

Section 5 Oceania

1 Australia

1 General Situation

Australia maintains a special strategic partnership with Japan and shares universal values, such as strategic interests, respect for freedom and human rights, and democracy. It is allied with the United States, as are Japan and the ROK.

The Defence White Paper released in February 2016 states that over the next two decades, the Australian Government will make important investments to maintain the high level of capability of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), setting out a plan to continue to increase the troop strength and acquire high performance equipment. The white paper states explicitly that defense funding would be increased over the next decade, setting a specific target of 2% of Australia's GDP to be reached by 2020. With regard to Australia's international relationships, the white paper sets forth that Australia would aim to mature and deepen practical engagement with partners across the Indo-Pacific, including Japan, while continuing to give highest priority to its alliance with the United States. To achieve its strategic defense objective of contributing military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order, Australia makes proactive contributions to the peace and stability of the international community through the deployment of ADF to overseas operations, among other efforts. On May 18, 2019, a general election took place, and the ruling conservative coalition (Liberal Party and National Party) gained a victory.

2 Security and Defense Policies

The Australian Government launched its first National Security Strategy in January 2013.¹ The Strategy provides

a blueprint for national security over the next decade, presenting the recognition that responding to the economic and strategic changes in the Asia-Pacific region is vital to the national security of Australia. The Strategy defines four objectives for the country's national security: (1) to ensure a safe and resilient population; (2) to protect and strengthen Australia's sovereignty; (3) to secure Australia's assets, infrastructure and institutions; and (4) to promote a favorable international environment. On this basis, the Strategy outlines the following priorities for the next five years: (1) enhanced engagement in the Asia-Pacific region;² (2) integrated cyber policy and operations;³ and (3) effective partnerships.⁴

The Defence White Paper released in February 2016 presents⁵ an outlook of Australia's security environment over the next two decades. It then outlines the direction of Australia's defense strategy for dealing with this environment, and the development of the defense force pursuant to this strategy.

Specifically, the white paper maintains that while there is little prospect of a military attack on Australian territory in the period to 2035,⁶ Australia will face new complexities and challenges. Based on this understanding, three strategic defense interests are identified, namely: a secure, resilient Australia (including the security of sea lanes); a secure nearer region; and a stable Indo-Pacific region and a rules-based global order. Additionally, the following three strategic defense objectives are given: (1) Deter, deny, and defeat attacks on or threats to Australia and its national interests; (2) Make military contributions to support the security of maritime Southeast Asia and support the governments of Pacific Island countries to build and strengthen their security; and (3) Contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order. To maintain the ADF's high level of capability

¹ This strategy is based on the National Security Statement, announced in December 2008, which articulated Australia's national security agenda and set in motion reforms to strengthen the National Security Community.

² Specifically, this includes: (1) deepening the Australia-U.S. Alliance; (2) enhancing bilateral cooperation with influential regional countries such as China, Indonesia, Japan, the ROK, and India; and (3) promoting the superiority and effectiveness of multilateral forums.

³ The Australian Cyber Security Centre (ACSC) integrates the capabilities of Australia's Department of Defence, Attorney-General's Department, and Federal Police and the cyber-related personnel of the Australian Crime Commission.

⁴ This includes sharing information securely and quickly with domestic and international partners and strengthening information sharing between government and business.

⁵ The Defence White Paper of Australia presents the government's future plan and measures for national defense. It was previously published in 1976 (Fraser Liberal Party administration), 1987 (Hawke Labor Party administration), 1994 (Keating Labor Party administration), 2000 (Howard Liberal Party administration), 2009 (Rudd Labor Party administration), 2013 (Gillard Labor Party administration), and 2016 (Turnbull Liberal Party administration) a total of seven times.

⁶ The white paper identifies six factors that will shape the security environment of Australia over the next two decades: (1) the roles of the United States and China in the Indo-Pacific region and the relationship between them; (2) challenges to the stability of the rules-based global order; (3) the threat of terrorism to Australians at home and abroad; (4) state fragility caused by uneven economic growth, crime, social, environmental and governance challenges, and climate change; (5) the pace of military modernization and the development of more capable regional military forces; and (6) the emergence of new complex, non-geographic threats (e.g., cyber threats). With regard to (5), the white paper notes that in the Indo-Pacific region, half of the world's submarines and at least half of the world's advanced combat aircraft will be operating and more countries may acquire ballistic missile technology.

needed to achieve these objectives, the Government will make important investments. In addition to increasing the troop strength by approximately 4,400 personnel,⁷ Australia will acquire high performance equipment, including 12 new submarines,⁸ 3 air warfare destroyers (Aegis vessels), 72 F-35 Joint Strike Fighters, and 7 MQ4C unmanned patrol aircraft. Simultaneously, Australia will seek to strengthen intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) capabilities, electronic warfare capabilities, and cybersecurity capabilities, as well as strengthen the functions of its bases in northern Australia and elsewhere. To support these programs by funding, the white paper also presents the concrete target of increasing defense funding to reach 2% of GDP by 2020.

