

NEW ZEALAND

THE SECURITY ENVIRONMENT

New Zealand's singular geographical situation as a remote island country protected by the huge natural moat of the South Pacific shapes its approach to security. There is no perception of an external military threat to New Zealand's own physical security. Thus New Zealand's defense policies and capabilities are not based on a stand-alone defense of the homeland but on the contribution they can make, along with other policy instruments such as diplomacy and aid, to the protection of its broader external interests.

New Zealand's economic situation, its location in the Asia Pacific region, and the commitment of its people to improved quality of life around the world all define these broader interests. New Zealand's prosperity depends very substantially upon trade. Since 1984, the country has been engaged in a private sector-led diversification of production and export dependencies. Today seventy percent of exports go to Pacific Rim markets and 30 percent elsewhere. Thus the prosperity and security of Asia and the Pacific will decisively condition the prosperity and security of New Zealand itself. Moreover, the security of sea lanes, air connections, satellite and fibre optic communications as well as maintenance of an open regional and world trading system are of vital importance to New Zealand as a remote island economy integrated into the global goods and services economy.

New Zealanders tend to be optimistic about the present Asian regional security outlook. There is no over-arching threat or any group of countries bent upon aggressive expansion or the denial of security to others. The tensions in the Taiwan Straits, the Korean peninsula, and the South China Sea all illustrate a continued potential for conflict, but none is so severe as to jeopardize regional stability as a whole. Similarly, Asian arms modernization programs bear watching, but none appears connected to aggressive intentions. Economic interdependence can produce frictions, for example, over the terms of trade, access to natural resources, and irresponsible ecological behavior. But the priority attached throughout Asia to economic growth creates a strong collective incentive to manage frictions prudently in order to continue the successes already achieved.

Of the developments now occurring in the region, the modernization of China is probably of greatest historic significance. The way in which China pur-

sues its path toward national strength and the responses of other countries will have a significant impact on peace and stability in the region and will condition the future of regional cooperation efforts. China's current modernization policy based on openness marks a decisive break from that country's introspective past. New Zealand's approach to China is based on encouraging this openness through including China in regional and multinational fora.

Because of New Zealand's location and its ethnic, cultural, historical, and even constitutional links with the Pacific Islands region, New Zealand conceptions of its own external interests include the well-being and security of the Pacific Island nations. The security threats to these countries are basically non-conventional ones. They include sea-level rise, unsustainable resource exploitation including irresponsible tropical timber exploitation by Southeast Asian and other commercial interests, destruction of marine resources by over-fishing or pollution, natural disasters, international crime, and health concerns. New Zealand's response includes deployment of defense capabilities for natural disaster relief and community care needs as well as for assistance in surveillance of maritime jurisdictions.

DEFENSE POLICIES AND ISSUES

Alliance Relations. As a small country, New Zealand understands that its efforts to protect its broad security interests cannot be achieved by itself but require association with like-minded allies. Its most significant security relationships are its bilateral ties with Australia, the tripartite 1951 ANZUS Treaty with the United States and Australia, and links with Britain, Australia, Singapore and Malaysia in the Five Power Defense Arrangements (FPDA).

New Zealand and Australia share deep cultural and historical ties and have military links that date back to the formation of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) during the first World War. Although New Zealand is a member with Australia in ANZUS and the FPDA multilateral relationships, since 1991 there have been moves to strengthen the two countries' bilateral security relationship under the title of Closer Defense Relations (CDR). The CDR is not a treaty and entails no formal obligations. Rather it is an agreement to increase the effectiveness of both countries' armed forces through consultation, the development of complementary force structures, high levels of interoperability, and improved coordination. As yet there is little attempt to formulate common policies and no attempt to establish combined units except as an ad hoc response to circumstances. The essence of CDR is that it is a process and one that moves at

a pace with which both sides feel comfortable.

The defense relationship with Australia became more important to New Zealand following the U.S. suspension of its ANZUS security guarantee to New Zealand in 1986 due to New Zealand's non-nuclear legislation. This policy banned all nuclear weapons and nuclear-powered vessels from New Zealand, thus effectively precluding the entry of all warships unless they were conventionally powered and certified as not carrying nuclear weapons. The U.S. response ended all top-level bilateral diplomatic, political and military contracts, port visits by U.S. naval vessels, intelligence sharing, exercises and the preferential supply of military equipment. The break in military relations with the United States inflicted tangible losses for New Zealand (absence of joint exercising, professional interchange and access to equipment, for example), but it produced a more self-reliant approach to strategic thinking and, in some instances, effective improvisation in operation of equipment.

Since the end of the Cold War, the New Zealand-U.S. relationship has improved slowly, benefiting from President George Bush's 1991 decision to remove all nuclear weapons from U.S. surface vessels and a fresh approach brought to the issue by the Clinton Administration. Top-level political and diplomatic ties were resumed in 1995. The full range of security dealings have not been restored, however, pending what the United States describes as the "unfinished business" of New Zealand nuclear legislation and its ban on nuclear ship port visits. As far as New Zealand is concerned, successive governments have stated that they regarded the ANZUS Treaty as remaining in force. The treaty officially is considered as an important pillar of the defense relationship with Australia.

There are no grounds to believe New Zealand will modify its non-nuclear legislation. In a post-Cold War world where a major security preoccupation is the nonproliferation of nuclear weapons and capability, New Zealand's non-nuclear policy assumes added relevance. For the majority of New Zealanders the passage of time and world events have thus seemed to validate the correctness of their approach.

