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Engaging with the Asia-Pacific: Australian Foreign Policy in the Pacific Century

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"I declare that this thesis is an original work"

Canberra, 11 November 1997

Rodd McGibbon
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Abstract

This thesis examines Australia's engagement with the Asia-Pacific. It seeks to locate Australian foreign policy within a larger Western discourse of international relations (IR) and geopolitics which has provided the dominant understandings, meanings and boundaries of international political life in the modern period. In the chapters to follow, I show how this larger discourse has been articulated in the history of Australian foreign policy through the dominant elite perspectives of market liberalism and power politics realism. Rather than treating these perspectives as discrete, mutually exclusive theories of IR, however, I understand each as contending poles of this larger Western discourse. In doing so, I argue that liberalism and realism have traditionally framed Australia's encounter with the Asia-Pacific region. I also show that, in continuing to draw on these dominant perspectives, contemporary policy-makers have pursued a diplomacy of regional engagement designed to integrate Australian strategic and trade interests more fully into the rapidly growing economies of Asia.

This thesis provides a critique of this regional diplomacy as an inadequate and narrow policy agenda that has focused on engaging with, and buttressing, unaccountable and undemocratic elites in the region. That has been at the expense of a more wide-ranging regional engagement with the grassroots communities of the Asia-Pacific. In advancing such a critique, this work is designed to count the costs and dangers of a foreign policy so unequivocally aligned to repressive and anti-democratic forces in the region. Those forces have engendered precisely the kinds of instabilities, volatilities and insecurities that contemporary foreign policy has been designed to counter.

In pointing out as much, however, this thesis is not intended as a blanket condemnation of contemporary foreign policy for as I acknowledge there are some commendable elements of our recent regional policies. Those elements provide a glimpse of where we might begin to creatively respond to the challenges of contemporary global life. In particular, the acknowledgment by the more intelligent sectors of the foreign policy community that we need to seriously rethink identity through a fundamental intellectual and cultural engagement with the region represents an important insight in the context of present foreign policy challenges.

The overall purpose of this thesis, then, is to question the more narrowly-conceived policy perspectives of Australian diplomacy. The aim in doing so is to open up space in which to rethink the dominant perspectives of liberalism and realism which have underpinned foreign policy. In the final part of this work, accordingly, I discuss how it might be possible to think beyond the realist-liberal impasse of prevailing foreign policy discourse in order to formulate perspectives more attuned to the everyday realities of regional life. I conclude that the formulation of such alternatives to traditional ways of thinking is imperative if more equitable, just and sustainable ways of life across the Pacific are to be achieved than those which are currently developing.
Contents

Acknowledgments  
Abstract  
Introduction- Australian Foreign Policy in the Pacific Century

1. Imagining the Asia-Pacific: Region, State and Identity in Australian Foreign Policy
   1.1 Territoriality and the Proto-Foreign Policy of Hobbes
   1.2 Encountering Difference: Defining Self and Other
   1.3 The Colonial Origins of Australian Foreign Policy

2. Early Foreign Policy: Securing White Australia in the 'Far East'
   2.1 Western Identity and Australia's Dual Search for Security in the 'Far East'
   2.2 Producing Knowledge of the Region: Foreign Policy between the Wars
   2.3 Heightened Fears of the Yellow Peril: Foreign Policy during WW II
   2.4 Breaching Australia's Imperial Reflex?: Liberal Regionalism in the Post-War Period

3. Region and Foreign Policy during the Cold War
   3.1 Cold War Geopolitics and Australian Foreign Policy
   3.2 Western Strategy and the Production of Cold War Knowledge
   3.3 The Western Presence in Southeast Asia and the Violence of Cold War Discourse
      i. The Korean War
      ii. Relations with Indonesia
      iii. The Vietnam War

4. The Crisis of Western Geopolitics: Foreign Policy after Vietnam
   4.1 Crisis, the Rise of East-Asia and the Postmodern Condition.
   4.2 Australian Foreign Policy and Crisis.
   4.3 The Foreign Policy of the Whitlam Government: Reinvoking Liberal Regionalism in an Uncertain Era

5. Contemporary Foreign Policy I: Realism and the Regional Threat
   5.1 From Fraser to Hawke: The Renewal of Cold War Discourse
   5.2 Realist Narratives in the Post-Cold War Period: The Asia-Pacific as a Marker of Uncertainty
   5.3 Contemporary Policy Articulations: Regional Security and the Violent Reassertion of Sovereign Identity
   5.4 Recalcitrant Encounters: Asianist Discourse and the Continuing Crisis of Representation
6. Contemporary Foreign Policy II: Liberalism and the Pacific Century 105
6.1 Celebrating the Pacific Century
6.2 Australia in the Pacific Century: Neoliberalism and the Ambiguous Reframing of Identity
6.3 Liberal Institutionalism and Australia's Regionalist Diplomacy

7. Shifting Perils, Dangerous Liaisons in Australia's Regional Engagement 124
7.1 Globalising Strategies and Developmentalist States in the Asia-Pacific: The Darkside of the Pacific Century
7.2 The Perils of Australia's Free Trade Diplomacy: Enhancing or Undermining "Security"?
7.3 Dangerous Liaisons: Australia's Regional Strategic Engagement

8. On the Margins of the Asia-Pacific: Omissions, Exclusions, Silences 145
8.1 Exclusion I: The Gendered Nature of Industrial Production and Resistance in the Asia-Pacific
8.2 Exclusion II: Trans-Pacific Flows and Border Crossings
   i. Sex Workers
   ii. Migrant Labour
   iii. The Policy Response: Policing Territorial Boundaries
8.3 Exclusion III: Environmental Crisis, Indigenous Peoples and Local Knowledges

9. Reframing Foreign Policy: Toward an Expanded Agenda of Regional Engagement 167
9.1 Beyond the Realist-Liberal Impasse: Difference, Identity and the Asia-Pacific
9.2 Rethinking the "Asia-Pacific": The Critical Geopolitics of Social Movements
9.3 Reformulating Australian Foreign Policy
   i. From the American Alliance to Regional Engagement
   ii. Beyond Strategic Integration: Acknowledging Difference and Change in the Region
   iii. Countering Globalisation-from-Above

Conclusion 194

Bibliography 199
Introduction

Australian Foreign Policy in the Pacific Century

Amidst the uncertainties of the post-Cold War era — of the disintegration of existing states, the re-emergence of ethnonationalism and the increase in capital and technology flows across national boundaries — the rise of the Asia-Pacific has represented a story of alluring teleological attraction to policy-makers, journalists and scholars alike. Given this attraction, it is hardly surprising that the Asia-Pacific region has also become a contentious subject in contemporary political and economic discourse. Here one sees often fundamental disagreement between liberal economists and those in the strategic communities of the West. While the former understand the region in terms of the victory of free markets and democracy in the post-Cold War period, the latter argue in typically realist terms that the rise of Asia portends a violent realignment of global relations marked by the strong possibility of Great Power conflict, a regional arms race and ethnic and civil strife. Still others, particularly the ruling elites of East Asia, claim that the economic success of the region can be explained in terms of the organic notions of community found in Asian values and Confucian culture.

Whatever the merit of these debates, most observers agree that the rise of the Asia-Pacific has represented a fundamental shift in global economic power in the last decades of the 20th century. According to available economic data, more than one half of the world’s economic growth is now centred on the Asian region. Combined with the demise of the Soviet bloc, the rise of Asia’s economies has signalled a radical departure from the bipolar world of the Cold War. The simple dichotomy of communist and capitalist versions of Western modernity has now been replaced with a more complex multipolar world of proliferating centres of power and identity.

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1 A note on the system of referencing I have adopted in this thesis: Since this work makes extensive use of unattributed newspaper articles and other published material I have used two different means to reference source material. The first, used in those cases where there is a specified author, states the author first, then the year and finally the details of the article or volume in question. The second, used in those cases where the source has no specified author, cites the name of the article first, followed by details of the article including the date and page numbers.


This decentring of global political life can also be seen in the increasing powerlessness of states to control accelerating flows of capital, people, goods, technology and culture across territorial borders. This globalisation process has not only led to the adoption of a global consumer culture by peoples across the world, it has simultaneously elicited a reassertion of local ethnic identities and religious fundamentalism. Challenged by both these global and local forces, many nation-states now face the threat of disintegration and fragmentation. Meanwhile, a shift has occurred from the geopolitics of the Cold War when competition over territory represented the major dynamic of international politics to the rise of geoeconomics in which the struggle for market share has become an increasingly important dimension of global politics.

These far-reaching changes have not only led to a fundamental transformation in global relations but have also overturned the dominant paradigms through which IR have been understood. The traditional Western representation of IR as an anarchic realm of clearly-demarcated and discrete territorial states is no longer sustainable. Gender, ecology, migratory flows, capital movements and ethnic expressions of identity have all emerged as salient global issues to disrupt existing understandings which have tended to reduce IR to a geopolitical struggle amongst states. This has manifested itself in the theoretical and conceptual upheaval that has marked the discipline of IR in the last decade. In particular, the dominant assumptions of power politics realism that provided Western elites with a sense of certitude and stability during the Cold War have began to unravel in the face of the flows and transferred crossings of contemporary global life.5

This disjunction between contemporary global flows and the static cartographies of Western IR discourse has manifested itself in the inability of policy-making elites to adequately respond to the emerging realities of post-Cold War politics. As a result, policy paralysis has become a commonplace experience of intellectual and governmental elites when confronted with economic marginalisation, environmental crisis and the violent reassertion of subnational ethnic identities. This sense of crisis has been exemplified in the failure of the second earth summit where attempts by the world’s leaders to confront the current global ecological crisis ended in the spectacle of diplomatic discord and political impasse.

In this context of conceptual and policy crisis, there is a growing need to rethink and reformulate the traditional assumptions through which IR has been understood in the West. The fundamental transformation in the Westphalian system of international relations presently occurring demands that the dominant assumptions of Western IR be subject to reappraisal. And yet for all the routine promises made by mainstream scholars and policy-makers to rethink dominant Cold War understandings, contemporary Western IR has offered instead reformulated "post-Cold War" perspectives. These perspectives

5 I am referring more specifically to the Third Debate. See the special edition of International Studies Quarterly (1989 Vol. 33) devoted to this debate.
are based upon the same metatheoretical assumptions as those which underpinned Cold War thinking.

To take just three recent examples: the Persian Gulf War, the conflict in Bosnia and the genocidal events in Rwanda exemplified the dangers and policy pitfalls of applying traditional thinking to the complex strategic environment of post-Cold War global politics. In each of these cases, Western strategic elites invoked a variety of traditional realist themes of just war, territorial sovereignty, non-intervention and Machiavellian power politics drawn from understandings codified in the 17th century European states system. Framed via these anachronistic understandings, Western strategic thinking in the 1990s has become characterised by simplistic and inconsistent policy responses which have seen the same Western diplomats and political leaders who celebrated the decimation of the Iraqi population in the Gulf War stand idly by as ethnic cleansing was perpetrated in Bosnia and Rwanda.

It is against this background of the failure of policy-making elites to adequately respond to contemporary global challenges that I examine Australia's contemporary regional engagement. As this thesis makes clear, Australia's recent attempt to "engage with the Asia-Pacific" provides an exemplary study of the great dangers and opportunities that exist in IR in the 1990s: of the changed geostrategic environment that peoples and nations across the globe confront; of the needs to rethink traditional Western understandings of IR in the face of such changes; of the crisis of policy-making elites in addressing this challenge; and of the concrete geopolitical dangers associated with not doing so.

Indeed, characterised by attempts to move away from European preoccupations to a focus on the Asia-Pacific region, our contemporary foreign policy has been inextricably bound up with the broader dilemmas and volatilities of post-Cold War politics. The need to formulate creative alternatives to prevailing understandings, therefore, is particularly urgent for Australians in the 1990s who can no longer rely upon the traditional alliance structures of "the West" to ensure security in an increasingly "Asianised" region. Alone in the Asia-Pacific, Australians, more than ever, need to understand the Asia-Pacific in all its complexity and diversity. That task demands innovative thinking which moves beyond the kinds of self-understandings of the past which reduced our identity to a Western outpost in an alien and unstable Asian region.

Yet for all the strategic reassessment and repositioning that has marked the contemporary engagement agenda, foreign policy in the 1990s remains underpinned by the same assumptions and presuppositions of Western IR which have long formed the basis for our

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relations with the outside world. One of the major aims of this thesis, accordingly, is to illustrate that while the rapid growth experienced by Asian economies has forced policymakers to readjust the geographical coordinates of foreign policy, Australia's regional diplomacy continues to be driven by the dominant realist and liberal perspectives of Western IR. I will show in this thesis how these perspectives have been converted into narrowly-conceived trade and strategic agendas that have dominated Australia's encounter with the region. Thus, while contemporary defence planning continues to be characterised by a traditional realist security agenda, Australia's recent policy of "enmeshment with the Asia-Pacific" has been based upon a (neo)liberal program of multilateral trade liberalisation and market integration. 7

It is what that gets left out of these dominant agendas — their shared silences and exclusions — which I highlight in this thesis as the most disturbing dimension of contemporary foreign policy. This is clear in the ways in which the trade and security agendas currently driving the policy process have been pursued at the expense of giving attention to a range of alternative security issues such as gender, ecological crisis, migration, grassroots development, and cultural/ethnic identity. It is precisely these kinds of alternative security issues, however, that have become salient forces in the Asia-Pacific region with the end of the Cold War.

Thus, the realist and liberal perspectives currently underpinning our contemporary regional policies remain as narrowly framed as they ever were. As in the past, the dominant perspectives of Western IR remain wedded to the interests of a small privileged strategic elite located in Western industrialised societies whose strategic practices and understandings continue to reduce the complexities and diversity of global life to narrow market-based and geopolitical images of reality. In reproducing these narrow understandings as the basis for regional engagement, policy-makers have marginalised many of the everyday realities of regional life from policy and analytical attention. In pointing out as much, this thesis seeks to identify the dangers inherent in failing to reflect upon reductionist understandings of global life. This absence of any serious reappraisal of the broader assumptions which have traditionally underpinned Australia's regional diplomacy represents a major shortcoming of recent foreign policy. Here we shall see how, far from reflecting upon their own understandings, contemporary policy-makers

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7 While this thesis illustrates how these liberal and realist perspectives have dominated Australian thinking on foreign policy, a number of writers have argued that there is another perspective which has shaped Australian foreign policy; namely rationalism. See Indyk, M (1985) "The Australian Study of International Relations" in D. Aitkin (ed.) *Surveys of Australian Political Science*. George Allen and Unwin: Sydney. Seen in terms of a broader set of metatheoretical assumptions — e.g. the state as rational actor, international relations as an anarchical system, the positivist-empiricist notion of "real worldism" etc. — the so-called "rationalist" school, however, represents a variant of realism, rather than a departure from it. For a critical discussion of these themes particularly in relation to Hedley Bull whose work is seen as an exemplar of the rationalist approach see George, J. (1992) "Some Thoughts on the 'Givenness of Everyday Life' in Australian International Relations: Theory and Practice" *Australian Journal of Political Science* 27 (1): pp.31-54.
have retreated into old patterns of thinking in responding to the challenges of the post-Cold War period.

In advancing these arguments, however, this thesis is not intended as a blanket condemnation of contemporary foreign policy for as I acknowledge there are some commendable elements of our recent regional policies. Those elements provide a glimpse of where we might begin to creatively respond to the challenges of contemporary global life. In particular, the acknowledgment by the more intelligent sectors of the foreign policy community that we need to seriously rethink identity through a fundamental intellectual and cultural engagement with the region represents an important insight in the context of the foreign policy challenges that are emerging in the Pacific century.  

As I point out in the following chapters, however, such insights have rarely found sustained expression in the formulation and conduct of recent foreign policy. Rather, in the rush to attach Australian trade and security interests to the growing economies of East Asia, regional engagement has been generated less by a willingness to engage at an intellectual and cultural level with our regional neighbours than by what can only be described as a cargo cult mentality. Engagement has become reduced here to a narrow policy of market and strategic integration with the region’s elites. This is a disturbingly short-sighted policy agenda that, in its focus on regional elites, runs the risk of detaching Australian diplomacy from a wider range of post-Cold War security issues, as indicated above. Indeed, by so unequivocally promoting Australia’s integration into the dominant commercial and strategic networks of the region, policy-makers are pursuing elitist and narrowly-conceived policies precisely at the time when we need to open up our perspectives to new understandings. That includes expanding the purview of foreign policy in what is becoming an increasingly complex, interdependent post-Cold War environment.

In this context it is worth introducing an argument elaborated in the final chapters of this thesis: namely, that our narrow trade and security-driven policies have precluded Australian policy-makers and diplomats from contributing to innovative and creative diplomacy in resolving the region’s most intractable security problems such as in Bougainville, East Timor, West Papua and Tibet. Instead, our diplomacy has been characterised by an unimaginative policy of giving support to repressive state elites in the Asia-Pacific in the name of regional "stability" and "security". Far from achieving these goals, however, our elitist regional diplomacy has actually undermined the objective of creating a more stable, peaceful regional order. In this sense, Australia’s recent diplomacy can be seen as a specific articulation of the broader policy crisis which I discerned above in the Western response to the Gulf War, Bosnia and Rwanda.

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In examining recent engagement policies in such critical terms, this work argues that the desire to integrate into the region should not blind us to many of the less salutary realities of the Asia-Pacific. Rather than uncritically accepting the current ideological attachment to strategic and economic integration, I seek to think through and draw out the specific politico-economic implications of our multiple engagements with the region. Far from rejecting the need to engage with the region, however, this work argues that our present policy agenda has not gone far enough in its attempts to re-align Australia’s interests with the region. It suggests that any meaningful and far-reaching regional engagement must go beyond the narrow and opportunistic policies of prevailing diplomacy. That requires no less than a serious and sustained reassessment of orthodox foreign policy thinking which, as we shall see, remains constrained by the elite perspectives of power politics realism and market liberalism.

**Containing the Asia-Pacific: Australia’s Realist Foreign Policy Tradition**

In order to understand how contemporary Australian foreign policy has arrived at this critical juncture, it is necessary to know where it came from in the first place. To this end, Chapter 1 of this thesis begins by outlining the dominant understandings through which Australian policy-makers have come to make sense of the world. That chapter represents a thematic discussion designed to identify a broader Western discourse of IR from which Australian foreign policy has derived its major assumptions.

In locating Australian foreign policy as a site of this larger discourse, I illustrate how policy-making elites have traditionally understood the societies of Asia and the Pacific through the dominant perspectives of Western IR — in particular, power politics realism and, to a lesser extent, market liberalism. Framed via these perspectives, Australia’s regional foreign policies have been based upon strictly geopolitical and market-based representations respectively. These representations have reduced the cultural richness and diversity of Asian and Pacific societies to rigid and narrow images of strategic and commercial reality. As we shall see in early chapters, these representations have served to frame the history of Australia’s encounter with the region, which has fluctuated between realist representations of the region as a strategic threat and liberal images of the region as an object of development, trade and engagement.

Through addressing this broader process of understanding, Chapter 1 of this thesis examines how the dominant perspectives of Western IR came to be articulated in an Antipodean context in the first place. I argue that this process was inextricably linked to the formation of Australia as a settler colony in the 18th and 19th centuries in which successive generations of European settlers sought to make sense of an alien world through drawing on the dominant understandings and experiences of modern European society from whence they had come. The settlement of Australia became a process of transposing the familiar forms and structures of European society to an isolated Australian continent. In doing so, the new settlers tapped into culturally resonant representations of Asia deriving from Europe which emphasised the despotic, dangerous
and unstable nature of the Asian region — thereby consigning a vast area of the earth's surface to a singular geopolitical identity of otherness.

These representations served not only to simplify the complex realities and great cultural differences that the new settlers confronted in the Asia-Pacific, but also to more clearly demarcate a nascent sense of identity in the Australian colonies. Thus, the representation of Asia as a geopolitical and cultural threat amounted more to an affirmation and narration of Australia's own identity as an isolated Western settlement than representing an objective depiction of the societies of Asia and the Pacific. In other words, Australians came to "know" and "understand" the Asia-Pacific through a broader process of Western identity formation wherein the Asia-Pacific represented a marker of "otherness" against which the sovereign identity of Australia as a stable, Western state was defined.

This broader process of identity formation was reproduced after World War II through power politics realism. That approach came to dominate the thinking of Western foreign policy elites during the Cold War. With the development of an Australian IR discipline in the 1960s, realism became entrenched as the unquestioned orthodoxy in Australia. Educated in Britain's most esteemed universities, the first generation of Australian IR scholars brought the dominant assumptions and understandings of Anglo-American realism to Australia's policy and academic sectors. As Mel Gurtov has noted the realist approach stresses the need to:

construct and defend a stable balance of power among rival states; to evaluate the costs and benefits of state actions in strictly national terms; to operate on the basis of what is, not what has been or might be; to disregard the expressions of good intentions by other leaders; to trust no-one and nothing, other than the justness of one's own national cause; and to rely on military power rather than moral suasion, diplomatic agreements, international law, or an open, democratic decision-making process to protect and enforce one's interest.

For Australian policy-makers and academics, these realist understandings provided a conceptual language and set of shared assumptions about the nature of IR through which Australia's traditional sense of Western identity could be expressed in Cold War terms. In particular, the dominant realist image of IR as an anarchical world of competing self-interested states fitted neatly into Australia's own self image as representing an

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10 Ibid.
endangered, isolated European society located in a hostile, unstable Asian region. Buttressing such discursive representations was the development of Area Studies in Australia which played a central role in producing knowledge of the domestic polities of Southeast Asia. The knowledge produced under the aegis of Area Studies confirmed and reinforced realist images of Asia as dangerous, unstable and backward.

In adopting these understandings, policy-makers during the Cold War reproduced the traditional regional threat scenario in which the Asia-Pacific became reduced to an unstable region that represented a geostrategic threat to Australia’s Western settlement. Such representations were articulated through the pervasive fear of Asiatic communism which dominated the foreign policy debate in Australia during the Cold War. Policy-makers and academics were particularly concerned with what became known as the "falling dominos of Southeast Asia". In responding to this sense of threat and fear towards the region, our strategic elite formulated a containment strategy of Forward Defence designed to counter regional threats through eliciting the deployment of Western forces in Southeast Asia.

As I make clear in the early chapters of this thesis, however, the realist understandings that underpinned such policies were not the product of neutral and objective representations of the Asia-Pacific region. Rather they represented a narrowly-bounded discourse of Cold War geopolitics that reduced the complex realities of the Asia-Pacific to strictly geostrategic representations of reality. I argue that such representations cannot be disconnected from the rise of US global hegemony in the post-war period in that they provided the discursive underpinnings that made possible a larger Cold War project in which US strategic power was extended across the globe. Thus, in framing Australian identity as an isolated Western outpost in an anarchical Asian region, policy-makers were also involved in a broader set of strategic practices that integrated Australia into the US global strategic network. That was achieved through converting Australia’s traditional sense of insecurity into the broader policy objective of attracting a US strategic presence in the region. In this way, Australia’s Cold War foreign policy became hitched to the goals of American globalism. As we shall see, this was to have grave implications for Australia’s encounter with the region which became characterised by a violent interventionist Cold War strategy that drew Australia and its Western Allies into a series of bloody conflicts in Southeast Asia. This strategy involved no less than Australia’s military commitment to the Vietnam War and all the failures of Western regional strategy that this entailed.

Such policies, however, were not the only option open to policy-makers at the time. Indeed, one of the major themes of this work is to show that, outside of the dominant realist discourse, other interpretations of regional reality could emerge through which a less violent, more cooperative regional foreign policy was possible. In fact, if they had decided to do so, policy-makers could have rejected the power politics view that emphasised Australia’s endangered position and stressed instead the post-colonial
affinities that Australian society shared with its neighbours as small powers located in a common part of the world.

That this was not the case was due largely to the powerful attraction which realism held for policy-makers in offering simple representations of a complex world that claimed a universal, mirror-like perspective on reality. Drawing on a positivist theory of knowledge which dominated Anglo-American social science, realism represented a self-enclosed, self-affirming discourse of reality on the basis of which Australian policy-makers could claim to know and understand the world. The whole problem with this, however, was that it discouraged any kind of critical reflection on the broader theoretical presuppositions and discursive meanings that underpinned the dominant images of reality which emerged during the Cold War. The consequences of this were that the crude simplistic understandings of Asia adopted by Australia's early settlers were unquestioningly reproduced by policy-makers throughout the Cold War.

This was clear in the ways in which policy-makers resorted to monolithic understandings of the region as a substitute for the more arduous task of developing sophisticated and nuanced knowledge of the great complexities of Asian and Pacific societies. The dangers of such unreflective real worldism were no more tragically exemplified than in Australia's strident promotion of Western involvement in the Vietnam War. Here we shall see how reductionist geopolitical images of Vietnam as a Cold War battlefield came to frame Australia's dominant policy perspectives. Such images betrayed a profound misunderstanding of the deep historical and cultural processes driving Asian nationalism and anti-colonialism during the Cold War.

**Australia's Neoliberal Regional Engagement: Beyond the Cold War?**

With the dramatic transformations that have marked IR in the last two decades, particularly the West's defeat in the Vietnam War, these Cold War understandings of the Asia-Pacific have become unsustainable. As Chapter 4 illustrates, the recent decline of the Western industrial centre and the emergence of the traditional peripheries of Asia as centres of economic growth have challenged the image of Asia as unstable and backward.

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13 The history of positivism is a complex one which I can hardly aim to do justice to here. In its most general sense, positivism refers to the notion of a unified theory of science in which the methodology of natural sciences is adopted as the major underpinning for the explanation of social reality. Rejection of this positivist theory of knowledge can be made on simple grounds that human reality is very different from that which exists in the natural world. Here we can see how social reality involves intersubjective meanings and interpretive understandings that do not lend themselves to the empiricist methodologies that underpin study into the natural world. I would go further than this, however, in rejecting positivism on the basis that even in the natural sciences — and, in particular, in the most sophisticated apogee of the natural sciences, namely physics — the notion of reality as an independent realm of facticity and truth has long been discredited since at least Heisenberg quantum physics and chaos theory. See, for instance, Jencks, C. (ed.) (1992) _The Postmodern Reader_. St. Martin's Press: New York. For a general discussion of positivism see Giddens, A. (1982). _Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory_. London: Macmillan Press.
which underpinned Australia's Cold War policies. In seeking to elaborate on this transformation, I examine recent arguments regarding the "postmodern" condition of contemporary political life. Here we shall see how the proliferation of identities and the unravelling of traditional geopolitical alignments in recent decades have served to disrupt many of certainties which have formed the basis for "modern" political life since the Renaissance. Against this background of postmodernity, I argue, the forces of global capitalist development have effectively overturned the traditional territorial cartographies of Western IR and given way to new terrains of discourse in the post-Cold War period.

It is in response to these changes that policy-makers have shifted Australia's regional diplomacy from a Cold War strategy of containment to one of regional engagement and integration in the post-Cold War era. This shift has been dominated by a neoliberal policy agenda characterised by two major themes. The first relates to the introduction of major reforms designed to integrate Australia more fully into the rapidly growing economies of Asia. Those reforms have been based on the export drive of the Australian state in which contemporary foreign policy has become hitched to the goal of achieving increased market share in the Asia-Pacific. The second theme, and one complimenting this market approach, has been the vigorous promotion of trade liberalisation and "open regionalism", exemplified in Australia's recent APEC diplomacy. This has been part of a broader liberal institutionalist agenda directed at developing inter-state trade and security arrangements across the Pacific to strengthen free market economic relations.

For policy-makers, journalists and academics alike, this neoliberal policy agenda has represented a fundamental "repositioning" of Australia's place in the world in which Australian society is understood to have finally overcome its traditional estrangement from the societies of the Asia-Pacific.14 Thus, according to one leading foreign policy analyst, Australia's diplomatic history has seen a "diplomatic maturation" over the last 25 years as policy-makers have begun to accept the need to engage more fully with the Asia-Pacific.15

This thesis critically examines these claims, challenging the notion that regional engagement has marked a "new direction" in foreign policy. It argues that current neoliberal policies remain wedded to many of the same assumptions and narrow images of reality that characterised Cold War foreign policy. In pointing out as much, this thesis represents a strategic intervention into the current IR debate in Australia and its uncritical celebration of regional engagement as representing a fundamental break with Cold War understandings. Hence, while speaking the language of policy reform and reappraisal, contemporary policy-makers have in fact resorted to understandings of regional reality as equally reductionist and narrowly conceived as those produced in Cold War thinking. In

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reducing the region to narrow neoliberal representations of the region as a "miracle economy", policy-makers run the risk of merely replacing the strategic reductionism of the Cold War with a brand of post-Cold War economic reductionism.

Before introducing this broader critique of neoliberal foreign policy in more detail below, I want to comment on contemporary defence policy as it represents an even more direct line of continuity with realist Cold War thinking. This is a theme I elaborate on in Chapter 5 of this thesis. Here we shall see how the traditional realist threat scenario that underpinned Australia’s Cold War strategy of containment has been reproduced in defence planning in the 1990s. This is clear in the ways in which policy-makers continue to look towards the United States as our major ally in defending against a possible threat to Australian security from the Asia-Pacific region. In reproducing this old worldview, defence planners have recently sought to rejuvenate the Western Alliance in the Asia-Pacific. They have also attempted to enhance Australia's technological edge over potential regional adversaries by acquiring high-tech weapons systems. In pursuing these policies, Australia’s defence establishment has reinvoked the traditional "region as threat" scenario through seeking to identify a myriad of unspecified threats that exist "out there in the region" as the major source of danger in the post-Cold War era.

In the absence of any critical reflection, however, our defence community, which has never thought too seriously about the assumptions and presuppositions that have formed its worldview, is proving incapable of devising adequate post-Cold War defence policies. Indeed, while recent transformations in global politics demand a fundamental rethink of Australia's place in the world, current defence planners have sought a nostalgic return to the past when the Western Alliance provided Australia with a clear sense of identity and when security objectives were advanced through the projection of US geopolitical power into the region. As we shall see, this attempt to turn back the clock has not only undermined recent attempts to "engage with the region" but has also led to an explicitly violent politics of identity, exemplified in the militarisation of contemporary Australian defence planning.

While this traditional security agenda can be readily traced to Cold War thinking, it is in relation to our neoliberal regional diplomacy that policy-makers have forcefully promoted the idea that an extensive repositioning has occurred in contemporary foreign policy. In Chapter 6 of this thesis I subject these claims to vigorous critique. Here we shall see how contemporary neoliberalism shares many of the same fundamental assumptions about international life as Cold War realism. Thus, whatever the stated differences in emphasis between Australia’s traditional realist policy of containment and its contemporary neoliberal agenda of regional engagement, both, I argue, are concerned with a narrow set of questions and assumptions regarding the rational action of states in an anarchical world.
This is clear in the ways that both contemporary neoliberalism and realism take the state as the central actor of IR. This has produced a shared image of IR as a mosaic of clearly demarcated sovereign jurisdictions. It is also clear in the methodological individualism that both realism and neoliberalism share. Thus, the former’s stress on the atomised, self-interested nature of international relations is reproduced in the neoliberal notion of a static, essentialised human nature. Here individuals, and states, become reduced to self-interested utility and profit maximisers competing in an anarchical marketplace. In sharing this common view of human nature, both neoliberals and realists account for agency in terms of rational action based upon calculations of narrowly defined self-interest. Hence, while neoliberals stress the possibilities of cooperation in inter-state relations, a proposition rejected by realists, they do so on a utilitarian basis that departs little from the power politics worldview of realism. From either a realist or neoliberal perspective, ethical or moral considerations are ruled out as irrelevant to the atomised, self-interested realm of IR.

This convergence between neoliberalism and power politics realism can be readily discerned in contemporary Australian foreign policy. Hence, the same Cold War realist insistence on “order”, “stability” and “Western leadership” have also been invoked by contemporary policy-makers as a crucial precondition for developing and maintaining liberal economic relations across the Pacific. In other words, Australia’s strident promotion of a neoliberal free trade agenda presupposes the maintenance of the same kind of global order as Western strategists sought to entrench during the Cold War — an order of stable territorial states and market economies underpinned by the strategic practices of power politics realism. It is through the promotion of a stable (Western-dominated) regional order, then, that Australia’s free trade diplomacy has converged with the goals of defence planning.

This convergence of realism and neoliberalism, however, has meant that the prevailing foreign policy debate has been conducted within such narrow terms of discourse as to exclude a range of emerging realities from analytical and policy attention. As two of Britain’s leading IR theorists have noted, the contemporary debate in Western IR:

... clearly does not cover many of the central features of contemporary world politics. By focusing on states it automatically ignores major features and by avoiding moral questions it locates itself in a very narrow debate. It looks very much like a debate restricted to the prosperous nations of the West, and takes for granted many of the features of this globalized world that theory should in

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fact call into question, such as identity, nationalism, economics, religion and gender. 17

Framed in terms of this narrowly-conceived debate, Australia's regional engagement has been characterised by major silences and omissions. In Chapter 7 of this thesis, I show how the silences and limitations of this broader IR debate have found concrete policy articulation in the narrow definition that policy-makers have given regional engagement. Here we shall see how engagement has come to denote a narrow policy of integrating strategically and commercially with the elites of the region. Like its Cold War counterpart, therefore, contemporary foreign policy has represented an elitist and dangerous set of geopolitical practices detached from the cultural, gendered, environmental, ethnic and class realities of everyday life. This has been exemplified in the disturbing ways in which Australian policy has been directed toward supporting unaccountable and undemocratic state elites in the region which appear increasingly distant from the daily needs and struggles of the people over which they rule. Seen from this perspective, the concrete politico-economic agendas currently driving regional diplomacy are actually detaching Australia from the Asia-Pacific region, rather than leading to any meaningful engagement with it.

Rethinking Australia's Regional Engagement
Where, then, does this critique of contemporary regional engagement lead? Is it possible, I ask, to think beyond the rigid policy understandings which have circumscribed regional engagement within such narrow parameters of discourse. The final part of this thesis addresses these questions through examining in more detail the silences and exclusions of contemporary foreign policy. My main objective is to draw upon and formulate alternative understandings to the realist and liberal perspectives currently underpinning Australia's regional diplomacy and its narrow market-based and geopolitical images of reality.

In addressing this task, it is necessary to recognise that any adequate understanding of the Asia-Pacific must be based upon an acknowledgment of the great diversity and complexities of regional life. As I have already indicated, however, those complexities have been obscured in contemporary foreign policy, characterised as it is by rigid images of the region as a miracle economy and strategic threat. Beyond these reductionist understandings, a range of other identities and realities exist. In Chapter 8, accordingly, I map some of the non-territorial identities and everyday practices that have characterised social relations across the region — relations based upon gender, ethnic and indigenous identities, ecology and migratory flows. These realities are emerging as part of an alternative regional security agenda that is taking on growing significance with the end of the Cold War.

In addressing this alternative post-Cold War security agenda, I draw upon a growing critical literature on IR from scholars concerned with the growing crisis of sovereign authority and the incapacity of governments across the globe to formulate creative solutions to contemporary global problems. Engaging in dissent against orthodox IR theory and its positivist assumptions about the “real” nature of international politics, critical IR has drawn upon a range of post-positivist approaches to knowledge and society — from postmodernism and postcolonialism to critical theory and feminism. Above all else, this emerging critique of Western IR seeks to open up to scrutiny many of the dominant assumptions about identity, knowledge and representation through which global political life has been understood in the West since the expansion of the European states system in the 17th century.

By drawing upon this critique, I seek to apply the questions posed by critical IR to Australia’s engagement with the Asia-Pacific. This involves developing more sophisticated tools of inquiry and policy-making able to apprehend emerging realities — a particularly urgent task if we are to respond adequately to the increasing volatilities and complexities of the post-Cold War security environment. Indeed, in a world in which issues such as gender, migration, ethnic identity and technology flows are becoming increasingly important, it is imperative that Australia’s foreign policy community question prevailing policy directions and expand the narrow intellectual perspectives underpinning prevailing policies.

Thus, through posing fundamental questions about how we represent the world around us, this thesis draws upon more inclusive understandings of the Asia-Pacific attuned to the shifting terrain of work, ecology, migration and gender of regional life. That entails thinking beyond the exclusionary practices of modern foreign policy discourse by developing policy perspectives attentive to the everyday practices and non-territorial identities of the societies of Asia and the Pacific.

To this end, Chapter 9 of this thesis examines the recent emergence of a range of social movements across the Pacific which have articulated the marginalised perspectives of indigenous peoples, migrants, refugees, women and ordinary citizens. I argue that, in their focus on grassroots communities, social movements represent an important source for rethinking and reformulating contemporary understandings of the Asia-Pacific. This

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focus goes beyond the dominant strategic and commercial networks of the region that have been the main preoccupation of prevailing engagement policies. In this sense, the emergence of critical social movements can be seen as part of a "broader process of social invention that carries the possibility of reconstructing the conditions for a decent life from the bottom up". Indeed, as I argue, the real significance of social movements lies in the ways they have sought to reclaim the cultural richness and diversity of Asian and Pacific societies from the reductionist understandings of prevailing discourse.

Having identified these movements as important agents for reimagining the Asia-Pacific region, I conclude this thesis by examining how opening up foreign policy to the insights and perspectives of social movements can promote a more wide-ranging agenda of regional engagement. How is it possible, I ask, to subject the formulation of foreign policy to the grassroots perspectives of citizens groups and other non-governmental organisations (NGOs)? How does this serve to expand regional engagement from an elitist, state-centred focus to a policy agenda sensitive to ecological, gender, and other marginalised perspectives? In posing these questions, I argue that it is necessary to have a more open and transparent debate on foreign and defence policy in Australia, one that promotes greater community participation rather than being the preserve of a small elite of trade economists and strategic professionals.

Democratising Australian foreign policy, however, not only involves a reform of formal political processes, but necessitates an entire reappraisal of Australia's policy of "regional engagement" and its narrow strategic and economic agendas. That is, if Australians are to fundamentally reorient their place in the world then regional engagement must be seen as an opportunity to engage in a broader debate about who "we" are as Australians in the late 20th century. Any meaningful and far-reaching engagement policy implies a broader intellectual and cultural engagement with the peoples and grassroots communities of Asia the Pacific.

That will necessarily involve posing a much broader set of questions than has been possible within the prevailing foreign policy debate. How, for instance, might it be possible to rethink and reinvent identity in line with the fundamental changes taking place in global politics? To what extent will engaging with the Asia-Pacific demand a fundamental reorganisation of our relations with the outside world? Is it possible, moreover, to imagine regional engagement in terms that are consistent with Australia's democratic traditions? And finally how might "regional engagement" contribute to a general renewal of domestic society at a time of great community anxiety and stress? Before turning to these questions, however, it is a necessary to relate a larger story of Australia's historical encounter with the Asia-Pacific. It is a story that like so many others

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about the modern world begins (but by no means ends) in post-Renaissance Western Europe.
Chapter 1

Imagining the Asia-Pacific: Region, State and Identity in Australian Foreign Policy

In this chapter I provide a thematic discussion of the broader modes of discourse through which Australian policy-makers have traditionally understood the Asia-Pacific. My argument is that foreign policy-makers have derived their underlying assumptions about identity, sovereignty and order from a larger Western discourse of IR. I identify this discourse with the dominant understandings of post-Renaissance Western thought which emerged in conjunction with the development of the European states system in the 16th and 17th centuries.

While it is beyond the scope of the present chapter to examine this discourse in its myriad detail and complexity, I want to identify two dominant themes as being central to the theory and practice of contemporary Australian foreign policy. The first relates to the emergence of a distinctly modern conception of political identity and space as territorial. Here I examine how the strict demarcation of political space in early modern thought became codified in the European states system as the basis for understanding IR in the modern era. As we shall see throughout this thesis, such territorial understandings have been translated into Australian foreign policy through state-centric representations of reality which contemporary policy-makers have drawn upon to understand the “Asia-Pacific”. Such representations have reduced the region’s great complexities and pluralism to the expression of its governing elites.

The second theme of post-Renaissance thought which I discuss in this chapter involves the dominant modes of discourse through which modern Western societies have come to understand other cultures and, in turn, through which Australian policy-makers have understood the societies of the Asia-Pacific. Here I will show how Europe’s colonisation of the non-Western world hinged upon defining its colonial subjects as inferior, dangerous and backward — that is, as “others” against which the sovereign Western self was imagined. This division between Western selves and non-Western others has become central to the ways that Western IR scholars and foreign policy practitioners have classified global political space in terms of a range of dichotomies between inside/outside, self/other, West/East and advanced/backward. In seeking to make sense of the different cultures and peoples of Asia and the Pacific, successive generations of Australians drew upon these dichotomous understandings of Western IR. That served not only to reproduce traditional Western representations of otherness but also to reduce the Asia-Pacific to crude and monolithic images of the region as a geopolitical threat to Australia.
In charting how these themes of territorality and otherness have been translated into Australian foreign policy, my aim is to demonstrate that the understandings currently driving foreign policy are not the product of universally valid, mirror-like representations of reality. Instead, policy-makers have represented the Asia-Pacific through historically and culturally-constructed understandings and meanings. Translated into Australian foreign policy, such understandings have become part of, what Jim George has identified as, "a discursive regime of exclusion, silence, and intolerance that reduces a complex and turbulent world to a patterned and rigidly ordered framework of understanding, derived from a particular representation of post-Renaissance European historical experience".¹

Space as territorial, the state as the only true expression of identity and a world divided along a binary axis of self/other, West/East, core/periphery and Australia/Asia — these are the dominant assumptions that policy-makers have drawn upon in reproducing narrow market-based and geopolitical representations of the region. Such representations have come to be expressed more formally through the dominant realist and liberal perspectives of Western IR.

In reflecting upon this narrowly-conceived process of understanding, this thesis demonstrates that there are other ways of relating to different cultures beyond Western IR and its dominant representations of territoriality and otherness. To point that out is to acknowledge that modern territorality is not the only way of organising political life. As anthropologists have long been aware, many "traditional" societies are structured around non-territorial modes of identity such as complex kinship networks. In fact, in some societies, notably those based on slash and burn agriculture, fixed territoriality is inimical to their fragile ecological systems. Far from being "natural", then, territorality in the form of fixed property rights and permanent agricultural use has proven to be ecologically dysfunctional in those areas that require cyclical patterns of land use. Within such societies, "nomadic property rights" and "the sovereign importance of movement" displaces the fixed control over territory that characterises modern industrial life.²

Recognising these other models of social organisation is a particularly urgent theme in contemporary life, as ecological crisis, the emergence of a global economy and other transnational forces have recently challenged the dominant territorial organisation of global political space. Thus, neither by looking at the world through a state-centric prism nor by responding to different cultures through reducing them to representations of otherness have contemporary policy-makers adequately responded to the global challenges they now confront. Indeed, as I argue in the final chapters of this thesis, in a world of accelerating flows of capital, people, goods, technology and culture — what I will characterise later as the "postmodern" condition — it is imperative that we begin to

rethink the static cartographies of prevailing discourse extrapolated from the 17th century European states system.

Before discussing the implications of these insights in the following chapters, I begin this chapter by examining the emergence of a strictly territorial understanding of political identity in post-Renaissance Western Europe, focusing particularly on the thought of Thomas Hobbes. I then turn to a brief discussion of the theme of otherness in Western political thought. Here I show how the global expansion of the Western powers engendered a particular understanding of the non-Western world as a dangerous and backward realm that needed to be subjugated, controlled and colonised. My aim in doing so is to examine how the themes of territoriality and otherness have become the basis upon which contemporary Western policy-makers and academics have understood IR and, in turn, Australian policy-makers have related to the Asia-Pacific. In the final part of this chapter, I discuss how these understandings came to be articulated in a specifically Antipodean context through examining the formation of Australia as a settler colony in the 18th and 19th centuries. Here I will argue that successive generations of European settlers sought to understand the alien world they confronted in the Asia-Pacific through drawing on the dominant understandings of Western Europe from whence they had come.

**Territoriality and the Proto-Foreign Policy of Hobbes**

As I have already indicated, the origins of Australian foreign policy are part of a larger story of how a territorial notion of identity emerged in post-Renaissance Western Europe and subsequently became the basis for organising modern political relations. This can be traced to the breakdown in medieval cosmology and the formulation of a modern, territorial conception of space by early modern thinkers to meet the spatial requirements of the emerging political and intellectual order in post-Renaissance Europe. As Michel Foucault has pointed out, the world of the middle ages was constituted through the prevailing discourse of Christianity in which:

> there was a hierarchic ensemble of places: sacred places and profane places; protected places and open, exposed places; urban places and rural places...In cosmological theory, there were supercelestial spaces, as opposed to the celestial, and the celestial was in its turn opposed to the terrestrial place. ⁴

This hierarchical conception of medieval space was based upon an "episteme of Resemblance" where everything conformed to God's presence in the world.⁵ That world represented a divinely created text in which, as William Connolly has noted, "everything was bound up with everything else through chains of resemblance...in a divinely inspired world of harmonies, correspondences and resemblances".⁶ Space was multiple,  

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heterogeneous and disparate, depending on its particular function in the divinely ordered cosmos. By the time of the Renaissance, however, this conception of space as hierarchical and divinely ordered gradually broke down, heralding a crisis in the ecclesiastical order in Europe. That in turn led to a fundamental transformation in the ways political order and identity came to be imagined and structured.6 This process neither represented a simple break with the past nor was it a natural evolutionary process in which Man came to be liberated from myth and religion and thus achieve full self-consciousness. It was rather an intense struggle waged on many fronts that took place over several centuries. Here the medieval structures of Western Europe gradually dissolved as distinctly modern understandings of space, society and identity led to the emergence of industrial capitalism, modern science and the modern nation-state.

A central figure in this transformation was Thomas Hobbes whose work *Leviathan* came to express an early modern reconceptualisation of society and identity bound up with the emergence of the modern sovereign state. As I indicated above, this retheorisation took place against the background of political and theological chaos as early modern thinkers sought to establish political order in a gradually dissolving world of divine foundations.7 In response to that challenge, Hobbes sought to articulate a new foundation for order and identity in the form of the sovereign state, encompassing a radically altered conception of authority, law and human subjectivity. Here the belief in a naturally ordained and hierarchically structured society was gradually replaced by Hobbes' notion of a humanly-constructed social order conceived as an "artificial Man".8

By conceiving an artificial Man, Hobbes was concerned with constructing the boundaries of the state as the all-powerful sovereign agency of political life.9 At the centre of this


9 My interpretation of Hobbes can be characterised, in the words of Ashley and Walker, as "countermemorialising" in the sense that it rejects the monologic reading of Hobbes by contemporary realists who seek to appropriate "the true" Hobbes. Realists interpret Hobbes as the grand theorist of the abject, self-interested nature of mankind, a contention that represents the fundamental basis of realist thought. In reducing Hobbes' insights to a simplistic universalised theme concerning the atomised condition of human nature, however, realism impoverishes the complex and polysemic nature of Hobbes' thought. This is clear in the ways in which realist accounts exclude the more specific historical, linguistic and cultural circumstances in which Hobbes thought was located — namely, 17th Century Europe. In focussing on how Hobbes reflects the enduring nature of the "real world", realists also fail to acknowledge the ways in which Hobbes' thought created a discursive space in which particular modes of thought were made possible at the expense of others. That was particularly true in Hobbes' contribution to the early modern reconceptualisation of space as both territorial and geopolitical. For a compelling critique of the ways Hobbes has been interpreted in the discipline of IR, see Boucher, D. (1990) "Inter-
concern was the boundary that he established between interior and exterior realms: between, what Hobbes envisaged as, a disciplined, well-ordered and artificially-constituted society and the state of nature, which consisted of war, madness and drunkenness. While for many contemporary scholars, Hobbes' moral philosophy is the central theme of *Leviathan*, the boundary he draws between inner and outer realms has an explicitly spatial or territorial dimension. This is clear in the trope of the polity as a body which pervades Hobbes' text\(^\text{10}\), evidenced in arguably the most cited passage of *Leviathan*:

> For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMON-WEALTH, or STATE, (in Latin CIVITAS) which is but an artificial man; though of greater stature and strength than the natural, for whose protection and defence it was intended; and in which, the sovereignty is an Artificial soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The Magistrates, and other Officers of the Judicature and Execution, artificial Joints; Reward and Punishment (by which fastened to the seat of the Sovereignty, every joint and member is moved to perform his duty) are the Nerves, that do the same in the Body Natural; the Wealth and Riches of all the particular members, are the Strength; Salus Populi (the peoples safety) it business...Lastly, the Pacts and Covenants, by which the parts of the Body Politique were at first made, set together, and united, resemble that flat, or the Let us make men, pronounced by God in Creation.\(^\text{11}\)

The trope of the "Body Politique" represents a reconstitution of space and identity in terms of a sharply demarcated space of sovereign jurisdiction. This is clear in the textual strategy Hobbes deploys in *Leviathan* in which he seeks to carve out a domesticated and ordered space of the territorial state where forms of otherness such as madness are to be disciplined, controlled and punished.\(^\text{12}\) Thus, "through drawing boundaries between an inside and an outside, chaos is chased out of the gates, orders are established "within" and a manageable world can be created".\(^\text{13}\)

What is instructive for the purposes of this chapter is the ways in which this demarcation between inside and outside made possible a broader shift from the divine cosmos to the

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\(^{10}\) The notion of the polity as a body has a much longer history which can be traced to antiquity. What is distinct about the use of this analogy by early modern thinkers, however, is the ways in which it became radicalised with thinkers such as Hobbes to signal a "humanly created" order.


sovereign state: from overlapping, loose tributary affiliations of feudal Europe to the territorial organisation of modern international relations. Hobbes' demarcation between inside and outside realms essentially delineated a territorial space in which the personalised basis of feudal authority gradually gave way to the consolidation of authority into a single public realm. With this, the state gradually replaced the multiplicity of hierarchical bonds with a mutually exclusive and territorially fixed identity. Thereafter, the positing of an all-powerful centre of authority that monopolised the means of legitimate violence over a sharply demarcated territory became the primary means for organising European political space. The right to make war, which had hitherto been exercised by certain individuals, was transferred to the state which increasingly monopolised the legitimate use of violence in order to police its newly-formed boundaries. As the interior other of drunkenness, unruliness and deviance became increasingly subject to disciplinary state practices, the notion of "foreign-ness" thereby became projected to an external realm.

Thus, by inscribing this boundary between inside and outside, Hobbes provided the discursive conditions of possibility for the modern practice of foreign policy. Hobbes' political theory can be seen, therefore, as a kind of proto-foreign policy in which, as Reinhart Koselleck has noted, it was:

the delimitation of an independent inner space, a space whose moral integrity was shown by Hobbes to lie solely in its character as a State...that effectuated the outward evolution of an inter-state, supra-individual, commitment...Nothing but Hobbes' strict separation of exterior and interior realms could make it possible to core an area of foreign policy out of the welter of religious jurisdictions.

