



The author during Tandem Thrust '97.

DOD (Gary A. Bryant)

# ANZUS:

## A View from the Trenches

By PETER LEAHY

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**T**he significance of the Australia, New Zealand, and United States (ANZUS) alliance is not what it promises but what it allows. It has great value to the soldiers, sailors, marines, and airmen of each nation. Its advantage from the trenches is that it imposes few rules and regulations on like-minded people who share common hopes, aspirations, and professional approaches to the defense of their respective countries.

Though this article is focused on land forces, it should be noted that

naval and air forces are equally if not better supported within the alliance because of the extensive integration of naval and air equipment, intelligence, doctrine, and training. Before turning to the tactical level, however, it is useful to look at ANZUS from the strategic and operational levels.

### Common Interests

On the strategic level war is the province of Parliament and the Chief

Australian gunners arriving for Tandem Thrust '97.



DOD (Robert Shanks)

of the Defence Force. Here things have been remarkably constant. But it is the level on which little is actually promised. Nevertheless, Australia and the United States have worked together to maintain the ANZUS treaty with a clear view of the advantages

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that accrue to each. The treaty has proven remarkably durable. It has been supported by two governments of different persuasions over four and a half decades of peace and conflict.

Like many international agreements the wording of the ANZUS document is ambivalent: no promises are made and both countries are only obliged to act in accordance with their constitutions. This is no bad thing for a treaty between sovereign states whose interests can change over time and diverge under particular circumstances. In this respect ANZUS differs markedly

from agreements such as the North Atlantic Treaty in which member states are committed to certain actions.

The lack of compulsory action in ANZUS does not seem to be a drawback in the relations between Australia and the United States, whose association is based on common values and shared security interests. Both countries have held similar world views for many years. Their values and interests nurtured and sustained a relationship long before the ANZUS treaty was signed in 1951. One early example occurred at the battle of Hamel during World War I when U.S. soldiers fought under Australian command.

Common national objectives were also apparent in the close relations that developed during World War II and the Korean War. Since signing the ANZUS treaty this bond has been enhanced through the common experience of the Vietnam and Persian Gulf Wars and through a shared hope for a better world by cooperation in Somalia and other humanitarian crises.

Both the United States and Australia are intent on sustaining the relationship. In addressing the Australian

Parliament, the President of the United States said, "The alliance is not just for this time. It is for all time." Australia is seeking to invigorate the alliance by maintaining its relevance, by reinforcing its importance in making a substantial contribution to regional peace and security, and by enhancing its own capability for self-reliant defense.

### **Standardization**

On the operational level battles and campaigns are conducted to achieve strategic objectives. Military doctrine holds that it is essential to maintain a direct link between the strategic through the operational to the tactical level. Battles must be fought and campaigns must be waged for strategic ends. There must be a direct relationship between the deliberations by Parliament or Congress and the weapon pit or foxhole.

The political and diplomatic aspects of the alliance should support and be directly supported by operations in the field and fleet. In practical terms this begins on the operational level. It is here that a soldier gets the

F-15 in Australia during Tandem Thrust '97.



U.S. Air Force (Efrain Gonzalez)

first real view of ANZUS in action. He begins to realize that the strength of the alliance is in what is allowed, not what is promised.

The treaty is more symbolic than promissory. It is on the operational level that one finds practical cooperation in intelligence, technology, and logistics and in substantive efforts to achieve interoperability and standardization. None of these actions are formally mandated under the treaty.

The American, British, Canadian, Australian (ABCA) Armies' Standardization Program is an example of strong linkages at ground level. Although not strictly a product of ANZUS it came about and is largely sustained as a result of the cooperation epitomized by the treaty. Its strategy is to ensure that militaries achieve agreed levels of standardization necessary for two or more ABCA armies to cooperate effectively in a coalition. ABCA has the following minimum requirements:

- compatible doctrine, tactics, techniques, and procedures (TTP), training, electronic systems, and platforms
- interoperable communications and information systems (including functions of maneuver, fire control, air defense, intelligence, and combat service support), critical weapon systems, and critical training simulation systems

- interchangeable combat supplies, combat support and combat service, and formations and units

- common critical TTP and engineering quality standards.

Two important aspects of ABCA that further consolidate these linkages are that the program acknowledges the primacy of U.S. doctrine on the operational level and addresses army issues and those joint issues which impinge on the land battle primarily on the tactical level.

The program contributes to army coalition operations by being responsive and focusing on standardization across functional areas of the battlefield. It allows both armies to share resources by exercising coalition operations and exchanging information, matériel, and ideas among military staffs, scientists, and developers and by matching army requirement documents.

Agreements and advisory publications help to achieve standardization under business type arrangements that ensure that effective and tangible returns are provided efficiently from the resources invested by the participants.

