

Laborites' 'Fortress Australia' plan means clear sailing for the Soviets

by Allen Douglas and Col. Molloy Vaughn, U.S. Army Ret.

In late May, Australian Defense Minister Kim Beazley will release the highly classified "Dibb Report," on Australia's military doctrine. One year in the making, the report proposes radical shifts in defense policies and force structures. From the previous policy of forward defense and close collaboration with its allies, in particular with the United States, in the ANZUS Pact, Australia's Socialist International government proposes to retrench toward "self-reliance" in a 1,100 kilometer zone around Australia's coast. The proposed changes, together with the rejection of the U.S. offer to participate in the Strategic Defense Initiative (SDI), signal the complete disintegration of the ANZUS alliance, among Australia, New Zealand, and the United States.

Commissioned by the 38-year-old former Rhodes scholar Beazley from Australian National University's Paul Dibb, the report betrays a quality of strategic thinking, that exceeds the follies of the French Maginot Line. It not only contracts Australia's own defense capabilities, but jeopardizes key U.S. bases as well.

'The 10-year warning time'

All competent strategic thinking in the world today recognizes a reality which Dibb ignores: the awesome Soviet military buildup and drive for world domination, as documented in *EIR's* Special Report, *Global Showdown: The Russian Imperial War Plan for 1988*. As Dibb stated to *The Bulletin* magazine of Australia, on April 8, "One of the things I thought very important in intelligence was the concept of warning time—that we would have 10 years' warning of a major assault on Australia because it would take any country other than the superpowers at least that long to prepare the sort of forces necessary."

Even apart from this elimination of the Soviet threat with one pen stroke, Dibb's idea of a 10-year warning time is ludicrous. As one leading U.S. strategic thinker commented, after noting the extensive Soviet military buildup in the Pacific and the existence of Vietnam's 1-million-man, highly equipped, battle-tested army, "What universe are these guys [Beazley, Dibb] living in? What this report really says is

The ANZAC Corridor

The ANZAC Corridor of the Pentagon enshrines the long tradition of cooperation among the U.S., Australian, and New Zealand forces, which Dibb seeks to end.

The first U.S. and ANZAC force contacts began during the U.S. fleet visit "down under" of 1907-08. The display, "Europe 1917-18," points out how, in summer 1918, regiments of the untrained U.S. 80th Division were trained by, and went under their first fire with, the New Zealand Division. The 131st and 132nd Regiment of the U.S. 33rd Division were "trained by and received their baptismal fire" with the Fourth Australian Division.

In the crucial battle of Sundu Straits in February 1942, as the Japanese rolled down through the Pacific Islands toward Australia, the *USS Houston* and the Australian ship, *HMAS Perth*, fought side by side until both ships went down, guns still firing, with both captains and 800 men, having made a major contribution to slowing the Japanese advance.

Gen. Douglas MacArthur's field commander, Lt. Gen. Harmon, had "only the greatest praise" for the 3rd New Zealand Division commanded by Maj. Gen. Barrowclough, for their campaigns of Vella Vanda, the Treasury Islands, the bitter fighting at Bougainville, and elsewhere. As a top U.S. officer, also with MacArthur in the Pacific, recently put it, "There is no way an American soldier will ever forget the valor of these people. Their units were decorated almost every day."

The same qualities were exhibited by the ANZAC troops during the fighting alongside American units in Korea and Vietnam.

'We're not going to have the capability to bother you, so we hope you won't bother us.'" Even Beazley admitted, during a trip to Indonesia in March, "Vietnam poses a major strategic problem for Australia."

From the wishful premise of "10 years' warning time," Dibb proceeds to recommend dismantling Australia's armed forces. First, the "self-reliance" doctrine reorients Australia's army, navy, and air force away from integrated deployments with their opposite numbers in the services of the Western alliance, toward "working with each other." This change in C³ (command, communication, and control) structure, together with changes in equipment, will make unified deployment with the Western alliance very difficult in case of emergency, a de facto decision to scrap the ANZUS alliance. In addition, the Army and Navy are substantially downgraded:

Army: It is to be largely stripped of its tanks, artillery, and APCs (armored personnel carriers). Some existing Leopard tanks and APCs will be mothballed, and no new ones will be ordered, in favor of lighter, smaller, helicopter-borne units. This sort of unit is for counterinsurgency, with no capability for sustained battles against armored and mechanized divisions.