It is this inside-outside boundary which is central to understanding how Australian policy-makers have traditionally understood the "Asia-Pacific". Here we shall see how, as an expression of modern statecraft, Australian foreign policy has been based upon the Hobbesian delineation of interior and exterior realms. In seeking to secure the boundaries of the modern Australian state, therefore, successive generations have represented the Asia-Pacific as a dangerous exterior realm. In this way, the Asia-Pacific became converted into a marker of otherness against which Australia's own sovereign identity has been defined.

There is another way that this theme of territoriality has fundamentally shaped foreign policy toward the Asia-Pacific. This relates to the ways in which contemporary foreign policy-makers have viewed the world through a state-centric prism of understanding.

Thus, by projecting onto the Asia-Pacific the neatly-demarcated boundaries of Western IR, our policy-making community have understood the region through broader representations of IR as a mosaic of distinct territorial states. As Edward Soja has observed, Western conceptions of IR are based upon a "rigidly compartmentalized division of political space", in which "the conventional Western political map is highly linear, incredibly precise (at least in appearance) and partitioned into distinct parcels" of territory.17

Whatever the utility of such understandings in early modern Europe, the strict separation between interior and exterior realms in Hobbesian thought represents a dangerous and anachronistic basis upon which to devise contemporary foreign policy amidst the accelerating flows of contemporary political life. Such dangers have been exemplified in Australia's contemporary regional foreign policies. Here we shall see how our policymakers have reduced regional identity to a strictly territorial formulation, effectively reducing the societies of Asia and the Pacific to the expression of state elites. This has effectively circumscribed Australia's regional engagement within narrow statist parameters in which a range of increasingly salient issues such as migration, gender, ecology and indigenous communities have simply been ignored or marginalised by contemporary policy-makers. Those issues, however, are irreducible to territorial formulations. I will examine the consequences of this narrow framing of Australian foreign policy in the following chapters of this thesis. For now, however, I want to turn to a discussion of how this territorialisation of space in post-Renaissance thought became converted into a broader global classification of Western selves and non-Western others with the expansion of Europe. More directly, I ask how did the Hobbesian inscription of geopolitical identities on a territorial basis become converted into a hierarchical ordering of states and regions, selves and others, and allies and enemies in Australian foreign policy?

Encountering Difference: Defining Self and Other

_We are all descendants of Columbus, it is with him that our genealogy begins._18

In order to establish these broader discursive connections, it is instructive to return to the Renaissance and the expansion of Western civilisation during the so-called Age of Discovery. It was during this period that Europeans came to directly encounter other peoples and cultures on a global scale for the first time in human history, an encounter which has set the major patterns and modes through which modern Western society (including Australia) has subsequently engaged with different cultures and peoples.19

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19 A close analysis of this reveals that the internationalising impulses of Western modernity centred on a range of discursive practices whereby Europe's others became integrated, as a subordinate part, into the
A key moment in this dominant geopolitical trajectory was Columbus's discovery of America. As Tzvetan Todorov's remarkable account has shown, the Spanish conquest of America represented "an exemplary" history of the ways in which Western civilisation has confronted and encountered societies and civilisations that are different. As Todorov observes, the Spanish encounter with America's Indians encompassed two approaches to understanding and coping with difference. The first approach, that adopted by the conquistadors, centred on defining "the Indian" as an inferior other and an object of conquest and domination. The second approach, exemplified in the missionaries' response, was based upon the principle of equality in which the Indians were seen as potential Christians who could be saved from their pagan ways and integrated into the righteous framework of Western Christian civilisation. Both these approaches composed a logic of obliteration of difference — one through conquest, the other through conversion. The point that Todorov makes is that the humanist proclivities of missionaries such as Las Casas were as equally intolerant and complicit in the near-destruction of Indian civilisation ("the greatest genocide in human history") as the brutal conquistadors and their notion of the Indian as an inferior, sub-human identity. The logic of obliteration of difference that underpinned both approaches transformed the Spanish "discovery" of America into a bloody, murderous encounter with Europe's other.

What is instructive for present purposes is that, as Todorov suggests, this dual hostility towards difference has encompassed the discursive field of possibilities that has framed the West's encounter with other societies and cultures. Through both conversion and conquest, accordingly, Western modernity has been fuelled by an expansionist logic in which Europe's others have been integrated within a disciplinary framework of the West. This has amounted to an annihilation and obliteration of difference at the heart of the rationalising impulse of modernity, examined by Max Weber among others. As Todorov points out, excluded as a model for social relations is a third approach to difference that is based not upon the logic of obliteration but rather on a respect for difference. This approach seeks neither to destroy nor convert the other but to relate to difference on its own terms.

It is on the basis of this dual approach to difference, which excludes this third orientation, that Australia's regional policies foreign policy have been formulated. Indeed, this dual orientation has been articulated in foreign policy via the dominant "realist" and "liberal"
perspectives that have underpinned Australian thinking on international affairs. The history of Australia's regional relations, accordingly, has been characterised by understandings of the Asia-Pacific which have oscillated between realist threat scenarios and a liberal agenda of trade and economic engagement. While the former has been based upon representations of the region as an object of conquest/containment, the latter has stressed the possibilities for cooperation, development and conversion. Beyond this double bind of our regional policy lies Todorov's third approach to difference which has effectively been excluded from the formulation of foreign policy. In the final chapter of this thesis, I will examine how it might be possible to rethink the prevailing engagement with the Asia-Pacific through adopting this alternative approach to difference.

For now, however, I want to preface the discussion of Australian foreign policy to follow by further examining the theme of otherness in Western post-Renaissance thought. This theme has been elucidated in Jacques Derrida's discussion of logocentrism, a term which denotes the pervasive tendency in Western thought to divide the world up into a series of binary oppositions such as mind/matter, self/other, West/East, inside/outside, rational/irrational, sane/insane etc. The dominant disposition here is to impose a hierarchy upon each binary pair in which the former term is accorded a pure presence or identity that inhabits the realm of logos, while the latter term derives from the former as its negation, inferior form or oppositional "other." This is clear in the two paradigmatic approaches to difference identified above where both define different cultures in terms of the privileged features of Western self-identity. That is, both approaches locate their own position, namely, Western civilisation, as the regulative ideal against which other societies and cultures are understood. It is through such logocentric modes of discourse that the West has understood the East and, in turn, that Australia has understood the Asia-Pacific region. Thus, in encountering difference on a global scale, European explorers, traders, colonialists, missionaries and soldiers deployed these dominant logocentric modes of Western culture in order to give meaning to their experiences. In doing so, they classified the world in terms of a range of binary oppositions in which a hierarchy of self/other, inside/outside and West/East was imposed upon the spatial relations between Europe and non-European societies.

21 See Footnote 7 in the introduction.
23 Ibid. p.107.
24 None of this is to say, however, that this ordering was a simple, monologic process. Rather, as the history of colonialism has shown, Western geopolitics has been resisted at every turn requiring systematic violence that has often ended in genocide. The point I wish to make here is that such violence was made possible by the sense of superiority and mission that Europeans felt in "bringing civilisation to the world". For a discussion of the more specific ways in which Asia and the Pacific became imagined in Western thought see Dathorne, O.R. (1996) *Asian Voyages: Two Thousands Years of Constructing the Other*. Bergin and Garvey: Wesport, Connecticut.
In the Enlightenment, this logocentric ordering of global relations became articulated through a distinctly temporal dichotomy between "advanced" and "backward" societies. Here the advanced stage of Europe was contrasted with the backward and primitive state of non-European societies. As notions of temporal transition came to dominate Enlightenment thinking, Europe's superiority was seen as a product of a universal path of historical development, expressed in the evolution of modern science, capitalism and the nation-state. Writers such as Rousseau and Montesquieu began speculating on the factors and principles that might be applied in ordering the distribution of populations, cultures and political systems in the world. The "primitive" state of the non-Western world was explained via a whole raft of environmental and racial typologies framed as scientific theories that placed Western civilisation at the apex of evolution and non-European societies at the other end of the evolutionary scale.

An exemplary figure of the Enlightenment project was Hegel whose totalising system of world history established a fundamental hierarchy between the West and its others. In *The Philosophy of History*, which reproduced his famous lectures of 1830-31, Hegel developed a typology of global development based upon the absolute sovereignty of state forms. While at the apex of this typology stood the absolutist states of the West (the "Germanic World"), the lowest stage of evolution was reserved for the despotistic rulers of "the Orient". Within this typology, universal history represented a process in which "the Universal Spirit" achieved full realisation through a progressive movement to statehood. History became understood as a process in which temporally backward non-European societies progressively adopted the privileged features of the West. As we shall see in the following chapters, it is via these same modes of universal progressivist history that "the Asia-Pacific" has been imagined in contemporary Australian foreign policy.

By the time that the modern system of IR had developed in the 19th and 20th centuries, the dominant understandings of Western IR were well established. In seeking to outline some of these understandings, I have focused on modern thinkers such as Hobbes and Hegel whose work amounted to what can be seen as proto-foreign policies through which space became territorially defined and the globe was divided up into a hierarchical

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26 As with Hobbes, my reading of Hegel is not meant to discover the "real" Hegel. In fact, rather than seeking to capture "what Hegel actually meant" (because he said and meant a lot of things all of which are subject to multiple interpretations) I am concerned with the ways in which Hegel has tended to be read and translated into IR discourse. For an example of an interpretation of Hegel which goes beyond caricatured readings of "Hegelian Idealism", see Zizek, S. (1990) "Beyond Discourse-Analysis" in E. Laclau (ed.) *New Reflections on the Revolution of our Time*. Verso: London. This is a brief piece that seeks to radicalise Hegel by reinterpreting his Lord/Bondsman dualism as a kind of postmodern retheorisation of identity in which the self becomes possible only through its oppositional relation with the other.

ordering of geopolitical relations. In deploying these historically-constituted understandings of space and identity, contemporary policy-makers have reproduced the prevailing division of global geopolitical space as a natural object of policy. Discursive strategies which were seen as contingent and historically constructed by thinkers such as Hobbes and Descartes have tended to become naturalised in modern foreign policy. For instance, when a former Australian Foreign Minister unproblematically invokes foreign policy as an objective response to "the world as we find it", he is actually normalising that world through the deployment of a deeply embedded understandings which constitutes selves and others on a global scale. Those understandings have not only effectively shaped the interpretive possibilities of Australian foreign policy but have provided the logocentric lens through which policy-makers have understood the world.

As I will show throughout this thesis, it is through this broader ordering of global relations in post-Renaissance thought that our policy-makers have traditionally understood the societies of Asia and the Pacific. Thus, when confronting the difference represented by Asian and Pacific societies, Australia's colonial settlers looked toward Europe as the main locus of identity and the regulative ideal against which to make sense of their experiences. No less than the Spanish conquistadors and missionaries landing on the shores of the Americas in 15th and 16th centuries, successive waves of European migrants to Australia have engaged difference in terms of the intellectual baggage of their own culture. In doing so, they deployed familiar binary oppositions that demarcated the boundaries between inside/outside, self/other, West/East and so on. In the rest of this chapter, I want to connect Australian foreign policy to this broader history I have charted above. In particular, I want to examine the historical circumstances through which the broader understandings of Western IR were transmitted to the new colonial settlement of Australia and ultimately translated into contemporary Australian foreign policy.

The Colonial Origins of Australian Foreign Policy

...Without songs, architecture, history:
The emotions and superstitions of younger lands,
Her rivers of water drown among inland sands,
The river of her immense stupidity

Floods her monotonous tribes from Cairns to Perth.
In them at last the ultimate men arrive
Whose boast is not: "we live" but "we survive",
A type who will inhabit the dying earth.

And her five cities, like teeming sores,
Each drains her: a vast parasite robber-state

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Where second-hand Europeans pullulate
Timidly on the edge of alien shores... 

The evocative verse of A.D. Hope gives expression here to the experience of isolation, alienation and estrangement that has encompassed the formation of the modern identity of "Australia". It is a cultural expression bound up with the act of founding a settler state in the Southern land of "Terra Australis" whereby European civilisation was transplanted to an alien continent, isolated from the rest of the world by the Indian and Pacific Oceans and surrounded by unknown cultures and peoples. This experiment of turning an unexplored continent into a penal colony was far removed from the Enlightenment visions of Utopia that infused European society. On the contrary, it represented "a Dystopia of petty thieves and other criminals" — what Jeremy Bentham termed "a sort of excrementitious mass". As Robert Hughes has noted, "to most Englishmen [Australia] seemed not just a mutant society but another planet - an exiled world, summed up in its popular name 'Botany Bay'. It was remote and anomalous to its white creatures."

Difference, then — in the form of estrangement from the land and a sense of isolation from Europe — was the dominant experience for successive waves of European immigrants in first arriving in the Southern continent. The problem for the new settlers became one of securing a stable identity amidst a sense of isolation and estrangement. This identity was based upon a founding act so obviously and openly an act of pure invention: namely, the transplantation of a British penal colony to a continent half way around the world. There are no centuries of noble history here, no grand revolutionary struggle for independence, and certainly no sense of mission to match America's frontier society. On the contrary, the transportation of a surplus of convicts from Britain's teeming gaols to Australia is notable precisely for the lack of legend and shared history usually associated with the founding myths of state.

In lacking clear historical or ethnic referents, the new settler colony in Australia was manifestly "inorganic", relying solely upon the imaginative practices of settlement and statecraft to secure the stable boundaries of identity. Indeed, the difficulties of forging a sovereign identity were if anything heightened in the colonial settlement of Australia as the formation of the new colony was quite literally a Hobbesian act of projecting the

31 Ibid. p.2.
32 The same point is made by David Campbell in respect to the American colonies. Campbell argues that, as an inorganic settlement, America is peculiar in its dependence upon practices of imagination for its being as the "imagined community par excellence". In contrast to Campbell's reformulated "American exceptionalism" thesis, however, it is possible to speculate here that the salience of imaginary practices is in fact a common condition of colonial settler states or what Paul Carter has characterised more broadly as "living in a new country". Campbell, D. (1992) Writing Security p.105, Carter, P. (1992) Living in a New Country: History, Traveling and Language. Faber and Faber: London.
criminal element of British society to an external realm "out there", a realm of difference, disorder and unruliness. The challenge for the new settlers became how to convert this Antipodean "state of nature" (an exotic "outside" to Europe's "inside") into a stable interior identity of the sovereign state. In other words, how was it possible to carve out a sovereign space in the absence of any foundational referents of national identity?

The answer revolved around the referents of geography and race. A sense of nation thus became tied, not to an imagined tribal community or a long history as in Europe, but rather to the lonely figure of Anglo-Saxon Man struggling to master the harsh geography of the Southern continent located at the margins of empire. When launching Federation by declaring "a nation for continent and a continent for a nation", Alfred Deakin sought to invoke a shared geographical reference point for the new nation. Meanwhile, Henry Parkes celebrated phrase "the crimson thread of kinship" exemplified the other enduring referent of Australian state identity — a racial affiliation with the British Empire and its spread of White civilisation across the globe. These tenuous referents of identity — geography and race, and continent and empire — gave rise to an intense anxiety on the part of the new settlers. Confronted with the harsh Australian environment, its strange other-worldly fauna and flora, European Man was estranged in this hostile, harsh environment. In signifying the Hobbesian state of nature, Australia's desolate bush landscape became central to the imaginative aesthetic representations of the new colony.

Seeking to overcome such estrangement, the colonisers of Australia expressed a strong desire to settle the continent and tame it. This explains the centrality of narratives of exploration in Australian nationalist mythology. As Paul Carter has shown, the colonisation of Australia was marked by an Enlightenment narrative in which the words, charts, explorations, mappings and discoveries of the new settlers served to convert the strange territories of the continent into a sense of place and home.33 The colonisation of the new continent was above all an act of domestication of social space in which the early settlers sought to fashion the alien continent into a territorially-fixed state. As Carter has noted, "located against the imaginary grid, the blankness of unexplored country was translated into a blueprint for colonization".34 This was exemplified in the urban settlement of Australia's coastline in which "towns were laid out as geometrical abstractions" evidenced most notably in the planning of Melbourne and Adelaide which strictly conformed to the grid rationality of Euclidean geometry.35

Indeed, as Carter has noted, the efficacy of the grid in the formation of Australia was not so much that it was more rational than other forms of urban planning but that it was culturally familiar36, providing a recognisable space in which the new settlers could feel at "home". Western civilisation could thereby be constructed in an alien land and space.

34 Ibid. p.204.
rationally planned. The rationalising impulse of Western modernity was in this way extended to the new continent, transmitted by state-building forces seeking to "settle" the new continent. The objective of constructing an ordered social space became tied to what Keith Hancock called "Australia's great social experiment" of capital-labour relations in which a truly rational, egalitarian society could be constructed out of a hostile, alien territory.\(^{37}\)

As the settlement of the continent proceeded, the sense of continental estrangement of the early colonies became converted into a profound anxiety about Australia's own geographical position in the world. As Rex Mortimer has noted, "the shell of a Europeanised society [was] grafted onto the rump of Asia, a society whose predominant reaction to its situation has been expressed in reflexes generated by irrational fears and racial prejudices".\(^{38}\) The displacement of the early settlers from European civilisation to an alien continent gave rise to a sense of danger and threat emanating from the immediate environs. In establishing a small Anglo-Saxon settlement inhabiting a vast, empty continent rich in resources, successive generations of Australians felt under constant threat of being overrun by the poverty-stricken "hordes" of Asia and the Pacific. In the early part of this century, the union official R.S. Ross, put it this way:

...the ultra-problematic Pacific is all awry. The more one reads on the problems the more one is alarmed, the more one thinks the outlook full of foreboding. Wherever one turns, a black wall stands like an inexorable Gibraltar across one's path, offering naught but something upon which to dash one's head in erring futility. As a country Australia is in the danger zone because of the proximity, ambitions, and requirements of Asia's multiplying millions.\(^{39}\)

This fragility of identity — that feeling of being on the periphery of empire — engendered an extreme sense of otherness in Australia's geography. Just as the Australian continent had been understood in terms of its other-worldly, exotic and unfamiliar qualities, so too did the neighbouring societies of Asia and the Pacific represent a vast perilous unknown to the European settlers of Australia. In confronting this threatening unknown realm, early policy-makers sought to convert the societies of Asia and the Pacific into an object of knowledge through reproducing the "time-honoured image of Asia as difficult, despotic, dangerous, and above all different from Australia".\(^{40}\) In doing so, they tapped into a range of Western constructions of the non-Western "other" which reduced the complex realities and great cultural differences of the Asia-Pacific to a variety of tropes such as the yellow peril, the multiplying millions of Asia, the falling dominos of Southeast Asia, to the falling dominos of Southeast Asia's growth.

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Asia or the unstable regional balance of power. It was through these broader Western images of otherness that knowledge of Asia and the Pacific came to be produced in Australian foreign policy.

Indeed, what has made these images of region so enduring and powerful is the ways in which they have fed into a broader process of identity formation through which successive generations of Australian elites imagined and understood their own identity. Hence, representations of the Asia-Pacific region as a dangerous, unstable other amounted as much as anything else to an affirmation and narration of Australia's own identity. Thus, in locating otherness in the Asia-Pacific, policy-makers displaced a sense of continental estrangement and isolation that characterised the early settlement of Australia to a space outside the continent. This projection of threat and insecurity to an external, foreign realm, marked the emergence of a distinctly Australian foreign policy. The Hobbesian challenge of carving out a sovereign domain was thereby achieved through practices that defined the region as a foreign, exotic realm. "Australia" and the "Asia-Pacific" — state and region — became mutually constitutive identities of this emerging foreign policy that inscribed the Asia-Pacific region as a marker par excellence of otherness.

As we shall see in the following chapters, this framing of Australian identity has manifested itself in two main themes in Australia's foreign relations. The first, articulated in the protector theme, has been based upon the realist goal of containment whereby policy-makers have sought protection from the Asia-Pacific region in the form of a security guarantee from Western allies: Great Britain before World War II and the United States thereafter. This has led to a sycophantic, highly dependent foreign policy that, in its strident efforts to show "loyalty" to imperial patrons, has called on successive generations of Australian troops to fight and die in foreign adventures on faraway battlefields. In the first 88 years of Federation, the Australian armed forces were engaged in war in countries abroad for a total of 27 years, and had military forces stationed abroad for a further 27 years, or 62 percent of the time.41 That surely makes Australia one of the most belligerent war-making states on earth, all of the time never once having been forced to defend itself.

The second response has been articulated in the theme of engagement with the region, in which, rather than adopting a posture of containment and protection, policy-makers have sought to overcome Australia's geographical engagement through development, cooperation and assistance with the region. This posture has been based upon the desire by Australians to feel "at home" in our Asian and Pacific neighbourhood. Whilst this approach, identified with the focus of contemporary foreign policy, has been presented as a fundamental break with the past, a major aim of this thesis is to challenge this notion. I

will show here that contemporary regional engagement has not only reproduced traditional liberal themes of Australian foreign policy but that it has been driven by precisely the same modes of Western IR discourse as those which have given rise to the protector theme.

Indeed, rather than treating realism and liberalism as discrete, mutually exclusive theories of IR, I understand each as contending poles of the larger discourse I mapped above. That is to say, rather than comprising opposing, mutually exclusive viewpoints, the liberal and realist approaches to foreign policy have drawn their enduring discursive force on the ways in which each establishes and delimits the other and, in turn, constructs the terms of discourse within which Australian foreign policy has been conducted. Richard Leaver has summed this up by observing how realism and liberalism:

perpetually invoke and justify each other's separate existence...the two are not alternative so much as complementary visions of the international system. They provide a classic example of how a relationship of total exclusion which appears to be highly adversarial in fact sustains a symbiotic link between the two 'reverse video images'.

Taken together, then, and constituted within a common discursive space, the realist and liberal approaches to Australia's regional relations have served to reproduce the dominant assumptions of Western IR — in particular, a territorial understanding of global life articulated via the state-as-actor model and a division of global political space into domestic-international, inside-outside and self-other. In reproducing these shared metatheoretical assumptions, Australian policy-makers have naturalised a particular territorial image of IR in terms of a hierarchical arrangement of states and regions, at the expense of other definitions of global life. A major theme of the following chapters is to show how, characterised by the double bind of Western IR, Australian foreign policy has effectively come to understand the world through representations which reduce the complexity and difference of the Asia-Pacific to narrow market-based and geopolitical images of reality.

This chapter has focused on examining the themes of territoriality and otherness in Western thinking on IR. My analysis began with the gradual shift that occurred in early modern thought in which thinkers such as Hobbes classified and divided political space and identity into sharply-demarcated territorial jurisdictions. My main focus was on showing how particular understandings and interpretations of sociopolitical life became

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codified into a rigid discourse of foreign policy and international relations (Western IR). Through this Western discourse, I argued, foreign policy practitioners and IR scholars have classified the world in terms of a range of dichotomies between self/other, inside/outside and West/East. In charting the trajectory of Western IR, the main objective of this chapter has been to establish the broader connections between this discourse and the theory and practice of Australian foreign policy. Having traced the dominant understandings through which foreign policy-makers have understood the Asia-Pacific, I can now turn in the following chapters to a more detailed historical survey of Australia’s relations with the Asia-Pacific.
Chapter 2

Early Australian Foreign Policy: Securing White Australia in the ‘Far East’

In this chapter, I examine the early period of Australian foreign policy from the late 19th century to the beginnings of the Cold War in the 1950s. My focus is on identifying certain pivotal moments which highlight how the identities of state and region were framed in early foreign policy. This, in turn, involves showing how relations with the Asia-Pacific came to be circumscribed within a broader Western discourse of identity formation. Within this discourse, Australia was represented as an isolated outpost of the British Empire located in what policy-makers viewed as a dangerous Asiatic region. Underpinned by such representations, early foreign policy was dominated by a profound sense of threat and isolation concerning Australia's place in the world. This manifested itself in an obsessive search for security. Thus, in seeking to respond to apparent security threats emanating from the region, policy-makers adopted a dual approach — that is, they looked toward the British to provide strategic protection from Asia at the same time as attempting to increase trade and development cooperation with the so-called “Far East”. Characterised by this dualism, regional foreign policy fluctuated between realism and liberalism, strategy and trade, and containment and engagement.

Western Identity and Australia’s Dual Search for Security in the ‘Far East’

In the late 19th Century, Australian policy-makers became concerned with European imperial competition in the Pacific. At the turn of the century these security anxieties shifted to the spectre of a rapidly modernising Japan with expansionist aims, a development which elicited a heightened sense of threat in Australia. This sense of threat drew upon a more generalised racial fear of "Asia" popularly dubbed the "yellow peril" which was initially articulated in the explosions of racial violence that accompanied the influx of Chinese immigrants to the Australian gold fields. With Japan's military victory over Russia in 1905 — a victory that marked the emergence of Japan as a major global power — the locus of anti-Asian sentiments shifted to the menacing figure of Japanese imperialism. The Japanese threat was to dominate Australian thinking on international affairs for the next half century.

Believing that Australia represented an isolated Western outpost in a volatile region, policy-makers were convinced of the need for Great Power patronage to ensure Australian security. In the name of showing loyalty to Great Britain and eliciting future protection, accordingly, a long history of Australian participation in foreign wars was launched with the dispatch of expeditionary Australian forces throughout the 19th century to the Sudan, the Maori wars, the Boer wars and the Boxer rebellion in China. In
all these expeditions, the initiative for Australian participation came not from Britain but from the various Australian colonial governments which competed with one another over who would be the first to display loyalty to empire.¹ That theme has resonated throughout the history of Australian foreign policy since the 19th century.

In fact, this strident loyalty to Empire by Australian elites reflected the broader framing of Australian identity in terms of a sense of Anglo-Saxon kinship, or what Paul Hasluck was to call, Australia's "family ties" with Great Britain.² Australian patriotism was, thus, imperial rather than national, exemplified in Prime Minister Alfred Deakin's definition of Australians as "independent Australian Britons".³ At the core of state identity was a civilisational and racial mythology that identified Australia with an imagined Western civilisation characterised by Anglo-Saxon culture, a capitalist economic system, liberal-individual values and the Christian religion. This identification with "the West" is illustrated in the most enduring and profoundly-felt national myth in Australia — the ANZAC legend which commemorates the defeat of New Zealand and Australian Troops (ANZAC) by Turkish forces at Gallipoli in World War I. Here a tactical blunder by the British hierarchy led to the deaths of a great number of Australian troops, who, it is said, fought with great courage and distinction. The resonance that the ANZAC legend has found in nationalist mythology can be explained through the way it served to give definition to national identity whereby imperial sacrifice came to mark Australia's graduation to full nationhood. Gallipoli signalled Australia's indivisible unity with the West, a kind of sacrificial act committed in battle against Western Christianity's long-standing Nemesis — the Islamic Turks. As Bruce Kapferer has pointed out:

The Anzacs are vital symbolic embodiments of the Australian nationalist imagination because they established an identity for Australia in the context of the very ideological and ontological roots of Western Judeo-Christian civilisation. It did so in a situation in which the very basis of Western European Christian civilisation was ideologically conceived as threatened by anti-Christian of forces...In doing so, the Anzacs symbolised their ontological unity and too, the unity of the nation they represented with the Western European world.⁴

The narration of national identity in terms of the broader distinction between East and West engendered an intense sense of endangerment and insecurity in Australian thinking on international affairs. Australian insecurity stemmed from a fundamental discord between the alignment of Australian identity with the West and its geographical location

in the East. The constitution of state identity was secured under the perpetual threat of erasure in which "the yellow peril" lurked ominously at the boundaries of Australia's identity, always threatening, always "out there" and always in need of being kept out. This projection of danger and otherness to an outside realm was reflected in the naming of the region as "the Pacific and Far East". That designation conjured up an image of a vast oceanic expanse that cut the continent off from its roots in Europe, emphasising, in turn, Australia's dependence on the maritime protection of Britain. The characterisation of the region as "the Far East" was a clear product of a British-devised foreign policy and indicated the ways in which Australian representations of the outside world prior to World War II were mediated through the interests of the British Empire, denoting both Europe as centre and the location of Australia on the periphery.

Australian representations of the "Far East", however, did not merely replicate those of the Colonial Office in London. On the contrary, while the idea of "the Far East" may have had some geographical logic for colonial policy-makers in London, for Australians it denoted proximity, not distance, representing a subject of intense concern rather than indifference. For Australia's policy elite, "the Far East" was not a transparent description of geographical reality but an objective of policy. The alien threats emanating from the region had to be kept in abeyance — the Far East had to be kept "far away". Rather than replicating British imperialism in seeking to incorporate the East into Empire, Australian policy-makers sought to insulate Australia from the region's dangers. That meant vigorously patrolling the boundaries between self and other in order to secure the boundary between a stable, sovereign Australia and a dangerous, unstable region.

In order to ensure such insularity, containment of the region became the primary objective of early foreign policy. That involved eliciting British naval and military protection, maintaining the discriminatory White Australia immigration policy, and ensuring the protection of Australian industry through economic tariffs. Cohering around rigid and fixed modes of representation of self/other, this attempt to ensure continental protection was based upon achieving nothing less than absolute security. This was to lead to a distinctive brand of colonialism in which successive generations of political leaders sought to deny hostile anti-British forces access to the Pacific from which they could launch an attack on Australia. This was achieved either through promoting British annexation of the islands of the South Pacific or seeking diplomatic recognition of Australia's own control of some areas.

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Prime Minister Alfred Deakin's ambitious initiative in the early 20th century to establish an Australian "Monroe Doctrine" exemplified this colonial impulse. Deakin proposed that the American commitment to control the "Western hemisphere" be extended to the Pacific, involving a vague and unelaborated proposal to establish cooperation among the British Empire, Holland, France, China and the United States. Although virtually ignored by the Colonial Office, this initiative indicated the ambitious security objectives pursued by Australian policy-makers. Early foreign policy was thus characterised by a fervent attempt to strengthen Britain's resolve in staying militarily engaged in the Pacific and maintaining the colonial status quo. This "sub-imperial" reflex was also evident in a number of other diplomatic initiatives such as the invitation Deakin extended to the American navy's "Great White Fleet" to visit Australia, Lyon's attempts to initiate a Pacific pact of regional understanding and Bruce's 1936 proposal for a non-aggression pact. These initiatives were all designed to check the expansion of Japan and to maintain Western dominance in the region by institutionalising the presence of American and British forces in the Pacific. What was distinctive about this imperialist role was that, far from being generated by the grand civilising mission that characterised American and British expansionism, Australian imperialism was provoked by an abject fear of invasion. As Keith Hancock noted:

...the imperialism of these Australian colonies...sprang from an intense racial self-consciousness combined with a continental insularity...All they wanted was security, and to them this meant isolation.

In espousing such imperialist designs, policy-makers adopted a reductionist understanding of the Pacific and Far East. This was clear in the naming of the region as "the Pacific and Far East", which tended to be used in an undifferentiated way by policymakers who represented the lifestyles and cultures of regional life through strictly geopolitical understandings. Here the region was reduced to a monolithic strategic threat and an object of Western imperialism. By reproducing these representations, Australian policy-makers were complicit in the broader imaginative practices that sustained Western imperial history through incorporating Asia and the Pacific into the circuits of Western strategic power.

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11 In locating Australian foreign policy within this broader history of Western imperialism, however, it is important to note that this history has never been a unitary, unproblematic nor uncontested process. On the contrary, the grand narratives of Western imperialism have always been challenged by counter-narratives: either from alternative imperial traditions such as those of Japan and China or from anti-
In his post-World War I diplomacy in the League of Nations, Prime Minister Billy Hughes exemplified this reductionist geopolitical imagination. Hughes argued successfully that Australian needed control over German New Guinea, the Soloman Islands, the Bismark Archipelago and Nauru on the basis that these neighbouring islands "encompassed Australia like fortresses." This argument effectively reduced the South Pacific to a singular geopolitical identity of otherness and an object of colonial control. The consequences of such strategic reductionism were exemplified in Australia's major colonial possession, New Guinea, where the Australian administration was characterised by a marked sense of indifference to the development of the colony through its policy of neutralising the territory through occupation. Unlike British colonialism which was based upon the need for a secure supply of raw material from its colonies, there was no great desire to develop or economically exploit Australia's mandated areas. The less that happened in Australia's colonies the better, lest a developing colony attract the attention of hostile imperialist powers. Such indifference was to have far-reaching consequences for the territory. Contemporary Papua New Guinea is characterised by severe problems of economic underdevelopment, poverty and high levels of unemployment, all of which can to one degree or another be traced back to the indifference of Australian colonialism.

Producing Knowledge of the Region: Foreign Policy between the Wars.

Against this background of indifference, Australian knowledge about the Asia-Pacific remained rudimentary. The study of Asian history and civilisation was not a separately taught subject in Australian schools and universities but rather found expression as an adjunct in courses on European history. "Asia" appeared as part of history only insofar as it was an object of conquest and discovery in the expansion of Europe. Not surprisingly, public debates about the Far East and the Pacific were characterised by both ignorance and xenophobia in which sensationalist and racist depictions of the "Asian menace" and "the Yellow peril" were commonplace. The lack of a well-informed public debate on Australia foreign policy was due, in the estimation of William Macmahon Ball, a noted scholar on East Asia, to the fact that 85% of news reports in the Australian media colonial struggles and everyday practices of resistance by peoples across the Pacific and Asia. See for instance Osborne, M. (1970) Region of Revolt: Focus on Southeast Asia. Pergamon Press: Sydney.

12 In fact, New Guinea had been the object of Australian imperialism as early as the middle of the 19th century when the Queensland government unilaterally sent an expedition to the territory to claim it as part of the Empire. On hearing of this, the Colonial office in London revoked Queensland's declaration as it was determined not to be forced into extending its colonial empire any further. For a discussion of this see Stargardt, A.T. (1977) Australia's Asian Policies: The History of a Debate 1839-1972. Institute of Asian Affairs: Hamburg. pp.55-81.


"comes through London" and a further 12% "through New York". Relying solely on the British Colonial Office and its various legations abroad for knowledge about international politics, the Australian Government had no independent diplomatic representation abroad, nor any independent means to gather and assess intelligence on foreign relations. This was officially recognised as a major problem in 1923 when the official Leeper Report concluded that there were "serious deficiencies in Australia's knowledge of the course of world events and British policy".

The first signs of an official government interest in developing knowledge about Asia and the Pacific are discernible with the government's appointment of James Murdoch as Foundation Professor of Oriental Studies at Sydney University in 1917. Murdoch was appointed to teach Japanese language at Sydney University and the Duntroon Military College in Canberra. His appointment was made at the urging of both the Department of Defence and the New South Wales Chamber of Manufacturers. While the former was concerned with the increasing activity of Japanese imperialism in the Pacific, the latter urged Murdoch's appointment on the basis of potential trading opportunities in large Asian markets. Two year later, the Government established the Pacific Branch in the Department of Prime Minister under the directorship of the former intelligence officer Edmund Piesse which was designed to gather both military intelligence about Japan and information in assisting Australian administration of its colonial territories under the Mandate system of the League of Nations. These early efforts to produce knowledge of the region were motivated, therefore, by Australia's interests in defence and trade — interests which were to create a fundamental dualism at the core of Australian foreign policy. Thus, since at least early this century, policy-makers have oscillated between representing "the region" in terms of threat, at one time, and as an unparalleled trading opportunity, at another.

While the fear of Japan characterised foreign policy thinking throughout the inter-war period, the optimism that marked IR after the dark years of World War I was articulated through a liberal, trade-based orientation. This liberal disposition emphasised the cooperative and non-conflictual basis of Australia's relations with the Asia-Pacific based upon images of the region as a trading partner and object of "development". This approach was energetically promoted in the 1930s by a group of liberal intellectuals, comprising mainly economists and politicians associated with the Austral-Asiatic Bulletin,
the Institute of Pacific Relations and the Australian Institute of International Affairs.\footnote{See Brown, N. (1990) "Australian Intellectuals and the Image of Asia: 1920-1960" Australian Cultural History 9: pp. 80-92.} Foremost amongst this group were John Latham, J.G Crawford, I. Clunies Ross, Frederick Eggleston, William Macmahon Ball, and A.C.V. Melbourne. This group was preoccupied with the problem of Australia's declining trade position, particularly as the world-wide depression of the 1920s had highlighted Australia's vulnerability to the vagaries of world trade. In addressing this problem, these liberal intellectuals argued that Australia needed to increase its share of the rapidly growing markets of the Far East. The image of huge markets and an untapped consumer base, particularly for Australian raw materials and food stuffs, was energetically promoted in the writings of this group. Clunies Ross, for example, edited a well-known volume concerned with demonstrating that Australian capital enjoyed "comparative cost advantage" in specific Asian markets.\footnote{Clunies Ross, I. (ed.) (1935) Australia and the Far East: Diplomatic and Trade Relations. Angus and Robertson: Melbourne. See also Shepherd, J. (1939) Australia's Interests and Policies in the Far East. New York Institute of Pacific Relations: New York.} These kinds of arguments have found expression in Australia's contemporary regional engagement which, notwithstanding present claims about its novelty, has its antecedents at least as far back as the liberal regionalism of the 1930s.

The policies prescribed by these liberal intellectuals included posting Australian trade representatives to Asian capitals such as Shanghai and Batavia and promoting the teaching of Asian languages and culture in Australian schools and universities. It was not until Australians understood "the East" that they could effectively trade in it. By 1933 some of these proposals were taken up by the Government with the legislation of a trade commissioners act allowing for the appointment of trade representatives abroad.\footnote{See Stewart, F.H. (1935) "Australian Commercial Representation Abroad" in H. Dinning and J.G. Holmes (eds.) Australia's Foreign Policy 1934, which contains a reprint of the Trade Commissioners Act.} Within a year, the Attorney General, John Latham, undertook a major trade mission to the Netherlands East Indies, Hong Kong, Singapore, French Indo-China, the Philippines, China and Japan, concluding in his official report to the Parliament that "it is important we should endeavour to develop and improve our relations with our near neighbours, not only in economic matters but also in relation to the vital issues of peace and war".\footnote{Magew, R. (1973) "The Australian Goodwill Mission to the Far East in 1934: Its Significance in the Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy" Journal of the Royal Australian Historical Society 59 (4): pp.447-63. Gobert, W. (1992) The Origins of Australian Diplomatic Intelligence in Asia, 1933-1941. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence No.96. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University: Canberra. p.15.}

Although such policies tended to stress cooperation and engagement as the basis for regional diplomacy, there was no absolute divide between the arguments of the liberal regionalists and those policy-makers who tended to emphasise a sense of threat in Australia's relations with the Asia-Pacific region. Rather, these dual policy perspectives
articulated the respective defence and trading interests that generated a common search for security across the Pacific by policy-makers. Driven by these instrumental policy interests, Australian diplomacy was based upon the dual agenda of eliciting Great Power protection from the region, while at the same time as promoting strategies of regional trade and development. Constituted within a common space of Western geopolitics, therefore, both liberal and realist approaches presupposed that a Western regional presence was imperative for the maintenance of a stable geopolitical order of free trading states across the Pacific.

Heightened Fears of the Yellow Peril: Australian Foreign Policy and WW II

While trade remained an important part of Australian diplomacy, it was a sense of military threat that increasingly demanded the attention of policy-makers in the late 1930s. Australia’s political leaders paid primary attention to Japan whose expansionary foreign policy in the Pacific heightened the need for policy-making elites know more about the outside world. Suddenly, political leaders required knowledge and information about the Asia and the Pacific region. Many liberal intellectuals who had an interest in "Asian" societies were called upon to become functionaries of the state — this time, however, producing knowledge for security purposes rather than trade.25 By the mid-1930s the Department of External Relations was established for the first time as a separate government department. As Millar has suggested, the new department "was greatly needed to provide advice on the developing relations with Asia in which Japan was thrusting and threatening".26 With this, Australia's official links with the outside world rapidly expanded as Australian diplomatic appointments were made for the first time outside Britain: in 1940, Casey was appointed to the United States, Latham to Japan, Eggleston to China and Crithcley to the Netherlands East Indies. Diplomatic postings were also established in New Caledonia (1940), Portuguese Timor (1941), Malaya (1941), the USSR (1943), India (1944) and New Zealand (1944).27 In the new Department, a Pacific Affairs Division was divided up into "South-East Asia", "East Asia", and "South West Pacific" sections, the "Australian-New Zealand Secretariat" and "the Far Eastern Commission for the Allied Control of Japan".28 This division of labour reflected the increasing needs of Australian policy-makers "to know more about Asia" as inter-state tensions increased across the globe.

Far from contributing to a deeper understanding of the region, however, such efforts to develop knowledge of Asia merely reinforced time-honoured stereotypes of the Yellow Peril and traditional notions of regional threat and danger. Foremost amongst such representations was the image of a Japanese "southern thrust" through "Southeast Asia"

27 Australia, Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (1975) "Appendix" pp.552-553.
advancing toward the Australian continent.\(^{29}\) The actions of the Japanese armed forces were interpreted as being part of a grand design to take control of the Australian continent. By 1942, as one writer has noted, an "air of panic and desperation" hung over any discussion of Australian foreign policies.\(^{30}\)

This amplified sense of threat in war-time foreign policy was, however, less the product of a considered appraisal of the strategic situation in the Pacific than a familiar reflex reaction to White Australia's enduring sense of geographical endangerment. As Henry Frei has observed in his exhaustive study of Australian reactions to Japan's southern advance, policy-makers never seriously analysed Japanese strategic writings and, if they had, would have found that Japan's "southward advance was never...a direct push on to Australian shores so often anticipated in Australia threat-literature".\(^{31}\) Indeed, Japanese assessments concluded that an invasion of Australia would require a huge deployment of troops and equipment which was beyond Japan's already stretched capability. Rather than coveting the Australian continent, Imperial Japan sought to secure a supply of resources from Southeast Asia crucial for Japanese industry which had been cut off by Western powers prior to World War II.\(^{32}\) Far from being an indication of Japan's intention to invade Australia, therefore, the bombing of northern coastal Australia in 1942 represented an attempt to preempt any possible counter-offensive against its take-over of the Netherlands East Indies, including its major target, the Sumatran oil field. The notion that the Australian continent held relatively little interest for Japanese strategists was difficult to accept, however, for policy-makers whose sense of superiority derived from the notion that Australia was a prosperous, white, Western country in a region of poverty and instability.

In seeking to make sense of the events of a world at war, then, policy-makers invoked the decades-old fear of the "yellow peril". In doing so, they drew on a self-enclosed discourse of foreign policy that reduced the complex strategic situation in the Pacific to the familiar binary oppositions of Western IR which demarcated Australia from a threatening and dangerous Asian and Pacific region "out there". Their focus was as much on the cultural, civilisational threat that "the barbaric Asiatic Japanese" presented to Australia's

\(^{29}\) This image was particularly prevalent in the period from December 1941 to July 1942 during which Australian fears of an invasion were at their most intense. Sifting through the documents collated in *Documents of Australian Foreign Policy 1937-1949* illustrates the profound sense of vulnerability of Australian policy-makers toward Japanese military actions. Coral Bell has described Australian policy during these months as "embarrassing" in its obsessive sense of threat and "less than realistic understanding of the situation overseas". Bell, C. (1994) *Dependent Ally: A Study in Australian Foreign Policy*. Third Edition. Allen and Unwin: Canberra. p.19.


"Western" way of life as it was on the concrete strategic danger that Japanese militarism posed to Australian security. As Prime Minister Curtin emotionally announced after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbour in 1941: "We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilisation will persist"\(^{33}\).

By invoking this sense of civilisational threat, Australian political leaders were preparing the discursive ground for Australia's shifting alliance from Britain to the United States in the post-war period. The sense of vulnerability and defencelessness promoted by Australian political leaders during WWII can thus be understood in terms of the effect it had in creating a psychology of dependence on the United States.\(^{34}\) This was clear in the ways in which the war in the Pacific was narrated in Australia. Here, the British failure to defend Singapore meant that Australia became "rescued" by the United States when General Douglas MacArthur's forces defeated Japan both at the Battles of Midway and the Coral Sea.\(^{35}\) In reproducing this dominant narrative of the war, Australian policymakers viewed the United States as the emerging leader and saviour of Western civilisation.

When addressing the Parliament on his arrival in Australia, MacArthur outlined his military strategy in terms of a Western struggle to defend (Euroamerican) civilisation. MacArthur declared that the bond between the two countries is "that indescribable consanguinity of race which causes us to have the same aspirations, the same ideals and the same dreams of future destiny".\(^{36}\) In declaring as much, MacArthur was skilfully invoking the binary image of Western Saviour/Regional Threat central to Australian thinking on international affairs since settlement. Such declarations not only drew on, and reproduced, a deeply entrenched sense geographical of otherness in Australia but also the long-standing martial tradition of Australians fighting and dying abroad in the name of upholding Western civilisation against it's enemies.\(^{37}\)

**Breaching Australia's Imperial Reflex?: Liberal Regionalism in the Post-War Period.**

With the end of World War II, a more open atmosphere prevailed in international relations. Out of the chaos of world war, peoples and governments across the world appeared to be more open to a whole range of possibilities for the reorganisation of global relations both between and within states. In long-standing European colonies such as in the Netherlands East Indies, the Japanese occupation had opened the way for post-war independence from European colonialism. In Australia, meanwhile, those liberal intellectuals who had been recruited into the state during the war were now able to give

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35 see McQueen, H. (1991) *Japan to the Rescue*.
expression to their own liberal attitudes in the post-war reconstruction of Australian society. During this period, foreign policy was formulated by this small intelligentsia, whose war-time experiences of mobilisation elicited an unwavering belief in the efficacy of the state in promoting progress, prosperity and democracy. The central policy influences during this period were Prime Minister Ben Chifley, Secretary of the External Affairs Department John Burton and the Minister for External Affairs Herbert Evatt. Under the tutelage of these figures, post-War diplomacy was based upon the grand liberal vision of Keynesian global development and Evatt's own brand of liberal internationalism, in particular, his untiring efforts to develop and promote the fledgling United Nations.

In promoting this liberal agenda, policy-makers also sought closer relations with the Asia-Pacific. This was reflected in the sympathetic and generally positive relations which the Labor Government established with the emerging nationalist elites of Asia. In particular, Chifley and Burton developed an affinity with Indonesia's anti-colonial nationalist cause. While Australian waterside workers banned Dutch shipping from Australian ports, Australian representatives in the United Nations attacked the brutality of the second Dutch "police action" in Indonesia and demanded that the Dutch be expelled from the United Nations.\(^{38}\) Australian support was clearly appreciated and acknowledged by the Indonesian nationalist Republican leadership which nominated Australia to represent it on the United Nations Good Offices Committee and whose foreign minister, Dr. Subandrio, went so far as to describe Australia as the "mid-wife" of the Indonesian Republic.\(^{39}\)

Based upon sympathy towards nationalist struggles for independence, Labor's foreign policy eschewed the traditional sense of threat toward Asia. The Labor Government framed Australian identity less in terms of the image of a Western outpost in an alien region than as a small power that had much in common with the emerging independent countries of Asia. Evatt stressed Australia's interest in developing international structures that would favour small powers and moderate the excessive influence that dominant states such as the United States could exercise. That represented the first time in which Australian foreign policy significantly departed from the broader interests of Western global hegemony.\(^{40}\)

This departure, however, was far from unequivocal. Thus, while the Labor Government displayed a liberal disposition toward decolonising struggles in Asia, it also reproduced many of the protectionist measures of past policies. Under Immigration Minister Arthur


\(^{40}\) By 1949 relations between the United States and Australia were at an all time low. The Unites States was particularly concerned by Australian actions in the United Nations which sought to resist the imposition of American globalism. Indeed, relations were strained to such an extent that US policy-makers were worried about the possibility that the Australian Labor Government could become a major security risk to the West. This centred on suspicions that a high-level intelligence leak existed within the Australian government. See Pemberton, G. (1987) *All the Way* Chapter 1.
Calwell, Labor represented arguably the most strident Australian government in applying and promoting the racist White Australia Policy. In promoting the "peopling Australia" program, Calwell allowed huge numbers of migrants from Europe to enter Australia while deporting Asian spouses of Australian servicepeople and prohibiting the permanent entry of "Asians" without exception. This racist and discriminatory policy was framed via the widely-held belief that "prosperous", "democratic", Anglo-Saxon Australia had to be kept culturally pure from the "Asiatic" races of the region.

Other aspects of Labor's foreign policy were also a product of the long-standing protectionism of diplomacy. The Government's obsession with a resurgent Japan was one such aspect, articulated most notably in Canberra's resistance to the Japanese Peace Treaty which was seen as too "soft". Another was the continuing efforts to obtain agreement for a Pacific security pact, evidenced in Evatt's appeal to the United States to provide the kind of security guarantee once provided by the British Navy.41

Through seeking the stationing of US forces close to Australia, Evatt reproduced an imperialist imagination that rendered the region an object of Australia's security anxieties and goals. The notion that the Pacific was central to Australian security was repeated ad nauseam. The Pacific, however, was not understood in terms of its cultural diversity but rather as an undifferentiated geopolitical space that had to be neutralised as a threat Australian security through occupation. The ANZAC pact between Australia and New Zealand engineered by Evatt during the war, typified this small-time imperialist disposition. The pact unilaterally called for the establishment of a zone of regional defence in the "south and southwest Pacific" after the war and asserted Australia's right to have a major input into post-war planning. As Evatt claimed in 1946:

Our stake in the Pacific is paramount...The Australian Government has never relaxed for a moment in its determination to see this country participate as a party principal in all the international decisions that affect this area.42

Evatt was essentially making a claim here on the "southwest Pacific" as an area of Australian strategic interest and one that Australia had the right to intervene in, if not with its own forces then those of its imperial patron. In order to entice American policymakers into the region, Evatt offered the use of Manus Island for the establishment of US naval base.43 Manus was an island north of New Guinea that was not Australian territory but rather part of the original Australian mandate for that area under the League of Nations system.44 The unquestioned assumption that Manus "belonged" to the Australian

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44 Bell, C. (1994) Dependent Ally p.32
Government as a bargaining chip in Evatt's negotiations, without even the slightest attempt being made to consult with the Island's people, was an indictment of Evatt's shallow legalistic and statist rhetoric on the "sovereign rights of people". It was also an indication that foreign policy was still based upon a "colonial ethos" and a "Western imperialist view of the world". 45

This failure to totally break with Australia's "imperial reflex" was not merely a product of Evatt's anglophile disposition but was related more fundamentally to the ways in which liberal regionalism shared common assumptions with Australia's realist tradition of foreign policy. Thus, both realist and liberal policy-makers framed regional identity in terms of the grand dichotomy of Western self/Asian other. This shared framework is illustrated by the work of Frederick Eggleston and William Macmahon Ball, arguably the two foremost intellectual figures of this liberal regionalist tradition. Like their realist counterparts, both writers characterised the region as politically "unstable", strategically "dangerous" and economically "backward". 46 According to Eggleston, the democratic practices, economic development and stable social order that prevailed in the "advanced West" represented a stark contrast to Asia where the question of order had not been settled. The prevalence of anarchy, poverty and ignorance in Asia made the "primitive" appeals of communism attractive there. Progress, Stability and Development were all taken as the constitutive principles of Western identity, features that were viewed as "absent" and "lacking" in the East.

