

---

## **Debate:**

# **The ADF and Operational Art**

The following contributions are responses to Michael Evans, 'The Closing of the Australian Military Mind: The ADF and Operational Art', *Security Challenges*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Winter 2008), pp. 103-129.

---

Jim Molan

Dr Michael Evans, by titling his paper "The Closing of the Military Mind" has taken an extreme view on a very important subject. He has characterized the leadership of the Australian Defence Force (ADF), of which I am (or was) one, as falling into the trap of being unable to recognize that a serious problem exists, that change is necessary and remedial action is required. And the failing of which we stand accused is not new—the inability to prepare 'generals' for future campaigns is as old as war itself. If the generals cannot do their job, the troops, no matter how well trained or equipped they are, could find themselves in an un-winnable situation, not unknown in our military history. And if militaries are not 'fighting' (conducting modern joint military operations) regularly and their senior commanders are not 'campaigning' (planning and executing complex military operations) in the field regularly, then complacency is almost inevitable, and Joint Professional Military Education (JPME) is critical.

I have served forty years in the military that Mike is accusing of closing its mind. For thirteen of those years I have been a one or two star general. These then are serious accusations that I must take personally. As a general, I am vitally interested in 'generalship'. My background is command at the tactical and the operational level, single service, joint and coalition, in peace and in war. I consider myself both a student of the operational art, and a practitioner. If Mike is correct with these serious accusations, how are they manifest and why are they not recognised by an ADF which seem to be performing to the satisfaction of government and of the Australian people.

Looking back on my own career, I note the following:

In 1995, I took command of a mechanised brigade and conducted most of my operational training activities in the almost total absence of direction from any superior commanders. Self education is important but supervision and

mentoring is of extreme value in creating generalship, as is alignment with the organisation's larger aims.

At the same time, I watched the creation of a command structure in Australia that tried to create a command vehicle through which Australian commanders could exercise operational art. It was an excellent idea but was dislocated by being based on an incredible strategic theory (Defence of Australia), then overtaken by the reality of East Timor and the invasion of Iraq.

For years I watched the Department and the ADF concentrate its limited energy on efficiency reforms which produced a singular lack of operational effectiveness, particularly in our ability to plan, command and sustain operations in excess of the most simple kind. I watched one of those simple joint operations, East Timor, from a unique position—with the Indonesians—and we all know how stretched we were. Were we very lucky to produce Cosgrove, Keating and Evans? Were they a product of our JPME system or were they competent despite it?

I noticed how far behind comparable military nations we were when I took part, with the command elements of my brigade, in the US Warfighter program with commanders from the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. This was the ultimate in modern command training and covered the tactical and operational levels of war. When I returned from this activity, few were interested in my observations that in almost every area of command and operations that I observed, the most militarily competent nations on earth had ideas that were diametrically opposed to those of the ADF.

I attended the ADF's most senior professional military education course in 1997 at the Centre for Defence and Strategic Studies (CDSS). I observed how proudly we announced that 'operations' formed no part of this capstone course. I could only conclude that operational art was something that was not the province of a JPME system, but my common sense (and all my comrades on the course) knew otherwise. For operational art, I could not even rely on osmosis, none of my peers or superiors had such experience. To understand the operational art, it was back to the books—and foreign books at that.

I took command of the Deployable Joint Force Headquarters at the end of 1999, and I found that I had to use subterfuge to involve my immediate commanders in training activities that I had essentially planned and conducted. I realised that nothing had changed since I was a brigade commander. In the field of creating generalship, I was on my own.

I noticed how dislocated we were when on one operation as commander of an evacuation force, I was allocated joint and army resources that I knew

nothing about and had never used before. And I was expected to use them in periods of only hours after they were allocated to me. We were not making success at generalship easy for ourselves, but once again, the ADF was lucky—there was not significant resistance.

I then found myself responsible for an aspect of senior officer JPME when I was Commander of the Australian Defence College (ADC). I was responsible for applying (but not originating or significantly amending) the syllabus of the Australian Command and Staff College (ACSC) and the CDSS. There was no proportionality in our system so much so that at staff college we were attempting to teach majors (E)<sup>1</sup> to be generals (E) instructed by Lieutenant Colonels (E). We were still boasting at the CDSS that we were about producing diplomats and defence bureaucrats.

