

ROBERT JOHN O'NEILL

CITATION FOR AN HONORARY DEGREE

Mr Chancellor, it is my privilege to present to you for a degree of the University, Professor Robert John O'Neill.

Robert O'Neill is the leading international scholar in strategic studies to have come out of Australia. His career spans over 40 years of work in this field, both in the United Kingdom and Australia. He recently retired from the Chichele Professorship of the History of War at All Souls College in the University of Oxford.

Professor O'Neill completed a Bachelor of Engineering at the University of Melbourne in 1960, winning the Rhodes Scholarship for Victoria, and is a graduate of the Royal Military College of Australia. He served in the Australian Regular Army from 1955 to 1968.

He began his studies in International Relations while reading Politics, Philosophy and Economics at Oxford in 1961-63. In 1965 he was awarded a Doctorate of Philosophy in Modern History for a thesis published in 1966 as *The German Army and the Nazi Party 1933-39*. After returning to Australia and resuming his military duties in 1965 he served in the Vietnam War as a Captain in the Fifth Battalion, The Royal Australian Regiment. He was mentioned in despatches for his services in that conflict. He was then appointed to the staff of the Royal Military College of Australia. He published two further books at this time: the first, *Vietnam Task*, (1968) was based on his own experiences in the Vietnam War, and the second, *General Giap: Politician and Strategist*, (1969) analysed the record of the North Vietnamese commander-in-chief.

In 1969 Robert O'Neill was appointed a Senior Fellow in International Relations, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University. He was Head of the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) from 1971 to 1982, and became a Professorial Fellow in International Relations in 1977. During the 1970s he was active in the analysis of the security problems of the Asian-Pacific region, and built up the SDSC to become a substantial force in the public debate on strategic policy in Australia, the Asian-Pacific region and globally.

During his years at the ANU Robert O'Neill maintained a major research effort in the field of modern military history, publishing the two volume official history, *Australia in the Korean War 1950-53* in 1981 and 1985. This work established a new pattern in the way Australian war histories are written, focusing primarily on the strategic and diplomatic interactions which led to involvement in the Korean War, and which governed policy during the conflict itself. He also produced several edited volumes based on conferences held by the SDSC. These helped to set a new direction for the development of Australian defence policy in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

In 1982 Robert O'Neill was the first person from outside Europe to be appointed Director of the major International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, becoming the executive head of an organisation spanning over 2,500 members in over 80 countries. During the following five years he did much to widen the work of the Institute and focus it more on the problems of the Asian-Pacific region, while maintaining the Institute's high research profile and reputation in the analysis of super-power policies and relations between NATO and the Warsaw Pact. From 1996 to his retirement he was Chairman of the Council of the International Institute for Strategic Studies.

In 1987 Robert O'Neill became the Chichele Professor of the History of War at Oxford. He was the founding Director of the All Souls Foreign Policy Studies Programme and Director of Graduate Studies in the Modern History Faculty. He was United Kingdom Chairman of the International Nuclear History Programme, Chairman of the Board of the Centre for Defence Studies, Kings College, University of London, Chairman of the Committee of Management of the Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies, University of London and Vice President and Chairman of the Trustees of the Imperial War Museum. He was a member of the Canberra Commission on the Elimination of Nuclear Weapons, 1995-96, and of the Tokyo Forum on Nuclear Non-proliferation and Disarmament, 1998-99, both of which bodies published widely read reports.

His teaching work at Oxford focused on the relationship between strategic thinking and the conduct of war and the supervision of over 40 doctoral theses.

He was appointed Officer in the Order of Australia in 1988, and elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences in Australia in 1978, and a Fellow of the Royal Historical Society in 1989.

The Australian Government has invited Robert O'Neill to be the first Chairman of the newly established Australian Strategic Policy Institute and the ANU has appointed him to be an Adjunct Professor in the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre.

Mr Chancellor, it is with great pleasure that I present to you Robert John O'Neill, that you may confer on him the degree of Doctor of Letters, on the grounds of distinguished creative achievement as a scholar in the field of Asian-Pacific security and International Relations.

Professor Frank Jackson
Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Research)
The Australian National University
28 September 2001