T.B. Millar

AUSTRALIA
IN
PEACE AND WAR

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AUSTRALIA
IN PEACE
AND WAR

EXTERNAL RELATIONS
SINCE 1788

Second Edition

T. B. MILLAR

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Preface to the Second Edition

The first edition of any book is launched with no real knowledge of the reception it will be given. I spent much of my time over several years working on *Australia in Peace and War*, so was grateful that the book became a standard text in university courses in several countries. This reflected the fact that no one else had written a volume of this kind covering, however patchily, the whole period of Australian political history; that from 1915, and especially from 1942 until 1975 (the end of the Vietnam war), Australia had been an important participant in major world events—it was ‘in the news’; and that despite its length (602 pages) the book (especially the paperback edition) was sold at a price most students could afford.

In the decade following publication, the book continued to sell, until it went out of print, but it simultaneously became increasingly dated. Australia itself became far less relevant to most major international situations. (In the new *Oxford History of Australia*, vol. 5, the 76 pages dealing with the period 1972–88 include three paragraphs on foreign affairs.) And the publishers told me that for the book to be accessible to students’ pockets I would need to reduce it in length by about a third. As I have written the book mainly for students rather than for libraries, this became decisive.

It was essential to incorporate the fruits of recent research as well as an account of later developments. This has compounded the problem of length and presented a considerable challenge, which I have met only by deletions that have significantly reduced the scope of the book as a work of reference. I have deleted all the appendices, statistical and documentary, and the introductory chapters about the land and people and the making
and conduct of foreign policy. This information is all available in other places, though not in one place. The events of the late 18th and the 19th centuries are presented more sketchily than I would have wished. Several short chapters are deleted. Other material is condensed to make place for the new. While few authors like to see the scope of their work reduced, I believe that the narrative of the second edition is tighter, more accurate than the first, and of course more contemporary. I am grateful to those reviewers of the first edition who pointed out errors of fact or typography. The editorial comments have varied considerably, and I could not have acted on them all without emulating Stephen Leacock’s hero, galloping off madly in all directions. The narrative is of necessity selective. Some critics complained at the shortage of archival material in the references. I can only plead guilty. I have taken into account published as well as some other archives, but the sheer volume of documentary material produced each day by what is now the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade is more than any one person can read, let alone digest and assess.

The organisation of the book again presented problems. In some ways it might have been better to start all over again and let the narrative flow down the two centuries. Being substantially without research assistance and occupying a busy post in London, I found that prospect too daunting, and have left it to later scholars to write. I still hope that this second edition will be useful both to students and to the general reader.

I acknowledge with gratitude the additional help of Jayne Brand, Jocelyn Brown, Lindie Davey, Stuart Harris, Richard Higgott, Paula Lucas, John Piper, Wendy Robins, and especially Robin Ward who prepared the book for publication. I am grateful to the Department of International Relations, Australian National University, on which I tried out the ideas in the last chapter.

Sir Robert Menzies Centre for Australian Studies
University of London
November 1990

T. B. Millar
Preface to the First Edition

This book began in an attempt to write a second edition of *Australia's Foreign Policy*, which was published in 1968. As I worked at the revision, I came to realise that what I wanted and needed to write was a different book altogether, not an assessment of current foreign policy and relations but a history of them, especially their development in this century, from the time the six colonies formed the Commonwealth of Australia. So I began again, and this is that book, although it includes a few items from the earlier work, which is now out of print. There are also paragraphs which first appeared in articles in *Foreign Affairs*, *The Round Table*, and *Pacific Community*, and which are used by permission.

Many people have helped make this book better than it would otherwise have been, by research, comments, criticisms, suggestions, or pieces of information. I gratefully acknowledge especially the help, in their several ways, of Hugh Collins, Peter Edwards, Nicola Feakes, Hester Gascoigne, Keith Hancock, Norman Harper, Bill Hudson, Philip Hurst, Milton Lewis, Peter Lyon, Betty Macfarlane, Jim McIntyre, Neville Meaney, Bruce Miller, Nancy Mullins, Robert O’Neill, Charles Price, David Sissons, John Ward, Robin Ward, Alan Watt and Michael Wilson. The Institute of Commonwealth Studies and the Royal Commonwealth Society in London provided invaluable hospitality and library assistance. ANU Press gave wise editorial advice. Cheryl Hood in addition to making helpful comments on the text, performed nobly the thousand tasks associated with the final stages of the manuscript, most of which was typed by Sandra Kosseck, Jacqueline Nichols, and Shirley Steer.

Some points of explanation: unless otherwise indicated, the currency used is Australian—the Australian pound (£) up to 1966, the dollar ($) thereafter, one pound being equal to two dollars. The Australian pound was initially worth a pound sterling, then it depreciated to about 0.80 of a pound sterling. Today, the pound sterling is worth about 1.5 Australian
dollars. The Australian dollar has varied in value between 1.2 and 1.1 US dollars.

The term 'Commonwealth' is ambiguous. When the six colonies federated in 1901, the new state harked back to Cromwell and forward to an ideal, and was called the Commonwealth of Australia. The term Commonwealth in Australia is widely used to mean the federal government, as noun or adjective. But during this century the word has also referred to the association of self-governing and independent nations which evolved out of the British Empire; after India became a republic, with a separate head of state, it was called simply the Commonwealth of Nations, or the Commonwealth. In this book, unless the context shows otherwise, the word Commonwealth refers to the Commonwealth of Nations, and not to Australia.

Many of the people mentioned in the book received titles under the British honours system. They are referred to by the title they had at the earliest time they are mentioned, subsequent changes being shown in the index.

