

## Australia Dossier by Robert Barwick

### 'Globalized' Defense

*Australia's military is being restructured to enforce globalization upon Asia-Pacific nations.*

On Dec. 6, Australian Prime Minister John Howard presented to Parliament a new Defense "White Paper," which he called "the most comprehensive reappraisal of Australian defense for decades." Entitled "Defense 2000—Our Future Defense Force," it calls for a \$23.5 billion boost in defense spending over the next decade, including an extensive catalog of new equipment—airborne early warning and control (EAWC) aircraft; light tactical aircraft; Army reconnaissance and attack helicopters; air-to-air refuelling aircraft; and either upgrades or new outfitting for existing Navy and Air Force craft.

Most significantly, the White Paper plans a 6% increase in the number of soldiers in the Army, from 51,000 to 54,000, and an expansion in the number of rapid deployment infantry battalions from four to six, each with improved mobility and firepower. This will be complemented by an expanded Army Reserve, which, for the first time, can be deployed overseas. According to official commentaries, this is part of a "major strategic change" toward mobile, rapid-reaction forces, "refocusing the military's emphasis on Australia's immediate region." In fact, it reshapes the military for deployment against its neighbors, as well as, under conditions of global economic collapse, against Australia's own citizens.

In its Executive Summary, the White Paper spells out the new globalization, anti-sovereignty mission: "At the global level, two inter-related trends seem likely to shape our strategic environment most strongly—globalization and U.S. stra-

tegic primacy. These factors will help strengthen global security and promote economic, social, and political developments that align with Australia's interests and values. *Increasingly, the United Nations has been responding to a growing sense in the international community that crises causing avoidable human suffering cannot be ignored just because they happen within the borders of a sovereign state.* The trend to a more active and effective UN security role is also welcome" (emphasis added).

The impetus for this military build-up is Australia's professed concern about the growing "arc of instability" surrounding Australia ever since last year's East Timor crisis. That arc includes the whole of Indonesia, and Irian Jaya (West Papua) in particular; Papua New Guinea, and its troubled Bougainville province (now occupied by Australian peacekeepers); and the Solomon Islands and Fiji, both recent victims of political coups d'état.

However, as *EIR* has documented (see Jan. 28, 2000 issue), that instability is of Australia's own making, particularly the East Timor crisis, which was triggered when Howard pressured then-Indonesian President B.J. Habibie to hold a referendum on independence, despite the high risk of deadly violence. Thus, the crisis was *planned*, as Howard virtually admitted in introducing the White Paper. "Early last year we took what proved to be a prudent and far-sighted decision to increase the readiness of our land forces, so that we were ready to meet the crisis in East Timor when it arose," he said.

The other enemies implicitly tar-

getted by the new doctrine, are Australia's own citizens. In August, the Howard government, with the support of the opposition, rammed draconian shoot-to-kill laws through the federal parliament, authorizing the Australian military to use "lethal force" against Australian citizens to "protect Commonwealth interests." By adding domestic policing to the traditional military role of external defense, the new law gives the federal government the power to impose a military dictatorship.

On Oct. 17, the director of "future warfare" at the Australian Defense Headquarters, Col. Michael Goodyer, told an International Land Warfare conference in Melbourne that "urban warfare" will be the conflict of the future, because of population growth and the trend of poor people moving to the city. Under the new White Paper, the military's six new rapid-reaction battalions will be stationed in Darwin and Townsville, making them easily deployable to regional conflicts, and to the large southern Australian cities of Brisbane, Sydney, and Melbourne.

Coinciding as it has with the ascension of George W. Bush to U.S. President, the White Paper has also proved timely for Australia's warhawks. The potential of a war between the United States and China over Taiwan is virtually anticipated by its reference to "U.S. strategic primacy." Evidently, Australian military involvement is part of the new strategy: On Dec. 14, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer declared that Bush's election would mean an upgrade of U.S.-Australian military ties. And, on Dec. 7, notorious anti-China agitator Paul Dibb, the author of Australia's last Defense White Paper in 1987, gave the new strategy his blessing. "It is arguably the best Defense White Paper Australia's has produced," he raved.