

military reading military reading military reading military reading military reading

Australia's interests in E. Timor's continuing crises

When Bob Lowry wrote his *Strategic Insight* on Australia's interests in Timor-Leste [ISSN 1449-3993] for the Australian Strategic Policy Institute in November 2007 he could not have foreseen the consequences of the recent assassination attempts on President Jose Ramos Horta and the Prime Minister, Xanana Gusmao.

As President Ramos Horta recovers from serious injuries in Darwin and Prime Minister Gusmao takes over a critical security situation with more Australian troops being sent there, Bob Lowry's paper assumes even more importance.

He concluded last year, "The path of cooperation assumes a functioning and effective state which the current UN mission supported by various bilateral programs is helping to resurrect.

"However, as the de facto internal security guarantor of last resort, Australia has a special interest in seeing that these efforts succeed.

"It should also be prepared to intervene if policy directions are likely to threaten the viability of the state, if it wants to avoid the cost to the Timorese and its own interests of another state collapse. ..."

Bob Lowry's prophetic concerns are a timely reminder of the fragility of nations in our region.

Remuneration Tribunal

The Defence Force Remuneration Tribunal made its 22nd report to the then Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations. The RSL is one of the organisations that seek leave to intervene in most matters coming before the tribunal. The tribunal reports that the need for more flexible pay structures and systems in the ADF has occupied much of its time over the last year. For more information call (02) 6257 3795 or email dfrt@dfrt.gov.au

Government publications

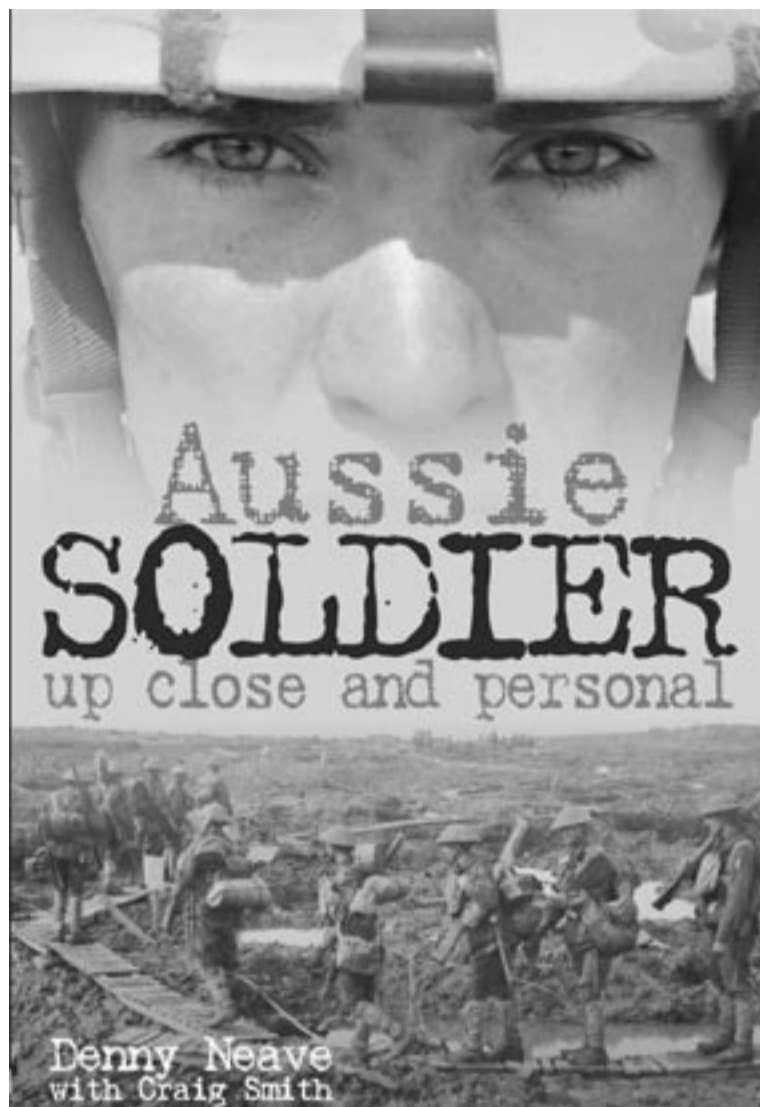
Stand To readers are reminded that a wide range of government publications, include departmental annual reports, committee reports, books and other documents can be obtained through your local federal MP's office or any of the senators representing your territory or state.

Terrorism trial prompts questions on forms of Islam at home

As *Stand To* goes to press, Australia is witnessing its first trial in Sydney of a group of nine alleged terrorists charged with conspiring with each other, and others, to do acts in preparation for a terrorist act or acts.