It is now about fifteen years since I began writing about Australian defence and foreign policy. Much of that writing was contemporary with or soon after the events described, with all the advantages and disadvantages of a spectator's immediate but limited view. This book is largely history. It offers opportunities for recording l'esprit de l'escalier, for wisdom after the event, but that is what historical writing inevitably is, even though it has problems of selection, emphasis and balance, of remembering the context.

To compress nearly two hundred years of external relations into a single volume has meant that much has been omitted, telescoped, or generalised. Australia has had a far greater volume of dealings with other countries than is recorded here. The appendices* give some indication of them, but the reader looking for detail of useful but uncontroversial relations with (for example) the countries of Scandinavia or the Caribbean will need to read official literature such as Current Notes on International Affairs, or its successor, Australian Foreign Affairs Record, or articles in specialised journals.

The wit or the cynic may ask whether Australia has a foreign policy to write a book about. Having written all these words, I would reply: if a policy has so much history, who can doubt that the policy exists!

Canberra
October 1977

T. B. Millar

*Omitted in the second edition. The Australian dollar has depreciated by about 40 per cent since the first edition of this book.
Introduction

ALL MIGRANTS TAKE WITH THEM A PORTION OF THE world they leave behind. The soldiers, convicts, adventurers, settlers, who formed the white population of Australia after 1788 were at first Europeans in the South Seas. Gradually they became Australian in outlook and temperament, more gradually in their external attitudes and policies and relations. It has taken longer again to realise—indeed it is only now, after two centuries, beginning to dawn—that they are not only in a new land. They are in a new, a different world.

In those attitudes and actions which have come to constitute Australia’s foreign policy, there is no single theme, no fixed star, no clear common denominator of principle. No obvious enemy stands poised at the gates; no burning ideology drives from within. Being a nation of migrants, superimposed on a small and culturally removed Aboriginal population, Australians are not completely homogeneous.

The huge island continent was developed as six distinct British colonies between 1788 and 1901. Although many Australians can be readily identified abroad, even before (although especially after) they have begun to speak, there is no single representative Australian national type, no demonstrably Australian ideology, no defined Australian image of the world. Yet on many issues there tends to be a consensus. Sooner or later, migrants assimilate into the totality. Cultures merge. Within societies, there are interests in common.

A shared location and environment, shared institutions, shared myths, a single nationally elected central government (superimposed on six state governments) and a permanent administrative system lead to continuities in policy. It usually requires a change of government to show how fragile or how firm those continuities can be.
In foreign affairs, the main continuity has been simple inertia and apathy. There have been no significant Australian initiatives in the past 40 years and only a few in this century: ‘White Australia’; Deakin’s attempt in 1907–08 to interest the United States in the western Pacific; Hughes’s demand at Versailles to keep control of German New Guinea; Lyons’s proposal in 1936–37 for a non-aggression pact in the Pacific; Evatt’s energetic but largely unsuccessful effort to shape the United Nations in the interests of small and middle powers; the Colombo Plan of 1950 and ANZUS Treaty of 1951. For the rest, there have been policies, changes of direction, emphasis, or tone, but Australia has been essentially a reactor rather than an actor on the world stage.

This book does not attempt to analyse how the world sees Australia, but how Australian governments see or have seen the world. The government of the day will presumably adopt what it believes to be the best policy, but many decisions are made ‘on balance’ after assessing incomplete information and weighing up a variety of internal and external considerations, the overriding consideration (although rarely invoked) being the survival of the government in office.

If the government’s information is incomplete—and it invariably is—the information available to a member of the academic community will be still less complete. No Australian government has taken the view that foreign policy is a subject on which the public should be well-informed, aware of the complications of each major situation and the pros and cons of alternative decisions. ‘Labor will trust the people’, E. G. Whitlam said before the 1972 federal election, but Labor in fact was no more trusting than its predecessors. The Australian parliamentary system, strongly democratic as it is—indeed, because it is strongly democratic and subject to popular vote—has grown up on the assumption that the government must appear infallible, its decisions unquestionable, its arguments unanswerable. Governments have thus been reluctant to confide in the public, and the public service in extension of this rationale and to protect its own authority has been even more reluctant. Matters of foreign policy and defence are assumed to have an additional need for secrecy to protect the nation’s interest, and an esoteric nature which if explained to the common people would only confuse them. As in other countries, what the government and the Department of Foreign Affairs want of the public is not a debate on alternative policies but an agreement with decisions already taken—‘informed’ agreement perhaps, but agreement whether informed or not.

Clearly a Department of Foreign Affairs or Defence cannot reveal all its information or thinking, yet it is not self-evident that conclusions from the
basis of classified information are better, or more valid, than conclusions reached from publicly available sources. Classified information (other than military intelligence) is not necessarily more correct than unclassified information. The main source of confidential information about a foreign country usually comes from the Australian mission located there, but the quality of mission reporting varies widely. Some diplomats are reluctant or unable to make contact with local people who are out of favour with the government; this will restrict the information sources available to them and their reports will be incomplete. There is an occupational hazard in diplomacy. Diplomats tend to identify themselves increasingly with the viewpoint of the government to which they are accredited, simply through association or through direct influence; or occasionally the reverse happens—an increasing dislike for the government and for the people. There is of course the different temptation—to report what the Minister wants to hear. Officials back home will not know always how to discount such reporting, although there are usually other sources to check it against. Both diplomats and foreign office officials will be reluctant to do anything which rocks the boat of the relationship between the two states. Different parts of the government’s apparatus for gathering, collating and assessing information will frequently disagree, and decisions at the various levels will be taken on a basis of ‘political’ strength rather than ‘objective’ fact.