In addition, with North Korea continuing to make repeated, provocative actions unlike any seen in the past, then Prime Minister Turnbull announced in October 2017 that Australia would be equipping nine of the future frigates of the Royal Australian Navy with a ballistic missile defense system (the Aegis system), stating, “A number of states, notably of course, North Korea, are developing missiles with advanced range and speed. We must have the capability to meet and defeat them.”⁹

3 Relations with Other Countries

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia subscribed to the view that Australia’s security and prosperity are directly linked to the development of the nearer region, the Indo-Pacific region, and the global strategic environment. Based on this view, Australia will build and maintain international security relationships to achieve its strategic defense objectives. In particular, Australia will aim to mature and deepen practical engagement with partners across the Indo-

Pacific region, including Indonesia, Japan, the ROK, New Zealand, India, and China, while continuing to give the highest priority to its alliance with the United States. On November 2017, Australia published the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper for the first time in 14 years.¹⁰

Q See Part III, Chapter 3, Section 1-2-1 (Australia)

(1) Relations with the United States

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia states that its alliance with the United States pursuant to the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States of America (ANZUS)¹¹ is based on shared values and will continue to be the centerpiece of Australia’s defense policy. Australia notes that the United States, which remains the pre-eminent global military power over the next two decades, will continue to be its most important strategic partner, and the active presence of the United States will continue to underpin the stability of the region. It is stated that Australia thus welcomes and supports the critical role of the United States in ensuring stability in the Indo-Pacific region.

Since 1985, the two countries have been regularly convening the Australia-United States Ministerial Consultations (AUSMIN) to discuss major diplomatic and security issues. On the operational front, the two countries have made efforts to increase interoperability through joint exercises, including Exercise Talisman Saber.¹² Since April 2012, the U.S. Marine Corps have conducted rotational deployments to northern Australia.¹³ On the equipment front, the two countries have been simplifying the export procedures associated with equipment deals pursuant to the Australia-U.S. Defence Trade Cooperation Treaty that entered into force in May 2013. In addition, the two countries are considering the joint

⁷ According to the white paper, over the next decade, the number of active duty ADF personnel would be increased to approximately 62,400 personnel from the current approximately 58,000 personnel. If this is realized, the ADF would return to its largest size since 1993.

⁸ The Defence White Paper refers to the submarines to be acquired as “regionally superior submarines.” It explains that Australia would select the submarine classification by the end of 2016, and that the first submarine would begin entering service in the early 2030s. Japan, Germany, and France participated in the submarine Competitive Evaluation Process. In April 2016, the Australian Government announced that the French company DCNS was chosen as the partner for building the submarines. In August 2016, it was found that confidential DCNS documents on its submarine order for the Indian Navy had leaked, resulting in rising calls in Australia for a review of the deal. Prime Minister Turnbull emphasized that the submarines being built for Australia are a different type than the one leaked, refuting the need for a review.

⁹ Following statements made by then Foreign Minister Bishop in April 2017 to the effect that “the United States Administration did say that all options are on the table” and suggesting that Australia supports this. In regard to North Korea, a spokesperson for the North Korean Foreign Ministry criticized Australia, saying, “If Australia persists in following the US’ moves to isolate and stifle North Korea ... this will be a suicidal act of coming within the range of the nuclear strike of the strategic force of North Korea.”

¹⁰ The 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper recognizes that it is in the national interest of China to increase its influence, and concludes that there are instances in which Chinese influence is indeed greater than U.S. influence in parts of the Indo-Pacific. Beyond that, it points out that Australia will expand strategic relations with democratic states that share similar aspirations with Australia, while also ensuring the deepening of the Australia-U.S. Alliance. The White Paper also emphasizes that Australia will strengthen relationships, keeping in mind the “quad” states (Japan-U.S.-India-Australia) with the aim of ensuring stability and growth from Asia to Africa in particular.