In framing regional identity in terms of the absence of these features, liberal intellectuals focused on ways in which the region's otherness could be converted into the values and characteristics that marked the West. The societies of Asia and the Pacific thereby became a kind of social laboratory in which liberal ideas of progress and development could be applied and tested for their validity. Eggleston, for instance, focused on the possibilities of spreading democracy and capitalist development to Asia in the form of education, capital and the gradual "grafting" of appropriate Western political institutions to Asian societies. 47 Similarly, Macmahon Ball argued that poverty provided fertile ground for communist revolutions which the West could help to alleviate through assisting in the economic development of Asian countries. His focus was on both improving the social and economic welfare of the "rank and file" and addressing the "critical shortage" of "capital equipment...and technical and scientific training". 48

In advancing such policy prescriptions, both Macmahon Ball and Eggleston espoused a notion of "development" in which the Western liberal state represented the model of

48 Macmahon Ball, W (1952) Nationalism and Communism in East Asia p.203.
progress and guarantor of a stable international order. Eggleston, for instance, argued that the privileged status of Western liberalism derived from the fact that it represented the apex of an on-going historical evolution from "chaos to order". That involved a process through which the Western liberal state had moderated the inherently competitive urge of human nature through its codification of "certain rules of order so that Man could carry out life with his fellows". According to this view, the evolution of human society is based upon an Hegelian movement of otherness into self (See Chapter 1) in which the rules of Western order are geographically extended "until they cover the whole world". In seeking to extend Western order across the Pacific, liberal regionalists pursued the same goals as policy-makers who saw the world in more traditional realist terms. Thus, whether through liberal engagement or realist containment, Australian policy-makers defined security in terms that presupposed the maintenance of a particular kind of socio-political order across the Pacific — an order which was Western-dominated, capitalist and based upon the territorial state.

While in the late 1940s the emphasis on development and regional engagement produced a regional foreign policy which stressed engagement and cooperation, the Labor Government merely reproduced the underlying assumptions that had long characterised Australia's relations with the outside world. The major elements of early Australian foreign policy — a craving for absolute security, the framing of Australian identity in terms of its affinity with an imagined Western civilisation, and the deep-seated sense of threat and otherness towards Asia and the Pacific — continued to underpin post-War foreign policy. Such assumptions derived from a broader Western discourse of IR which successive generations of Australians drew upon to understand and make sense of the unfamiliar societies of Asia and the Pacific. As we saw in the last chapter, this discourse derived from broader territorial understandings developed in the post-Renaissance European states system. In continuing to espouse such understandings, post-War policy-makers sought to secure the tenuous boundaries of Australian identity through rigidly demarcating self from other and Australia from the Far East, projecting onto the region the qualities of an exotic, undifferentiated other. Whatever the slight degree of openness in the Labor Government's policies, in any case, the possibilities of an alternative to traditional analytics glimpsed in the 1940s were closed off with the emergence of the Cold War in the 1950s and 60s, a period to which this thesis now turns.

50 Ibid.
Chapter 3

Region and Foreign Policy in the Cold War

By 1950, the period of liberal regionalism that had characterised the Labor Government’s foreign policy had ended. Led by Robert Menzies, the conservative establishment in Australia was to exercise its electoral ascendancy for more than two decades thereafter, reasserting the traditional realist bases of foreign policy. That included reinvoking familiar threat scenarios, further integrating Australia into the Western Alliance and formulating a regional foreign policy based upon Cold War geopolitics. This emerging Cold War discourse signalled a general shift in the dual terms of reference of foreign policy from liberal regionalism back to the dominant tradition of Realpolitik.

This chapter examines the emergence of this Cold War discourse in the 1950s and 1960s. I argue that, through this discourse, the new conservative Government articulated the familiar fears of Asia and the Pacific in terms of a broader Cold War conflict between the "Free World" and Communism. Thus, policy-makers framed the territorial and moral boundary between Australia and the Asia-Pacific region via a larger set of Cold War binary oppositions. Those oppositions rigidly demarcated good from evil, West from East, capitalism from communism, and modernity from tradition as a way to secure a stable sovereign identity of the West. As we shall see, in drawing on such representations, Australia’s political elite participated in a broader Cold War ordering of global political relations in which Western geopolitical power was projected across the globe.

Cold War Geopolitics and Australian Foreign Policy

The polarisation of inter-state relations during the Cold War proved to be an electoral windfall for the Menzies Government. In seeking to align Australian security interests as closely as possible to its Western allies, the new Government was able to present itself as the guarantor of Australian security in contrast to Labor’s reckless, utopian policies. The skill of Menzies and his parliamentary colleagues in advancing these arguments effectively shifted the foreign policy debate towards hard-lined realism. That forced Labor politicians to match their parliamentary counterparts in displays of anti-Communist rhetoric.

While domestic political interests were important in this the shift to a more realist foreign policy, Australia’s Cold War diplomacy was also shaped by the deep-seated fears that Australia’s Anglophile establishment had toward Asia. Thus, in seeking to understand the

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1 For a fine example of the way the conservatives used foreign policy issues to marginalise Labor, see Menzies’ rhetorical flourishes in Parliament, Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates, House of Representatives, 3 April 1963. pp.344-5.
emergence of nationalist and communist revolutions in Asia, Australian political leaders drew upon the familiar binary oppositions of foreign policy. In doing so, they invoked traditional threat scenarios which heightened the sense of fear and otherness regarding Australia's Asian neighbours. This was, after all, a period in which the Third World began to challenge Western hegemony, evidenced in Nasser's take-over of the Suez canal, the 1955 Bandung non-aligned conference and Sukarno's confrontation over Malaysia. For conservative policy-makers who equated the status quo of Western colonialism with the natural order of things, this was a dangerous and troubling period as old certainties were being called into question by the emergence of "the colonial other" from an earlier position of subjugation.

Canberra's response to this rapidly decolonising world was to seek to militarily engage the United States in the Asia-Pacific. That response, and the fear of the Asia-Pacific that underpinned it, was not, however, the only interpretive option open to policy-makers. Indeed, if they had decided to do so, policy-makers could have rejected Australia's traditional sense of estrangement in the Asia-Pacific region, stressing instead the post-colonial affinities that Australia shared with its Asian and Pacific neighbours as small powers located in a common part of the world. In doing so, policy-makers would have seen in the region emerging independent states which were both seeking to assert their cultural independence and negotiate a path between tradition and modernity in creative ways. In this sense, far from being a source of fear and insecurity, Australia's location in the Pacific was not only a fortuitous part of its geography but also provided an opportunity for policy-makers to explore a dialogue with the culturally rich and diverse Asia-Pacific region. That possibility was glimpsed, if only fleetingly, in some of the policy initiatives of the Labor government in the 1940s.

That this was precluded as a serious policy option in the 1950s was due to the narrowly-conceived interpretive framework of Cold War geopolitics through which Australia's anglophile establishment sought to make sense of the world. Thus, in 1954, Foreign Minister Casey observed that:

> The world is very disturbed. Anything could happen at any time, and this is a time when we have to stick to our friends and to our convictions. The United States of America is on our side. It is on the side of democracy, decency and right, and the forces of darkness opposed to it are very apparent and very powerful. The world may have a show-down at any time between our form of life and the forces of darkness.²

By articulating this pessimistic vision, Casey reproduced the dichotomous categories of Western IR in terms of the Cold War principle of bipolarity. Through this principle, policy-makers divided the world into opposing camps between the capitalist West and the

communist East. As the Cold War progressed, this understanding became codified into a Cold War discourse of geopolitics. Foreign Minister Percy Spender's 1950 ministerial statement represents an exemplary text of Australian Cold War discourse. According to Spender, the world was in a "trance of uncertainty, doubt and fear" where the "conflict between Democracy and Communism" that had pervaded Europe was "now developing throughout Asia and the Pacific" through the "spread of Communism". Against this background, the main objective of Australian policy was "the maintenance of our security and our way of life, through maintaining the closest and best possible relations with the United States" with which we share a "common tradition, heritage and way of life".

Through such dichotomous understandings, the Government reproduced the identity-making practices that had traditionally served to demarcate Australia's "Western" identity from the regional Asiatic other. Hence, according to Menzies, Australian security was dependent on "the unshakeable unity of thought and action of the United States and the British Commonwealth, and of those other great and free nations who hold their liberty in common". In framing identity in such terms, Menzies not only stressed Australia's Western affiliations but also the deep-seated fears of Asia that had long pervaded Australia's national consciousness. Thus, while the emergence of Soviet communist expansionism constituted the major security concern for US policy-makers, the sense of threat that prevailed in Australia drew on a much older, historically entrenched fear of Asia and the region.

The fear of Communism and the Yellow Peril coalesced in the figure of Communist China and its imperialist designs on Southeast Asia. As in the past, this fear centred as much on the civilisational sense of threat from Asia's teeming millions as it did on the concrete geostrategic danger posed by Communist China. For the conservative anglophile establishment in Australia, the Peoples Republic of China stood as the very antithesis of the West, articulated in Menzies vision of an Australian nation based upon the suburban contentments of private property, consumerism, liberal democracy and the Christian religion. In other words, policy-makers understood China through a broader discourse of identity formation that othered the Orient as a threat in opposition to the regulative ideal of Australian identity. Thus, while Australians were represented as a democratic, liberal, Christian people living in an empty, underpopulated continent, the teeming millions of China were a "herd-like", submissive people ruled by a despotic, atheistic communist ideology. Outside of this oppositional framework, of course, other views of China and

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7 Ibid. p.142.
the Asian region could, and did, emerge such as in the writings of the dissident scholar C.P. Fitzgerald or the Labor politician Les Haylen whose views departed from prevailing images of China as the Cold War bogeyman. 8

Representations that portrayed China in anything but menacing terms, however, were anathema to most policy-makers whose pervasive fears of China came to be articulated through the notion of "the falling dominoes of Southeast Asia". Deriving from American strategic thinking, the domino theory was articulated as early as Spender's 1950 ministerial statement which declared that: "should the forces of communism prevail and Vietnam come under the heel of Communist China, Malaya is in danger of being outflanked and it, together with Thailand, Burma and Indonesia will become the next object of further Communist activities". 9 Spender's successor, R.G. Casey, even more explicitly and urgently stated the geopolitical logic that generated Australian fears of China in Southeast Asia, when he declared in Parliament:

If the whole of Indo-China fell to the Communists, Thailand would be gravely exposed. If Thailand were to fall, the road would be open to Malaya and Singapore. From the Malay Peninsular the communists could dominate the northern approaches to Australia, and even cut our life-lines with Europe. These grave eventualities may seem long-range- but it is not impossible that they could happen within a reasonably short period of time. 10

The scenario foreshadowed by Casey and other adherents of the domino theory, however, relied upon the validation of a range of assumptions for Communist China to be taken seriously as a threat to Australian security. For example, it assumed both that China was determined to pursue expansionist aims and that Southeast Asian nationalism was merely a surrogate for Chinese Communism. That these assumptions were never seriously examined demonstrated that Australian fears of Asia were so deeply embedded in a sense of national identity that it was enough for policy-makers to simply invoke a rearticulated version of the "yellow peril". Far from merely reflecting geopolitical realities, therefore, the threat of Asiatic communism was discursively constructed, drawing its veracity on images that objectified Asia as a dangerous other. These objectifying, othering strategies operated on a number of different levels and through a variety of tropes which reduced Southeast Asia to a mere object of Chinese expansionist aims. One of the more typical ways that this representation was secured was through commonplace sexual metaphors of a virulent, masculine China and a feminised Southeast Asia. In Spender's 1950 statement, for example, a virile China "penetrates" and "thrusts" into the passive "Southeast Asian region", representations which journalist Denis Warner reproduced in his characterisation of Australia as living "under the shadow of the Chinese

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9 Spender, P. (1972) "Statement on Foreign Policy" p.313.
Phallus". Similarly, in a meeting of the Cabinet of the Menzies Government in the early 1950s, it was decided to "restrain" the United States in "interfering" in the region and to "stimulate the British".

Other metaphors that were deployed in foreign policy, centred on the almost inevitable "flow" of Chinese communism into Southeast Asia. Labor leader Calwell, for instance, described how "the red lava flow of communism is creeping ever onward and ever southward". At another time he spoke of "the red tide of Chinese imperialism". Functioning as naturalising rhetorical strategies, such representations were often expressed through scientific metaphors. Hence, references were made to the "spread of the communist infection" or to "the shift in the centre of the gravity of world affairs" in which it appeared that by the force of gravity itself the regional other would merely fall down upon the Australian continent. By using such metaphors, policy-makers tapped into the familiar fear of a "population explosion" in Asia and monolithic images of a human wave of Asian refugees "lapping" at Australian shores.

The continual reproduction of such images actually precluded and overshadowed any serious analysis of the struggles taking place in Asian societies. The content and specific details of local spaces became suppressed by the grand abstractions of Cold War discourse and its neat bifurcation of global political space into competing Communist and Capitalist visions of modernity and political economy. This crude reductionist discourse simply ignored the complex historical causes of Asian nationalism and anti-colonialism (such as centuries of European imperialism) in favour of simplistic images of a monolithic global communist conspiracy. For Australian policy-makers, such crude images neatly fitted into existing understandings of Australia's perilous location in the Asia-Pacific. Such understandings led to policies which, as one writer has noted, were "locked into a conceptual framework that drew a haze over historical reflection [and] acted as a closed circle with a pattern of loaded language, establishing a public climate of fear which limited rational policy-making and stifled views on Asia". As we shall see below, not only were such policies based upon a profound misunderstanding of the nature of Asian and Pacific societies during the Cold War but they gave rise to a violent interventionist Cold War strategy that drew Australia and its Western Allies into a series of bloody military conflicts in Southeast Asia.

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13 Ibid.
14 Ibid.
Western Strategy and the Production of Cold War Knowledge

Unless grasping is accompanied by a full acknowledgment of the other as subject, it risks being used for the purposes of exploitation, of "taking": knowledge will be subordinated to power.\(^\text{17}\)

The fall of Singapore to Japanese forces during World War II effectively undermined the credibility of imperial defence as the traditional basis for Australian security. During the 1950s, the Menzies Government formulated a new doctrine of "Forward Defence" to replace the strategy of imperial defence. In doing so, it sought increasing Australian involvement in the region alongside Australia's Western Allies. If isolation from the region was no longer feasible, then it was necessary to contain regional threats through a direct presence of Western troops in Southeast Asia. In seeking US strategic engagement in the region, the Menzies Government aligned foreign policy irrevocably to American globalism and its strategy of containment.

The expansion of US geopolitical power in the post-War period demanded increased knowledge of the societies of Asia and the Pacific. The US Government heavily promoted the development of Asian language training and graduate research. Those efforts became codified in the "area studies" programs established in American universities in the 1950s and 1960s. The knowledge produced in these programs was not, however, an objective, neutral form of fact-gathering but rather represented a specific kind of instrumental knowledge organised within Cold War discourse. As Ben Anderson has argued, "what was needed was a framework which could reduce the intractable pluralism [of Southeast Asian societies] to an orderly, structured universal pattern, on the basis of which 'systematic' analysis and policy-formulation could go forward".\(^\text{18}\) Area Studies filled this requirement, replacing the highly specialised study of language, literature and philosophy found in traditional European scholarship with the universalistic premises of functionalism. Here Asian political systems became studied and compared via a singular universal measure. That measure, at least implicitly, was represented by the ideal of American capitalist democracy.\(^\text{19}\) Notwithstanding its universalistic pretensions, then, Area Studies was inherently Ethnocentric and was based upon knowledge of Asian societies which maintained a "conservative, pro-capitalist ideological framework" that coincided with the global expansion of US economic, political and military power.\(^\text{20}\)

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Developing out of area studies was the theory of "modernisation" which dominated Cold War thinking during the 1960s. Modernisation theorists took the historical experience of the "advanced", "modern" states of the West as the basis for constructing universally valid models by which the "traditional" societies of the Third World could "develop" and pursue economic "growth". Through a process of extrapolation, they sought to specify the exemplary functions and features of "modern", "industrial" society that were seen as "lacking" in traditional societies. Based upon this unilinear model of development, modernisation theory became a blueprint for the transition from tradition to modernity in the Third World which, applied on an international scale, was converted into the ambitious project of US globalism centring on the construction of an international multilateral capitalist order across the Pacific. As Rex Mortimer has observed, modernisation theory was peculiarly suitable for servicing American expansionism in that it emphasised the necessity for Western intervention in Southeast Asia in the shape of aid and investment while at the same time denying the historical claims of new states to an autonomous culture and development process.

As Gabriel Kolko has added, the hallmark of American foreign policy after 1945 was the universality of its intense commitment to create an integrated, essentially capitalist world framework out of the chaos of World War Two and the remnants of the colonial systems. The United States was the major inheritor of the mantle of [Western] imperialism in modern history, acting not out of a desire to defend the nation against some tangible threat but because it sought to create a controllable, responsive order elsewhere, one that would permit the political destinies of distant places to evolve in a manner beneficial to American goals and interests. The regulation of the world and its inevitable costs were justified...as a fulfilment of an international responsibility and mission.

In launching this project, US strategic planners adopted an Enlightenment rhetoric of universalism and progress to justify their expansionist aims. The ambitious goals of US globalism in fact resonated with the Enlightenment belief that the application of science and technology to postcolonial societies promised a future of cumulative and unilinear progress across the globe. Based upon such ambitious objectives, however, US foreign policy was not only driven by lofty ideals but also by the strategic practices of traditional power politics. The coexistence of an enlightenment liberal rhetoric alongside Cold War realism illustrated the "Janus-faced" nature of American globalism. Thus, by seeking to create strong political institutions in the Third World to undergird expansionary economic

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liberalism, Western policy-makers lent support to many authoritarian anti-communist regimes. As Samuel Huntington pointed out, the transition from traditional communities to modern industrial society presupposed a strong institutionalised order. In its early stages, at least, this took the form of strong military regimes in the Third World which provided the requisite stability, national loyalty and strong political institutions for the development of capitalist structures.\(^{25}\)

The same liberal rhetoric, underpinned by the strategic practices of Cold War realism, was also expressed in Cold War Australian foreign policy through the Colombo aid plan, which I will comment on below. For now, however, I want to focus on the ways in which the Cold War construction of knowledge through Area Studies was replicated in Australia through efforts by the government to promote greater knowledge of Asia. Thus, in 1955, the Federal Government established Departments of Indonesian and Malaysian Studies at Melbourne and Sydney universities which represented the first specialised centres for the study of Southeast Asia in Australia.\(^{26}\) By 1964, Paul Hasluck, could claim that with the development of Asian studies "reciprocal trade, closer cultural relations and a clearer understanding of Asia and its people are in the forefront of Australian policy".\(^{27}\) That claim would have been inconceivable two decades earlier.

As in the US, however, the production of knowledge in Australia was not simply an objective fact-gathering process but rather grew out of Cold War strategic considerations and the perceived need to understand a seemingly dangerous Asian region experiencing communist and anti-colonial insurrection. As the Cold War progressed, Australian scholars and policy-makers began to use the language of American social science to explain events in the region. As John Legge has recounted, the development of a modern social scientific understanding of Asia that applied the tools of economics, sociology, political science and anthropology overshadowed the traditional study of Asian civilisations and cultures in Australia during the Cold War.\(^{28}\) In this way, notions of patrimonial states, bureaucratic elites and patron/client relationships became popular models for explaining Southeast Asian societies in Australia.\(^{29}\)

Representing a new mode of Cold War knowledge, the emergence of "Southeast Asian" studies was driven by the need to convert the region into an object of policy and knowledge. Thus, while earlier notions like "the Far East" had captured both a sense of


\(^{26}\) Mortimer, R. (1978) 'From Ball to Arndt: The Liberal Impasse in Australian Scholarship' pp.103-104.

\(^{27}\) Hasluck, P. (1964) "Australia and Southeast Asia" *Foreign Affairs* 43 (1): p.58


\(^{29}\) Ibid. p.96.
exotic, distant European colonies and overlapping tributary states, "Southeast Asia" was imagined in terms of the piercing territorial gaze of American globalism. Here the region was understood as a grouping of modern independent states with neatly-divided borders over which an intense Cold War struggle was taking place. 30 Underpinning this Cold War image of the region was a strictly geostrategic worldview. As Gregory Pemberton has observed, "US officials neatly divided the world up into regions", categorising each in terms of its "varying importance" to American global strategy. 31 The sheer spatiality of this imagination (exemplified in the "field" of "Area" Studies) was combined with the methodological individualism of Anglo-American realism. Here IR was understood as consisting of competing individual nation-states that "acted" and "behaved" rationally through calculations of maximising power and self-interest. 32 Exemplified in the domino theory, this combination of spatiality and methodological individualism sustained the broader goals of US global strategy. Southeast Asia became part of the US State Department's plans to construct an American-dominated "Great Crescent" from India around to Japan with Indonesia as its "southern anchor". 33 The "centrepiece" of such plans was an economically reconstructed Japan which was seen as a potential counterweight to China. Japan's reconstruction was to be achieved through a strategy of export-oriented industrialisation based upon "Southeast Asian" economies both as a supply of natural resources and as future markets for Japanese and American goods. 34

Such plans were enthusiastically supported by Australian policy-makers who took great comfort in US policies to build a defensive perimeter around mainland Asia to contain China. Those plans dovetailed nicely with Australia's own containment policy of Forward Defence which was also based upon strictly geopolitical understandings of "Southeast Asia" as a mere object of either communist expansionism or Western containment. By reproducing such understandings, Australian policy-makers reduced "Southeast Asia" to an undifferentiated space of "instability" that, in the popular idiom of the day, was viewed as a geopolitical "vacuum" that had to be filled. 35 Such representations provided the discursive underpinnings for the subsequent intervention of Western forces in Southeast Asia. There were two interrelated interventionist measures that became central to the

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30 As early as 1949, America's National Security Council was declaring that: "Southeast Asia is the target of a coordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin...If southeast Asia is also swept up by communism we [the West] shall have suffered a major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world, especially in the Middle East and in a then critically exposed Australia". Pemberton, G. (1987) All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam. Allen and Unwin: Sydney. p.12.
31 Ibid. p. 11.
34 Pemberton, G. All the Way Ch. 1 and 2. Ibid.
35 "The reality that has to be faced is that at present no balance to the power of China can be found in southern Asia. The balance has to be provided from outside Asia". Hasluck, P. (1964) "Australia and Southeast Asia" p.61.
Forward Defence: the Colombo Plan which was based upon providing aid to non-communist Asian countries and the strategy of Great Power protection through a series of alliances and other regional security instruments. While the former derived from liberal ideas of modernisation, the latter was based upon a realist insistence on institutionalising a Western military role in the Asia-Pacific region. 36

Devised largely by Percy Spender, the Colombo Plan was premised on the view that the spread of Communism in Southeast Asia could be prevented through addressing the socio-economic problems of poverty that made communism attractive to Asia's postcolonial societies. Designed as part of Western containment strategy, the Colombo plan was established in 1950 to provide regional bilateral aid in the form of technical assistance and educational programs. In promoting development assistance, policymakers also sought to enhance Australia's trading relations with the capitalist economies of Asia. Throughout the 1950s, Deputy Prime Minister McEwan completed a number of trade missions to Asia- obtaining trade agreements with Malaya, Indonesia and most notably Japan which had become Australia's closest trading partner. 37

While these initiatives were aimed at improving economic development they also had an intrinsic security dimension, in which, as Spender urged, "we must increase international efforts to stabilise governments and create conditions of economic life and living standards under which the false ideological attraction which communism exerts will lose its force". 38 That argument echoed the kinds of views about "regional cooperation" which liberal regionalists Macmahon Ball, Eggleston and members of the Chifley Government had been propagating a decade earlier. Indeed, the Colombo plan was anticipated by earlier proposals by the Chifley Government for an aid and development package for Asia and the Pacific analogous to the Marshall-Plan in Europe. 39

In this sense, Cold War discourse incorporated the liberal vision of the region as an object of social engineering to be developed and modernised with realist images of the falling dominos of Southeast Asia. As indicated above, this convergence was exemplified in the modernisation theories of American scholars Walt Rostow and Samuel Huntington which also explains why long-standing Australian liberals like J.G. Crawford and Frederick Eggleston were amongst the most strident of Cold War warriors. In this sense, Cold War discourse incorporated the temporal dimension of liberalism and its whole discourse on "economic development" within the spatial logic of realist power politics.

38 Spender, P. (1972) "Statement on Foreign Policy" p.315
Otherness was not merely represented in terms of territorial danger and threat but also focused on "backwardness" and "underdevelopment". Containment strategy synthesised both realist and liberal perspectives through a distinctly Western spatio-temporal ordering of global relations. Thus, Western policy aimed not only to bring "the other" (in the form of instability, disorder, chaos, communism, Asia etc.) under control across space but to obliterate its difference in time through modernisation and development.

While liberalism was expressed in the Colombo plan, Australia's Cold War strategy hinged on the realist approach of building up alliance relationships to achieve state security. Constituting a web of bilateral and multilateral relationships that institutionalised Western strategic engagement, these alliances included SEATO, ANZUS, ANZAM, and the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. The establishment of SEATO, for instance, augmented ANZUS as the basis for strengthening the Western alliance in Asia and the Pacific. Although established ostensibly as an Asian organisation for collective security, SEATO was designed to legitimise Western intervention in the Southeast Asian region in the event of communist expansion and insurgency. Western members of SEATO (France, Britain, the United States, Australia and New Zealand) heavily outweighed SEATO's regional members (the Philippines, Thailand and Pakistan) and was conceived by American strategic planners as an attempt to build a maritime "Great Wall of China" to contain the threat of Sino-communism in Asia.40

Although SEATO was an outgrowth of containment strategy, its multilateral constitution was an exception to US policy. Based upon what John Ruggie has identified as a "hubs and spokes" arrangement, US policy tended instead to be organised on a bilateral basis in which American strategic planners sought to deal with their Pacific allies on a more flexible one-to-one basis.41 Underpinned by concerns of imperial overstretch, the US preference for bilateralism, however, was not entirely welcomed by Australian policymakers who sought to lock the allies into multilateral regional arrangements. This tension between Australia's security anxieties in the Asia-Pacific and the pragmatic bilateralism of US globalism produced not only a deep psychology of dependence on the United States in Australia but a foreign policy designed to push for the extension of US strategic power at any opportunity possible. As we shall see below, driven by these dynamics, Australian policy-makers were by far the most strident advocates out of all of the countries of the Western Alliance for military intervention in Southeast Asia, effectively acting to strengthen the resolve of US strategic planners at a time when, as Noam Chomsky has suggested, the West was "at war with Asia".42

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The Western Presence in Southeast Asia and the Violence of Cold War Discourse

We made speeches at the UN and we made diplomatic representation in various capitals, at American behests, and at times in the very phrases concocted in Washington. Our assiduity and docility have been paralleled only by Russia's tamest, or most cowed, satellites.43

i. The Korean War.

Australian participation in the Korean War was the first of a series of Australian military deployments. In supporting Western intervention in Korea, the Menzies Government sought to obtain a security pact with the United States in which, as Casey noted, Korea was just too good an opportunity "to impress them [American policy-makers] with our bona fides".44 This attitude merely reproduced the time-honoured tradition in Australia of seeking Great Power protection through sending Australians to fight and die in other people's wars.45 As one government minister insisted, Australia had to do "everything possible...to attract American interests" into the region.46

In many ways, the Korean War was to exemplify the subsequent history of Australian foreign policy during the Cold War. The reductionist understanding which characterised official representations of Asia during the 1950s and 1960s found initial expression in the security fears of communist expansionism in Korea. Hence, Menzies couched the need for Australia's commitment to Korea in terms of the generalised threat of global communism. In doing so, he all but ignored the complex historical factors involved in the conflict in favour of simplistic invocations of the Red Menace of China. As Menzies declared "Korea is not an isolated affair...aggressive communism moves to a set plan".47

On the basis of this understanding, Australian policy became hitched to a crusading American anti-communism which effectively foreclosed the possibility, so fleetingly discerned in the late 1940s, of an independent and neutral Australian foreign policy.48 In tying Australian security interests to US expansionism, policy-makers became complicit in the violence of the Korean War, which cost three-to four million lives and gave us the idea of bombing the enemy "back into the stone age".49 This amounted to a broader Cold War geopolitics of violence that would ultimately lead Australian troops into an even more protracted conflict — the Vietnam War.

48 Ibid.
49 Ibid. p.104.
ii. Relations with Indonesia

While Vietnam became the focus of foreign policy during the mid-1960s, it was the newly independent Republic of Indonesia that preoccupied diplomats immediately after the Korean War. As a newly independent country of over 100 million people located on Australia's "doorstep", Indonesia represented for the conservative establishment in Australia all that was troubling and unsettling about a region emerging out of centuries of European colonialism. Given these anxieties, much was made in Australia of Sukarno's "expansionist" policies, his courting of both the Russians and Chinese and the fact that the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), which represented a major element in the Indonesian cabinet, was the largest communist party outside Russia and China.

In vigorously expressing these fears, Australian policy-makers became concerned with what they saw as an emerging "Peking-Djakarta axis" through which Sukarno was seeking to impose his "supremacy over the region". Such fears were exacerbated by Sukarno's fiery anti-colonial rhetoric and his attempt to claim the Dutch-controlled territory of West New Guinea as a natural part of the Indonesian state. Located adjacent to Australian-controlled Papua New Guinea, West New Guinea represented what Spender called "an absolutely essential link in the chain of our defence". This implied that, unlike the prevailing Dutch occupation of the territory, an Indonesian presence so close to Australian administered territories would constitute a fundamental threat to national security.

Australian diplomats were at the forefront of opposing Indonesia's claims to West New Guinea. In fact, according to both US and Indonesian officials, the Australian Government constituted an even more intransigent opponent to Indonesia's claims than the Netherlands' own government. It was only when the Indonesians stepped up their military infiltration into West New Guinea and both Britain and the United States made it clear that they supported Indonesian claims that Australia finally supported Indonesian control over West New Guinea in 1963. In its initial opposition to Indonesia, the Menzies Government reversed the policies of its predecessor that did so much to develop relations between Australia and the fledgling Republic. As one American correspondent put it, within the short period it had taken power, the Menzies Government "had drained the store of goodwill that Australia had accumulated during the whole of the Indonesian Revolution".

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52 A document by the US "National Security Council" concluded that the Australians are if anything more determined than the Dutch that West New Guinea should not come under Indonesia control, while American official Robert Johnson claimed that Australia was even more intransigent than the Dutch. Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio made similar comments to journalists Bruce Grant and Dennis Warner, saying that "Australia may be more of a problem in regard to the future status of West New Guinea than the Dutch". See Pemberton, G. (1987) *All the Way* pp.78,88.
If West Papua represented a serious setback in Australia-Indonesia relations, then Sukarno's subsequent policy of "Confrontation" over British plans to decolonise Malaya became a source of overt conflict between the two countries. As Sukarno escalated his policy of "confrontation" by sending Indonesian soldiers into Borneo, the Australian Government finally made the decision to commit its own troops to the conflict in 1965 by deploying forces stationed on the Malayan mainland to a larger Commonwealth contingent. In their support for Britain, Australian policy-makers were motivated by the objective of keeping their allies engaged in Southeast Asia. According to Garfield Barwick, Australia's new External Affairs Minister, the formation of Malaysia was a way of creating a "bastion against China" and represented "a major act of orderly decolonisation" in which Western interests were maintained.54

For Sukarno and Indonesian Foreign Minister Subandrio, in contrast, Malaysia was nothing more than a "neo-colonial construction" of the British who were attempting "to save the rubber, tin and oil of the area for the imperialists".55 While such arguments had some force, Sukarno's policy of "Confrontation" with Malaysia was fuelled as much as anything else by the needs of identifying an evil external Enemy against which a common national identity could be fashioned out of the deeply divided elements of the Indonesian archipelago. In this sense, Sukarno's policy of Confrontation was a manifestation of the familiar identity-making practices of modern statecraft which sought to demarcate an inside sovereign realm of identity from an outside, foreign space of otherness. Articulated via an adventurist foreign policy, such practices soon proved unsustainable. Thus, Sukarno's attempts to unify the competing political elements within the Indonesian elite through mass mobilisation were undermined by his own efforts to play one faction off against another in a precarious balancing act that would end in the massacres of 1965.

For all its fierce rhetoric, the actual military dimension of "Confrontation" amounted to no more than a series of minor skirmishes. At no time did Sukarno make threats against the Australian government nor did he violate or threaten to violate Australian-administered territory. In fact, both Australian and Indonesian policy-makers wanted to minimise the fall-out from Confrontation. And so, throughout Confrontation, the curious scenario developed in which Australian aid contributions to Indonesia continued largely unaffected at the same time that both Australian and Indonesian political leaders were speaking the language of war. Rather than being the product of strictly strategic considerations, therefore, Australia's sense of regional threat was an effect of the broader cultural framing of Australian identity during the Cold War. Thus, by defining Australia as a Western outpost, the Menzies Government put its support for the crumbling colonial empires of Europe above relations with Australia's closest and arguably most important neighbour.

The point that needs highlighting here is that Sukarno's actions in West New Guinea and Malaysia represented a threat to Australian security only within a discourse that constituted Australian Identity in terms of a larger Western identity imagined in opposition to the region. Outside of this discourse, a very different view of "Asia" and Indonesia could emerge. That was exemplified in Labor politician Jim Cairns' trenchant criticisms of foreign policy which, he noted, was based upon an "abject fear of a changing and emerging Asia" and the "vast oversimplification of the Communist threat" in Indonesia and elsewhere." Cairns was one of the few political leaders who explicitly recognised that Indonesian foreign policy was not the product of communist-inspired expansionism but rather of Sukarno's own attempts to impose unity on the diverse range of competing forces of the Indonesian polity. On this basis, Cairns could reject the heightened sense of threat that prevailed in Australia and, in doing so, disavow the crude foreign policy discourse that prevailed during the Cold War. Instead, he adopted an understanding of the region which privileged a sense of historical dynamism through embracing the rapid social changes taking place in Asia.

Almost all other Australian policy-makers, however, viewed the downfall of Sukarno and the ascendancy of pro-American forces in 1965-6 with a sense of relief. That demonstrated the extent to which Australian policy was dominated by Cold War considerations. The fact that Sukarno's downfall was made possible by a massacre in which anywhere up to one million people lost their lives hardly seemed to trouble policymakers. There is in fact strong evidence to suggest that leading up to the massacres the Australian Government was not merely a passive supporter cheering from the sidelines but worked covertly through its ASIS operatives in Indonesia in concert with the CIA to destabilise Sukarno and encourage a military revolt. Such was the delight at the army's destruction of "destabilising forces" in Indonesia, that as a reward to the new military government, Western aid poured into Indonesia after 1966. Australia's contribution was not an inconsiderable component. In fact, by 1968-9 Indonesia had replaced India as the largest recipient of Australian aid.

57 Ibid. Chapter 5.
For all the attention Indonesia attracted in Australia before the coup, it received very little attention in the foreign policy debate immediately after the imposition of pro-Western military rule. This suggests that the signifying power of "Indonesia" during the Cold War resided in the ways in which it came to represent a marker of threat and regional otherness. That partly explains how the slaughter which heralded the Soeharto regime was accepted with such comfort and ease by policy-makers. Bruce Grant, for instance, an otherwise intelligent critic, talked callously of the "self-regulatory capacity of Indonesian society" while, less surprisingly, for T.B. Millar, the events of 1965-6 in Indonesia were significant in that they represented a return of Australia-Indonesia relations to "normalcy". 60

There were people, however, who questioned this whole Cold War discourse and the oppositional categories through which such responses were formulated. Those who thought outside the prevailing Cold War orthodoxy in Australia tended to reject the apocalyptic sense of "threat from the North" that informed much of the foreign policy debate. Needless to say, such views sat uneasily beside the dominant Cold War view of international politics in Australia. 61 Indeed, any views that deviated from Cold War orthodoxy were quickly marginalised in the public debate. Representing one of the few instances of public criticism, a 1963 petition by a group of leading AND academics provoked an angry and vitriolic response from conservative politicians in Parliament. 62 While this suggested the closed nature of the public debate, the process of executive foreign policy-making was even more narrowly-based. 63 By 1963, a Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee was set up within Cabinet which effectively limited all decisions on foreign policy to a small clique of conservative anglophile ministers and bureaucrats. 64 According to Micheal Sexton, it is probable that, leading up to Australia's commitment to Vietnam, Menzies, Hasluck and Minister for Defence Partridge were the only ministers involved in making decisions on foreign policy. 65

In this Cold War climate of secrecy and fear, the effect of Australia's conflicts with Indonesia was to reinforce the deep sense of insecurity and isolation under which foreign policy was formulated. Successive generations of policy-makers drew upon a self-enclosed discourse that constituted Australian identity under the perpetual threat of erasure. US support for Indonesia in the West New Guinea dispute and its refusal to be drawn publicly on the ANZUS security commitment during Confrontation raised serious

doubts about the efficacy of ANZUS. Rather than questioning their dependence on the United States, however, policy-makers responded through a strengthened resolve to show loyalty to the United States, in which we had "to do everything possible" to elicit US protection in the future. In seeking to do just that, Prime Minister Menzies announced in a tense speech to the parliament on the night of the 29th of April 1965 the decision to commit ground troops to the Vietnam conflict. That decision was to disclose the fundamentally flawed nature of Australia's Cold War strategy and its broader geopolitics of violence.

iii. The Vietnam War
Detailed studies of the politics between Australian and US officials leading up to the Vietnam War clearly show that the Australian Government vigorously encouraged an escalation of Western intervention in the Vietnam conflict. Australian diplomacy was at its most active at the time when many US strategic planners were less than enthusiastic about increasing Western military involvement in Vietnam. Rather than being obedient clients yielding to pressure from their Superpower patron, therefore, Australian policy-makers were "more convinced hawks than the Americans" in stridently advocating the projection of US geopolitical power into the region.

The major proponent of escalating the Vietnam War was External Affairs Minister Paul Hasluck. A former writer, historian and diplomat, Hasluck represented the most articulate spokesman in the 1960s of the realist power politics approach that governed Cold War foreign policy. For Hasluck, Australia, the United States and all the other nations of the "free world" had to confront the Chinese communist advance in Vietnam lest the predictions of the domino theory be realised. As with Australian policy in Indonesia and Korea, Hasluck and his colleagues understood the civil conflict occurring in Vietnam in strictly geopolitical terms which they saw as a "linchpin" state that had to be "held" against communist expansion. That understanding blinded Western strategic planners to the local and historical nature of the conflict in Vietnam. Like Indonesia before it, Vietnam became an object onto which Australian fears about "the region" could be projected. Drawing on the rigid boundaries of Cold War discourse, policy-makers reduced Vietnam to a struggle between the forces of good and evil, self and other, capitalism and communism and West and East while all but ignoring the local, historically-specific nature of the Vietnam conflict. Exemplary here were the public pronouncements of Prime Minister Menzies which were articulated in almost mythico-religious terms. For Menzies, accordingly, Vietnam was a "moral contest [and] a battle for the spirit of Man" in which "those who affirm the existence of a divine authority" were pitted against "those others who see nothing beyond an atheistic materialism". "We

66 Ibid.
must by strength", Menzies stressed, "defend the geographical frontiers of those nations whose self government is based upon the freedom of spirit".69

Menzies' rhetorical flourishes were supported by an emerging academic IR community in Australia. Based at the Australian National University, this community contributed the voice of "expertise" to the chorus of Cold War warriors in supporting the Vietnam War. Set up by Professors Miller and Millar with the staunch anti-communist Chancellor J.G. Crawford, the Centre for Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (SDSC) at the ANU was to become a hive of pro-government activity in the 1960s. In conceding later that the Centre was "vaguely open to the charge of militarism", Miller provided a rare insight into the orientation of this small IR community during the Cold War which was mobilised to defend government policy when public opposition began to coalesce in the mid to late 1960s.70 In attending public meetings to support government policy, Tom Millar was at the forefront of arguing that Australian involvement in Vietnam could be justified on the basis of "paying the club fees" to the United States.71 According to Millar, Australia was "living on the fringe of a forest fire" in which the "endemically unstable" Indonesia rated just below China as "the major source of instability" in Asia.72 In understanding the region in such fearful terms, Millar juxtaposed Australia and its "stable" "democratic", "Christian way of life" with the "unstable", "totalitarian" societies of Asia. That view was based upon a fundamental hierarchy between the affluence, stability and homogeneity of Australian society and the poverty, instability and heterogeneity of Asia.73 Through reproducing such rigid boundaries, Millar and his colleagues provided the discursive grounds on which the Government could claim justification for Australian participation in the war.

In drawing on this justification, policy-makers launched a vigorous diplomatic effort to obtain a "request" from the Americans for an Australian troop deployment in Vietnam. Recognising that a negotiated settlement would undermine the objective of attracting a US security presence into the region, Australian diplomats steadfastly opposed any

70 The symbiotic relationship between the academic IR community and government was reflected in the interchange of personnel between the A.N.U and the Department of External Affairs and Defence. It was also manifest in the establishment of the "Third Monday Club" where ANU academics, officials from the Departments of External Affairs, Treasury, Trade, Defence and Immigration met to exchange views and develop close relationships. See Miller, J.D.B. (1992) "Strategic Studies in Australia" in D.Ball (ed.) *Strategic Studies in a Changing World: Global, Regional and Australian Perspectives*. Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University: Canberra. pp.45-47.
73 See also Harries (1967) "Is Asian Communism a Threat to Australia" in J.Wilkes (ed.) *Communism in Asia: A Threat to Australia*. Angus and Robertson: Sydney. pp.118-122.
suggestion of seeking to resolve the conflict through negotiation. Accordingly, French President de Gaulle's efforts to achieve a negotiated settlement were automatically dismissed by strategic planners as "a shifty way out" of the conflict. Indeed, far from speculating about negotiations, Australia's political leaders were by late 1964 speaking the language of escalation. According to Hasluck, we needed to seek out and give support to "like-minded elements" in the Johnson Administration, by which he meant other hard-line realists who sought an escalation of the war. With an American presidential election in full flight, Johnson was showing signs of opting out of a military solution. It was precisely at this time that Australian political leaders and diplomats skilfully played on American fears that their policies appeared vacillating and powerless to the rest of the world. According to Bell, "if there is any phase of this entire period in which one might argue that Australian policy-makers influenced American policy-makers to ultimately damaging effect on a serious matter, it would be in these few months [around December 1964], when Canberra seemed far more convinced of the virtues of American combat in Vietnam than Washington did."

The Australian Government's efforts were finally rewarded in March and April of 1965 when Johnson gave in to the proponents of escalation and "requested" a deployment of Australian troops in Vietnam. Prior to this, the United States had escalated its air involvement in Vietnam by launching what became known as "Rolling Thunder". Involving the escalated "Stage II" bombing of North Vietnam, Rolling Thunder dropped three times the tonnage of bombs on North Vietnam by 1973 than was dropped by all sides in the entire Second World War. Not surprisingly, Hanoi was reduced to a shell of rubble as countless thousands of Vietnamese civilians were killed. The official reaction of the Australian Government was celebratory. Ambassador to Washington Waller welcomed what he termed euphemistically the "new spirit and robustness" in US policy. The sheer violence and terror that escalation represented cannot be understated. Nor can the physical violence of a war that gave us saturation bombing and defoliation on an unparalleled scale be disconnected from the violence of the broader reproduction of Cold War boundaries. Thus, in objectifying Southeast Asia as regional other, policy-makers reproduced reductionist understandings of global political life which effectively closed off other realities except the reality of Cold War territorial competition. It was through such discursive processes that policy-makers stridently supported, indeed promoted, a war of technosavagery in Vietnam. This was after all a war that gave us defoliated jungles and napalm, the My Lai massacres and the counter-terror Phoenix program in which

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74 Instructions from Canberra went out to all Australian Embassies, ordering that "[w]e should not speculate too much about negotiations at this stage". Sexton, M. (1981) War for the Asking pp.95-6.
76 Hasluck, P. (1964) "Australia and Southeast Asia" p. 56. Ibid. p.349.
80 Ibid.
Australian, South Vietnamese and American operatives were involved in, what even the official history of the involvement of Australian adviser's in Vietnam called rather sinisterly, "the twilight zone of the battlefield, an area that the Geneva Convention or 'the rules of war' never envisaged".  

Even in its own narrow terms, Australia's Cold War doctrine of Forward Defence, which culminated in Western intervention in the Vietnam War, was a terrible, tragic failure. Neither the introduction of sizeable ground troops nor the flattening of North Vietnam by American bombs proved to be able to defeat the Viet Minh. Indeed, by the early 1970s, through Nixon's announcement of the Guam Doctrine and Wilson's East of Suez proclamation, the US and Britain had signalled a reversal of Western military commitments to the region. Based upon eliciting Great Power protection, the strategy of Forward Defence was undermined as a viable doctrine during the Vietnam War. By any definition, the deaths of 500 Australians, 55,000 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese enhanced neither security nor stability in Asia and the Pacific in whose name young Australians were sent to fight in Southeast Asia. The failure of Western strategy in Vietnam thus reflected the misguided nature of Australian foreign policy and the broader modes of discourse from which it derived. The rigid geopolitical understandings through which policy-makers came to make sense of the world during the Cold War were simply inadequate in apprehending the complexities of Asian nationalism and anti-colonialism. Regional diplomacy was characterised by a strategic reductionism that led to a profound misunderstanding of the nature of Asian and Pacific.

Chapter 4

The Crisis of Western Geopolitics: Foreign Policy after the Vietnam War

What is before us now in the full imperial panorama is the deep, the profoundly perturbed and perturbing question of our relationship to others — other cultures, other states, other histories, traditions, peoples and destinies.¹

In previous chapters, I illustrated how Australian foreign policy cohered around a larger set of conceptual and spatial boundaries that sustained European colonialism up until World War II and American global hegemony thereafter. In reproducing these boundaries, Australian foreign policy abetted the Western imperial project and its dominant ordering of global political relations. Here the world became organised in terms of a larger set of binary oppositions between West/East, Europe/Asia, modern/backward, self/other, sovereignty/anarchy and Australia/the region. During the Cold War, this geopolitical ordering was exemplified in the strategy of containment in which Western policy-makers sought to define, demarcate and, above all, "contain" the non-Western other.

This chapter examines the breakdown in this containment strategy and indeed in the whole post-war global order of US expansionary liberalism. It focuses on the ways in which the rigid boundaries of the Cold War effectively broke down, heralding a fundamental weakening in the dominant discursive practices that sustained Western global order. In pursuing this line of argument, I seek to connect the practice of contemporary foreign policy and its sense of crisis to the broader theme of "postmodernity" articulated in recent social theory. This theme has centred on the apparent breakdown in the Western project of order and the unravelling of its sovereign identities.² In signalling a challenge to Western IR and geopolitics, the theme of postmodernity provides critical insights into the discursive context of contemporary foreign policy and the beginnings of the so-called Pacific Century, the subject of the following chapters.

In seeking to map this larger discursive context, and resuming where the last chapter left off, the present chapter seeks to locate the aftermath of the Vietnam War as a critical point of rupture of Western geopolitics. I argue that a whole series of events coalesced

around the Vietnam War which signalled a challenge not only to Western hegemony but also to the grand antinomy between Western selves and colonial others that underpinned global order. What has followed in subsequent decades has been a disordering of global political relations in which the dominant territorial organisation of political space has unraveled. This has led to a shift from the bipolarity of the Cold War to a multicentric global order, exemplified in the economic decline of the Western industrial centre and the emergence of the traditional peripheries of Asia as centres of capital accumulation in their own right.

This fundamental shift in IR has, however, not been accompanied by a rethinking of Western post-Renaissance discourse from which Cold War foreign policy derived (See Chapter 1). Instead we shall see in this chapter how, in responding to the dissolution of the ordering project of Cold War geopolitics, Australian policy-makers have attempted to reimpose Western order through reasserting the dominant geopolitical boundaries of the past. Through this response, Western political elites have sought to contain the proliferating sites of difference, flux and ambiguity that characterise contemporary global life.

I begin this chapter with an examination of the crisis of Western IR and geopolitics during the 1960s and 1970s, followed by a discussion of the ways in which this crisis was specifically expressed in Australian foreign policy. The third and final part of this chapter examines the response to this crisis by the Whitlam Labor Government. That response, I argue, merely served to reproduce the realist-liberal terms of foreign policy discourse.

