics than good advice to government.⁵⁹

I'm not so sure about the 'wrong output from the SPCG' line [as justifying the need for the Taylor Committee]: if you don't like the output, tell the SPCG to create the right output, rather than create another body ...⁶⁰

Other interviewees, often those closely involved in the committee, were more enthusiastic—perhaps because they had a different view of the committee's mandate:

The whole support to government stepped up eight or ten notches as a consequence of Allan's committee. A lot of it was due to having the function, and a lot was Allan's ability to manage it.⁶¹

The [Taylor] Committee ... kept the discipline if you like ... It wasn't a high-powered policymaking body, it was there to coordinate. To smooth the wheels.⁶²

⁵⁶ Interview 051-06 observed that the informal processes of SPCG made it unsuited to managing a crisis and noted broader concerns about the need to coordinate better at the official level. For background, see the section in Chapter 4 titled 'Acute crisis and response'.

⁵⁷ Interviews with Chris Barrie, 024-05 and 028-05.

⁵⁸ Interviews with Aldo Borgu, 009-05, Michael Scrafton and 032-05.

⁵⁹ Interview with Hugh White.

⁶⁰ Interview with Michael Keating.

⁶¹ Interview with Michael Scrafton.

... to some degree the creation of another committee was amusing at the time. But with hindsight, what we didn't realise at the time, was that we were learning. So when we found something wasn't working, we formed the Taylor Committee. It wasn't the case that we just stuck with something. We moved onto a different model ...⁶³

The Taylor Committee came after a very hectic year and an acute crisis. It was time to find a way to step back, draw a breath and find a way to develop some medium- and long-term policy options for the relationship with Indonesia.⁶⁴

The adoption of new methods to coordinate policy shows, as Aldo Borgu noted, that the government as a whole was learning as it went. The key officials learned quickly about the potential disconnects that could occur in the existing structures and the weaknesses in those mechanisms, so they made changes. In one interpretation, this shows that a highly adaptive mindset is necessary to keep the activities of a large number of agencies coordinated in a national security crisis. It also shows that practicing ministers and senior officials in crisis simulations may help them to learn before an event, and so reduce the chance of mid-crisis change. In another interpretation, decisions to form new bodies in the midst of a crisis can be simply part of an ongoing conflict where agencies jockey for power.

One prescription for avoiding conflict over responsibilities (or turf) is role clarity. A lack of role clarity, should it exist, can have consequences including conflict, nugatory work at lower levels, and work at 'cross purposes with people running different agendas'.⁶⁵ While some activities needed active de-confliction and demarcation, Australian government agencies seem to have possessed a reasonable idea about what they were required to do during this crisis. For example, the coordination role played by DPM&C was understood and not disputed, as was DFAT's leading role in the pre-crisis meetings with external actors and Cabinet submissions. This is not to claim that the division of responsibilities was always clear, and Alan Ryan thought 'the issue of how departmental responsibilities were divided was never fully resolved'.⁶⁶ However, some instances of where people are uncertain about processes or rules should be expected in any new situation.

⁶² Interview with 014-05.

⁶³ Interview with Aldo Borgu.

⁶⁴ Interview with Ashton Calvert.

⁶⁵ Interview Bob Treloar.

⁶⁶ A Ryan, p. 39.

Having a way to settle these disputes quickly, authoritatively and with minimal work is therefore essential to successful coordination. The method used in this crisis can best be likened to a series of courts. Small problems between departments, generally technical ones linked to different interpretations of policy or legislation, may get resolved at lower-level committees such as Bill Paterson's or in discussions between officials. If not solved here, problems would be elevated to more senior committees including the SPCG, the Taylor Committee and the Secretaries Committee on National Security (SCONS). The final court was the NSCC, but the ministers would be displeased if a matter reached them that could have been resolved at lower levels.⁶⁷

Agencies were very aware of their responsibilities, but still willing to cede some at different times. One example involved Defence conducting important diplomatic tasks instead of DFAT (as discussed in Chapter 5). Understanding what counterpart organisations actually do is another way of ameliorating conflict.⁶⁸ The less-formal interactions between DFAT and Strategic Operations staff mentioned by Michael Keating were attempts to promote this understanding.

Providing a forum to reconcile issues is another way of inducing role clarity and reducing the problem of turf battles. According to Interview 052-06, the SCONS played an important role as it allowed a 'fairly robust discussion' between the departmental secretaries. Issues that could not be resolved here would be referred to the ministers. All were aware that such a move would provide additional, unwelcome work for the minister that could be viewed as a failure on their part.

The role of the central agencies of DPM&C and Treasury is interesting because this case provides an important distinction between the view of coordination presented by Bridgman and Davis, and this particular instance of crisis policymaking. According to Bridgman and Davis, the central agencies 'work to resist fragmentation

⁶⁷ In his interview, Tim Fischer recounted the prime minister's intolerance towards 'protecting fiefdoms' and airing interdepartmental conflicts in NSCC.

⁶⁸ Interview with Adrien Whiddett.

by providing consistent rules and processes'.⁶⁹ Their view receives wide support in other literature, including work that ascribes a key role to the British Treasury.⁷⁰

This case provides partial support for the usual interpretation of the roles played by central agencies. On balance, DPM&C played its normal role throughout.⁷¹ It was involved in developing the broad direction for policy (such as its involvement in drafting the Howard Letter), while performing its usual tasks of advising the prime minister and guiding Cabinet business. DPM&C's main new intervention in the process—forming Bill Paterson's group—was also a fairly normal task. While no doubt useful, this committee played a relatively small part in coordination compared to others such as the SPCG (which included DPM&C representation), DFAT's East Timor Task Force and Defence's East Timor Working Group.⁷² This meant that DPM&C did not assume a leading position until the acute crisis. On the other hand, the other major central agency, the Treasury, was only a minor player. It limited its involvement mainly to matters of expenditure, although it would have played a key role in the question of the 'Timor Tax'.

Political leadership through the NSCC was another structural element of coordination with a deeper relevance. The view of NSCC as the bridge for national security policy was mentioned in Chapter 3, as this is the place where authoritative commands were issued and, sometimes, where coordination linked different departments. When asked about how coordination looked from the political level, Interview 048-06 commented that it was 'better than normal' because the daily NSCC meetings imposed discipline on the bureaucracy; there was less room for conflict because answers were needed the next day. But routine was not the only factor. The strong solidarity of the NSCC was important for preventing gaps opening between departments.⁷³ This also led to a strong distaste for conflict or competition between

⁶⁹ Bridgman and Davis, p. 97.

⁷⁰ These works include H Hecló and A Wildavsky, *The Private Government of Public Money: Community and Policy inside British Politics*, MacMillan, London, 1974; and MJ Smith, *The Core Executive in Britain*, MacMillan Press, Basingstoke, 1999.

⁷¹ Interview 052-06 noted how DPM&C handled their role 'as normal' though International Division and, later, the Taylor Committee.

⁷² Both DFAT's and Defence's coordinating committees met far more frequently than Paterson's group, and often included representatives from the same organisations.

⁷³ While John Moore thought the relationships between key ministers were very good (Interview, 29 November 2006), other interviewees thought competition between the prime minister and Treasurer Peter Costello could be observed.

departments among the senior ministers and indeed senior leaders. As Tim Fischer noted, anything more than ‘a touch of light banter’ would have resulted in a censure from the prime minister and secretary of DPM&C.⁷⁴ This type of attitude had a distinctive flow-on effect that will be discussed later in this section.

Ministerial staffs were also involved in coordination through their role in keeping their minister aligned with the prime minister and other ministers. This role extended to keeping ministers aware of departmental activities, whether by reading submissions, calling senior departmental officers, or attending departmental meetings in some cases. Advisers would also help to coordinate activity by describing ‘the minister’s thinking’ on various issues. Of these advisers, the prime minister’s international adviser played a crucial part as a conduit of information to, and from, the prime minister.⁷⁵

Routines also help to coordinate activities by making actions consistent and predictable.⁷⁶ Thus the DPM&C’s *Cabinet Handbook* outlines a number of routines that ensure coordination occurs before submissions are presented to Cabinet.⁷⁷ These processes are supported—in theory at least—by strong links between the norm of coordination, the concept of collective responsibility of Cabinet, and the strong desire to prevent surprises from emerging at the Cabinet table or in discussion between senior officials.⁷⁸

While formal Cabinet submissions seem to have been used infrequently in this case, it was usual for other documents and draft cables to be circulated to relevant stakeholders before final submission. The small size of the policy community undoubtedly helped to make this process relatively smooth.⁷⁹ Of the major instruments used to support routines, it was the time-honoured methods of meetings, phone calls

⁷⁴ Interview 051-06 also said that the prime minister would not tolerate poor cooperation.

⁷⁵ Interview with Aldo Borgu.

⁷⁶ G Davis, *A Government of Routines: Executive Coordination in an Australian State*, Centre for Australian Public Sector Management/MacMillan, South Melbourne, 1995, pp. 24–6.

⁷⁷ BG Peters, ‘Managing horizontal government: The politics of co-ordination,’ *Public Administration*, vol. 76, no. 2, 1998, p. 41.

⁷⁸ Interview with 052-06.

⁷⁹ Interviews with 028-05 and 032-05.

and—although a relatively recent innovation at the time—email that helped make the processes work at the speed required.⁸⁰

Despite this, and noting that uncertainty still exists over what was discussed at the 1 December 1999 NSCC meeting, the East Timor crisis appears to have begun with an instance of poor coordination:

I said to Max [Moore-Wilton] that I had just heard about the letter to Habibie and that we weren't consulted on that letter. I said that we had consultative processes coming out our ears, and they are rigorously enforced, insisted upon, except when it matters.⁸¹

The effect of this lack of coordination was felt deeply within Defence. On top of the frustration expressed by Hugh White at the 15 January 1999 SPCG meeting (as discussed in Chapter 4), Defence planners were forced into a situation where a range of practical options needed to be devised quickly. The ADF itself needed to conduct a crash program of resource redistribution and training to bring sufficient forces to readiness for deployment.

Other problems—many of which were discussed earlier in Chapters 4 and 5—continued to flow from the initial decision not to consult or coordinate. In particular, it was clear that DFAT's preferred policy line of early 1999, which aimed to prevent a major rupture in Australian–Indonesian relations, could have been compromised by Defence's need to prepare forces for operations. The problem was further embodied in the different ways both departments viewed the possible course of the crisis, and their different concepts of 'worst case'.⁸²

While a number of instances have been discussed already, communication between departments posed additional problems. On one hand, it can be difficult to find the person who could make a decision in a large place like Defence, and work-arounds or a range of entry points could be needed if difficulties were encountered

⁸⁰ Most interviewees spoke of the importance of direct communication to coordination. For example, Adrien Whiddett spoke of regular liaison meetings and telephone calls, Andrew Hughes spoke of the need for a central crisis room and Allan Behm spoke of the way email could be used effectively when people asked themselves who really needed to know the information.

⁸¹ Interview with Paul Barratt.

⁸² Interviews with Allan Behm, Peter Briggs and 035-05.

with specific people.⁸³ There were also times where people found themselves talking in different languages: another interviewee thought a ‘Babel Fish’ was needed to interpret between the government and the ADF on some occasions.⁸⁴ But even if such a device existed, there would still be a range of other problems confronting coordination, such as secrecy, compartmentalisation, policy ambiguity and the turf battles associated with bureaucratic politics.

Collegiality trumps turf

Structures and processes are clearly important to coordination, but they may not be sufficient. As the discussion about bureaucratic politics in Chapter 1 showed, there is a deep-seated view that government agencies act in their own self-interests and this creates conflictual relationships. While it is possible to observe instances of conflict and competition between departments in this case, these instances were relatively minor and immaterial to the outcome. Instead, this case provides support for the view that relationships between government departments in a crisis are more collegial and reliant upon informal aspects of coordination such as relationships and trust.

Strong personal relationships, a willingness to approach the work with a collegial attitude, and the small size of the group involved in the case and their frequent experience of working together⁸⁵, were all cited as important factors for coordination:

I think [relationships are] critical ... especially at the SES [Senior Executive Service] level in the Commonwealth, and even the states.⁸⁶

That our senior ministers, senior bureaucrats and senior military have worked with each other in the past means they can talk with each other on the phone and fix problems. That was a great advantage in 1999.⁸⁷

⁸³ Interviews with 014-05, 028-05, Andrew Hughes and Major General John Hartley (Canberra, 27 September 2005). Hartley was Land Commander Australia in 1999. As such, he was responsible for preparing Australian land forces for deployment and providing advice to the Chief of Army and COMAST.

⁸⁴ Interview 009-05. A ‘Babel Fish’ is a mythical animal that instantly translates any language into another.

⁸⁵ Interviews 020-05, 051-06 and 032-05 commented on the way the small group involved in national security policy was a particular advantage for Canberra.

⁸⁶ Interview with Adrien Whiddett.

⁸⁷ Interview with 029-05.