### Ground Level

Down in the trenches one talks about how to make things work rather than about alliances. ANZUS is constant, something that we accept and work within because it makes sense.

Thus we talk about standardization and interoperability, personnel and equipment exchanges, and resolving problems that will enable us to operate more effectively. The treaty does not limit us to certain actions but instead provides the room for like-minded people to function together. ANZUS works on the tactical level because it feels right. Parliament and Congress agree on a strategic view that helps to maintain an important security and defense relationship based on common values and interests.

ANZUS is a constant for Australia just as cooperation with America has been in peace and conflict over many decades. It is about people in and out of uniform and common aspirations. As the deputy commander of Combined Army Force for Tandem Thrust '97 observed in an interview published in the June 1997 issue of *Army* magazine:

*People are what really make joint operations work. . . . I think fundamentally operations between militaries and success in military operations are a function of how well you get along culturally, how you see the values of your society playing out in a world landscape. Interoperability is a lot of talk about electrons, radio sets, weapons, and equipment but at its core in its most fundamental aspect, to ensure success, it's people bonding together in a common cause. From what I've seen of our two nations during Tandem Thrust, I'd say we're doing OK.*

### Combined Exercises

Tandem Thrust '97 was a U.S.-led and Australian-supported joint and combined exercise that involved some 27,000 personnel. Its object was to further develop procedures for combined crisis response operations as outlined in the ANZUS planning manual. It tested a combined task force based on U.S. Seventh Fleet in a short-warning power projection scenario.

The commander of Australian Deployable Joint Force Headquarters (Land) was the deputy commander of the combined task force under the commander of Seventh Fleet. A large element of that headquarters was fully integrated into the command ship *USS Blue Ridge*.

National Guardsmen,  
Tandem Thrust '97.



DOD (John E. Long)

[EDITOR'S NOTE: 3<sup>d</sup> Brigade (Australian)—with a battalion (Task Force 2–35) from the 25<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division (U.S.) under its operational control—comprised the Combined Army Force (CARFOR), which was commanded by the author with the commander of 3<sup>d</sup> Brigade (U.S.) as his deputy. The Americans supplemented CARFOR headquarters with nearly 900 personnel.]

Tandem Thrust was really two exercises. One was a combined force planning exercise that 3<sup>d</sup> Brigade played in Townsville. In this phase the headquarters was deployed on *USS Blue Ridge* and became involved in crisis action planning. Australian personnel assimilated into the combined task force and offered valuable planning assistance. The American presence in Townsville meant that many lessons were learned

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for the next phase. Moreover, deployed U.S. forces conducted in-theater training, became familiar with command and control arrangements, and grew acclimatized. The exercise also allowed

both national headquarters elements to conduct familiarization and cross leveling, which meant that communications officers could conduct interoperability checks and that staffs could establish standing operating procedures. Many combat and combat support functions in the brigade were integrated at company, platoon, and section level.

The field deployment phase commenced after 10 days during which CARFOR deployed to Shoalwater Bay by road, sea, and air. CARFOR was allocated an area of operations (AO) adjacent to a force of U.S. Marines. This phase was marked by high intensity operations using a range of joint and combined assets.

Many lessons learned during both phases fell within the framework of the ABCA program objectives and the stated minimum requirements of compatible, interoperable, interchangeable, and common critical procedures. But people make Tandem Thrust and ANZUS work. The soldiers of the

two countries get on with one another. Nationality makes no difference. Cultural commonality and shared hopes

extend from the soldiers in the field to the politicians in the cabinet room.

Firstly, consider doctrine, TTP, training, electronic systems, and platforms.

- Our doctrine and TTP are largely compatible and the differences are surmountable. The ABCA framework for U.S. corps-level doctrine provides a solid basis for compatibility, and few difficulties arose during Tandem Thrust, even in the detailed tasking and direction of TF 2–35 by headquarters CARFOR.

- Australian training methods are similar. One major success was the training value gained by TF 2–35. During reconnaissance for the exercise the task force commander was able to state his training needs, which easily translated into requirements for training areas and resources as well as safety and environmental considerations.

- Electronic systems are generally compatible though uneven areas existed, mostly related to the nature and scale of equipment distribution. Examples are tactical satellite systems and night vision gear. Australian forces are not as well equipped and in some cases were not able to operate on the scale and with the intensity of the U.S. military. At times U.S. forces had to degrade their capabilities (such as radios and satellite communications) to operate with Australian forces.

Secondly, consider inoperable communications and information systems (which include the functions of maneuver, fire control, air defense, intelligence, and combat service support), critical weapon systems, and critical training simulation systems.