I conducted a Chief of Defence Force (CDF)-directed study of ADF command during the 2003 invasion of Iraq, and discovered that we knew so little about modern operational art that the system that we created to assist the commander actually worked against him. We were just lucky (as we were during East Timor) to have had a commander that could command despite the command system. To our credit, we have now fixed a significant part of this problem with the strategic command arrangements, but that same approach is not reflected at a lower level.

As Commander ADC, I proposed changes in 2003 that would have started to create operational art in our senior commanders in the ADF by 2005. Supported by the CDF, I was able to gain permission and resources from the Chiefs of Staff Committee (COSC) to run a pilot course in 2004 for an approved 12 week course at CDSS, based on the UK model to address operational art (campaigning) in the Australian context. When I was posted at short notice to Iraq, COSC direction on this course was ignored, COSC did not notice and the pilot was not run. How many years have we lost now?

I then went to war for a year in Iraq and compared myself daily with operationally deployed US commanders in a modern conflict. I felt that although I was as good as any contemporary Australian commander, I was seriously under-prepared to command forces on a modern, complex operation. As chief of operations to the operational level commander in Iraq I implemented the direction of the operational level commander for the entire war for a year, and thought much about operational art and how it applied to Australia.

I began to realise how closed our minds were when I returned from Iraq and not only was no one interested in what I had to say, but when I forced my opinion on others it was grossly misunderstood. We in the ADF leadership

---

<sup>1</sup> Or equivalents for other services.

do not even share a common language to address generalship and the operational art.

Through other means, I gained the attention of the ADF leadership on our generalship problems and operational art once again several years after returning from Iraq, and once again I argued verbally and in writing that Australian generalship was deficient, and that much of those problems was due to the ADF's JPME system. Again, nothing happened. In was in these iterations of advocacy that I requested Dr Evans to write this paper on "The ADF and Operational Art".

Dr Evans is right—our collective mind is firmly shut. I have tried several times to effect change from inside and I have failed dismally. Perhaps Dr Evans can stimulate us sufficiently to avoid the only other form of change that I know of—that emanating from an operational failure.

I agree strongly with the sentiments in this paper. I have seen the need to address this issue for years. I have never been able to express it in terms as comprehensible as Mike Evans. My prediction is that he will be faced by trenchant criticism by those that have no concept much less experience of operational command or campaigning. I fear that he will raise a storm of apathy because our minds are not open.

If Dr Evans does stimulate debate, then I suggest that the last thing that we need is yet another inquiry into JPME. We would waste another year admiring the problem. But the solution is wider than just JPME. In my view, if we are going to create generalship in the ADF, two areas need to be addressed:

Bring into effect joint capability management in the ADF. Specifically, the joint capability manager needs to define the joint environment, to set joint operational standards for the current and future force through goals, concepts and doctrine, to coordinate all inputs to joint capability, and to ensure compliance with central direction. Without this background, addressing generalship is unlikely to be effective because it will lack the ballast to withstand parochial Service views. And actually effecting joint capability management is vastly different from allocating responsibility without authority or resources, which is the current situation.

Refocus joint professional education and training, providing more rigour and relevance in joint training (particularly CDSS and ACSC), more coherence across the joint training continuum, and more indigenous joint operational training particularly for senior leaders. Joint education and training is the major tool to improve generalship, and change can be led by severely changing the focus to operations at CDSS.

It is not difficult if we just open our minds.

Major General A.J. Molan AO DSC, has spent over 40 years in the ADF, 13 of them as a one or two star general. He retired from the ADF in mid-2008 after extensive experience at the tactical and operational levels, in peace and war. HarperCollins will publish his book *Running the War in Iraq* in July 2008. [jim.molan@defence.gov.au](mailto:jim.molan@defence.gov.au).