[Relationships] were very important. Did I go about building them? No, I didn't. They came about through a process that I don't think exists any more. I went through a series of jobs that put me into professional contact with military officers who were coming up through the system ...⁸⁸

I knew most of the people. One of the points I would make is that coordination in Australia is easier in the security area than in any other major country that I am aware of because ... [for example] all of the other heads of the intelligence agencies had been contemporaries, or near contemporaries in DFAT in the 60s and 70s. So we knew one another. We could just pick up the phone. We were around the lake. It was not difficult to coordinate at all.⁸⁹

Trust also allowed action to occur faster, and the familiarity gained during ordinary times often bred confidence between people.⁹⁰ While relationships usually worked better where they had been established, newcomers were not excluded. It was normal for people recently appointed to Canberra to need to develop relationships quickly; although on some occasions, newly arrived senior officials would delegate (for a short period) the function of working with other stakeholders to a close subordinate who had been in Canberra longer. When the time came to build one's own network, officials generally did so through the formal structure of meetings and committees. Beyond that, people grew their relationships through telephone calls, emails and informal discussions.⁹¹

In other situations, people with wide-ranging ties could be used as intermediaries, using the trust they had developed in different organisations to bridge gaps:

I think one role that I played was that I was seen to be a reasonably sensible player from both the bureaucratic and political side of the house, which was kind of to lend a bit of confidence in both areas that their concerns were being taken care of.⁹²

The key [to understanding the positions of other ministers] was the Defence and Foreign Affairs Adviser to the Prime Minister, Michael Thawley ... he

⁸⁸ Interview with Michael Scrafton.

⁸⁹ Interview with 014-05.

⁹⁰ Interview with 021-05 (Canberra, 12 August 2005). Interview 021-05 was a former senior Defence intelligence official.

⁹¹ Interviews with 012-05, Kerry Clarke, 020-05, Martin Brady, 024-05, Michael Keating and Andrew Hughes.

⁹² Interview 009-05.

understood defence, he understood foreign affairs ... and he was an enormous support to me when I started at Defence ...⁹³

Thus trust was clearly important to coordination in this case, and it seems to have been more widespread—to different degrees, but widespread nonetheless—at the more senior levels in the government. Thus relationships within Cabinet, and between officials and ministers in NSCC, were important to maintaining cooperation throughout.⁹⁴ At other times, strong relationships and trust had not been formed at lower levels and this could be a problem:

... that level of relationship didn't necessarily exist further down the chain—that it was more compartmentalised both within and between organisations.⁹⁵

It was not all plain sailing though, and a few interviewees reported minor instances of disagreement and even conflict between individuals.⁹⁶ One went as far as to speak of animosity between Defence and DFAT at some levels, especially at first. However, the same interviewee also said that:

When people realised what needed to happen, they just got on and worked together ... and made things happen despite other issues and problems. So when the group was brought together and given some imprimatur to do something, I think, that even if the government structures and formalities weren't there, individually we all got on and worked well together.⁹⁷

This experience was echoed by Interview 033-06, who said that working together in a crisis soon overcame attitudes whereby people were departmental representatives first, and team members second.⁹⁸ This view of good working relationships was also seen in instances where parts of different organisations worked together. For example:

⁹³ Interview with John Moore.

⁹⁴ John Moore described his strong trust in one of his senior officials, and how this influenced his way of working. Daryl Williams identified the need to trust people because he, as a minister, did not have all the information. Hugh White observed the long way many officials had to come in 1996 to overcome the new government's mistrust of their relationship with the previous government.

⁹⁵ Interview with Andrew Hughes.

⁹⁶ Interviews with Paul Barratt, 012-05, Michael Keating and Andrew Hughes all cited instances where disagreement or conflict occurred. However, none recalled this as a major impediment to policymaking.

⁹⁷ Interview with Matthew Skoien. Interview 062-07 thought that some DFAT officials had a poor understanding of ADF officers and tended to underestimate their knowledge.

⁹⁸ Interview 062-07 also noted the importance of establishing himself as part of the team when sent to work in another department.

I don't recall any animosity. Strategic Command had been working extensively with relevant DFAT teams—joint briefings on what we did and why, and at social gatherings including dinners and drinks—before and after I arrived ... All this was to our favour after the crisis started.⁹⁹

This kind of divergence in opinions about working relationships shows how perceptions of conflict can vary according to where you sit, and can be strongly influenced by personalities. In other words, conflict may occur as a result of institutional pressures, but conflict also occurs because individuals simply allow it to.

Observations about coordination

This case provides support for the importance of structures and routines to coordination. However, since the evidence of this case adds weight to the collegial interpretation of relationships, the proposed characteristic of policymaking as 'basically competitive with a propensity of increasing collegiality' will be reformulated to read 'coordination is basically collegial, but the potential for conflict should not be ignored'. Since this represents both a discontinuity with previous Australian experiences and a characteristic with a caveat, there is prospect for change in the future.

This case shows the importance being flexible enough to change structures and routines when the situation warrants. Such flexibility was shown in the way different committees were formed to cope with both the increased policy workload and the imperative of keeping activity aligned. Flexibility was also shown in the way departments invited others to meetings, and were generally willing to present a united front to external agencies.

The East Timor crisis also points to a range of other factors that were important to coordination. For one, this case shows that big is not necessarily better; the relatively small size of the Canberra bureaucracy could help to make policy quickly when needed. Even more importantly, this case highlights the importance of relationships and trust to coordination. The importance of the informal aspects of coordination was reasonably well-understood by practitioners and often mentioned in interviews, but they are not mentioned by Bridgman and Davis.

⁹⁹ Interview with Kerry Clarke.

Others have identified the importance of informal mechanisms. Donald Chisholm argues informal bargaining, norms or networks based on friendship or technical expertise are powerful devices under some conditions.¹⁰⁰ However, these informal mechanisms are not given enough attention, often because they are considered as illegal, unhealthy or designed to achieve personal—rather than organisational—goals. Chisholm promotes a contrary view to the orthodoxy and instead describes informal networks as flexible, adaptive, coherent and problem-oriented.¹⁰¹ This case supports the need to encourage informal coordination methods, while noting the importance of formal structures that provide these with an overarching legitimacy.

This case also shows some weaknesses with the interpretation of bureaucratic politics as the driving factor in coordination. Indeed, most of the comments about coordination in the interviews conducted for this study describe a far more collegial approach to policymaking than the theory of bureaucratic politics would allow. Differences—which do certainly exist—occur at the margins and these should be expected. However, a number of factors may have worked to lessen conflict, such as the small size of the bureaucracy, the urgent nature of the crisis, the relatively clear division of responsibilities, political leadership and the significant interpersonal relationships that existed between key players.

It is entirely possible that collegiality is a transitory phenomenon. Chapter 1 identified a school of thought that saw bureaucratic politics played a role in national security policymaking (see pp. 50–1), and there is evidence to show its presence in earlier crises (for example, during the United Action Crisis—see p. 85). In this case however, a collegial attitude can be seen in the way officials emphasised the importance of respecting other's roles, getting on and knowing people. These norms were backed by a strong political will to get the job done. However, it is possible that a future government may not be as cohesive as the NSCC of 1999, or as able to exert their will over interdepartmental rivalries. Future collegiality should not be assumed, and governments will need to take active steps to promote trust and cooperation, and reduce the rewards for destructively competitive behaviour.

¹⁰⁰ D Chisholm, *Coordination without Hierarchy: informal structures in multiorganisational systems*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989, pp. 11–12 and p. 39.

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 12 and pp. 27–8.

Ministers have been involved in policymaking at various stages of the cycle; they have been important to identifying issues, have participated in analysis and even conducted consultation. Their influence has also been felt in coordination. The next chapter examines the point where ministers become central to policymaking, namely decision. But that point is not the end of the story because decisions must be implemented and, in theory at least, evaluated. The task of examining these last three phases of the policy cycle is taken up in Chapter 7.

DECISION AND BEYOND

This chapter completes the examination of Australian crisis policymaking in 1999 by testing the last three phases of the policy cycle: Decision, Implementation and Evaluation. This chapter follows the format of the previous two.

Decision

The Decision phase is the pivotal point of the cycle where the analysts' work is judged by the authoritative actors in the cycle—in this case, the prime minister and the NSCC. The characteristics proposed in Part I for this phase were:

- The prime minister is dominant.
- Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the Cabinet room before decisions are taken.
- Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy and recorded decisions.

While this phase is pivotal, it is also opaque. On top of the Thirty Year Rule that withholds Cabinet documents from the public, the rules and norms of the Cabinet process make it difficult for an outsider to develop an understanding of how decisions were made in this case (and others as well). As one interviewee remarked:

Getting inside the minister-to-minister relationship is a hard veil for anyone to penetrate ... they seem to keep their own counsel if they are content enough with how it is coming out.¹

As a result, this section offers insights about the factors that led to specific decisions in the East Timor crisis. Further evidence, such as the Cabinet notebooks and Cabinet submissions, will be needed to reconstruct the discussions between Australia's senior leaders. Meanwhile, the interviews collected for this dissertation provide some evidence to begin understanding the Decision phase's characteristics.

¹ Interview with Paul Barratt.

Dominant prime minister and involved committee

While Cabinet remained the final authority for decisions, it is more useful to focus on the dominant role of the prime minister and the main Cabinet committee, the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC). As Chapter 3 noted, the membership and processes of the NSCC are different to Cabinet and other committees in that officials are invited to sit with politicians. NSCC also has considerable formal power because its decisions are recorded as Cabinet decisions (although that power is not absolute as NSCC refers some matters to the full Cabinet). In this case, only those concerning the final or in-principle decisions regarding the deployment of police or military forces to East Timor seem to have been referred to Cabinet.² This freedom to commit the government and direct activity allowed the prime minister and NSCC to be the dominant decision-makers in this case.

There are three other reasons for this dominance. The first relates to Prime Minister Howard's personal authority. Electoral success clearly played a role in generating this authority, while being at the centre of the government means most key decisions are brokered through his office. These factors are enhanced by the prime minister's personality and his colleagues' trust. For Howard, this was activated through his meticulous attention to process and inclusive pattern of consultation; he learned the value of carrying his colleagues with him from observing other prime ministers.³ But the prime minister was also his own man:

Anyone who takes the prime minister to be a patsy for anyone else is seriously mistaken. He would make his own decisions, and he often went against other ministers or officials ... No committee that Howard chairs runs by consensus. It runs by trying to get agreement—and that doesn't mean that Howard has made up his mind (beforehand)—but when he has made up his mind there is no doubt that he gets what he wants ...⁴

² John Moore also described the autonomy generally received in defence and national security matters from Cabinet, and neither he nor Tim Fischer could not recall a situation where Cabinet overturned an NSCC decision.

³ Interviews with John Moore and 051-06. Interview 052-06 noted how the prime minister used NSCC as a tool to keep his key ministers involved. Other commentators noted Howard's dominant and personalised role. For examples, see J Birmingham, 'A Time For War: The Re-birth of Australia's Military Culture', *Quarterly Essay*, no. 20, 2006, pp. 42–3; and G Sheridan, 'All the World's a Stage', in N Cater (ed), *The Howard Factor: A Decade that Changed the Nation*, The University of Melbourne Press, Carlton, 2006, p. 159.

⁴ Interview with Chris Barrie.

These factors of delegation, process and personality helped Howard to lead authoritatively during crisis, but another factor was also important. The second reason was that the grouping of Howard, Treasurer Costello, Foreign Minister Downer and Deputy Prime Minister (and National Party leader) John Anderson meant that the NSCC contained Cabinet's key leaders.⁵ When Defence Minister John Moore—who had a reputation as an internal powerbroker— was added, it is not surprising that the NSCC was able to dominate national security decision-making at that time.

This group relied on precedent to operate as it did. Interview 049-06 likened this to the authority given to the Expenditure Review Committee in the budget process, but there was also an intangible factor:

I think there was a feeling of comfort [in Cabinet] that if NSCC had looked at it in detail then it did not need to be unpicked ...

This confidence was born partly from the status of the individual members, and partly from success in managing other major issues, such as the Asian Economic Crisis.⁶ When coupled with their access to information and close contact with senior officials, the NSCC had the means and authority to act within Cabinet's very broad guidelines and a degree of latitude to make new policy if needed.

Procedural factors were the third additional reason to explain NSCC's dominance. One important contributor was NSCC's ability to meet daily (and frequently twice daily) during the crisis' acute stage.⁷ This meant NSCC ministers were kept apprised of breaking issues and agencies raised matters for decision in a timely fashion.⁸ Other factors that helped promote NSCC's role included access to briefings, the ability to question senior officials in depth and together (noting ministers would not usually be able to quiz the senior officials from departments other than their own), and the ability to conduct consultative and coordination tasks themselves. Taken together, these procedural factors gave the national security ministers a high degree of awareness and involvement in the crisis. It also allowed

⁵ Anderson replaced Tim Fischer in July 1999.