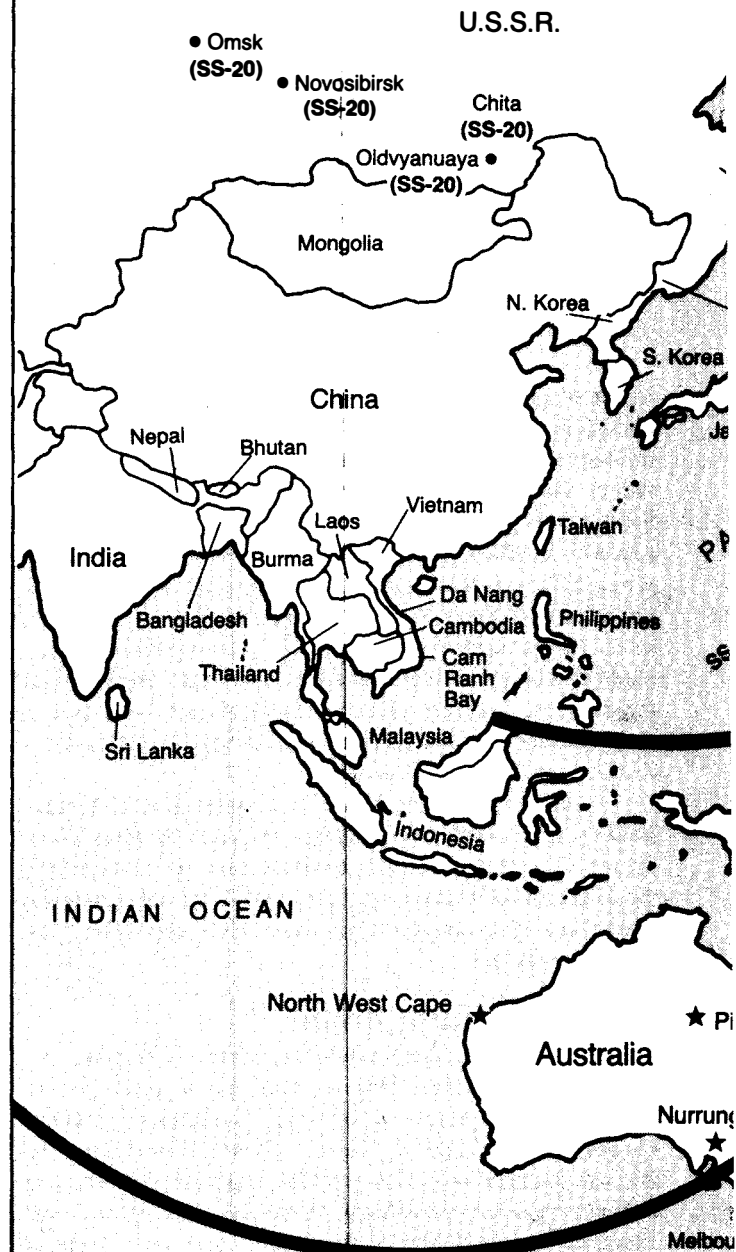
Navy: The six River frigates the Navy has will be replaced by smaller, slower Corvettes. The Navy will be a smaller, slower force operating only within the 1,170 km interceptor range of air cover of the Air Force's F/A-18s. This will result in essentially a coast guard function—to catch smugglers, infiltrators, etc.