---

## Ray Funnell

I greatly enjoyed studying Michael Evans' paper on Australia and operational art. I choose my words carefully. This paper is not one that can just be read; it needs to be studied and studied carefully. It is packed with ideas and opinions that warrant careful consideration. Those ideas and opinions frequently recur in nuanced forms that require further careful consideration, all to the benefit of the reader.

The second point that I make is that the paper is not about the closing of the Australian military mind. That might be a title to catch the attention of a prospective reader but it is not a true descriptor of the body of ideas in the paper itself. In fact the paper is less about the closing of the military mind than it is about the failure of the Australian military mind to open fully and effectively to a range of modern thinking. The paper seeks to correct that and, in my opinion, does so quite skilfully.

Michael Evans tackles a number of important issues. He emphasises the importance of operational art to middle powers such as Australia; he argues convincingly that technological advances, especially in communications, have not eliminated the operational level of war or the need for the practice of operational art; further, he argues that operational art does not depend on size or technology but on function; and he highlights the inadequacy of both Australian doctrine and the Australian system of professional military education in the conception and development of operational art in both Australian practice and Australian practitioners.

As I worked through the paper I felt time and again that I would like to have Michael with me to discuss this point, to further develop that one, or, in a number of cases, to dispute his thoughts or his interpretation of past events. It is that sort of paper.

For example, I would argue that the adoption of the notion of the operational level of war was much earlier than 1987-88. Further, I would argue that, in the ADF, the three so-called levels of warfare were not conceived as being discrete. I would also inform him that the development of doctrine as currently conceived in the ADF was not merely sluggish but, until the late 80s/early 90s, essentially non-existent.

I also consider that his contention that “‘Defence of Australia’ guidance forced operational art into the straitjacket of continental defence” is just not so.<sup>2</sup> In my experience in both the Department of Defence and various military headquarters in the 70s, 80s and 90s, the dual notions of defence of Australia and alliance support further afield were and I suspect continue to be constants. One benefit of that consistency is that no great shift in either thinking or practice is required to move to the development that Michael Evans has called for, namely, that Australian operational art should integrate alliance force-provision based upon global ‘missions of choice’ and lead nation force-generation based upon regional ‘missions of necessity’.

Another contentious statement is that the appropriate domain for the rigorous intellectual scrutiny of concepts and doctrine is the JPME System. I disagree. While that scrutiny must certainly occur, it is secondary to the development and scrutiny that must occur within the central domains of the Department of Defence and Headquarters ADF (HQADF).

To move now to professional military education: of the four reforms that are called for in the paper, it is the one that receives the least attention. Moreover, although the solutions to “the ADF’s JPME malaise”<sup>3</sup> are seen as obvious, Michael Evans merely details his solutions, none of which is, in my opinion, obvious. All are worth considering but so too are possible alternatives. Discussion and debate on professional military education are extremely important but have yet to happen. I hope that this paper will act as a catalyst that generates the discussion and that its proffered solutions will generate the debate that must take place if reform is to occur.

Throughout the history of the ADF, professional military education has received inadequate attention. In particular, senior people—politicians, officials, military officers—have misunderstood, under-valued and consequently neglected one of the most important elements of the professional development of both military officers and their civilian counterparts. The prevailing belief is that education is probably beneficial but not really a necessity. Accompanying this is an over-valuation of short courses, both military and civilian. The military courses are narrowly focused and of little broader value while the civilian ones have little direct application to the military. Longer courses, e.g. of twelve months, are seen as acceptable for juniors but not applicable to their seniors because it removes them from the mainstream for too long. The associated but mainly un-stated belief is that senior people acquire all the knowledge and skills they need while on the job. These beliefs must be challenged. There is nothing more important in the preparation of people for senior positions in the defence hierarchy than to be intellectually challenged in a sustained and directed

---

<sup>2</sup> Michael Evans, ‘The Closing of the Australian Military Mind: The ADF and Operational Art’, *Security Challenges*, vol. 4, no. 2 (Winter 2008), p. 125.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 130.

manner on those issues they will confront in the last and most important phase of their professional lives. Twelve months is the minimum period for that to be achieved.