⁶ Interviews with Chris Barrie and Aldo Borgu. The Asian Economic Crisis refers to the series of interconnected financial meltdowns that afflicted some Asian countries, including Indonesia, in 1997–98.

⁷ It is hard to determine the actual frequency of full Cabinet meetings during the acute phase of the crisis, but most interviewees could not recall meetings more frequently than weekly during September 1999.

⁸ Interview 048-06.

them to move NSCC from being a decision-making body alone towards being a body for decision and management.

Dominance has pitfalls though. It is also possible that a dominant group can suffer from a cognitive defect, such as bias or groupthink. While the methodology used in this dissertation was not suited to identify these types of problems, it is possible to see how the NSCC could get sidetracked on important, but nonetheless second-order issues:

Minister Downer made his 'coalition of the willing' remark on [the weekend]. NSCC met on Monday and did not discuss it—they focused on the safety of consular officials in Dili instead. They got to the coalition statement on Tuesday, [the same day] Habibie was in press saying it would not happen.⁹

These remarks were widely reported¹⁰, and the notion was quickly and explicitly rejected by President Habibie.¹¹ Yet this apparent diplomatic disagreement did not ultimately have a major effect on support for Australia's leadership role. In Hugh White's opinion, that was a close call. While consular official safety is important, the focus on this issue to the exclusion of major matters such as international relationships and national credibility prevented the NSCC from developing a unified view on coalition development at this delicate moment. It also prevented NSCC from considering how best to clarify what might have been interpreted as a call to arms against Indonesia. 'It was lucky that we had the initiative,' said White.¹²

Prime Minister Howard used other mechanisms for decision-making in this crisis. Of these, unilateral decisions were the least used and seem limited only to times where he was discussing fast-moving events with international leaders.¹³ More commonly, Howard would discuss important emerging issues with Downer and Moore.¹⁴ Important consultations would also occur between ministerial advisers, and

⁹ Interview with Hugh White, who was referring Downer's doorstep interview on 4 September 1999 (see G Barker, 'Australian foreign minister on possible peacekeeping force', Radio Australia, 4 September 1999).

¹⁰ P Daley, 'Troops Could Go Within Days', *Sunday Age*, 5 September 1999.

¹¹ S Anthony, 'Jakarta blocks Canberra's call for armed intervention', *West Australian*, 6 September 1999.

¹² Interview with Hugh White.

¹³ Hugh White recounts the interaction between Howard and Kofi Anan as one instance, although Howard was probably working within the NSCC's agreed course at the time.

¹⁴ Defence Minister Moore acknowledged that a 'sub group' of Ministers – not the full NSCC would be meeting on the night of 6 September 1999 to discuss the Timor Crisis (see Defence Public Affairs, 'Transcript, Hon John Moore, MP & Hon Alexander Downer', Commonwealth

between ministerial advisers and the prime minister's office. Interview 051-06 characterised such discussions as a normal way of doing business, especially in a system where ministers have substantial authority to act in their own right and direct control over some of the principal instruments. Since these discussions tended to foreshadow subsequent NSCC discussions and decisions, the committee's central role was preserved.¹⁵

Closely involved officials

The emergent role for NSCC was also influenced by the growing trust between the political leaders and their senior officials during 1999. In 1998, it was common for officials to attend NSCC, but not always stay for the entire meeting; at times, they would be asked to leave when matters got 'political'. There would also be occasions where officials were not invited at all.¹⁶

This situation changed in 1999, where senior officials, the prime minister's international adviser and (frequently) less-senior officials and ministerial staff attended most, if not all meetings and stayed throughout.¹⁷ According to one interviewee, this was indicative of the government learning that the bureaucracy was not full of 'old Laborites', but of seasoned public servants who were experienced in national security matters.¹⁸ At other times, it was a reflection of fast-moving events.

The privilege of attending the complete NSCC meeting provided those senior officials with a better understanding of the reasons for decisions, and an opportunity to comment as the discussion progressed toward decision. It did not, however, mean that the officials participated in the decision, for 'you always knew they were the decision-makers and we were the advisers'.¹⁹ The close involvement was reflected by three senior officials, who described NSCC's atmosphere as one of open discussion or

Offices, Melbourne, 6 September 1999, available <http://www.minister.defence.gov.au>, accessed 12 December 2007).

¹⁵ Interview with John Moore. Interviews with Tim Fischer, 051-06, 048-06 and 064-07 also described the important role of informal contact between ministers and the facilitating role of their advisory staff.

¹⁶ Interview with John Moore.

¹⁷ Interviews with Hugh White and Paul Barratt.

¹⁸ Interview with Chris Barrie. This point was supported in interviews with Daryl Williams, Tim Fisher and John Moore.

¹⁹ Interview with Paul Barratt.

even ‘collegiality’.²⁰ These descriptions speak of a high degree of trust—in the main—between the NSCC ministers and their senior officials when dealing with a crisis.

A conventional Cabinet?

While Cabinet’s conventions were observed, some were bent to fit the requirements of crisis in 1999. Of these, secrecy and collective responsibility remained intact, although the latter was modified in that the Committee—rather than the full Cabinet—took most major operational decisions.

Compromises were made in other areas as well. For one, the NSCC took many briefs verbally, which bypassed the normal process of written submissions and coordinating comments. This weakness was ameliorated by the Taylor Committee’s work, as it consulted across government relatively quickly when preparing their submissions. Another factor that reduced potential consternation over the lack of formal process was that the ministers and officials understood the nature of crisis decision-making, and were willing to accept the occasional surprise: ‘No one was too precious about having uncleared matters, especially once the tempo of events increased’.²¹

The close involvement of ministers and senior officials in the details of the crisis was another factor that modified normal processes and promoted faster decision-making:

One of the ways that people get crisis management machinery wrong is that they assume that, in a crisis, ministers still have limited time and limited attention because they are getting around a whole lot of other things. That’s not what happens ... In a crisis, the only people who understand the situation are the ministers. And the people lower down know less and less about what is going on.²²

This highly abbreviated and closed form of decision-making meant that normal processes—involving formal consultation, briefing papers and preliminary committee meetings—became less important as the crisis progressed. One factor enabling this

²⁰ Interviews with Hugh White, Chris Barrie and Paul Barratt. Daryl Williams also described how the prime minister invited his international adviser to make policy contributions in the NSCC (Interview, 17 March 2007).

²¹ Interview with Chris Barrie.

²² Interview with Hugh White.

was the way ministers and officials effectively stopped work on most other tasks. They read cables (reports from overseas missions), intelligence briefings and other submissions more carefully and more often—and developed a deeper understanding of the situation. In this sense, every NSCC member became both the ‘desk officer’ and the decision-maker.²³

It is one thing to make decisions; it is another to communicate decisions so people charged with implementation can do so faithfully. With the limited information contained in formal minutes, a short space of time between meetings and the hyper-busy schedules generated by crisis, officials rely upon understanding the decision-makers’ intent.²⁴ The guidance provided by the NSCC was considered satisfactory by a number of interviewees—and importantly, none complained about an inability to understand NSCC’s intent:²⁵

[A Cabinet decision was] a pretty clear statement ... after the ministers agreed it. So in that sense we had a clear statement of intent ... I don’t recall too much difficulty that he [our minister] had with anything that we sent to him, and [cabinet and ministerial submissions] were written in a way designed to give us a mandate to go ahead and do things.²⁶

However, many senior leaders had only a general understanding of their minister’s detailed requirements and relied upon their understanding of the context of events to develop directives to their subordinates:

We had some very clear understandings of what a number of key objectives had to be ... I think in these broad terms we had an understanding of the key challenges and particularly what to avoid.²⁷

... You might get word from the minister that this [issue] was being canvassed. You would also look for the Cabinet document to find things for [us]. You certainly had a hankering of what it was about before [NSCC decisions] came and you would know what was coming ...²⁸

²³ Interview with Hugh White.

²⁴ Intent describes the outcomes desired by political leaders. Intent may be more encompassing in practice, for politicians may also choose to stipulate how the outcome is to be achieved, and not just what should be achieved. An understanding of intent enables subordinates to adjust their plans to the emerging situation, or to take action where guidance is incomplete or ambiguous.

²⁵ Chris Barrie, Hugh White and Michael Scrafton made particular mention of the importance of intent in their interviews.

²⁶ Interview with Scott Dawson.

²⁷ Interview with 009-05.

²⁸ Interview with Adrien Whiddett.

Other ministers, notably Downer, would have regular meetings with task force officials to hear their views directly:

... every two weeks we would brief Downer on how the ETTF [DFAT's East Timor Task Force] was tracking. This was an informal, fireside chat ... there was no agenda, it was very much a 'so what have you got for me' ... Downer would say what he had to say, [and] offer guidance or not ...²⁹

These few comments show that while intent is transmitted in a number of ways, the most important factors for understanding intent was a knowledge of the minister's or senior official's long-term goals and preferences, an understanding of where others stood on an issue, some ability to extrapolate once new information came to hand, and a willingness to ask follow-up questions.³⁰ But a clearly stated intent was not always easy to obtain:

The minister was under no illusions that he necessarily knew what he wanted, so he was fairly reliant upon the department for advice on issues. He would give broad parameters, but given Moore's style he was not the sort of person who communicated by reams of paper. His style was to talk to people and talk through issues, and he would have someone from the office involved. He would say 'you tell me what'.³¹

Consequently, subordinates still needed to work hard to identify the intent of a decision before they passed instructions to others. However, this management approach may be a blessing—after all, it would be a poor minister who provided a misleading intent to their officials.

Observations about decision

While making definitive observations about the substance of decisions during the East Timor crisis remains difficult, it is possible to discuss the way the Decision phase worked. For one, the prime minister's dominance is clear. Howard's chairmanship of NSCC gave him the final say in decisions, but his style was not unilateral: he preferred to operate with and through his key committee. As a result, the existence of a strong leader, and indeed a strong leadership core, meant most decisions were made through the NSCC without constant or even frequent reference

²⁹ Interview with 062-07.

³⁰ Interview 051-06 described the value the prime minister and other ministers placed on knowing the opinions and preferences of other main actors before decisions were made.

³¹ Interview with Aldo Borgu.

to Cabinet. When the focus of ministers is added, the NSCC acted as a highly responsive committee that managed the crisis—particularly the acute stage—effectively.

NSCC's effectiveness was shown by the way their intent was grasped by officials responsible for implementing policy. For example, NSCC's position on a number of critical issues was well understood, such as the conditions for Australian involvement and the desire not to go to war with Indonesia. In addition, the close interaction between senior officials and political leaders ensured that if the NSCC did not provide all of the necessary direction, the officials could follow their intent. This need for officials to interpret guidance, understand the broader context of issues, and make changes as the situation demands is clearly an essential aspect of crisis policymaking.

That the nation's political leaders overcame the real (or perceived) suspicion of their senior public servants, and trusted their officials to remain throughout NSCC meetings, circumvented one important Cabinet convention. Trust also allowed shortcuts in a number of important processes, and allowed the prime minister to bend Cabinet conventions to make decision-making fast and responsive. This shows a highly pragmatic streak at play, which leads to questions about whether this type of Decision phase would be repeatable under other conditions and leaders.

Implementation

Implementation is the penultimate phase of the policy cycle, where 'the machinery of government smoothly implements the Cabinet's wish—in theory'.³² The two main characteristics of implementation identified in Part I were:

- Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle; and
- The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes.

Since this dissertation takes a Canberra-centric view of national security policymaking, there is no intention to discuss here the activities of the diplomats, election officials, police, military personnel or aid workers who actually served in

³² P Bridgman and G Davis, *The Australian Policy Handbook*, 3rd edn, Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2004, p. 119.

East Timor or elsewhere.³³ However, issues such as the way forces were assigned to INTERFET, how aid was organised from Canberra, and how the media was managed from Canberra are germane to this discussion.

Considered throughout the policy cycle

Implementation occurred throughout 1999, often in parallel with earlier parts of the policy cycle. One particularly good example of this was the Australian preparation for dealing with an independent East Timor, which included establishing a direct connection between humanitarian aid and East Timor, and by establishing a consulate in Dili.³⁴ A second instance displaying simultaneity between consultation and implementation can be seen in the way Australia prepared forces for peace operations—widely interpreted as peace operations in East Timor—while the Australian Government insisted that Indonesia remained responsible for security. These examples show how considerable amounts of policy may need to be developed after implementation begins.

In another respect, those implementing policy may be writing aspects of that policy at the same time. This situation was evident during the period when the INTERFET coalition was formed. Officials exercised a significant deal of discretion at this time, offering carrots and some small sticks in order to entice decisions from potential contributors. On one occasion, INTERFET Branch made it known that attachés from non-contributing nations accredited to Canberra would be excluded from the classified operational briefs. As one foreign government, in particular, was horrified at the thought of being excluded from the inner circle, INTERFET Branch

³³ A number of other authors have undertaken this task, including B Breen, *Mission Accomplished—East Timor*, Allen & Unwin, Crows Nest, 2000, for an ADF perspective; N Sugget, *See the Road Well: Shaping East Timor's Frontier*, Pandanus Books, Canberra, 2005, for the perspective of Customs officials after early 2000; L Taudevin, *East Timor: Too Little Too Late*, Duffy and Snellgrove, Sydney, 1999, for an aid worker's perspective; and R Tanter, M Selden and SR Shalom (eds), *Bitter flowers, sweet flowers: East Timor, Indonesia, and the world community*, Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Boulder, 2001, for a number of papers about UNAMET's activities.