**Crisis, the Rise of East-Asia and the Postmodern Condition**

_There is something in Asia for us to be intently concerned about. There is an "emerging force" in Asia: a force of well over a thousand million people moved by nationalism, by aspirations for industrial and scientific power and economic strength, and by ideological influences. Asians are emerging from a thousand years and more of poverty and national impotence. They will emerge: nothing can stop them...The important question is: Can we learn to live with them and they with us?_  

As we saw in the last chapter, the Cold War represented a relatively stable discursive economy through which Western policy-makers demarcated the boundaries between self/other, West/East, developed/undeveloped etc. In industrial societies such as Australia, a relatively consensual political culture was constructed through a broader disciplinary regime of Cold War politics. By invoking the threat of global communism, Western political leaders were able to mobilise public support behind the state against a common enemy. The imposition of this political consensus was replicated in the economic compromise forged between labour and capital in the core Western industrialised states. Based upon a stable international system of fixed exchange rates regulated by the IMF and World Bank, this compromise involved an unwritten contract.
through which trade unions ensured stable labour relations in return for welfare and employment guarantees.4

The basis of this post-War global order, however, was fundamentally challenged by the proliferation of political, military and economic crises which occurred across the globe during the 1960s and 70s. Signifying a broader loss of US power, Nixon enunciated the Guam Doctrine in 1969 which effectively amounted to a call for US allies to take responsibility for their own security. This, in turn, signalled the unwillingness of the United States to become involved in future military conflicts in the region. If any one event symbolised this growing realisation of the limits of American power, it was the Viet Minh's Tet offensive in the Vietnam War. According to Stanley Karnow, Tet "dazzled American officers" in its sheer scope and boldness and "stunned" President Lyndon Johnson. Only months afterwards, Johnson announced his intention not to recontest presidential elections while largely suspending air strikes on North Vietnam.5 Even more unsettling for the US and its allies was the sheer terror and technosavagery of the War. Emblematic here was the outrage provoked by the My Lai massacres in which American troops slaughtered hundreds of Vietnamese men, women and children. The massacres provoked such outrage not because the North Vietnamese were innocent of such acts but rather because here was the United States, the apogee of Western liberal reason, engaging in overt acts of barbarism. In this sense, Vietnam came to symbolise a larger crisis of moral, political and cultural authority in which the premise of superiority that defined Western identity was increasingly being called into question.6

Arguably the most disruptive force to post-War global order in the wake of the Vietnam War was the severe economic recession that spread across the globe in the early 1970s. The US commitment to Vietnam was a significant factor in this crisis as it imposed massive costs upon the US economy which were financed by the Johnson and Nixon administrations through printing more dollars. That action effectively flooded the world with excess liquidity, resulting in the world-wide inflationary spiral of the early 1970s.7 The emergence of stagflation which involved the concurrence of inflation and unemployment was also symptomatic of a more generalised crisis in global capital accumulation. This was reflected in the inherent weakness of the US dollar, the growth of unregulated global money markets and the shift to flexible exchange rates, all of which heralded the end of the Bretton Woods regulatory mechanisms of the post war liberal

6 Space does not permit a full account of the series of concrete political, economic and military crises that erupted across the globe in the aftermath of the Vietnam war. In addition to the references supplied below see Kaldor, M. (1978) The Disintegrating West. Allen Lane: London.
economy and the rise of what Robert Cox has called "global structural disorder". The unprecedented growth in the post-War period had finally come to an end as industrialised economies stagnated and protectionist policies became increasingly common. As Robert Gilpin has noted, "by the mid-1980s...the liberal dream of an expanding world economy organised in terms of a self-regulating market had been shattered". The effects of this economic crisis were particularly devastating for the US Government which since Vietnam had been unable to solve its massive budget deficit. That problem had the effect of overvaluing the dollar which, in turn, encouraged imports over exports and led to a far-reaching process of deindustrialisation, particularly in America's mid-West.

Reflecting a broader sense of malaise in advanced, industrialised countries, these economic problems have been emblematic of the inability of governments to achieve fundamental social and economic goals. With growing economic interdependence and the globalisation of production and finance, national governments across the globe have found it increasingly difficult to control events within their own boundaries. Transnational flows of capital, commodities, people, information and culture have undermined the economic sovereignty of the state. As Timothy Luke suggests, "[transnational] flows are decentring, despatialising, and dematerialising forces...[they] create new transnational communities that are blurring the old geographies of them and us, other and I, friend and foe". Signalling the unravelling of Western geopolitics, this collapse of territorial boundaries has unsettled the hitherto stable territorial basis of IR, a theme that I will address in more detail in following chapters. Suffice to say here the unravelling of territoriality in recent decades has had serious implications for the dominant understandings of Western IR from which Australian foreign policy has derived.

Coinciding with these changes has been the emergence of other centres of production and capital accumulation outside of Europe and America. Arguably, the most dramatic challenge to Western dominance was the economic re-emergence of Japan in the 1960s and 1970s followed by other East Asian economies less than a decade later. According to Robert Gilpin, the meteoric rise of Japan represented not only "a challenge to the liberal international economic order [but also] a remarkable shift in the locus of the centre of the world economy from the Atlantic to the Pacific in the closing decades of the twentieth century".

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10 Ibid. p.341.
The scope of this transformation can be glimpsed in the fact that Japan has managed to catch up with and overtake countries whose GNP per capita were almost seven times higher than Japan's immediately after WWII. This shift in the centre of the world economy has been facilitated by a transnational movement of capital to Japan and East Asia where foreign capital has set up low wage production sites as a way of lowering costs in a globalising economy — a process I will examine in more detail in Chapters 6 and 7.

In addition to the economic rise of East Asia, the emergence of Third World nationalism also served to heighten the crisis in Western global order during the 1970s. Calling for a "New International Economic Order", Third World governments and intellectuals throughout the 1970s sought to "challenge the legitimacy of the principles of international economic relations underwritten by Pax Americana". That not only had the effect of weakening hegemony but in fact signalled the emergence of a counter-hegemonic force. Hence, during the 1970s there was a general reassertion of Third World nationalism evidenced in, for instance, the victory of the Sandinistas in Nicaragua and the fall of the Shah in the Iranian Islamic Revolution.

Taken together, the economic crisis in Western industrialised societies, the industrial rise of Japan and East Asia, and the emergence of Third World nationalism represented a fundamental challenge to Western hegemony and the representational practices that served to frame and give meaning to the post-War global order. Indeed, these decolonising events have signified an historical irruption in which, as Edward Said has noted, "Europe and the West, were being asked to take the Other seriously". Seen in these terms, decolonisation represented a struggle that both disrupted and resisted the demarcation of Europe's others to a space of inferiority and backwardness.

In seeking to theorise this emergence of "the other" from centuries of suppression, Robert Young has argued that the present epoch is characterised by what he identifies as the postmodern condition. For both Young and Said, in forcing Europeans to confront "the other", the colonial project generated the West's own cultural awareness and sense of relativity. Through this self awareness, it was no longer possible to view "the West" as the unquestioned and dominant centre of the world. Invoking historian Arnold Toynbee, Young traces this process of cultural relativisation to the expansion of Europe in which

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17 Ibid.
the global spread of Western power also led, paradoxically, to the re-empowerment of non-Western states. As Young concludes, postmodernism could be said to mark:

not just the cultural effects of a new stage of late capitalism, but the sense of the loss of European History and Culture as History and Culture, the loss of their unquestioned place at the centre of the world.

This has meant that the univocal and unilinear story of Western modernity can no longer continue to go uncontested. The fixed boundaries between self/other, West/East, inside/outside which have sustained Western geopolitical thought have been seriously challenged recently with the multiplication of centres of history and identity. As Said has observed, alterity has erupted into vision: the decolonisation of women, natives, sexual eccentrics etc. has both challenged and resisted metropolitan History, and the single narrative of Western Enlightenment upon which it has been based. This decolonisation of Western thought has involved not only the displacement of the West as Centre but a serious rupture in Western civilisation itself. That is, to the extent that "the West" has depended for its veracity on claims to superiority and universality, the growing awareness of Europe's relativity (i.e. the consciousness of other cultures and histories) has served to make problematic Western identity. As Young has suggested, "as History gives way to the Postmodern we are witnessing the dissolution of 'the West'". As we have already seen, this "dissolution" of the West as centre has been fuelled by concrete historical conditions in which "the other" has erupted out of, and spilled over, the boundaries of Western geopolitical discourse that ascribed the non-Western, the deviant, the mad, the feminine etc. to a realm of otherness and inferiority.

Jacques Derrida has invoked the Greek term *aporia* to denote this condition in which the originating principle of identity is revealed as nothing more than the effect of differential relations — that is, the product of Western logocentrism. In other words, in demarcating a space of otherness to secure a sovereign self, modern identity is always confronted with and challenged by this space of otherness (its *aporia*) that endlessly threatens to spill over and disrupt the neat categories upon which identity depends. The conditions producing the crisis of Western geopolitics after the Vietnam War, therefore, were not unique to this period but can be seen as always present in, and intrinsic to, the constitution of modern identity.

Australia's sense of endangerment in the Asia-Pacific region has exemplified this *aporia* of modern identity as images of the Yellow Peril have always been intrinsic to Australian

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20 Ibid. p.19.
21 Ibid. p.20.
self-understandings. In eliciting Great Power protection throughout this century, policy-makers have been able to defer the *aporia* of Australian identity. With the withdrawal of a Western security guarantee after Vietnam, however, policy-makers have found it increasingly difficult to sustain the traditional definition of Australia as an outpost of White Civilisation. The shift in global power that has occurred in recent decades has meant that Western academics and strategic elites can no longer unproblematically confine the societies of Asia and the Pacific to a space of otherness and inferiority.

The post-Vietnam war period can be characterised, therefore, less as a fundamental break with the past than a manifestation of this ever threatening condition of *aporia*. As I have indicated above, that condition has brought about a generalised breakdown in Western foreign policy discourse and the categories that have ordered, defined and divided the world into objects of knowledge and geopolitical disciplinary practice. In this sense, by disclosing the traces of otherness which identity relies on, crisis can be seen as a general condition in which the boundaries between identity/other blur and the strategies that patrol this boundary break down.\(^\text{25}\)

The point here is that the economic, political and military crises that coalesced around the US defeat in Vietnam were framed by a larger discursive crisis of Western geopolitics. That crisis involved the declining capacity of dominant discursive formations (such as Australian foreign policy) to represent the world in the dichotomised terms of Western logocentrism. In particular, the economic success of the Japanese and East Asian economies, roughly coinciding with the decline of Western industrialised society, has disrupted claims of a Western cultural monopoly on modernity. New narratives and mythologies have emerged containing a counter-vision of modernity from Western civilisation based upon "Asian values" and "Confucian" or "Communitarian capitalism".\(^\text{26}\) All of this has served to disrupt the Cold War mapping of global politics in terms of bipolarity, framed via the broader themes of otherness and territoriality of Western IR.\(^\text{27}\)

### The Crisis of Representation in Australian Foreign Policy

*The world becomes chaos and synthesis salvation.*\(^\text{28}\)

Signalled by the failure of containment and the blurring of conventional geopolitical boundaries, the breakdown in Cold War discourse has had profound effects on Australian foreign policy. Symbolised in the Guam doctrine, the contraction of Western geopolitical

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power removed the central objective of Australia's own containment doctrine of Forward Defence: namely, the deployment of Australian troops alongside Western forces in the region. The consequences of this breakdown, however, went far beyond ending Cold War strategic doctrine. In fact, it signalled a broader crisis of representation of foreign policy in which the whole spatial imaginary of Western geopolitics came to lose its signifying power. With this, the traditional modes of foreign policy could no longer be deployed in the unproblematic way they once were. The framing of "the region" as a space of backwardness and instability was no longer undertaken with the same confidence, vigour and certitude that representations of a Cold War threat had permitted. This breakdown in traditional thinking can be glimpsed in the anxiety of the new Australian Minister for External Affairs in 1969, Gordon Freeth, who observed that:

there is a widespread feeling that in Asia and the Pacific old patterns are breaking up and new ones emerging; and that Australia's own relationship with the region may be entering a period of change and readjustment.

This sense of rapid change and uncertainty became a pervasive theme in the foreign policy debate during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Writing in the official series of the Australian Institute for International Affairs some five years after Freeth's statement, Professor Gordon Greenwood described a world in "disarray" in which "Western unity, strength and cohesion had eroded [and] ominous signs of difficulties lay ahead". For Greenwood, the "decay of old alignments and of bipolarity" presented a bleak landscape dotted with a range of "disturbing tendencies such as the rebellion of youth, mass demonstrations, the quagmire of Vietnam and the prevalence of guerrilla and terrorist activities". Greenwood noted that "the seemingly intractable problems of race, rapid decolonisation, the political instability of many new states and the use of political violence as a deliberate political weapon" all represented a challenge to global order. Taken together these so-called disturbances signified a more general malaise in which, according to Greenwood, "men were feeling their way in a swamp of uncertainty".

It is the response by Australian policy-makers to this sense of crisis in the 1970s — a sense of being in the swamp of uncertainty — which I examine in the rest of this chapter. During this period, policy-makers sought to fill the void left by the failure of containment.

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33 Ibid.
34 Ibid. p.3.
with a myriad of fragmented strategies, reassertions, narratives and practices. As Greenwood suggested, Australian policy-makers "were groping for new directions". Revolving around the traditional longing for order, this groping for new directions represented a response to losing the kind of certitude and predictability which Western strategic elites enjoyed during the Cold War. It is a response that Richard Ashley and Rob Walker have characterised as one of "desire" in which crisis:

elicits a kind of homesickness for an institutional order that reimposes order and stable boundaries — and brings an ambiguous and uncertain reality under control. This is the response of desire...the desire to fill the void, to compensate for the lack, to impose a centre of universal judgement capable of effecting limitations and fixing a space, a time and identity beyond question.  

In adopting this response of desire, Australian policy-makers attempted to reassert the boundaries of Cold War geopolitics. This has taken the form of attempts to reassert both the territorial boundaries of the Australian state and Western identity amidst the proliferating challenges to sovereign identity in contemporary political life. As we shall see, in reproducing traditional understandings, policy-makers drew upon the traditional realist and liberal modes of foreign policy discourse. Hence, the foreign policy of the Whitlam Labor Government, which I examine below, signalled a shift from the Cold War language of threat and anarchy to a more liberal rhetoric of cooperation and "engagement with the region" while the subsequent Fraser and Hawke Governments, the subject of next chapter, represented a return to a more realist foreign policy.

The Foreign Policy of the Whitlam Government: Reinvoking Liberal Regionalism in an Uncertain Era

Coinciding with the electoral victory of the new Whitlam Labor Government in the early 1970s, the crisis of Western geopolitics engendered a more open atmosphere in Australia in which the rigid boundaries of Cold War discourse were increasingly open to challenge. This openness produced the conditions in which a more liberal rhetoric prevailed in Australian foreign policy. In this sense, the emergence of the new Government had many parallels with that of its Labor predecessors of the 1940s as both were a product of a time when prevailing global social relations were coming under challenge and the dominant geopolitical alignments of international politics remained relatively fluid. Against this background, a less oppositional regional foreign policy emerged in the early 1970s in which the traditional emphasis on threat was replaced with a stress on cooperation with Australia's regional neighbours. This reformist foreign policy agenda was spelt out by Whitlam during a visit to Malaysia:

We have shifted the emphasis of our continuing involvement in South-East Asia from one primarily based on...military alliances to one based increasingly on developing trade with the countries of the region, on promoting progress through constructive aid programs, on encouraging security through regional cooperation-operation, on a positive response to recent proposals that we should consider financial assistance to agreed ASEAN projects, and on the development of cultural contacts through the negotiation of cultural agreements with the countries of Southeast Asia. 37

In pursuing these kinds of policies, the Whitlam Government tended to eschew Cold War understandings that reduced the Asia-Pacific to a geopolitical buffer or threat, preferring instead to stress the common affinities that the countries of Asia shared with Australia. This was articulated in the development of closer links with the governments of the region including: the completed withdrawal of troops from Vietnam, official recognition of the People's Republic of China, the condemnation of America's continued bombing of North Vietnam, the abolition of National Service, the provision of aid to ASEAN, and the introduction of decolonisation plans for Papua New Guinea. 38

Despite claims of "new directions", however, the whole foreign policy outlook of the Whitlam Government resonated with the voices of an earlier era of liberal regionalists such as William Macmahon Ball and Frederick Eggleston. In reverting to traditional liberal foreign policies, Labor sought to restore a sense of order and certainty amidst the clamour of difference and multipolarity that increasingly characterised global relations. As the Australian Prime Minister told The New York Times in July 1974, the regional reorientation of foreign policy was "essential for Australia in a new era of Pacific diplomacy, [an era marked by] the drift away from international order and international cooperation". Through promoting greater cooperation in the Pacific and Asian region, Whitlam declared that "Australia was seeking a better international order [against the backdrop] of a sense of drift, a sense of events out of control". 39

In its regional reorientation of foreign policy, therefore, the Whitlam Government was attempting to find new bases of Australian identity against the background of a breakdown in the major categories and boundaries of Cold War geopolitics. In promoting a "self-reliant", "independent" and "regionally-oriented" foreign policy, Whitlam sought to articulate a broader modernist vision of Australia's place in the world. That vision was one in which the certainties of the past were restored through a liberal, social democratic ethos of centralised social management. Standing at the centre of this vision was the heroic figure of Whitlam, the urbane lawyer educated in classics. He fulfilled the desire for a traditional rationalist order of social progress in Australia through declarations of a

self-confident and tolerant Australian nationalism, aboriginal reconciliation and the Keynesian objective of a just, growth-oriented economy.

Driven by this social reform agenda, the Whitlam Government sought to refashion Australian identity in response to a broader cultural crisis in the West. That crisis manifested itself in Australia in the serious challenges to the dominant identity of White Australia which emanated from the feminist movement, the Aboriginal community and the growing number of refugees and migrants coming to Australia from Asia. In responding to the breakdown in the grand mythology of Western civilisation and its univocal definition of Australian identity, the Whitlam Government promoted a new discourse of multiculturalism. Meanwhile, in foreign policy, Whitlam's cosmopolitan vision resonated with the need to find a place in the region, expressing a broader desire to be "at home" in Asia which had long generated liberal thinking. In articulating this theme of "Australia in Asia", the Labor Government in the early 1970s anticipated much of the contemporary discourse of foreign policy and its so-called "turn to Asia". The major themes of cooperation and integration with Asia that dominate present-day foreign policy in fact resound with the Whitlam reformist agenda of the 1970s in which Australia came to be viewed as a multicultural nation on the edge of the Asian Region.

While there was much that was appealing about this vision, Whitlam's liberal policies hardly represented a novel approach to Australian foreign policy. The emphasis on cooperating with the region was based upon the same instrumental interests of trade and security that had long characterised Australian regional diplomacy. Those interests hardly lent themselves to any kind of expansive and meaningful intercultural engagement between Australia and the societies of Asia and the Pacific. Indeed, far from representing a break with Australia's imperial past, the Whitlam Government's foreign policies were based upon the enduring assumptions of Western foreign policy discourse and the objective of maintaining Western "order" and "stability". Such interests and objectives had determined the nature of Australia's relations with the region since settlement.

This continuity in policy was reflected in the Labor Government's continuing support for the American Alliance which was viewed as the "keystone of Australian security". This view placed Australia firmly within the orbit of the Western security alliance led by the United States. As Whitlam remarked during his visit to America: "the United States remains the true leader of the world and as much as she used to be "the last and best hope of the world". "It is to the United States", Whitlam continued, "that the West chiefly looks for meaningful leadership in that direction."

By aligning Australia to the interests of the US, the Whitlam Government espoused a liberal vision of regional cooperation and progress which presupposed the same kind of global order as Western strategists sought to entrench in the Cold War. Privileging the interests and value systems of Western industrialised society, the Whitlam Government took Western liberal capitalism as the exemplar of development and progress and the basis for global order. Hence, while it is true that the foreign policy of the Whitlam Government signalled a definite shift toward a regionalist agenda, it could hardly be said to have marked a major departure from traditional realist assumptions. Never far from the surface were many of the assumptions that had undergirded Cold War thinking such as the need for a White Protector, the view of international politics in terms of the global balance of power and the primacy of instrumental national interests as the basis for Australian diplomacy. Indeed, as we have seen throughout this thesis, liberal good intentions of cooperation and engagement have always gone hand-in-hand with realist power politics. This convergence has been articulated in the common desire of both liberals and realists to create a stable manageable order in Asia and the Pacific as a way of guaranteeing Australian security.

This "will to order" was exemplified in Whitlam's attempts to establish a regional forum to facilitate regional cooperation and consultation, a proposal that reproduced the long history of Australian diplomatic attempts to establish a Pacific Pact as the basis for institutionalising a role for its Western allies in the Asia-Pacific. Resonating with a colonial-style mentality, Whitlam's proposal was greeted with silence by regional leaders who were highly suspicious of Australia's role as a proxy of US interests. Put forward without any serious prior consultation, Whitlam's unilateral proposal represented a particularly clumsy attempt by a small peripheral country to upstage the newly-formed ASEAN grouping, which Whitlam envisaged would be subsumed into his broader regional forum as a "sub-regional organisation". 42

Understood in these terms, such policies were designed to restore the status quo of Western global order and can be viewed as a readjustment of Australian policy in line with the changes in US strategic thinking after the Guam doctrine. As in the Cold War, the attempt to maintain Western global hegemony by the Whitlam Government involved massive costs and enormous geopolitical violence. That was evidenced no more tragically than in the complicity of the Whitlam Government in Indonesia's invasion of East Timor. Involving the on-going genocide of the East Timorese people, the Indonesian takeover of East Timor has shown in unequivocal terms the limitations of the liberal reformist agenda of Australian foreign policy.

Generated by a preoccupation with "order" and "stability", Australia's policy on Timor was determined by the broader objective that has dominated foreign policy since the mid-1960s: namely, developing and maintaining friendly relations with Indonesia's military rulers. For Whitlam, Indonesia represented the "gateway" to Asia and was thus crucial to the Labor Prime Minister's grand vision of Australia as a developed nation with budding relations with its Asian neighbours. Apart from such liberal ambitions, Australian efforts to develop close relations with Indonesia were determined by realist security considerations in which Australian support for the Soeharto regime was conceived on the basis of Soeharto's consolidation of a pro-Western, capitalist order in Indonesia. In protecting wider Western security and economic interests, the Soeharto regime was viewed by policy-makers as a major strategic asset to Australia. In privileging such strategic calculations above any ethical or moral consideration, Australian policy-makers jettisoned the interests of East Timorese independence in favour of the wishes of Indonesia's generals and the imperative of keeping Indonesia "stable" and "benign".

This policy position was framed via the broader understandings of Western IR which reduced the complexities of global life to a rigid territorial mosaic in which global political space became partitioned into distinct parcels of sovereign states. As Stephen Toulmin has observed, this territorial worldview can be traced to the Newtonian theory of central forces. H Hobbes extended this theory to the social world in his conception of sovereignty in which he insisted that the atomised, individual nature of social life requires overwhelming force concentrated at the centre in the form of the sovereign state (See Chapter 1). As we have seen throughout this thesis, such understandings have been central to the practices of modern statecraft which subordinate the dynamics of plural local communities to a sovereign centralised authority exercising control over a fixed territorial space. Forming the basis for organising IR, these dominant territorial understandings have effectively detached policy perspectives from the specificities of local space in favour of ritualised invocations of "stability" and "order" based upon 17th century theories of centralised force.

In framing its foreign policy at least implicitly via these broader understandings, the Whitlam Government supported Indonesian sovereignty over the former Portuguese colony. The basis for this position was stated clearly by Whitlam when he declared that an independent East Timor "would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the area". Former adviser to Whitlam, Nancy Viviani has noted that Australia's Timor policy was determined largely by Whitlam's fears of the "balkanization of Southeast Asia". That fear was based upon the Hobbesian assumption that viable political units could be constructed only through the development of large-scale communities with power concentrated in a central, sovereign authority. On this basis, a small independent

East Timor was viewed by Australian policy-makers as unviable and vulnerable to the military ambitions of larger (non Western) powers. According to this view, an independent East Timor would be a potentially disruptive element to the Western orchestration of a stable geopolitical order of sovereign states and capitalist economies in the Asia-Pacific. Exemplifying this strictly geopolitical worldview was Whitlam's contemptuous attitude toward "mini-states". According to James Dunn, the former Australian Consul General to Portuguese Timor, Whitlam often treated the idea of an independent state of East Timor "as a joke", while former diplomat Gregory Clark commented on Whitlam's "obsession about the stupidity of creating small nation-states". From this viewpoint, calls for East Timorese independence came to be seen as an unwelcome disruption to the sovereign act of developing "relations with Indonesia" which represented a central part of the Whitlam Government's grand visions of engagement with Asia.

The fundamental objectives that undergirded the Whitlam Government's Timor policy, therefore, can be summarised as: maintaining Western "order and stability" across the Pacific, strengthening the status quo of regional state elites and above all else developing close relations with Indonesia. These objectives have formed the basis for Australia's subsequent security policies which I examine in more detail in the next chapter.

While the Whitlam Government stressed the need to restore order in international relations, however, support for the Soeharto Government and other repressive state regimes in Southeast Asia has had exactly the opposite consequences. By most socioeconomic measures, the policies pursued by regional elites over the last three decades of high-speed export-oriented industrialisation have contributed to, rather than curbed, rising social tensions and "instabilities". Far from contributing to any enduring sense of "regional stability", therefore, Australian policy, as exemplified in our support for Indonesia's takeover of East Timor, has been designed to buttress the repressive state rule of the Soeharto Government and other authoritarian regimes in keeping a lid on simmering social tensions and discontent that their own policies have created. I will address this theme in more detail in chapters 7 and 8 of this thesis.

The attempt by Whitlam to promote a new modernist vision of Australian identity and nationhood ultimately proved unsustainable. Rather than heralding a new beginning, the Whitlam Government signalled a heightening of crisis which exacerbated the general sense of social, political and economic malaise. In particular, Whitlam's modernist ethos of enlightened social management was difficult to sustain in a society that remained, for the most part, an inward looking Anglo-American outpost. Furthermore, while Whitlam

sought to promote a new vision of Australia's place "in the region", Australia continued to be viewed by many as a proxy of Western colonialism. Ending as late as the 1960s, the White Australia Policy continued to cast a long shadow over Australia's image in the region while the emerging discourse of multiculturalism was resisted by many Australians who still clung to a deeply-entrenched mythology of Western civilisation and identity. Perhaps most significantly, Whitlam's vision of a just social democracy faltered as the hyper-Keynesian economic strategy pursued by the Government served only to deepen the economic recession. It is the response to these ultimately unsustainable policies by contemporary Australian defence planners to which this thesis now turns.
Chapter 5

Contemporary Foreign Policy I: Security, Realism and the Regional Threat

In the previous chapter, I examined the breakdown of Cold War geopolitics and its bifurcated organisation of global politics in terms of the principle of bipolarity. With this breakdown, the containment strategy of Cold War foreign policy was replaced by "a groping for new directions" in Australia's external relations. Forming the basis of the Whitlam Government's foreign policy, the search for new directions was articulated through attempts to promote a renewed modernist vision of identity in response to a postmodern decentring of identity. The Whitlam Government sought a (qualified) return to a liberal regionalist view of Australia and its place in the world. Despite Whitlam's claims of new directions, however, his liberal regionalist vision was based upon the same assumptions and objectives that underpinned Cold War thinking. Whatever the nature of this vision, it soon proved unsustainable. Indeed, far from heralding a new beginning, the Whitlam Government's policies heightened the general sense of social, political and economic malaise.

With this failure, the "groping" for a sustainable basis of state identity has continued. The downfall of the Labor Government ushered in a series of conservative governments and a shift from the liberal directions of Whitlamism back to a language of Realpolitik in foreign policy. This chapter examines the reassertion of realist policies by recent Australian governments — policies designed to counter apparent threats emanating from the Asia-Pacific region. I argue that through these policies, Australia's defence community has sought to reinvoke a sense of order and certainty in international relations through the reinscription of Cold War boundaries between self/other, inside/outside, West/East etc.

In examining contemporary defence/security policy, I begin with a brief discussion of the Fraser and Hawke Governments and the renewal of Cold War geopolitics. The second part of this chapter discusses contemporary realist narratives of the Asia-Pacific and the rearticulation of the traditional "region as threat" scenario. As this discussion makes clear, this renewed "region-as-threat" scenario has centred less on identifiable military threats as in the past than on a more generalised notion of "regional uncertainty and instability" which has dominated post-Cold War threat assessments. The third part of this chapter examines how this updated, yet all-too-familiar, threat scenario has been expressed through contemporary security policies. That has been clear in the continuing alignment of our regional diplomacy with the Western Alliance and burgeoning defence cooperation between Australia's defence forces and those of the region. Finally, I
conclude this chapter with a discussion of the contemporary discourse promoted by a number of regional leaders on "Asian Values". I relate this discourse to the theme of postmodernity examined in the last chapter. This discussion illustrates how recent attempts by policy-makers to forestall and defer the *aporia* of Australian sovereign identity have ultimately proved unsustainable.

**From Fraser to Hawke: The Renewal of Cold War Discourse**

The failure of the liberal policies of not only the Whitlam Government in Australia but also the Carter Administration in the United States provoked a neo-conservative backlash in the late 1970s and early 1980s. For the conservative elites of Western industrial society, the sense of breakdown in domestic society and loss of control in international affairs in the 1970s was due to a deeper moral crisis in Western society. Evidenced most dramatically in the US defeat in Vietnam, the loss of Western will and fortitude was viewed by American conservatives as an inevitable consequence of the decline in morality.¹ For this generation of leaders, the contraction of Western geopolitical power and the loss of US credibility had to be reversed through reasserting US leadership in the world. That view reflected a nostalgia for the certitude and stability that had prevailed during the height of the Cold War underwritten by US power projection.

Roughly coinciding with the beginning of the so-called second Cold War, the new Fraser Government sought to reassert the dominant boundaries of Cold War discourse. The epitome of the traditional conservative establishment, Fraser became arguably the most strident advocate of the renewal of Cold War politics in Australia. Like his Labor predecessor, Fraser exercised a dominant influence on the formulation of foreign policy, for whom the liberal principles of Whitlam's diplomacy were characterised by a lack of "realism" in truly appreciating the persistent dangers that communism posed to international order. In his first major foreign policy statement, Fraser argued that Australia could not survive in "a deeply disturbing world environment" through a foreign policy that was based on ideology and values as in the past. Instead, he stressed the need to focus on concrete interests as the basis for a realistic foreign policy which involved the realisation that "power in the broader sense remains the major factor in international politics".²

In seeking to reinvoke the traditional boundaries of the Cold War, however, Fraser faced the problem of identifying a credible strategic threat to Australian security. The traditional threat scenario of the yellow peril could no longer be sustained with the force that it had during the height of the Cold War. Earlier strategic analyses in the wake of Vietnam had noted the lack of an identifiable threat to Australia in the short to medium term. The old communist danger of China had subsided while the repressive state rule of

the Soeharto regime made Indonesia the "model of stability and rationality" that policymakers had always yearned for. In the absence of traditional threats, the regional threat scenario that circulated during the height of the Cold War was replaced by representations of the global threat that the Soviet Union posed to Australian security. Indeed, by the time, the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, Fraser had whipped both himself and, if polling is accurate, the Australian public into something of a frenzy. In arguing that the Soviets were seeking to achieve global "primacy", Fraser advanced the view that "the world is facing probably its most dangerous crisis since World War II". Not to be outdone by his party leader, Defence Minister Killen claimed that the Soviets represented "a direct threat" to Australian security, although he failed to elaborate on why this was so.

As we have seen in this thesis, there was nothing new about this translation of distant conflicts into "direct threats" to Australia security. In the case of the Fraser Government, this was achieved via realist understandings of IR, and, in particular, "balance of power" arguments. As Fraser declared, "Australia lives in a world where predominant power is controlled by the United States and the Soviet Union and international diplomacy has to be understood principally as an effort by the [major] powers to create a balance in the world favourable to their interests". In adopting a balance of power worldview, the Fraser Government drew up foreign policy assessments which, in their global scope, meant that just about any action by the Soviet Union could be portrayed as detrimental to the global balance. Tied into this narrow framework, the notion of the Soviet Union representing a "direct threat" to Australian security became both credible and real.

Through this great powers perspective on the world, the Fraser Government sought to bolster US credibility as its primary foreign policy goal. Here, policy-makers were concerned with the US capacity to project geopolitical power across the globe in resisting at all costs "Soviet expansionism". As Graeme Cheeseman has argued, such objectives signalled a return to Forward Defence as "Australian military forces were once again deployed into the region to help the Americans contain communist expansionism". That was evident in the increased air and naval deployments in the Indian ocean, increased air surveillance of Australian ocean approaches, the offer to the United States of the use of Australian defence facilities, the commitment of troops to the US-sponsored peace keeping mission in the Sinai desert and aid provision to shore up the South Pacific

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4 Ibid. p.82.


nations against Soviet aggression. In its return to Forward Defence, the Fraser Government reproduced the objectifying, othering strategies of Cold War geopolitics. Once again "the region" became reduced to an object of the imperialist desires of either communist expansionism or Western containment. Thus, policy-makers became preoccupied with attempting to "prevent the movement of the Soviet Union into this area as superpower competition in Southeast Asia would lead to instability".

Such representations, and the concrete practices of Realpolitik they engendered, were reproduced in the foreign policies of the subsequent Hawke Government. If anything, the new Labor Government was even more staunchly anti-communist and pro-American than its predecessor. In its preoccupation with growing Soviet links with some Pacific island states, the Hawke Government expressed alarmist statements bordering on hysteria. The peak of the Government's reaction came with news of Libyan interest in expanding its links with Pacific states. That news was greeted by the Hawke Government and the mass media in Australia with statements that evoked a sense of danger and threat recalling early Cold War discourse.

While during the peak of the Cold War, this sense of a threat "out there" was associated with the so-called falling dominos of "Southeast Asia", the focus of both the Fraser and Hawke Governments was concern over "instability in the South Pacific". The coups in Fiji, anti-colonial strife in New Caledonia, the secessionist struggle in Bougainville and the crisis of the ANZUS alliance were all viewed in Canberra as evidence of the growing "instability" in the Pacific. This instability was seen by policy-makers as creating "a window of opportunity" for the Soviets in the region.

In projecting a discourse of regional otherness onto the "South Pacific", policy-makers converted the Islands states of the Pacific into an object of strategic concern. During the Fraser and Hawke Governments, Australia's Pacific policy centred on the doctrine of "strategic denial" which involved both the maintenance of Western dominance and the denial of access to countries regarded as potentially hostile (i.e. the Soviet Union). By adopting this approach, the Fraser and Hawke Governments reproduced the reductionist
strategic imagination through which the South Pacific had been understood by policymakers since settlement. Here the South Pacific became represented as a strategic vacuum that needed to be "filled". This policy of strategic denial represented a renewal of the Cold War doctrine of "containment" in which policymakers sought to prevent Soviet expansion into the region. Thus, throughout the 1980s, Canberra pursued the familiar dual strategy of "stabilising" the region through supporting "economic development" while at the same time promoting political alliance "to the West".

In pursuing these diplomatic initiatives, Australian policymakers continued to locate Australian identity firmly within the Western Alliance. Arguably, Australia's most overt declaration of alliance to the West was the maintenance of US defence and intelligence installations in Australia. Long a thorny issue for successive Australian governments, the bases were justified by Hawke and other ministers on the grounds they contributed to global bipolar stability. The unequivocal support given by the Labor Government resonated with a long history of Australian sycophancy and dependence, which Hawke did his best to reproduce, telling the Australian-American association that the two nations would be "together forever". Aside from the geopolitical arguments for or against the American installations, their existence has served a fundamental symbolic function in securing the boundaries of "the West" as a meaningful geopolitical and cultural category at a time when Western identity has come under serious challenge. Richard Leaver makes the argument eloquently:

...[Australian] Governments owed much of their post-war success to their ability to act out the domestic role of loyal ally to the United States. The symbolism of loyalty was domestically more important than the content of support. Australia's decision to host the bases was not judged domestically by any reckoning of what the bases did or did not contribute to the nuclear balance, but simply by the appearance of cooperation they conveyed.

15 This was articulated in the increase in Australian aid to the South Pacific which quadrupled in the 1970s, further doubling after the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, see Ibid.

16 This was achieved through a pro-American diplomacy whereby Australia sought to assert its leadership in the South Pacific Forum to exclude Soviet influence in the region. This elicited a view amongst Pacific states at the Forum that Australia was seeking to play the role of "regional policemen". Other measures that the Hawke Government adopted as part of its regional diplomacy included upgrading the maritime surveillance system of island states, providing technical and training support for Pacific defence and security forces, increasing Australia's naval movements in the region and supervising more effective coordination of regional defence activities. Camilleri, J (1989) "The Emerging Human Rights Agenda: Australia's Response" Interdisciplinary Peace Research. 1 (1): p.112. Fry, G. (1991) "Australia's Regional Security Doctrine" p.4. Hegarty, D. and Polomka, P. (1989) The Security of Oceania in the 1990s, Vol.1: Views from the Region. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University: Canberra. p.6, 9.


This symbolic "presencing" of the West provided the discursive underpinning for Australia's continued support for US globalism in the 1980s and 1990s. This was clear in the Hawke Government's automatic support for US actions in the Gulf War in which, with neither Cabinet nor public consultation, Hawke pledged Australian forces to the Gulf. This recalled a long expeditionary pattern of showing loyalty to the protector. As Henry Reynolds has noted: "the man who shed tears over bodies in Tiananmen square expressed pride in a campaign which may have well decimated a generation of Iraqi youth". Exemplifying the predominant policy orientation, journalist Greg Sheridan sought to justify complicity in such carnage by advancing the time-honoured argument that "the unique aloneness of Australia's position" meant that it is "overwhelmingly in our interests to maintain the one truly significant alliance we have". Once again, facing a complex, volatile reality that required a sophisticated, thoughtful response, our foreign policy elite reverted to a ritualised invocation of the need to show unquestioned loyalty to distant allies. Instead of pursuing a serious debate, policy-makers privileged a narrow, unreflective provincialism through which Australia was understood as an isolated outpost of Western civilisation rather than an independent member of its own region. That self-understanding was exemplified in the failure of Australian political leaders to notify, let alone consult with, regional governments about Australia's decision to commit forces to the Gulf.

**Realist Narratives in the Post-Cold War Period: The Asia-Pacific as a Marker of Uncertainty**

While policy-makers were preoccupied with the "Soviet threat" in the early 1980s, by the end of the decade reformist elements within the Soviet Union had emerged, culminating in Gorbachev's strategy of *Perestroika* and *Glasnost*. In signalling the end of the Cold War, these developments meant that attempts to reinscribe communism and the Soviet Union as the grand Cold War enemy soon became unsustainable. Within a year of the Hawke Government's hysterical response to Libyan and Soviet activity in the Pacific, the foreign minister was claiming that the presence of hostile powers in South Pacific had disappeared without a trace. Amidst this decline in the threat posed by Cold War enemies, Australian defence planners cast around for alternative sources of danger which posed a potential threat to Australian security. This search for potential threats can be related to the identity requirements of the modern state and the representational practices of statecraft that demarcate a sovereign inside space of identity from an outside space of otherness. As we have seen in this thesis, through fixing the boundaries between

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domestic-foreign, self-other and inside-outside, modern foreign policy functions to fulfil these requirements of modern state identity.

In the absence of a grand Cold War enemy, however, policy-makers have had to draw on an emerging post-Cold war discourse of otherness to secure traditional geopolitical boundaries. This discourse has centred on a myriad of possible threats. Arabs (as in the Gulf War), immigrants, global terrorism, aids, and economic marginalisation have all at various times assumed the figure of otherness in post-Cold War foreign policy. Such othering strategies have departed from the Cold War proclivity to identify specific states as enemies such as in the 1950s and 60s when Indonesia, China and North Vietnam all became markers of the regional threat to Australia. Since the 1986 Dibb Report, defence planners have concluded that there is "no readily identifiable threat of major direct attack" and the most likely threats to Australian security would come from "low level and escalated low level contingencies". While still concerned over China and other traditional military threats, our defence planners have focused on emerging non-military dangers which have become a more common source of insecurity in the post-Cold War period. As the 1994 Defence White Paper, Defending Australia, noted:

...ethnic and national tensions, economic rivalry, disappointed aspirations for prosperity, religious and racial conflict, or other problems could produce an unstable and potentially dangerous strategic situation in Asia and the Pacific over the next 15 years.

The locus of otherness has shifted from the grand enemies of the Cold War to the "spectacle of uncertainty" and the general condition of disorder in the post-Cold War period. In place of an identifiable military threat, a more generalised sense of threat prevails — of boundaries blurred, territories unravelling, and old patterns of geopolitical organisation breaking up. Whilst lacking the parsimony and discursive force of the Cold War fear of an expansionist Soviet Union or China, post-Cold War threat assessments have continued to identify "the Asia-Pacific region" as a marker of otherness and danger. For contemporary policy-makers, therefore, myriad threats "out there in the region" continue to lurk ominously at the edges of Australian territory. The function of this renewed "region as threat" scenario has been to secure the territorial boundaries of the state, through distinguishing "us" from "them" and projecting "our" insecurities onto an external realm of otherness. As a marker of uncertainty and complexity in the post-Cold War period, "the region" has become characterised as a geopolitical "cauldron" from

which a major conflict could soon erupt.26 Policy-makers have become concerned by Chinese military modernisation, growing nationalism and militarism in Japan, rapid economic change across the Pacific, rising protectionism in East Asia, growing "instability" in the South China Sea and the growing "arms race" in Asia.27 The question, however, as to why such discrete and apparently unrelated developments have been categorised within, as it were, a common inventory of regional instabilities is never explained by contemporary defence planners. By tying these troubling developments into a broader Western discourse of otherness, policy-makers have simply assumed that these events are related; that taken together they indicate the threatened and endangered condition of Australia in the Asia-Pacific region.28

By questioning this assumption, my intention is not to suggest that these developments are untroubling — for they surely are. Rather I want to point out that such developments have come to be understood within a narrow discourse in which the spectre of "regional uncertainty" has reinforced Australia's sense of estrangement in the Asia-Pacific region. This sense of estrangement and the defensive response it has given rise to, however, is not the only interpretive option open to policy-makers. In fact, rather than resorting to traditional existential anxieties, policy-makers could develop a less apocalyptic response to so-called "regional instability". That response would recognise that the rapid historical changes experienced recently in Asian and Pacific societies are in fact shared by all societies in an expanding global economy. Such changes represent new opportunities for creative diplomacy, rather than provoking a ritualised turn to old anxieties. In contrast to such open possibilities, Australian defence and security thinking has been characterised by a conditioned policy response which has projected contemporary global problems to a realm outside the state defined as "the region out there".

In reproducing this conditioned Hobbesian response, contemporary policy-makers have drawn upon neorealist narratives of economic decline and the loss of Western global hegemony. I want to briefly discuss the major themes of neorealism and its structuralist bent, particularly concern over the regionalisation of the world economy and the renewal of mercantilist policies which have increased the possibility of future global conflict.29

26 A useful survey of such arguments is provided in Richardson, J.L. (1994) The Asia-Pacific: Geopolitical Cauldron or Regional Community.
28 Exemplary here is the work of Ball and Kerr who provide a neat table listing a range of diffuse unrelated conflicts and tensions in Asia and the Pacific. How, for instance, competing Russian and Japanese claims to Southern Kuril Islands are related to continued fighting between government and rebel forces in Laos is never explained by the authors. Ball, D. and Kerr, P. (1996) Presumptive Engagement: Australia's Asia-Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s. Allen and Unwin: Sydney. p.42.
Advancing the neorealist notion of hegemonic stability, Charles Kindleberger has argued that a single, hegemonic power (i.e. the United States) is necessary for international economic stability, a precondition presently lacking in international politics with the recent emergence of new centres of power (i.e. Japan and East Asia). That has not only demanded painful adjustments among states but also generated the possibility of major conflict including recent tensions between the United States and China.

In advancing this thesis, Kindleberger has argued that during the Cold War the US supplied "public goods" of order and international stability which provided East Asia with the necessary preconditions for development. These costs were borne disproportionately by the hegemon. As the US has declined economically, however, it has become unwilling to bear such costs by tolerating the protectionist industrial policies of East Asian economies. This has signalled a period of rising trade tensions and even potential conflict. Implicit in this neorealist perspective is the desire to re-project US power across the globe and to return to an earlier era of American globalism. Not surprisingly, many neorealists have bemoaned the passing of the Cold War in which the United States was able to impose its will and provide so-called "leadership" in an anarchical world.

Those concerns have been central to contemporary Australian debates on defence, although such debates have been characterised by traditional realism rather than its neorealist variant. This has been exemplified in the work of Paul Dibb, government adviser and Australia's leading defence analyst, who has expressed fears of regional instability in terms of the need to develop "balance of power" mechanisms in Asia. For Dibb, the spectre of "unbridled competition between Asia's Great Powers [could well become] the dominant theme of the 21st Century [in which] there is a danger that the Pacific Age could end in a major Asian war two or three decades hence". In arguing that governments have become "too complacent about security", Dibb's target of criticism is the dominant liberal, multilateral approach of contemporary Australian foreign policy which I discuss in detail in the next chapter. "Neither the market nor the information revolution", Dibb writes, "will resolve ancient enmities, racial hatreds,

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religious bigotry or territorial ambitions". It is only through the "use of the balance of power that we can maintain international order [and prevent Asia] from lapsing into chaos". 35

Far from being international in nature, however, the kind of "order" that Dibb has in mind is an American-centric one. That preference is reflected in the crux of his argument that should a destabilising struggle for power between India, Japan and China take place "only the US can hold the balance of power". As Dibb concludes, "we need a rejuvenated US alliance system in the region". 36 It is at this point that the political project implicit within such realist narratives is disclosed. Order and stability equals US hegemony. The Pacific age is less a cause for celebration than a call to arms — order must be reasserted, American power renewed and Asia put back in its place as the other.

Underpinned by these objectives, Dibb's thesis also draws on, what Edward Said identifies as, a broader discourse of "orientalism" 37 in which Western scholars, colonialists and policy-makers have sought to define and make authoritative statements about "Asia". Through converting the region into an object of knowledge, policy-makers have sought to contain Asia to a space of otherness and ultimately to achieve Western control over it. Dibb's latest work, accordingly, is littered with sweeping generalisations about the character of societies "in Asia". 38 His work reproduces traditional essentialisms about "Asia" as a threat. Thus, invoking a brand of cultural determination, he notes that "the values of the States and individuals in Asia are not as resistant to the idea of war and conflict, and the primacy of the State, as in the democracies of the West". This opposition between West-East, however, is not the product of secure ontological foundations but rather an effect of Dibb's dogmatic attempt to redraw the orientalist boundaries of the past. Significantly, it was the so-called "West", not "Asia", that was "less than resistant to the idea of war" in its development of weapons of mass destruction during the Cold War. That such orientalist arguments can be reproduced by Australia's "leading" defence analyst indicates that the crudest possible expression of Western logocentrism is alive and kicking in Australia in the 1990s.

In fact, this renewal of orientalising strategies has been a major theme of one of the most influential perspectives on post-Cold War politics, Samuel Huntington's "clash of civilisations" thesis. 39 Huntington has argued that, rather than heralding the end of East-West conflict, the post Cold War period will be characterised by an intensification of conflict along major civilisational "fault lines". Applying Huntington's thesis to Australia's regional relations, Owen Harries has claimed that Australia is located on one such "fault line" and thus faces a more severe threat in the future than at any other time in

its history. He argues that, "Australia's strategic isolation from the West will be greater than it is now because for the first time in Australia's history there will be no Western power projecting its power into the region". Harries concludes in foreboding terms that "if Huntington is right in identifying an emerging Confucian-Islamic challenge to the West, Australia is on the edge of the most dangerous "fault-line" in the world — and it is the softest Western target on that line".

The effect of these various contemporary realist narratives of region has been to reinscribe traditional Hobbesian boundaries in Australian foreign policy at a time when transnational forces such as migratory patterns, informational and capital flows and changing economic trajectories are making such boundaries problematic. Contemporary security policy, therefore, is being formulated against a broader disordering/reordering dynamic of postmodernity. Thus, as conventional patterns of political relations increasingly unravel so too are official efforts to sustain and rearticulate these patterns correspondingly increased. Running through contemporary realist narratives, accordingly, is an acute sense of loss of certainty in international relations in which the Cold War is seen in terms of the stability and predictability it once afforded (Western) policy-makers. This chapter now turns to an examination of the ways in which these understandings have been articulated in Australian defence policy through a violent politics of identity.

**Contemporary Policy Articulations: Regional Security and the Violent Reassertion of Sovereign Identity**

Framed via these larger narratives of post-Cold War uncertainty and disorder, contemporary Australian security policy has been characterised by a stress on self-reliance, a rejuvenation of the Western Alliance, a major weapons acquisition program and burgeoning defence cooperation between Australia and the states of Southeast Asia. I will take each of these elements in turn in order to show how they represent interlocking security policies designed to reterritorialise global political space and to secure the territorial boundaries of the Australian state amidst the rupture in the dominant geopolitical ordering of IR signalled by the "end of the Cold War".

The notion that Australia needs to develop an independent, self-reliant defence capability was foreshadowed in the 1970s, although its adoption in official policy did not occur until

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42 Ibid.
the 1987 Defence White Paper. Since that time, self-reliance has become a central element of defence policy. The prevailing definition of "self-reliance" has not, however, led to a more independent Australian stance from its Western allies. On the contrary, it has denoted the development of defence forces with an enhanced technological capacity to meet external military threats within the context of Australia's continuing alliance with the United States. This oxymoronic policy of "self-reliance within the US alliance" has been based on a realisation that Australia can no longer rely solely on US protection to meet its security needs in the Asia-Pacific region. In other words, self-reliance has represented a minor policy modification to Cold War thinking in which Australian defence planners have brought their policies into alignment with the less ambitious regional commitments by the US in the post-Guam doctrine era. As Defence Minister Kim Beazley proudly declared in the late 1980s, "our allies are looking to us to play a larger role in the region as their own resources shrink" and have insisted that we accept "our regional responsibilities". Australia has taken up the slack here as the United States withdraws from Asia — a proud proxy of the Western Alliance.

In continuing to support US power projection into the region, contemporary defence planners remain wedded to old patterns of thinking. Policy-makers have not rethought the fundamental assumptions of Western IR that one might expect with the monumental changes that have occurred with the end of the Cold War. Nor, in the face of growing economic interdependence across the Pacific, have they rejected the sense of existential anxiety and geographical estrangement that has underpinned Australian thinking on international affairs since settlement. Thus, while the Keating Government asserted an independent diplomatic style, the content of its policies sought to maintain Australia's integration into the American global strategic network. The advent of the conservative government of John Howard has marked even closer relations between the US and Australia, evidenced in the planned upgrade of the joint Pine Gap intelligence station and increased military cooperation between Australia and the United States. Such initiatives have signalled a "rejuvenation" of the Western Alliance in the Asia-Pacific region. As in the past, the aim of contemporary diplomacy is to elicit a greater US commitment to the Asia-Pacific in the belief that the United States is a "stabilising force". This move to "rejuvenate" the Western Alliance, however, has not gone uncontested, nor is it unproblematic. Hence, while policy-makers defiantly declare that "the Western association of nations...will remain in place", the mere enunciation of this statement

illustrates the fragility of an identity that was once taken for granted. In reinserting traditional geopolitical identities, contemporary defence planners have been preoccupied with what Bradley Klein has called "the construction and preservation of the West" at a time when this identity is increasingly coming under challenge. As we have already seen, the emergence of other centres of capital accumulation and geopolitical power in the Asia-Pacific has made the traditional framing of Australian identity as an isolated outpost of Western civilisation difficult to sustain. That has led to a fundamental tension in Australian defence and foreign policy between accommodating recent global power shifts through "engaging with the Asia-Pacific", while at the same time as maintaining traditional alliance structures with "the West". Once again, our regional diplomacy can be characterised in terms of its oscillation between realist and liberal approaches, i.e. between a narrative that positions Australian against the region and one that locates Australia in the region.

A product of this (ambiguous) attempt to preserve "the West" as the sovereign locus of Australian identity has been the major weapons acquisition program carried out in the last decade by Australia's defence forces. Announcing a $7 billion ship building program and an upgrade of long-range forces including submarines and F-111 and F/A-18 aircraft's, the 1987 White Paper described the program as "the largest defence capital investment in Australia's peacetime history". As Beazley told an American audience, the weapons program allowed Australia to develop "the technological edge we need to enable less than one percent of the earth's population to guard 12% of its surface".