And whether or not the government of the day accepts the recommendations made to it by its officials, those officials must implement the government’s decisions, make the best of them, and justify them if questioned. During the Whitlam Labor government’s period in office, officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs were in fact encouraged to do that, being deputed to give lectures to public groups throughout Australia explaining and justifying government policy. That situation has continued to the present time. It is still true that governments have access to far more information than does the ordinary citizen, and they ought to be able to arrive at more accurate conclusions.

An academic speaking or writing about foreign policy in a democratic society should have a greater flexibility, and perhaps a wider duty—not simply to his conscience, but to the community which supports him and which, in a sense, he serves. It is assumed ideally that he will try to be objective, but complete objectivity suggests a total absence of criteria. A writer cannot avoid having a set of values about man and society, good and evil, advantage and disadvantage, which will determine how he will select his facts and assess them. All writers, whether academic, journalist, official or freelance, are in the market-place of ideas. They all want rewards for
what they write. They are tempted to become the prisoner of their own reward system—money, status of one kind or another, glory. Some academics like to be thought of as rebels, or progressives, or leaders or formers of opinion or just sensible men. In areas of current public interest, including foreign affairs, there is a tendency for academics to advance into the market under the university umbrella and mount a soap-box—perhaps borrowed from another discipline or from none. Governments understandably welcome support from the academic community. Less understandably, they often seem to find it difficult to credit that an academic who dissents from official policy may be an honest man, still less that he may have something useful to contribute.

The traditional approach of the historian or political scientist to foreign policy has been called into question in recent times by radical scholars. Some of these see only one criterion for the validity of a particular foreign policy: does it assist the people of the other state to throw off all dependence on foreign economic or political, governmental or non-governmental, national or multinational institutions? Others judge a policy in terms of its support for the local revolutionary forces. A few people are concerned with humanity at large, with men, women and children as individuals entitled to certain minimum standards of living which the foreign policies of more fortunate states should be promoting. Words of commendation or disapproval are raised as flags for one side or another—'free world', 'imperialism', 'colonisation', 'neo-colonialism', 'pragmatism', 'power-politics', 'justice', 'development-oriented', 'multinational corporations', etc. Such words can easily become a substitute for thought and analysis, and it is still true that we have to deal with the world as it is, whether or not we want to make it into something else.

It is right and inevitable that there should be continuing challenge to the conventional wisdom, the established 'facts', images, policies and procedures. Most of these challenges will be strongly resisted. So far as one can see, very little substantial challenge comes from within the government system, and very little of what comes from the community outside that system makes even a dent upon it. Policies do change, of course. In Australia this is usually under external pressure; occasionally it is the result of ideas from within the bureaucracy, and (more rarely, because we are reluctant to change our government, but when we do, more noticeably) from a change of government.

Even in a democracy it is not always easy to discover all the details and implications of foreign policy. Not all the assurances given to foreign governments, formally or informally, are made public. Contingency plans
to meet international situations cannot be made public. Nevertheless, on the whole the policies are known and can be debated. It is far more difficult to discover the reasons why particular decisions were taken, who in the process exerted the greatest influence, how he was able to do so, and on what basis he and others were led to take the position they did. A sociologist might wish to discover the background, beliefs, values, images and associations of the decision makers, and might feel that unless he did so he could not properly explain the policies. An outsider, appropriately trained, might by extensive professional questioning arrive at some conclusions, just as might someone who examined the filing systems, organisation, promotional procedures, and pecking orders within the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. Yet no foreign office is going to welcome the latter or permit the former. The memoirs of retired ministers, officials, or diplomats can be examined for what they tell about the individuals concerned. However professional the analyst may be, his own beliefs and values and training bring a highly subjective and unmeasurable element into his analysis. This book does not attempt such inquiries or explanations. It seeks to give the facts about policies, and the ascertainable factors that went into their formulation. It is not a piece of behavioural analysis.

Nor is it an attempt to relate policies to models, although readers may seek to stretch the book against a model of their own choosing. It is not a book about a particular kind of state, about Australia as a middle power, as a former colony, as an ally, as ‘developed’ (i.e. rich and industrialised), as Western, or as white. These aspects emerge, in their place. It is not a case study, but a study of this one country, Australia: Australia as it is, or as I see it; Australia’s policies, as I see them. For reasons of space, it is not a book about press or public opinion on the issues discussed; nor, for the most part, about the alternative policies canvassed or views expressed.

A historian in any field is faced with the problem of the size of front on which he advances. To write about everything that happens in a given year, and thus to move year by year up the century, helps to throw contemporary light on each event but it also may multiply incoherence; whereas to select themes and follow them for a substantial period may require a series of disconcerting time jumps back and forth, cross-references to show the effect of contemporary influences, and some repetition. I have tried to mix the two approaches, but with greater emphasis on the second than on the first. This is because Australia’s relations with individual states are now substantial enough to stand alone, and because I believe that most readers of the book will be more interested in the themes than in the broad
advance. It is always easier to read up a theme ‘in chunks’ than in 150 scattered references even if adequately indexed. Thus my purpose has been to present a panorama in sections, to write a book about Australian foreign policy today, and to write about past policies from the perspective of the present. For convenience, some chapters extend beyond the time frame of their part of the book.

It is not a book about Australian defence policy, in any narrow sense, but war has played an important part in the history of Australia and in the development of foreign policy. In the first 88 years of Australian federation (since 1 January 1901), the country was engaged in war, including operations against terrorists in the Malayan or Malaysian area, for 27 years, and had military forces stationed overseas for a further 28—a total of 55 years, or 62 per cent of the time. World War I saw Australia grow and gain coherence and confidence as a nation, acquiring myths and traditions which are part of the equipment of nationhood. World War II, 21 years later, accelerated these processes and brought Australia into active sovereign membership of the world of states. Subsequent conflicts in which she was involved emphasised both dependence and independence in Australia’s international relationships: dependence based on habit and fear, independence based on brashness or self-reliance, all four qualities being part of the Australian makeup.