¹¹ A trilateral security treaty among Australia, New Zealand, and the United States, which went into effect in 1952. Since 1986, the United States has suspended its obligation to defend New Zealand due to its adoption of a non-nuclear policy. The treaty is thus effective only between Australia and the United States and between Australia and New Zealand.

¹² Exercise Talisman Saber, started in 2005, is a biennial combined U.S.-Australia training exercise designed to improve combat readiness and interoperability. About 33,000 U.S. Forces and ADF personnel participated in the exercise held from June to July 2017. Japan Ground Self-Defense Force (JGSDF) also participated in this exercise in 2015 and 2017, strengthening its relationships with the United States and Australian forces.

¹³ By way of the Force Posture Initiatives of November 2011, the United States and Australia announced that the U.S. Marine Corps would conduct rotational deployments approximately every six months to Darwin and northern Australia. Accordingly, approximately 200 U.S. Marines were deployed in 2012 and 2013, 1,150 Marines in 2014 and 2015, approximately 1,250 Marines in 2016 and 2017, approximately 1,600 Marines in 2018, and approximately 2,500 Marines in 2019. The Defence White Paper 2016 set out that the size would be increased to approximately 2,500 Marines by 2020. In addition, under this same initiative, access to Australian military facilities and areas in northern Australia by U.S. Air Force aircraft was set to be expanded, together with opportunities for joint exercises and training. Accordingly, in February 2017, 12 F-22 fighter aircraft were deployed to Australia.

development of the F-35 and missile defense cooperation.¹⁴ Furthermore, bilateral cooperation is being advanced in areas such as ISR, space,¹⁵ and cyber.¹⁶ In August 2014, the two sides signed the Force Posture Agreement which provides a legal framework for the rotational deployment of the U.S. Marine Corps. From October 2014, the ADF participated in the combat mission of the U.S.-led operation against ISIL. In July 2015, the two countries conducted training in which B-52 strategic bombers of the U.S. Forces were flown from the U.S. mainland to drop bombs on an air weapons range in Australia and then returned to the United States.

Under the Turnbull administration, at the AUSMIN in October 2015, the two sides signed a joint statement on defense cooperation¹⁷ to serve as a guideline for future defense cooperation, and reaffirmed their strong bilateral cooperation. In their joint statement at the AUSMIN held in July 2018, the United States and Australia made their commitment to work together to shape an “Indo-Pacific that is open, inclusive, prosperous, and rules-based,” welcomed the recent U.S.-Australia-India-Japan consultations on the Indo-Pacific, reaffirmed their commitment to strengthen trilateral dialogue with Japan, and highlighted their commitment to raising the number of Marines rotating to the full complement of 2,500 as soon as practicable, the achievement of which was announced in the AUSMIN in July 2019. At the AUSMIN 2019, serious concerns about continued militarization in the South China Sea and the Pacific were also expressed. In addition, both sides emphasized the importance of Australia-U.S. defense cooperation in the Indo-Pacific region, indicating the policy to deepen cooperation with Japan, India, the United Kingdom, France, Germany and other countries. Furthermore, they committed to further support Southeast Asian and the Pacific Island countries, and cooperation to

maintain pressure on North Korea.

(2) Relations with China

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia states that its relationship with China is crucial in different ways from its relationship with the United States, and that it welcomes China’s continued economic growth and the opportunities bringing for Australia and other countries in the Indo-Pacific. It goes on to say Australia is committed to continuing the development of Australia’s defense relations with China, and working to enhance mutual understanding, facilitate transparency, and build trust.

Based on such policy, Australia and China continuously hold dialogues among their defense authorities,¹⁸ along with exchanges to develop the cooperative relations between their defense forces, including joint exercises and mutual visits by vessels.¹⁹

Meanwhile, Australia has been showing its wariness toward China, by, among other ways, making Australia’s position on China very clear.

The Australian government expressed strong concerns over China’s recent land reclamation and construction activity in the South China Sea, and called on all claimant states to halt militarization, while also clearly expressing its intention to continue to exercise its rights to free navigation and flight.²⁰ Furthermore, the 2017 Foreign Policy White Paper contained statements to the effect that China is challenging the position of the United States in the Indo-Pacific, the most important region for Australia.

