Section 7. Australia

1. National Defense Policy

Australia, like Japan and the Republic of Korea, is allied with the United States. Australia has been broadly and actively involved in resolving security issues in the Middle East and Asia-Pacific region in addition to those in neighboring areas such as Timor-Leste and the Solomon Islands. (See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 2)

In December 2000, Australia announced “Defence 2000 - Our Future Defence Force,” which set forth its defense policy for the coming decade. The document states that the missions of the Australian Defence Force (ADF) are: first, to defend Australia; second, to contribute to the security of its immediate neighborhood; and third, to contribute effectively to international coalitions of forces to meet crises beyond Australia’s immediate neighborhood in support of Australia’s wider interests and objectives.

In order to respond to subsequent changes in the strategic environment, the Howard administration reviewed the national defense strategy approximately every two years, and the results were announced as “Australia’s National Security: A Defence Update.”

“A Defence Update” issued in February 2003, which took into account the 9/11 terrorist attacks and the bombing in Bali, Indonesia, in October 2002, designated terrorism, proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, and failing states as priority issues for responding to the new strategic environment resulting from progressing globalization, and predicted an increase in opportunities for ADF activities in remote regions.

“A Defence Update” issued in December 2005, taking into account the ADF’s participation in the military operation in Iraq that began in March 2005 and the subsequent reconstruction activities, the Regional Assistance Mission to the Solomon Islands (RAMSI) activities that began in July 2005, as well as terrorist acts in many parts of the world, indicated the importance of the government’s integrated efforts to respond to increasingly complex and diverse situations.

“A Defence Update” issued in July 2007, taking into account factors such as the ADF involvement in the Middle East to that point, the dispatch of the ADF to the uprising in Timor-Leste, and nuclear issues in North Korea and Iran, stated that the priority issues laid out in the above-mentioned 2003 report would remain in effect. The report expected that the situation will continue where the ADF, while continuing activities in neighboring regions, engages in activities in coalition with foreign forces in remote regions, including Iraq and Afghanistan. In this way, the ADF aims to make a meaningful contribution to international security issues in remote regions, as well as to take a leadership role in the neighboring region, which comprises many unstable island states. For all of these activities, a high readiness posture is required. The report also mentions that although it remains unlikely that Australia will face conventional military threats, in order to allow the country to independently defend its territory without relying on the assistance of other countries in case of such an unlikely event occurring, it continues to be of great importance to retain an edge in leading military capability in the region.

2. Foreign Relations

1. Relations with the United States

Australia attaches importance to its alliance with the United States based on the ANZUS Treaty (the Security Treaty among Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America). In addition to annual ministerial consultations among their foreign ministers and defense ministers, and joint exercises such as Talisman Saber, Australia has dispatched warships, combat aircraft and special forces to the military operations in Iraq and the war on terror in Afghanistan. While the Rudd administration announced that it would withdraw combat troops stationed in Iraq by mid-2008, it also announced that troops stationed in Afghanistan would remain there for the long term. Thus, the close alliance is maintained.
Australia decided to participate in the U.S.-led missile defense program in December 2003. Although the concrete forms of participation remain to be decided yet, Australia decided in August 2004 that it would adopt the U.S. Aegis system for its new air defense destroyers. The possibility is indicated that these destroyers will be applicable to ballistic missile defense. In addition, seeking to enhance interoperability with the United States, with the retirement of the F/A-18 Hornet and F-111 main fighters in several years, in June 2002 Australia announced that it would participate in the U.S.-led F-35 Joint Strike Fighter Program. In preparation for the delay in that program, in March 2007, it decided to purchase F/A-18 Super Hornet, and is expanding U.S.-Australia joint exercise facilities in the country.

2. Relations with Other Countries
Australia is strengthening its partnership with NATO, primarily through its ISAF activities in Afghanistan. It also conducts joint exercises with Malaysia, Singapore, the United Kingdom and New Zealand based on the Five Power Defence Arrangements (which came into effect in 1971). In addition, Australia has taken part in U.N. PKOs, such as the United Nations Integrated Mission in Timor-Leste (UNMIT).

As regards its relations with Indonesia, after the Bali terror bombings in 2002 and 2005, and the one that occurred in front of the Australian Embassy in Jakarta in September 2004, the two countries decided to resume suspended joint exercises between their special forces. Furthermore, in November 2006, they signed a security agreement for a broad defense cooperation including counterterrorism and intelligence.