

US INSTALLATIONS IN AUSTRALIA - AGENDA FOR THE FUTURE

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The United States maintains in Australia more than two dozen installations concerned with military communications, navigation, satellite tracking and control and various forms of intelligence collection, making Australia host to more such US operations than any other country except the United Kingdom, Canada and West Germany.

These installations have frequently been the subject of major political controversy in Australia. They comprise the single most important US strategic interest in Australia, but they are also the focus of most of the disquiet and opposition concerning the Australian-American security relationship. The first part of this paper describes the principal US installations in Australia; the second part outlines the major issues which have surrounded these installations; and the third part discusses some areas for future policy decision concerning the operations of these installations.

1. The US Installations in Australia:

The exact number of US installations in Australia is impossible to determine. There is, in the first place, a definitional problem. All the important installations are now officially known as 'joint US-Australian facilities' and involve Australian as well as US personnel and funding. Indeed, there are some installations which are manned and operated entirely by Australians even though the operations are primarily for the benefit of the United States. More important, however, is the extraordinary secrecy which surrounds these installations. The Australian public has never been given a full list of all the defence, scientific and intelligence installations in Australia. And even where the existence of a particular operation has been acknowledged, its function is usually described euphemistically only as 'space research', 'upper atmospheric studies', 'geological and geophysical research', etc.

The most recent list of US defence and scientific installations in Australia was provided by the Minister for Defence in answer to a Question on Notice in the House on 10 October 1978. Listed were:

- (i) Naval Communications Station 'Harold E. Holt', North West Cape;
- (ii) Joint Defence Space Research Facility, Alice Springs, commonly known as Pine Gap;
- (iii) Joint Defence Space Communications Station, Woomera, commonly known as Nurrungar;

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- (iv) Joint Geological and Geophysical Research Station, Alice Springs, commonly known as USAF Detachment 421;
- (v) TRANET Station 112 at Smithfield, SA; and
- (vi) Portable geodetic satellite observation posts, then operating at Perth and Townsville.

This list is very far from complete. It excludes, for example, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) satellite tracking stations, such as Orroral Valley in the ACT, which have been used to track and communicate with US military and classified intelligence satellites, a network of half a dozen seismic stations operated by the US Defence Advanced Research Project Agency (DARPA), at Hobart, Adelaide, Charters Towers (QLD), Alice Springs, and Mundaring (WA); a Seismic Research Observatory at Narrogin (WA); a solar observatory for the US Air Force at Learmonth, WA; and an Omega VLF navigation station at Darriman in Gippsland, Victoria. On 11 March 1981, the Australian and US Governments reached agreement on the terms and conditions governing US Air Force B-52 aircraft staging through RAAF Base Darwin on navigation training and sea surveillance flights over the Indian Ocean; about 100 US Air Force personnel and associated equipment support these operations, and some of these are stationed at RAAF Base Darwin. And since 1979 the US Navy has increasingly used HMAS Stirling at Cockburn Sound, WA, as a transit point for its ships patrolling the Indian Ocean, including aircraft carriers, nuclear-powered attack submarines, and missile cruisers and destroyers.

The three most critical US installations in Australia are the naval communications station at North West Cape and the satellite ground control stations at Pine Gap and Nurrungar.

North West Cape, which was officially declared operational on 16 September 1967, is one of the most important links in the US global defence communications network. According to official brochures, the base may serve several purposes. However, its main reason for existence is to maintain reliable communications with submarines of the US fleet patrolling in the Pacific Ocean and, in particular, 'to provide communication for the US Navy's most powerful deterrent force - the nuclear powered ballistic missile submarine'. The VLF facility for communicating with the American submarines is the largest and most powerful of all the stations in the US world-wide submarine communication system.

North West Cape also has an array of high frequency transmitters which are extremely important to US military operations in the Indian and Western Pacific Ocean areas, as well as a ground station for the US Defence Satellite Communications System (DSCS).

The Pine Gap facility, which became operational in 1969, is located 19km (12 miles) south-west of Alice Springs. The 'business end' of the facility consists of seven large radomes and an enormous computer complex, currently being even further expanded.