People within and outside Australia expressed their concerns over the acquisition by Chinese businesses of Australian facilities, including Port Darwin, a port that has been used by Australian and the United States fleets among

¹⁴ While Australia considers that the threat of an ICBM attack on Australia is low, it deems there is a possible threat of an attack on Australian territory by a long-range or submarine-launched ballistic missile or cruise missile, as well as attack on the deployed ADF by a short-range ballistic missile or cruise missile. To counter such threats, Australia and the United States have launched a working group to study options that could contribute to missile defense in the region.

¹⁵ Since signing the Space Situational Awareness Partnership in November 2010, Australia and the United States have promoted space cooperation, including the relocation of the U.S. C-band ground-based radar system and the Space Surveillance Telescope to Australia.

¹⁶ At the AUSMIN in September 2011, the two nations signed a joint statement on cyberspace and confirmed that, mindful of their longstanding defense relationship and the ANZUS Treaty, the two would consult together and determine appropriate options to address threats in the event of a cyber attack that threatens the territorial integrity, political independence, or security of either Australia or the United States.

¹⁷ The statement envisions that greater competition for resources and territorial disputes will increase the possibility of miscalculation and the potential for conflict in the Asia-Pacific and Indian Ocean regions, and states that the two countries would further deepen their defense relationship to deal with this. Specifically, the statement sets forth the following: deeper interoperability; strengthened policy and intelligence cooperation; increased collaboration in science and technology, capability development, and defense industry engagement; and coordinated multilateral engagement.

¹⁸ Australia and China have regularly convened a Defence Strategic Dialogue since 1997. At the 21st Dialogue held in October 2018, Secretary of the Department of Defence Greg Moriarty and Chief of the Defence Force Angus Campbell visited China and had a meeting with Chief of the Joint Staff Department of the Central Military Commission Li Zuocheng.

¹⁹ With an aim to build teamwork, goodwill, and trust between the Australian and Chinese forces, Australia annually conducts Exercise Pandaroo (since 2015) and KOWARI, survival training among the United States, China, and Australia (since 2014). In August and September 2018, PLA Navy vessels joined multiple maritime exercise Kakadu for the first time. Also, in September, Australian Navy vessels visited Zhanjiang, China for a joint cruising exercise with the PLA Navy.

²⁰ In response to China’s announcement of the “East China Sea ADIZ” in November 2013, then Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop issued a statement saying Australia has made clear its opposition to any coercive or unilateral actions to change the status quo in the East China Sea. The Joint Statement of the AUSMIN in October 2015, referring to China by name, expresses strong concerns over recent land reclamation and construction activity in the South China Sea, and calls on all claimant states to halt militarization. When the United States conducted the Freedom of Navigation Operation in the South China Sea in the same month, then Minister for Defence Marise Payne of Australia issued a statement expressing strong support for rights to freedom of navigation and overflight under international law. In July 2016, then Minister for Foreign Affairs Bishop announced, with regard to the final ruling by the Arbitral Tribunal on the case between the Philippines and China, that Australia would support the rights of all countries that resolve disputes peacefully following international law, including the UNCLOS, and that Australia would continue to exercise its rights related to the freedom of overflight and the freedom of navigation pursuant to international law.

others.²¹ In January 2017, the federal government of Australia announced the establishment of a dedicated center within the Attorney General's Department, which will identify facilities requiring surveillance and carefully manage the risks for advising related institutions in order to block the sale of important infrastructure related to national security, including specific ports and harbor facilities, to companies from other countries.²²

With China's perceived influence on Australia growing larger,²³ the Australian Parliament passed a bill to prevent interference in domestic affairs by foreign actors.²⁴ The Australian government announced the cancellation of its contract on a submarine cable project with Chinese telecommunication company Huawei and decided to let an Australian company undertake the work with its support.²⁵ Moreover, in August 2018, Huawei revealed that the company and ZTE were banned from bidding in an Australian 5G (advanced telecommunication system) network project by the Australian government.²⁶

(3) Relations with India

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia states that it welcomes India's increasingly active role in the Indo-Pacific region, and that it sees India as a key security partner. Australia notes that it aims to further mature its defense relationship with India in support of their shared strategic interests.