This is an excellent paper. It needs to be considered at the highest levels in Defence. However, its natural readership is not at that level but at the one below. I ask that those who read it and are stimulated by it to take it or a synopsis of it to their boss and tell him, 'sir, you need to read this.' I hope that in doing so their bosses will gain as much from it as I have.

*Air Marshal Ray Funnell (ret'd) served in the Royal Australian Air Force until 1992, the last five years as Chief of the Air Staff. He brought into being the College of Defence and Strategic Studies (CDS), of which he was Principal from 1994-98. [rayf@netspeed.com.au](mailto:rayf@netspeed.com.au).*

---

### Chris Barrie

The title of this article invites the reader to think carefully about the truth of whether or not the 'Australian military mind' is actually closed. It suggests that our military has been somehow deficient or negligent in pursuing professional proficiency here in Australia. But, I am not so sure that a compelling case has been though I readily admit some of the key issues are difficult to grasp. For these reasons the piece by Michael Evans deserves deep consideration by our military professionals, and the community at large. If Evans is right then we need to implement some significant changes, and soon.

I worry whenever it is suggested that the solution to a particular problem is the inclusion of more material into the curriculum of our military colleges or getting the doctrine 'right'. This approach alone is too simplistic. A good recipe for success can be written and taught but it still takes great skill and practice for the cook to produce a spectacular result.

In addressing operational art it seems to me that successful campaign commanders earn their reputation for a number of reasons. One—they have learned a great deal from their own experience and from watching other people do it. Two—they have probably studied a great deal and reflected themselves on the lessons to be learned and in this way they have acquired the necessary wisdom. Three—they have had adequate resources with which to accomplish the outcome desired. This means more than applying money, people and the right array of capabilities to the problem. It also means possessing the right political nous to operate within the political framework that we have inherited and the legitimate system of government at all appropriate levels. Four—they are invariably resourceful. Five—they must be capable of exercising significant influence both within the campaign

area and externally. Six—they must be media savvy. And finally, of course, they must be able to inspire their subordinates.

So, even though the bulk of Australia's military experience has been focussed on the tactical there has also been a significant world demand for our expertise in the higher levels of conflict especially in UN operations. A classic example of this demand was for Australian leadership in Cambodia with United Nations Transitional Authority in Cambodia, a multinational force commanded by Lieutenant General Sanderson. This tells me that we must be getting something right. As Vice Admiral Cebrowski said to me in the Office of Force Transformation in May 2004,

we (the U.S. and Australia) share many of the same military problems yet I admire how resourceful Australians have been in obtaining great results with limited resources in solving them.

I have no doubt that the study of all aspects of the military profession is important. As military professionals we need to be able to make the appropriate contribution to Australia's national security effort. But I do not think that such studies should be confined only to military officers. Strategists and our political leadership should also take an interest. After all, it is not the responsibility of the military professional to secure Australia—that is very directly the paramount responsibility of every Australian Government.

Another concern I have relates to what I discern as the current fashion to think that Australian military forces will somehow find themselves fighting a long way from home alongside significant coalition partners and somehow this becomes a driving force for our force structure and doctrine. While I think that we have inherited a long tradition of our young people going to distant places overseas to shape and build a better world, and I do not want to change that tradition, I believe in the military context we need constantly to remind ourselves that in Australia we have a Department of Defence and an Australian Defence Force. We must continue to operate strictly in line with the responsibilities and obligations set out in the Charter of the United Nations. That Charter imposes serious limitations on our ability and rights to use military force beyond the rights of self defence enshrined in it. It is for this reason that we do not have a Ministry of War!

So to go to the point of Michael Evans article I ask myself: When would the effort to educate our military and other interested people about the operational art deliver its most significant benefits? My answer—when Australia is directly threatened. These are the circumstances when there would be no reasonable doubt in our community about the need for Australian leadership and what Australian leadership must deliver. In such circumstances we have to be successful in our strategic deliberations as well as at the operational level in the conduct of the military campaign(s) if that is required. We must be able to do this under such circumstances, even if there are no coalition partners and yet there are no choices about what must

be done. Our investment in military education would then deliver its fullest rewards.