Air Force: While the Air Force is assigned the major role of protecting Australia from invasion, and so is slightly upgraded, even it will have only a fraction of the necessary capability. The 58 older Mirage III O/Ds will be replaced by 71 F/A-18s. But since half of the F/A-18s will be assigned to maritime strike functions, there will be only some 30-35 F/A-18s (given maintenance time) functioning as interceptors, for all of Australia. Dibb's "Fortress Australia" will also lack a balanced air defense, like the new Patriot going into all the Nato countries and Japan: a modern ground-based SAM missile system, able to knock down enemy bombers, cruise missiles, and with a limited ABM capability.

A real defense for Australia: the SDI

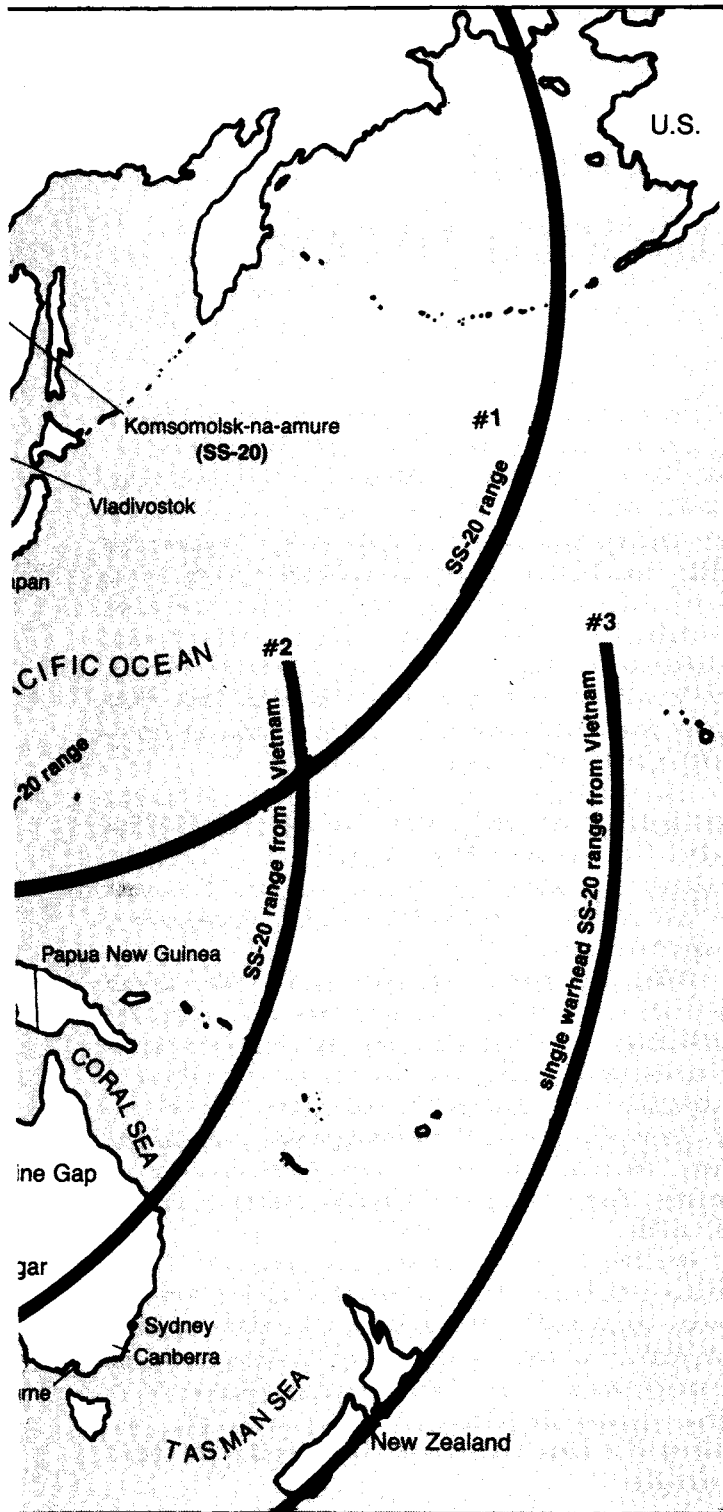
Air defense is essential, for reasons of strategic reality, which Dibb and his patron, Beazley, studiously avoid: Australia is not exempt from Soviet strategy and planning for global showdown with the West. By virtue of its physical location, the country is a prime target for Soviet strikes. A Soviet commander, looking at the map, as Soviet commanders do, sees that Australia represents a base of control over both the naval choke-points of the Straits of Malacca and adjacent straits - the transit route from the Pacific to the Indian Ocean - as well as the alternative route south of Australia. The Soviet officer also observes, that the United States maintains three important C³I bases at NW Cape, Pine Gap, and