Although Pine Gap is formally administered by the US National Reconnaissance Office (NRO), it is operationally controlled by the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA). Pine Gap was originally established as part of Project Rhyolite, which involves a small number of very large antenna-carrying signals intelligence (SIGINT) satellites in

geostationary orbit capable of sucking up 'like a vacuum cleaner' a wide spectrum of Soviet and Chinese military communications and radar transmissions and beaming them back down to Pine Gap. The frequencies covered by these satellites embrace a number of very significant radio emanations. First, it includes most radar transmissions, allowing the mapping of the extensive Soviet early-warning and air defence networks. Second, it includes telemetry data transmitted during Soviet ballistic missile tests. Analysis of these signals has become one of the principal means by which the US has been able to monitor Soviet missile developments - and hence Soviet compliance with the Strategic Arms Limitation (SAL) agreements. And, third, these satellites have the capability for intercepting Soviet and Chinese telephonic and radio microwave communications.

Nurrungar, which is located within the Woomera restricted area, about 480 km (300 miles) north-west of Adelaide, is one of two ground stations for the American satellite early warning system. Formally a Detachment of the US Air Force's Space Command, Nurrungar provides a real-time data link between the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD), the Strategic Air Command (SAC) and the National Military Command System on the one hand, and the satellite early-warning system on the other hand. (The second ground station for the system is in Colorado.) Data are derived from infra-red, charged particle and radiation sensors aboard the geostationary satellites of Program 647 or the Defence Support Program (DSP), which detect missile firings shortly after lift-off. Program 647 has been officially described as 'the most important' system which the US relies on for earling warning of ballistic missile attack.

2. The Issues:

These installations have frequently been the subject of intense controversy, and opposition to them remains widespread. The four principal areas of debate relate to the implications of the operations undertaken at the installations for the global strategic balance; for the possibility of Australia becoming a nuclear target; for a more independent Australian defence and foreign policy; and for Australian sovereignty.

(i) Implications for the Global Strategic Balance:

At the global strategic level, the issue is between those who argue, on the one hand, that the signals monitoring and early-warning functions of Pine Gap and Nurrungar serve to prevent any Soviet surprise attack and the North West Cape station serves to preserve the deterrent capability of the US submarine-launched ballistic missile (SLBM) force, thus reducing the possibility of any nuclear war; on the other hand, it is argued that the capabilities of US SLBMs are now sufficient to enable them to be used in attacks against Soviet nuclear forces in so-called counterforce operations and that satellite surveillance capabilities allow the US to plan its strategic posture so as to be able to engage the Soviet Union in a nuclear war rather than simply deter such a war, thus making nuclear war more likely.

(ii) Australia as a Nuclear Target:

On the question of Australia becoming a nuclear target, there is now a widespread acceptance within the defence community of the argument

that Australia's hosting of US defence and intelligence installations is likely to involve Australia in a nuclear war in which not just the installations but (although much less likely) perhaps also Australia's military bases and facilities, and even cities, might be targets. In particular, it is now generally accepted that North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar would be priority targets in any strategic nuclear exchange while RAAF Base Darwin and HMAS Stirling could well be targets in some circumstances.

On the other hand, it is argued that the effects of nuclear attacks against North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar would be quite marginal given the isolated locations of these installations (although the fatalities resulting from attacks on RAAF Base Darwin and HMAS Stirling could total as much as 150,000), and that, in any case, Australia has a responsibility to accept the risks involved in supporting US attempts to balance Soviet nuclear capabilities.

(iii) Implications for a More Independent Defence and Foreign Policy:

In the 1950s and 1960s, when the critical decisions were taken to host the US installations, Australian defence planners believed that both Australia, because of its enormous size but limited budgetary resources and population, could only defend itself with the active assistance of the United States, and that the presence of the US facilities on Australia's soil committed it to such assistance. Neither of these assumptions has carried much credence within the Australian defence community since the late 1960s. On the other hand, it has become clear that the presence of the US installations has constrained moves to a more self-reliant Australian defence posture and has circumscribed Australia's diplomatic freedom of manoeuvre, especially in regard to proposed regional arms control arrangements such as nuclear free zones or so-called 'zones of peace'.