Based upon a desire for order and control, such claims illustrate the persistence of Cold War patterns of thinking in recent defence policy. Thus, drawing on a traditional military understanding of security conceived as the maintenance of territorial boundaries against external military threats, defence planners have resorted to high-tech weapons to counter perceived threats to Australian security that exist "out there in the region". Once again, a militaristic solution of "strategic denial" is being invoked as a way of securing the boundaries between a sovereign, stable Australia and a dangerous, "uncertain" region. As Christine Sylvester has noted, the latest offering of defence orthodoxy, the 1994 Defence White Paper, parades the "force capabilities" that defence planners are developing to

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tame and bring under control the "new uncertainties" which have emerged recently.\textsuperscript{54} This is where the modernism of Australian defence policy is most visible — evidenced in its taming of uncertainty, its fetish for technology and its celebration of progress to defeat the forces of disorder and recalcitrance, invoked rather ominously as "the region".

By resorting to the technology of organised violence to stave off the uncertainty of post-Cold War politics, defence planners have drawn on traditional realist views of security and IR as a time-honoured struggle for power in an anarchical world. From this realist perspective, the only possible response to contemporary uncertainties is to mobilise the means of organised violence, to acquire a "technological edge" to bring threats under control and to reassert the boundaries that provide the "stability" and "predictability" that policy-makers yearn for. This militaristic response is, however, at odds with the public rationales of contemporary diplomacy to build cooperative international institutions across the Pacific.\textsuperscript{55} As Graeme Cheeseman has pointed out, defence planners are continuing to prepare to defend against a region which our diplomats are seeking to engage with.\textsuperscript{56}

At a time of growing economic interdependence and the globalisation of capital, technology and culture, defence planners are persisting with a traditional realist security agenda that ignores the complexities and multi-layered nature of contemporary insecurity and violence. In pursuing a traditional state-centric security agenda, contemporary policymakers understand the societies of Asia and the Pacific through reductionist representations of reality. Thus, the region continues to be framed via a narrow geostrategic worldview in which as Kim Beazley has candidly declared:

> We do not address the complex texture of political, economic, cultural and social characteristics of our neighbours. On all these subjects we make no judgements: we address only the simple facts of geography, in light of what history tells us about the vulnerabilities of our territory and approaches.\textsuperscript{57}

By reducing the region's complexities to such narrow geopolitical considerations, the defence establishment has continued to pursue instrumental policy interests as the basis for its relations with the outside world. This has been at the expense of a more expansive and meaningful engagement between Australia and the Asia-Pacific. That has been exemplified in the failure of Australian defence planners to deliberate upon the importance of self determination, demilitarisation, decolonisation, inter-cultural exchange, resource destruction and environmental degradation, to name just a few elements of what

\textsuperscript{55} Dalby, S. (1996) "Security Discourse, the ANZUS Alliance and Australian Identity" p.123.
\textsuperscript{57} cited in Cheeseman, G. (1993) \textit{The Search for Self-Reliance} p. 147.
an expanded non-traditional agenda of security policy might look like. To the extent that such issues have been considered at all, they are invoked as "regional uncertainty" and converted into a threat to sovereign boundaries that must be controlled through traditional militaristic means.

This narrow geostrategic worldview — long the basis for Australian defence planning — has also underpinned the other major element of contemporary defence policy: namely, growing defence cooperation between Australia and ASEAN defence forces which since 1989 has burgeoned. For instance, in 1993-94 Australia spent $A229 million on cooperative defence activities in the Asia-Pacific mostly with ASEAN nations, the majority of whom are now more militarily engaged with Australia than any other country including amongst themselves. As Ball and Kerr point out, it will soon be difficult for Singapore and Indonesia to deploy military equipment or forces which have not been maintained or trained in Australia.

Such cooperative initiatives may appear inconsistent with the rest of Australia's contemporary defence posture which, as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, has centred both on preserving close links with the Western alliance and developing technological means to defend against threats coming from the Asia-Pacific region. Yet for contemporary policy-makers, defence cooperation with ASEAN dovetails nicely with the emphasis on bilateral defence relations and military alliances found in existing security policy. Through providing "transparency" and "confidence-building" amongst the region's defence forces, defence cooperation is viewed as contributing to a web of bilateral defence links. This perceived need for defence cooperation has been reinforced by the concern shared among ASEAN, Australia and the United States over an economically emerging and militarily powerful China.

More broadly, the policy of "strategic partnership" with ASEAN has been engendered by the reterritorialising impulses of the state in Australia. While defence planners have declared that Australia's regional security environment is "benign", they have displayed considerable unease and anxiety at the state of general disorder in post-Cold War politics. Struggles for self-determination, religious fundamentalism, growing environmental problems, rising social tensions and economic dislocation throughout Asia have all been viewed with great concern by the defence establishment. In responding to these challenges to sovereign boundaries, policy-makers have engaged in military cooperation

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60 ibid. p.93.
with the sovereign authorities of ASEAN as a way of securing a stable and fixed interstate system across the Pacific.

In their attempts to do so, regional defence planners have formulated the notion of "regional resilience" as the major objective of defence cooperation. The term is borrowed from Indonesian strategic doctrine (Ketahanan Nasional) in which it denotes policies designed to secure the territorial integrity of the Indonesian state through the overwhelming presence of the armed forces throughout the archipelago. Underpinned by this territorial notion of "regional resilience", Australian defence cooperation with ASEAN, like the recent weapons upgrade of contemporary defence forces, functions as a means of staving off the deterrioralising challenges to state identity. In mobilising against the common enemy of disorder and uncertainty, the region's governments have sought to police the rigidly compartmentalised organisation of global political space across the Pacific. That strategy was identified long ago by Hedley Bull as the conspiracy of "the compact of coexistence" between sovereign authorities.63 This is evident in the principle of non-interference in domestic affairs that has formed the basis for ASEAN relations. It is also evident in the secrecy that surrounded the negotiation of the Australia-Indonesia Security agreement. Through conceding that the Treaty would have been unachievable had it been opened up to public debate, Prime Minister Keating confirmed the ways in which state elites have engaged with one another in opposition to elements of civil society viewed as destabilising threats to regional unity and stability. In this context, regional "integration" and "cooperation" does not signal the transcendence of the state; on the contrary, it is the product of the reterritorialising moves of the forces of contemporary statecraft in the Pacific.

These tactics of (re)territorialisation are the product of the broader attempt to create a stable geopolitical order of sovereign states and market economies across the Pacific — the central security objective of Australian foreign policy throughout its history. The pursuit of this goal has, however, been achieved at a terrible cost. In striving for absolute certitude, predicability and security, military strategists have sought to create a neat, rigidly-demarcated grid of stable territorial states. As the history of Western geopolitics has shown, however, there is never a point at which all challenges to modern strategy can be suppressed — a point at which the messy difference and heterogeneity of human reality can perfectly fit the rigid Hobbesian boundaries of modern foreign policy discourse. In seeking to project an idealised image of the inter-state system onto global political space, modern strategy is characterised by a never-ending quest for "security" which always encounters recalcitrant elements that cross established boundaries. The response to this has been the mobilisation of geopolitical violence on a global scale.

This violent geopolitics has been exemplified in Australia's growing defence links with the Soeharto regime, a policy justified on the basis of maintaining regional "order" and

"stability". Indonesia now holds more military exercises with Australia than with any other country, filling the void left by the United States' decision to cut its military training IMET program to Indonesia following the Dili massacre. In conducting training and joint exercises with Indonesia, it is clear that Australia's defence establishment does not share US concerns about human rights concerns, nor its reservations about engaging too closely with a repressive, authoritarian regime. Indeed, far from distancing Australian interests from the Soeharto regime, the development of Australia-Indonesia defence links has reached a highpoint recently with the signing of the Australian-Indonesia Security Agreement.

While for the most part, the agreement serves to simply formalise existing security cooperation between the two countries, Article two calls on the two countries to consult and consider joint measures in the case of "adverse challenges" to either party. This phrasing represents a potentially new level of engagement between Canberra's defence establishment and Jakarta's military leaders. The ambiguity of the term "adverse challenges" has posed the question whether this could lead to the direct engagement of Australian troops in Indonesia to suppress internal opposition and dissent. The Indonesian defence forces have proved themselves more than capable of performing the task unassisted, due partly to military training in Australia. Of greater concern than this unlikely scenario, therefore, is the training of Indonesian military units in Australia which are later used to violently repress internal dissent and secessionist movements in Indonesia, including in East Timor and Irian Jaya where ongoing struggles for self-determination have been met with brutal repression by the Indonesian military. In privileging a narrowly conceived notion of regional "order" and "stability, policy-makers have remained silent on the ethical dilemmas posed by defence cooperation. Characterised by this major policy silence, Australian defence planning has become hitched to the repressive rule of state elites throughout Asia and the Pacific. I will address this subject in more detail in Chapter 7.

Taken together, then, self-reliance, the maintenance of the Western alliance, the high-tech upgrade of Australian defence capabilities and defence cooperation with the region have formed a contemporary strategic orientation designed to reinvoke a sense of order and certainty in Australian foreign policy. In the face of various challenges to the sovereign authority of both the territorial state and Western identity, defence planners have pursued a strategy designed to reterritorialise global political space through a violent reinscription of the traditional boundaries. As I show below, however, this strategy is a problematic one, not least in the ways it has sought to preserve Western identity as the primary reference point for Australia's own identity.

Recalcitrant Encounters: Asianist Discourse and the Continuing Crisis of Representation

Notwithstanding the attempts by contemporary policy-makers to restore the certainties of the past, the crisis of Western geopolitics discernible since the 1970s continues to unsettle and displace the traditional assumptions of Western IR. Australian-Malaysian relations and the periodic tensions that have arisen between the two countries over the last decade provides an instructive case study of the continuing crisis of representation in contemporary foreign policy. This represents as it were a microcosm of the broader contradictions in Australia’s regional diplomacy.

The tensions between the two countries have emerged over a number of issues such as Australian media representations of Malaysia and Paul Keating’s characterisation of the Malaysian Prime Minister Dr. Mahathir as "recalcitrant". These incidents have raised the considerable ire and indignation of Mahathir, whose response can be related to the broader discourse of "Asian values" articulated by East and Southeast Asian policy-making elites. Mahathir has become a leading advocate of this discourse, rallying against the individualistic and "decadent" culture of the West and its media which, according to Mahathir, has represented the postcolonial world in sensationalist and disrespectful ways. In contrast to the decadence of the West and its high crime rates, open sexuality and disintegrating family life, Mahathir ascribes to Asia a common cultural heritage based upon the ethics of hard-work, social integration and family values. Those ethics have been seen as central to the recent economic success of East Asia.

The most obvious dimension of this discourse is that it reverses the identity-making representations of Western IR. Here sovereign identity is ascribed to Asia not Europe as the West becomes othered as abject, dangerous and unstable. Confucianism not Protestant Christianity is the source of the modern work ethic, while the economies of East Asia not the US and Western Europe are the growth centres of the world economy. This reversal of the categories of Western IR offers a counter-vision of modernity by the conservative modernising elites of East Asia who, while promoting high-speed capitalist industrialisation, have sought to ward off the detrimental effects of individualism and materialism that accompanied the industrialisation process in the West. This counter-vision has been based upon an organic view of society in which the state is viewed as a guardian of national community in opposition to the liberal individualism of Western society. That view has been deployed with great domestic political effect by East Asian governments who have naturalised their authoritarian rule through laying claim to a venerable tradition of "authority and hierarchy" in Asian civilisation. By inverting the boundaries between self-other and West-East, East Asian policy-makers have sought, like their counterparts in Western industrialised countries, to reaffirm a strong sense of identity and security in an uncertain world where old patterns of global political relations

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are rapidly unravelling. Thus, both Australian and Malaysian policy elites are attempting, in different ways, to insert themselves into a shifting global network of power.

Far from challenging traditional geopolitics, therefore, Mahathir and others have promoted an identity as equally essentialising as its Western counterpart. In seeking to secure an East Asian identity, Mahathir has come up against the fundamental predicament of postcolonial states — namely, that through their attempts to assert an identity in opposition to the West, postcolonial elites have appropriated the very categories of Western colonialism and foreign policy discourse against which they have sought to position themselves. Not surprisingly, a strident assertion of state sovereignty is the hallmark of Asianist discourse in which an inside space of Identity must be insulated from evil "outside" influences of Western decadence. Thus, while Asianist discourse has offered a counter-vision to Western modernity, the proponents of Asian values have not only reproduced the logocentrism of Western IR but have also embraced its dominant cartography of territorial states and capitalist economies.

The main point that needs to be made here is that, in inverting traditional foreign policy categories, Asianist discourse has served to exacerbate the crisis of representation in Australian foreign policy. This is despite the militaristic attempt to stave off this crisis evidenced in contemporary defence planning discussed above. Thus, Mahathir's promotion of "Asian values" is explicitly designed to contest and make problematic the Western discourse of otherness which has relegated Asia to a space of backwardness and inferiority — in effect turning this discourse on its head. Mahathir's promotion of "Asian identity" has skilfully played on Australian anxieties about closer engagement with the Asia-Pacific as a way of asserting Malaysia's growing awareness of its enhanced economic and political power. This has represented an example of "the colonial other" talking back to, and turning the tables on, the West in its own language. Through challenging traditional representations of Asia as an inferior other, Asianist discourse has problematised the sovereign identity of the West. That was clear in Paul Keating's attack on his Malaysian counterpart for being "recalcitrant" over Mahathir's refusal to attend the Seattle APEC summit. That exemplified the deep-seated anxieties that Western policy-making elites have experienced towards recent shifts in global power relations.

This anxiety can be related to the postmodern condition of contemporary foreign policy. Here we have seen how a sense of crisis and boundaries blurred has prevailed in Australia's foreign relations in which hitherto discrete social spaces have collapsed into one another and the strong sense of "the other" has been replaced with a weak sense of merely others. The effect of such transgressions has not only been "to put institutional

boundaries in doubt but also to deprive an institutional order of stable oppositions.\footnote{Ashley, R.K. and Walker, R.B.J. (1990) "Conclusion: Reading Dissidence/Writing the Discipline: Crisis and the Question of Sovereignty in International Studies" \textit{International Studies Quarterly} 34 (3): p.386.} The statement by former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew that Australia was fast becoming the "white trash of Asia" hit a raw nerve in Australian public discourse because it exacerbated this sense of crisis.\footnote{See article by Ball, W. Macmahon (1979) "Act, or be the Poor Whites of Asia" \textit{The Age} December 10: p.9. "Asia's Trash can Wait: Warning" \textit{The Age} 23 May 1979: p.5.} What was so disturbing about Lee's statement was that it overturned the dominant imaginative cartography through which Australians had understood their place in the world as a wealthy, developed nation in an undeveloped poverty-stricken region. Lee's statement disrupted the privileged sense of Western identity and racial superiority that Australian foreign policy has long been based upon.

These themes are further illuminated in the dispute that arose between the Australia and Malaysia in 1991 over the broadcasting of an Australian drama series \textit{Embassy}. A banal and seemingly innocuous drama series, \textit{Embassy} was set in "an imaginary state somewhere in Southeast Asia called Ragaan" which had many striking similarities with Malaysia. Whilst Mahathir was incensed at the unsympathetic depiction of Ragaan which he saw as a thinly veiled criticism of Malaysian society, Ragaan was as much a composite picture of the Southeast Asian region as it was a specific representation of Malaysia. Indeed, as a country depicted with a military government and large US strategic presence, Ragaan could be said to be more like Thailand than Malaysia. In seeking to capture the region's underlying realities in a pure, distilled form through the depiction of Ragaan, the makers of \textit{Embassy} were in fact invoking the monolithic portrayals of "the region" based upon the dichotomy between Australia/Asia central to Australian thinking on IR. Not surprisingly, the program's depiction of Ragaan was based upon images of an unstable, crisis-ridden and illiberal society in opposition to the stability and democratic nature of Australian society. Such representations amounted to an exemplary form of foreign policy in which the unstable and crisis-ridden Ragaan was represented in opposition to the rational, heroic and stable "Australian self", personified by the portrayal of Australian diplomats and represented spatially in terms of the sovereign territory of the Australian Embassy.

In the ensuing furore over the drama series, however, Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir's reaction and challenge to these crude discursive practices demonstrated that traditional geopolitical boundaries could no longer be accepted in the unproblematic way that they were during the Cold War. In registering a diplomatic protest over the broadcasting of \textit{Embassy}, the Malaysian Government challenged and contested the representational strategies deployed by the makers of \textit{Embassy} who fixed the identity of "Southeast Asia" in terms of otherness and danger. In this sense, the \textit{Embassy} dispute signalled the postmodern moment of contemporary Australian foreign policy in which, as Der Derian and Shapiro have noted:
foundational unities (the autonomous subject, the sovereign state, grand theory) and synthetic oppositions (subject-object, self-other, inside-outside) are undergoing serious and sustained challenges. We are witnessing changes in our international, inter-textual, inter-human relations in which objective reality is displaced by textuality (Dan Quayle cites Tom Clancy to defend anti-satellite weapons); modes of production are supplanted by modes of information (the assembly line workplace shrinks, a computer and media-generated cyberspace expands) representation blurs into simulation (Hollywood and Mr. Smith go to Washington)... With these tectonic shifts new epistemological fault lines develop: the legitimacy of tradition is undermined, the underlying belief in progress fragments, and conventional wisdom is reduced to one of many competing rituals of power used to shore up a shaky society. This is the postmodern moment.  

As a postmodern moment, the Embassy dispute defied the traditional territorial view of international politics. The high politics of IR — of war, security and international diplomacy — were displaced in this dispute by the clash of cultural difference, the dynamics of representational practices, the transnational flow of information and, above all, the power of television. Mahathir's trenchant criticism over Embassy, and the whole Asianist discourse he has articulated, betrayed a deep sense of anxiety on the part of sovereign authorities toward the uncontrollable flows of contemporary life that have increasingly challenged territorial boundaries. Generated by the flows of contemporary electronic communications, the Embassy dispute signalled the ways in which new electronic spaces and "mediascapes" have increasingly come to shape contemporary inter-state politics. New sources of diplomatic conflict centring on cultural representation have emerged recently outside of the conventional spaces of inter-governmental diplomacy.

While these deterritorialising flows call into question old boundaries and demand the formulation of more imaginative and critical perspectives on global political life, the Australian response to the Embassy dispute drew on conventional territorial categories. Accordingly, the debate over the dispute in Australia was dominated by nationalist sentiment in which Foreign Minister Gareth Evans was condemned for his statement of "regret" at the incident. That reaction disclosed the continuing dominance of the realist, state-based framework of Australian thinking on international politics. The major question to emerge within this framework was: "in the context of the power politics of IR was it in the national interest for the Government to have apologised to Malaysia?". Within this highly masculine, gendered and orientalist discourse, the Foreign Minister was accused of "grovelling" to the Malaysians. The hyperbole of this charge (Evans' "regret"

becomes grovelling) and the incredulous question that accompanied it (How could Australia possibly apologise to the Malaysians?) — at the same time that Australia's sycophantic behaviour towards its Great and Powerful friends went unnoted — was infused with Cold War themes of the past. For his part, Foreign Minister Evans' contribution to the debate was limited to a strident denial that he had grovelled and used the "language of apology".

While the realist terms of this debate privileged geopolitical space as the terrain on which the Embassy dispute took place (hence, the focus on the territorial state and national interest), the conflict spilled out of conventional geopolitical boundaries. This has highlighted the paralysis of contemporary policy-makers in comprehending the textual and cultural dimension of global politics. In this sense, the dispute over Embassy became a destabilising event — a moment of *aporia* — in which the conventional categories of foreign policy lost their explanatory power.

This chapter has examined recent attempts to reassert traditional geopolitical boundaries. It has shown how those attempts faltered with the crisis of Western geopolitics after the Vietnam War in which the dominant binary oppositions of the Cold War began to lose their signifying power. In an emerging decentred and postmodern world, contemporary policy-makers have experienced a general sense of drift and events out of control. In response, they have deployed a combination of fragmented strategies and practices designed to stave off crisis by reimposing a sense of order and identity onto the space of "international politics". As we have seen in this chapter, this attempt to reimpose traditional boundaries has taken the form of a militaristic security posture. While this realist orientation has been the major dimension of Australia's contemporary defence and security policies, in the areas of diplomacy and foreign policy, policy-makers have pursued a liberal institutionalist agenda designed to economically engage with the region, the subject of the following chapter.
Chapter 6

Contemporary Foreign Policy II: Globalisation, Liberalism and the Pacific Century.

The Asia-Pacific is our future. We are at a great moment in our history.¹

Our future lies, inevitably, in Australia becoming more and more closely integrated into the region of which we are geographically so inescapably a part.²

In previous chapters, I mapped the larger discursive context of foreign policy after the Vietnam War. I argued that, with the breakdown of Cold War understandings, contemporary Australian foreign policy has been characterised by a crisis of representation. Thus, we saw in Chapter 4 how the capitalist transformation of East and Southeast Asia has overturned existing conceptions of global political space consisting of a Euro-American Centre and a non-Western periphery. That effectively displaced the traditional framing of "the West" as the sovereign locus of Australian identity.

In response to these transformations, policy-makers have sought to reterritorialise global political space and to reassert the territorial cartographies of foreign policy discourse. Hence, in espousing conventional military conceptions of security, contemporary defence planners have attempted to reassert rigid Cold War boundaries between us and them, self and other, West and East and Australia and the region. As we have seen, however, these representations can no longer be secured in the same uncontested and unproblematic way that was once possible. The emergence of Japan and the Asian NICs to economic power, the decolonisation of Asia and the general regional challenge to Western dominance in recent years have disrupted traditional foreign policy understandings which consigned the Asia-Pacific region to a space of otherness. I have characterised this as the postmodern condition of Australian foreign policy.

While Australian defence planners have pursued a violent and inadequate attempt to renew the realist practices of statecraft, recent policy initiatives of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have centred on a liberal agenda of free trade. This has centred on an activist economic diplomacy designed to integrate Australia more fully into the growing economies of the region. The main focus of this chapter is on these liberal policies of regional economic engagement. I argue that, by pursuing a liberal free trade agenda, contemporary foreign policy-makers have attempted to fashion a new

mythological basis for state identity in Australia in response to the various challenges to Cold War thinking. That has involved a shifting definition of region in which the moral, cultural and cartographic boundaries of the region have expanded. The region is no longer represented as an unstable and dangerous "Southeast Asian" other, but rather a dynamic grouping of economies located on the "Pacific Rim". Contemporary policy-makers have effectively reversed Australia's positioning vis-à-vis the region — in the late 20th century imagination of Australian foreign policy, "the region" no longer inhabits the space of an alien dangerous "outside" but rather is identified in terms of Australia's own identity.

This identification of Australia with the Asia-Pacific has been understood as a fundamental break with the past in that it has heralded an "extensive repositioning [and] fundamental rethinking about our place in the world". Such claims, however, implying as they do that Australians have only recently "discovered" Asia, appear disingenuous and partisan against the background of a more nuanced historical understanding. As I have shown throughout this thesis, White Australia has grappled with its "Asian" location since settlement, while cultural exchanges between the people of Asian societies and Australia have taken place for hundreds of years. Furthermore, to imply that prevailing policies of regional engagement are a novel development is to deny one of the most obvious realities of post-War Australian society: namely, that post-war economic growth was sustained by trade with Asian countries, particularly the insatiable demand for Australian primary products in Japan.

This chapter rejects such inflated claims about Australia's contemporary regional engagement. It argues that while the emergence of the Asian NICs to the status of economic miracles has effectively overturned existing cartographies, policy-makers continue to imagine "the region" through the conventional liberal and realist lenses of the Western IR. Thus, while a realist view of the region persists in Australian defence planning, contemporary foreign policy has been characterised by a liberal discourse preoccupied with the "rise of Asia-Pacific economies" and the possibilities for regional engagement that flow from this. Coupled with contemporary realist defence policies, therefore, regional engagement represents a reproduction of the traditional analytics of foreign policy. Such continuities have been exemplified in the narrow strategic and trade interests that continue to drive regional policy.

In fleshing out these arguments, I turn to a discussion below of the ways in which contemporary regional diplomacy has been framed via a larger narrative on the rise of the

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Liberal Foreign Policy in the 1990s

Pacific Century. As in the earlier parts of this work, my aim is to relate Australia’s contemporary policy framework to the broader stories and discourses that sustain and lend coherence to modern political life. In doing so, I examine how recent governments have sought to refashion Australian identity in terms of this narrative. Here we shall how the forces of postmodernism and global capitalist development have given rise to new regional and global cartographies and new kinds of discourse. Far from pursuing new policy directions, however, contemporary diplomats and policy-makers have adopted a free trade agenda as narrowly-based as Cold War policies. In reducing regional engagement to this narrow geoeconomic agenda, I argue that recent Australian governments have passed up the opportunity to pursue a more far-reaching engagement with the diverse cultures and peoples of Asia and the Pacific. The final part of this chapter discusses the concrete implications of this through an examination of the multilateral activist diplomacy that policy-makers have deployed in recent years as a strategy of securing increased market share in a globalising economy.

Celebrating the Pacific Century

The Asia-Pacific region has become a central category in recent academic and popular discourse. Debates in geography, economics, IR and development studies have all heralded the economic miracle of the region and the so-called dawning of the “Pacific Century”. Signalling a post-Cold War teleology, recent claims about the “Pacific Century” have effectively come to replace the notion of an American Century central to Cold War thinking. Here political leaders and policy-academics have latched onto the so-called regional economic miracle to reassert faith in what Jurgen Habermas has called "the incomplete project of modernity". In response to the challenges of postmodernity (see Chapter 4), contemporary policy-makers have sought to restore the modernising project. With the demise of "the West" as the centre of History and identity, the grand narratives of progress that characterised Enlightenment thought have been renewed in post-Cold War discourse in the form of celebrating "the Pacific Century". This celebration has heralded the end of Western global primacy and the emergence of Pacific countries to the ranks of advanced capitalist states. In fact, the imagery of Asia-Pacific regionalism is replete with this kind of Atlantic-to-Pacific, Europe-to-Asia, West-to-East metaphor. According to an article in The Economist, for instance, "about fifty-odd

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countries now grouped around the Pacific Ocean...[have taken] the torch of leadership from those hitherto grouped around the Atlantic".6 Drawing on a similar trope, the authors of a best-selling book entitled Megatrends 2000 have claimed that, "the Pacific Rim is emerging like a dynamic young America but on a much grander scale".7

Such representations have neither gone uncontested, nor are they undifferentiated. In fact, rather than representing a stable and unproblematic identity, the "Asia-Pacific" has become a site of contestation and appropriation. In promoting varying accounts of the region’s rapid economic growth, modernising elites have sought to claim the region in line with their own political and commercial agendas. This is clear in the differences between an emerging Asianist discourse (discussed in the previous chapter) and a free-market explanation of the rise of the Asian NICs. While the former relates the growth of East Asian economies to the apparent communitarian values of Asian culture, the latter understands the economic development of the region in terms of the well worn path of capitalist industrialisation.8 These explanations reflect a broader struggle over meaning among policy and commercial elites across the Pacific who have sought to insert the region into contending discourses in order to advance their own interests.

For Australian policy-makers, the region’s economic growth has represented an affirmation of the free market model. This has been exemplified in Ross Garnaut’s official report Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy which explained the economic success of Northeast Asia in terms of liberalised free trade and the "major role of the market in the allocation of goods, services and productive resources".9 As a model of free market progress, Garnaut invoked the rise of Northeast Asia as an example of the efficacy of modern technology and science. Not surprisingly, futurologists such as Alvin Toffler and John Naisbitt have been at the forefront of promoting a similar image of Asia-

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Pacific development as reinvigorating our faith in the promise of modernity and its teleologies of human reason and progress. Toffler has taken on cult status in places like Malaysia and China where in 1983 as a personal guest of the Chinese Premier, lectured to the prestigious Chinese Academy of Social Sciences in which, according to one participant, "he was listened to as if he were an oracle".10

In promoting this neoliberal discourse of free market economics, contemporary policymakers have framed the Asia-Pacific via a broader post-Cold War remapping following the unravelling of traditional Western geopolitics. The most salient feature of this emerging cartography has been the global expansion of capitalism. Thus, by defining the region in terms of the expansive boundaries of the "Asia-Pacific" — a definition that covers nearly 50% of the world's surface — contemporary policymakers have promoted a more fluid imaginary of flows and capital movements than Cold War discourse. Based upon the "deterritorialising power" of the Pacific Ocean whose "circumference is everywhere and centre nowhere", the "Asia-Pacific" implies a despatialised imagination of open markets and global capital.11

In remapping the region in these terms, policymakers have responded to an emerging regional economy in which multiple centres of capital accumulation and economic control are based in the region's major metropoles, from Tokyo to Los Angeles, Singapore to Hong Kong, and Sydney to Bangkok. No longer cohering around the simple centre/periphery axis of Cold War geopolitics, the decentralised nature of this regional political economy has been characterised by a series of complex, overlapping subcontracting networks that run throughout the region in a chain-like fashion.12 Emanating from Tokyo rather than Europe or North America, the expansion of these transnational networks was initially fuelled by the internationalisation of the Japanese economy from the 1970s. That process involved Japanese firms relocating production sites to South Korea and Taiwan in an attempt to escape rising domestic costs by exploiting favourable wage differentials in East Asian countries.13 This move was soon replicated by Taiwanese and South Korean corporations which relocated production off-shore to further cut costs. That precipitated a massive extension of multilateral subcontracting networks throughout

East and Southeast Asia, particularly into the special economic zones set up along coastal China.\textsuperscript{14}

This movement of capital has represented a transnational regionalising strategy in which East Asian and, to a lesser extent, American multinational corporations have used East and Southeast Asian countries as an export platform to maintain global competitiveness. In promoting rapid economic growth through export-oriented development strategies, East Asian states have competed with one another to attract foreign investment by providing the low-wage, high-profit conditions conducive to the relocation of transnational production.\textsuperscript{15} This new international division of labour has facilitated a shift in global production from Western industrialised countries to East and Southeast Asia. It has also led an emerging transformation in the structure of production itself to a post-Fordist system of industrial organisation.\textsuperscript{16}

Viewed in these wide-ranging terms, current policy debates on the Pacific century represent less a neutral, objective explanation of regional economic growth than they are a product of the broader imaginative cartography that sustains contemporary globalising forces. The sheer scope and extent of such globalising forces, identified by Susan Strange with an emerging "business civilisation"\textsuperscript{17}, has represented a pervasive penetration of capital into all corners of the globe and the Unconscious. As Steven Gill has noted, "capitalism is once again spreading as the predominant form of socio-economic organisation, not only across states, but also within states as marketisation and commoditisation deepens its social and geographical reach".\textsuperscript{18} The production of space known as the "Asia-Pacific" is symptomatic of the global expansion of capitalism as "the region" has become reduced to an homogenised zone of transnational capital flows and economic exchange.\textsuperscript{19} Thus, characterised by the World Bank as a "miracle economy"\textsuperscript{20}, the Asia-Pacific region has become reified by modernising elites who seek to fashion the region in their own image and universalise their own interests.

In reducing the region to such narrow geoeconomic images, recent policy debates have been characterised by a shift from the geopolitics of the Cold War to the geoecnomics

\begin{thebibliography}{9}
\bibitem{}14 Ibid. p.13.
\end{thebibliography}
of transnational capitalism and industrial competitiveness. As we have seen in the
foregoing chapters, during the period of European colonialism, the region became
conceptualised as the "Far East", a strictly geopolitical labelling that denoted the
positioning of the region on the periphery and the primacy of Europe as Centre. During
the Cold War, Western policy-makers divided the region into "Southeast Asia", "East
Asia", "South Asia" and the "Southwest Pacific". Southeast Asia became reduced here to
a Cold War battlefield in which Asia's falling dominos were seen as vulnerable to
communist expansionism.

With the shift from Cold War geopolitics to contemporary geoeconomics, policy-makers
have reversed the representations of the region produced by their Cold War predecessors.
Far from representing a dangerous unstable other, the region now connotes a
transnational space linking both sides of the Pacific. Connecting the growing economies
of East Asia and the US, "the Asia-Pacific" exemplifies the incorporating logic of global
capitalism and its imaginative geography of inclusivity and oneness. The aim of this liberal
discourse and its dominant geography is domestication. At stake in the celebration of the
Pacific century, accordingly, is the projection of the constitutive features of identity onto
a space labelled "the region". The Asia-Pacific acts as a mirror as modernity reinvents
itself in the form of an economic miracle, holding out the promise that everything will be
all right against the background of flux, crisis and transformation. "Development" not
underdevelopment, "modernisation" not "backwardness", are the dominant processes that
characterise "the region" today. In representing the region through such geoeconomic
images, contemporary policy-makers have adopted equally reductionist and narrowly-
conceived understandings as those espoused in Cold War thinking. In so doing, they
merely replaced the strategic reductionism of the Cold War with a brand of post-Cold
War economic reductionism.

From the geopolitics of high modernity to the geoeconomics of postmodernity, from
regional other to regional self and from Cold War bipolarity to the deterritorialised
imagination of transnational liberalism — these shifts have all amounted to a post-Cold
War reframing of foreign policy. This has represented a response to the challenges that
have destabilised and disrupted the dominant regional and global cartographies of
Western geopolitics. State identity is no longer secured through the rigidly demarcated
boundaries of national economies but rather revolves around multiple niche markets.21
The erosion of state's boundaries is part of a more pervasive condition of contemporary
political life that has entailed the decentring of political authority. Giving rise to new
topographies, the forces of globalisation and postmodernism are reconstructing the world
order as we experience it.22 Against this background, new stories and mythologies have
been invented and old narratives reworked and renewed in order to continue to do
business, to mobilise capital, to elicit loyalty to the state — in short, to sustain the

22 Ibid.
dominant identities of global capitalism and statecraft that resonate in contemporary life. It is within this broader context that the Pacific century has been celebrated and, in turn, that the erasures and reconstructions of contemporary foreign policy can be situated.

**Australia in the Pacific Century: Neoliberalism and the Ambiguous Reframing of Identity**

The end of the Cold War and the crisis of Western geopolitics has unhinged the dominant moorings of Australian identity in Anglo-Saxon culture. In the words of one scholar, Australia has become a "continent adrift". This unhinging of Australian identity has not only signalled the end of certitude of Cold War thinking but has also led to a fundamental ambiguity at the heart of contemporary foreign policy — an ambiguity relating to the postmodern condition of contemporary social life. Thus, while policy-makers have continued to cling to the Western Alliance, they have also sought refocus Australia's foreign policy toward the region. Thus, while ritual incantations continue to reverberate about "the Western community", powerful forces are pulling the state away from these traditional moorings. As one writer pointed out in the late 1980s, a shift from West to East has taken place in which:

of the 25 largest banks in the world 17 are now Japanese, the first US bank is ranked 28th. The Tokyo stock exchange- once one-fifth the size of its New York counterpart is now the equal of New York, London, Frankfurt, Paris and the Toronto Stock Exchange put together. 24

This shift has amplified the anxiety about place that has long animated Australian thinking about international affairs. The sense of being at "home" in the region has become an urgent theme of contemporary foreign policy, as diplomats and policy-makers seek to come to terms with the shifting locus of power in global politics. Thus, driven by a deep-seated sense of isolation, contemporary policy-makers have insisted that Australia must become a part of the region amidst fears of being left out of an emerging power bloc with the regionalisation of the global economy. These anxieties are not unconnected to the contradictory nature of the times. The globalising forces which have dominated contemporary life have unleashed forces of both universalisation and fragmentation. 25 While centrifugal processes are experienced as a loss of centre and a fragmentation of identity, globalisation entails the universalisation of a capitalist consumer culture.

How, then, against this backdrop of great flux and transformation, have the boundaries of the modern Australian state been reproduced and secured? How, that is, have policymakers reconstituted Australian identity in terms of the prevailing geopolitical,
geoeconomic and geocultural realignments of global politics in the late 20th Century? And, what are the new totalising narratives and discourses that serve to sustain such fundamental realignments?

As I have indicated above, the dominant response by Australian policy-makers to these challenges has been to seek to engage more fully with the Asia-Pacific region. Signalling a reformulation of the spatial imaginary of Australian diplomacy, policy-makers now appropriate the region as "self", by increasingly defining Australia's place in the world as being an Asia-Pacific nation. This "repositioning" of Australia in the world seeks to attach Australian trade prospects to the rapidly growing economies of East Asia and, to a lesser extent, the ASEAN countries.

In seeking to achieve this objective, contemporary governments have vigorously pursued a reformist agenda of domestic economic restructuring in Australia. That has centred on "micro-economic reform" aimed at "opening" the economy to international capital and trade through floating the dollar, deregulation, the lifting of restrictions on foreign capital and the lowering of protection. This has represented a general shift in policy away from the protectionist practices of the past to a neoliberal agenda of "internationalising" society and state in Australia in an effort to integrate more fully into an emerging global economy.

This was exemplified in the early 1990s with the "Garnaut Report" which explicitly linked, what Garnaut referred to as, "the economic dynamism of Northeast Asia" with the need for "domestic reform" of the Australian economy. In particular, Garnaut drew on the stark imagery of economic decline in which, to use Paul Keating's evocative turn of phrase, Australia was in danger of becoming a "Banana Republic". Juxtaposed against such dire forecasts, the Asian NICs were looked upon as a possible economic saviour as

a recession-hit Australia found itself in the midst of "a regional sea of hyper-growth". 32 The need to integrate with the booming economies of the region became related to Australia's tenuous survival in the modern world economy. That linkage led to the emergence of a new threat scenario in foreign policy centring on the theme of economic marginalisation which has been invoked by Garnaut and others to push through a neoliberal agenda of unilateral trade liberalisation. Drawing on this theme of economic marginalisation, the Garnaut Report argued that in line with the:

shift in the world's economic centre of gravity towards East Asia...Australia needs to press ahead with trade liberalisation, towards the abolition of all official restrictions in trade imposed at Australia's borders by the end of the century." 33

In proposing as much, Garnaut was essentially issuing a challenge to the Government to commit itself to a "drastic" program of micro-economic reform and a radical neoliberal course of unilateral tariff reductions. 34 In continuing to argue this case throughout the 1990s, Garnaut has promoted an almost evangelistic view of the benefits of "the market" while all but ignoring the potential costs of unilaterally reducing tariffs, particularly the potential loss in both domestic employment and diplomatic leverage in trade negotiations. 35 Relying upon an orthodox free market account, Garnaut explained East Asia's economic success in terms of high saving rates, high levels of investment and significant productivity growth. That explanation, however, has fundamentally misrepresented the nature of recent development in the Asia-Pacific where the state has played a crucial role in high-speed export-oriented industrialisation (EOI). 36 As indicated above, the pursuit of such rapid-growth EOI polices has been undergirded by a particular geopolitical order based upon the repressive rule of regional state elites which has provided the conditions conducive to the transnational relocation of capital. I address the implications of this in more detail in the following chapter. Suffice to say here, in adopting a narrow free market model, Australian policy-makers have ignored the different developmental experiences of countries like Indonesia where "organic" notions of community and statehood have prevailed. 37

32 Ibid.
The neoliberal agenda advanced by Garnaut has not only shaped domestic economic policy but has also dominated contemporary foreign policy. That is clear in the main objective of contemporary diplomacy which has centred on securing export markets for Australian goods in an increasingly competitive global economy. The primacy of trade goals in contemporary foreign policy was facilitated by the amalgamation of the Departments of Trade and Foreign Affairs in 1987. Austrade was also relocated into the new amalgamated department and its activities were integrated into Australian diplomatic missions abroad. According to Grant and Evans, this restructuring has enhanced "[o]ur capacity to target and penetrate export markets" as one of the main objectives of Austrade has been to develop an export culture among Australian business.38 According to prevailing orthodoxy, this will make Australian business more competitive and integrate Australia economically into the region. This has been part of the broader restructuring of the Australian state in which the traditional welfare structures of the social democratic state have been dismantled in the last decade. In the view of many scholars, that has made Australia the quintessential neoliberal state.39 Indeed, the recent restructuring of Australia's diplomatic machinery can be seen as representing a broader corporatisation of contemporary foreign policy.

Preoccupied with this search for export markets in Asia, foreign policy has become rationalised in terms of the utilitarian principle of neoliberal doctrine, in which, as Clive Hamilton has suggested, "a thing is right if the net economic benefits are positive, and wrong if they are not".40 Neoliberalism presupposes a static essentialised human nature in which people become reduced to utility and profit maximisers who respond rationally and efficiently to correct market signals.41 This assumption leads to the belief that unfettered markets will produce rational behaviour which reflect market signals based on principles of scarcity and choice.42 In their preoccupation with this narrow idealised conception of the market, contemporary policy-makers have adopted understandings of the region abstracted from the everyday social relations of peoples across the Pacific. This has meant that objectives other than market integration such as humanitarianism have been subordinated to trade-based interests or what Gareth Evans has explained as "the

42 Ibid.
economic imperative driving Australian policy". This has been clear in Australia's regional human rights diplomacy in which successive governments have pursued a softly-softly approach to gross human rights throughout the region in order to protect commercial interests.

These broader restructuring processes have not been unique to Australia. In fact, they have had a major impact on the very nature of international relations. Thus, the traditional struggle over territory waged during the Cold War has been transformed into a focus on competition over market share in the global economy. With the emergence of this global economy, promoting export competitiveness has become a crucial function of the modern state as governments have sought to maintain legitimacy by staving off crisis and keeping national incomes rising. Industrial policy has in this way become a primary component of foreign policy. Robert Cox has made the argument well:

Since the mid-70s demise of Bretton Woods, a new doctrine has achieved preeminence: states must become the instruments for adjusting national economic activities to the exigencies of the global economy — states are becoming transmission belts from the global into the national economic spheres. Adjustment to global competitiveness is the new categorical imperative.

These changes have engendered what Cox has termed the "internationalisation" of the state in which certain "outward-looking" state agencies have become pre-eminent. More traditional ministries of national capitalism built up in the context of national corporatism have been subordinated to these new internationalised departments which have developed to adjust domestic economic interests and political structures to the global economy. While Cox is concerned with the general neoliberal trend which has occurred across the globe recently, his argument fits the specific restructuring of the Australian state in the 1980s and 1990s. In particular, the merging of the Departments of Trade and Foreign Affairs exemplifies Cox's notion of the "internationalisation" of the state in which the formulation of foreign policy has become tied to trading interests and securing global market share.


46 Ibid.


48 Ibid.

Against this background of global restructuring, contemporary state elites have sought to redefine their role amidst the unravelling of territorality as the primary organising principle of IR in the modern period. This has been exemplified in the rise of regionalism recently. Thus, driven by the process of internationalisation, states have cooperated within broader regional free trade organisations to create integrated economic spaces within which global capitalism can flourish, particularly, in facilitating flows of capital and technology across national boundaries. While that has represented a breakdown in the traditional territorial boundaries of the state, however, regionalism does not signal the end of state sovereignty. Rather, what we are witnessing today is the de-coupling of sovereignty from territorality in which state elites have engaged in transnational cooperation through regional arrangements as a way of renewing, rather than relinquishing, sovereign authority. That has placed state interests at the centre of current transformations. As G. John Ikenberry has noted, the building of supranational regional bodies amounts to a pooling of sovereignty which may actually create more (not less) state control over trade and other flows.

This form of state-directed regionalism has been particularly prevalent in the Asia-Pacific where attempts to institutionalise a binding regime of regional trading arrangements such as in Europe have been resisted and where states have been central to developing regionalist structures. In this sense, the growth of regionalism can been understood in terms of a larger institutionalist agenda. This has involved growing networks of state elites, international institutions and transnational capital which have developed emerging institutional mechanisms designed to regulate and control the deterritorialising world economy. Representing a response to the powerful deterritorialising forces unleashed by globalisation, this liberal institutionalist agenda has engendered the formulation of new spatial practices that both police and regulate global capitalism and subject populations to the discipline of market forces. Underpinned by this (re)ordering impulse, "Australia's engagement with the Asia-Pacific" has combined a neoliberal free trade agenda with an activist multilateral regional diplomacy. By pursuing this multilateral diplomacy, policy-makers have sought to institutionalise free trade structures across the Pacific in order to facilitate and regulate state sanctioned flows of capital and technology. In the remaining part of this chapter, I discuss in more detail this activist multilateral regional diplomacy and its broader reordering agenda. I argue that this diplomacy continues to promote dominant trade and strategic relations while marginalising large

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sections of people and groups who remain outside of the dominant circuits of power across the Pacific.

**Liberal Institutionalism and Australia's Regionalist Diplomacy**

The central theme of Australian foreign policy recently has been an activist "middlepower" regionalist diplomacy. Former foreign minister Gareth Evans has been the most articulate advocate of this approach. He has argued that Australia is best served by a strategy of niche diplomacy aimed at strengthening multilateral trade and cooperative inter-state relations through coalitions with like-minded governments. For Evans, such a strategy is apposite for small and middle ranking countries like Australia which possess limited military capabilities and which require international adherence to "the rules of the game". By showing "intellectual leadership", middle powers such as Australia can buttress liberal international institutions against the forces of disorder and power politics and thus exercise a level of influence far beyond their capabilities.

Through pursuing this diplomatic strategy, contemporary policy-makers have sought to develop a multilateral trading regime across the Pacific as a counter to the possibility of a resurgence of protectionist trade blocs. According to Evans, the development of trade blocs would be catastrophic for a heavily dependent trading country like Australia. In initiating multilateral trade reform, policy-makers have sought to free up international markets which, they argue, will increase the opportunities to develop export markets for Australian goods in the burgeoning economies of the Asia-Pacific. Hence, the regionalist strategy promoted by recent governments has been based upon the notion of "open regionalism" — a non-discriminatory trading area consistent with the globalist guidelines of the newly-formed World Trade Organisation and designed explicitly as a mechanism to pre-empt any move toward regional trading blocs. Open regionalism has formed the basis for Australia's promotion of APEC which has been characterised by a broader neoliberal agenda of unilateral trade liberalisation, tariff reductions and trade facilitation.

In adopting this free trade multilateral diplomacy, contemporary policy-makers have introduced an increasingly managerial and technocratic approach into Australian foreign policy recently. As a response to the "turbulence" and "disorder" of post-Cold War politics, this technocratic foreign policy has been underpinned by the theme of geopolitical order and control. As Richard Leaver has pointed out, the desire expressed in Australia's (hyper)activist diplomacy to "shape the environment" and exercise "leadership" in order to "manage change" tends to map out in advance an agenda of mastery, control and regional hegemony. This (re)ordering impulse has been articulated

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54 The main proponent of "open regionalism" has been ANU economist Peter Drydale. See his (1991) *Open Regionalism: A Key to East Asia's Economic Future?* Pacific Economic Papers. No. 197, Australia-Japan Research Centre, Australian National University: Canberra.

in what Nancy Viviani has characterised as the "Grand Design" of Australia's multilateral diplomacy.\(^{56}\)

In promoting this broader agenda of control, policy-makers have contributed to the prevailing image in the region of Australia as an anxious and overbearing proxy of the Western alliance. Thus, many policy-makers in the region have viewed Australia's recent promotion of a free trade agenda as a policy designed to benefit the richer economies of the region at the expense of developing countries. These elites have been less enthused about lowering industrial protection and other trade barriers central to the region's economic growth. As one Philippine scholar has bitterly noted, the idea of an Asia-Pacific community is "a baby whose putative parents are Japanese and American and whose midwife is Australian".\(^{57}\) In pushing stridently for strict deadlines for liberalisation within APEC — in contrast to the preference for non-binding agreements by many Asian governments — Australian diplomacy has been seen as a surrogate for the United States and Japan and their attempts to integrate East Asian economies into a free trade regional economy dominated by American and Japanese interests.\(^{58}\)

Australia's engagement policies have become characterised, accordingly, by a liberal instrumentalist view of "cooperation" in which Australia's regional engagement has been constituted by a technical interest in trade and securing export markets. The Garnaut Report, for instance, called for Australians to "achieve mastery in Northeast Asian languages, economics, politics and other subjects".\(^{59}\) That appeal was framed within a broader argument about the need to develop a knowledge-base "to allow Australian enterprises to make the most of commercial opportunities" flowing from the economic growth of the region.\(^{60}\) In this sense, regional engagement implies market access not cultural exchange, while restructuring denotes market integration, not a fundamental questioning of the assumptions that have generated Australian policy. This narrow agenda of regional engagement resonates with the traditional liberal image of the Asia-Pacific as a huge untapped market for Australian exports. By adopting this cargo cult mentality, contemporary policy-makers have sought to "cash in" on the region's recent economic growth through integrating Australian economic interests East Asia. That has involved an instrumentalist definition of cooperation in which policy objectives have become subordinated to an interest in control and economic gain.

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\(^{59}\) Garnaut, R. (1990) *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy* p.7. The way this theme of "the need to know the region" has been tied into narrowly-based trading and strategic interests can also be discerned in a range of emerging Government publications urging Australians to get to know Asia. See for instance, Asia in Australia Council (1995) *The Way to Go: Culture, Language and Australian Business in Asia.* Australian Government Publishing Service: Canberra.

These themes of control and economic self-interest are central to the "architectonic" objectives that have dominated Australia's APEC diplomacy. Through a form of institutionalised multilateralism, contemporary diplomats and policy-makers have sought to "fashion" a new "architecture" for the Asia-Pacific region in order to maintain a stable geopolitical order of market economies and territorial states across the Pacific.\(^{61}\)

Preoccupied with this architectonic project, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) has recently engaged in a mapping exercise of "the East Asian Hemisphere" in which Australia was placed at the centre of "the region" around which East Asian and Southeast Asian countries revolved.\(^{62}\) By producing such cartographic representations, DFAT has sought to imaginatively realign Australia's strategic and economic interests to the rising centres of power in the Asia-Pacific. That has amounted to an attempt by policy-makers to reterritorialise Australian identity within a broader regional order — i.e. to reanchor a "continent adrift" in terms of what Evans has called the "geometrical" or "geographical" reference point of the East Asian Hemisphere.\(^{63}\)

It is via this multilateral regionalist diplomacy that the dominant security and trade agendas of foreign policy have converged. Hence, in their promotion of APEC, Australian policy-makers have sought not only to advance greater regional trade liberalisation but also to enhance Australian security interests through keeping the US engaged in the region. As Paul Keating has suggested, "APEC helps to lock the US economic and commercial interests in the region, which in turn helps to ensure US strategic engagement. It provides a framework to help contain or manage competition between China, Japan, and the US".\(^{64}\) By advancing this view of APEC, policy-makers have attempted to fashion APEC into a regulatory instrument for "managing" the realignment of regional relations in the post-Cold War era. For Australia, this has entailed reconciling the political and cultural disjunction between its major East Asian trading partners and its major strategic ally, the United States. Hence, policy-makers have recently promoted the view of APEC's role as "a bridge across the Pacific, counteracting the continuing tendency toward economic division between the US and Japan, and the US and China".\(^{65}\) Defined in these far-reaching terms, Australia's APEC diplomacy has


\(^{63}\) Evans, G. (1995) "Australia in East Asia and the Asia-Pacific" p.112.


