

***The Armed Forces of New Zealand and the ANZUS Split: Costs and Consequences.* By Peter Jennings.** Occasional Paper No. 4. New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1988. 108 pp.

Given the paucity of public information on his subject, Peter Jennings has set himself a demanding task in attempting to determine the consequences for the New Zealand Armed Forces (AFNZ) of the Labour government's decision in early 1985 to embark on a policy course which would fundamentally change the nature of the nation's security relations with the United States. More specifically, the author pin-points those areas of defence co-operation between New Zealand and the United States which were affected by the latter's retaliation against the then Lange government's questioning of the U.S. practice of neither confirming nor denying the presence of nuclear weapons on board its vessels visiting foreign ports.

Following a brief discussion of the nature of defence co-operation between New Zealand and the United States prior to February 1985, a more substantial chapter is devoted to examining the "pain" subsequently suffered by the AFNZ including, *inter alia*, the loss of informal, high-level access to Pentagon officials and of expertise formerly gained through co-operative military exercises; restricted access to U.S. training courses, communications technology and research and development; complications in bilateral logistic supply and equipment maintenance arrangements; and the loss of intelligence products previously shared among the Western community.

The penultimate chapter then explores a number of consequences faced by the AFNZ caused by these unwelcome costs, including a serious decline in the operational capabilities of the three services, and in particular of the navy; the revelation of shortcomings, confusion and inconsistency within and between the government's policy pronouncements, budgetary allocations and force structure plans for a more self-reliant defence posture; and the prospect of increasing strains in defence co-operation between Australia and New Zealand as the former continues to out-pace AFNZ military skills through close defence co-operation with the United States and, as the author predicts, attempts to dominate policy and arms acquisition decisions made in Wellington in ways which may be detrimental both to the financial priorities of the New Zealand Government and the operational efficiency of the AFNZ.

Having cast a pessimistic eye over the AFNZ's prospects for development without the support formerly provided by the United States, the author concludes that, as of April 1988, the Labour government had failed in its attempts to develop a more self-reliant defence posture, incorporating

closer defence relations with Australia, as a means of offsetting the costs inflicted on the AFNZ by the ANZUS rift.

While the author's case is presented in forthright and well documented terms, backed at key points by information derived from private interviews with defence officials in the United States, New Zealand and Australia, the reader may be forgiven for feeling somewhat ill at ease amid the pages of such an apparently watertight and damning presentation. This feeling might be attributed to questions concerning issues which the author has chosen not to cover rather than to any doubts as to the veracity of the information provided.

For example, it would have been helpful for the author to have included at an early stage a brief section on the political conditions in New Zealand during the early to mid-eighties in order for those readers with little background knowledge (one suspects the majority of his audience) to appreciate the political thinking and imperatives which brought the Lange government to throw itself into a period of difficult security relations with both the United States and Australia. Indications of the political conditions of the time are consigned for the most part to glimpses scattered throughout the text or footnote references. In short, if the catalogue of privations suffered by the AFNZ is comprehensive, it lacks contextual perspective.

While the author stresses that the New Zealand military at no time questioned the government's right to make policy to which the services might object, the author presents unashamedly a pro-military case; a complement to the occasional, embarrassing leak from the New Zealand defence community designed to undermine the credibility of the government's publicly expressed confidence in the prospects for greater defence self-reliance minus elements of the U.S. connection. The reader is left with a bleak picture of alienation between the government and its defence bureaucracy and military personnel. A former defence minister receives sustained criticism, bordering on implicit allegations of incompetence, throughout the work, contributing to the overall impression of civilians as bogeymen baffling hard-pressed service personnel. Such may have been the case, but we are left somewhat sceptical of the simplicity of the sketch. In the interest of balance, it might have been worthwhile to have canvassed counterpoints to the New Zealand military's undoubtedly sincere, though perhaps in some instances, self-serving arguments against government policy. To what extent was the military engaged in preserving comfortable, though decreasingly relevant capabilities, skills, doctrine, international status and equipment more suited to a bygone era of defence dependency? Did the military possess proposals for the development of defence policy which were any less incoherent than those promoted by the

government? Were the losses felt by the AFNZ as permanent as the author believes? Are the alternatives to U.S. co-operation really so second-rate?

On the last question, for example, the reader will be obliged to look beyond the pages of this monograph for a full evaluation of the worth of non-U.S. sources of arms, intelligence co-operation and exercise and training expertise, particularly from Australia, Southeast Asia, and the Southwest Pacific. Admittedly, these are difficult areas for public analysis, a detailed account of which would be beyond the scope of a monograph-sized publication. But the author accepts too readily the New Zealand military's position that exercises under the Five-Power Defence Arrangements should be considered as less exacting complements to ANZUS exercises and that Army exercises with regional participants are qualitatively inferior to exercises with the United States. Again, such may be the case. However, inadequate attention is devoted to the relevance and value to New Zealand of the alternatives, especially with the increasingly sophisticated maritime and land capabilities emerging in Southeast Asia and the need for both Australia and New Zealand to become more actively involved in security issues in the Southwest Pacific in ways acceptable to that region.

Notwithstanding the above suggestions, the work is concisely written, tightly structured, and polished with a measure of wit welcome to what might otherwise have been a dry subject. Jennings displays a keen nose for the contradictions and irony revealed by juxtaposing various defence policy statements made prior to, and during the Lange government's term of office. Perhaps such an approach would be easy targets for the reader's titillation, but by maintaining his sense of purpose, the author successfully portrays the AFNZ's contemporary predicament and, by putting defence policy rhetoric into perspective, highlights the government's inadequate consideration of the difficult military problems caused by an essentially political decision.

Those familiar with the recent development of Australian defence self-reliance might be forgiven for suggesting that the New Zealand defence community could benefit from a kiwi version, more sophisticated than that attempted to date, of the process of defence policy consolidation triggered in 1986 by Dr Paul Dibb. If a future New Zealand government can address objectively the criticisms contained in this monograph, and doubtless in Jennings' works to come, it may find in the author a useful contributor to the cause. In the meantime, those of us on the sidelines can look forward to the fruits of Jennings' growing expertise in what has been a neglected area for considered analysis.

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