*Admiral Chris Barrie (retd) was Chief of the Australian Defence Force from 1998 to 2002, and is now a Visiting Fellow at the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre of the Australian National University. [cbarrie@ozemail.com.au](mailto:cbarrie@ozemail.com.au).*

---

## Ross Thomas

The central argument made in this paper is that the current level of development of operational doctrine, and understanding of operational art in the ADF, is inadequate and needs to be improved if the ADF is to fulfil the missions it is most likely to undertake in the twenty-first century. After making his case in support of this argument, Dr Evans goes on to make a number of recommendations for changes to ADF operational art, operational doctrine and the curricula of the educational institutions which form the JPME system at the Australian Defence College.

Although Dr Evans makes many telling points in the paper to demonstrate the shortcomings in operational doctrine and operational art as currently developed by the ADF, there is room to debate some other points he has made and some aspects of his prescriptions for reform. Among the debatable points is his contention that Defence of Australia (DOA) guidance “forced operational art into the straitjacket of continental defence”.<sup>4</sup> While it is certainly true that from the late 1970s onward strategic guidance emphasised the fundamental importance of DOA contingencies for force structure and capability development (and by extension shaped the development of operational doctrine and concepts around those contingencies) that did not constitute a straitjacket. My clear recollection is that during the 80s and 90s it was always recognised that the ADF should be prepared to operate not just in Australia but also overseas in support of our alliance with the US or in UN peacekeeping activities. The issue was where priority should lie.

Dr Evans foresees that in the twenty-first century operational art will need to be built around two main functions that the ADF will then have to perform. They are global “missions of choice”, in which the ADF would be employed in tactical-level alliance operations, and regional “missions of necessity” in which the ADF may be required to undertake strategic-operational leadership of a coalition. Dr Evans considers that the requirement for the ADF to be both a global “security contributor” and a regional “security leader” makes it necessary for the ADF’s operational art to be developed in such a

---

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 125.

way that these two functions are integrated appropriately.<sup>5</sup> While there is much merit in this, I would suggest also that the imponderables abounding in the future strategic environment continue to make DOA contingencies a central feature of our force development, and therefore of our operational concepts and doctrine, however unlikely DOA contingencies might now be considered to be.

A compelling reason for this is the prospect that, as economic growth in Asia and the Pacific continues, Australia's strategic weight and military capability relative to some other countries in this part of the world is likely to diminish substantially. If Australia were to come under direct threat or attack in the vastly different circumstances of the latter part of the twenty-first century it is conceivable that Australia's survival as an independent democracy could be put at greater risk than has been the case since the Second World War.

To ignore the DOA in developing operational art for the ADF would therefore be unacceptably rash. The issue, however, is not whether DOA or a synthesis of alliance force provision and lead nation force generation should be the basis on which operational art is developed. Operational art needs to encompass all three. The military mind should not be closed to that.

With that qualification, the first of Dr Evans' four main recommendations for developing a middle-power model of Australian operational art appears entirely sensible, as do his second and third. In relation to the fourth—reform of the curriculum of the Australian Defence College—while agreeing with much of what he has proposed I do not share his view that there should be institutionalised in the JPME system responsibility for scrutinising operational concepts and doctrine. That function properly rests within the central areas of the Defence organisation. The JPME system may be able to make an important contribution to the ongoing development and refinement of concepts and doctrine, not least by training senior officers in the relevant disciplines, but ultimately it is a function for which HQADF and the strategy group of the Department of Defence should bear joint responsibility.

Dr Evans also comments that the JPME has

failed to give proper attention to the study and development of military art and generalship preferring instead to concentrate upon strategic policy and defence management issues.<sup>6</sup>

While I agree that it would make good sense to reform the senior officer education system so as to provide for more tuition in and study of operational art and doctrine, it would not be wise to include such material at the expense of study of strategic policy. Operational concepts and doctrine

---

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

need to be informed by strategic policy and the strategic guidance which flows from it. There may be other areas of the curriculum which could be abbreviated, or it may be possible to offer courses in operational art as elective programs.