The Australia-India relationship was elevated to a strategic partnership in November 2009, and the two countries have regularly conducted strategic dialogues, mutual visits by senior military officers, interactions among military services, and mutual dispatches of students to military educational organizations. In November 2014, Prime Minister of India Narendra Modi visited Australia, marking the first visit to Australia by an Indian Prime Minister in 28 years. The

two leaders agreed to extend defense cooperation to cover research, development, and industry engagement, to hold regular meetings at the level of Defense Minister and conduct regular maritime exercises, and to convene talks between each of their military services. Since then, mutual exchanges between Australia and India have steadily progressed through such initiatives as mutual visits of naval ships and joint navy training exercises.

 See Chapter 2, Section 7-1-2 (Military Affairs of India)

(4) Relations with Southeast Asia and Pacific Island Countries

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia regards a secure nearer region encompassing maritime Southeast Asia and South Pacific as its strategic interest. In particular, Australia considers that instability and conflicts in Southeast Asia have the potential to threaten Australia's security and economic relations with countries. Furthermore, Australia depends on maritime trade with Southeast Asian countries and maritime trade that transits Southeast Asia. In this regard, Australia perceives that the security of these sea lanes must be ensured alongside freedom of navigation. Based on this understanding, Australia seeks to make military contributions to support the maritime security of Southeast Asia and support the governments of Pacific Island and other countries in building and strengthen their security.

Australia has been deepening its relations with Indonesia in the security and defense fields following the signing of the Lombok Treaty in November 2006, the elevation of their relationship to a strategic partnership in March 2010, and the conclusion of the Defence Cooperation Arrangement in September 2012.²⁷ The two countries' cooperative relations in the security and defense fields have stalled intermittently.²⁸ However, since mutual visits by ministers and higher-level

²¹ Opposition parties and think tanks raised concerns over the fact that this Chinese company is thought to have close ties with the Communist Party of China and the PLA, and over the fact that the U.S. Forces that utilize Port Darwin were not consulted in advance. According to press reports, then President Barack Obama requested then Prime Minister Turnbull to provide advance notice. Additionally, the Chinese company in question is currently expressing interest in a port near Adelaide where future submarines are slated to be built, raising further concerns.

²² The Government of Australia has struck down the acquisition of a farming company, S. Kidman & Co., which owns land equivalent to about 1% of Australia's landmass and the acquisition of major power company Ausgrid by Chinese companies due to reasons of national security. The established Critical Infrastructure Centre is viewed as supporting the Foreign Investment Review Board (FIRB), which screens individual projects and advises the Government.

²³ According to Australian media reporting, it is clear that China has meddled in domestic affairs through large-scale political contributions and bribes from at least five Chinese people.

²⁴ The law requires the registration of the representatives of foreign governments or foreign companies doing lobbying activities in the Australian parliament, and imposes imprisonment in the event that someone does make calls to action or influence the policymaking process without registering.

²⁵ The Solomon Islands government and Chinese telecommunications giant Huawei once signed a deal to build an undersea communication cable between Australia and the Solomon Islands. However, then Australian Prime Minister Turnbull announced in June 2018 that an Australian company would undertake the project instead to build cables among Australia, Papua New Guinea, and the Solomon Islands.

²⁶ On August 23, 2018, regarding 5G technology, the Government of Australia announced that companies that are likely to be subject to illegal directions from a foreign government were posing a risk to national security. In the announcement, the Government of Australia did not cite the name of any country or company, and it stated that the announcement was not targeted at any particular country.

²⁷ The Lombok Treaty is a security cooperation framework that espouses wide-ranging cooperation in the defense field. It entered into force in February 2008. The Defence Cooperation Arrangement covers strengthened cooperation in counter-terrorism and maritime security.

²⁸ In November 2013, it was reported that an Australian intelligence agency wiretapped the telephone calls of Indonesia's previous President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, Mrs. Yudhoyono, ministers, and others. The Indonesian Government lodged strong protests, including summoning the Australian Ambassador to Indonesia and demanding an apology to the Australian Government. The Government also announced the suspension of military exchanges and intelligence cooperation with Australia. In April 2015, two Australians were executed in Indonesia for helping to smuggle drugs, and the Australian Government strongly protested against Indonesia.

officials resumed in the second half of 2015, the bilateral relationship has been improving through many initiatives, including regular Foreign and Defense Ministerial Meetings (2+2) and the signing of an agreement on maritime security and terrorism, and of a Maritime Cooperation Plan of Action in 2018.