The Pacific theatre



★ U.S. base facilities by agreement with Australia

Australian Defense Minister Kim Beazley's "10 year warning time" shows the range of Soviet SS-20 missiles when fired from their present mobile SS-20s can be quickly moved by ship or air to Cam Ranh Bay in Australia (#2). Single warhead SS-20s can reach a further 3,300 km, a target. Since the SS-20s can be launched from non-prepared sites (literally hit the ground in Vietnam). As well, Soviet Backfire and Bear H bombers, on familiarization flights into Da Nang.



' for an attack on Australia, drops to 10 days, or even 10 hours. Map locations in the Soviet Far East Theater Military Command (#1). The oval base or Da Nang air base, bringing them within range of most of making every point in Australia (and New Zealand as well) a potential ally, by the side of the road), they can begin firing almost as soon as they armed with 3,000-km-range cruise missiles, have already been observed

Nurrungar. And, Australia is a possible resort for U.S. bombers needing to land and submarines to refuel, a capability the U.S.S.R. would want to knock out in a conflict. The Soviets have not only the motive, but the capability, to "take out" Australia, using either submarine-fired missiles, or, as the accompanying map shows, the SS-20 IRBM. This missile can be rapidly transported from the Soviet Far East to Vietnam, and from there can hit any Australian target (and most of New Zealand), in its one-warhead modification.

But Beazley and Dibb, as they prepare to dismantle the capability to deal with conventional threats, rule out the one defense made-to-order for the actual threats to the continent—the SDI. Beazley crowed, in early April during his Indonesia visit, "We do not support SDI both in terms of its workability and in terms of the strategic balance. . . . We will pursue our views with the American government and our views are all discouraging."

The New Yalta and the 10-year warning

After a first round peddling his cardboard "Fortress Australia" to Australia's military traditionalists, Dibb stated, "I think the warning time concept is critically important and I'm disappointed the wider defense community sometimes doesn't seem to grasp it very well," admitting further, "If warning is less than the 10 years specified in the guidance *then we would need a completely different kind of force structure.*" (emphasis added). Since, as even Beazley has indirectly admitted, there is no 10-year warning time, what, precisely, is motivating this insane report? The answer may be found in the decision of powerful Western financial forces, for a "New Yalta" accord with the Soviets: the decision to hand them Western Europe, the Middle East, and the Pacific Rim, besides Eastern Europe, already ceded in 1945.

The Socialist International, which runs the Australian and New Zealand Labor Parties, was originally sponsored by these same Western circles as a battering ram against industrial nation-states. But now, under the New Yalta arrangements, it is de facto deployed by the Soviet High Command in its global showdown with the West, pushing the same force restructuring, nuclear-free zone schemes, as the West German Social Democracy.

Fortunately, the pro-Soviet Laborites are not the only show in town. Australian Opposition Leader John Howard has repeatedly called for full Australian participation in the SDI, as in a speech to a Liberal Party gathering last year: "Opponents of President Reagan's Strategic Defense Initiative conveniently overlook the fact that the U.S.S.R. is currently developing its own strategic defenses. . . . If the opponents of President Reagan's SDI have their way, the U.S.S.R. will have an absolute monopoly on anti-missile defence systems. Such an eventuality would not assist the cause of peace. It is quite obvious why Moscow is vehemently opposed to the SDI. But it is far from clear why the Hawke Government has effectively lined up with the Soviet Union and against the United States on this key issue."