³⁴ For example, DFAT listed a range of implementation activities and aid programs in relation to East Timor in their March 1999 submission (Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and AusAID, *Submission to the Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee Inquiry into East Timor*, Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, Additional Information, Volume 5: Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, pp. 047–048 and pp. 056–062).

and their attaché kept the conversation open and this eventually led to a contribution of forces to INTERFET.³⁵

Structures and processes need to be in place to support implementation. One example is the need for appropriate financial arrangements to support novel solutions to policy problems. As AusAID found in this case, issues such as budgets and annual allocations can actually work against implementation by delaying activity, by precluding certain options, or by forcing agencies into ‘creative accounting’ as they juggled rules with realities. In some instances, agencies used trust funds or moved funds between appropriations to ensure that the desired policy was implemented.³⁶ These points highlight the importance of legitimate and understood financial processes that are flexible enough to make funds available when they are needed to support implementation.

One interesting aspect of implementation in this case was the way the strong political imperative behind INTERFET allowed, or perhaps forced, officials to take risks that might have been unacceptable under other circumstances. This was especially noticeable in the way officials accepted a large degree of financial risk in order to facilitate (or entice) non-Anglo-Saxon contributors to INTERFET.³⁷ In some instances, Australian officials showed significant initiative by agreeing to pay for capital equipment items, and underwrite compensation benefits for a number of contributors as a way of getting a rapid agreement to contribute.³⁸

Implementation was also essential to supporting the political message in other ways. Early in the UNAMET deployment, DFAT and AusAID recognised the importance of getting UN humanitarian agencies involved, and showing the people of East Timor that Australia was supporting them. This required some novel and risky implementation measures:

³⁵ Interview with Steve Ayling.

³⁶ Steve Darvill described how one agency wrote a contract for helicopters to support UNTAET from June to August (Interview, 5 July 2005). While sufficient funds were available for the full contract, this money would be ‘lost’ at the end of the financial year—and they were not permitted to commit the Commonwealth unless they had an approved budget. At this stage, AusAID created a new ‘trust fund’ so that the money could be held beyond the formal financial year.

³⁷ Interview with Steve Ayling.

³⁸ This example financial risk was discussed in the earlier discussion of policy instruments in Chapter 5.

Again, it was that kind of practical stuff [that was needed] ... I was phoning around trying to get rice. And Ralph [an AusAID official] essentially went to Woolies and emptied their warehouse of rice, so that day there was stuff to drop. Back here I was phoning rice growers, and working out how to get it there. So I was on the bus on the way home, negotiating for a 747. It was expensive, but we had to make things happen. There was a political message that we had to get out there ...³⁹

Desperate times often call for creative thinking and unusual measures.

The use of the media during crisis is another aspect of implementation, and one that attracted criticism from a number of interviewees. One important use was the way Australian leaders employed the media to make sense of the crisis for the Australian public.⁴⁰ During September 1999 alone, Howard gave fifty-three separate media interviews and speeches that helped him to explain the situation to domestic (and sometimes international) audiences. He used these opportunities to explain the events in East Timor, outline the reasons for Australia's commitment, stress Australia's role as being both in line with the international community and in line with Australia's responsibilities, and to reduce growing domestic animosity against Indonesia. He did not, however, miss the opportunity to highlight the government's political achievements and how these contributed to the operation's success.⁴¹ Other ministers also provided press briefings or spoke to other audiences (the Defence minister made twenty-three announcements about the East Timor operation and the Foreign minister made at least thirty-one announcements—the majority of these in the period 6–10 September).⁴² The Australian commander in East Timor, Major General Peter Cosgrove, also played an important part in developing the narrative and providing a reassuring message to people in Australia and internationally.⁴³ However,

³⁹ Interview with Steve Darvill. The risk of this hurried activity was shown when a food airdrop injured a small boy (see *Birmingham Post*, 'Refugee boy crushed by East Timor airdrop', 30 September 1999, p. 9).

⁴⁰ An important role noted by P 't Hart, K Tindall and C Brown, 'Success and failure in crisis leadership: Advisory capacity and presidential performance in the 9/11 and Katrina crises', unpublished paper, 2007, pp. 7–8.

⁴¹ For example, Howard linked the government's economic management to the operation in East Timor (J Howard, 'Address to the ACT Division of the Liberal Party', 29 September 1999, available <http://www.pm.gov.au>, accessed 10 April 2006).

⁴² This workload compelled the defence minister to assign a second adviser to the media liaison role to keep track of the requests and allow the primary media adviser to maintain close contact with the prime minister's office (Interview with 048-06).

⁴³ Interview with Chris Barrie.

it was the prime minister who carried the bulk of the message to the Australian people and presented the government's preferred view of this crisis.

Getting this message out is not simple, and there are significant limitations in using the media as a tool to support policy implementation. For one, having an independent media reflect the government's preferred view is no easy task. This difficulty is magnified when the target of influence is a foreign population, and their domestic media is the only viable way of reaching them. One interviewee, who was involved in Defence's public affairs organisation in 1999, recounted the analysis done to identify how to get messages to the Indonesian people in particular, and the Southeast Asian public more generally. He cited the real challenge with getting balancing messages through media outlets that were either controlled by foreign governments, or highly sympathetic to their government's position.⁴⁴ He also noted the absence of Radio Australia and decline of Australia Television during this period, but added the audience for this type of media was relatively small. He thought suggestions that foreign media could be manipulated were fanciful, but recounted the way positive messages were sent to specific audience in Japan to encourage their support.⁴⁵

The second difficulty relates to the tools available to an organisation such as Defence public affairs. The formal tools—press releases and media alerts—often provide the news 'filling' for the daily newspapers. However, they have limited utility if the media wants other stories or is simply unwilling to accept the view presented. Also, public statements need to be carefully managed to ensure all remain 'on message'. Transcripts of media interviews and speeches by Prime Minister Howard, Foreign Minister Downer and Defence Minister Moore all show high degrees of consistency in their messages about the international mandate, relationship with Indonesia, and will of the East Timorese people when discussing the intervention. Keeping these messages coordinated was a major task that required real ingenuity given the technology of 1999. In one case, the system of synchronising near

⁴⁴ A problem noted in J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, pp. 121–2; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998-2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001, p. 145.

⁴⁵ Interview with 066-07, who has a knowledge of Defence public affairs planning in 1999.

simultaneous briefings in Dili, Darwin and Canberra involved taping conferences and then playing them down the satellite phone line to the next conference location.⁴⁶

Thirdly, it was also difficult to be 'proactive' due to political sensitivities (as disused earlier) and the complexity of engaging with a skeptical media. Interview 066-07 recounted one attempt where Defence arranged for a very senior ADF officer to speak to an influential Indonesian journalist about a range of topics, with the aim of showing Australia's benign intentions and friendly attitude towards Indonesia. By his recollection, this attempt was only marginally successful and risked back-firing as the journalist interpreted a casual remark in a negative way. On other occasions, the desire to get fresh news footage from East Timor to the international media could have resulted in negative images of the Australian intervention being sent into the public domain. This led to some photographs being confiscated to protect operational security and Australia's image. Engaging with the media to implement policy is clearly important, but complex, aspect of implementation.

Other interviewees criticised the Australian Government for being less than effective in using the media to further their interests. The attempts to influence regional perceptions about Australia, as mentioned in Chapter 5, are one example. However, the broader problem concerned the difficulty with using information as a policy instrument. For example:

My view was that you should use the international media, among other things, to present your position and the operational character of your deployment in the best possible light, and the opposition's in the worst possible light. But we did none of that. We didn't engage anybody to work over the *New Straits Times* or the Jakarta newspapers, we didn't seed stories about the Indonesian generals—and we could have run terrible smear campaigns because we knew all about them and how corrupt they were. We could have had that stuff flashed all round the world, and undermined the credibility of the Indonesian military and *Kopassus*. I think this was a great lacuna in respect out of our IW [Information Warfare] policy toward East Timor ...⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Interview 066-07.

⁴⁷ Interview with Allan Behm. Michael Scrafton also described the difficulties of implementing an 'information operations campaign' at the strategic level (Interview, 5 August 2005). There was more success at the operational level: see K Beasley, *Information Operations during Operation Stabilise in East Timor*, Working Paper 120, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2002; and J Blaxland, *Information-era Manoeuvre: The Australian-led Mission to East Timor*, Working Paper 118, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2002.

Others also pointed to tactical reasons for not using the media to explain Australia's position:

If only the media knew that in fact we were doing more than anyone else in the world to prepare and be ready to guide consideration in the UN and US; but we wouldn't, couldn't speak out about it ... [if] it had looked that we were preparing an Australian peacekeeping force before the ballot or anything like that, we feared that Indonesia would say they would only go ahead with this if Australia took no part. That would have been our worst outcome ...⁴⁸

These conflicting views of whether or how to use the media highlights a profoundly difficult choice faced by policymakers. In these situations, they must confront the need to gather support for initiatives and remain accountable, while balancing the need to restrict information for the purposes of achieving policy objectives.

Cooks and broth?

It is not surprising to find that implementation becomes more complex and complicated as the number of participants increase. For example, the relatively straightforward task of organising helicopters for UNAMET using a commercial provider was soon complicated as other departments became involved:

When we hired the helicopters, there was a period where they couldn't go ... from our point of view it was being treated a logistical thing—get them on contract, painted the right colour ... But having done that, [attention] shifted to the political arena and DFAT went to Jakarta and took this up in the UN with Indonesia.⁴⁹

And:

The ADF had duty of care for their people, if they fell ill on deployments. They would normally have their hospital go with them, but the Indonesians were not going to have a bar of that, and it fell back onto us to hire a medevac [medical evacuation] facility to sit on the tarmac in Darwin—at great expense—just in case there was a need. I don't know whether it got used much. But that became a kind of political issue with Defence, and DFAT had to play the political dialogue [with Indonesia] to make this happen.⁵⁰

However, the limited capacity of some organisations actually increases the need to involve more players. This was especially seen in the difficulties experienced by the AFP when deploying overseas. This went beyond having sufficient numbers of

⁴⁸ Interview with Matthew Skoien.

⁴⁹ Interview with Steve Darvill.

⁵⁰ Interview with Steve Darvill.

police officers, as the AFP also needed support for communication, transport and logistics.⁵¹ It is also important to recognise that civilian firms and charities become critical to implementation when the government either lacks their own capabilities, or needs help to surge for a crisis.⁵²

Implementation also influences the way people think about coordination. On the one hand, the act of executing a policy decision can have a unifying effect within large organisations. Some interviewees commented on how people got behind each other, while another commented on how single-minded Canberra became once forces were deployed.⁵³ On the other hand, some had the impression that once the decision was made, politicians would just leave the departments and agencies to get on with the job:

On one occasion, [Defence Minister] Moore called General Cosgrove and directed him to call a fresh press conference to announce that INTERFET would conduct operations across the Indonesian border if needed [the 'hot pursuit' issue⁵⁴]. Moore then called back five minutes later to check to see that the arrangements had been made.⁵⁵

I think there was still quite a strong entrenched feeling within the military element of the structure—to Dili and beyond quite frankly—that it wasn't appropriate for civilian advisers to be urging them to provide information quickly, and a view that some of this stuff needs to be sat on so that the minister doesn't bugger up 'our operation'.⁵⁶

The complexity involved in implementation was also shown through issues such as the 'hot pursuit' remarks and the shooting at Motaain.⁵⁷ In both cases, the

⁵¹ The need for state police was especially acute as AFP prepared for the second rotation of UNAMET.

⁵² Some of the specific shortfalls for INTERFET were discussed in A Ryan, *Primary responsibilities and primary risks: Australian Defence Force participation in the International Force East Timor*, Land Warfare Studies Centre, Duntroon, 2000, p. 39.

⁵³ Interview with Kerry Clarke. Interviews with Adrien Whiddett and Matthew Skoien also expressed similar views.

⁵⁴ For descriptions of this incident, see E Knickmeyer, 'Australia: peacekeepers allowed to cross border in hot pursuit', *Associated Press Newswires*, 30 September 1999; and D Shannahan, 'Muzzling Moore the hottest pursuit – Australia cannot afford to send any more mixed messages', *Australian*, 2 October 1999, p. 10.

⁵⁵ Interview with John Hartley.

⁵⁶ Interview 009-05.