With Singapore and Malaysia, Australia carries out regular joint combined exercises in the South China Sea and other areas under the framework of the Five Power Defence Arrangements.^{29, 30} Australia considers that Singapore is its most advanced defense partner, and that they share Australia's interest in a secure maritime trading environment. Defense cooperation is also deepening, including the signing of a memorandum of understanding concerning military training and training area development in Australia under the comprehensive strategic partnership in October 2016. As regards Malaysia, Australia stations the ADF in Royal Malaysian Air Force (RMAF) Base Butterworth, and contributes to maintaining regional security and stability through patrol activities in the South China Sea and the northern Indian Ocean.³¹

Australia plays a leading role in assisting Pacific Island countries, and Timor-Leste in fields such as security maintenance, coping with natural disasters, and maritime patrol.³² In particular, in the field of maritime patrol, Australia still regularly deploys ADF assets to the South Pacific to assist with patrol activities. In addition, in June 2014, Australia unveiled a plan to replace the 22 patrol vessels it provided to these countries in the past and add Timor-Leste in the list of the recipient countries.³³ In November 2018, Australia announced its largest ever financial package of up to AUS\$3 billion for infrastructure development in Pacific Island countries, with the intent of further strengthening relations. In May 2019, immediately after forming his Cabinet following the general election, Prime Minister Scott Morrison expressed his intention to continue active engagement with the Pacific Island countries, called "Pacific Step UP". He made his first official trip overseas after the

cabinet forming to Solomon Islands in June 2019, showing his stance of placing importance on the Pacific Island countries.

Q See Chapter 2, Section 5-2 (New Zealand)
Chapter 2, Section 6 (South East Asia)

(5) Overseas Activities

In the Defence White Paper 2016, Australia identifies the following strategic defense objective to contribute military capabilities to coalition operations that support Australia's interests in a rules-based global order. In line with this objective, as of June 2019, about 2,400 of Australia's approximately 57,050 force strength³⁴ are deployed and are conducting operations overseas.

Australia joined the airstrikes conducted by the U.S. Forces against ISIL in northern Iraq in October 2014. Today, it is engaged in advising and assisting, as well as providing capacity building assistance to the Iraqi Security Forces on the military front.³⁵

In Afghanistan, since October 2001, approximately 1,550 ADF personnel on average have engaged annually in reconstruction assistance activities and the training of the Afghan National Security Forces (ANSF), under the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF). After the completion of ISAF's activities in the end of 2014, about 300 ADF personnel now train, advise, and assist NATO-led Afghan forces. The term of these activities has been extended to the end of 2020.

Since 2018, the ADF engaged in patrolling and monitoring activities against illegal maritime activities, including illicit ship-to-ship transfers by North Korean ships, which is prohibited under the UNSCR.

²⁹ See Chapter 2, Section 6, Footnote 4

³⁰ In Exercise Bersama Shield held in April 2018, approximately 440 personnel, vessels and patrol aircraft of the ADF, participated. In October 2016, Exercise Bersama Lima was held in Malaysia, Singapore and South China Sea in which approximately 750 personnel, vessels, and patrol aircraft of the ADF participated.

³¹ In December 2015, the Australian Department of Defence admitted that as part of these activities, Royal Australian Air Force (RAAF) aircraft conducted patrol activities in the South China Sea from November to December. This was preceded by BBC's release of the content of the radio communications that allegedly took place between RAAF aircraft and the PLA Navy, claiming that Australia was carrying out "freedom of navigation" flights in the South China Sea.

³² Australia has extended proactive assistance for the political and social stability of Timor-Leste since 1999, when the momentum for independence heightened in Timor-Leste. The ADF led the International Stabilization Force (ISF) since 2006, and with the stabilization of the security situation in Timor-Leste, the withdrawal of the ADF was completed in March 2013. In the Solomon Islands, the ADF extended assistance for their stabilization since July 2003 through the Regional Assistance Mission to Solomon Islands (RAMSI). The ADF withdrew from the country in August 2013, when the military activities of RAMSI were completed.

³³ The Australian Department of Defence plans to provide 21 Guardian-class patrol boats to the Pacific Island countries and Timor-Leste by 2023.

³⁴ According to "The Military Balance 2019." The breakdown by service is as follows: approx. 29,000 Army personnel; approx. 13,650 Navy personnel; and approx. 14,400 Air Force personnel.