The US connection has led to the development of an Australian defence posture which is not optimum from the point of view of the defence of Australia and, indeed, which has serious weaknesses in terms of its capabilities for the defence of Australia.

With an annual defence budget of some \$4 billion dollars, of which only about 13 per cent is devoted to new major capital acquisition, Australian defence planners have to choose between a force structure optimized for the defence of Australia, its maritime approaches and its vital national interests on the one hand, and a structure designed for more distant operations in collaboration with US forces on the other hand. There are simply insufficient resources for a defence posture capable of satisfying both strategic concepts.

(iv) Infringements on Sovereignty:

There are aspects of the US-Australian intelligence connections and of the operations of some of the US installations in Australia which have led to Australian involvement in activities about which the Australian Government has been neither informed nor consulted and in which Australian interests have not been appreciated.

One aspect of the intelligence relationship which involves the infringement of Australian sovereignty is the opportunity for domestic intelligence operations which is provided by some of the intelligence facilities in Australia. This is especially the case with regard to

SIGINT operations, since the facilities are quite indiscriminate about the signals they intercept and record. There is considerable evidence that the US has engaged in the monitoring of Australian communications. In some cases it would be very difficult to avoid picking up local signals. For example, SIGINT receivers tuned to wavelengths on the order of six centimetres (4000 to 6000 MHz), such as those on the Rhyolite satellites tasked with monitoring Soviet missile telemetry, would automatically intercept Australian voice messages and non-voice information (facsimile material, teletype, telex and other printer traffic) carried on microwave relay systems as well as domestic communication satellite links. Documents obtained by the New York Times in April 1979 revealed that Australian communications were included in the electronic intelligence intercepted by the SIGINT satellites controlled from Pine Gap.

The US facilities in Australia have been involved in external military activities several times without the knowledge or consent of the Australian Government. There was, for example, the full commitment of North West Cape's high frequency transmitters to the service of the American mining of Haiphong and other North Vietnamese harbours in 1972. A Defence Department dossier leaked at the ALP's Federal Conference in July 1973 asserted that satellites controlled through Australian ground stations were being used to pin-point targets for American bombing raids in Cambodia at the time. And it appears that during the Middle East War of October 1973, Pine Gap and Nurrungar, as well as North West Cape, were placed on alert on 11 October, or five days after the war began and two weeks before the US general alert of 25 October

Australian ground stations were apparently used for relaying American satellite intelligence about the Middle East conflict to the US, at least some of which was passed on to the Israelis, all without the knowledge of the Australian Government, and involving a situation in which the avowed policy of the Australian Government was one of the 'even-handedness'. North West Cape itself was used on 25 October to communicate the US general alert to American installations and forces in the Indo-Pacific region. It was apparently only with this communication that the Australian Government first learnt that any bases in Australia were involved in the alert; Australia was not even told this until the alert had been implemented.

Another incident involving North West Cape occurred in May 1978, when it was revealed that the US planned to upgrade the satellite ground terminal at North West Cape and that the Minister for Defence had not been informed.

The infringements of Australia's sovereignty that are occasioned by the operations at North West Cape have been of particular concern to the Australian Labour Party (ALP). As the present Foreign Minister, Bill Hayden, stated in April 1981,

The question remains ... whether or not Australia exercises sufficient control over the operations of North West Cape to ensure that our authority and sovereignty is preserved.

The short answer is, no, we do not.

The fact is that key US communications from North West Cape cannot be monitored nor controlled by

those Australians working there. Even the Americans at the station are unable to do this.

Key messages are relayed in code through North West Cape from US command centres elsewhere in the world. They are unintelligible to local US staff even if they wished to monitor their contents.

The most dramatic illustration of the use to which North West Cape could be put is the obvious one of relaying an order for a nuclear attack.

At a lower level, it could be a series of commands directing offensive military operations in an area, and of a nature, that compromised our national interest.

Eight years ago, during conflict in the Middle East, the United States relayed a message through North West Cape placing US nuclear submarines on high levels of alert. Australia was not told beforehand.

Australia has a sovereign right to be in ultimate control of affairs on her own territory. In these circumstances, we find present arrangements covering North West Cape unsatisfactory.

