



Peace Movement Aotearoa

PO Box 9314, Wellington 6141. Tel (04) 382 8129, fax (04) 382 8173
email pma@xtra.co.nz website <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma>

Defence Review credibility questioned

16 June 2010

This update on the Defence Review follows the release of the 'Defence Review Consultation: Summary of Submissions' document last week. Initial concerns about the credibility of the Defence Review process, raised when the public consultation document was released in June 2009, have been heightened by the way the contents of at least one submission have been completely misrepresented in the summary document.

There are three sections below, with information on: the Defence Review; the 'Defence Review Consultation: Summary of Submissions' document; and what happens next. This update is available at <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/defrev0610.pdf>

- **Background information on the Defence Review**

The Defence Review was announced on 21 April 2009 as, "a fundamental assessment of New Zealand's security environment, as well as the roles and tasks the Defence Force is expected to fulfil and the capabilities it requires to achieve these. It will also seek to ensure New Zealand achieves maximum value for money from its defence spending. The first such Review in over a decade, it will develop a blueprint for preparing New Zealand and its Defence Force for the challenges they face now and in the future."¹

As part of the Review, a public consultation process was launched on 26 June 2009 to encourage "all New Zealanders to 'Have their Say'". [sic]² The original deadline for written submissions was 24 August 2009, although it was later extended to 31 October 2009, and there were public consultation meetings in different parts of the country in September 2009.

Initial concerns about how genuine the Review would be centred around the nature of the questions in the consultation document, in particular the narrow definition of "security", as well as the lack of any examination of whether we actually need armed forces given the absence of any identifiable military threat for which a 'defence' force might be required, and whether the deployment of armed forces overseas is the most useful contribution New Zealand can make to the international community.

Concerns about the consultation process were heightened by statements made by the Minister of Defence, Wayne Mapp, in a speech given the week before the original closing date for written submissions. He said that the "major strategic priorities" had already been identified and that "there is a broad consensus on New Zealand's fundamental security priorities"³. Furthermore, just three days before the public consultation meetings began (and before the final deadline for written submissions), he said, "The concept of "Enduring Conflict" is the background to the Defence Review" and that it ""has become the expectation of our Defence Force".⁴ The priorities, the consensus and the prospect of the armed forces being involved in "enduring conflict" were thus apparently decided before the Review was completed.

- **The 'Defence Review Consultation: Summary of Submissions' document**

The 'Defence Review Consultation: Summary of Submissions' document was released on 11 June 2010.⁵ The Foreword states that some key themes emerged: a high priority on the defence of New Zealand and its wider interests; greater cooperation with key defence partners; and a strengthening of the ANZAC relationship - perhaps unsurprisingly, similar themes to those identified by the Minister of Defence in his speeches during the period of public consultation.

What is rather surprising, however, is the inaccurate reporting of what at least one submission said - take, for example, this paragraph:

"Submitters such as the United Nations Association of New Zealand, the Peace Movement of Aotearoa and the Christian World Service that supported humanitarian roles believed that the Defence Force should focus on developing its capabilities to contribute to civil defence, search and rescue, disaster response and humanitarian relief."⁶

In fact, the Peace Movement Aotearoa submission said:

"All of the activities carried out by the Defence Force, with the exception of warfare, can be done by civilian agencies - fisheries protection, search and rescue, disaster relief and so on - and at far lower cost as civilian agencies do not require expensive military hardware and weapons systems."⁷

This paragraph plainly does not indicate any support for "humanitarian roles" for the Defence Force. It is not clear whether this misrepresentation was due to carelessness, wishful thinking, or a more deliberate attempt to give an impression of consensus around this issue. As recent comments by the Minister of Defence demonstrate, military involvement in humanitarian assistance has apparently become government policy:

"Humanitarian relief is increasingly a core task for all defence forces. The capabilities of defence forces need to explicitly provide for humanitarian requirements. They should form part of core military business, not be simply a secondary task."⁸

However, regardless of what the government has already decided, there is no excuse for misrepresenting the views of submitters - if the contents of one submission can be presented in the 'Summary of Submissions' as precisely the opposite of what was said, then the credibility of the whole document is questionable.