In making these comments I have been acutely aware that I have not touched on a number of issues raised in Dr Evans' paper. I think it prudent to leave discussion of the content of documents such as Decisive Manoeuvre and Joint Operations for the twenty-first century to people who have actually read them. But I have to say that I have found his analysis of the development of the ADF's operational art most illuminating, and thank him for it.

*Ross Thomas is a former public servant who left the Australian Public Service in 2000 after 34 years with the Department of Defence. His career in the Defence Organisation was mainly in strategic and international policy and in intelligence. His final appointments were as Deputy Director of the Defence Intelligence Organisation (1993-96) and later as Director of Studies at the Australian College of Defence and Strategic Studies (1996-98), and the Australian Defence College (1999-2000). [ross.thomas@optusnet.com.au](mailto:ross.thomas@optusnet.com.au).*

---

## Rejoinder

Michael Evans

I am most grateful for the views on my article provided by two retired and one serving military practitioner and by a former senior intelligence analyst in the Department of Defence. All four commentators have served Australia with great distinction. Each of their contributions provides a critique that enriches my knowledge and contains much valuable intellectual food for further thought on the development of Australian operational art. However, there are some points raised in the commentaries that require either clarification or disputation on my part. Three of the commentators, Admiral Chris Barrie, Air Marshal Ray Funnell and Mr Ross Thomas are uncomfortable with my argument that the evolution of Australian operational art between 1987 and 2007 was hampered by what I call a 'straitjacket' emanating from the narrow geographical priorities of DOA strategic guidance. Admiral Barrie makes the point that a refined Australian operational art is always likely to deliver its most significant benefits when Australia is directly threatened by physical attack. Similarly, Ross Thomas argues that in a world of turbulence it would be rash to discard the constant features of DOA geographical planning as a basis for the development of

force structure and operational art. In short, the peculiarities of Australian strategic geography must rule.

I disagree with the above views on philosophical grounds. I have always believed as the late Tom Millar, in his seminal 1965 book *Australia's Defence* put it that, "the first point to remember about the Australian island-continent is not that it is a continent but that it is an island".<sup>7</sup> Since island nations do not have to be physically attacked in order to be militarily threatened, they invariably prepare to fight offshore wars in defence of their values and vital interests. In terms of strategic first-principles, then, Australia is a trade-dependent maritime nation, an island-continent based on Western liberal democratic values. The intellectual difficulty I face with DOA is that its default geostrategic position is parochial, fortress-like and inward-looking. Put simply, it views Australia through the lens of Theodore Ropp's 'continental navalism' in which we represent a potentially isolated continental-island that requires direct continental defence by air, land and sea from 'hordes to the north'. Such an approach is the opposite of a classical maritime strategic rationale that argues that an island-nation comes under direct threat whenever the key international conditions that permit it to function and prosper in the global political economy begin to deteriorate. Under DOA's neo-Roppian-style continental strategy, a maritime strategic calculus based upon vital interests is regarded as secondary in defence planning. Such vital outward-looking features of national prosperity such as sea communications, trade and the critical importance of alliances, become additives to the baseline singularity of an inward continental defence. This is an approach to defence planning that runs contrary to Australia's entire strategic history and operational practice. Here, indeed, we have another manifestation of 'the closing of the Australian mind'—in this case the strategic mind.

The simple truth for this writer is that DOA, at least in its purist form, defies the lessons of historical military practice and, in consequence, cannot serve as model for a twenty-first century Australian middle power model of operational art. The only way in which Australian defence planning can be aligned with the globalised realities of the twenty-first century is not as a singular geographical postulate, but through a much broader and interests-based strategic equation that encompasses Australia's evolving geopolitical regional-global intersection. Relevant DOA principles need, therefore, to be absorbed into a new calculus. It is around a geopolitical intersection of nation, region and globe that both strategy and, by definition, operational art must be developed in the future.