We would seek to re-negotiate the North West Cape Agreement to provide: first, that Australia's consent is mandatory for all orders to initiate military action which flows from the station; and second, that we be given firm and convincing assurances the station will not be used to send orders for a first strike nuclear attack nor to initiate a limited strike.

If the United States would not accept these reasonable provisions designed to protect our national sovereignty, then we would ask them to wind down the operations of North West Cape as rapidly as possible.

3 The Agenda for the Future:

The US installations in Australia constitute one of the most critical issues of Australian national security policy. Unfortunately, the subject is also one of the most complex as well as one of the most controversial; there are no easy answers for the Australian citizen concerned with what should be done about them. The installations differ enormously in their functions, relative importance and implications for questions of Australia's security. The balance sheet contains both positive and negative entries, many of the variables are uncertain, and the 'bottom line' depends more on one's general philosophical attitudes towards the maintenance of any national security account rather than any calculation of costs and benefits.

The American installations in Australia can be addressed from many directions. A basic approach is simply according to general function - scientific, intelligence, and more direct defence support, partic-

ularly defence communications. There are a number of installations which are engaged principally in scientific activities with relatively little defence relevance - at least as currently operated. These include the NASA satellite tracking, communications and data acquisition stations in the ACT, and the new solar observatory at Learmonth. There can be little quarrel with hosting these particular operations, though given the economic and social problems of the world as it nears the close of the twentieth century, some might question the priorities evident in official science policy and research. However, even these installations have some military significance, and sometimes potentially great military significance, the nature and implications of which have never been officially explained to the Australian public.

The second group of installations in Australia is comprised of those engaged in intelligence operations, although few of them have been officially acknowledged as such. This includes the nuclear test monitoring facilities and the satellite ground stations at Pine Gap and Nurrungar. The intelligence collected relates to nuclear tests, missile launchings, military operations such as troop movements and naval exercises, diplomatic communications, and domestic economic, commercial and personal communications.

These intelligence operations are aimed against the Soviet Union, China, and a host of countries in east, south and south-east Asia, including nominal allies of the US and Australia, and may also include intelligence of a domestic nature. A wide range of strategic, political, legal and moral objections can be raised against many of these operations; unfortunately, many of them are equally justifiable, and since most are technical collection systems which are generally indiscriminate, it is not possible to allow some but to reject others.

The third group of American installations in Australia provide communications, navigation and other infrastructure support to US military operations. This includes the naval communications station at North West Cape, the Omega navigation station, the TRANET navigation system, and a SOSUS type ASW sonar system. The military operations supported by these installations include those of the Strategic Air Command, responsible for the development and deployment of the US land-based strategic nuclear forces (long-range bombers and ICBMs); operations of NORAD, responsible for American air defence; the operation of the US FBM submarine fleet; military operations such as the mining of Haiphong harbour (1972) and the bombing of Cambodia (1969-1972); and US ASW operations against Soviet submarines. It is extremely difficult to generalise about these military operations; while some (like the bombing of Cambodia) were most insidious, others (such as NORAD operations) are essentially unobjectionable.

What, then, is to be done?

Removal of the Installations:

The most radical proposal is that the US be requested to dismantle its installations in Australia, either in the imminent future or at the times when the various relevant agreements come up for renewal. Unfortunately, however, there are many problems with this proposal. Does it include all "US installations" in Australia and, if so, how are

such "US installations" to be defined? Does it include scientific installations such as NASA satellite tracking stations; or installations which are also used by the Australian defence forces, such as the VLF and HF facilities at North West Cape; or installations which are important with respect to the monitoring of activities subject to arms control agreements, such as the seismic stations and, to a lesser extent, the Pine Gap facility?

The fact that many of the installations must be located in Australia if their missions are to be fully effective and efficient greatly reduces Australia's freedom of manoeuvre over them. Dismantling these facilities would be especially resisted by the United States. Moreover, since most of these facilities have some worth features, it would often mean throwing out the baby with the bathwater. (For example, if Australia was to prevent the interception of microwave signals by stations in Australia, an immediate casualty would be the loss of the access to Soviet missile telemetry that is so necessary to a viable SALT agreement).