It is not a book, either, directly about economic policy, although economic aspects impinge upon, or may even determine, ‘political’ policies. The economic dimension is discussed from time to time. Australia is a great trading nation, has been developed by imported capital, has a very high standard of living that it is determined to defend. Foreign policy has consistently been directed to such ends.

Every country has its foreign policy difficulties and dilemmas, problems inherited from history, from geography, or imposed by events of the day. So it is with Australia, a plantation of European culture permanently located alongside Asia, remote from her traditional friends (except New Zealand) and major markets, with a wealthy economy still substantially dependent on primary exports and secondary imports travelling long distances across the open seas. The role of foreign policy is not simply to come to terms with such problems but to alleviate their effects where possible, to keep striking the best bargain with the circumstances of international life.

This book is an attempt to show what kinds of bargains, if any, Australia has struck, and what other bargains may be worth considering; to ask where we are, and how and why we arrived there.
PART 1

BEGINNINGS
When the British government commissioned Captain Arthur Phillip to establish the first settlement in New South Wales in 1788, it gave him authority over the eastern half of the Australian continent. It was 40 years before a formal claim was laid to the whole land mass. During the first few years, several new settlements were begun—at Norfolk Island, Port Phillip (briefly), and on the Derwent River in what became Tasmania. A common factor in their establishment was to prevent occupation by France, against whom Britain was engaged in intermittent war up till 1815. In 1810, Napoleon ordered the Governor of Mauritius to ‘take the English colony at Port Jackson [Sydney]’, but as the British navy both protected Sydney and blockaded Mauritius, the Governor did not comply. Even after Waterloo, suspicion of France continued in the Australian colonies. In Western Australia, settlements first at King George Sound on the south coast in 1826 and shortly afterwards on the Swan River, were largely to pre-empt the French and demonstrate occupancy and thus possession of the whole continent.

Other countries were interested in the new colonies. American vessels principally engaged in the China trade called at Botany Bay from the earliest years, and contact continued because of American involvement in the sealing and whaling trades. The Secretary to the Admiralty in London thought (without any apparent justification) that the Americans, like the French, might covet the Swan River anchorage. American consuls were appointed for Sydney in 1836, Hobart 1843, and Melbourne 1852. Gold fever took Australians to California in the late 1840s, and some 12,000 Americans returned the compliment during the Australian gold rushes between 1851 and 1856.

Russia, an important maritime power, also took notice of the new
outpost of Europe. Russian vessels called at Australian ports from time to
time, but to waning cordiality in the face of pro-Polish sentiment imported
from Britain.

English fears for the rights of the British East India Company deterred
proposed colonial contacts and trade by Australian colonies with the Spice
Islands and China, which were in any case off the main shipping routes.
The main settlement, at Sydney, looked out on the south-west Pacific, and
soon developed a sense of possessiveness towards it. Early Governors of
New South Wales had commissions that extended over the adjacent islands
in the South Pacific. New Zealand, some 1600 kilometres to the south-east,
comprising two main islands and several smaller ones, was viewed as an
extension of the Australian colonies—a colony, in effect, of New South
Wales, until 1840, when it was annexed by the British government.

Settlers, traders, sealers, missionaries and vagabonds from Sydney found
the land more hospitable than Australia. The Maoris were less acquiescent
and more formidable than the Aborigines, but they were as prone to attack
one another as they were to attack the whites. The immigrants from
Australia brought New Zealand under British influence, but British order
came only with annexation. The new colony looked in two directions: to
London and to Sydney, and until the end of the century it was uncertain
where its ultimate destiny lay. Australia did not especially care, and tended
then as now to take New Zealand very much for granted, to look on New
Zealanders as being 'Australians across the water'.

Tahiti, Fiji, the New Hebrides and other islands were early seen as being
strategically important to New South Wales and therefore, desirably,
British, and to be administered at Britain's expense. Sandalwood, bêche-
de-mer, and pigs formed the basis of trade, and when some of this trade
collapsed it was replaced by traffic in labour, to meet the growing needs of
cotton and sugar plantations in Queensland and Fiji. The Australian
settlers welcomed Britain's annexation of New Zealand, and saw the South
Pacific becoming a 'British lake'. They thus bitterly resented the French
protectorate over Tahiti in 1844, and the annexation of New Caledonia
nine years later. This resentment was directed less at Paris for its acquisi-
tiveness than at London for its inaction.

1 Imperial troops were sent from Australia in 1845 to help in the first Maori war. In the sec-
ond, which began in 1860, in addition to imperial units, some 2600 colonial volunteers and the
Victorian colonial navy's steam corvette Victoria crossed the Tasman.

2 Even as late as 1900 New Zealand made an attempt to keep open the possibility of federating
with the six Australian colonies. After this it came to feel firmly, if gradually, that its destiny
lay, like Australia's, in independence within the British Empire and Commonwealth.
In the 1830s, the expanding Australian pastoral industry faced a serious labour shortage, reinforced by the impending end to the transportation of convicts. Pastoralists were interested in the idea of introducing indentured Asian labourers, especially Indians. The Colonial Office in London, colonial Governors, and by 1842 the working classes in Sydney, were opposed to the pastoralists' demands. In 1841 a Committee on Immigration of the New South Wales Legislative Council produced a report which emphasised the importance of racial homogeneity. It wanted British institutions reproduced in the colony. It was concerned to preserve the dignity of manual labour. It wanted to prevent the creation of an inferior, near-slave, labouring group, not so very different from convicts. Here were demonstrated those attitudes which led eventually to the White Australia policy and the strong trade union movement. They were partly an expression of a perceived racial superiority, partly a reaction against the whole concept of servility.