Another common theme in each of the commentaries on my article is the linkage between ADF operational art and the efficacy of the JPME system. Major General Jim Molan, a former Commander of the ADC, points to the

---

<sup>7</sup> T. B. Millar, *Australia's Defence* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 1965), p. 30.

need for joint capability management to refocus JPME around warfighting rather than the production of what he calls 'diplomats and defence bureaucrats'. He highlights past difficulties involved in reforming JPME courses to include operational art and uses the prism of his own experience as a senior commander to paint a picture of an ADF that has fallen behind comparable nations in operational warfighting practice. I too reached the conclusion that the ADF has fallen behind in its understanding of operational art, but by a different route: namely by a comparative theoretical analysis of Australian doctrine, professional literature and JPME practices with those of our peers, the US, UK and Canadian militaries.

Three of the commentators, Ray Funnell, Ross Thomas and Chris Barrie, appear to misinterpret my ideas on using the JPME system for operational concept review as a call for primacy in overall concept development. This is not the case. I agree with them that, ultimately, the intellectual scrutiny of concepts and doctrine is not primarily a responsibility of the JPME system. Indeed, it was never the intention of my article to suggest that the JPME system can in some way replace the work of dedicated operational concepts and doctrine cells in HQADF and elsewhere. Yet, in stating this view, I believe that we must beware the rise of a potential 'cycle of restrictive knowledge' and of institutional discontinuity arising from the vagaries of the military posting system. The problem is simple: how can rigorous intellectual scrutiny of concepts occur if the itinerant military officers concerned are themselves products of an unreformed JPME system?

The uniformed posting cycle within the ADF leaves much influence in the hands of civilian policy-makers within the Australian Defence Organisation (ADO). Yet just as strategy cannot be left to generals, operational concept development cannot be abandoned to civilian policy-makers. In the future, it is clear that deep and incisive thought needs to be undertaken within the Defence Department to developing a nexus between JPME and what might be called 'Civilian Professional Military Education'—the educational immersion of civilian policy makers in a deep knowledge of military affairs. As the leading British scholar, Brian Holden Reid has argued, twentieth century strategic studies developed out of subjects quite divorced from the conduct of war, principally arms control and nuclear deterrence. In the new strategic conditions of the twenty-first century, there must be a philosophical readjustment towards a renewed knowledge of military power and war studies.<sup>8</sup> In this respect, it is highly likely that, at some point in the future we will see the evolution of an Australian National Security College offering a suite of JPME and integrated security practitioner courses. If, as Air Marshal Funnell puts it, my article becomes 'a catalyst' for a serious debate on Australian JPME requirements for the twenty-first century it will have served a vital purpose.

---

<sup>8</sup> Brian Holden Reid, *Studies in British Military Thought: Debates with Fuller and Liddell Hart* (Lincoln, NB: University of Nebraska Press, 1998), p. 12.

Let me conclude my rejoinder with three pleas to the 'senior sirs' in uniform and suit within the ADO. The first is a simple one: Beware complacency because complacency kills. The fact that the ADF performs well in 2008 is not a ready-made prescription for success in the kinds of missions that may be encountered in 2018. For this reason, Australian operational art must be revitalised and studied with the utmost intellectual rigour. Second, if operational art is to be developed as a distinct military cognition within the ADF then continuity of command is required at the ADC which has had eight commanders in eight years. The study of operational art must be fostered from the apex of the JPME system and such an approach requires leadership incumbency over time. Third, it is proposed in the course of 2008, apparently on the grounds of cost, to abolish the *Australian Defence Force Journal (ADFJ)* currently managed by the Australian Defence College. Whilst the *ADFJ* has many professional and intellectual weaknesses—not least its failure over the last decade to transform itself into a credible Australian-style *Joint Force Quarterly*—it would be a retrograde and anti-intellectual step to abolish a thirty-two year-old publication with the potential to be a future forum for discussion of operational art. The *ADFJ* needs reform not removal. If ADF officers are denied a journal for the joint profession of arms it will only confirm the melancholy premise of my article—namely that we are indeed in the midst of a 'closing of the Australian military mind'.

*Dr Michael Evans is the Australian Defence College Fellow and author of the article 'The Closing of the Australian Military Mind: The ADF and Operational Art' that is the topic of this debate. The views expressed are those of the author and do not reflect the official views of either the Australian Defence College or the Department of Defence. [drme@ozemail.com.au](mailto:drme@ozemail.com.au).*