There may be two possible exceptions to this - the naval communication station at North West Cape and the Omega navigation station at Darriman, Victoria. Both of these could be located anywhere within a very large area of the South-West Pacific or eastern Indian Ocean with no degradation in the effectiveness of the respective communication and navigation networks as a whole. The US FBM submarine communication system would be equally well served were the VLF station at North West Cape to be moved to the Marianas Islands, which was in fact the initial choice of the US Navy in the early 1960s; and there is no technical reason why the Omega station in this region should not be located on Macquarie Island or elsewhere in the Tasman Sea rather than in Australia. Communication and navigation systems of more direct relevance to Australia's own interests and needs could then be installed in Australia; the technical performance of the US system would not suffer, and the US could feel more secure about the remaining installations in Australia.

Consideration might also be given to changing the agreements and understandings concerning the US operations at RAAF Base Darwin and at HMAS Sterling at Cockburn Sound. These operations currently ensure that at least under some circumstances two major Australian urban centres - Darwin and Perth - are likely to be nuclear targets, a situation which would probably not pertain in the absence of these operations. Moreover in neither case are these operations of any critical importance to the US forces. Rather, the US use of these establishments is based much more on convenience than necessity.

In the case of the B-52 operations, the new Prime Minister has reaffirmed that the US can continue to use RAAF Base Darwin under the existing arrangements. However, an interesting possibility emerges with the up-grading of RAAF Base Tindal, located 15 km south of the township of Katherine and some 363 km south of Darwin. The airstrip at Tindal is capable of handling all types of aircraft, and is to become the home base for 75 Squadron, which will transfer from Darwin when it is equipped with the new F/A-18A fighters. To transfer the B-52 operation to Tindal at the same time would in no way impair the effectiveness of the navigation training and sea surveillance flights, but would ensure that any Soviet nuclear attack on the B-52 support facilities would not produce any civilian casualties.

In the case of the US use of HMAS Stirling at Cockburn Sound, the current arrangements might be modified to exclude visits of those particular US vessels which are likely to invite Soviet nuclear attention - i.e. aircraft carriers and hunter-killer submarines. This would not interfere with visits of those ships which have an actual operational role in this region, such as the cruisers and destroyers, but only with those ships whose visits are matters of convenience, and would remove the only other likely situation in which an Australian urban centre might suffer the direct effects of nuclear attack.

A Commitment to Arms Control:

The new Labor Government, and Foreign Minister Bill Hayden in particular, maintains a strong commitment to the promotion of arms control. Hosting the US installations should provide Australia with a means not only of ensuring that the functions and missions served by these installations contribute to arms control rather than to the destabilization of the central balance, but also of pressing the United States to act more seriously and conscientiously with respect to arms control.

Several of the US installations in Australia are already involved in the collection of intelligence relevant to the monitoring and verification of arms control agreements. For example, the 647/DSP satellites controlled from Nurrungar and the NAVSTAR Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites tracked by the Tranet station at Smithfield are now equipped with the Integrated Operational Nuclear Detection System (IONDS), which provides a capability for the rapid detection, locating and reporting of nuclear detections worldwide, and thus contributes to the monitoring of any nuclear test ban. The seismic station operated by USAF Detachment 421 at Alice Springs, together with the various other seismic stations at Hobart, Adelaide, Charters Towers, Mundaring and Narrogin are also involved in monitoring nuclear detonations. The Australian Government has also stated that it would "consider favourably any proposal that Australia be the site of one of the data centres which will need to be established to monitor a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty by seismic means". On this basis, Australia should be in a good position to further increase its efforts to persuade the US to resume negotiations relating to the conclusion of a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which would ban the testing of nuclear weapons by all states in all environments.

The signals intelligence (SIGINT) received from the Rhyolite-family of satellites controlled through Pine Gap serves many purposes, not all of them benign, but through the monitoring of Soviet missile telemetry it provides perhaps the single most important means of monitoring Soviet missile developments and of verifying Soviet compliance with strategic arms limitation agreements. Hosting of the Pine Gap facility should give Australia a right to insist to the United States that intelligence derived from the operations of that facility should be used in support of a serious attempt to secure a viable and meaningful strategic arms reduction agreement with the Soviet Union.