Institutions for democratic internal self-government were set up in each of the colonies as a result of the Australian Colonies Government Act of 1850. This forced the legislatures to consider both their internal and external security, especially when the gold discoveries brought a rush of sometimes disorderly immigrants and an accumulation of visible wealth. Napoleon III of France apparently considered privately in 1853 the possibility of seizing the Australian colonies. The colonists do not seem to have been aware of this, but they had a general fear of France, which annexed New Caledonia in 1853, and they were always aware—some months later, because of the slow mails—of what was happening in Europe, and for the most part still looked on the world through European, and especially English eyes. Thus the Crimean War of 1854 caused alarm in Sydney and Melbourne at the state of the defences. The imperial garrisons and navy seemed inadequate. Forts were constructed and volunteer forces raised to meet the fear of an attack on the gold-rich colonies by Russian men-of-war, while Victoria—partly from fear of a possible French naval base in New Caledonia—indulged in the additional protection of its own small navy which was later to provide a significant part of the Royal Australian Navy.

The first Russian ships to sail into Australian waters were welcomed by the early settlers. Glynn Barratt reports 17 Russian visits between 1807 and 1835. Towards the end of this period, colonial authorities had become affected by British hostility to Russia's Polish policies, and by rumours of a major Russian warship off New South Wales. Glynn Barratt, *The Russians and Australia*. 
Some of the British troops were withdrawn in 1860. In December 1861 the Secretary of State for the Colonies wrote to warn that war with the United States was possible. This crisis soon passed. A Russian naval force visiting the colonies in 1862–63 stimulated further fears of a Russian invasion. Throughout the rest of the century, colonial opinion reflected British tensions with Russia, especially in 1878 and 1885, and translated them into defence measures. Russian ships visiting Australian ports were the subject of normal courtesies, but also of abnormal suspicions and rumours. Yet Russia was by no means a great naval power, as later events were to demonstrate, and could have done little more than harass British vessels or territory in this part of the world. Such is the force of fear based on ignorance that the Australian colonies and New Zealand were as much afraid of Russia as of France and Germany when they agreed (see below) to contribute to the costs of a British naval squadron to be stationed in their waters in the late 1880s. By this time, Russia's territorial acquisitions across the Asian continent, with the trans-Siberian railway creeping in their wake, had made her a Pacific power to be thought about but not yet one to be reckoned with.

Under the Colonial Laws Validity Act of 1865, the legal supremacy of the imperial parliament was considerably modified, or at least certain assumptions about that supremacy were removed.⁴ The powers of the Governors and of Westminster in the colonies were progressively limited. The major area in which Westminster exercised almost exclusive power was in negotiation with foreign powers. There was considerable local freedom over defence, tariffs and immigration.

Immigration became a significant issue because of the influx of Chinese (mainly Cantonese) to the New South Wales and Victorian goldfields after 1851, so that by 1855 over 18,000 had arrived.⁵ Their different race, culture and customs, and their capacity for hard work, brought strong reactions. Victoria was the first colony to impose restrictions, first by limiting the number of arrivals by ship and taxing them. The Governor, seeking imperial assent to the Act, claimed that it did not contravene the 1842

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⁴Colonial laws were held to be invalid only to the extent that they were repugnant to laws adopted by Westminster, irrespective of administrative decisions or Governors' commissions. The repugnancy provision remained legally in force until the Statute of Westminster, 1931, although its application was progressively reduced.

⁵This account is taken largely from Charles A. Price, The Great White Walls are Built. Restrictive Immigration to North America and Australasia 1833–1888.
British commercial treaty with China, as it did not prevent Chinese from landing, did not deny them freedom and protection, and indeed was more liberal than the restrictions placed by China on British merchants. (So, throughout the history of White Australia, Australian immigration restrictions were frequently less stringent than those of the countries from which the migrants came.) One effect of the Victorian Act was to divert the Chinese migrant ships to New South Wales and South Australia, from where the Chinese walked overland to Victoria and the diggings. By June 1857 there were some 40,000 Chinese in the colony. Further legislation in all three colonies in Queensland, and a decline in gold yield, eventually reduced the flow. A seamen’s strike in 1878 over the employment of Chinese helped make Henry Parkes premier of New South Wales, and he raised the question at an intercolonial conference in 1880. This led to more uniform Acts, made more restrictive after violent demonstrations in Sydney in 1888 against the landing of Chinese. In the same year, at colonial request, Britain agreed to negotiate with China a treaty which would stop Chinese migration to the colonies.

The anti-Chinese movement was accompanied by an attempt to uproot the system of indentured Kanaka (Pacific Islander) labour in Queensland, much of it the result of malpractices by ship captains and labour recruiters (‘blackbirding’). Indenture was prohibited in Queensland in 1890, but restored in 1892 for another ten years.

Humanitarian feeling partly explains the movement to abolish the Kanaka immigration, but there was also developing throughout the colonies, as the century drew towards its close, a feeling in favour of national unity, embodying an ideal of social equality. This feeling was less able in Queensland than elsewhere to counter the advantages believed to derive from cheap coloured labour. When the Premier of Queensland, Sir Thomas McIlwraith, tried to annex eastern New Guinea in 1883, following various attempts to claim the territory for the British Crown on commercial and missionary grounds, the British government repudiated his action, partly on account of Queensland’s racial policies and partly because the Foreign Office did not share the Premier’s fears of German colonial initiatives in the area. As it happened, the Premier was right and the Foreign Office was wrong. Germany annexed the north-eastern quarter of the island, and by agreement Britain took over the south-eastern portion (Papua). Even so it was reluctant to give Queensland a controlling interest in the administration of the territory, because of its racial policies. Papua functioned as a British protectorate from 1884 to 1888, and then until 1902
was administered as a British colony through the joint offices of Britain and the Australian colonies. It became a territory of the new Australian Commonwealth in 1906 (see Chapter 14).