Liberal Foreign Policy in the 1990s

amounted to an attempt to apply a "spatial fix" to the accelerations and transformations that characterise contemporary diplomacy. It is here that Australia's neoliberal trade diplomacy has converged with the broader security goals of contemporary defence planning. In other words, realist power politics is central to the neoliberal agenda of free trade and globalisation and its attempt to construct a regional order on the basis of the values and norms of "market civilisation".

The preoccupation of policy-makers with this multilateral agenda has signalled a depoliticisation of contemporary foreign policy. Technical questions of international trade have come to dominate the foreign affairs agenda. This has given rise to a network of trade advisers and experts on "Pacific cooperation" who have exerted considerable influence over the decision-making process. In a recent survey, Richard Higgott has noted that the process of Pacific cooperation has been the preserve of a small network of practitioners, policy analysts and professionals who share a positivist problem-solving worldview based upon the normative framework of neo-classical economics. What binds this transnational elite together is a shared commitment to the promotion of economic growth through the development of global liberal institutions directed at the minimisation of trade reducing or trade distorting measures. An example of one such network is the Pacific Economic Cooperation Council (PECC), which has laid much of the groundwork for APEC and which constitutes a Trans-Pacific council organised in a tripartite structure of academics, government officials and business representatives.

As part of an entire stratum of trade and foreign policy professionals, PECC can be seen in terms of a broader range of multilateral networks which have emerged across the globe recently, including the G3, G7, WTO, the IMF, the World Bank and APEC. These networks have, in their various ways, become key coordinating institutions of the global economy. What binds the functionaries of such institutions together is a shared commitment to market ideology and a growing recognition that territoriality alone will not secure the basis for geopolitical order.

Driven by this elite community of experts, contemporary Asia-Pacific regionalism has been characterised by its lack of democratic accountability to the peoples of Asian and Pacific societies. Constituting a series of meetings of officials who work behind the scenes, the APEC process represents, according to one scholar, "the most anti-
Liberal Foreign Policy in the 1990s

Representing a microcosm of the APEC process, Australia’s regionalist diplomacy has been based upon a trade-driven foreign policy far removed from popular demands and democratic accountability. Thus, as Richard Leaver has observed in respect to the Garnaut Report:

Democracy is approached with the utmost caution and short-circuited wherever possible by channelling economic diplomacy through elite circles. It is, therefore, no coincidence that the Garnaut Report concerns the ways and means to confine the conduct of economic diplomacy to a small circle of "professionals." 71

Characteristic by this absence of democratic forms of decision-making, Australia’s multilateral diplomacy can be understood in terms of a broader rationalisation of contemporary political life. That has involved the universalisation of Western instrumental forms of knowledge, exemplified in the promotion of market forces and market ideology by the policy-networks of Pacific Cooperation. These rationalising processes can be discerned in Australian foreign policy through the reductionist conception of the Asia-Pacific that our policy-makers and diplomats continue to espouse. Hence, for the architect of Australia’s recent diplomacy, Gareth Evans, the Asia-Pacific represents:

A region which is probably the most committed of all regions to trade liberalisation. The economies of the region have also become increasingly linked. As a process of "shifting complementarities" works its way through the region, the pattern of regional trade and investment, the direction of technological flows and inter-linkages in sectors such as tourism, have all combined to produce a regional economic map criss-crossed with the ties of interdependence. 72

Through conceiving of the region as a series of "shifting complementarities" of trade and technological flows, Evans has reduced the cultural richness and diversity of Asian and Pacific societies to narrow geoeconomic images. Underpinning these images is the notion of convergence advanced by Evans who claims that "the most obvious force working to bring the Asia-Pacific together is economic self-interest". 73 "Countries of very different backgrounds", he claims, "are developing — under the particular impact of modern communications technology — information bases, practices, institutions, tastes and outlooks that are ever more similar". 74 For Evans, then, the convergence of different cultures and societies across the Asia-Pacific means that "as the battlefields of yesterday

74 Ibid.
turn into the marketplaces of today and tomorrow questions of cultural and social identity become less dominant". 

In reducing "the region" to merely a marketplace, Evans has promoted a vision of a future Asia-Pacific community in which corporate capitalism represents the basis of global civilisation and in which questions of language, culture, history and gender become irrelevant in the march toward homogenisation. In this vision, social and economic life becomes refracted through the prism of the market, a move that excludes the broader ethical, cultural and human dimensions of the Asia-Pacific from analytical attention. Far from representing a benign process of "development" and "modernisation", therefore, "convergence" signals a growing confluence among socialised regional elites in promoting the dominant forces of statecraft and global capitalism hegemonic in contemporary political life. Left out of the visions of policy-makers such as Evans are regional identities and realities that exist outside of the dominant circuits of economic and strategic power. Imagined via the neoliberal modes of post-Cold War foreign policy, then, the "Asia-Pacific" represents a space inhabited by state, capitalist and professional elites tied together within a web of transnational networks of strategic and economic power. Within this space, Canberra is closer to Tokyo than it is to the slums of Sydney’s Kings Cross or the rural hinterland of outback New South Wales. Representing a kind of new Asian-Pacific co-prosperity sphere, "the region" here encompasses the educated, professional classes of Asian and Pacific societies while excluding its underclasses.

In the last few chapters I have outlined Australia’s contemporary policy of engagement with the Asia-Pacific. I argued that, in response to the postmodern challenges of contemporary life, policy-makers have sought to reassert the dominant understandings of Western IR. Thus, recent governments have continued to support the US alliance, pursued a realist security agenda of defence cooperation with ASEAN and vigorously promoted a multilateral free trade diplomacy based upon the precepts of liberal institutionalism. Driven by these dominant interlocking trade and security agendas, contemporary foreign policy has been based heavily on engaging with regional state elites. This has often been at the expense of undertaking a more expansive regional engagement with the diverse and competing forces of Asian and Pacific societies. In its narrow and elitist focus, Australia’s regional engagement has contained a number of dangers and silences. In particular, in seeking to integrate Australia's security interests into the region’s dominant commercial and strategic networks, policy-makers have been complicit in engendering a regional order characterised less by trans-Pacific prosperity than economic marginalisation and cultural dislocation. It is to these silences and dangers that this thesis now turns.

Chapter 7

Dangerous Liaisons/Shifting Perils in Australia's Regional Engagement

In the preceding chapters of this thesis we saw how, in promoting an instrumental strategic and trade agenda, policy-makers have aligned Australian diplomacy to the dominant military and economic forces of the region. As a result of this alignment, Australia's regional engagement has become hitched to the objective of maintaining and buttressing a broader geopolitical order of market economies and territorial states across the Asia-Pacific at great social costs. This chapter is designed to count these costs and to examine the dangers of a foreign policy so unequivocally tied to the interests of the dominant state and capitalist elites of the region. In particular, I argue that Australia's regional diplomacy has represented a narrow and dangerous set of geopolitical practices detached from the cultural, gendered, environmental, ethnic and class realities of everyday life.

In advancing these arguments, I seek to question prevailing policy directions and, in turn, to open up space in which to rethink the images of order, identity and region which have traditionally underpinned Australian foreign policy. To this end, I begin this chapter by outlining the major features of the dominant geopolitical order of the Asia-Pacific region. My focus here is on the essentially inequitable and unsustainable nature of this regional order. I then go on to discuss how, in its stress on strategic and trade integration in the Asia-Pacific, recent Australian diplomacy has supported the repressive developmentalist states of the region and their economic strategy of exported oriented industrialisation. In focusing here on the twin aspects of Australia's regional engagement — namely, free trade liberalisation and strategic integration — I seek to offer a sustained critique of contemporary foreign policy and its inadequate response to the postmodern challenges of contemporary political life.

Globalising Strategies and Developmentalist States in the Asia-Pacific: The Darkside of the Pacific Century

The so-called economic miracle is in fact just like a fierce economic civil war with the workers as casualties... The amount of wealth we workers share is far too little. You call it an economic achievement? In fact, the gap between the rich and the poor is far greater now than 40 years ago. The capitalists have taken the bulk of our earnings. What workers get is precious little.¹

¹ Taiwanese Union Official Jeng Tsuen Chyi appearing on the “Dateline” program on SBS Television, 18th December 1995.
We saw in the last chapter that Australian policy-makers have accounted for the rise of regional economies in terms of the efficacy of free markets and the growth of intra-regional trade. Deploying data that suggests growing economic integration amongst East Asian and Pacific countries, contemporary policy-makers have vigorously promoted the objectives of multilateral trade liberalisation through grand visions of a world free from trade barriers. While, the promotion of such visions has served distinct diplomatic and political goals, policy-makers have effectively left out of the picture the profound social costs that have accompanied the economic rise of the Asia-Pacific. As we shall see, while the “economic miracle” of the Asia-Pacific has signalled high levels of economic growth and industrialisation, the export-oriented industrial strategies pursued by East and Southeast Asian states have also had some less salutary consequences. That has included ecological crisis, a reduced capacity in the democratic capability of governing institutions and a growing gap between rich and poor throughout the region.

In refusing to adequately acknowledge these dimensions of recent regional development, policy-makers have failed to understand the dangers and disturbing implications of regional engagement. I argue that while engagement has been justified in terms of preserving regional “security” and “stability”, the prevailing policy of supporting brittle, authoritarian regimes while stridently promoting the expansion of free market capitalism has in fact contributed to a regional order of great instability, disorder and insecurity. Indeed, far from “engaging with the region”, Australia’s support for undemocratic regimes and its promotion of a globalisation free trade agenda has in fact detached regional diplomacy from the everyday lives of people across Asia and the Pacific. Thus, in aligning policy to the interests of this regional status quo, contemporary policy-makers have actually threatened Australia’s long-term security interests. In doing so, they have passed up the opportunity to give regional engagement a more creative and expansive definition. I argue in the following chapters that this is a crucial precondition for developing an adequate policy response to the increasing volatilities and complexities of global life in the post-Cold War era.

To argue as much is to question the sanguine picture that accompanies prevailing analyses of regional economic growth in which, as geographer Dean Forbes has observed, "the pattern of socio-economic change [in the Asia-Pacific] illustrates a different, somewhat darker and more complex side of the picture" than prevailing analyses. Here great spatial disparities in present development is heightening the existing gap between urban and rural, inner and outer and interior and coastal areas. "If we delve deeper into the experience of selected countries", Forbes continues, "we find that, despite the modern facade of much of modern Asia, there remains grinding poverty in both rural and urban areas". Forbes’ conclusions are supported by research on transnational

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3 Ibid. p.54.
production which illustrates that regional economic integration has not been accompanied by a corresponding redistribution of income but has instead facilitated an increasing concentration of capital and wealth across the Pacific. This dark side of the Pacific Century has been summed up well by Walden Bello who notes that:

whether in Korea, Thailand, or the Philippines, the growth of GNP that came with export-oriented industrialisation was accompanied by worsening distribution of income; and political repression, as governments seeking American and foreign investors imposed labour policies banning unionism and assuring a supply of cheap labour. Moreover, from Seoul to Bangkok, export-oriented, high-speed growth in the American model has created a profound ecological crisis as forests are leveled by the buzzsaw and the bulldozer, rivers are rendered biologically dead by industrial wastes and cities cloaked with smog worse than Los Angeles.

Australian policy-makers have tended to obfuscate these less salutary realities. Thus, by adopting a neoliberal triumphalist discourse, they have celebrated the globalising EOI strategies of Asia-Pacific development as a benign and positive development of the free market. That has fundamentally misrepresented the state-oriented developmental experiences of the Asian NICs. Those countries have not only been characterised by high economic growth and a deepening of capitalist social relations but also by strong authoritarian governments and rampant human rights abuses involving the murder, incarceration and harassment of labour activists and other dissidents by, what Herb Feith has termed, the "repressive developmentalist states" of the Asia-Pacific. Such practices have been central to the "transnational style of development" that has characterised the region's developmental experience in which high-growth, export-oriented strategies have depended on the effective deployment of cheap and disciplined labor in order to attract foreign productive capital. It is worth teasing out the dynamics of this transnational form of development in order to more fully appreciate the Janus-faced nature of the Pacific Century and its "economic miracle".

As I indicated in the previous chapter, a massive restructuring of economies across the globe has taken place over the last several decades. Brought about by repeated recessions in the 1970s and 1980s, this restructuring precipitated the emergence of a global economy transcending the borders of the nation-state. That involved the development of

increasingly innovative technologies by firms across the globe who were forced to cut costs and gain a competitive advantage in the market place. Geopolitical struggles over territory that characterised the Cold War henceforth became supplanted by "the struggle for the world product" as a major dynamic of inter-state relations. Against the background of an increasingly competitive world market, national capital has been unable to survive by only supplying the local market and producing in a single location: hence, the emergence of transnationally mobile capital producing in sites across the globe for a world-wide market.

This "globalisation of production" has represented a complex process in which innovations in factory automation and informational technologies have made possible the disaggregation of production by large firms. That has allowed for the relocation of productive processes to sites in the Third World where the costs of unskilled and semi-skilled non-established labour are relatively low. The growth of transnational capital and its increasing global mobility has reflected a relative decline in the bargaining power of labour as the global restructuring of production has enabled capital to "shop around" for sites of production offering the best conditions and lowest costs. This process has been facilitated by the governments of low wage countries which have discarded their traditional import substitution strategies of development in favour of World Bank-sponsored export oriented industrialisation based upon attracting foreign investment through tax incentives, the maintenance of a disciplined labour force and generous conditions for profit repatriation.

It is this global expansion of capital which has given rise to the rapid economic growth rates of the Asian NICs. Indeed, the major restructuring of production recently has resulted in large inflows of productive capital into Southeast and East Asian countries which spurred the region's so-called economic miracle. Symptomatic of this shift was the far-reaching de-industrialisation of the mid-Western and Northeastern parts of America in the 1970s as American productive capital shifted to the Pacific seaboard of America, Europe and Southeast Asia.

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Japanese capital also moved into East and Southeast Asia in the 1970s and 1980s in search of lower production costs to avert economic recession and avoid a loss in the competitive advantage it had acquired over competitors. Precipitated by continual rises in the value of the Yen and Japanese wages, the expansion of Japanese capital involved a three-fold process: a transfer of labour intensive industries from Japan to Southeast Asia; direct Japanese investment in resource extraction in Southeast Asia; and the sub-contracting by Japanese firms of the production of more sophisticated components to the East Asian NICs, particularly to Taiwan, Singapore, South Korea and Hong Kong.  

More recently, a comparable process has taken place with the appreciation of other East Asian currencies. This has led to the extension of Taiwanese and South Korean production operations into ASEAN economies and the special economic zones set up along coastal China, particularly in low-value added, labour-intensive manufacturing. Hence, just as Japanese capital has moved into East and Southeast Asia in its quest to stay globally competitive, so too have Taiwanese and South Korean corporations transferred many of their production sites to Southeast Asia and China in order to exploit wage differentials in these countries.

Generated by these globalising impulses, the EOI policies pursued by Asian governments have hinged on the establishment of effective exclusionary labor regimes throughout the region. Designed to politically de-mobilise labour and to guarantee the supply of a low-wage workforce, these labour regimes represented a necessary precondition for the relocation of transnational capital. As I argued above, this has been part of a broader structural dynamic of the global economy in which competition amongst states to attract capital has resulted in an increasingly disciplined workforce and downward pressure on wages. Seeking to integrate their economies into the emerging transnational division of labour, particularly in light manufacturing industries, the repressive developmentalist states of East and Southeast Asia have exerted tight control on labour to maintain a low-wage environment for transnational capital.

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These exclusionary labour regimes have involved a varying range of strategies to regulate labour and ensure its docility ranging from all-out state coercion to the establishment of government-controlled unionism in order to coopt and neutralise independent labour activism. The range of anti-labour measures put in place by Asian states are historically specific and have, therefore, varied from country to country. For instance, in Indonesia, one of the region's most repressive states, the military has played a direct role in disciplining industrial labour. For those who courageously defy the coercive tactics of the military, terrible consequences can result, as in the recent Marsinah case. Here a young Indonesian labour activist was found dead three days after protesting the sacking of employees from a local East Javanese factory. Her body bared the marks of torture, beatings and rape.

South Korea has had an equally brutal, albeit more sophisticated, system of labour repression in place in order to promote the conditions for export-oriented production. Violent clashes between the military and workers in South Korea have long been a visible consequence of South Korea's repressive form of development. The South Korean military-technocrat alliance has regularly had to resort to large-scale imprisonment, torture, and assassination in order to secure the supply of cheap disciplined workers in the face of a highly radicalised student and labour movement. The internal security apparatus in South Korea which has regularly infiltrated factories has played a central role in the surveillance and repression of labour. These activities have been an integral part of the broader economic strategy pursued by the South Korean state and its corporate backers.

There have also been less coercive, more ideological forms of control and exclusion in South Korea. While the state has continually intervened to limit union activities, instituting laws which virtually outlaw strikes and independent union activity, efforts have also been expended to formulate and institutionalise mechanisms for the ideological containment of workers. In promoting a fierce anti-communist identity amongst workers, the Factory Saemaul (New Community) exploited deeply entrenched collectivist and patriotic values in South Korea in order to mobilise workers to achieve economic targets set by the state and management.

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19 Ibid.
One way that Australian policy-makers have rationalised the repressive aspect of regional capitalist development has been to point to economic data suggesting the relatively even distribution of recent development in East and Southeast Asia. This implies that political repression represents a legitimate cost of equitable economic growth. Recent analyses have questioned the use of this data, however, arguing that the orthodox focus on narrow quantitative economic indicators masks a less salutary reality. In conducting detailed socioeconomic research, Arrighi, Ikeda and Irwan have recently concluded that the "East Asian miracle has been a phenomenon limited to jurisdictions that account for no more than 10% of the total population of East Asia and Southeast Asia."  

In Thailand, for instance, a recent study by Japanese economist Yukio Ikemoto has shown that while in 1981 the share of national income of the richest 10 per cent was 17 times that of the poorest 10 per cent, by 1992, the figure had blown out to 38. Similarly, in one of the region’s fastest growing economies, Indonesia, concern over the growing gap between rich and poor has reached such a level that the Government has instituted a law forcing Indonesia’s wealth-owning classes to contribute a set amount of income to a state-based poverty fund. Meanwhile, in East Asia, although there is some evidence suggesting that real household wage rates have increased over the last several decades, the increase in worker’s income has been less the product of the equitable distribution of the fruits of economic growth than of the high levels of labor extraction among low-income workers and families. Hence, wage increases have lagged well behind productivity increases while a major characteristic of East Asian development has been the massive entry of secondary household earners, especially women from low-income families. In other words, income equity among Asian households reflects no more than intensified labor outlays among poor families.

Moreover, indices on real wages invoked by liberal economists to demonstrate the benefits of capitalist development do not address the conditions that workers must endure as a result of these very high levels of labor extraction. South Korean industry, for instance, has one of the worst safety records in the world and its workers have the longest working hours of any society, while Japanese is probably the only language in the

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26 Ibid.
27 Ibid.
world to have a specific word for death by overwork. Fatal accidents due to fatigue and inadequate safety regulations are common in many factories throughout the region. Enduring health problems are widespread amongst many factory workers engaged in export production. For example, in the Philippine factory of the American transnational corporation, Gelmart, the most common illness suffered by workers are urinary tract infections contracted because workers fear they will fall behind their production targets if they leave their posts to go to the bathroom. Meanwhile, in the agricultural sector across Asia and the Pacific, the social costs have been equally disturbing. Thus, the so-called "Green Revolution" has been accompanied not only by massive increases in crop production but also by tragic health costs, devastating environmental problems and the heightening of landlessness and the concentration of land ownership in the hands of a few.

Borne disproportionately by the region's workers and underclasses, the great social costs of Asia-Pacific development suggest that the benefits of recent economic growth have not trickled down beyond a small privileged elite. Instead, the prevailing modes of export-oriented industrialisation pursued by regional states have been characterised by a highly uneven pattern of development both within and between states. This is having the effect of further widening the gap between rich and poor across the Pacific. Arguably, the most serious problem of prevailing development in Asian and Pacific countries is the high level of debt that regional governments have incurred in financing large-scale industrialisation and resource-extraction projects of "national development" promoted by regional elites, international lending institutions and Western governments. As development specialists have pointed out, debt reserving has become the most important mechanism by which rich industrial countries have extracted huge outflows of capital and wealth from the poorer countries of the South. Not only do such outflows far exceed the total aid contributions from the North to South, they eclipse the more overt forms of wealth extraction secured under colonialism. The reproduction of these highly unequal global power relations through prevailing modes of regional development has served to exacerbate the divisions and cleavages that have long run throughout Asian

and Pacific societies. As we shall below, that has led to growing unrest and instability throughout the region.

To the extent that such social costs are recognised at all by Australian policy-makers and other regional elites, however, they tend to be explained as a necessary phase in the industrialisation process. Here the authoritarian regimes of the region are viewed as providing the conditions of political stability and rapid economic growth conducive to a stable transition from authoritarianism to democratic industrial society. In adopting this understanding, contemporary policy-makers have drawn on the neoliberal theme of convergence whereby the societies of Asia and the Pacific have been viewed as becoming more like the West by progressively adopting the democratic values of Western liberal capitalism.

This *apriori* identification of high levels of economic growth with political democratisation, however, has proved fallacious. As a recent analysis by leading area specialists has concluded, the liberal faith in the emerging middle classes of the region is entirely misplaced, who, far from forging liberalisation, have been "unable to construct democratic regimes in the place of authoritarianism and have [in fact] been overtaken by military dictatorships or forms of oligarchic authoritarianism." This points to the fact that the developmental experiences of Asian and Pacific states have followed different trajectories from the evolution of Western liberal capitalism. It also indicates that the linear narrative of progress adopted by Western policy-makers is simply inadequate in understanding the complexities of development in the Asia-Pacific.

Indeed, far from heralding a transition from authoritarianism to democracy, the export-oriented, high-growth strategies of the Asian NICs have in fact relied upon repressive state practices to maintain labour discipline and integrate into the prevailing regional division of labour. In other words, exclusionary labour practices are intrinsic to the broader globalising strategies that have marked the emergence of Asian economies in which labour repression has become an essential instrument of social order. That has been demonstrated by recent figures which suggest Asian trade unionists have been the target of 58% of all labor violations reported to the International Labour Organisation.

It is the depoliticisation of such violent state practices that is the most dangerous and silenced part of Australian foreign policy. Contemporary policy-makers have simply ignored the connection between their support for globalising forces in the Asia-Pacific and the kinds of authoritarian, anti-liberal and anti-democratic processes prevailing across

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the region.\textsuperscript{35} As Jim George has warned, "our support for free-trade strategies and indigenous elite-driven institutionalism might well be accelerating divisions of power and increasing the risk of conflict, rather than liberalising and democratising the region".\textsuperscript{36} This suggests that the convergence thesis at the core of Australia's recent regional diplomacy is in urgent need of critique. The globalising development strategies pursued by regional states have not led to the kind of free trade democratic order envisaged by liberals. That realisation undermines the whole foundation of contemporary Australian diplomacy, based upon the argument that free trade and globalisation will lead to a regional order of free market economies and democratic states across the Pacific. I examine the consequences of this in more detail below, arguing that judged by even a narrow geopolitical definition of stability and order, Australia's prevailing free trade diplomacy has proven to be an abject failure.

The Perils of Australia's Free Trade Diplomacy: Enhancing or Undermining "Security"?

Adopting an agenda of neoliberal economics, Australian policy-makers have vigorously promoted the benefits of free trade in organisations such as APEC and the newly created WTO. For them free trade represents a win-win situation in which opening up markets to global competition will increase the exchange of goods and services across borders — thereby boosting demand, economic growth and employment opportunities. For the advocates of free trade, economic liberalisation not only produces economic gains, but equally importantly, enhances security among states. That argument has been advanced by the architect of Australia's recent multilateral trade diplomacy, Gareth Evans. For Evans, the increased trading activity engendered by globalisation and the breakdown in national economic borders leads to a convergence of cultures and understandings in which:

across national borders things are being done more alike and...institutions, practices and outlooks are becoming more alike as a result of which countries, cultures and peoples are becoming less alien to each other...and they are beginning to learn that their best interests are advanced not by a culture of conflict but a culture of cooperation.\textsuperscript{37}

As indicated above, however, the kinds of globalising strategies adopted by state and capitalist elites in the Asia-Pacific belie such sanguine forecasts of a regional order of peace, security and economic prosperity. Indications of the effects of globalisation so far suggest that opening up markets to global competition will not necessarily lead to the kinds of benefits that neoliberals are fond of declaring. Instead, the prevailing transnational style of development embarked upon by regional governments has


\textsuperscript{36} Ibid. p.5.

exacerbated the divisions and inequalities that exist both within and between states in the Asia-Pacific.

This is clear in the ways in which large groups of people have been marginalised from the workforce recently. This is especially the case in advanced industrialised countries where high wages put these countries at a disadvantage in competing with new production sites in East and Southeast Asia. In Australia, for instance, the Textiles, Clothing and Footwear industry lost 27,000 jobs between 1989 and 1994, as companies moved offshore to lower-wage countries. Such changes have not been limited to working class people: over the past two decades 25% of mid-level, white collar male jobs in Australia have become the casualties of global restructuring and the ideology of competitiveness. Far from benefiting from the prevailing neoliberal directions of Australian policy, these groups have been marginalised from the modern economy. For these people, the failure of neoliberal policy has been translated in the rise of structural unemployment which has become an intractable problem for governments across the globe. In OECD countries 35 million people are now un- or under-employed, while the first ever survey of world-wide joblessness by the ILO estimated 2.6 billion people were unemployed globally or 30% of the world's total work force.

For those in employment the prospects are also grim. Employment trends now show a massive increase in "contingent" labour either in the form of part-time, contract or casual work. A recent EPAC report on the Australian labour market shows that between 1984 to 1994 casual employment has risen from 15.8% to 23.7%. For those left in permanent employment, marked increases in pressure and stress are the results of now having to take on the work of retrenched colleagues. A "race to the bottom" is what some analysts have called this downward spiral in workers' wages and conditions in which workers are being put in competition with one another as the threat of moving production off-shore to lower wage sites is enough to undermine most union claims. Arguably, the most disturbing effect of this global drive toward the hyper-exploitation of labour has been the continuing high levels of child labour around the world. According to a recent ILO report, 73 million children between the ages of 10 and 14 world-wide are forced to work: in Asia alone 44 million children work. This labour force has played a critical role in the rapid economic growth rates of regional development recently. The effect of all this has been heightened global inequalities and the concentration of market and financial power in the hands of a few. It is now estimated that just 300 companies own one quarter of the

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world's productive assets. This growing global disparity between rich and poor is further illustrated by recent statistics which suggest that while in 1970, the richest one-fifth of the world population received 30 times more than the poorest one-fifth, by 1990 the ratio had blown out to a factor of 60.

It is precisely these kinds of disturbing trends that Australia's APEC strategy has had the effect of promoting. Indeed, in facilitating trade and investment liberalisation, our policymakers have enhanced the mobility of transnational capital throughout the region. This has had the effect of further reducing the bargaining power of labour and its ability to halt the erosion in conditions and wages. That has been exemplified in Australia's recent diplomacy in the WTO in joining with ASEAN countries' rejection of Western plans to link trading agreements with labour issues. This plan would give policy-makers in the more advanced high-cost economies such as Australia some leverage in halting the race to the bottom represented by the large-scale relocation of industrial production to low-wage countries. Many officials in Asia have been rightfully wary of the sudden interest of Western governments in labour issues, seeing in this another form of discriminatory protectionism against the rising industrial centres of Asia.

Coupled with the development of global redistributive mechanisms, however, the linking of labour rights and trade agreements appears to be at present the only way of halting the global deterioration of workers' rights and conditions. Based upon an ideological attachment to free trade and regional engagement, therefore, Australia's trade-driven policy of rejecting such an initiative has merely served to reproduce the conditions under which sweat shops and widespread child labour have come to characterise the region's "economic miracle". Through rejecting this initiative, policy-makers have missed an opportunity to align Australian diplomacy with the decolonising forces of the region. That has precluded Australian diplomacy from contributing to the formulation of creative redistributive solutions to the structural problems of recent globalisation.

Seen from this perspective, prevailing patterns of globalisation and free trade represent less a neutral process delivering benefits for all people than one that feeds into existing socioeconomic cleavages and divisions. In the case of recent development in the Asia-Pacific region, globalisation has exacerbated the highly inequitable power relations and broader patterns of discrimination which characterise regional societies. As a number of non-government organisations have pointed out, the effects of the globalisation agenda promoted in APEC will have massive social and economic implications for the poor of the region, particularly farmers, the rural landless and wage labourers.

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45 Ibid.
As the centrepiece of Australia’s free trade diplomacy, the push for agricultural trade liberalisation is a good example of the dangers of free trade. While designed primarily to open up highly subsidised farming sectors of American and European countries, Australia’s liberalisation agenda will, if successful, have far-reaching effects for the millions of small-scale, subsistence farmers throughout Asia. In a totally liberalised market, they would be unable to compete with the large-scale, capital intensive and highly mechanised farming operations of the advanced economies. Hence, while world-wide liberalisation of agricultural products would prove a bonanza for Australia’s large agricultural sector it would be “cataclysmic” for the region’s small farmers and rural poor. That would have particularly devastating effects in rural Asia where a majority of people still rely on agriculture for their livelihood and where opening up the economy to cheap foreign imports could mean “the undermining of entire rural communities and their way of life with greatly increased disruption and unrest”.49

The problem with the free-trade win-win scenario painted by neoliberal economists is that it fails to recognise the need to develop mechanisms of global redistributive justice as a necessary precondition for the even spread of the benefits of free economic exchange. By failing to acknowledge this, Australian policy-makers appear unaware that latent volatilities in the region could well be converted into serious unrest by current Australian demands for across-the-board trade liberalisation regardless of the social costs. This suggests that, in promoting a short-sighted agenda of economic self-interest, contemporary policy-makers are dangerously detaching Australian policy perspectives from the everyday realities of regional life. It also suggests that, defined beyond the prevailing terms of narrow economic self-interest, Australian “security” interests are better advanced by a more pragmatic, less ideologically-driven policy. That policy should be based upon bilateral trade negotiations that recognise the varying capacity of different economies to meet free trade targets.

The threat of internal unrest which I touched on above points to a broader danger inherent in Australia’s present promotion of globalisation-from-above strategies. That relates to the destabilising effects of the transnational-style of development pursued across the region. While Asian and Pacific societies have been integrated into the broader international circuits of trade and production since the colonial period, the breakdown of international economic boundaries has taken on unparalleled proportions in the last two decades. This has opened up the region to the far-reaching transformative effects of capitalist industrial development and its associated instabilities and volatilities. As Bradley Klein has suggested, the construction of modern industrial society represents a “violent

transgression of the land and human body". Here the construction of roads, port cities, transport networks, modern administrative techniques, large-scale infrastructural projects — all those requirements of modern industrial development — inevitably have far-reaching effects "on the tenor of everyday life". According to the United Nations Centre for Human Settlement, for instance, literally millions of people are evicted from their homes across the globe each year to make way for modern industrial urban development.

Giving rise to such dislocative processes, the large-scale development projects pursued by regional governments and promoted heavily by the World Bank and IMF have involved the displacement of thousands of local communities from their traditional lands. These projects have included mining enterprises and the construction of dams, golf courses and tourist resorts. Typically these have not only led to serious environmental damage but have tended to be promoted by unaccountable and undemocratic global policy elites detached from the everyday needs of local communities. Australian companies have been heavily involved in such projects throughout the region.

The inequitable and dislocative effects on local communities of this kind of development has given rise to growing social tensions and unrest throughout the region. For instance, Indonesia has experienced unparalleled social and political turmoil recently. Riots regularly erupted throughout 1996-97, including an uprising by Jakarta’s disaffected underclasses in the capital city that lasted for three days in the aftermath of the Government’s blatant attempts to remove Megawati Sukarnoputri from the leadership of the People’s Democratic Party (PDI). Frustrations over political and economic disparities in Indonesia appear to be the main motivating force behind the August unrest.

51 Ibid.
The prime targets of the street violence were visible “symbols of wealth” such as banks and luxury residential areas.\textsuperscript{56}

In addition to having to quell unrest throughout Java, the Indonesian Government has had to confront continuing rebellion and resistance to its rule in Irian Jaya, East Timor, Aceh and West Kalimantan. In Irian Jaya recently the multinational Freeport mining operation has come under physical attack by the local communities disaffected by the mine’s environmental destruction, and the dislocative effects that thousands of Javanese trans-migrants are having on the province.\textsuperscript{57} Outside Indonesia, authorities throughout the Asia-Pacific are facing similar problems. For instance, China’s recent economic boom has brought with it heightened inequalities between coastal and interior provinces — raising questions about the central Government’s grip on coastal economies.\textsuperscript{58} It has also given rise to increasing social expectations and worker unrest throughout the country.\textsuperscript{59}

In fact, the problem of unmet rising social expectations has become a major source of discontent throughout the region. The lifestyle promised by a growing global consumer culture remains unachieved for the great majority of peoples in Asian and Pacific societies. In rejecting the dominant transnational style of development, voices of dissent and resistance are becoming increasingly insistent.\textsuperscript{60} They have given testament to the great social costs and instabilities that have accompanied prevailing regional development. Workers calling for labour rights, students demanding greater democracy and slum dwellers demanding the right of housing have all expressed their discontent with the conditions of daily life that prevail across the region. This reflects the growing disenchantment of ordinary people with elitist, undemocratic and highly inequitable modes of development and governance.

Far from engendering a stable geopolitical and economic order, therefore, the support for globalising strategies in the Asia-Pacific has actually had the opposite effect. The Australian Government’s promotion of an undifferentiated agenda of across-the-board trade liberalisation has contributed to a regional political economy of endemically unstable states racked by ever widening social divisions and rising political tensions. In responding to these destabilising forces, Asia’s developmentalist regimes have used familiar repressive tactics to keep a lid on simmering social tensions. This has led to an unending spiral of geopolitical violence and instability in which social tensions brought

about by recent development have been accompanied by the repressive use of force by military elites seeking to guarantee stability. That has led to yet further social unrest and increased military repression. In this context, Australia's support for globalisation and free trade has converged with its policy of engaging strategically with the region's military elites. Here policy-makers have deduced that the only way to keep the instabilities of trans-Pacific capitalist development at bay is through buttressing the repressive state regimes of the region to keep order. That has served to align Australian diplomatic interests to the violent strategic practices of regional states. As we shall see in the final part of this chapter, this is where the dangerous implications of regional engagement are most apparent.

**Dangerous Liaisons: Australia's Regional Strategic Engagement**

There may be some truth to the claim that in many cases our soldiers have been well ahead of our diplomats [in engaging with the region]. The Australian military has been at the forefront of our diplomatic effort. They will continue to serve us well. 61

In a recent report on the region, the respected NGO, Human Rights Watch, concluded that the human rights records of Burma, Indonesia, Cambodia and China actually worsened in 1996. This conclusion explicitly undermines the argument proposed by Australian diplomats and policy-makers that high rates of economic growth translate into progressive political liberalisation. 62 As indicated above, the developmentalist regimes of the Asia-Pacific have used repression in order to keep a lid on simmering social discontent. Thus, the disordering effects of capitalist development have been accompanied by a violent reordering/reterritorialising impulse in which the state has sought to reimpose strict territorial control through the means of organised violence. Paul Twomey has made the point well:

The most pervasive influence in many Asian capitalist societies has been the linking of its repressive power with the economic development aims of a Western-educated technocratic elite. These elites promote a model of development, supported by most western governments and such institutions as the International Monetary Fund, that emphasises growth through export-oriented manufacture and commodity production. This model requires the maintenance of low labour costs, political and social stability and conditions favourable to foreign investment so that the economy can reach a "take off" phase of growth. The task of assuring that social change does not destabilise these conditions for growth is given to the military. 63

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Australia’s strategic regional engagement has had the effect of reinforcing the major aspects of this regional political economy. I have already discussed in Chapter 5 of this thesis, how this has been articulated in Australia’s burgeoning defence links with ASEAN. These links have included extensive intelligence sharing between ASIS (Australian Secret Intelligence Service) and the internal security apparatus of regional governments. In this context, Australia’s intelligence interests have become inextricably entwined with the repressive forces of the regional status quo. The dangerous implications of this have been highlighted by Brian Toohey and William Pinwill who have documented the extensive intelligence links that ASIS has shared with the region’s most repressive regimes. That included the disturbing revelation that in the early 1980s ASIS was handing over intelligence to the corrupt Marcos regime on opposition forces in the Philippines. Similarly, Australia’s policy on Bougainville, Tibet, Burma, West Papua and East Timor has reflected the support that Australian diplomacy has directed to regional states, no matter how repressive or authoritarian.

In Bougainville, for instance, the Australian Government continues to arm the PNG military which has shown itself incapable of preventing its soldiers from committing blatant human rights abuses. This included the 1996 mortar attack by PNG forces on a Catholic church during morning mass, followed three days later by the massacre of 15 innocent civilians during a village raid. Meanwhile in Burma, Australian policy-makers have steadfastly rejected calls to take action against the State Law and Order Restoration Council (SLORC) — arguably the world’s leading pariah state. Australia has opposed calls by pro-democracy leader and Nobel Peace laureate Aung Sung Su Kyi for economic sanctions, favouring an approach designed ostensibly to neither encourage nor discourage Australian business from operating in Burma, although the fact that the Government has refused to close its Austrade office in Rangoon suggests a preference for a business as usual approach. Apart from trade interests, Australia’s policy on Burma has also been driven by its broader goal of engaging diplomatically with ASEAN governments who, far from criticising the governing regime in Burma, have welcomed Burma as a permanent member into ASEAN. Echoing the arguments of the convergence thesis, Australian Trade Minister and Deputy Prime Minister Tim Fischer has justified the policy on Burma by claiming that “officially Burma is headed towards democracy”. That claim has been contradicted by the actions of the SLORC which continues to repress its people through torture, martial law and arbitrary arrests and which has promoted the use of child and

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slave labour in development and infrastructural projects to aid multinational companies and tourist operators.  

Likewise in Tibet, Australia’s softly-softly approach toward Chinese abuses has been shaped by a concern to protect markets in China. This has reflected the ways in which Australia’s policy of trade and strategic engagement has come at the cost of a concern with human rights and developing creative diplomatic initiatives to resolve the region’s intractable conflicts. In fact, in so unequivocally promoting integration into the dominant commercial and strategic networks of the region, policy-makers have pursued a short-sighted diplomacy that, while providing the facade of “stability”, has actually undermined the goal of creating a more stable, peaceful regional order.

It is arguably in Australia’s close links with the Soeharto regime in Indonesia where the dangerous implications of Australian strategic engagement with regional elites are most obvious. As I noted above, Indonesia has recently shown increasing signs of unrest accompanied by high levels of repression. This has represented a dialectic of violence that has become the most visible feature of the Indonesian political landscape recently. A 1996 report by the Indonesian Legal Aid and Human Rights Association (PBHI) noted continuing “power abuses” by the Indonesian Government and stated its “deep concern about the malfunctioning of Indonesia’s legal and judicial institutions”.

It also observed that “political violence” in Indonesia had reached “a critical point” while noting that the “Indonesian Government had failed to ratify the international covenant against torture”. Meanwhile in East Timor, Amnesty has claimed that “arbitrary detention and torture remain a part of daily life” and that reported “disappearances and political killings have remained uninvestigated and unresolved”.

Forces resisting this ever increasing level of repression and organised violence in Indonesia are, however, becoming increasingly visible. This was clear in a recent petition by non-government organisations (NGOs) declaring their opposition to the increasing use of “naked power”, “political violence” and “the repression of democracy” in Indonesia. It was also manifest in a recent statement issued by scholars expressing concern at the

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serious dangers of social unrest due to the elitist forms of development presently taking place.  

In the face of such turbulent events in Indonesia, Australian diplomacy has been characterised by what can only be described as policy paralysis. This was exemplified in the official response, or lack thereof, to the military crackdown of demonstrations in Jakarta in August 1996. Peter Hartcher described this response as the “the towering silence of Australian diplomacy”. As people were being killed in the streets and others rounded up by the military for detention and interrogation, Foreign Minister Alexander Downer refused to criticise the violent suppression of unrest, saying only that he hoped “the situation will settle down quickly”, while adding limply that “we don’t conduct our affairs in Australia in the same way”. In warding off criticism of Australia’s timid response, Downer declared that the crackdown on dissent was an “internal affair”. By invoking the territorialising logic of traditional foreign policy discourse, Downer precluded any ethical consideration of Australia’s close relations with the Soeharto regime. Whilst this support for the Soeharto regime has been justified on the grounds that Australian interests are best served by ensuring a stable, united Indonesian state, the policy of buttressing a repressive and undemocratic regime can hardly be seen as a stability-producing policy. As Peter Hartcher has noted:

Our policy-makers are confusing a lack of change with stability. Stability in Indonesia is not going to be served by political repression to prop up a particular regime. This ultimately will lead to frustration. And frustrations can create explosions.

Thus, Australia’s diplomacy of silence on Indonesia has reflected a one-dimensional foreign policy and a refusal to listen to other voices outside of the military elite. Yet, the Indonesian Government itself has recognised that such voices will play an increasingly important role in Indonesia in coming years. Recent unrest indicates that the dominant economic model of high-speed economic growth promoted by the Soeharto regime is fast approaching its use by date. Here the flagrant capital accumulation by rentier sections of the Indonesian state and multinational capital underpinned by repressive state rule is proving an increasingly inadequate basis on which to manage the Indonesian economy. That is clear in the current economic crisis in Indonesia in which the Soeharto regime has been forced to call in the IMF to bail it out.

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74 Ibid.
In so unequivocally tying our diplomacy to forces seeking to maintain the Soeharto model, Australian policy-makers have become detached from the voices of change. These forces such as those led by Indonesian democracy leader Megawati Sukarnoputri represent the best chance for a democratic transition in a post-Soeharto Indonesia. Stability and security will be achieved, therefore, less through supporting repressive state rule in the region than promoting aspirations for democratic development and accountable governance across Asia and the Pacific, including in Australia itself.

Far from promoting such aspirations, however, the Australia’s foreign policy establishment has put all its “diplomatic and strategic eggs into the Soeharto basket”. Thus, for Tim Fischer, Soeharto represents “perhaps the world’s greatest figure in the latter half of the 20th Century”. The extent of such support can be measured in Australia’s continuing recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor. Representing the only state outside of ASEAN to do so, Australia has been “the odd man out” in the international community over the issue of East Timor. The European Union, the United States, the United Kingdom and the United Nations are all beginning to take a more high-profile approach in opposing Indonesia’s human rights abuses through seeking a negotiated settlement in East Timor. The awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Bishop Bello and Ramos-Horta is another sign that East Timor is becoming an increasing focus of international diplomacy. As is Nelson Mandela’s recent attempts to find a resolution to the conflict.

The increasing detachment of Australian diplomacy from such international efforts has not been without costs. This was illustrated in the recent defeat of Australia on the floor of the United Nations in the ballot for a temporary place on the UN security council. That very little was learned from this defeat is evident from Ambassador Butler’s account of the vote in terms of what he called the RLB factor, or the Rotten Lying Bastards who promised to vote for Australia, but evidently did not. In accounting for Australia’s failed diplomacy in such personal terms, Butler ignored the extent to which Australia’s policy on East Timor has rankled with states across the globe, particularly in Africa where Australia lost most of its votes and where Portugal still has considerable diplomatic influence. That our policy-makers remain impervious to, and increasingly detached from, such international diplomatic opinion is further illustrated by the Australia’s effort to distance itself from US criticisms of the Indonesian Government in which, as Brian

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Toohey has observed, Australian leaders have actively sneered at more enlightened US attempts to raise human rights with Soeharto. In fact, in formalising Australia's diplomatic alignment with the Soeharto regime, the recently-signed Australia-Indonesia Security Agreement has served to effectively distance Australian diplomacy from the diplomatic path pursued by governments across the world in raising concerns over East Timor and Indonesia's human rights record, including by Australia's traditional Western allies. To reiterate, Australia's support for the Soeharto Government has precluded us from contributing constructively to a resolution to East Timor which, if achieved, would provide a far more secure regional strategic and diplomatic environment in the future.

This chapter has highlighted the inadequacies of prevailing regional diplomacy. It has argued that, in pursuing a dual agenda of free trade diplomacy and regional strategic engagement, policy-makers have sought to integrate Australian security interests into the dominant circuits of commercial and strategic power across the Pacific. In doing so, Australian diplomacy has become aligned to repressive state elites who have not only blocked democratic change but have pursued inequitable policies designed to benefit a small business, military and technocratic class at the expense of the great majority of peoples in the Asia-Pacific.

In aligning Australian diplomacy to these dangerous forces, policy-makers have continued to draw upon the traditional assumptions of Western IR. This is clear in the continual promotion of a state-centred security policy that has privileged state-building forces irrespective of the repressive and corrupt nature of those forces. This conventional security agenda has, by definition, narrowed the ambit of Australian diplomacy to inter-governmental relations with regional state elites, thereby precluding an expanded notion of security based upon questions concerning human rights, gender, ecology and migration. Yet, these questions are becoming increasingly important issues and themes of the post-Cold War period. It is to these questions that I now turn to in this thesis, before going on to discuss how Australian foreign policy might be reframed in the final chapter of this thesis.

Chapter 8

On the Margins of the Asia-Pacific: Omissions, Exclusions, Silences

The instabilities in global units and their interrelations are an incitement to discourse, an invitation to review the partialities of the voices that have monopolized the interpretation of political identity and space and to create a discursive frame that can enunciate alternatives. To appreciate this invitation, however, it is necessary...to map the sites of alternative voices whose addresses have not appeared in the directories provided by mainstream political science disciplines.¹

In the previous chapter, I examined the ways in which Australia’s contemporary regional diplomacy has become aligned to some of the region’s most authoritarian and repressive regimes. Based upon an agenda of integrating into the dominant strategic and commercial circuits of power, Australian diplomacy has become detached from the everyday grassroots realities of the region. This chapter examines in more detail these marginalised realities — in particular, gender, ethnicity, ecology and migration. In doing so, it focuses on a range of social relations written out of foreign policy discourse and its dominant territorial cartographies. Bradley Klein has identified these social relations with “the multiple, overlapping and interlocking networks of production, ecology, work and personal identity” of regional life.²

By highlighting these silenced realities, the aim of this chapter is to show how a variety of non-territorial identities and affiliations have become increasingly salient forces recently — representing a source of many of the volatilities and possibilities of post-Cold War politics. The shifting definitions of work, identity and gender that have characterised post-Cold War politics are having a broader deterritorialising effect on global political life in which the territorial boundaries of states are coming under serious challenge.

In the face of this challenge, however, contemporary regional elites have resorted to the familiar territorialising moves of modern statecraft. Here we shall see how policy-makers have sought to contain contemporary flows within the conventional geopolitical grids of self/other, inside/outside and domestic/foreign. This territorialising response is proving to be increasingly dangerous and inadequate in a postmodern world of accelerating velocities and collapsing boundaries. Indeed, by continuing to pursue an elitist, state-centred regional diplomacy, Australian policy-makers, in particular, have failed to

understand the rapid changes presently taking place in the region. Through recent diplomacy, they have reproduced a discourse bereft of the kinds of insights into contemporary political life required to formulate an adequate post-Cold War policy response. As I point out throughout this chapter, an adequate understanding of the region requires the formulation of analytical schemas more nuanced and sophisticated than those currently framing the narrow trade- and security-driven agendas of Australian foreign policy.

In focusing on the silences of contemporary foreign policy, this chapter examines in turn gender, transborder flows, ecology and indigenous peoples. Although, by no means exhausting the list of omissions of contemporary foreign policy, the examination of these issues exemplifies the narrow policy perspectives of Australia’s regional engagement.

Exclusion I: The Gendered Nature of Industrial Production and Resistance in the Asia-Pacific

Gender has been almost universally excluded from analyses proclaiming the rise of the Pacific Century. For instance, the Garnaut report on the “Northeast Asian ascendancy” largely neglected the issue, while policy statements by successive Australian foreign ministers have been notable for their glaring omission of gender as an important dimension of regional engagement. In excluding gender from analytical attention, policymakers have abstracted Australia’s regional engagement from the local, everyday dynamics of the societies with which they have sought to engage. Indeed, as we shall see, not only has gender been central to the region’s “economic miracle” but a focus on gender politics serves to disrupt and destabilise the triumphalist nature of Pacific Century discourse. In commenting on this silence in the political analysis of the region in general, Maila Stivens has noted that:

the issue of women as active members of classes has been one of the glaring absences of political discourse about the region. “Peasants”, “farmers”, “proletariats”, all the participants in social movements have been assumed to be unproblematically male, with little recognition of the ways that women act as political agents.3

What is intriguing about this silence is the central role that female labour has played in the economic rise of regional states.4 Indeed, the most visible characteristic of export-oriented production across the Pacific has been its gendered nature. As Gayatri Spivak has observed, “it is the urban sub-proletariat female who is the paradigmatic subject of the current international division of labour”.5 That is evident in the free trade export

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zones that now litter the Pacific rim where female workers predominate in low-wage, non-unionised and low-skilled production. In South Korea, for instance, female workers make up between 70 and 90% of the workforce in export industries, while in Taiwan's free trade export zones female labour constitutes up to 85% of the total workforce. 6

In an increasingly competitive global economy, both transnational corporations and smaller firms have sought to exploit substantial wage differentials between men and women. In doing so, these firms have been able to lower costs by hiring part-time female workers which has shifted the cost of the reproduction of labour to households. 7 The attraction of female labour for capital is heightened by the prevailing belief that because of their subordinate position in the societies of Asia and the Pacific, women are more "pliable" than men and, therefore, more suited to factory discipline. These beliefs have also been accompanied by the notion that the "nimble-fingered", "dexterous" nature of "Oriental" women make them perfect for the demands of assembly line work. These gendered beliefs have been central to the expansion of industrial capitalism recently as young unmarried women have become the pivot of globalising strategies in the Asia-Pacific.