More generally, there might be some scope for using the presence of the installations to argue against some of the more destabilising aspects of recent developments in US strategic nuclear policy, but it would be a mistake to imagine that Australia's potential influence could ever be sufficient to have any significant effect on the US

strategic nuclear posture.

Australian Access to the US Facilities and Their Operations:

One of the most disturbing features of the US installations has been the lack of political control exercised by the Australian Government over their establishment, operation, and maintenance. Indeed, until the mid-1970s the Government was abysmally ignorant of the functions and missions of the major US installations in Australia. It was not until early 1973, for instance, that the Government sought to ask Washington for "authoritative US comment" on the roles of North West Cape and Smithfield with respect to communication with FBM submarines and to the use by those submarines of the Transit satellite navigation system.

In the case of Pine Gap and Nurrungar, three of Australia's recent Prime Ministers - the only ones to address the issue - have specifically stated that, at the least, they were ignorant of major aspects of the operations of these stations. In December 1978, John Gorton stated: 'I don't even know what Pine Gap is all about. I didn't then [1969]. I could have asked but it didn't arise. I didn't ask about it'. In May 1977 William McMahon stated that although at the time he was Prime Minister, he thought he knew the true functions of Pine Gap and Nurrungar, he was not now so sure: 'I have increasing doubts that the Australian Government knows the entire truth'. Gough Whitlam has revealed on a number of occasions that there were several critical aspects relating to Pine Gap and Nurrungar that he was never told about. For example, Whitlam told parliament on 4 May 1977 that the Australian government had been unaware that information obtained by these facilities was made available to private American companies such as TRW Systems Incorporated, that the first American officer-in-charge of Pine Gap, Richard Stallings, was an employee of the CIA, or that Pine Gap was in fact a CIA operation.

In October 1973, as noted previously, North West Cape, Pine Gap and Nurrungar were placed on a higher alert status, and North West Cape was used to communicate the US decision to move to Defence Condition (DEFCON) 3 to US nuclear and conventional forces in the Indo-Pacific region, without informing the Australian Government. As a result of this, an agreement was reached between Minister for Defence Lance Barnard and Secretary of Defense James Schlesinger on 10 January 1974 under which an Australian Deputy Commander was appointed to the North West Cape communications station and it was agreed that the US would attempt to keep Australia more fully informed about operations and policy decisions relating to the station.

However, the procedures for implementing this agreement were evidently deficient, for it was revealed in the Australian press in May 1978 that the US planned to up-grade the satellite ground terminal at North West Cape and that the Minister for Defence had not been informed. Indeed, it took the Minister for Defence, Mr. Killen, several days from the initial press revelations to determine that a new ground station was in fact destined for North West Cape. His initial response then was to indict the US for not treating Australia 'with the proper courtesy'. Killen later stated that 'there exists a difference of opinion between the United States Government and the Australian Government as to the procedures to be observed' in respect of consultation. As a result Australia, once again, undertook detailed

discussions with the United States in an attempt to reach agreement on 'improved procedures to meet the Australian Government's needs'.

The question of access to the US installations and their operations needs to be considered at three levels : the appropriate degree of Australian access to the installations themselves; the nature of Australian representation in Washington; and the possibility of direct access to the various US satellites controlled or monitored from ground stations in Australia.

Access to the Installations:

There are now Australian officials located at all the US installations. At North West Cape, for example, the Deputy Commander is an Australian naval officer and there are some 50 other RAN and more than 200 Australian civilian personnel employed at the station. There are senior Australian Defence Representatives at both Pine Gap and Nurrungar, and some 225 and 200 other Australian personnel employed at these installations respectively.

However, there are some important limits on Australian access to these installations. At North West Cape, Australians are excluded from the US National Communications Room, which obviously severely constrains any Australian ability to ensure that 'the station will not be used to send orders for a first strike nuclear attack nor to initiate a limited strike'.