⁵⁷ Australian forces exchanged fire with Indonesian border police and troops on 11 October near the border crossing at Motaain (see R Epstein, 'Australians and Indonesian forces clash in East Timor', *AM* (ABC Radio), 11 October 1999, available <http://www.abc.net.au>, accessed 2 January 2008).

wider range of players and heightened political sensitivity added another layer to considerations that may not have been grasped immediately. As one interviewee noted:

For me, that [problem] will always crystallise around the shooting incident that happened at Motaain on the border, which we found out about through CNN ... You know, we had the minister screaming down the phone trying to find out what had gone on ... I tried COMAST [Commander Australian Theatre, in Sydney] and then I actually rang Dili to find out what was going on. I got some Captain who was quite aghast, and probably rightly so in a sense that here was this wally from headquarters trying to get some information. But what the doctrine manuals said was a fairly trivial tactical incident had the potential to be a serious strategic impediment in the government's policy. It could have brought us frankly to a shooting war with Indonesia. I don't think the Defence system, then or now, has really engaged its mind on how to deal with that issue.⁵⁸

These difficulties also extended to a range of other problems that had a lesser impact on the overall mission. However, it is important to note that the implementation of INTERFET went well, to the point where it was described as successful and a significant achievement by Australia's leaders and by some foreign observers.⁵⁹

Observations about implementation

Asked whether Australia achieved its policy objectives, Hugh White started his answer by listing what he thought were the key four at the start of 1999: East Timor would remain a part of Indonesia, there would be no disruption to Australian–Indonesian relations as a result of East Timor, East Timor would not disrupt TNI–ADF relations, and Australia would not have large parts of the ADF deployed in East Timor. 'We got none from four', he said.⁶⁰

However, the effective implementation of INTERFET in the period of acute crisis did ultimately save the 'strategic bacon'. For one, it was the beginning of the end of the humanitarian crisis that had been occurring since 4 September. Secondly,

⁵⁸ Interview 009-05.

⁵⁹ For examples, see A Downer, 'Australia at Year's End – Retrospect and Prospect', Speech by the Hon Alexander Downer MP, Minister for Foreign Affairs, at the National Press Club, Canberra, 1 December 1999, available <http://www.foreignminister.gov.au>, accessed 27 November 2007; F Brenchley, 'The Howard Defence Doctrine', *Bulletin*, 28 September 1999; John Howard, 'Statement on East Timor', 23 November 1999, available <http://www.australianpolitics.com>, accessed 16 April 2006; and M McKew, 'Clinton advisor praises Australian leadership on East Timor', *7.30 Report*, ABC Television, 13 January 2000.

⁶⁰ Interview with Hugh White.

INTERFET's deployment kept global attention focused on the East Timor problem, which gave legitimacy to the cause and additional exposure to encourage more support. Thirdly, INTERFET initially operated amid TNI forces, and then maintained a separation between themselves and the Indonesians across a difficult border. Fourthly, INTERFET provided enough stability for the UN transitional administration to begin work to create an independent East Timor. Thus, successful implementation led to an objective desired by many—although not enjoyed by everyone that should have shared in it. The successful mission also allowed the Australian Government to weather significant media and political criticism over their handling of the crisis. Although the critics were fast to point out shortcomings and the lives lost in the crisis, the Australian Government was able to respond by acknowledging some faults while pointing to the world's newest free nation. It was the Australian Government's position that resonated most with Australian voters.

The difficulty with describing implementation shows a real shortcoming of the policy cycle. Policy in a crisis is unlikely to be a single decision followed by a single action. Instead, a range of decisions are made and implemented over time, with later decisions being influenced by the impact of measures implemented earlier. Not all of these actions were the result of formal Cabinet or NSCC decisions; even routine cables from DFAT posts elicited some form of action in Canberra that contributed to policy implementation.

The importance of structures and processes, intent, creative thinking and risk all came though in this case. Structures and processes are generally considered essential to spending money; public servants in Australia cannot, in layman's terms, commit public funds without an approved budget and the authority to spend that money. However, some impediments can be overcome (legally) if political support is present and if the officials have a clear understanding of what is needed to meet the intent of the decision-makers. Armed with some confidence, officials can then devise alternatives and even accept risk in areas ranging from funding to media engagement.

Given the wide range of problems that arise in crisis, a variety of players must be involved in implementation and they need to be consulted early. This case showed how the agencies traditionally responsible for national security policy in Australia—DFAT, Defence and DPM&C—needed important support from those normally associated with domestic aspects of security, particularly the AFP. It also identifies

that some agencies, such as AusAID and the AEC, were only partially aware of their role in national security issues at all. This crisis also reinforces the need to consult operational agencies at the start of planning, and to practice responses before crises occur.

Evaluation

The Evaluation phase provides the nominal end of the policy cycle, where the utility of policy must be questioned and a new cycle of analysis begins. Two characteristics of evaluation are:

- If conducted at all, evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented in full.
- Policy advice is not systemically evaluated.⁶¹

There were four identifiable avenues to evaluate policymaking about the East Timor crisis. These included formal reports by external agencies on limited aspects of performance; classified, internal evaluations of Defence's performance; implied individual evaluations that will be described here as 'self-critique'; and special or periodic inquiries by Parliament. A call for a commission of inquiry was also made by the opposition spokesperson on foreign affairs, Laurie Brereton.⁶² These final two are mentioned not because they were actually used, but because they could help to evaluate policy if given a mandate.

An examination of these sources finds that the characteristics of policymaking described in Part I generally hold true for this crisis, although there are some small differences. This examination also shows that if evaluation is difficult, then a spirit of self-criticism is essential.

Evaluation only after implementation is complete

Of the clearly identifiable evaluation efforts that took place around the East Timor crisis, most occurred after the crisis had ended. Of these, two formal evaluations were conducted after the event, but these only covered limited aspects of

⁶¹ Bridgman and Davis, pp. 131–3.

⁶² L. Brereton, MP, 'East Timor: Revelations on Four Corners', News Release, 15 February 2000.

performance. The first, an Australian National Audit Office (ANAO) report about the ADF's deployment into East Timor, was unusual.⁶³ While a broad range of Defence activities have been subjected to ANAO scrutiny over time (around sixty-four Defence-specific reports were delivered in the period 1996 to 2007), the vast majority focused on procurement or other management functions. In this case, the ANAO chose to look at an operational activity and made recommendations on issues that included training standards, public affairs planning and preparedness issues. AusAID also participated in a formal UN evaluation of the humanitarian response, and regular assessments of transitional administration programs. These evaluations were conducted on a six-monthly basis and provided to donor countries before major meetings.⁶⁴

Defence conducted internal evaluations of its policy processes during the crisis. Allan Behm's report into Defence command arrangements is still classified, but he recounted some aspects of the report in an interview for this dissertation. His report was developed after interviews with key members of Defence, some outsiders, and his own observations of Defence during the crisis. Interestingly, he developed two versions of the report: a 'vanilla' draft for external (government) readers and a more candid version for an internal audience. The internal version was reputedly a very blunt assessment of Defence's organisational deficiencies, and it included recommendations to change the structure of Defence headquarters. However, even supposedly objective assessments can be controversial and may not lead to any action: according to Behm, no recommendations to improve coordination were implemented as of early 2005 (although the results of others, such as a separate review of ADF command and control in 2003, did result in some change).⁶⁵ According to another source, some of the data captured by Behm was different to what people were saying

⁶³ Australian National Audit Office, *Management of Australian Defence Force Deployments to East Timor*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2002.

⁶⁴ Interview with Scott Dawson. These reports can be read at World Bank, 'Trust Fund for East Timor', available <http://web.worldbank.org>, accessed 12 July 2007. For the UN's evaluation of the 1999 humanitarian program see C Hurford and M Wahlstrom, *OCHA and the East Timor Crisis*, Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, November 20001, available <http://ochaonline.un.org>, accessed 12 July 2007.

⁶⁵ Interview with Kerry Clarke.

at the time and resulted in a mismatch between feedback at the time and criticism later.⁶⁶

On top of Behm's formal evaluation, Defence's Strategic Command Group conducted an informal, yet frank evaluation of its own performance. In this, the service chiefs reportedly expressed their concern about the way command and control was effected, especially the limited role given to Commander Australian Theatre and his headquarters.⁶⁷ Other interviewees from within and outside Defence spoke of learning lessons from previous events and operations and how these were applied during the East Timor crisis. This shows, at least, a willingness among officials to test current or likely events against experience.⁶⁸

The remaining three modes of evaluation were certainly ongoing throughout the crisis, but it is difficult to pinpoint their influence on policymaking. The first, and most important, was the way politicians and officials evaluate events themselves. While evidence to prove self-criticism is very scarce (aside from personal accounts), some hints of criticism and reflection may be found in the way structures were changed mid-crisis. While other reasons may have been influential, the decision to create new organisations within DPM&C and Defence to manage different aspects of the crisis can be interpreted as learning, and perhaps contemporary criticism of the policymaking process.⁶⁹

One group that did not have a formal review of their performance was the NSCC. One interviewee noted that ministers are 'constantly reassessing as things move on', but:

There's not that much time available to sit down and do an academic review of what's gone on before. But in the moving forward exercise, you are reassessing as you go.⁷⁰

This response seems to echo the 1943 slogan concerning the lack of time for review when things are busy. This seems unlikely to change because ministers will always be confronted with a new issue to deal with. It is also unlikely to change because it

⁶⁶ Interview with Frank Lewincamp.

⁶⁷ Interview with Frank Lewincamp.

⁶⁸ Interviews with Scott Dawson, Frank Lewincamp and John Hartley.

⁶⁹ Interview 051-06 mentioned the concerns being reflected about coordination and their role in the decision to establish the Taylor Committee.

⁷⁰ Interview with Daryl Williams.

would require a willingness on the part of ministers to initiate reviews of their own performance voluntarily—a willingness that was not been seen in this case or before. But while internal review and ‘lessons learnt’ processes can be difficult to conduct when time is short, they offer at least one way of learning from experience.

Parliamentary committees can play a role in evaluation—but none had an effect on policymaking in 1999. Of the two parliamentary bodies operating in 1999 the Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee (FADTRC), was the most focused on this crisis through its hearings on the social, political and economic conditions in East Timor. This committee often probed officials with questions about government policy, the history of the case, the facts of the emerging crisis, and details of Australia’s assistance to East Timor. However, the committee’s interim report, which was tabled soon after INTERFET deployed, only contained recommendations concerning the future of Radio Australia and a request for a Committee visit to the territory.⁷¹ The committee’s final recommendations were similarly slim. Aside from another request to visit Indonesia, the only policy-relevant recommendation concerned East Timorese access to oil from the Timor Gap.⁷² None of these recommendations acted as evaluation, or had a significant impact on policy.

The Senate Estimates process is another forum where evaluation can occur. The purpose of this process is to examine the operations of government by considering ‘estimates of government expenditure referred to Senate legislation committees as part of the annual budget cycle’.⁷³ This mechanism provided an opportunity for senators to ask detailed questions of public servants and, in so doing, scrutinise the government and its performance. In 1999–2000, most of the issues raised in this committee related to the costs of the Timor campaign, the effects of the campaign on other areas of Defence, and questions about issues such as reserve forces

⁷¹ Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee, *Interim Report on East Timor*, Senator J Hogg (Chair), Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 1999, paragraphs 3.54 and 3.57.

⁷² Foreign Affairs Defence and Trade References Committee, *Final Report into the Inquiry into East Timor*, Senator J Hogg (Chair), Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2000, p. 74 and p. 200.

⁷³ Australian Senate, ‘Consideration of Estimates by the Senate’s Legislation Committees,’ Senate Brief No 5, September 2006, available <http://www.aph.gov.au>, accessed 25 February 2006.

and equipment.⁷⁴ There were some questions about readiness, as well as Indonesian activities and the TNI–ADF relationship.

That neither committee appeared to contribute to evaluation highlights the difficulties that even Parliament has. While committees can get good access to departmental officers and ask questions of them, the depth of questioning generally depends upon the expertise of the individual senator and their staff. This format also creates a competitive atmosphere where officials aim to provide complete answers, while ensuring their answers provide only enough information to answer the specific question. Nor can officials discuss classified information in this forum. These shortcomings make parliamentary committees unsuitable for the type of reflection or self-criticism that aids evaluation.

Policy advice not systematically evaluated

Despite the different types of evaluation discussed above, there was no evidence of a systematic evaluation of policymaking during or after the East Timor crisis. Of the identified evaluation efforts, Behm’s report on defence command arrangements provides one instance of systemic evaluation, albeit one focused within a single department. The other major evaluation by the ANAO crossed departmental lines to a small extent, but it was focused on the management of the deployment.⁷⁵ While both are examples of evaluation, they fall well short of a government-wide process that would be useful for evaluating policymaking processes and structures.

This should not be surprising. Michael Di Francesco noted that Australian policy departments of the 1990s ‘commonly protested that evaluating policy advising activities was impractical since it presented what they saw as insurmountable problems of definition ... and fuelled concerns that, if pressed, assessment would invariably fall back on judgmental factors’.⁷⁶ According to Di Francesco, that would

⁷⁴ For example, see Senate Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade Committee, *Consideration of Additional Estimates (Department of Defence)*, 10 February 1999. At least six meetings of this committee discussed East Timor issues in 1999–2000.