- Our command and control systems are not entirely compatible, and as the United States pursues digitization and satellite communications Australia is being left behind (as are other allies). Moreover, various U.S. services are developing different equipment and disparate procedures.

- There was trouble with information systems during Tandem Thrust. A system is needed that filters information and provides a commander with only what is timely, accurate, and relevant. Much can be done with improved staff procedures and staff discipline, but we also should employ technological solutions (which is not particularly a problem within ANZUS).

- Tandem Thrust provided access to myriad intelligence systems and sources which were largely compatible and vastly improved. Recently our brigade capabilities have been extended to include access to the joint intelligence support environment (JISE) through a dedicated terminal.

Thirdly, there is the issue of interchangeable combat supplies, combat support, combat service support, and formations and units.

- The experience at Tandem Thrust and other exercises and exchanges suggests that we can interchange formations and units. While it is easier to swap companies or platoons, exchanges can be done at battalion or brigade level. Command and control remains a problem. Both nations must define their operational parameters and exercise control over certain functions and responsibilities, and appropriate procedures should be developed to overcome any difficulties. (I was privileged to command a U.S. Army task force during Tandem Thrust '97. Teaming arrangements developed by the deputy commander and myself were crucial to mission accomplishment and were generated without external guidance.)

- There were no critical problems with combat support and combat service support, though national differences still exist.

Finally, consider the following common critical TTP and engineering quality standards:

- Australian notice to move (NTM) and battle procedures were not as responsive as those used by Seventh Fleet and embarked Marine elements, which compelled us to truncate our NTM and accelerate theoretical preparations. In a crisis Australian forces must be capable of responding in parallel with the U.S. forces they are tasked to deploy.

- The procedures followed during crisis action planning and Australian battle procedures are dissimilar. Moreover, U.S. Army procedures are dissimilar from those of the other services, which caused some difficulty in rationalizing Seventh Fleet procedures with current joint doctrine. The Navy and embarked marines followed a planning process of embark, plan, rehearse, execute while the Australian planning process is plan, rehearse, embark, execute.

- Rules of engagement (ROE) are critical and reflect national differences in the ratification of protocols and interpretation of their impact. There has been an initial proposal for Asia-Pacific ROE which requires further development. Such rules are critical for developing and maintaining coalitions. Tandem Thrust did not provide adequate lessons in this area because the issue could not be fully played. ROE and orders for opening fire were not developed early enough.

## The Future

ANZUS is well supported on the strategic level. Although no promises have been made, remarks by our political leaders in both Washington and Canberra as well as the Sydney Statement provide a framework for its continued robust health and growth.

### **if the U.S. Marines are to be the 911 force, then the Australian army must be interoperable with them**

The alliance also remains vital on the tactical level, where like-minded soldiers are given the latitude to put a basically sound concept into practice—what is allowed makes the alliance viable.

Fundamentals on the operational level are also solid, but more could be done.

- Maintaining ABCA objectives enables the continuance of basic levels of interoperability and should be considered as the minimum requirement.

- Ongoing training and exercise opportunities such as Tandem Thrust are of considerable benefit for an Australian unit as they are for an American.

- More comprehensive participation in wargames and CPX activities is helpful as this is the level on which commanders can be trained at comparatively little cost.

- Continued exchange of technology is beneficial, especially when associated with communications and command and control.

- If Australia, as a self-reliant nation, wants to take advantage of the so-called revolution in military affairs it must actively engage with the United States; full participation is also important in order to maintain interoperability.

- If the U.S. Marines are to be the American 911 force of response in the Pacific, then the Australian army must be interoperable with them. Interoperability is good with the U.S. Army (particularly with the 25<sup>th</sup> Division) and has been built up over a long period, but it is not as good with the Marines. Further development will be achieved through more exercises and exchanges.

ANZUS remains relevant to those of us in the trenches. To preserve it, however, a number of challenges must be acknowledged. An increased

commitment to engagement in the region could draw Australia away from ANZUS. Maintaining the alliance may be seen as Australia siding with America or not being fully committed to the Asia-Pacific. Finally, though the focus of ANZUS for Australian soldiers is the U.S. Army, it may be necessary to readjust that perspective more toward the U.S. Marine Corps.

The alliance remains an untroubled and rewarding relationship. It works because those of us in the trenches are given a solid basis and left to make it work. There are no needless rules and regulations. ANZUS provides access to technology, equipment, and training. Moreover, it allows like-minded professional soldiers to work together. In this way the Australian army becomes more capable both as a self-reliant force and as an equal partner in coalition arrangements during any contribution to regional or world peace and security.

JFQ

**This article is drawn from remarks presented to a seminar organized in August 1997 by the Australian Parliamentary Defence Subcommittee of the Joint Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs, Defence, and Trade.**