At both Pine Gap and Nurrungar there are also national US cypher and communication rooms to which Australians are not admitted. More importantly, however, Australians are also excluded from one of the most critical sections of the Control and Computer Building at Pine Gap. This building has three principal sections: (i) the Station-Keeping Section, which is responsible for keeping the satellites at geostationary altitude from drifting out of orbit and for correctly aligning them towards areas of interest; (ii) the Signals Processing Office (SPO); and (iii) the Signals Analysis Section. The Signals Analysis Section (SAS) is staffed only by CIA and NSA analysts; it includes no US contractor personnel and no Australian citizens. Many of the personnel in this Section are linguists who monitor the voice intercepts. Former staff at Pine Gap have claimed that much of the material analysed in this Section is never passed on to the Australian officers - this included, for example, voice intercepts obtained from China and Vietnam during the period of the last Labor Government. It is imperative that there be Australian personnel working in this Section, not only to ensure that all SIGINT of interest to Australia is passed on, but also because while there remains a Section which is inaccessible to Australians there can be no confidence that domestic Australian transmissions are not being intercepted and routed through this Section.

Access in Washington:

There is still no Australian official in Washington specifically tasked with monitoring US strategic policies, budgetary proposals and decision-making which might affect Australia's interests through the operations undertaken at the US installations.

Following the controversy of May 1978 regarding the installation of a new satellite ground station at North West Cape, an agreement was reached between R.N. Hamilton, the First Assistant Secretary of the Strategic and International Policy Division of the Australian Department of Defence, and Michael H. Armacost, the Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense (East Asia, Pacific, and Inter-American Affairs) under which the Pentagon accepted an obligation to keep Australia fully informed of all likely and impending decisions with respect to the operations of the installations. Subsequently, in 1981, some consideration was given to the notion of posting an appropriate Defence officer to the Embassy in Washington with specific responsibility for monitoring these decisions; the officer was to be accredited to both the Pentagon and also the other agencies involved in the operation of the US installations in Australia.

On 13 June 1983, in his discussions in Washington with President Reagan and Secretary of Defense Weinberger, Prime Minister Hawke raised 'the possibility of stationing in Washington a specific defence person whose responsibility it would be to liaise with the United States Defense authorities so that we would have the capacity, in addition to that already existing, with the positioning of such a person, of having a fuller and more immediate knowledge of developments in regard [to the US installations in Australia]'. According to Prime Minister Hawke, 'Secretary Weinberger believed that that was something that was worthy for further consideration at the official level and he gave me an undertaking that this proceed immediately'. This matter was one of the principal subjects of discussion when the Minister for Defence, Gordon Scholes, and the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Bill Hayden, visited Washington for the annual meeting of the ANZUS Council in mid-July. The Ministers discussed with Secretary Weinberger two possibilities - one was to place an Australian official in the Pentagon with direct communication with Cangerra who 'would be informed of any change in the strategic situation that might involve use of the facilities in Australia'; the other was to place an official in the Australian Embassy in Washington with responsibility for monitoring the use of the installations by the United States. Neither of these possibilities was acceptable. The most that the US would accept was an amendment to the 1974 agreement on North West Cape to the effect that the US will liaise with a nominated officer of the Australian Defence Staff in the Washington Embassy, who will inform Canberra of 'any change in the status of military preparedness or alerts which take place' with respect to the North West Cape station.

This is clearly not good enough from the Australian point of view. There needs to be a senior, capable Australian official in the Embassy tasked solely with the responsibility of monitoring and reporting on all decisions and developments which might affect Australia and its interests. The purview of this official must be broader than the Department of Defense. Although the National Reconnaissance Office (NRO) is formally located in the Pentagon (4C-1000), a comprehensive monitoring of decisions and developments concerning Pine Gap would also require accreditation to the Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), and most particularly the Foreign Missiles and Space Center of the CIA's Directorate of Science and Technology, and the Defense Special Missile and Astronautics Centre (DEFSMAC), which is jointly maintained by the Defense Intelligence Agency (DIA) and the National Security Agency (NSA) at NSA Headquarters at Fort Meade.