⁷⁵ It should be noted that the ANAO is mandated to examine government agencies, not Cabinet (see Commonwealth of Australia, *Auditor-General Act 1997 (Commonwealth)*, available <http://www.comlaw.gov.au>, accessed 18 October 2007).

⁷⁶ M Di Francesco, ‘An Evaluation Crucible: Evaluating Policy Advice in Australian Central Agencies’, *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 59, no. 1, 2000, p. 37.

reduce evaluation to a highly political activity in a sphere where policy advice was traditionally held to be non-political.

Indeed, the reticence to be open to any external evaluation—particularly in the highly partisan Senate—is well illustrated in this exchange between the FADTRC Chairman, Senator John Hogg of Queensland, and DFAT’s John Dauth. According to *Hansard*, Senator Hogg said:

Throughout this inquiry, there have been more brickbats than bouquets for DFAT. If you have read the *Hansard* that will show itself to be fairly true. There has been a claim—and these are my words trying to paraphrase a number of people who have put evidence to us—that DFAT has failed in its advice to the government, in its advice to the Parliament... there have also been claims by some people appearing before us—rightly or wrongly; I am not siding with anyone on the evidence—that there should be an inquiry into DFAT and its shortcomings over a long period of time, whether it be 25 years ago or even today. Do you have a response to that?’

Dauth’s response was short: ‘No. Senator, I do not’.⁷⁷

There is anecdotal evidence to suggest that the lessons of East Timor informed planning for the next major national security issue, which involved the Sydney Olympics in 2000, and for national security policymaking in general.⁷⁸ This type of evaluation is, however, inherently personal and reliant upon a continuing role for key participants in future relevant activities.

Observations about evaluation

The two main characteristics of evaluation developed in Part I are very closely matched to the experience of this case. While the main evaluation efforts occurred after the crisis, none were systematic, cross-government evaluations of policymaking. However, this is not to say that evaluation did not occur at all—it can be inferred from structural change, such as the Paterson and Taylor committees. The decision to increase force readiness in February 1999 could also be offered as one example of early evaluation and anticipation. These changes show that evaluation can occur during the policy cycle.

⁷⁷ Foreign Affairs, Defence and Trade References Committee, *Economic, social and political conditions in East Timor*, 6 December 1999, p. 39.

⁷⁸ Interviews with Chris Barrie, Frank Lewincamp, Steve Darvill, Aldo Borgu, 028-05, and 033-05.

Evaluation seems more likely to occur after failure, particularly when there is a strong public demand.⁷⁹ In this case, voices for change to policymaking structures would likely have been hampered by the overall perception that INTERFET was a successful mission—indeed, about 99 per cent of Australians interviewed in one survey thought the ADF had performed well in East Timor.⁸⁰ Speaking against a strongly held conventional wisdom and demanding a review can be difficult. These difficulties can continue even where well-researched and considered recommendations are provided as evaluation. As this case shows, not all recommendations are acted upon, no matter how prescient or logical they may be.

This chapter completes the examination of the East Timor case and its comparison against the proposed characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia. This examination has shown a strong degree of continuity between the proposed characteristics and the East Timor case, particularly in the role of the prime minister and his executive, in the importance of external actors, and in the complexity of coordination and implementation. But some change was also identified, particularly in the officials' role in decision-making and in a noticeable increase in collegiality between departments. Change was also observed in the policymaking structures during the crisis. The final tasks for this dissertation involve refining the characteristics of crisis policymaking that have been presented in this and preceding chapters, and identifying the implications of this research for the future Australian crisis policymaking system. These tasks are undertaken in the concluding chapter.

⁷⁹ A point made by Interview 052-06.

⁸⁰ I McAllister, *Attitude Matters: Public opinion in Australia towards defence and security*, Australian Strategic Policy Institute, Canberra, 2004, p. 4.

CONCLUSION: REFINING THE CHARACTERISTICS OF CRISIS POLICYMAKING

Two major conclusions are drawn from the research presented in this dissertation. The first is that enduring characteristics of Australian crisis policymaking can be identified. The second is that while the broader national security policymaking system is an important influence, the contingent nature of crisis and political preferences are generally responsible for variation in the system during crises. The dissertation has also developed a number of insights into the understanding of crisis policymaking and the East Timor case that add to the store of knowledge about each.

This concluding chapter contains two sections. In the first, the characteristics identified in earlier chapters are drawn together and then reduced to a manageable, essential group. The section then explores the two major causes of variation within the crisis policymaking system. The second and final section identifies implications for Australia's future crisis policymaking system, and concludes by describing this dissertation's substantive and methodological contributions to the understanding of crisis policymaking in Australia in general and of Australia's role in the East Timor crisis in particular.

The characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia

Part I developed characteristics of national security policymaking (Chapter 1), and proposed characteristics of its subordinate crisis mode by examining historical vignettes for evidence of change and continuity in the system over time (Chapters 2 and 3). These proposed characteristics were tested in Part II using the East Timor crisis of 1999. This work provides a sound basis on which to identify the characteristics of crisis policymaking, and to identify why the system changes. These characteristics are aggregated in Table 8.

Table 8: The Characteristics of Crisis Policymaking in Australia

Phase	Characteristic of Crisis Policymaking	Variable or consistent?
Issue Identification	The prime minister, his national security ministers and their senior officials are the dominant domestic actors in issue identification and, by extension, problem definition.	Consistent
	Foreign actors and events (especially governments) have the ability to place issues on the crisis policy agenda when they intend to harm Australian interests, when the interests of Australia's allies and friends are threatened, and when high levels of interdependence mean that threats to others' interests are viewed as threats to Australia.	Consistent
	Other domestic actors have a limited ability to identify issues in a crisis.	Consistent
	Mass appeal plays a limited role in issue identification.	Consistent
Policy Analysis	Where the ability to conduct rational comprehensive analysis is limited in a crisis, decision-makers turn to trusted sources of advice. This can change the structure of policymaking and which actors will be influential.	Consistent
	Policy issues are rarely analysed as individual, discrete problems, and the nature of competition between issues and interests, and the consequent influence on the issue at hand, makes analysis iterative.	Consistent
	Policy insiders dominate.	Consistent
	Where dominant frameworks exist, they are likely to be noticeable where there is no clear lead for a crisis.	Variable
Policy Instruments	The instruments most used by the Australian Government in crises are diplomacy, alliances, military force, economic levers (including foreign aid), information, international law, and (sometimes) social levers.	Consistent
	The utility of foreign and defence policy instruments is highly situational in a crisis.	Consistent
Consultation	All options are used with overseas interlocutors (who are primarily other governments and major international organisations); with information, discussion, partnership and delegation commonly occurring.	Consistent
	Consultation between the government and the public usually takes the form of a one-way passage of information.	Consistent

	Much consultation occurs in secret.	Consistent
Coordination	Governments describe structures and routines that suit their particular preferences and best thinking for the time, the task at hand, and external factors.	Consistent
	Coordination is basically collegial, but the potential for conflict should not be ignored.	Variable
Decision	The prime minister is dominant.	Consistent
	Cabinet conventions are based on collective responsibility, secrecy, and recorded decisions.	Consistent
	Officials, when invited, answer questions of a technical nature and leave the Cabinet room before decisions are taken.	Variable
Implementation	Implementation is considered throughout the policy cycle.	Consistent
	The more agencies involved, the more difficult implementation becomes.	Consistent
Evaluation	If conducted at all, evaluation typically occurs after the policy has been implemented.	Consistent
	Policy advice is not systemically evaluated.	Consistent

This table shows remarkable consistency among the characteristics. The stable constitutional basis and accepted conventions of government help explain this. For instance, the executive's role has been developed in a largely informal way and has resulted in a very strong role for the prime minister. Few immediate political constraints are placed on executive action, mainly because the Australian public and Parliament do not pay constant attention to national security issues—and because the process is generally closed and secretive. This provides the executive with significant latitude to identify the issues and develop policy in their preferred way. The external orientation of crises also provides a consistent and enduring role for foreign actors. Another noteworthy consistency can be found in the absence of frequent, structured evaluation. The lack of a formal method for evaluating policymaking performance in crises means the Australian Government misses real opportunities to learn from experience and improve.

There is always potential for variation in coordination structures and routines, dominant frameworks in policy analysis, and cooperation during a crisis. Other examples of variation can be seen in conventions, such as the role of officials in Cabinet meetings. The choice of policy instruments is an excellent example of how the external environment creates variation, particularly in the way the situational utility of instruments changes from crisis-to-crisis. The main sources of variation will be described further in the next section.

While the twenty-two characteristics presented in Table 8 are thorough and suitable for lengthy analysis, this list is not easily used to discuss crisis policymaking under other conditions. These characteristics also overlap in a number of places, and some are more important than others. Refining these twenty-two to a smaller group provides a shorthand way to discuss crisis policymaking without compromising the substance of this dissertation. This essential group is described in more detail below.

Dominant executive

The national security executive's dominance of crisis policymaking is evident from its role in issue identification, policy analysis, coordination, consultation and decision. The executive's dominance also impedes evaluation.

Of those forming this executive, the prime minister stands above the others in crisis policymaking.¹ He maintains his position by using his superior institutional and political resources to provide leadership to the Cabinet, and usually the nation, when crisis occurs. Of his political resources, his support in the party room and Parliament's lower house are significant assets. But his institutional resources are more important in crisis. He has his own sources of advice, and he also chooses the method of decision-making—although he must take care to ensure Cabinet supports him on major decisions. Another critical advantage is his role as an information hub. In the tight timeframes of a crisis, where communication channels narrow and discussions with overseas interlocutors are of great import, the prime minister has an exclusive view. The prime minister is also the leader who defines the problem to the public and generally acts as the personification of national interests. These advantages and responsibilities mean he must receive the best possible level of support in a crisis.

The key national security ministers are also important. But while their sources of information, advice and resources are significant, they rarely secure authority over other departments. For example, the Defence minister may be highly influential when the defence force is employed, but the National Security Committee of Cabinet (NSCC) is unlikely to approve supporting diplomatic or economic activities without the foreign minister's concurrence or a prime-ministerial directive. At times, the foreign minister may be able to act as the lead in a crisis, as Barwick did in the early stages of *Konfrontasi*. However, this position is easily lost if the prime minister takes a direct interest.

Senior officials and ministerial advisers are the executive's last main component. Australian leaders rely on advice from these two groups, despite the occasional instances of unilateral decision-making. Under most conditions, senior officials and advisers are highly influential in issue identification, policy analysis, consultation, coordination and implementation. Some play a discreet part in decision as well. Trust is an essential part of this relationship—as the East Timor case showed,

¹ This finding provides strong support to a range of other work on Australian foreign policy. For other work that also makes this link, see P Edwards, *Prime Ministers and Diplomats: The Making of Australian Foreign Policy 1901–1949*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1983; R Trood, 'Prime Ministers and Foreign Policy', in P Weller (ed), *Menzies to Keating: The Development of Australian Prime Ministership*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 1992; and A Gyngell and M Wesley, *Making Australian Foreign Policy*, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2003, pp. 97–102.

increasing trust between ministers and their officials changed the operating mode of the NSCC. A number of senior officials involved in this case also referred to their close contacts with others, and the positive effect of these relationships on the smooth functioning of the crisis policymaking system. The characteristic of executive dominance is unlikely to change, although political preferences are likely to change the location of, and the structures employed to make, decisions.

Collegial approach

This dissertation showed that the Australian crisis policymaking system tends towards a collegial approach, which supports the analysis of foreign policymaking by Gyngell and Wesley.² Although interagency conflict does occur, it rarely reaches the worst excesses of bureaucratic politics.³ This is because role clarity, political direction, agreed processes, personal relationships and trust serve to mitigate or resolve conflicting points of view—most of the time.

This collegiate approach has other effects on policymaking. It, together with the pressures of time and secrecy, makes rational-comprehensive approaches to policymaking less valued in the process. Instead, ministers and senior officials tend to use their experience and intuition to make sense of emerging situations where normal policy processes cannot or do not deliver within their perceived time limitations. This informal analytical process generally produced satisfactory outcomes in the East Timor case, but it also meant Australia did not fully recognise the importance of some issues or events until it was too late to have influence. The continued maintenance of an ineffective formal system only serves as a source of unnecessary risk in crisis.

Secretive and closed system

Crisis policymaking is likely to remain secretive and closed due to the system's competitive nature, time pressures, and the privileged sources of information used. The same pressures also impose restrictions about who within government has information about future plans, while the use of sensitive intelligence usually prevents

² Ibid., p. 32.