In 1896, a conference of colonial premiers, with Queensland dissenting, agreed on uniform legislation to exclude all immigration of non-white people. Queensland also alone decided to adhere to the immigration provisions of the 1894 Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, and entered that treaty in 1897 by a special protocol, each party having the right to regulate the inflow of labourers and artisans. The restrictive legislation adopted by New South Wales, South Australia and Tasmania was reserved by the Colonial Secretary, Joseph Chamberlain, who objected to its form rather than its principles. Nationally uniform legislation therefore was held over until after the six colonies came together in the federal Commonwealth of Australia in 1901.

With their growth in wealth and power, the colonial governments gave increasing thought to their own defence. The imperial garrisons were finally withdrawn in 1870, leaving defence on land to the colonies, while defence at sea remained primarily the responsibility of the Royal Navy. In 1878 a Russian war scare focused attention on colonial naval defence, and the Carnarvon Commission of 1879 recommended among other things the creation of an Australian naval squadron partly financed by the colonies. The colonies at first objected to the expenditure involved, especially as the squadron could be removed at will by the British Admiralty. But Britain's dominance in empire, maritime power and trade was coming under increasing challenge. Germany was a late but energetic competitor with France and Britain for control of island territories in the South Pacific. Fiji, most of whose white settlers were Australians, was annexed by Britain in 1875, as a result of strong colonial pressure and an offer of cession by Fiji the previous year; the two eastern parts of New Guinea by Britain and Germany.

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6 In the archives of the Victorian colonial Defence Department is an unconfirmed report of a plan for the Russian Asiatic squadron, in the event of war with Britain at this time, to sail south and attack Sydney and Melbourne, exacting all the bullion in the banks. Memo by Major General E. Harding Stewart, 17 September 1884—file 0/2/1/1. A Russian squadron visited the eastern colonies in 1882. In the mid-1880s there was an eruption of anti-Russian feeling in England, reflected in renewed Australian fears of a Russian attack.

7 In 1869 the government of Victoria had seriously considered intervening in Fiji, which was troubled by internal disorders, and the Melbourne press advocated such action. An intercolonial conference in 1870 pressed for a British protectorate over Fiji. The Colonial Office, looking to finances and considering that the Fiji islands should be the responsibility of a united Australia, was prepared in the meantime to give the colonies a say in the islands' administration for a financial contribution. The offer was refused.
The nineteenth century

in 1884; Samoa by Germany and the United States in 1900. In the New Hebrides, to prevent French annexation, Presbyterian missionaries stimulated the colonial governments to bring pressure through London on Paris. The islands were administered by a joint British-French naval condominium in 1887 and by a condominium government in 1906.

In 1883, an Australian inter-colonial conference had adopted a proposal for a federal council with powers affecting Australian relations with the islands. The council was created by an imperial Act in 1885, but remained largely ineffective when New South Wales stayed out of it because of the council's limited powers. It was however one of the first national manifestations of foreign policy, and reflected the growing concept that Australian interests in trade, labour, missionary activities and security in the South Pacific warranted the colonies exerting a leading influence there. This assertion of what has been called an Australian or Australasian Monroe Doctrine was unacceptable to the British government, and was considered offensive by France and Germany. Sixty-one years later (1944), an Australian government with a somewhat reluctant New Zealand in tow was to assert even more strongly a major role in the south-west and south Pacific, a role it was then almost equally incapable of fulfilling.

By most of the advocates of this idea in the 1880s, the Australian Monroe Doctrine was not intended as a challenge to British imperial power. The Australian colonies were British—New South Wales and Victoria competed to send a force to the Sudan after the death of General Gordon. (Victoria, to its chagrin, lost.) Their complaint was that Britain was doing too little in their area. As Alfred Deakin told the 1887 Colonial Conference in London:

The despatches received from England with reference to English activity in these seas, exhibited only the disdain and indifference with which English enterprise was treated in the Colonial Office…. We hope that from this time forward, Colonial policy will be considered Imperial policy; that Colonial interests will be considered and felt to be Imperial interests; that they will be carefully studied, and that when they are understood, they will be most determinedly upheld.9

9 Alfred Deakin records that in 1888 or 1889 the inner cabinet of the Victorian government, hearing rumours that the French were preparing to seize control of the New Hebrides, 'decided to forestall them by despatching a detachment of the Victorian permanent military forces in a swift steamer with orders to hoist the British flag and keep it flying'. On the eve of executing this venture, it became clear that the French did not have the motives attributed to them, and the scheme was abandoned. A. Deakin, The Federal Story: The Inner History of the Federal Cause, 1880-1900, pp. 24-5.

The attitudes of Whitehall, understandably, were almost the reverse: the colonies should do more for themselves, and at the conference the Australian colonies agreed to contribute £126,000 per annum to the cost of an Australian naval squadron, provided (at Deakin's insistence) that the ships would not be removed from local waters without colonial agreement.

Two attitudes about relations with Britain contended during the 1880s and early 1890s, but neither gathered sufficient support. Republicanism, modelled on the United States, had been preached by the Reverend John Dunmore Lang 30 years before, but became a public issue only as the idea of federation within a single Australian nation took firm root. It was too radical, too surgical for the majority of colonists. At the other extreme was the proposal for federating the whole of the British Empire into a single state or nation. An Imperial Federation League was founded in 1884 and had some eminent supporters. It reflected a great deal of self-satisfaction about the Empire; it did not reflect the preoccupation of most British subjects overseas with developing distinctive political societies where they were.