Access to US Satellites:

The Australian Defence Force would benefit greatly from access to US defence communication satellites. The US currently maintains at least two Defense Satellite Communications System (DSCS) satellites and one Fleet Satellite Communications (FLTSATCOM) satellite within range of its DSCS and FLTSATCOM ground stations in Australia - which comprise an AN/TSC-54 DSCS terminal at North West Cape (currently being replaced by an AN/MS-61 terminal); an AN/SSR-1 FLTSATCOM terminal at North West Cape; an AN/SCT-35 and an AN/SCT-9 DSCS terminals at Pine Gap; and an AN/MS-46 DSCS terminal at Nurrungar. The US DSCS 111 satellites have six channels, operating in the Super High Frequency (SHF) band, from 7250 to 8400 MHz, each with bandwidths of 50 to 85 MHz. Australia should request that one of these channels be reserved for use by the Australian Defence Force and a DSCS ground terminal should be procured so as to provide a quasi-independent defence satellite communications capability for the Australian Defence Force.

Informing the Australian Public:

Finally, it is imperative that the Australian public be told as much as possible about the general purposes and functions of the installations as is compatible with any genuine security requirements.

The extraordinary point about the secrecy the government has imposed on the installations, together with the deception and dissembling it has practiced, is that it has very little to do with any genuine security requirements. The target of this secrecy is not Australia's (or America's) notional adversaries but, rather, the Australian public.

The greater part of what the government has attempted to keep from the Australian public is available on the public record in the United States. While the Australian Government has refused to acknowledge the presence of the NSA in Australia, the world-wide operations of this Agency have been discussed in numerous Congressional and Executive reports in the US since the mid-1970s, and the presence at North West Cape of the NSG component of NSA was mentioned in official US Navy testimony to a subcommittee of the Senate Armed Services and Appropriation Committees in 1972. Other instances in which information relating to the American installations in Australia has been officially disclosed in the US while not being available to the Australian public include the following: the installation of the AN/TSC-54 satellite ground terminal at North West Cape in 1967; the Pentagon's plans for replacing this with an AN/MS-61 ground terminal; the use of the NASA satellite tracking and communications facilities in Australia for defence communications; the fact that the geodetic observation stations in Australia were from 1961 until 1972 really controlled by the US Defense Intelligence Agency; details of various military uses of the Omega navigation system, which have been disclosed in numerous Congressional Hearings; the extent of the war-time SIGINT exchange arrangements between Australia and the US; the fact the VLF communications stations such as Cutler (or North West Cape) are considered priority nuclear targets; etc. In each of these cases, the information was presented to the US Congress, subjected to security sanitisation, and officially released. All of it should be part of the public record in Australia.

As a general principle, information which is generally available to the intelligence agencies of the Soviet Union and other notional adversaries should also be made known to the Australian public. There may be some particular exceptions to the principle. For example, there have perhaps been one or two instances where something may have been put on the public record accidentally and where officials have thought it best not to draw attention to the matter, but this is doubtful; there might also have been instances where officials would prefer not to confirm particular reports since such confirmation might free hostile intelligence collection and assessment resources for application elsewhere; and there might be some cases where official confirmation of some information might lead to demands for even more information. However, the general principle that the Australian public should know as much about US operations in Australia as do Soviet intelligence agencies remains determinate.

The platform of the Australian Labor Party (ALP) declares that 'Labor will make known to the Australian public the general purpose of the bases and any change to these'. A resolution calling for a statement describing the general purposes and functions' of the installations was passed at the ALP National Conference in early July, and Mr. Hayden declared at the outset of his visit to Washington in mid-July that agreement on 'a joint public statement on the "general purposes and functions" of the bases at Pine Gap and Nurrungar would be a matter of high priority during his visit'. Unfortunately, however, this attempt was frustrated by Secretary Weinberger, although Mr. Scholes later stated that 'we have agreed that those discussions will continue and I will be reporting back to the Government and we will then determine what the next steps will be in that process and exactly what approach we are going to take from there'.

The major US installations in Australia - North West Cape, Pine Gap, and Nurrungar - are potentially quite consequential. The Australian public in accepting the potential risks entailed in hosting these installations, is entitled to an official statement of the 'general purposes and functions' of these installations. Such a statement need not be much different from the description of the installations given on pages 3-4 of this paper. Without such an official statement, it is not possible for informed and authoritative public debate on these installations and their implications for Australia's security. And such debate, on such a controversial but critical subject, is essential in a democracy.