³ The disagreement between the Department of External Affairs (DEA) and the Prime Minister's Department (PMD) at the start of *Konfrontasi* provides an example of how different opinions lead to the creation of a structural mechanism (the Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee – FADC) to ameliorate interdepartmental conflict.

national leaders from releasing some kinds of information during a crisis and for some time after the event. While the lack of transparency gives some people cause for concern⁴, even critics concede that secrecy in national security matters is usually in the public interest.⁵ However, some change may be necessary because future governments will have to contend with increased public expectations, competing sources of information, interconnected problems, and a broader range of actors involved in national security.⁶

Central role for external actors

While most domestic actors play peripheral roles in crises, foreign governments and other external actors are usually at the centre. At the start (in many cases), an external actor frames the issue at hand by challenging an existing interest. External actors may also help the government meet a challenge by employing their significant resources, such as military forces or economic assets. Close consultation with allies will be necessary in most crises.

Since this characteristic is unlikely to change, the future crisis policymaking system must create effective linkages with allies or potential partners while denying information to adversaries. The system must also provide information on the capability and intentions of these actors in a timely and relevant way so decision-makers and policy analysts understand overt and subtle indicators of change.

Complicated and complex implementation

The significant range of issues involved in any crisis makes policymaking complicated. Identifying the issues at stake is critical, because this directly bears upon the instruments used and the range of actors involved. This increases the importance of having multidisciplinary planning teams and sound written procedures, and of

⁴ C Oatley, *Australia's National Security Framework: A Look to the Future*, Australian Defence Studies Centre, University of New South Wales, Canberra, 2000, p. 18; and B Robert and C Lajtha, 'A New Approach to Crisis Management', *Journal of Contingencies and Crisis Management*, vol. 10, no. 4, 2002, pp. 181–3.

⁵ W Funnell, *Government by Fiat: The Retreat from Responsibility*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2001, p. 190.

⁶ This future environment and its range of challenges is discussed in D Beveridge, 'Australia's Future Threat Space: Strategic Risks and Vulnerabilities', *Security Challenges*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2006, pp. 45–52; and D Connery, *National Security Community 2020: Six Practical Recommendations for the Australian Government*, The Kokoda Foundation, Canberra, 2007, pp. 6–15.

providing opportunities to practice together before a crisis occurs. Such measures will improve participants' ability to understand the implications of possible events, or anticipate how their policies may be challenged in crises.

The growing number of actors and actions, and reactions among them; the apparent compression of time and space; and the interconnectedness of future national security crises will make implementation increasingly complex.⁷ Yet the characteristic of complexity is one that Australian governments have found difficult to manage at times. For example, the failed attempt to create a coordinated counter-subversion plan for Asia in the 1950s shows how difficult it can be to implement effective plans and align departmental efforts.⁸

This essential group of characteristics provides a basis for thinking about the future of Australia's crisis policymaking system. While others have suggested methods such as 'first principles'⁹ or adapting a foreign system for Australian purposes¹⁰, these characteristics have the significant advantage of being rooted in the system's history and inherent nature. While examining other systems and borrowing a good idea is worthwhile, being conscious of the system's characteristics decreases the likelihood of developing a system that is alien to its nature. While there is a strong degree of continuity in these characteristics, change has occurred in the structures, processes and norms of crisis policymaking. Understanding how and why these characteristics have and may change is therefore an important part of understanding the system.

Accounting for variation

Two factors account for variation in Australia's crisis policymaking system. The first, political preference, stems from the prime minister's ability to adopt different methods of decision-making and to restructure the crisis policymaking

⁷ M Evans, 'Towards an Australian National Security Strategy: A Conceptual Analysis', *Security Challenges*, vol. 3, no. 4, 2007, p. 117.

⁸ C Waters, 'A failure of imagination: R.G. Casey and Australian plans for counter-subversion in Asia, 1954–1956', *Australian Journal of Politics and History*, vol. 45, no. 3, 1999, pp. 360–3.

⁹ I Wing, 'Reapplying First Principles', paper presented at the *Safeguarding Australia Summit 2007*, Canberra, 2007.

¹⁰ A Dupont, 'Taking out policy insures country against trouble', *Australian*, 7 November 2000, p. 15; and G Keating, 'The Machinery of Australian National Security Policy: Changes, Continuing Problems and Possibilities', *Australian Defence Force Journal*, no. 166, 2005, pp. 24–5.

system. Sometimes, the prime minister will be able to make decisions unilaterally; at other times, Cabinet will be involved. The prime minister can seek advice from different sources, or stick to his established sources. He can also direct others to establish new committees, and bypass existing ones if he needs to. This power to revise the system is a major source of change.

The important role played by informal relationships between individuals is relevant here.¹¹ Trust and personal contacts reduce the costs of interaction and reduce disruptive competition. Trust also provides actors with the confidence to bend established rules or processes to increase the speed of policymaking. This helps to explain, in part, why the NSCC was an effective body during the East Timor crisis. It also helps to understand why departmental leaders were confident of their understanding of what ministers wanted to achieve.

Despite this informality and ability to vary structures and processes, the crisis policymaking system is not anarchical.¹² The prime minister must operate within a system where institutions, such as Cabinet and the House of Representatives (at least), must explicitly or implicitly support his decisions at critical times. The four distinct modes for prime ministerial decision-making, the limited structural options for advisory systems, and the consistent influence of external actors also serve as system boundaries. Similarly, informal relationships must be legitimised by formal structures or personal responsibility. Thus, national security institutions—departments, intelligence agencies, Cabinet, and nominated committees—create a closed structure that bars entry to new actors, unless an existing one takes responsibility for their actions.

The contingent nature of crises is the second main cause of variation. Every crisis involves different interests, actors and responsibilities because instruments have greater or lesser utility (described as ‘situational utility’ earlier) in each situation. For

¹¹ This supports Donald Chisholm’s view that informal coordination helps to correct the failures of formal systems. He goes on to argue that informal coordination is based on ‘good behaviour and relationships’. See D Chisholm, *Coordination without Hierarchy: informal structures in multiorganisational systems*, University of California Press, Berkeley, 1989, pp. 16, 66, 114–20 and 130–4. Other authors have also noted how the informal system replaces the formal in crises. For example, see U Rosenthal, P ’t Hart, and MT Charles, ‘The World of Crises and Crisis Management’, in Rosenthal, ’t Hart, and Charles (eds), *Coping With Crises: The Management of Disasters, Riots and Terrorism*, Charles C Thomas, Springfield, 1989, p. 18.

¹² Gyngell and Wesley, p. 22.

example, the Jenkins mini-crisis of 1986 was a case where the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) minimised input from others and de-escalated tension. Keeping the military out of calculations in 1954's United Action crisis, and keeping Australian combat forces out of Borneo until late in *Konfrontasi*, are other good examples. Similarly, while diplomacy was unable to prevent Japan from advancing towards Australia in 1942, it was important to securing the new relationship (and eventual alliance) with the United States. While Australia is not usually known for financial muscle, it was able to apply its relative wealth to help build and sustain an effective coalition for the intervention in East Timor. This source of variation contains the impetus of future change as broader challenges are categorised as national security issues, and different instruments are used to achieve national objectives. Any future crisis policymaking system should remain flexible enough to account for these variables.

Insights from the empirical findings

The research presented in this dissertation presents important insights into the roles played by different actors in crisis and the relationships between them. This has important implications for the structure, processes and development of Australia's future crisis policymaking system.

Implications for structure

This dissertation has identified the propensity for *ad hoc* change in Australia's crisis policymaking system. This insight tells us that any future Australian system should not be overly reliant upon rigid structures and processes. Instead, a future system should capitalise on Australia's collegiality, small size, and the direct involvement of political leaders to ensure responsiveness and coordinated action. These requirements make the structure of NSCC broadly suitable for future challenges, particularly as this committee brings the political and policy domains together.

Despite this general predisposition towards flexibility, there is a need to develop a more effective way of planning responses to national security crises that ensures all the instruments of national power are brought together early, in a coherent, comprehensive and effective way. This need was demonstrated in three areas during

the East Timor crisis. First, planning for the intervention tended to focus on individual policy instruments, meaning important work for the nation-building aspect of the task was not conducted together with the initial security response. There is a need to ensure that all aspects of a situation receive attention at the same time. Second, the inability of a rational-comprehensive planning system to provide decision-makers with advice on the full range of options contributed (in the eyes of some participants) to Australia missing some opportunities to influence events that were important to the national interest. While there may have been a high level of satisfaction with the informal process that was used in 1999, the willingness to accept an ineffective formal system creates a risk factor in crisis that could be reduced by prior attention to this challenge. Third, the imperative to coordinate policy and operations from a whole-of-government perspective, which was demonstrated by the creation of the *ad hoc* Taylor committee in 1999, could be met by increasing the capacity within the Australian Government to develop national security policy, supervise its implementation, rehearse scenarios and evaluate outcomes of real and rehearsed crises.

The need for a more integrated, ‘national security’ approach to planning is only likely to increase in the future as the increasing complexity of challenges heighten the need to incorporate advice from a range of sources—some of which currently sit outside the security-cleared system boundaries. There are a range of existing proposals to achieve this¹³, with the best focusing on the appointment of a national security adviser to the prime minister and developing additional capacity within the Department of Prime Minister and Cabinet (DPM&C) to plan ahead, coordinate activity, supervise implementation, evaluate performance and develop capacity within the system.

¹³ Such as R Babbage, *Preparing Australia’s Defence for 2020: Transformation or Reform?*, The Kokoda Papers No. 1, The Kokoda Foundation, Canberra, 2005, p. 43; B Pacey, *National Effects-Based Approach – A Policy Discussion Paper*, Working Paper 381, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra, 2004; A Bergin and D Woolner, ‘Security needs power of dedicated leader’, *Australian Financial Review*, 28 May 2003, p. 63; and A Dupont, ‘A National Security Policy for Australia’, unpublished, copy in author’s possession, 1998.

Implications for processes

The evidence presented here agrees with the depiction of the national security executive as the central domestic actors.¹⁴ Within this group, it is the prime minister who emerges as dominant in crisis policymaking. Consequently, the future policy making system should account for the prime minister's role, and ensure he or she is provided with the best possible sources of information and advice. This advice should provide strategic options that unify the executive's preferences, while allowing the prime minister to provide early political input to planning. While the prime minister should not control implementation, the advisory system needs to provide a source of unfettered feedback on the crisis situation.

A national security adviser, as mentioned above, would provide such support. Appointing a 'minister assisting the prime minister for national security', rather than a bureaucrat or another ministerial adviser, is the best way of injecting early and ongoing political input to the policymaking process. Such an appointment would lend authority to the position, as a minister assisting would clearly have the status and access to deal with the other national security ministers as an equal. It would also create an effective way of maintaining accountability because a minister assisting can be asked questions about policy and process in Parliament.

The closed and secretive nature of crisis policymaking should be acknowledged in the future system, while ensuring that the process maintains its legitimacy and effectiveness. Ministerial control over national security policy is the main way of promoting legitimacy, although measures such as freedom of information (to the extent these laws apply to national security), Parliamentary committees and archival rules also provide *post-facto* assistance.

The informal nature of the existing crisis policymaking system tends to a rapid recourse to a small group of trusted insiders—a pattern that arguably heightens the risk of cognitive biases such as groupthink.¹⁵ There are a few ways of reducing this risk, and enhancing effectiveness, without disrupting the system. These include

¹⁴ Such as Gyngell and Wesley, Chapter 5.

¹⁵ IL Janis, *Groupthink: psychological studies of policy decisions and fiascoes*, 2nd edn, Houghton Mifflin, Boston, 1982. See also P't Hart, *Groupthink in government: a study of small groups and policy failure*, Swets & Zeitlinger, Amsterdam, 1990, for other cognitive biases that may afflict small groups in crisis.

structural and process changes that increase the internal contestability of advice, which may include placing an arbiter between competing advisors or creating a new competitor in a decentralised policymaking system. This change would enable the use of a more comprehensive planning system, as advocated above, and could be achieved by expanding DPM&C's ability to make and supervise national security policy. As this group could also make a contribution to evaluation—albeit one done by those who, in part, conducted the activity.

The effectiveness of the future system will be strongly influenced by the ability to expand the group of insiders quickly and securely in the face of more complicated challenges. This expanded group of insiders may include new players from government policy instruments such as education, health, economic analysis and disaster management capability; and even key commercial providers and owners of critical infrastructure under some circumstances. Having the ability to expand quickly requires attention to mundane aspects of administration, such as information technology and security clearances. Exercises, simulations, tailored education and personnel exchanges would also contribute to this—and provide a way to ameliorate the negative aspects of competition—by helping all parts of the system to understand their roles, build trust, and ensure that policy skills are highly valued. An effective evaluation system would also help to promote accountability and learning.

Implications for system development

The spectrum of friction between bureaucratic politics and collegiality received much attention in this dissertation. Indeed, the balance between the two changed as the research moved from the literature on national security policy and past instances of crisis into the modern crisis policymaking system and East Timor. This indicates significant variation in this characteristic over time, and shows that future governments cannot assume the policymaking system will remain collegial. Nor should collegiality be accepted as a universal good, for the ability to air competing positions strengthens policy analysis. The suggestions made above for structural changes and greater ministerial involvement will help to promote collegiality, as long as other factors such as role clarity, training and education receive attention as well.