The Five Power Defense Arrangement originated in 1971 and provides a platform for networking and confidence building among the partners. For New Zealand, the FPDA is a useful and practical vehicle for joint exercises, to be supplemented by bilateral arrangements with the individual countries.

Personnel and Force Structure. New Zealand's defense expenditure decreased as a percentage of GDP from 1.96 percent in 1986-87 to 1.4 percent in 1996. One consequence is a decline in the personnel strength of the New

Zealand Defense Force (NZDF) with cuts in all three services. In 1991–92 New Zealand's total armed forces comprised 11,300 personnel (4,900 Army; 2,500 Navy; 3,900 Air Force). In 1996, there were 10,000 members (4,500 Army; 2,200 Navy; 3,300 Air Force). The New Zealand army and air force are now consolidating force structure changes developed and implemented from 1993 to 1996. In essence the army has changed from a reinforced regular ready reaction force (one regular battalion with another in support) supported by a reserve infantry brigade to a two group (two regular battalions) integrated regular and reserve structure with the capacity to expand to a brigade. The air force has rationalized its operations and logistics functions into a single air command.

Capabilities. Current NZDF capabilities are limited, as most of its combat equipment is aged. The Navy's frigate fleet is obsolete. The acquisition of two ANZAC (Meko 2000 class) frigates, the first due for delivery in 1997, will provide New Zealand with a modern, although small surface combat fleet. Wellington has the option until November 1997 to acquire two additional ANZAC frigates. The Navy also plans to procure new anti-submarine helicopters. In addition it has successfully brought into operation its first logistic support ship.

Beyond low level operation, Army capabilities are limited. It has no medium and heavy artillery, modern anti-tank capability or medium and heavy armored vehicles. Its lack of air defense capability, however, should be redressed by the purchase of a Very Low Level Air Defense System. Despite being lightly armed, the army is professional and trained to high standards. It can operate in the full spectrum of conventional operations and has successfully participated in UN peacekeeping missions. Its ability to operate at night will be enhanced by the purchase of night vision equipment.

The air force has a mix of modern and aging capabilities. Its strike capability consists of old aircraft (the A4K Skyhawk) fitted with modern avionics. The surveillance platforms (P3K Orions) are old, but are to be rewinged and possibly fitted with new avionics in the near future.

CONTRIBUTIONS TO REGIONAL AND GLOBAL SECURITY

Historically New Zealand has played a broad role in regional and global security as an individual country and in association with other countries in the Asia Pacific and elsewhere. In the Pacific, New Zealand has constitutional responsibilities for the security of the Cook Islands, Niue and Tokelau and, implicitly, through a Treaty of Friendship, Western Samoa. Security assistance has also been provided for a number of years to a number of the other Pacific Island states including Papua New Guinea, Tonga, Fiji, Vanuatu and the Solomon Is-

lands under the Mutual Assistance Program.

In Southeast Asia, New Zealand has well-established security links with Singapore and Malaysia and continues to be involved in the region through the consultative mechanisms of the FPDA and its collective training activities. The marked increase in bilateral defense exercises and contacts with ASEAN members, particularly Malaysia and Indonesia, is also a sign of this commitment. At the broader Asia Pacific level, New Zealand participates enthusiastically in the new multilateral security processes of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF). It is a member and an early financial supporter of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO). Bilaterally, New Zealand is working to strengthen its defense arrangements with Australia, Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia, Thailand, Japan, South Korea, China, Canada, and the United States.

New Zealand actively promotes global peace and security. It believes that multilateral diplomacy extends the influence that a small country can have and thus seeks to use the opportunities offered by the UN system to work in concert with like-minded countries in the political, economic, and trade domains. It has been a member of the United Nations since its founding and conscientiously pays its full dues on time. With the end of the Cold War and with the experience of a term on the UN Security Council in 1993–94, New Zealand reinforced its involvement in UN peacekeeping. NZDF personnel are or were recently deployed in peacekeeping operations in Bosnia, Iraq, Mozambique, the Sinai, Angola, the Middle East and Cambodia. Combined ANZAC signals and mine clearance teams served in the recent UN peacekeeping operation in Cambodia, and Australian and New Zealand personnel have also worked cooperatively in Somalia, Rwanda, Mozambique, Lebanon, Syria and the Sinai. In all, New Zealand participated in nine UN or multinational peacekeeping operations during 1995–96. New Zealand's global contributions complement its regional commitments. For a small country committed to good global citizenship, there is a mutually reinforcing quality in New Zealand's global and regional policy.

New Zealand is a strong proponent of nuclear disarmament. In effect, its non-nuclear policy calls into question the utility of nuclear deterrence for the defense of New Zealand itself. New Zealand originated the proposal for a South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, and with others it has sought an advisory opinion from the World Court on the legality of nuclear weapons. The New Zealand government has strongly supported the nuclear nonproliferation treaty, the comprehensive test ban treaty, and other multilateral arms regimes. The government believes that the five acknowledged nuclear weapons states should

undertake to reduce and eventually eliminate their nuclear arsenals. For this reason, among others, New Zealand was a leading opponent of French nuclear testing in the Pacific.

New Zealand also is active in other areas of arms control. One important change this year came in its stand on landmines. New Zealand supports the outlawing of these weapons by international treaty and has forsworn the use, manufacture, or export of landmines. It has been appointed to full membership of the UN Committee on Disarmament.