Furthermore, according to the figures in the 'Summary of Submissions'⁹, 45.7% of submissions came from the Defence Force, with a further 1.4% from Service related organisations - which raises a further question about how genuinely representative of public opinion the document, and indeed the whole Review process, is.

- **What happens next**

In addition to the Defence Review Consultation, two other processes will contribute to the overall Defence Review.

The first process comprises the three Companion Studies that were announced by the Associate Minister of Defence, Heather Roy, on 19 August 2009, to "enable a detailed examination of several important aspects of the links between Defence and society"¹⁰. The studies are on: the New Zealand Defence Industry, examining options for economic improvement in the sector; the

role of the New Zealand Defence Force in Youth programmes and the New Zealand Cadet Force; and Voluntary National Service, including examining future options for a whole of government strategy. The terms of reference for the studies are at <http://www.defence.govt.nz/review09/companion-studies-terms-reference.html> with an overview of some of the concerns about the studies at <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/defrev09pm.pdf>¹¹

The second process is an external NZDF 'Value for Money Review' (VFM) which the government has commissioned to: "identify efficiencies; identify options for shifting resources to front-line activities; and provide assurance and options around the cost effectiveness and sustainability of NZDF."¹²

The VFM and Defence Review Consultation outcomes will be submitted to Cabinet by the Secretary of Defence by the end of June 2010, and the outcome of the Companion Studies will be submitted by the end of July. The documents produced by the three processes will be used to write a Defence White Paper which is scheduled for release by the end of September 2010. The White Paper will replace the 1997 Defence White Paper¹³ and set New Zealand's defence policy for the next twenty years.

References

¹ Defence Review 2009 page at <http://www.defence.govt.nz/defence-review.html>

² As at note 1

³ "Our Defence Review is making solid progress towards its publication early next year. Major strategic priorities have been identified. The implications of these priorities on our capabilities, both now and in the future, are being worked through. Concurrently with this work we have been undertaking wider public consultation. Although the public consultation is not completed, it is apparent there is a broad consensus on New Zealand's fundamental security priorities." Speech to the Australia New Zealand Leadership Forum, Wayne Mapp, 21 August 2009 - <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech+australia+new+zealand+leadership+forum>

⁴ "The concept of "Enduring Conflict" is the background to the Defence Review. The past 15 years has seen the continuous deployment of the New Zealand Defence Force. These have included combat operations, as with the SAS in Afghanistan and elements of the early deployment to Timor-Leste. They have also involved stabilisation operations, shipping interdiction and patrol and intelligence gathering. All three services have been actively involved. The effect is that contemporary service people can expect to be deployed on overseas operations. It has become the expectation of our Defence Force. This is no surprise given New Zealand's geographic place in the world. For over 100 years, New Zealand servicemen and women have fought far from home. Whilst 'Enduring Conflict: Challenges and Responses', Speech to the Chief of Army's Conference, Wayne Mapp, 2 September 2009 - <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/speech+chief+army039s+conference+039enduring+conflict+challenges+and+responses039>

⁵ Defence Review Consultation: Summary of Submissions, Ministry of Defence, June 2010 - <http://www.defence.govt.nz/pdfs/defence-review-09-consultation-summary-submissions.pdf>

⁶ As at note 5, p 11

⁷ Submission to Defence Review 2009, Peace Movement Aotearoa, August 2009, p 2 - <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/defrev09pma.pdf>

⁸ Humanitarian and Disaster Relief in the Asia-Pacific: Shangri-La Dialogue, Wayne Mapp, 7 June 2010 - <http://www.beehive.govt.nz/speech/humanitarian+and+disaster+relief+asia-pacific+shangri-la+dialogue>

⁹ As at note 5, p 7

¹⁰ As at note 1; the terms of reference are at <http://www.defence.govt.nz/review09/companion-studies-terms-reference.html>

¹¹ Defence Review based on "enduring conflict", Peace Movement Aotearoa, 4 September 2009, p 2 - <http://www.converge.org.nz/pma/defrev09pm.pdf>

¹² Terms of Reference: External NZDF Value for Money Review, March 2010 - <http://www.defence.govt.nz/review09/terms-reference-value-for-money-review.html>

¹³ The Shape of New Zealand's Defence - A White Paper, Ministry of Defence, November 1997 - <http://www.defence.govt.nz/pdfs/archive-publications/1997-white-paper-low-res.pdf>