To complement the daily coverage — much of it sensational in the beginning then hard to find until the verdict — it would be worth revisiting an Australian Strategic Policy Institute Insight report, *Beyond belief: Islamism,*

Real soldiers, real stories



Aussie Soldier Up Close and Personal by Denny Neave with Craig Smith is published by Big Sky Publishing [ISBN 978 0 9803251-1-9]. It retails for \$34.95 and is on sale from March 1 at all good book shops or online at www.aussiesoldier.com.au

A percentage of *Aussie Soldier* book sales will be donated to Legacy.

The publisher's notes say:

"*Aussie Soldier* is a vivid account of the unique characteristics that shape an Australian soldier.

"Author Denny Neave has created an exceptional book featuring the personal anecdotes and experiences of Aussie soldiers from World War I to current conflicts. With the assistance of more than 200 Australian soldiers, *Aussie Soldier* provides up close and personal perspectives on what being a soldier means to them.

"A compilation of confronting, thoughtful and often humorous anecdotes plus excerpts from previously unpublished diaries and interviews, *Aussie Soldier* takes us from the battle grounds of Europe to the jungles of Vietnam and New Guinea, the desert sands of Iraq and Afghanistan as well as peace-keeping missions in Rwanda, Timor and Somalia.

"Author Denny Neave says, 'I wanted to create a book that personalised the Australian soldier and showcased the core values that make them do the things they do. *Aussie Soldier* isn't about the glorification of war or detailing military history, it's about recognising individuals and what goes through their mind and heart when placed in unimaginable situations. From the mundane to the heroic, it's the soldiers who are the main players in these events.'

"Created as 15 separate chapters, *Aussie Soldier* includes those focusing on the core values of compassion, mateship, courage, initiative, loyalty, integrity and trust as well as others on close calls in battle and diggers' diaries. In addition, a 30-page battle book provides an accessible snapshot of some of the major conflicts mentioned in the individual stories.

The anecdotes of Australian soldiers from 87-year-old veteran Captain Bede Tong, who served in World War II in New Guinea, including Kokoda, to Corporal David Hawkins, who served in Rwanda, Somalia and Timor, provide an insight that extends beyond the mainstream perception of the tough Aussie soldier."

History begins yesterday – and goes on today

We are advised constantly to learn the lessons of history, the suggesting being that we hark back to some vaguely similar event to work out how to tackle a problem facing us today.

The trouble is that history begins yesterday when it's not considered history at all.

Rod Lyon, Program Director, Strategy and International with the government-funded Australian Strategic Policy Institute, asked last August *Whither the Bush doctrine?* in an ASPI Special Report No.8 [No ISSN — access www.aspi.org.au].

Dr Lyon is of the opinion that whoever occupies the White House after George W Bush vacates it may well be forced to follow some of his policies on the war on terror — a vague, indefinite, catch-all description of security concern.

Writing months before the current Turkish-Kurdish conflict and in the then belief that the "surge" of more US troops would lead to US withdrawal, Dr Lyon has this to say about the next US president, "After the problems of Iraq, it would be no surprise if a follow-on president [were] more reluctant than Bush has been to commit US ground forces to open-ended missions in the name of democratic regime change but, given [a continuing] pattern of large-scale terrorist attacks around the globe, that succeeding president would be just as determined to pursue counterterrorism, including through military options, and would not be prepared to disengage the US even from troubled regions like the Middle East ..."

Welfare and the Aged

Two annual reports concerning welfare and the aged were tabled in Parliament before the federal election:

Australia's Welfare 2007, published by the Australian Institute of Health and Welfare; and

Report on the Operation of the Aged Care Act 1997 for 2006–2007.

The 530-page Institute's report covers children, youth and families; ageing and aged care; disability and services; housing for health and welfare; dynamics of homelessness; welfare services resources; and indicators of Australia's welfare.

An online version of the report is at: www.athw.gov.au

radicalisation and the counter-terrorism response [ISSN 1449-3993].

Written by Anthony Burgin, ASPI's director of Research Programs, and by Queensland academics Dr David Martin Jones and Dr Carl Ungerer, this report was published last September.

In defining current terrorism — it is by no means new, as the Romans were well aware — the authors make the distinction between state-boundary wars and ideological wars.

They write, "Islamism seeks not only to expose the incoherence at the heart of secular modernity but to engineer an apocalyptic confrontation with it. ..."

They make the necessary differentiation between violent, political Islam and the broader Australian Islamic community.

Law enforcement agencies now have the difficult task of finding "home-grown terrorists" in a sea of law-abiding Australian citizens who practise

Islam. The answer, according to the authors, is for security, police and national leaders to reassure the majority of Australian Muslims that they can practise their faith freely and that they have a place in a pluralistic Australian society integrated into wider social networks.

This way, Australian Muslims are less likely to experience the rejection and alienation that Islamists seek to exploit.