Major-General J. Bevan Edwards, commander of the British ground forces in China and Hong Kong, inspected the defences of all the Australian colonies in 1889. He reported individually to the six governments, and also proposed in a separate memorandum that the various forces be brought together into a common system of defence. The state of affairs in Europe, and the role of the unforeseen in war, demanded it, he said. Sir Henry Parkes, Premier of New South Wales, successfully used Edwards's memorandum to reinforce his earlier arguments for federation,\(^\text{10}\) while Edwards sought unsuccessfully to use his relationship with Parkes to further his own military and political career in the colonies.

The Colonial Defence Committee, set up to guide the colonies on defence questions and to preserve the sense of imperial collaboration established by the Sudan War and by the 1887 naval agreement, rejected the sense of alarm conveyed by the Edwards memorandum, but supported its proposals to encourage intercolonial defence cooperation. The Committee's activities were superseded by the movement towards political federation.

During the decade prior to that event, the 1890s, the earlier colonial fears about France, Russia and Germany substantially abated. Defence

\(^{10}\text{R. Norris, The Emergent Commonwealth. Australian Federation. Expectations and Fulfilment 1889–1910, has been one of the recent Australian historians who believe that defence was less important than other considerations in bringing about the federation of the six colonies.}\)
The nineteenth century accordingly took a less important place in the final federation and constitutional debates than other more domestic topics. On one occasion Parkes referred to the possibility of a Chinese invasion, but this became less believable after Japan’s easy defeat of China in 1895. Under the new federal Constitution, exclusive power was given to the Commonwealth (the central government) over ‘the naval and military defence of the Commonwealth and of the several States’, over external affairs, and ‘the relations of the Commonwealth with the islands of the Pacific’. However, before the Constitution was enacted, colonial forces became engaged in two imperial military adventures.

The first was the war in South Africa. At the invitation of the Victorian government, the military commandants of the six colonies conferred in September 1899 and recommended that a combined Australian contingent be organised in the event of a war with the Boers. When war came, the colonies in fact sent separate contingents. The Premier of Victoria, Sir George Turner, expressed the common reasons for the decision: it was an expression of loyalty to the Queen and to the Empire; and the British people in the Transvaal were fighting for a righteous cause—equal rights for all white settlers. He also declared that many people in the Transvaal, and especially miners, went there from Australia, and sent back large sums of money ‘which have assisted us to a very great extent in surmounting the difficulties with which we have been surrounded’. It was an act of sentiment, allowing ‘our men to stand side by side with those who form the British Empire’. Opposition to the proposal was vocal but ineffective. The British government defrayed the expenses of the colonial and (from 1901) combined Australian contingents. A total of 16,314 Australians served in South Africa, of whom 1,400 were killed or died in the war.

The second expedition went to China. When the Boxer hostilities broke out in 1900, the British government requested the despatch of the Australian Squadron of the Royal Navy to the area. New South Wales and Victoria agreed to more than that. Each raised a naval contingent, while South Australia sent its only naval vessel of any size, the gunboat Protector. Again it was sentiment that spurred the colonial governments. Again, not everyone shared that sentiment. Henry Bournes Higgins, an Irishman who was to become a justice of the High Court of Australia and president of the Commonwealth Court of Conciliation and Arbitration, spoke up in the

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11 For this debate see Victorian Legislative Assembly, Parliamantary Debates, Session 1899–1900, vol. 92, pp. 1727–1801.
Victorian Legislative Assembly with the arguments to be used by generations of Australians on the radical side of politics, and especially those of Irish descent:

The people will be wanting to know whether we in these colonies are to be expected to volunteer each time to contribute valuable lives and money in aid of wars which may or may not interest us directly; in aid of wars the policy of which we have no direct control over, and, in some cases, perhaps no knowledge of; in aid of wars that we have not in any way been consulted about... I think the taxpayer of this country is entitled to know whether his liability is unlimited with regard to all wars in all parts of the globe which the particular Government of Her Majesty for the time being may think fit to wage.\(^{12}\)

Yet in all three expeditions—to the Sudan, South Africa and China—the initiative came not from England but from the Australian colonists themselves, leading politicians admitting that the forces were not in fact needed by Britain. This loyalty, this patriotism, this fervour, this sense of being part of a single Empire and responsible for its defence, were to send overseas expeditionary forces to successive wars for a further half century.

Defence and immigration were two of the three elements in colonial attitudes to the external world. The third was trade. Aside from intercolonial traffic, trade was initially wholly with Britain, but diversified a little as the 19th century progressed. From the mid-century, protective tariffs began to replace free-trade policies in continental Europe. In 1850, the colonies were permitted to levy non-differential customs duties. Victoria, concerned to develop local industries and to remove unemployment, led the way among the Australian colonies in erecting tariffs against one another as well as against Britain and foreign countries, although New South Wales remained committed to free trade. The absurdity of this situation, representing competing local colonial 'nationalisms', was both a hindrance and a spur to federation. The Australian Colonial Duties Act of 1873, enabling the colonies to negotiate trade agreements between themselves, came too late to rationalise the various tariff systems, a process which only occurred within the fiscal debates leading to federation. In England, a National Fair Trade League, designed to protect British industries, tried without success to promote tariff preferences within the Empire. In 1895, the Australian colonies were given the power to charge differential duties not only on their trade with one another but also on trade with the

outside world. Several of the colonial governments wanted differential tariff rights written into the new federal constitution, but the tide was against them, and the first listed power of the new Commonwealth government was over 'trade and commerce with other countries, and between the States' (i.e. between the six former colonies, now States in the new federation).