This research has identified a strong role for ministerial advisers in policymaking. This group has not been a feature of writing on national security until recently, and then really only during instances of controversy rather than in national security crises.¹⁶ Yet the prime minister's international adviser and advisers in the other ministerial offices (to a lesser extent) played key roles in bringing people and their positions together—and sometimes, on the actual content of policy. A future crisis policymaking system would be made stronger by recognising this influence, for example, by formally incorporating advisors into national security exercises.¹⁷ Measures to improve the advisors' accountability are also likely to improve the trust between them and the non-partisan actors in the system.¹⁸

Contribution

While this dissertation aims to identify the consistent and variable characteristics of crisis policymaking in Australia, it also contributes to the body of knowledge of crisis policymaking in general and the understanding of Australian policymaking in the East Timor crisis. This dissertation also makes a contribution to the methodology of studying policymaking.

The in-depth examination of crisis policymaking in Australia is the major contribution of this dissertation. This examination was built on the first systematic study of national security as a policy field. The longitudinal comparison of four crises and the emergence of the modern crisis policymaking system allowed the system's consistent and variable characteristics to be developed, tested and eventually refined. This method for producing the characteristics should provide a high degree of confidence for those who apply these findings to other case studies, or for those who use them for practical problems such as designing a future crisis policymaking system for Australian conditions.

¹⁶ Such as the 'Children Overboard Affair' of 2001, as described in A Tiernan, *Power Without Responsibility*, UNSW Press, Sydney, 2007; D Marr and M Wilkinson, *Dark Victory*, 2nd edn, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002; and P Weller, *Don't Tell the Prime Minister*, Scribe, Melbourne, 2002. An exception is Gyngell and Wesley, pp. 109–111.

¹⁷ The author was told by one ministerial adviser that he played a role in the 2005 Multi-jurisdictional counter-terrorism exercise.

¹⁸ This view adds to the normative perspective on the need for accountability that is advocated by Tiernan, *Power Without Responsibility*, pp. 236–7.

Secondly, this dissertation makes a substantial contribution to the understanding of how Australian policymaking was conducted during the East Timor crisis. While the interpretation of events differs only in details from the broader accounts by Goldsworthy, Greenlees and Garran, White, and the Department of Foreign Affairs¹⁹, this dissertation is unique in that it looks at the policymakers' perspective of crisis. It shows how the formal, accepted structures and processes needed important modifications when the system was placed under pressure. The examination also provides insights into the changing conception of some policy instruments, and how the relationships between actors varied once in crisis. This research fills part of the gap in the understanding of this crisis that Cotton identified in 2004.²⁰ It also provides a window into a usually closed world, in a similar manner to Edwards' study of Australian social policy²¹ and Heclo and Wildavsky's groundbreaking examination of the British Treasury.²²

Lastly, the combination of the Australian Policy Cycle with interviews, official sources and other primary and secondary accounts makes a methodological contribution to the study of policymaking. This dissertation shows how the policy cycle can be gainfully employed as a heuristic framework for case studies. This usage supports both the proponents of the policy cycle and its critics (such as Howard and Everett²³) by not claiming too much for the cycle and recognising its limitations as an explanatory tool.

The interviews conducted for this dissertation will prove a valuable resource for the future, especially as the official record is likely to be incomplete when it is released to the public. In addition, these interviews have told a story about the

¹⁹ D Goldsworthy, 'East Timor,' in Goldsworthy and P Edwards (eds), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia*, Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2003; D Greenlees, and R Garran, *Deliverance: The Inside Story of East Timor's Fight for Freedom*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2002; H White, 'The Road to INTERFET: East Timor – 1999', unpublished paper, 2007; and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *East Timor in Transition 1998–2000: An Australian Policy Challenge*, Commonwealth of Australia, Canberra, 2001.

²⁰ J Cotton, *East Timor, Australia and Regional Order: intervention and its aftermath in Southeast Asia*, Routledge, London, 2004, p. 123.

²¹ M Edwards, *Social Policy, Public Policy: From Problem to Practice*, Allen and Unwin, Crows Nest, 2001.

²² H Heclo and A Wildavsky, *The Private Government of Public Money: Community and Policy inside British Politics*, MacMillan, London, 1974.

²³ S Everett, 'The Policy Cycle: Democratic Process or Rational Paradigm Revisited?', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 62, no. 2, 2003; and C Howard, 'The Policy Cycle: A Model of Post Machiavellian Policy Making?', *Australian Journal of Public Administration*, vol. 63, no. 3, 2005.

structure and processes—and sometimes the emotion—of policymaking that are difficult to assemble using documents alone.

The analysis of the political, policy and administrative domains adds another layer of richness to the understanding of policymaking. This depth is often missed by the usual focus on political leaders, just as the detail of the structures and processes of policymaking are overlooked unless those working at lower-levels in the system are illuminated through a suitable research method.

This dissertation, in effect, tells a story of how Australia developed its crisis policymaking system from one suitable for a dependent nation, to one that helps a nation protect and advance its own interests. It has also shown how the nation's bureaucracy has gone from little interaction, through a period of significant competition, to one marked by collegiality. This dissertation also shows how Australia has moved from being dependent upon others for policy inputs to one that develops its own, in cooperation with allies and others. Yet this does not describe the end of a journey. Australia's future crisis policymaking system must continue to change in ways that accord with its nature, while retaining an ability to respond to new challenges. Such change will be essential because Australia will face more complex crises in the future, and these crises will involve high stakes for its relationships, sovereignty, public safety and the economy. How the Australian Government organises its policymaking system beforehand will be critical to managing the transformative potential of those events. Making the most of pre-crisis opportunities to improve organisation, training and ultimately culture will improve the ability of future policymakers to respond effectively to crisis. This is a critical matter for governments to address, and to review periodically to ensure the continued relevance and robustness of Australia's crisis policymaking system.

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Interviews

(This dissertation relied upon the generosity and trust of a number of serving and former officials. A number of interviewees asked for their identities to be protected in this dissertation, while others were happy to be named in the reference list but not quoted in the body. All references to appointments relate to Australian Government positions, unless described otherwise. In general, there appointments reflect only their contribution to the events or times covered in this dissertation).

- Ayers, Tony (Secretary of Defence 1984–94. Deputy Secretary in DPM&C 1976–9)
- Ayling, Brigadier Steve (Director General INTERFET Branch, Department of Defence, in 1999).
- Barratt, Paul (Secretary of the Department of Defence 1998–August 1999. He was an invited official at NSCC and a member of SCONS)

Barrie, Admiral Chris (Chief of the Defence Force 1998–2002. He was an invited official at NSCC and a member of SCONS).

Beazley, The Hon Kim, (Defence Minister from 1984–90, and Opposition Leader in 1999)

Behm, Allan (First Assistant Secretary (FAS) International Policy in 1998 and FAS Strategic Policy and Plans in 1999–2000)

Borgu, Aldo (adviser to Defence Minister John Moore in 1999)

Brabin-Smith, Richard (former Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence in Defence)

Brady, Martin (Director, Defence Signals Directorate in 1999, acting Deputy Secretary Strategy in August-September 1999)

Briggs, Rear Admiral Peter (Head, Strategic Operations Division in Defence from early 1997 to May 1999)

Calvert, Dr Ashton (Secretary of DFAT in 1999. He was an invited official at NSCC and a member of SCONS)

Carmody, Shane (former Deputy Secretary Strategy and Intelligence in Defence)

Castellaw, Lieutenant General John (Commander of III Marine Expeditionary Brigade in 1999 and deployed to East Timor)

Clarke, Air Vice-Marshal Kerry (Director General Operations in Strategic Operations Division in Defence in 1998–9)

Darvill, Steve (involved in operational planning as part of AusAID’s Humanitarian Emergencies section in 1999)

Dahlstrom, Federal Agent Tim (a member of the ‘UN and Other Overseas Commitments Coordination’ team for AFP in 1999. As part of this team, he was responsible for the detailed planning of AFP’s involvement, especially contingent preparation, for UNAMET)

Dawson, Scott (Assistant Director General East Asia Branch in AusAID from June 1999, with responsibility for East Timor. In the post-ballot period, he headed the AusAID Task Force that dealt with the immediate emergency response and then worked on the longer-term program for East Timor)

Fischer, The Hon Tim (Deputy Prime Minister and NSCC member March 1996–July 1999. He headed the Australian Parliamentary Delegation to East Timor in August 1999)

Fraser, Rt Hon Malcolm (Prime Minister from 1975–83)

Hailston, Lieutenant General Earl (lead planner for USPACOM until 31 May 1999. He then moved to Command III Marine Expeditionary Force in June 1999, which was responsible for deploying III MEB to East Timor)

Harris, Professor Stuart (Secretary of DFAT 1984–88)

Hartley, Major General John (Land Commander Australia in 1999)

Hughes, Assistant Commissioner Andrew (Director International and Operations for the AFP in 1999)

Keating, Major General Michael (Head, Strategic Operations Division in Defence from May 1999)

Lewincamp, Frank (Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation from 1998–2005)

Moore, The Hon John (Defence Minister and a member of NSCC in 1999)

Nicholson, Air Vice-Marshal Peter (Head Strategic Policy and Plans mid-1998–June 1999, then Head C4ISREW Division)

Scrafton, Michael (Assistant Secretary Regional Engagement, Policy and Programs at the start of 1999. He became Acting Head International Policy in August 1999, and was appointed to head ETPU in September 1999. He was also Defence’s representative on the Taylor Committee)

Sinclair, The Rt Hon Ian (former member of parliament, Defence Minister 1982–83)

Skoien, Matthew (Director Indonesia Section in International Policy Division from December 1998 to September 1999)

Taylor, Allan (Director General of the Australian Secret Intelligence Service and the ‘Taylor Committee’ in 1999)

Titheridge, Air Vice-Marshal Alan (former senior ADF officer)

Treloar, Air Vice-Marshal Bob (Commander Australian Theatre from May 1999)

Varghese, Peter (FAS International Division in DPM&C in 1999)

Whiddett, Commissioner Adrien (Assistant Commissioner responsible for Australian Federal Police Operations in 1999)

White, Hugh (advisor to Prime Minister Hawke and Defence Minister Kim Beazley from 1985–91, Deputy Secretary Strategy in Defence 1995–2000, and acting Secretary of the Defence Department in August–October 1999)

Whitlam, The Hon Gough (Prime Minister 1972–75)

Williams, Colonel Mike (Chief of Staff for the second US contingent in East Timor, 2000)

Williams, The Hon Daryl (Attorney General and a member for NSCC from 1996–2003)

Woolner, Derek (adviser to Defence Minister 1973–74)

PROTECTED IDENTITIES

005-06 (a former senior ADF officer with knowledge of Strategic Operations Division)

007-05 (former senior ADF officer who was closely involved with Defence planning for East Timor, including knowledge of liaison with the United Nations)

009-05 (ministerial adviser and senior Defence official)

010-05 (identity protected)

012-05 (official with direct knowledge of the East Timor ballot)

014-05 (former senior government official with knowledge of the Taylor Committee)

020-05 (former member of DPM&C with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
021-05 (former senior Defence intelligence official)
024-05 (DFAT official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
026-05 (identity protected)
028-05 (DFAT official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
030-05 (identity protected)
032-05 (identity protected)
033-05 (identity protected)
035-05 (identity protected)
037-05 (identity protected)
038-05 (ADF officer with knowledge of Strategic Operations Division)
046-06 (former senior ADF officer with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
048-06 (identity protected)
051-06 (former ministerial adviser and senior government official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
052-06 (former senior government official with direct knowledge of the East Timor case)
060-07 (former senior Defence and DFAT official)
062-07 (ADF officer with knowledge of the East Timor case)
064-07 (former ministerial adviser and government official)
066-07 (Defence official with knowledge of public affairs activities in 1999)

INTERVIEW GUIDE

The interviews were designed to gain insights into policymaking during the crisis in East Timor (1998–99). The interview was tailored to the individuals experience and interest, so each was different in some way. The questions below are representative of those asked and were used as a basis for discussion.

1. I understand that you (appointment/position) from (date) to (date). How do you recall the events that led to the intervention up to that point?
2. What happened during the acute crisis in September?
3. I am interested in your views of policymaking within (your organisation), and between (your organisation) and other agencies.
 - a. How were issues identified?
 - b. What type of analytical processes were used?
 - c. What steps did you take to coordinate effort within (your organisation)?
 - i. Please describe the mechanisms. What helped? What hindered?
 - ii. How effective was coordination within (your organisation)?
 - d. What was policymaking like within (your organisation)?
 - i. What factors or events made *ad hoc* measures necessary?
 - ii. How effective was policymaking?
4. If you had your time over again, what would you change to improve policymaking (that you learned as a result of this crisis, and perhaps as a result of your broader experience)?