A central feature of Asia-Pacific development, therefore, has been the way in which existing local discourses of patriarchy and paternalism have provided the precondition for the transnational relocation of capital to Asia. Far from conforming to an idealised model of the free market, the region's economic growth has been associated, according to Frederico Deyo, with "the continued vitality, and indeed the expansion, of employment relations based on patriarchal, paternalistic and patrimonial systems of labor control". 8 In fact, the articulation of capitalist relations of production with existing discourses of patriarchy and cultural authoritarianism has given rise to new forms of gender domination. That, in turn, has led to new configurations of identity and a redefinition in the boundaries that mark out the domains of work and femininity in the region.

Exemplifying this shift has been the emergence of a new class of young, unmarried female workers engaged in low-wage, repetitive assembly-line work. This emerging industrial labour force has been recruited from the increasing pool of unemployed workers in rural areas due to increasing landlessness and mechanisation of agricultural work. 9 The

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formation of this new class of female industrial workers, however, has not been a uniform
process across the region but rather has been characterised by culturally specific regimes
of patriarchal power. As Donald Nonini has pointed out, the task of critical scholars is to
investigate the great variety of patriarchal controls within the region in all their cultural
and historical specificities. 10

In her study of women factory workers in Malaysia, for instance, Aihwa Ong has
examined the formation of a nascent industrial force in Malaysia. 11 Illustrating how this
involved a transition from the flexible conceptions of time and space of _kampung_ (Malay
Village) life to the hierarchical structuring of industrial discipline, Ong has examined the
ways in which female rural migrants were converted into a cheap pool of industrial
labour. Her focus is on overlapping disciplinary techniques deployed by state and capital
to produce the biological objects, docile bodies and sexualised subjects that have fuelled
transnational production.

Through instituting labour laws designed to maintain the sexual imbalance in wages, the
Malaysian state has been crucial in supplying the flow of cheap rural labour into the
emerging industrial sector. These laws have enabled transnational corporations to lower
production costs through employing a female-dominated labour force. 12 In fact,
governments throughout the region have pursued policies designed to displace women
workers from the rural sector to produce a surplus labour force for the industrial sector.
In Taiwan, for instance, President Lee has candidly admitted that "the Government has
intentionally held down peasants' income so as to transfer these people- who were
formerly engaged in agriculture — into industries". 13

While government policy has been central to securing a flow of rural female migrants into
industrial production, corporate strategies for securing discipline at the factory floor have
also been gender-based. As Donald Nonini has pointed out, the imposition of industrial
discipline in Malaysian factories has involved reproducing at the factory floor the broader
discourses of patriarchy that subordinate young females in rural Malay families. That is
clear in the ways in which male factory supervisors have taken on the metaphorical role of
"fathers", "uncles" or "older brothers" in relation to their young female subordinates
who have been encouraged to display "Asian" female values such as loyalty, hard work,
deference to elders and piety. 14 As we saw in the last chapter, the East Asian state has
played a critical role in promoting these so-called traditional "Asian" values. This has

Imaginary" in A. Dirlik (ed.) _What's in a Rim?: Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea._
12 Ibid. p.147.
14 Ibid.p.168.
served not only to naturalise a particular patriarchal model of the family but to reinforce traditional modes of gender domination through which factory discipline has been secured. Paradoxically, then, the promotion of Asian "values" by regional elites has involved the reification of "tradition" as a way of producing the conditions for "modern" industrial production.

By organising labour relations in terms of the patriarchal hierarchies of Malay society, transnational capital has been able to exercise a pervasive control over the lives of its workers. In many instances, factory management has encouraged the notion amongst the families of its female employees that the factory will protect the well-being and chastity of their daughters. That has enabled management in the industrial estates and export production zones to enforce a strict code of discipline on factory workers in the quest to achieve higher productivity levels. The control that factory management has exerted over female employees has in fact extended well beyond the factory floor. Housed in barracks or dormitories common throughout the region's industrial estates, many female workers are subject to curfews and other measures designed to regulate their movements. In controlling the mobility of workers, factory management has sought to produce a "captive" labour force that can be mobilised at any time in order to meet ever higher production rates. While such overt control has been justified as protecting the chastity of young factory workers, the gender-based disparity in power relations prevalent in the region's export factories has inevitably translated into sexual harassment and sexual exploitation. In these factories an unofficial policy of "get laid or get laid off" is not uncommon. The sense of being both exploited and under constant surveillance has been evocatively expressed by one Taiwanese factory worker who explained:

I've sold five years of my youth to the company. I need a rest from this brainnumbing work for two or three weeks. But there is no way I can leave without quitting or taking a big loss. There are so many regulations you feel you are tied up with ropes till you can't budge an inch. And I've given them five years of my life. 16

The modes of surveillance and discipline that have given rise to this nascent industrial class are illuminated by Michel Foucault's notion of "biopower". This concept relates to what Foucault has rather obliquely termed the "disciplinary techniques" deployed upon the body to constitute subjectivity. Put another way, the Foucauldian notion of "biopower" stresses the microphysics of power and its productive role in constituting and


making possible certain identities. Here modes of socialisation and discipline act upon the individual body to demarcate "normal" sanctioned behaviour from acts of "madness", "deviance" and "criminality".

What is instructive for the purposes of this thesis, is the intersection between these micro-practices of biopower and the macro-practices of foreign policy which draw upon a complementary form of "geopower". While the former works on the surface of the individual body, the latter is inscribed onto the surface of the body politic, constituting the macro-boundaries of IR. The complementarity of these distinct forms of inscription, has produced a modern form of power which, as Foucault suggests, is both totalising and individualising. Thus, modern power not only focuses on the discipline and welfare of entire populations over a given territory (geopower) but also inscribes itself on the microspaces of individual bodies (biopower).

This intersection of the microphysics and macrophysics of power provides critical insights into the expansion and reproduction of contemporary capitalism in the region. As we saw in Chapter 6, in promoting the regional imaginary of "the Asia-Pacific", contemporary policy-makers have produced a transnational space in which flows of capital and technology have been facilitated across the region. While these macro-practices of foreign policy have made possible the capital flows central to regional economic growth, the micropractices of "biopower" have served to constitute the docile, disciplined bodies that make up the region's industrial work force which has generated industrial production. It is through such modes of power that rural societies in Asia are being incorporated into regional and global circuits of capital. Here the making of labouring subjects from a pool of unemployed rural migrants has been central to the intensified, geographically expanded phase of capitalism which has characterised the regional economic miracle.

This transition from rural migrant to industrial worker in the region's industrial transformation, however, has not only involved new forms of domination but has also encompassed new subjectivities and new modes of resistance. In other words, the articulation of globalising strategies with existing patriarchal structures has not simply represented a process of domination over passive objects but rather has engendered shifting definitions of work, identity and gender. That, in turn, has given rise to new spaces for political action and resistance. This is illustrated in Ong's study by the changing distribution of power within rural Malay families with the recruitment of female workers into modern employment. Hence, while the making of a gendered industrial force has enabled the exploitation of industrial female workers by local and transnational capital, it has also tended to enhance the position of these women in their own rural families. In other words, as significant "breadwinners", many female industrial workers have been
able to challenge male authority in the home. In this sense, sexuality has become both a way of reinforcing new modes of domination and exploitation in the modern economy and also, paradoxically, a means of resisting and subverting the customary hierarchies of rural Malay life.

The centrality of such gender dynamics in regional political life has been almost entirely overlooked by regional foreign policy elites preoccupied with promoting dominant strategic and economic relations. This is particularly true of Australian policy-makers who have almost totally disregarded gender as a serious policy issue. This has served to abstract Australia’s diplomacy of “engaging with the Asia-Pacific” from the micro-practices of the region’s political economy. In doing so, policy-makers have been blinded to potential sources of unrest and conflict in the region based upon the new configurations of resistance and gender domination which I have mapped above. In continuing to reproduce the boundaries of Western IR, policy-makers have simply ignored the trans-border flows and shifting definitions of identity that have characterised contemporary regional life. In the next section of this chapter I examine some of these flows in more detail.

**Exclusion II: Trans-Pacific Flows and Border Crossings**

Recent discourse on the Pacific Century has focused on the dominant economic and commercial flows of the regional political economy. For example, Peter Drysdale’s influential text on international economic pluralism examines the growth of East Asian economies in terms of the rise of intra-regional trade and increasing regional economic interdependence over the last several decades. In policy terms, this narrow focus on trade and market integration has been evidenced in the absence of a working group on social or environmental issues in APEC.

So while state-sanctioned capital and trade flows have dominated the APEC agenda, other kinds of flows, particularly of people, have been excluded from analysis and policy-making. Recent advances in transportation — in particular, air travel — has meant that mass movements of migrants, refugees, students, businesspeople, professionals and tourists have come to challenge existing notions of movement and space that undergird foreign policy discourse. In particular, the dominant notion since Galileo that the homogeneity of the world follows from the homogeneity of geometrical space in which movement is definable through one and the same universally valid measure has become

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18 Ong, A. (1987) *Spirits of Resistance and Capitalist Discipline* p.220. See also Buang for the changing lifestyles of factory women and the “backlash” this has created, Buang, A.(1993) "Development and Factory Women".

On the Margins of the Asia-Pacific 152

contested. Instead, what we are seeing today is a world "where the borders and boundaries of modernity melt into the emergent forms of postmodernity and then fold back onto themselves [and where] the common thread that runs through the multiplicity of life activities is the increasing mobility of actors".21

Described by one scholar as "a kaleidoscope of moving bodies with complex subjectivities",22 this increasing mobility of peoples across existing borders has variegated the global map, unravelling the tightly demarcated boundaries between inside/outside, inclusion/exclusion and foreign/domestic of Western IR. The pervasive logic of territoriality in contemporary foreign policy simply reduces the idea of movement to regulated state-sanctioned flows of capital and trade while writing out the identities of gender, class, ecology and culture. These identities are based upon non-territorial affiliations and produce non-linear movements and flows. Hence, much of the rich texture of everyday life and movement across the Pacific is left out of foreign policy discourse and its sovereign model of movement and identity which confines contemporary flows within rigid geopolitical/geoeconomic grids. Contemporary flows fundamentally challenge traditional Hobbesian understandings from which Australian foreign policy has derived its major assumptions about IR. In continuing to hold to these understandings, contemporary policy-makers have privileged market and commercial flows over non-territorial human movements. That has effectively idealised the region in terms of, what Evans and Grant call, a series of "shifting industrial complementarities and economic inter-linkages".23

This valorisation of the region's political economy serves to mask less salutary flows and movements that have also been central to the "making" of regional identity. In other words, the historical constitution of the region has not merely involved commercial and market flows, but a range of transborder crossings silenced by prevailing modes of discourse. In the rest of this chapter I examine some of these deterritorialising flows, highlighting how the multiple and shifting identities of regional life have been obscured in contemporary theorising about the Pacific Century. While it is beyond the scope of this chapter to adequately map the trajectories of these flows, I examine how such trans-Pacific border-crossing has challenged conventional state boundaries. This challenge has, in turn, elicited a violent reterritorialising response by regional states seeking to contain contemporary flows within conventional geopolitical borders.

22 Ibid. p.291.
23 See Chapter 6 for a discussion of this.
i. Sex Workers

One of the most disturbing aspects of the contemporary political economy is the sex industry and its traffic in women’s bodies. Prostitutes, hostesses or sex workers have become a central part of the globalisation of the world economy. According to some accounts, international traffic in women is currently more lucrative than the global arms trade.\(^{24}\) Current estimates indicate that between one and two million women and children are trafficked across the globe every year.\(^{25}\) One hundred thousand women are taken to Japan annually to work in indentured servitude in bars and brothels, the vast majority from the Philippines, Thailand and Taiwan.\(^{26}\) This regionalised sexual political economy is characterised by the concentration of prostitution around both military bases and international tourist centres. Thousands of sex-workers service US military bases and facilities around the region, while the figure for the tourist industry is undoubtedly far higher.

In touting the exotic subservience of Asian women, tourist companies have sustained the rising demand for sex-workers in the region.\(^{27}\) One German tourist brochure on the attractions of Asia, begins “if you want extremely young girls something you could hanged for in your own country...”, while another obscenely boasts:

> you can get the feeling that taking a girl here as easy as buying a pack of cigarettes...With this little slave you can do practically everything in the field of sex. She gives real Thai warmth.\(^{28}\)

Described in a recent article in *The Far Eastern Economic Review* as "the underside of Asia's economic boom"\(^{29}\), this trade in women's bodies is simply written out of conventional foreign policy discourse. In their preoccupation with idealised capital and commodity exchanges, contemporary policy-makers have simply ignored the body politics of the regional sex industry and its inherent sexualised violence.\(^{30}\) It is hardly surprising to find then that the appalling exploitation of women and children in international prostitution is ignored by regional governments who, in urgent need of foreign exchange, quite literally prostitute their own countries.\(^{31}\)

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\(^{26}\) Ibid.p.2.

\(^{27}\) Ibid.p.3.

\(^{28}\) Ibid.p.3-4.

\(^{29}\) "For Lust or Money" *Far Eastern Economic Review* 14 December 1995: p.22.


\(^{31}\) Ibid. p.266.
Outside the mainstream labour market and working illegally, migrant sex workers become the greatest victims of violence, their invisibility leading to exploitation by a system that denies their existence. In Japan, for instance, refuges set up for migrant sex workers have reported large numbers of women requiring medical treatment as a result of their work, often from terrible sexual violence. There is strong evidence of the existence of international networks of brokers who control the supply of migrant sex workers and who have connections to organised crime syndicates. Often attracted into sex work through false promises made by agents, migrant sex workers typically incur huge "debts" in transport and accommodation costs before even starting work. These debts can take years to pay off.

The complex dynamics of this regional sexual economy are embedded in a broader set of colonial and imperial relationships. Such relationships operate in terms of both larger geopolitical structures and more specific gender and personal social relations in which the penetration of capital and strategic power across the globe (geopower) is replicated in the penetration of men into submissive oriental bodies (biopower). The intersection between geopower and biopower can be seen in US military bases throughout Asia whose colonising presence on the territory of the Philippines, Japan and South Korea has been replicated in the conquest and colonisation of women's bodies by American servicemen in the bars and brothels that surround the bases. Just as Asia has been portrayed in Western strategic discourse as a monolithic "other", so too in the everyday discourse of US soldiers have "Asian Women" become reduced, according to popularly worn T-shirt, to "little brown fucking machines powered by rice". This troping of the body as "other" serves to dehumanise migrant sex workers, effectively reducing them to raw materials for either export or processing at home in the sex trade.

For some observers, the conquest of women's bodies on such a scale has signalled a total and complete colonisation of both the social and physical body. And yet, for all the violence and exploitation experienced by migrant sex workers, there are parts of their lives that remain sites of resistance, uncolonised. The everyday practices of these women are characterised, accordingly, by "strategies of survival" which resist total subjection to globalising processes. In their book Let the Good Times Roll, Sturdevant and Stoltzfus relate the stories of women across Asia who, in the face of economic tumult, sickness and sexual exploitation, have managed to survive with great courage and resilience and who, in their simple day-to-day practices, have displayed small acts of

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36 Ibid.p.197.
37 Ibid.p.195.
resistance.\textsuperscript{39} In working illegally, migrant workers not only transgress the dominant moral and territorial boundaries of society, they also evade the territorialising reach of the modern state. While I do not want to play down the great violences of the sex industry, it is imperative to avoid simply reproducing racialised and gendered stereotypes of the submissive oriental woman by treating Asian sex workers as only victims of the sex industry. Rather, in the stories of these women's everyday lives — silenced in the grand narrative of the Pacific Century — we begin to understand them as active political subjects who, with great resourcefulness and intelligence, resist, confront and negotiate, the dominant instruments of power and capital in contemporary political life.\textsuperscript{40}

\textbf{ii. Migrant Labour}

The trans-Pacific border-crossings of sex workers have been reproduced in the regional flows of other migrant workers, refugees, tourists, students, professionals and businesspeople. In particular, labour migration across the region has been crucial to the rapid industrialisation of East Asia, a fact obscured by the focus on trade and capital flows in conventional foreign policy discourse. While I have examined the migration of rural female workers within the state, migrant flows in the Asia-Pacific have also occurred across national boundaries. In 1994 alone, more than one million migrants went abroad, "building the glistening skyscrapers and throbbing expressways, airports and transit systems of the region's boom towns".\textsuperscript{41} It is now conservatively estimated that there are 2.6 million migrants currently working throughout Asia.\textsuperscript{42} In the construction industry, foreign workers are playing a particularly central role as both the proliferation of public works projects and serious labour shortages in Asia are fuelling the growing need to import foreign labour.\textsuperscript{43} In Malaysia's construction industry 80 percent of the labour force consists of foreign workers.\textsuperscript{44}

Driven by the unevenness of capitalist development in the Pacific rim, labour migration has been based upon substantial wage differentials between labouring nationals. Hence, for many foreign workers moving across national boundaries represents an opportunity to help their families climb out of grinding poverty. In labour-importing countries, on the other hand, the existence of large pools of migrant workers, who often work illegally for low pay and in the most dangerous and onerous jobs, serves to push down wages and 

\begin{itemize}
  \item Ibid. For an account of labour migration flows throughout the region see the cover story "Workers on the Move: In Search of Prosperity" \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} 23 May 1996: pp.60-77.
  \item According to one journalist, Taiwan is facing nothing less than a "labour crunch". Baum, J. (1995) "Building Asia: Toil and Trouble?" \textit{Far Eastern Economic Review} 25 May: pp.56-57.
\end{itemize}
lower the costs of production for capital. Far from confirming idealised notions of the "free market", therefore, labour migration can be understood in terms of the creation of a subterranean economy that thrives on the gross exploitation of workers.

This economy of hyper-exploitation has been based on the inferior status of migrant workers as illegal or "guest" labourers who, in lacking citizenship rights, are under constant threat of deportation and the unscrupulous behaviour of exploitative brokers and employers. As Donald Nonini has noted "the threat of deportation acts as compelling form of industrial discipline". Strong evidence suggests that the supply of migrant labour is often controlled by trafficking syndicates who have connections to organised crime such as the Yakuza in Japan. On arriving in their host country, many migrants become bonded labour — their passports confiscated by agents until costs of transport and accommodation are paid off. For the few who make a small fortune as migrant labourers there are many tragic stories of workers returning to their home countries with greater debts than when they left.

At the core of this economy of hyper-exploitation is a structural disparity between the mobility of capital which increasingly moves around the globe in search of low-wage sites and the regulation of labour through visa and citizenship requirements. Hence, while states have worked together in dismantling trade barriers in APEC to facilitate trade and capital flows, they have also individually sought to regulate human flows in and out of the sovereign space of the state. Not surprisingly, debates over "ethnicity" and "national identity" have dominated public discourse throughout the region — debates which, shaped by these broader processes of facilitation/regulation, are deeply embedded in the structural dynamics of capitalist expansion across the Pacific.

Notwithstanding such attempts to regulate labour migration, increasing labour mobility has created diasporic communities of migrants that have fanned out across the region. This has engendered a variegated map of migratory flows very different from the dominant territorial cartography of Western IR. In continuing to espouse a sovereign model of movement and identity, policy-makers are detaching regional diplomacy from the everyday realities of these diasporic communities. As part of a broader deterritorialisation of contemporary life, flows of capital, information, culture, migrants and other bodies are crossing national boundaries at ever increasing speed. Hence, while thousands of Indonesian workers labour daily in Singapore, Malaysia and Japan,
Hong Kong has been inundated by Chinese workers.\(^49\) Meanwhile, Thai workers have moved into Singapore, Malaysia, Hong Kong, Japan and Brunei, many of whom come from Thailand's construction industry, which has itself had to import illegal labour from Burma.\(^50\) Similarly, the Philippines has recently had to import welders for construction projects after a shortage caused by the export of Filipino welders to Japan and Taiwan.\(^51\)

The complexities of this international labour circuit are creating complex labour interlinkages. Diasporas of labouring migrants now criss-cross Asia and the Pacific as literally whole regions are being integrated into international labour circuits. From the Philippine village of Santa Rosa, for instance, 2000 of the 7000 residents have taken overseas jobs, while in 1994 an estimated 53,000 residents of the poor northeastern Thai province of Udon Thani went abroad, many of whom were employed on construction sites throughout Asia and the Middle East.\(^52\)

These human flows have elicited a powerful reterritorialising response by the state. Through a variety of practices, the state has sought to control the mobility of people by reinscribing the inviolability of sovereign boundaries that separate domestic from international, inside from outside and self from other. The policing of these boundaries has taken many forms, most notably through immigration policy in which regional states have demarcated domestic selves from foreign others — the latter of whom have been defined as "exiles", "migrants", "foreigners" and "aliens" whose right of residence has not only been severely restricted but whose otherness has been inscribed in racialised terms.\(^53\)

In transgressing the sovereign borders of the state, therefore, migrants and refugees have become a signifier of an external realm of danger and threat. For instance, in Australia, "boat people" is a label used to describe Vietnamese and Cambodian refugees which turns resourceful, courageous human beings into a monolithic mob. Depicted in such dehumanised terms, the flow of refugees has been understood less as a human issue than a problem of "sovereignty". This has allowed Australian authorities to hold refugees in detention centres and repatriate them back to their country of origin to discourage future refugees from "invading" the country.

This projection of otherness onto migrants and refugees has also been exemplified in Japan where foreign workers and refugees have been blamed for a whole raft of social problems such as bringing crime and disease with them.\(^54\) That is despite the fact migrant

\(^{50}\) Ibid.
workers in Japan tend to take on those jobs that many Japanese are unprepared to do at very low wages — a service that has helped maintain high standards of living in Japan. This suggests that the construction of refugees and migrants as a threat derive their veracity less from empirical reality than from the ways such representations affirm the sovereign claims of the state.

**iii. The Policy Response: Policing Territorial Boundaries**

Such strident attempts to reassert the boundaries between inside and outside betrays a deep anxiety on the part of state elites towards the flux and speed of global flows and movements. Commenting on the proliferation of illegal Indonesian settlements in Malaysia, Prime Minister Mahathir commented that "no country anywhere could tolerate the existence of illegal settlement within its confines. If it did not do anything about the problem, the Government would lose the confidence of the people". In anxiously articulating this sovereign model of identity and space, Mahathir has sought to reassert the sovereign boundaries of the Malaysian state in response to the flows of contemporary regional life. Thus, Mahathir’s statement coincided with a crackdown on Indonesian “aliens” in which workers who had long settled in Malaysia (and whose labour has been crucial to Malaysia’s rapid economic growth) were deported and their settlements, built over many years, bulldozed to the ground.

This violent policing of boundaries is also evident in the surveillance of Australia’s coastline and the prosecution of Indonesian fishermen for illegally fishing in "Australian waters". Many of the fisherman prosecuted are from the Sama Bajo people, also known as the sea nomads of Sulawesi, who have for centuries been fishing Trepang in the waters off north-western Australia. These people are constantly battling to retain their seafaring way of life in the face of the depletion of ocean resources by large Japanese and Taiwanese trawlers operating in Indonesian waters. That has forced the Sama Bajo to fish, often illegally, in Australian territorial waters. By confiscating and burning their boats, the Australian authorities have caused great hardships for the Sama Bajo fishermen which includes the loss of their means of living. While the captain of the boats are imprisoned, the rest of the crew are usually deported to Denpasar. With neither money nor experience of being in an urban environment, many of the deportees are still only teenagers who must find their way back to Sulawesi. Not surprisingly, one of these inexperienced teenagers was recently stabbed to death in the East Javanese city of Surabaya.

While there is evidence to suggest that illegal boats fishing off the Australian coast cause environmental damage and resource depletion, the Sama Bajo’s use of non-motorised

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56 Ibid.
perahu (traditional fishing boats) and their traditional methods of fishing and navigation can hardly be considered a threat to the environment. Indeed, while many of the Sama Bajo are incarcerated in Darwin for illegal fishing, Australian authorities have implicitly sanctioned the high-tech fishing methods used by Japanese and Taiwanese trawlers which cause great destruction to the sea-bed and depletion of ocean resources. Thus, while much more destructive forms of fishing are sanctioned since they comply to legal boundaries, the Sama Bajo become a "threat" to sovereignty as their nomadic way of life spills over and contests the sharply demarcated boundaries of foreign policy discourse.

That suggests Australia's prosecution of Indonesian fisherman is aimed as much at the "policing of sovereign boundaries" as it is at protecting the environment. In prosecuting the Sama Bajo and other "foreign" fishermen, the Australian Government has sought to validate an arbitrary territorial border upon which state sovereignty depends. In doing so, it has translated the relatively benign actions of the Sama Bajo into a dangerous security threat. This representation has been reproduced in the extensive media coverage of the "seizure" of illegal fishing boats which has converted images of poor Indonesian fishermen and their dilapidated boats into a signifier of the illegal and potentially threatening nature of transborder flows.

In policing its sovereign boundaries, then, the Australian Government has sought to sever the enduring historical flows of the Sama Bajo to the Australian continent. The bitter irony of this is that while Australia's contemporary diplomacy has been driven by a policy known as "engagement with Asia", the Sama Bajo have been fishing in so-called "Australian territorial waters" and trading with the local Aboriginal peoples for over 500 years. This latter "regional engagement", however, has become inconsistent with Australia's security-driven foreign policy, based upon the increasingly anachronistic notion of the inviolability of sovereign boundaries.

Exclusion III: Environmental Crisis, Indigenous Peoples and Local Knowledges

The plight of the Sama Bajo is a microcosm of the larger processes of environmental destruction and marginalisation of indigenous peoples that has accompanied industrialisation in the region in recent decades. While such destructive forces have their origins in the expansion of European colonialism, it is only recently that environmental damage has become a major regional problem. Hence, while policy-makers celebrate regional development in terms of a neoliberal narrative of progress and prosperity, the region's rapid economic growth has also led to an ecological disaster of pesticide poisonings, air pollution, falling water tables, unregulated waste disposal, depletion of

58 Ibid., Osborne, R. (1989) "Turtles, Trepang and Trouble: Indonesians in Australian Waters" Inside Indonesia December No.21: pp.19-21. This is not to say that policy-makers such as Downer, Evans or Alatas are engaged in an evil conspiracy against the Sama Bajo but rather that within the prevailing terms of foreign policy discourse, the Sama Bajo become a "threat" or "problem". Thus, in challenging the territorialising logic of geopolitics, the Sama Bajo have become converted into an object of discipline and surveillance by Australian policy-makers.
forest and oceanic resources and land degradation. Underpinned by a linear narrative of progress, contemporary discourse on the "Asia-Pacific" has tended to obfuscate this environmental crisis.

Based upon centralised, top-down models of high-speed, export-led industrialisation, the dominant paradigm of "development" in the region has involved large inflows of foreign capital and an emphasis on large-scale projects of "national development". While this approach has made possible rapid rates of economic growth, it has also led to environmental damage and the large-scale marginalisation of indigenous peoples whose way of life resists the rationalising processes of capitalist industrial development. The plight of such displaced peoples focuses attention on the unequal distribution of wealth from regional development and the question as to who actually benefits from the "region's economic miracle" — a question obscured in prevailing foreign policy discourse.

In expressing its concern over the environmental consequences of industrialisation, the *Far Eastern Economic Review* recently observed that "the by-product of these boom years (of regional development) is environmental degradation of historic proportions". Far from representing an unintended by-product of economic growth, however, such appalling levels of environmental damage have in fact been intrinsic to the type of export-oriented industrialisation promoted by regional states. Thus, driven by the ever increasing demands of "international competitiveness", capital has been forced to increase productivity and lower costs wherever possible. This has included relocating heavy polluting industries to countries where environmental regulation is not enforced. In their efforts to attract foreign capital, East and Southeast Asian countries have become willing "pollution havens" for dirty industries disinclined to pay the costs of environmental protection. Implicit in the celebration of the economic miracle of the region and its industrial "competitiveness", therefore, is complicity in the environmental degradation that such "competitiveness" has demanded.

In South Korea, for instance, one of the exemplars of "the region's economic miracle", the sulfur dioxide content in Seoul's air is the worst in the world, causing close to 70% of

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the rain falling on the city to be so acidic as to pose a hazard to human beings. In urban Thailand, air pollution has reached such proportions that children in Bangkok have among the world's highest levels of lead in their blood. In China, a relatively late-comer to export-oriented industrialisation, the problems of rapid economic growth are becoming all too visible: in Shanghai, for instance, the booming construction industry remains environmentally unregulated, giving rise to problems such as contaminated soil and highly toxic fumes which pose a serious health risk for construction workers.

One could in fact detail a litany of the devastating effects of high-growth, export-oriented strategies of industrialisation across Asia and the Pacific, including the recent forest fires in Indonesia and Malaysia. It is in Taiwan, however, where the worst environmental degradation has taken place — where both large and small firms have dumped industrial waste with impunity and where in 1992 leaking chlorine gas from a polluting factory produced dangerous malodorous vapours over the Ai (lore) River. This disaster hospitalised 1700 people who required "poison antidote" injections for stinging eyes and throats. The problem of industrial pollution in Taiwan is of such magnitude that according to one estimate 30% of Taiwan's rice crop is tainted with heavy metals due largely to unregulated dumping of industrial and toxic waste which has killed rivers, damaged coastal systems and poisoned aquifers.

While industrial waste has become a serious problem, arguably the most alarming environmental issue in the region has been the rapid loss of Southeast Asia's rainforests. The increasing destruction of Indonesia's rainforests has exemplified the threat posed to fragile ecologies by the dominant development paradigm. By espousing this paradigm, Soeharto's modernising regime has pursued a dual economic strategy of export-oriented industrialisation and exploitation of its rich supply of natural resources. Estimates of the amount of Indonesian rainforest deforested per annum due to logging range from 600,000 to 1.2 million hectares, levels that the Indonesian Ministry of Forestry has itself acknowledged are unsustainable. By sanctioning this rapacious exploitation of Indonesia's forests, the Indonesian Government has sought to respond to the dramatic reduction in state revenues due to falling world prices in oil, Indonesia's major export. In addressing this fiscal crisis, the Indonesian Government, at the urging of the World Bank, has sought to increase non-oil exports, of which logging has become an important

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63 Ibid. p.56.
industry. Largely as a result of deforestation, Indonesia now has the longest list of species threatened with extinction of any country, serious soil erosion, flash-flooding, mudslides, and river systems that have serious siltation problems.

This destruction of the fragile eco-systems of Indonesia’s rainforests has had a profoundly negative effect on many of the archipelago’s indigenous peoples whose way of life depends on the ecological integrity of the rainforests. The plight of the Moi people in Irian Jaya is just one example of the onslaught of "development" that indigenous people face from state and capital. The Indonesian Government has recently granted a large Indonesian logging company, PT Intimpura, an enormous logging concession in the heart of Moi ancestral lands. The subsequent destruction of the forest has threatened the survival of the Moi's way of life. In particular, the construction of roads that now criss-cross the forest has caused serious environmental dislocation of the river system. It has also led to the appearance of a string of stagnant roadside pools which produce large concentrations of mosquitoes increasing the risks of malaria and other diseases.

The disregard that the Indonesian Government has had for the Moi people reflects the broader process of marginalisation of indigenous peoples resulting from the top-down development strategy in Indonesia. The demand for land fuelled by large projects of "national development" such as dam and golf course construction, logging operations, and Indonesia’s transmigration program has involved the extensive alienation of indigenous peoples from their lands. In promoting these large-scale development projects, the Government has used the geopolitical language of state sovereignty in which, according to former Minister for Forestry Hasjrul Harahap, "in Indonesia the Forest belongs to the State and not the people...[The Moi people] have no right to compensation". The Indonesian Government has steadfastly refused to recognise any tribal rights over land. In warning against romanticising indigenous peoples, Harahap has argued that "the mere fact that they are indigenous does not render them immediately effective or efficacious under today's conditions". Whatever the exact meaning of "effective" or "efficacious", Harahap's statements indicate that the Moi people and their way of life are viewed by the Indonesian Government as dispensable to the imperatives of "development".

Indeed, the nomadic ways of life of the Moi and other indigenous peoples are inimical to the *modus operandi* of modern capitalism and statecraft based upon fixed property

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rights. This is clear in the ways in which the swidden agricultural methods often adopted by indigenous peoples contrasts sharply with the sedentary forms of modern agriculture and industrial production. Thus, swidden agriculture has not only proved difficult to legislate in modern law, but has also engendered a mobile way of life which challenges the fixed occupation of territory demanded by the modern nation-state. Not surprisingly, in denying indigenous peoples access to forest resources, central state authorities have invoked the threat that "nomadism" poses to development to justify their actions. According to the World Bank and the Indonesian Government, for instance, the swidden agricultural methods used by many indigenous peoples have become a major source of deforestation and, therefore, a reason for denying indigenous peoples access to the forest.

These claims, however, have not gone uncontested. Peter Dauvergne has argued that the World Bank's use of data is "misleading" in underestimating the impact of logging and exaggerating the impact of swidden agriculture. He has pointed to detailed studies which indicate that "the [swidden] form of farming represents a very refined system, well-adapted to prevailing economic and social conditions. [It is a system] which makes optimal use of the limited opportunities, while ensuring that little harm is done to the natural environment". According to Dauvergne, much of the damage of deforestation in Indonesia is actually caused by the government's refusal to grant land use rights to indigenous peoples which intensifies the exploitation of those areas available to indigenous communities. In providing assistance to the Indonesia through Australia's official aid organisation AUSAID, the Australian Government, for its part, has been complicit in the marginalisation of indigenous peoples. Indeed, one of AUSAID's major projects in Indonesia is assisting the authorities there to regularise and rationalise Indonesia's land registration system. In introducing modern surveying techniques into Indonesia, the project will seriously undermine the needs and ways of life of indigenous peoples through its further codification of land registration.

The marginalisation of indigenous communities which has occurred throughout the region, therefore, has also involved a rejection of local knowledge as "primitive" and "backward". Hence, the stigmatisation of "swidden agriculture" as a cause of...

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79 Hence, the Indonesian army launched "Operation Penis Gourd" which aimed at getting the local tribespeople of Irian Jaya to wear Western-style clothes, instead of their semi-naked style of dress. An American missionary present at one location where clothes were distributed reported, however, that the next day the men were wearing shorts on their head and women were using the dresses as shoulder bags.
deforestation has become the major pretext for extensive resettlement of indigenous peoples. By promoting a technocratic agenda of "managing the environment", regional states have pursued policies designed to marginalise indigenous people and destroy their way of life. As part of its broader integration and assimilation policies, for instance, the Indonesian Government has relocated thousands of indigenous peoples from traditional ancestral lands into government villages based upon sedentary agriculture. One such program, the "Transmigration Industrial Forest Estate" project has been organised by 100 logging companies in Irian Jaya and has sought to remove "nomadic farmers" from their traditional lands and resettle them in camps where each farmer has been given a plot of land to cultivate fixed agricultural crops. The program has obliged companies to "employ the head of each family" in their logging operations, forcing indigenous peoples to survive by cutting down their own ancestral forests.

Through the imposition of the rigid boundaries of territoriality and fixed property rights, regional states such as Indonesia are pursuing massive "transmigration" and relocation programs which are having the effect of destroying the nomadic way of life of indigenous peoples. As in the case of the Australian Government's actions against the Sarna Bajo, the Indonesian Government has invoked the "environment" as a means to marginalise local knowledges. The imposition of a territorial logic is clear in the rigid sedentary farm model adopted in the Indonesian transmigration program — a model entirely inappropriate for the ecosystems of Indonesia's outer islands. In fact, far from being driven by "environmental" concerns, Jakarta has seen transmigration as a security policy and as central means of "maintaining stability" in the outer islands. Thus, while the relocation of indigenous peoples is an important part of the transmigration program, most transmigrants are Javanese — Indonesia's dominant ethnic group. Many of these transmigrants are in fact former military personnel. As Carmel Budiardjo has argued:

transmigration is being promoted by the military regime in Jakarta as a means of enforcing the government's 'top-down' development and extending its control over remote and troublesome areas. [T]he main motive for the program is to promote 'national security' and crush dissent.

Driven by such security concerns, transmigration has centred on a policy of relocating thousands of loyal disciplined bodies to "the margins" of the Indonesian state. This massive state relocation of Javanese peasants to Eastern Indonesia, whose sedentary agricultural practices have formed the basis of these new settlements, has amounted to an imposition of the dominant way of life and development onto the margins. In other

80 "The Last Stand of the Moi People" Inside Indonesia June 1992 No.31: p.22.
82 Ibid. p.512.
84 Ibid.
On the Margins of the Asia-Pacific

words, the Indonesian Government has promoted transmigration as a way of territorialising marginal places and people and incorporating them more fully into the state. This incorporation of indigenous peoples and places within the geopolitical grids of modern capitalism and statecraft, not their isolation from such processes, is the primary feature of marginality.85

The Indonesian experience I have examined above is a microcosm of the broader process of marginalisation of indigenous peoples throughout the Asia-Pacific by the forces of contemporary statecraft and capitalism.86 The on-going ethnocide of forest peoples in the region such as the Kanyan and Penan in Sarawak, the Karen, and Karenni in Burma, and the Batak, Aeta, and Agta in the Philippines remains a silenced part of the contemporary narrative of the Pacific Century.87 Similarly, in their focus on the booming Pacific Rim economies of East Asia, contemporary policy-makers have all but ignored the South Pacific. As one Pacific Islander has asked, "what about the area within the Rim? In comparison to the Rim, is the inner Pacific a vacuum?".88

Notwithstanding Australia’s declaratory policy of "constructive commitment" with the South Pacific, our diplomats have vigorously promoted an APEC agenda that has excluded the South Pacific from the broader dialogues and forums of Asia-Pacific regionalism.89 And yet it is peoples of the South Pacific, along with the indigenous communities of Asia, who have had the most to lose from the environmentally destructive patterns of regional development celebrated by policy-making elites across Asia. For many Melanesian and Polynesian peoples, then, it is the very survival of their way of life and environment that is presently at stake. Indeed, the use of the Pacific as a dumping ground for nuclear and industrial waste which has rendered some small Pacific atolls inhabitable.90 Moreover, the rising water levels which have occurred due to global warming recently threaten to submerge some Pacific microstates within the next 50 years. Most scientists are convinced that global warming has been caused by increased carbon and sulfur dioxide emissions resulting from increasing industrialisation and urbanisation. Viewed from the perspective of these terrible environmental consequences, the

86 See Ibid.
unregulated industrialisation of regional countries in recent decades is less a cause for celebration that deep concern.

In this chapter I highlighted some of the silences and omissions of contemporary theorising on the Pacific Century. I focused on the ways in which the abstractions of contemporary foreign policy have served to exclude from analytical and policy attention many of the everyday realities of Pacific and Asian societies — of gender, border crossings, indigenous peoples and ecology. Here we saw how, in promoting a trade-driven regional diplomacy, our policy-makers and diplomats have remained oblivious to the many of the dramatic changes that have occurred in the region in the last two decades. These changes, I argued, have had a broader deterritorialising effect on global relations. Hence, characterised by shifting definitions of work, identity and gender, the emerging realities of contemporary regional life simply evade the territorial logic of foreign policy discourse. This highlights the urgent need to expand the narrow intellectual perspectives currently directing the policy process by developing more inclusive understandings of the Asia-Pacific attuned to the emerging postmodern realities of regional life, a task I address in the following chapter.
Chapter 9

Reframing Foreign Policy: Toward an Expanded Agenda of Regional Engagement

In examining Australia's regional engagement, this thesis has focused on the exclusions and silences of contemporary regional diplomacy. It has argued that contemporary foreign policy has become detached from the non-territorial and everyday realities of Asian and Pacific societies. In this final chapter, I examine the possibility of acknowledging these silenced realities in the formulation of Australian foreign policy. How might it be possible, I ask, to rethink regional diplomacy through recognising these postmodern realities and their growing importance in the post-Cold War era? In other words, how does acknowledging the contemporary significance of gender, ecology, indigenous culture and transborder flows expand Australia's regional engagement beyond the prevailing agenda of commercial and strategic integration?

Reframing contemporary foreign policy in these terms entails being attentive to the local stories and everyday practices of trans-Pacific life and the ways such local sites are intersected by global forces. This corresponds to Frederic Jameson's call for a new cognitive mapping of local/global space consonant with the deterritorialising flows of global postmodernity. It also corresponds to Micheal Shapiro's appeal for a new "conceptual space beyond the world map of sovereign states [and regions]" which embodies planetary flows without reproducing the territorial logic of prevailing foreign policy discourse — a remapping based upon a critical "global politics of contested spaces and contentious identities".

How, then, does undertaking this remapping serve to reconstruct foreign policy discourse so as to engender more adequate and less violent understandings of post-Cold War global relations? How, more specifically, can a new sense of Australia's place in the world be imagined so that regional engagement might come to signify something more than cooperation between strategic and commercial elites? Furthermore, through what kinds of imaginative processes and geopolitical practices is it possible to reclaim the diversity and difference of trans-Pacific life from the rationalising practices of global capitalism and modern statecraft? And finally, how is it possible to construct new postmodern knowledges able to apprehend the deterritorialised realities of contemporary global life, knowledges which engage the multiple and polyvocal histories of the Asia-Pacific?

In posing these questions, I divide this chapter into three parts. I begin by drawing on the insights of critical IR scholars who offer ways to think beyond the realist-liberal impasse of Australian foreign policy. Here I examine how it might be possible to engender a respect for difference in regional diplomacy which displaces the reductionist, territorialising strategies of recent foreign policy. Far from representing an arcane academic exercise of "theory", this project draws on a broader set of concrete practices of resistance long engaged in by peoples across the Pacific who seek to give meaning to their lives beyond the abstractions of geopolitical discourse.

The second part of this chapter, accordingly, examines the dissenting practices of various social movements across the Pacific — of indigenous peoples, academics, environmentalists, feminists and, above all, ordinary citizens. It focuses on the ways in which these disparate groups of people are seeking to concretely reformulate issues of identity and political community. In particular, I show how cross-border coalitions signal an emerging "transnationalisation" of identity which forms the basis for reimagining regional political space. Finally, I examine how the alternative understandings of the Asia-Pacific engendered by social movements can be concretely articulated in contemporary foreign policy so as to expand Australia’s regional engagement.

**Beyond the Realist-Liberal Impasse: Difference, Identity and the Region**

As I have shown throughout this thesis, the dominant images of the Asia-Pacific region to emerge within Australian foreign policy have fluctuated between realist notions of threat and containment and liberal representations of cooperation and engagement. These fluctuating images have encompassed the discursive field of possibilities that have framed Australia's encounter with the Asia-Pacific. In recent foreign policy, liberal notions of cooperation and engagement have come to dominate over traditional realist threat scenarios. Contemporary policy-makers have represented the region less as a realm of danger and threat, as in the past, than as a space of identity, progress and modernity. Thus, while Australian identity has traditionally been secured through representing the region as an "other", in recent foreign policy, identity has become constituted through the inscription of an idealised Asia-Pacific region that exhibits all the privileged features of modern industrial life. In other words, "the self" has been secured through the projection of the constitutive features of identity onto a space labelled "the region" in which "Australia" is now located. "The Asia-Pacific" acts as a mirror as modernity reinvents itself in the form of an economic miracle. The economic emergence of the Asia-Pacific has rejuvenated the modernising project as rapid industrialisation and state building — once the preserve of "the West" — now characterise regional development. Represented by policy-makers via this unilinear movement of otherness into self (but not into difference), "the region" is emptied of any content of cultural difference. In adopting an homogenising narrative, policy-makers celebrate the emergence of new centres of power.
in the Asia-Pacific as a process of "convergence" in which "they" have become more like "us".

How is it possible to move beyond this dominant philosophical model of geopolitical relations that marginalises difference and delimits the possibilities of foreign policy? More specifically, through what emerging modes of discourse is it possible to reframe foreign policy so that the constitution and narration of Australian identity engenders respect for difference, rather than its obliteration? This question involves what Tzvetan Todorov has defined as the "third approach to difference" beyond the realist-liberal impasse discussed in Chapter 1. In posing these questions, this chapter draws on a broader rethinking of the dominant categories and assumptions of modern political life by critical thinkers and activists who, as Jane Flax has suggested, have sought "to understand and constitute the self, gender, knowledge, social relations and cultural change without resorting to linear, teleological, hierarchical or binary ways of thinking and being".  

This attempt to critique and reconstruct dominant ways of thinking in IR has become an urgent task in recent decades with the emergence of new centres of power in the Asia-Pacific. That development has signalled the postmodern condition of contemporary foreign policy in which the binaries of Western IR demarcating East from West, self from other, developed from undeveloped and Australian from the region have unravelled. In order to recognise this deterritorialisation and decentring of geopolitical identity, however, presupposes a discursive decentring of the major modes of Australian foreign policy through which identity and difference have been imagined. Writing over three decades ago, Paul Ricoeur presciently summed up the consequences of the globalised condition we now find ourselves in:

When we discover that there are several cultures instead of just one and consequently at the time when we acknowledge the end of a certain cultural monopoly, be it illusory or real, we are threatened with destruction by our own discovery. Suddenly it becomes possible that there are just others, that we ourselves are an "other" among others.  

Acknowledging this radically decentred condition promotes a self-reflective moment in Australian foreign policy and its constitution of identity. That is, if it is accepted that "we" are just "an other among others" then identity is disclosed as an effect of difference. Put another way, the self is made possible through its relations with others. There is no foundation that secures the self, no sovereign authority that posits a realm of ontological

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truth; rather, every identity is contingent on the existence and inscription of an other within a broader economy of differential relations. "Australia", therefore, is meaningful only in relation to a broader encounter with difference through which the boundaries of identity are demarcated — an encounter exemplified in Australia's enduring engagement with the Asia-Pacific region.

The acknowledgment of the interdependence of self/other and Australia/the region underpins an alternative understanding of geopolitical identity in which the reliance of identity on difference engenders a respect for the other. As James Der Derian has noted: "we must find a way to live with and recognise the very necessity of difference, the need to accept heterogeneity before we begin to understand our lives in the roles of others". This attitude promotes a reframing of foreign policy discourse in which identity is no longer imagined in terms of its opposition and autonomy from otherness but rather in its obligation and responsibility to others.

That involves establishing ways of thinking and being that constitute identity and engage difference without the imposition of hierarchy. Tzvetan Todorov has described this as "a dialogue of cultures...in which no one has the last word and in which neither voice is reduced to the status of a simple object". In adopting what is an essentially post-sovereign worldview, the interlocutors of this dialogue would reject the sovereign model of identity in favour of a sense of responsibility that one has toward others. Identity would be secured (always contingently) through a recognition of difference rather than the defensive moves of the modern state in which a sovereign space is carved out of boundaries which must remain inviolate in order to secure the stability of identity.

Rethinking identity and difference in these terms serves to open up hitherto unimagined possibilities in foreign policy. In particular, it serves to reframe regional engagement beyond the narrow economic and security agendas currently driving the policy process.

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9 One could speculate, for instance, how an alternative disposition toward refugees would emerge out of this reframing of the identity-difference problematic. Here one could understand refugee flows in human terms rather than purely as an issue of sovereignty.
"Australia in the region" becomes conceived here as a narrative space in which identity is constituted through a recognition of the interdependence of self and other. That involves resisting current conceptions of regional engagement in which "sovereign", "rational" policy-makers deploy an architectonic regional diplomacy designed to master space "out there" in the service of dominant strategic and economic interests. This architectonic project has amounted to is a refusal by contemporary policy-makers to acknowledge the emergent cartographies of contemporary political life. The modern image of a sovereign rational subject acting autonomously in an anarchic, atomised world has been challenged by the radically interdependent condition of globalised postmodernity. A more adequate post-Cold War remapping of regional space, therefore, involves displacing the centred territorial subject of Australian foreign policy. It also involves defining the Asia-Pacific as a hybridised space in which self and other coexist equally as subjects. Conceptualised in these terms, regional diplomacy takes the form of a dialogue "whereby the self instead of assimilating the other opens itself to the other through a relation with it".10

This broad-based reconceptualisation of identity/difference refigures regional engagement as an intersubjective encounter between Australian and Asian and Pacific communities — representing a larger dialogue whose participants each represent an interdependent "other among others". In this sense, the Asian and Pacific parts of "the region" come to signify the hybridised condition of intersubjectivity, a condition which resists the impulse to incorporate otherness into identity. In its place a dialogic understanding of the region emerges that engages the diverse histories and cultural differences of Asian and Pacific societies. Reimagined in such terms, the "Asia-Pacific" becomes a space that radically decentres identity (as the hyphen in its name suggests) — both disclosing the interdependence of self and other, and making possible a respect for difference as the basis for reformulating foreign policy discourse.

In the remaining parts of this chapter, I examine how this imaginative remapping of regional space can be articulated in respect to concrete policy settings. In pursuing that task, however, I resist the temptation of searching for quick-fix solutions, as is the wont of mainstream foreign policy analysts. They usually disparage any attempt to move beyond prevailing terms of discourse as irrelevant to "the world as we find it", as if an adequate policy response to the end of the Cold War can be formulated through a simple update of prevailing policies. Yet the dangers and opportunities facing societies across the globe in the late 20th Century do not lend themselves to such formulaic responses. Rather, the decentring and deterritorialisation of identity which has been a central feature of global politics recently belies the desire for instant answers, involving instead fundamentally rethinking the assumptions that have underpinned foreign policy policy.

To begin to relate this rethinking to policy settings requires confronting the logic of territoriality that pervades foreign policy discourse since it is through this logic that the

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difference and diversity of Pacific and Asian societies have been reduced to the requirements of identity. This has been expressed in contemporary Australian foreign policy through the conflation of "the region" with its ruling state elites. That familiar territorialising strategy amounts to reducing regional identity to statist expressions of cultural difference. Thus, in adopting the logic of territoriality, contemporary policymakers have focused on dominant commercial and strategic relations while all but ignoring other non-territorial issues drawn from cultural, gender, class and ecological perspectives.

It follows from this that any fundamental reframing of foreign policy must move beyond the discursive practices that construct identity on a strictly territorial basis. The deterritorialising flows that have characterised recent trans-Pacific relations serve to challenge and unravel the existing territorial organisation of political space and the dominant understandings upon which this is based. There is a need, accordingly, to think beyond prevailing territorial abstractions by relocating an understanding of the region within the dynamics of local social relations. By their very nature, these kinds of local relations are based on movements and flows that often transcend the borders of the territorial state.