³⁵ Following the Declaration of victory over ISIL by the Prime Minister of Iraq in December 2017, that same month, Australia announced that it would be halting air strikes. Accordingly, the Australian Government withdrew six F/A-18 fighter jets back to Australia on January 2018. However, the E-7A early warning and control aircraft and KC-30A refueling aircraft remain stationed in the Middle East.

2 New Zealand

In July 2018, the coalition government of the Labour Party and the New Zealand First Party, which is led by Prime Minister Ardern, announced a new defense policy, the Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018.³⁶ This document refers to major changes in the strategic environment since the publication of the previous Defence White Paper in 2016, including intensifying competition among powers, climate change, and cyber and space.

The Statement then presented New Zealand's security objectives, specifically, ensuring public safety, preserving sovereignty and territorial integrity, protecting lines of communication,³⁷ strengthening international order, sustaining economic prosperity, maintaining democratic institutions and national values, and protecting the natural environment. In order to achieve these objectives, New Zealand prioritizes the securing of operational capabilities in the primary operation area that stretches from the South Pole to the Equator. The country believes that challenges to the existing order of the Asia-Pacific region could impact its security and prosperity and that it is important to have defense capabilities that can globally support the maintenance of the international rule-based order. The Statement also mentioned other priorities, including capabilities to operate effectively with the United States, the United Kingdom, Australia, and Canada,³⁸ and the maintenance of the scale and quality of New Zealand's military contributions.

Moreover, the Statement was the first document that mentioned the impact of climate change and the role of the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) regarding this issue, which reflects the new administration's commitment to support the Pacific Island countries that have been exposed to increasing disasters.³⁹ As for the issues in the South China Sea, New Zealand had refrained from referring to China by name in order to maintain its neutral position in this matter. However, in the Statement, the country made a comment on China's militarization in the South China Sea, stating,

“China's more confident assertion of its interests has at times raised tensions with neighboring states and with the United States.”

As for diplomatic relations, New Zealand has maintained close relationships with the United States and Australia based on the ANZUS Treaty. In particular, New Zealand sees Australia as its closest partner. The United States has suspended its defense obligation to New Zealand since 1985, when New Zealand refused the entrance of a U.S. fleet following New Zealand's ban on nuclear weapons. Yet, the two countries have strengthened their relationship in the diplomacy and defense fields through the Wellington Declaration (2010)⁴⁰ and the Washington Declaration (2012),⁴¹ establishing the United States as a very close strategic partner. While New Zealand has deepened its relationship with China through such initiatives as cooperation for the Belt and Road Initiative and joint air exercises, it also looks at China with a cautious eye as shown in the Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018.⁴²

The NZDF has 9,000 personnel.⁴³ It has contributed to regional peace and stability through such activities as using patrol aircraft to conduct patrolling and monitoring of illegal maritime activities by North Korea, including illicit ship-to-ship transfers involving North Korea-flagged ships, which are prohibited under the UNSCR, and dispatching its personnel to the United Nations Command Military Armistice Commission (UNCMAC) in the ROK, and to other operations in the Middle East and the South Pacific.

In June 2019, the New Zealand government published “Defence Capability Plan 2019,” which sets out planned investments of NZ\$20 billion until 2030. Investments under the Plan are: strengthening of the relationship with the Pacific Island countries; response to the climate crisis; and acquisition of vessels, helicopters, transport aircraft and others to strengthen the maritime surveillance capability.

³⁶ This statement reviews the previous Defence White Paper published in 2016 and clarifies the national defense policies and strategies proposed by the new administration.

³⁷ According to the statement, they also include lines that allow for trading and engaging globally, in addition to communicating.

³⁸ New Zealand also attaches importance to cooperation with these four partners in the space field.

³⁹ In March 2018, the Arden Administration published a new package titled Pacific Reset, which aims to strengthen New Zealand's relationships with the Pacific Island countries. In May 2018, the administration announced additional funding of NZ\$714 million over the next four years to the Official Development Assistance (ODA) budget, which represents about a 30 percent increase in the past four years. Furthermore, in November 2018, the administration announced the establishment of a NZ\$100 million fund.

⁴⁰ The main content of this declaration is the strengthening of the strategic bilateral partnership in the diplomacy and defense fields.

⁴¹ The main content of this declaration is defense cooperation.

⁴² Spark New Zealand, New Zealand's major telecommunication company, revealed that the New Zealand's Government Communications Security Bureau (GCSB) rejected the company's application to use Huawei's technology to deploy its 5G network, citing national security risk.

⁴³ According to “The Military Balance 2019”