This involves a major shift from "sedentary" forms of knowledge based upon the state to non-territorial, "nomadic" knowledges that derive from the everyday realities of gender, identity, ecology and migration.\(^{11}\) In other words, the decentring of global relations in recent decades requires that we think beyond state-centred discourses as the only source of knowledge and practice. Instead we need to be attentive to the kinds of marginalised perspectives outlined in the last chapter, which have found their most powerful contemporary articulation in what I identify below as "critical social movements".\(^{12}\)

Emerging as increasingly salient actors across the Pacific in recent decades, social movements are concretely engaged in a kind of "critical geopolitics"\(^ {13}\) which seeks to

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\(^{13}\) The term is used and explained by a group of critical geographers working at the intersection of geography, development, international relations and international political economy. See O'Tuathail, G. (1996) *Critical Geopolitics: The Politics of Writing Global Space*. University of Minnesota Press: Minneapolis. For use of the term in relation to social movements see, Dalby, S. (1990) "Dealignment Discourse".
ground human community and identity via a post-sovereign worldview. That has served to advance the kind of rethinking of geopolitical identity outlined above. Thus, by forming coalitions across the Pacific, social movements refuse to be confined to the dominant territorial organisation of political life. They offer, therefore, the possibility of a rearticulation of political space beyond the dominant geopolitical understandings of the "Asia-Pacific". That possibility can be glimpsed in the way many social movements have formulated non-Western, non-elite forms of human security and development drawn from local knowledges which resist the imposition of a singular industrial order across the Pacific. This offers, in turn, the prospect for more democratic, sustainable and equitable modes of development and regional engagement.

**Rethinking the "Asia-Pacific": The Critical Geopolitics of Social Movements**

While social movements have played an important role in the historical experiences of Asian and Pacific societies, it is over the last several decades that various non-government organisations (NGOs) and citizens' movements have become salient agents of new political understandings and practices across the Pacific. The 1980s was an important formative period in which, according to Walden Bello, "a tremendous number and rich variety of NGOs and people's organisations [emerged to form] the cutting edge of the alternative Pacific enterprise".14 As Joseph Camilleri has noted, the kinds of regional networks and linkages forged by social movements "may well prove to be the single most important contribution to a more habitable future for the peoples of Asia and the Pacific".15

The rich variety of these movements, however, makes it difficult to use conventional conceptual schemas to explain their significance. Ranging from a concern with human rights, the environment, self-determination, indigenous culture, anti-nuclearism, urban renewal, health and alternative development, the issues and interests represented by social movements are astounding in their scope.16 Similarly, the constituency of social

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movements can range from small village groups to large-scale international coalitions. A further complicating issue is the non-institutional form that social movements often take: after all, they are defined more by movement than stasis, by the ebb and flow of their actions rather than their institutionalisation in fixed structures. To seek to classify such diverse movements, whose meanings and understandings remain to be fully articulated, is, therefore, a perilous task.

Moreover, in identifying these movements, it is important that one avoids romanticising their role or overstating their power. The problems typically faced by social movements are by now well documented and should not be underestimated. Social movements regularly experience repression or cooptation by governments and are often weakened by internal rivalries and conflicts over finances, political strategies and personal relations. Thus, while I examine the positive contribution that certain social movements have made in developing alternative understandings of political identity and practice, I am aware of the broader problems and dilemmas that many social movements face, particularly in the repressive state context of many East and Southeast Asian societies where there is often very little political space open to forces from civil society.

It is precisely on the basis of these difficulties, however, that it is possible to make some broader conceptual observations. Indeed, the contemporary significance of social movements can be seen to lie precisely in the ways in which they both evade conventional political categories and confront the closures of the prevailing political process. As Rob Walker has suggested, critical social movements are important not because of their overt
power in the present but because they carry the seeds of new understandings in reconstructing potential future orders.\(^{19}\) In doing so, they both acknowledge the transboundary flows of contemporary life and offer more just and equitable modes of regional engagement. The most significant feature of the recent growth of social movements across Asia and the Pacific, therefore, is the ways they have signalled new possibilities for imagining forms of identity and political space that go beyond the dominant territorial understandings of contemporary foreign policy discourse.

Such emerging possibilities can be discerned in respect to what I identify as the two defining dimensions of critical social movements: firstly, their articulation of non-territorial identities which engage the multiple histories and differences of Asian and Pacific societies; and secondly, the trans-Pacific coalitions and alliances they form and the broader set of trans-boundary practices they engage in as distinctly "regional" movements. It is these kinds of practices that distinguishes critical social movements from other kinds of peoples' movements and non-governmental organisations.

In both articulating non-territorial identities and developing emerging transnational practices, contemporary social movements have reconstructed an understanding of the "Asia-Pacific" in terms of an alternative transnational community of citizens groups and marginalised peoples constructed across territorial boundaries. The contribution of Muto Ichiyo to the Asia-Pacific NGO Conference on the World Summit for Social Development (1994) is worth quoting at length as it outlines the alternative political practices pursued by NGOs and community groups across the Pacific. According to Ichiyo:

> In the past two decades or so, we have witnessed grassroots communities organized in autonomous social movements empower themselves and resolve problems for themselves, without waiting for the state to become "ours" and without depending on seizure-of-state-oriented political parties. In other words, communities and social movements are beginning to change things here and now, without postponing solutions to remote days, while fighting all obstacles that stand in the way. These take various forms: Village communities developing integrated farming, workers' cooperatives creating jobs for themselves, consumer cooperatives having permanent links with rural and urban producer groups, people's banks, alternative people-to-people trade, credit associations and numerous other "economic projects" fall in this category.\(^{20}\)


By stressing the everyday practices of local communities, social movements reject the kinds of grand theorised conceptions of state and region that have dominated contemporary geopolitical discourses such as Australian foreign policy. The intrinsically local orientation adopted by critical social movements serves to enlarge political space beyond the institutional parameters of the state through focusing activities on the everyday practices of the family, the workplace and the community. This has had the effect of expanding the prevailing terms of discourse by redefining "the political" less in terms of dominant territorial conceptions of political agency than as a function of the structures and practices of everyday life. Again as Ichiyo points out:

The abode of political power is not only in the realm of government and overtly political institutions but in the midst of everyday life relationships. [The recognition of this involves] a reorganization of the power relationships in everyday life and a new understanding of politics....a Copernican change in the appraisal of on-going movements and struggles. [T]he Copernican change opens a very different perspective [in which] the whole endeavour [of everyday struggles] is highly political in a new sense, since the emergence of alternative relations means redistribution of power at all levels and in all aspects of life. The political, thus redefined, is enriched, liberated from the monopoly of political professionals and returned to communities.21

Through relocating their understandings of social life within the realm of local practice, social movements deploy an alternative conception of social reality based upon the non-territorial identities of gender, class, ecology and culture which arise out of the experience of grassroots communities. As Walker has noted, it is the capacity of social movements to articulate a multiplicity of marginalised experiences and histories "that now makes them so important as interpreters of the challenges and transformations of the modern world".22 This can be discerned in the ways citizens' movements and NGOs have given voice to important social forces marginalised from prevailing political processes. These have included the rural landless and urban unemployed marginalised from the modern economy, indigenous peoples alienated from their lands, women subjected to the violences of broader patriarchal structures and refugees and migrants who, lacking citizenship rights, are vulnerable to the disciplinary practices of statecraft.

In giving voice to these forces, social movements have sought to formulate participatory forms of democratic practice. Such formulations are far removed from prevailing conceptions of democracy advanced by contemporary policy-makers through the convergence thesis and the so-called triumph of liberal representative democracy. Far from joining in such Western triumphalism, social movements have highlighted the shortcomings of current representative democracy which, delimited within a given territory of the nation-state, is proving to be an increasingly anachronistic model under

21 Ibid. p.32.
globalising conditions. In particular, a growing number of scholars and activists has pointed out how the modern “democratic” model of political representation — based upon the election of political leaders to represent and speak for “the people” — has lost much of its legitimacy recently. Thus, in so-called Western liberal democracies grassroots communities have become increasingly disempowered from formal political processes signalled by growing class disparities. The limitations of this model have been displayed by contemporary Australian policy-makers whose promotion of liberal capitalist values in the region has been centred less on advancing the needs of grassroots communities than on institutionalising, socialising and buttressing unaccountable technocratic policy elites. (see Chapter 6)

In contrast, many activists have promoted citizen participation in political life as a way of establishing new ways through which poor communities can organise and speak for themselves. It is in this context that notions of "empowerment", "participatory democracy" and "self-determination" have become central to the community practices of NGOs and other citizens' groups. In promoting these concepts, social movements have adopted a decentred local politics designed to empower marginalised peoples to overcome their daily problems such as environmental degradation, gender inequality and ethnic marginalisation.

While engendering an enlargement of political space at the grassroots level, the local politics of social movements has by no means precluded them from engaging and challenging state power. Rather than aiming to capture the state apparatus, however, NGO activists and community groups have strategically negotiated repressive state structures in order to be able to openly promote a people-centred pattern of development and security. In fact, in the repressive systems of many East and Southeast Asian societies, negotiating state power is "a tactical necessity" for community groups seeking to legitimise their role in the political process. In the face of the closure of political space, social movements can sometimes only hope to bear witness to the repressive practices of states — their role limited to exposing the crimes of torture, arbitrary arrests and extra-judicial killings by authoritarian regimes whose victims remain silenced and forgotten. This role has centred on the objective of making both governments and

powerful international organisations more accountable, through pressuring them to adhere to the rule of law and to punish or boycott those who fail to do so.\(^\text{26}\)

In seeking to negotiate repressive structures, NGOs and other citizen movements have redefined two strategic agendas closely identified with the state — namely, security and development. Many have skilfully reappropriated the language of dominant policy agendas to reclaim human and community-centred understandings of "security" and "development". Thus, by promoting their own security and development agendas, social movements have been able to legitimise their community-related projects which the state often finds difficult to discredit, lest it undermine its own ruling ideology.\(^\text{27}\)

Exploiting the polysemic possibilities of state-promoted discourses, critical social movements have in fact articulated concrete alternatives to the dominant politico-economic order across the Pacific. That has been clear in their challenge to the export-based industrial strategies and militaristic security policies that regional states have pursued in recent decades. In contrast, NGOs and other community groups have promoted people-centred and ecologically sustainable modes of development and security designed to reconstruct self-sustaining communities from the bottom up.\(^\text{28}\) Challenging conventional geopolitical understandings, these alternative agendas have been framed via an "ethics which puts a respect for life and the intrinsic worth of all human beings above all else".\(^\text{29}\) In adopting this post-sovereign, postmodern ethics, contemporary social movements have formulated an alternative conception of security on the basis that "we cannot be secure unless others are secure, including them being satisfied with their economic and political situation".\(^\text{30}\) As Richard Falk has suggested, this recognition of the interdependence of self/other offers an alternative vision of a more secure and just world to prevailing realities. It is vision which is diametrically opposed to current definitions of

\(^{26}\) Ibid. Examples of this abound such as in Indonesia where the 1996 crackdown by the military regime against widespread protests in the capital were challenged by various activists. These opponents of the Soeharto regime sought to resist and "bear witness" to the brutal acts of arbitrary detention, torture and interrogation carried out by the military in the aftermath to the unrest. See "Rights Activists Worried about Missing People" *The Jakarta Post* 1 August 1996: p.1. While this might appear futile in the face of brutal military power, it is only through "bearing witness" that the military is prevented from abusing their power totally unchallenged and with impunity. For a very different example involving the role of social movements in making international organisations more accountable see Yoko, K. (1993) "Judging the G-7" *Ampto: Japan-Asia Quarterly Review* 24 (4): pp.39-57.

\(^{27}\) This ability of many social movements to use the polysemic possibilities of prevailing discourse for their own purposes is also evident in the reclaiming of "nationalist" struggles for independence by these movements. Thus, activists throughout the region have sought to re-work traditional discourses of nationalism in their respective societies to discredit, rather than legitimise the sovereign claims of state elites, by pointing to the continuities between the neocolonialism of present governments and the actions of their former European masters. The best example of this I know of is the writings and activism of Javanese priest, writer, architect and activist Romo Mangunwijaya.


Reframing Foreign Policy/Rethinking Engagement

security which, based upon the logic of deterrence, seek autonomy from others through a militarisation of global relations in which one's own security is achieved through making "others" less secure.³¹

An ecologically-based and people-centred ethics promoting participatory democracy and the self-reliant capacities of communities — these are the core elements of the reframed agendas of "security" and "development" that Asian and Pacific NGOs have articulated.³² The promotion of these alternative agendas has depended upon the ability of movements to draw attention to the connections between the local and global. What distinguishes particular social movements as critical, then, is the ways in which they are able to explore linkages between local conditions and a larger structural context — i.e. between the disempowerment of communities at a grassroots level and the broader processes of uneven development, indebtedness, structural poverty, militarisation and environmental destruction. Such structural processes are rooted in prevailing social relations both within and between nations. In making these connections, social movements have been at the forefront of resisting the deleterious effects of rapid industrial development, militarisation and the destruction of autonomous local communities. In their resistance, they have articulated a broader crisis of legitimacy in conventional political processes and understandings.³³ That has been exemplified in the ways that NGOs and citizens groups have highlighted the disparity that exists between official notions of Progress, Security and Development and the everyday realities of trans-Pacific life, characterised in many instances by ecological crisis, economic dislocation and political marginalisation.

In making these connections, citizens groups and NGOs have increasingly discovered that the struggles they wage and the broader economic and geopolitical structures they confront are shared by other communities across space. That has given rise to emerging transnational solidarities across Asia and the Pacific.³⁴ "As the struggle is a global

³¹ Ibid. See chapter 5 for the militarising strand in Australia's own foreign policies.
³⁴ Mapping these regional coalitions is a difficult enterprise as they often represent temporary strategic alliances rather than permanent structures. Some existing coalitions include: the Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC), the Asian Alliance of Appropriate Technology Partners (APPROTECH Asia), the Center for the Development of Human Resources in Rural Asia (CENDHRRA), the Asian Cultural Forum on Development (ACFOD), the Southeast Asia Rural Reconstruction Association (SARRA), the Indonesian Forum for International Development (INFID), The Asia-Pacific Centre for Justice and Peace (Washington D.C.) Asia-Pacific People's Forum on Peace and Development, Asia Monitor Resource Centre (Hong Kong), Philippine Rural Reconstruction
political struggle", observes Muto Ichiyo, "it is essential that alliances are forged between communities and movements of the core, semi-peripheral and peripheral countries to bring about the democratization of the global power center and the redistribution of global power and to create sustainable and alternative transborder systems and relations".35 One example of this is the People's Agricultural Plan 21 (PAP 21) which has involved an ambitious program between the grassroots communities of Japanese consumer cooperatives and the farming communities of the Negros Islands in the Philippines.36 This program has been designed to turn the monocultural plantation economy of Negros into a people-centred economy based upon self-reliant, organic and integrated agriculture supplying Japanese consumer cooperatives with chemical free produce. This has represented an alternative producer-consumer network that bypasses normal agricultural markets dominated by large agribusiness.

Another example of regional coalition building has been emergence of a range of coalitions of NGOs recently. These have tended to coalesce around the organisation of "counter-conferences" to more formal intergovernmental meetings, such as the official APEC and social development summits hosted by regional governments.37 Addressing issues such as gender, human rights, indigenous peoples, denuclearisation and regional cooperation, NGOs have skilfully exploited media coverage of official events to promote and publicise their own critical message. Hence, the organisation of counter-conferences consisting of critical scholars, activists and ordinary citizens alongside the formal meetings of officialdom has served to juxtapose far-reaching NGO proposals for change against the official orthodoxy of "more of the same". This has have effectively disclosed the policy paralysis of official responses to growing global crises.

The international networking efforts of NGOs and other citizens' movements have been aided by the development of new communication technologies in which the internet, in particular, has become an important way of establishing new transnational relations. This

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36 Ibid. p.34. See also Ampo 20 (4) 1988: pp.8-40 and 24 (2) 1993 pp.47-53
phenomenon has illustrated the positive potential of grass-roots globalisation, in contrast to the dangerous implications of globalisation-from-above which I have outlined in earlier chapters.\textsuperscript{38} These emergent forms of transnational practice are based upon the kind of postmodern reframing of identity which I touched upon earlier in this chapter. Hence, rather than constituting identity in terms of a shared attachment to one or another totalising ideal, social movements are typically made up of heterogeneous local communities representing a plurality of interests and objectives. As Anna Yeatman has pointed out, in contrast to conventional political strategies, social movements do not:

> totalise the differently motivated emancipatory struggles and convert them into the voices of the one, singular, rational subject. Theirs is an emancipatory politics of exploring what it means to develop the pragmatics of self-determination when there is no [autonomous] self in question, only selves who are positioned in different ways...[social movements] do not conduct themselves in terms of an homogeneous movement identity in relation to which individual adherents discipline and subject themselves. They eschew the idea of a shared or common culture. Instead, the identity of a movement arises out of a politics of affinity between subjects who continually reinterpret the movement and its goals in relation to the changing character of their own personal histories.\textsuperscript{39}

This reframing of identity contrasts with conventional definitions of the subject as an autonomous, unified self that incorporates others into a common identity. In contrast, social movements recognise the interdependence of self/other as the basis of an alternative framing of identity founded upon a relational sense of self. In recognising the shortcomings of traditional revolutionary strategies, therefore, social movements avoid the modern impulse to totalise resistance into one grand struggle. They adopt instead a pluralist orientation by acknowledging difference and diversity within broader cooperative arrangements that build connections and affinities between peoples and cultures.\textsuperscript{40} Engaging in emerging techniques of transnational coalition-building, social movements are becoming an important source of alternative understandings of identity at a time when territoriality has unravelled as the sole basis for organising political space.

In articulating the multiple non-territorial identities of gender, class, ecology and ethnicity — identities which by their very nature transgress state boundaries — contemporary social movements have displayed a heightened sensitivity toward the deterritorialisation and transnationalisation of global life. Here we have seen how the flows of postmodernity increasingly interpenetrate everyday practices, collapsing the global and regional into the local. Responding to these flows, social movements have displayed a simultaneously local and transnational orientation. Thus, NGO activists have sought to articulate local

\textsuperscript{38} An outstanding example of this is APRENET, an internet site bringing together a range of critical resources on the Asia-Pacific. See http://www.nautilus.org/nautilus


\textsuperscript{40} Ibid. p.7.
grassroots interests at the same time as recognising the regionalised and globalised frame of reference they must negotiate within the world capitalist system. Working at this local/regional/global intersection, social movements across Asia and the Pacific have articulated emerging decentred cartographies based upon flows and connections rather than the fixed territorial maps of foreign policy discourse.\(^\text{41}\)

The recent successes of the anti-nuclear and peace movement in the region represents a concrete example of the ways in which social movements have constituted alternative regional identities. Those successes have included the New Zealand Government's banning of visits by American nuclear warships; the breakdown of ANZUS; the creation and subsequent strengthening of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone; the upholding of the nuclear free constitution of Palau; the decision by the French Government to cease all nuclear testing in the Pacific; and the Philippine Government's decision to terminate the lease to the Subic Naval base.\(^\text{42}\) What is notable about these victories is how the Pacific peace movement has deployed an alternative spatial cartography to the dominant territorial code of representation of Western geopolitics which has objectified the Asia-Pacific as a "security commodity" to be struggled over by external powers.\(^\text{43}\) In contrast, the activism of regional peace movements has been underpinned by understandings of the Asia-Pacific as a region victimised by war preparations within a larger history of Western colonialism and indigenous resistance.\(^\text{44}\)

In drawing upon this alternative regional cartography, Pacific peace NGOs have redefined the notion of regional security. They have not only been concerned with a larger set of social relations in which forms of gender, class and ethnic domination have been viewed as important sources of insecurity and violence. In articulating these non-territorial security issues, regional social movements have attempted to recover the polyvocal histories and interests of trans-Pacific life through conceptions of space deriving from everyday social relations, rather than the territorial abstractions of foreign policy discourse. In doing so, they have redefined the "Asia-Pacific" as a hybridised space of cultural difference encompassing a field of multiple subjects and histories — a definition consonant with the decentred condition of contemporary global life and the breakdown in the traditional ordering of global relations into domestic selves and foreign others.

By adopting this form of "critical geopolitics", trans-Pacific social movements have formulated alternative forms of regionalism. As Rob Wilson and Arif Dirlik have noted, the coalitions and alliances being formed by a range of Pacific and Asian peoples have given rise to "critical regionalism" conceived as both "a strategic coalition linking diverse


\(^{44}\) Ibid.
spaces and times [and] a strategy for doing transnational battle in de-sublimating the historically repressed and ethically silenced subjects of the nation-state. Dirlik and Wilson have illustrated how the complex networks and linkages that criss-cross Asia and the Pacific "do not belong exclusively to circulations of hegemonic power" but rather have also characterised the recent emergence of new postmodern subjectivities based upon local and transnational communities offering the possibility for a counterhegemonic future. By engaging in transnational politics, critical social movements have not only sought to reclaim regionalism as a basis for articulating the pluralism of Asian and Pacific societies but also to recapture the political import of the "Asia-Pacific" as a region with a long history of anti-colonial and anti-imperial struggles.

I have sought to examine above the proliferation of regional social movements over the past several decades and their formulation of alternative regional cartographies. In redefining the Asia-Pacific in terms of the non-territorial identities and everyday practices of regional life, social movements have expanded existing agendas of security and development pursued by foreign policy-makers. This has been exemplified in the key role that social movements played in opening up New Zealand's foreign policy process to public participation in the 1980s which paved the way for the successful introduction of nuclear free legislation in New Zealand. As Simon Dalby has suggested, not only did this open up New Zealand's foreign policy to the perspectives of ordinary citizens but also served, at least momentarily, to reconceptualise New Zealand's place in the world away from European preoccupations and towards an understanding of the country as a regional nation with Pacific interests, concerns and responsibilities. In the final part of this thesis, I want to explore how a similar revisioning of "Australia's place in the world" might be secured through opening Australian foreign policy to the voices of critical social movements and their alternative cartographies of region, state and identity.

Reformulating Australian Foreign Policy

How, then, might the alternative cartographies produced by critical social movements outlined above promote an expanded agenda of regional engagement in Australian foreign policy? More specifically, how might it be possible to subject foreign policy to the grassroots perspectives of citizens groups and other NGOs so as to redefine regional engagement? That involves, I argue, thinking beyond the prevailing focus on states elites in favour of a non-territorial orientation centring on ecological, gender, and other marginalised perspectives. It also involves opening up foreign policy to the non-statist

46 Ibid.
knowledges and non-territorial identities articulated by critical social movements as a way to reclaim the diversity of the Asia-Pacific. The task before contemporary policy-makers, therefore, is one of deterritorialising the dominant modes of foreign policy and the trade and security-driven agendas of regional engagement.

This thesis has sought to make a modest contribution to this task through denaturalising the territorial logic of Western geopolitics from which Australian policy-makers have derived their major assumptions. Thus, I have shown how the dominant representations of Australian foreign policy have been the product of a narrow discursive regime of Western geopolitics that has reduced the complexities of Asian and Pacific societies to realist threat scenarios and liberal celebrations of the region’s economic miracle. In denaturalising such images, this thesis has displaced the territorial representations of state and region as the basis for understanding regional life. In this vacated space, I have sought to examine the non-territorial knowledges articulated by the dissenting voices of marginalised peoples, indigenous communities, migrants, refugees and social movements.

This strategy of displacement and denaturalisation can be connected to a larger democratising agenda directed at opening up the debate on defence and foreign policy. This agenda has been driven by the growing realisation that without increased community participation in the foreign policy process, the notoriously secretive and closed processes that characterised major foreign policy decisions in the past will simply be reproduced in the future. We have seen many examples of this undue secrecy in the preceding chapters — Menzies untruthful statements to the parliament about the basis of the request for Australian troop participation in the Vietnam War; Hawke’s commitment of forces to the recent Gulf War which he made without public or parliamentary consultation; or the recent signing of the Australia-Indonesia security treaty, the negotiations over which were deliberately kept secret in order to circumvent public debate and exclude dissenting voices opposed to Australia’s close relations with the Soeharto regime. Not surprisingly, this history has led to a policy disposition characterised by its closure and elitism not only in the ways through which policy has been formulated but in the voices that Australian policy-makers and diplomats have tended to listen to in other societies. This is a crucial point for those interested in a more open debate for, as Joseph Camilleri has argued, so long as foreign policy is regarded as the exclusive preserve of military and state elites a democratic politics will remain elusive.50

In the face of such a secretive and closed policy-making process, a range of people have begun to call for a more open and transparent debate on foreign and defence policy. Exemplary here has been the Secure Australia Project (SAP) which emerged out of a concern on the part of a group of critical intellectuals and activists at the growing

militarisation of Australian defence and foreign policy.\textsuperscript{51} Amongst SAP's proposals has been the call to establish community-based inquiries on Australia's foreign relations designed to elicit a range of contributions from community and citizens' groups. SAP has also called for a full-scale official inquiry into Australia's defence and security policies and the reassertion of parliament over the executive in policy-making in which "executive decisions on foreign policy would be placed under the scrutiny of parliament, which would in turn be provided with greatly expanded information and a capacity for independent analysis".\textsuperscript{52} Such proposals would go a considerable way to opening up debate on foreign policy and creating the conditions in which policy-makers would become more attentive to perspectives traditionally marginalised from foreign policy formulation.

The Amnesty International Parliamentary Group is a good example of the ways that policy can be opened up to the voices of social movements.\textsuperscript{53} The kinds of citizen diplomacy carried out by organisations such as Amnesty International are becoming an increasingly important dynamic of global affairs, particularly in providing a weathervane of popular opinion for political leaders. Australian policy-makers would do well to engender policy-formulation processes more open to such forces — seeing in such movements an opportunity to elicit grassroots support for foreign policy initiatives. For their part, social movements and citizens groups could reciprocate through disseminating information and knowledge about the benefits and logic of certain policies, thereby contributing to a general democratic renewal of the policy-making process. As it is at present, Australia’s attempts to “engage with Asia” has elicited a backlash manifested in both the emergence of the recent “race debate” provoked by Pauline Hanson and the massive electoral defeat of the Keating Government which was viewed as elitist and detached from the everyday lives of ordinary Australians.

In espousing a democratising agenda, however, it is not enough merely to promote greater public participation in formal political processes. Rather, democratising foreign policy must be underpinned by a more fundamental semiotic/discursive politics that challenges dominant territorial representations through which our policy-makers have reduced the "Asia-Pacific" both to a geostrategic threat and a miracle economy. Hence, realist threat scenarios have provided the discursive underpinnings of Australia’s militaristic defence policy based upon the acquisition of high-tech weapons systems with


\textsuperscript{52} Camilleri, J. (1992) "New Approaches to Regional Security" p.175.

long-range projection capabilities. Similarly, liberal representations of the "miracle economy" have led to a trade-driven diplomacy in which policy-makers have celebrated global capitalism as an opportunity to expand export markets while remaining silent on the economic dislocation engendered by expanding capitalist relations.

Without challenging these deeply-entrenched representations, a more democratic, inclusive foreign policy will remain elusive. This lesson is evident in the most significant geopolitical event of our times, namely, the demise of the communist bloc in Eastern Europe signalled by the fall of the Berlin Wall. Symbolising more than simply a direct physical challenge to the East German state, the fall of the Berlin Wall came to constitute a key signifying moment in the "fall" of communism, representing a discursive challenge to the practices that imaginatively constituted fixed boundaries between an inside and outside. The destruction of the Wall by ordinary East German citizens was as much an imaginative spatial practice as it was a physical act of defiance — a practice that, in breaking down traditional geopolitical boundaries, disclosed the arbitrariness of the East German state and its lack of legitimacy.

Democratising Australian foreign policy, therefore, entails not only opening up formal political processes to public participation but also challenging the exclusionary discursive practices of Australian foreign policy. To this end, this chapter has sought to open up foreign policy perspectives to the non-territorial identities and nomadic knowledges articulated by critical social movements. I argued that subjecting foreign policy to these marginalised voices offers the possibility of an expanded agenda of regional engagement consonant with the deterritorialised realities of contemporary global life. Here we saw how an alternative cartography encompassing a logic of flows and connections offers a more adequate basis for understanding IR in the 1990s. I want to conclude this chapter by examining how these alternative understandings might lend themselves to specific policy articulations in reframing Australia’s contemporary regional engagement.

1. From the American Alliance to Meaningful Regional Engagement

To reconstruct foreign policy in any meaningful way involves fundamentally reimagining Australia's place in the world. The "White Australia" traditions of the past which tied Australian security interests into the US strategic system are no longer relevant in a decentred world of proliferating identities and histories. In their place we need to develop a self-reflective foreign policy that locates Australia within a hybridised Asian-Pacific space where "our" identity is contingent upon the identity of regional "others". To engage with the region in any meaningful sense, therefore, is to affirm the diversity and difference of trans-Pacific life as the basis for organising Australia’s relations with the world. Hence, just as Donald Horne has argued that the present republican debate should be seen as an opportunity to engage in a broader debate about who "we" are, 54 so too should regional engagement be imagined in equally expansive ways. This would include

seeing in regional engagement the possibility of rejuvenating the democratic process and of opening up a new discursive and imaginative space to reorganise Australia's relations with the world.

That would involve delinking Australian security interests from the US strategic alliance in favour of formulating a regionally focused security policy. In acknowledging the interdependence of self/other and Australia/the region, this thesis has undermined the major assumption upon which the Australian-US Alliance is predicated: namely, the need for Australia, conceived as an outpost of Western civilisation, to be protected and made autonomous from the region "out there". Indeed, with the increasing interdependence of global political life, it is no longer credible to rely on Great and Powerful Friends — this is particularly true at a time when the dangers currently arising are shared across national boundaries and are far removed from traditional military threats of the Cold War.

Yet, despite this changing global context, policy-makers have continued to unambiguously align Australian security interests with those of the US, pursuing a high tech weapons acquisition program tied to the US strategic system. It is worth noting that while the Australian Government maintains a $10 billion annual defence budget (which until recently exceeded the total defence spending of ASEAN put together), it is cutting back in almost all other sectors of government spending. This has included cuts to spending on diplomatic training which could provide a cheap alternative to maintaining a large defence budget.

The basis for an adequate post-Cold War security policy, therefore, rests upon developing a viable and cost-effective defence posture that recognises the growing interdependence of global political life. That policy would focus on non-military means to achieve a stable regional order through promoting a sense of strategic community amongst Australia and its regional neighbours. A proposal of this kind has been put forward by SAP member Graeme Cheeseman who has argued that we need a less expensive and less dependent set of security policies focused on people-centred security rather than an offensive posture designed to project force into the region. This would involve, in particular, eliminating the clearly offensive elements of Australia's current force structure at the same time as promoting diplomacy and dialogue as a means of resolving regional and global conflicts. This alternative security approach, for instance, would promote diplomatic efforts to establish a regional denuclearised and demilitarised zone in the belief that the best way of achieving a stable and secure regional order is through demilitarising regional political relations rather than encouraging increased defence spending. These initiatives would, in turn, build on and expand existing diplomatic arrangements such as the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone, rather than reproducing the history of Australian diplomacy in seeking to water down such initiatives.

Whilst Australian policy-makers have dismissed such alternative approaches as unrealistic and unattainable, one need only look to New Zealand to find an example where creative thinking and the influence of social movements has led to a reframing of foreign and defence policy. Here New Zealand policy-makers have dealigned their security planning from ANZUS while avoiding militaristic definitions of security. The New Zealand Labor Party, for instance, has favoured a post-Cold War security posture in which its defence forces are organised primarily on the basis of policing fishing zones, providing disaster relief, assist in aid projects and furnishing peace keeping forces. This kind of policy platform is far removed from Australia’s current emphasis on developing high tech offensive force capabilities within the American Alliance designed to counter traditional military threats.

ii. Beyond Strategic Integration: Acknowledging Difference and Change in the Region

As indicated throughout this thesis, in attempting to integrate Australian security interests more fully into the region, policy-makers have developed closer relations with many of the region’s ruling military regimes. Through buttressing these undemocratic and repressive forces, contemporary policy-makers have actually undermined Australian security interests rather than enhanced them. I have argued that the key to this problem has been the territorial knowledges deployed by policy-makers — knowledges which have reduced Asian and Pacific societies to expressions of state elites, conflating culture in general with the culture of elites, and confining regional engagement to an engagement of states.

Proposing an alternative agenda of regional diplomacy, therefore, presupposes developing understandings of regional life sensitive to the differences within Asian and Pacific societies. That task involves disaggregating the statist cartographies of prevailing foreign policy through disclosing the pluralistic nature of regional life in all its complexity and diversity. Recognising pluralism as the basis for understanding the Asia-Pacific requires more complex three-dimensional depictions of political space and identity that encompass not only forces maintaining the status quo but also voices calling for change, voices which, as we saw in Chapter 8, have become increasingly insistent across the Pacific recently.

Framing Australian diplomacy in terms of this acknowledgment of pluralism and difference makes possible a more adequate, less elitist post-Cold War foreign policy designed to strategically negotiate the contending forces of the region, rather than merely taking the status quo as permanent and given. In Australia’s relations with Indonesia, for instance, an adequate policy would be based less upon giving unequivocal support to the Soeharto regime than on simultaneously encouraging the Indonesian Government to open up its political processes and institutions to popular participation while recognising and

supporting broader democratising forces in Indonesia. While in the short term this realignment of Australian policy might cause some irritations between the two governments, in the long term, such a policy would serve to deepen and broaden regional engagement.

There is a precursor to this proposed policy shift in the foreign policies of the Chifley Government in the late 1940s. Here, as we have seen, the Indonesian independence struggle was strongly supported and promoted by Chifley and Burton out of a strong commitment to anti-colonialism and self-determination, in the face of strong resistance from European colonialists. That represented essentially the only time that Australian foreign policy has spilled out of the state-based discourse of Western geopolitics. In other words, Chifley and Burton aligned our foreign policy to regional forces of change, and in doing so, established close relations outside of the status quo of European colonialism. Such policies produced an image of Australia as an ally of what Jim Cairns has called "the emerging forces of Asia". Subsequent governments have benefited greatly from this image. In aligning Australia’s diplomacy to the "emerging forces" of anti-colonialism and democratisation today, contemporary policy-makers could in similar ways build the foundations for an alternative regional diplomacy into the next century. That would be based upon meaningful grassroots engagement and wide-ranging relations with the communities of the Asia-Pacific.

To date, however, Australian diplomacy has been characterised by its timidity and sycophancy on the issue of supporting democratisation and human rights in the region. This has contrasted with the more assertive diplomacy it has pursued in promoting democratic change in other parts of the world. Timid regional diplomacy has made Australia a popular scapegoat in the domestic politics of some regional countries, as our zealotry in engaging with regional elites has come at the cost of losing the kind of respect that comes to those confident enough to openly assert their own beliefs without the fear of differing with others. This timidity can be largely explained by the anxieties about place that continue to haunt contemporary foreign policy. Australia today is a very anxious place to live in, where public discourse is dominated by a broader cultural crisis, and where fears of being left out of the region abound. This has reproduced the long-standing sense of insecurity and isolation "in Asia" that has traditionally defined Australian thinking on international affairs.

Understanding the region in terms of its heterogeneity, however, opens up a different disposition, allowing Australians to feel more comfortable and less anxious about their sense of otherness in the region. Indeed, as I have sought to highlight in this chapter, if the concept of the Asia-Pacific has any meaning at all it is that we are all merely others in the region. Hence, just as the Australia has had its differences with the Malaysia, so too

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has Malaysia with Indonesia, the Philippines with Singapore, Hong Kong with China, and so on.

Approaching the region on the basis of its vast differences introduces an ethical, post-sovereign and postmodern position into foreign policy. This particular ethical position, however, has been precluded within prevailing policies. This is clear in the ways in which contemporary policy-makers have reproduced the dominant territorial inscription of global political life. Here we have seen how the sharp demarcation of political space into territorial states has precluded the development of transborder dialogues in favour of a principle of "non-intervention". This has served to authorise the sovereign jurisdiction of the state over a fixed territory, thereby legitimising the often brutal rule of elites across Asia and the Pacific.58

Framed via these territorial understandings, Australian regional diplomacy has become detached from broader international efforts to formulate lasting resolutions to some of the region's most intractable security problems, such as in East Timor, Bougainville and West Papua. Peter King, for instance, has proposed that one way the Australian Government could contribute to international diplomacy is to promote the creative use of multilateral forums and "quasi-state" arrangements to solve long-standing regional disputes.59 According to King, Australia's policy toward Papua New Guinea could make more use of political and diplomatic levers in order to combat militarisation, ecological destruction and disintegration. This could include using Australia's substantial aid package to PNG as a bargaining chip to encourage Port Moresby to seek a negotiated settlement on Bougainville and to crackdown on corruption endemic in government and business circles.60

iii. Countering Globalisation-from-Above
Seeking to expand regional engagement in the terms I have outlined above also has wide ramifications for APEC and the trade liberalisation agenda promoted by contemporary policy-makers. As Jenny Wilkinson has observed, the "key problem of APEC is its undemocratic nature" and the "atmosphere of secrecy and unaccountability that surrounds" it.61 This lack of accountable and democratic decision-making is indicative of the entire regional free trade agenda that has come to dominate contemporary foreign policy. As we have seen, a narrow neoclassical brand of economic diplomacy has been

58 Of course, Australian national and state governments have also used the principles of "sovereignty" and "non-intervention" to justify actions viewed with opprobrium by the international community such as lax environmental control, attempts to outlaw homosexuality and other human rights abuses. This has been particularly the case in the perilous state of many aboriginal communities.


60 Ibid.

pursued by a small group of professional economists as the basis for Australia’s regional engagement. This group has risen to occupy key advisory roles against the backdrop of the broader rationalisation of the public sphere in Australia. Generated by these processes, contemporary foreign policy has become largely reduced to a technical interest in trade and securing export markets.

It is in this context that a range of regional NGOs, including Community Aid Abroad (CAA) and the Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA), have called for a democratisation of the trade liberalisation agenda. To this end, a major coalition of NGOs has sought to have an input into the APEC process through proposing the establishment of a social and environmental forum in APEC.62 According to its proponents, this forum would address those critical social and environmental issues marginalised by APEC’s strict focus on commercial transactions, such as the potentially detrimental social effects of liberalisation on marginal communities, the need for social clauses within trading agreements, and concerns over increasing environmental degradation caused by unregulated production and trade.

As a more specific part of this social and environmental forum, CAA and ACFOA have proposed the formation of an Australian advisory council to government made up of various sectors of the community, including NGOs, consumer groups, farmers, welfare groups and development agencies.63 In seeking to subject the regional trade agenda to such voices, NGOs and other community groups have challenged the increasing professionalisation and corporatisation of foreign policy. For these groups, foreign policy issues are simply too important to be left to trade and foreign policy professionals alone.

Instead of promoting “globalisation-from-above” and its deleterious effects, NGOs have advanced grassroots globalisation aimed at restoring the balance of power between capital and labour as the basis for sustainable global development in the future. As a first step, they have proposed introducing labour and environmental clauses in trade agreements, which would contribute to halting the downward spiral in wages of recent decades, while preventing the relocation of heavy-polluting industries into the Asia-Pacific in search of “pollution havens”. On its own, however, this proposal would be viewed with hostility by developing countries as an attack on the competitiveness of their economies and a form of backdoor protectionism by advanced industrialised economies unable to compete in the global marketplace. It is for this reason that any proposal linking trade agreements with labour rights or environmental clauses must be tied to a broader agenda of global redistributive justice. That agenda would be directed at growing global

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disparities in power and wealth and would be designed to promote the kinds of human-centred, ecologically sustainable modes of development articulated by critical social movements. This would not only have a large constituency of peoples in Asia alarmed at, and marginalised by, prevailing top-down development strategies — including students, activists, women, the rural poor and ordinary citizens — but would also elicit support from environmentalists and workers in advanced industrialised economies.

While this proposed agenda would involve a radical reformulation of foreign policy objectives, its prescriptions have found expression in the recent human development reports of an organisation no less influential than the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). The UNDP has been at the centre of global efforts to reformulate more sustainable approaches to development and security. Australian policy-makers need to take seriously UNDP's proposals on the reduction of debt and global military spending as the basis for an alternative agenda of global redistributive justice. As the UNDP's Human Development Report 1992 makes clear, even a small reduction in world-wide military spending would make considerable amounts of money available for meeting basic needs in developing countries.\(^64\) A three percent drop in total world-wide military spending, for instance, would by the year 2000 yield a peace dividend of 1.5 trillion dollars to be reallocated for grassroots development in poorer communities around the globe.\(^65\)

Similarly, measures designed to relieve pressures on debtor countries by reducing debt repayments — the major mechanism through which rich industrialised economies have appropriated a massive transfer of wealth and resources from the Third World — would also go a long way to achieving more equitable global economic relations. In taking seriously these kinds of options and promoting them through an active diplomacy, policy-makers could realign Australia to the decolonising forces of the region while contributing to the formulation of creative redistributive solutions to the structural problems of recent globalisation.

Of course, subjecting the whole APEC process to public participation requires an entirely different foreign policy disposition from the one presently espoused by policy-makers, a disposition that I have given articulation to in the foregoing discussion. In doing so, this chapter has attempted to think beyond the realist-liberal impasse of Australian foreign policy through examining alternative ways of thinking in the space beyond Western geopolitics. Located in this space, I argued, have been a range of critical social


movements which have become an important source of alternative understandings in contemporary political life. Here we saw how social movements have pursued a form of critical regionalism based upon people-centred and ecologically sustainable modes of development and security. My aim in examining these movements has been to explore how the alternative understandings they have engendered might be concretely articulated in Australian foreign policy. That challenge, I argued, not only presupposes a broader democratisation of the policy-making process, but also involves an expanded definition of regional engagement based upon non-military security issues and marginalised identities. And whilst the prospects of achieving this outcome look increasingly bleak in Howard's Australia, it is one that is absolutely necessary for Australians in the 1990s seeking a more equitable, just and sustainable trans-Pacific future.
Conclusion

This thesis has examined the broader modes of discourse through which the societies of the "Asia-Pacific" have traditionally been understood in Australian foreign policy. In Chapter 1 I identified a larger Western discourse of IR and geopolitics which Australian policy-makers have drawn upon to understand and make sense of the alien societies that surrounded them. I located this discourse in terms of a wider set of understandings associated with the emergence of a distinctly territorial worldview in post-Renaissance Europe. This worldview, I argued, has became the basis for understanding and organising global relations in the modern era.

Having established these broader modes of discourse, Chapters 2 to 6 presented an historical narrative of the various ways that the "Asia-Pacific" has been understood by policy-makers via the territorial worldview of Western IR. This narrative represented a broader interpretive history of Australia's regional diplomacy. Here it was shown how regional diplomacy has fluctuated between realist understandings of the region as a strategic threat and liberal images of the region as an object of development, trade and cooperation. Far from seeking to present a comprehensive history in these chapters, I sought to identify and explore certain pivotal moments in Australia's encounter with the societies of the Asia-Pacific. The emphasis was on the exclusions and silences of regional diplomacy and the ways in which this diplomacy has been based upon narrow geopolitical and market-based-interpretations of regional life.

This history led me to a broader critique of Australia's contemporary regional engagement in the final three chapters of this work. In examining the dangerous implications of contemporary regional diplomacy, Chapter 7 took up where the history of foreign policy left off. In particular, I sought to demonstrate how the security and trade-driven agendas presently directing foreign policy have been designed to integrate Australian security interests into the dominant circuits of commercial and strategic power in the Asia-Pacific. This has led, I argued, to a dangerous and elitist foreign policy perspective that has buttressed the unaccountable and undemocratic rule of repressive regimes in the region. Rather than enhancing regional stability and security, these policies have in fact undermined the long-term security goals of Australian diplomacy.

These arguments have been confirmed by the tumultuous events that have taken place in the region in recent months. Thus, the currency crisis presently sweeping through Southeast Asia has demonstrated the brittle foundations of, what I have termed here, "the repressive developmentalist regimes" of the region and their high-speed economic strategies. This crisis has led to revised growth predictions in coming years which serves to challenge not only prevailing notions of the region as an economic miracle but also the uncritical celebration of globalising strategies by contemporary policy-makers.
As I showed in Chapter 7, the dangers of aligning Australian diplomacy to such unstable regimes have been articulated no more clearly than in Australia’s relations with Indonesia. Widespread unrest has been the major feature of Indonesia’s political landscape in recent years. Thus, while struggles for self-determination continue in East Timor, West Papua and Aceh, the grizzly spectacle of ethnic cleansing in West Kalimantan has added to the increasing levels of political violence in Indonesia. In Java itself, riots have erupted over the last 12 months, as increasing disparities of wealth and power have become a major source of discontent across the island. An aging Soeharto, whose regime has the dubious distinction of being the region’s most corrupt, is becoming increasingly detached from the everyday realities of the people over whom he rules. This has been clearly demonstrated by his tardy response to the forest fires presently raging across the archipelago, caused by land clearing for plantations, which the Soeharto family and many of their cronies own.1 Yet, in the face of all this, Australian policy-makers have chosen to put "all their diplomatic and strategic eggs into the Soeharto basket". This has included Howard’s sending a delegation to Washington recently to impress upon the Americans the importance of the Soeharto regime to Western strategic interests. Given this unwavering support, Australian diplomacy has been characterised by a form of paralysis when confronted with examples of the Soeharto regime’s repressive and increasingly unsustainable rule, exemplified in the "towering silence" that characterised the Howard Government’s response to the 1996 Jakarta riots.

While Chapter 7 addressed, as it were, the dominant commercial and strategic networks of power in the region, Chapter 8 examined a broader set of social relations located outside of dominant regional networks which represent a major silence of Australia’s regional diplomacy. Thus, the policy of engaging with the region’s elites has effectively excluded a range of non-elite identities. These have centred on the everyday realities of gender, grassroots development, migration, poverty, ecological destruction, economic marginalisation and cultural/ethnic identity. Through highlighting the alternative security issues engendered by such realities, I argued that policy-makers have been unable to adequately respond to the growing complexities and polyvocal realities of contemporary political life across Asia and the Pacific. Instead they have grasped onto Cold War understandings, while remaining oblivious to the shifting definitions of work, ecology, migration and gender that have characterised post-Cold War global relations.

Chapter 9 of this thesis, accordingly, concluded with a discussion of how it might be possible to reframe and rethink the dominant policy perspectives of Australia’s regional diplomacy. In particular, this chapter focused on formulating an alternative policy agenda capable of apprehending the grassroots realities of regional life. Such realities, I argued, have emerged as salient security issues in the post-Cold War period. This period is proving to be a particularly appropriate moment to engage in such a rethinking as traditional geopolitical alignments have fragmented and the old certainties have collapsed.

Signalling an emerging postmodern era, such fundamental changes have left very few fields of modern knowledge untouched. Thus, while cartography has shifted from two-dimensional images of the geopolitical map to depictions of a complex reality of tectonic plates and ocean floors, scientific discourse has replaced the notion of a singular positive reality of post-Cartesian epistemology with an image of a complex, polysemic and interrelated world of chaos theory and quantum physics. 2 Meanwhile, in political and social theory, a range of postmodern interrogations of identity, truth and power have emerged to provide a salient critique of modern political thought. 3 And yet in the face of these transformations, Australian policy continues to be locked into perspectives drawn from geopolitical understandings fashioned in the 17th Century. Incarcerated within this post-Renaissance framework of Western IR, our policy-makers continue to deploy impoverished two-dimensional and linear images of the outside world.

In critiquing these anachronistic and narrowly-conceived understandings, the overall aim of this thesis has been to open up a discursive space in which those excluded voices located on "the margins" of the Asia-Pacific become audible. This has involved what Jim George has called "the unspoken, unwritten, unreflected narratives of the dispossessed and silenced" in the region. 4 By opening up a space of critique within Australian foreign policy, this work has rendered that which has been naturalised and dehistoricised within mainstream Western IR as mobile, fragile and above all contestable. 5 This form of critique has involved denaturalising the dominant geopolitical and market-based images of reality that have traditionally framed Australia's regional diplomacy. Rather than offering an objective, universally-valid perspective on reality, current foreign policy understandings are the product of a narrow Western IR discourse which has reduced the complexities and diversity of Asian and Pacific societies to rigid images of regional life.

In pointing out as much, I have sought to disclose how seemingly natural identities are discursively constructed. Through this denaturalising strategy, this thesis has explored that which is left out, silenced and marginalised in prevailing discourse, attempting in the process to excavate those subjugated knowledges and understandings of modern political life that represent latent, suppressed possibilities in the present. This, in turn, has served to open up a space of critique and reflection in foreign policy discourse in which on-going attempts at naturalisation are problematised and contested. It is within the spaces cleared by such denaturalising strategies that other realities and identities are able to emerge.

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In deploying these strategies, this thesis has also politicised prevailing foreign policy understandings by disclosing what Edward Said has termed "the highly organised political circumstances obtaining when knowledge is produced". Here we saw how the reality of the Asia-Pacific has been framed in ways that buttress the dominant politico-economic interests of regional life. It is the power exercised on the part of these dominant interests to name, classify, organise and order that I have sought to politicise and denaturalise. This power/knowledge nexus is disconnected within the conventional account of foreign policy in which IR, conceived as a preconstituted field of states and regions, represents the unproblematic object of foreign policy. In contrast, this thesis has refused to take for granted "the world as we find it" but has asked instead how the Asia-Pacific as a regional construct came into being in the first place. It has done this through examining the history of Australian attempts to insert the region into broader circuits of discursive, military and commercial power.

In adopting this approach, I have sought to introduce a more self-reflective attitude into the study of foreign policy. Such an attitude is sensitive to the ways in which foreign policy is constitutive of the dominant identities and boundaries of modern political life and attuned to the shifting terrain between inside/outside, self/other, West/East and Australia/the region. The need for such an attitudinal shift is particularly urgent in the 1990s not only because Australian foreign policy has been notoriously resistant to any kind of self-reflection in the past but because this absence of self-reflection has produced a contemporary policy agenda based upon increasingly outdated and inadequate representations of global reality. In asking questions about representation, identity and knowledge, therefore, this work has sought to introduce more sophisticated and nuanced understandings of a volatile post-Cold War arena, more able to apprehend the interpretive and multi-layered nature of social life.

In response to these demands, I have also sought to contribute in a modest way to a broader reconstitution and reinvention of contemporary political life by a growing number of critical scholars, activists and citizens across the globe. In seeking to contribute to this project, the ultimate aim of this thesis has been to engender more inclusive understandings of the Asia-Pacific and foreign policy perspectives that avoid the violences and omissions of prevailing discourse.

This surely is an ambitious and arduous task, which this thesis has claimed neither to have fully achieved nor to have addressed with any kind of finality. Rather, what this work has aspired to is the introduction of a critical interpretive perspective into the study of Australia's engagement with the Asia-Pacific. By aspiring to this goal, the foregoing pages have represented an invitation, as it were, to Australia's defence and foreign policy community to engage in some of the themes raised in this thesis. The question now remains as to whether Australian policy-makers and academics will take up the challenge

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provoked by these broader critical perspectives or merely reproduce the closure and intolerance that has long characterised Australia's encounter with the Asia-Pacific. My hope is that they will choose the former course since it is only by thinking critically that the present crisis of environmental dislocation and economic marginalisation will be adequately addressed and that a more stable, peaceful and secure region will develop in the next century.
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