The Australian colonists could not be expected to foresee the great changes that were soon to come in the world. The Empire dominated their image of the world, although it did not fill it. They were very conscious of the long distances from London, despite the advent of steam ships and the submarine cable opened in 1872. They watched with concern the competing European imperialisms active in their own Pacific neighbourhood. They were uneasily aware of the proximity of Asia with its teeming coloured populations. They knew that they had interests and priorities not shared by the mother country, but for the most part this meant to them not that they should take steps to promote these interests but that they should persuade the mother country to do it for them.

The new federal Constitution set up the forms of a single Australian state, but it could not of itself create a single Australian nation. Many colonial attitudes and legal dependencies continued. The relationship with Whitehall and Westminster changed slowly. The sense of subordinate authority, of dependence, common loyalty, common citizenship, remained, to be slowly eroded by the movements of people and ideas which impelled the young Commonwealth to develop its own place and personality in the world and reduced the great Empire within 70 years to an island state off the coast of Europe linked tenuously to its past glories.
PART 2

1901–1939
The Constitution of the Commonwealth of Australia was brought into effect on 1 January 1901 not as the result of a vote of a revolutionary assembly but peaceably by an Act of the British Parliament negotiated by colonial representatives with almost wholly acquiescent imperial statesmen. The new Australia was British, a part of the Empire. The head of state was the British monarch. The national anthem was the British national anthem: ‘God save the Queen!’ The flag was the British Union flag, or ‘Union Jack’, until a competition produced a new flag incorporating the Union Jack and the Southern Cross constellation. Social and political institutions were predominantly British in nature and affiliation. The overwhelming majority of the people were British by birth or descent. There was an Australian nationalism, developed and developing, but predominantly contained within the larger loyalty. This situation was to continue with slow attenuation for another 40 years, and there are still some elements of it.

In external matters, the powers exercised by the new Australian government, the powers it and the British government believed it had, were related to the institutions by which that exercise could take place. Thus tariffs could be imposed on imports, but as Australia had no overseas diplomatic posts, trade negotiations were carried out by representatives of the British government.¹ Defence by land was the responsibility of the Australian government; in the nearby seas, it was jointly managed with the British Admiralty; farther away, it was wholly British. Similarly, immigration could be controlled by Australia, but negotiated agreements

¹The Australian government could have communicated on these matters through the consular representatives of other powers in Australia, but for the most part chose not to.
required the participation and by implication the consent of the British government. Foreign relations generally were a matter for Westminster and Whitehall, whose connections with the Australian government until 1928 were through the office of the Secretary of State for the Colonies and the Governor-General. 'External Affairs', as a constitutional power, was interpreted to mean essentially relations with the British government.\(^2\) In international terms, there were thus important limits to Australia's sovereignty and independence. They were psychological, not immutable legal or physical restraints. Had it been determined to do so, the first Australian government led by Edmund Barton without doubt could have decided its own foreign policies administered through its own created diplomatic service. It did not want to do so. It did not believe it had the need, the right, the power, or the capacity. This was not a case of liberty reinforcing the bonds of empire, but rather of habits of empire softening the resolve of liberty.

In considering the great issues of peace and war, the Australian colonies, like their fellows elsewhere, were faced with unresolved and often unobserved dilemmas. They wanted British imperialism to extend by vigorous steps to protect their own environment; they did not want it to launch into colonial conflict elsewhere, into which they might be dragged unconsulted. They did not want to be committed to British wars, but they wanted Britain committed to their defence. They were prepared to act to defend themselves; they also expected to be defended. They did not want to provide a reserve for the security of the Empire. They wanted an influence over the allocation of forces for their maritime defence much in excess of the proportion of costs they were prepared to pay. The British government, on the other hand, saw only problems in having different colonial governments advising the Crown differently on defence or foreign affairs, and only waste in the colonies depriving the imperial fleets of the freedom and flexibility they needed to protect the whole Empire. Ministers and civil

\(^2\)See W. J. Hudson, *Australian Diplomacy*, Ch.1. In a letter to the Colonial Secretary in March 1902, Barton said that the Australian government was 'precluded from the discussion with external authorities representing Foreign Nations, of matters involving the relations between the Empire and those Nations, excepting with the express authority of His Majesty's Imperial Government'. Chamberlain agreed. Records of the Colonial Office CO418/18, cited by Norris, *The Emergent Commonwealth*, p. 207. Barton used this procedure to defend his government against Japanese representations over migration. In 1905 Deakin was prepared to negotiate directly with Japan (using the Japanese Consul-General) on migration matters. The Colonial Office channel was changed in 1918 to allow direct communications between the prime ministers of Britain and Australia.
servants in London saw their counterparts in Australia as brash, abrasive, immature, demanding; to those counterparts they were often pompous, dilatory, evasive. Yet when a crisis arose, the colonial leaders were imperialists almost to a man.

At the 1902 colonial conference, Australia negotiated a new and less satisfactory naval agreement with Britain. Australian sailors would henceforth be trained on a ship of the British squadron in Australia, but the Admiralty was to control all naval units (other than former colonial ships), and could remove them at will from Australian waters. Further, the Australian subsidy was to rise to £200,000 per year. Deakin, who had carried the burden of discussions at the 1887 conference, and who succeeded Barton as Prime Minister in 1903, disliked the new arrangements, which were a retrograde step in Australian national sovereignty and responsibility, and public opinion swung with him, especially in the light of Japan's devastating destruction of the Russian fleet at Tsushima in 1905. In November of that year Deakin asked the Committee of Imperial Defence to prepare a general scheme for the defence of Australian ports, in relation to any attacking forces which might reasonably be expected. The Committee in response supported the 1902 agreement, considered an attack upon Australia unlikely, and said that if Australia needed local naval defence elements, the Admiralty would provide them. This did not satisfy Deakin, who during his several periods of office and with the support of the Labor Party pressed for an Australian navy. This was part conceded at the Imperial Conference of 1907. By 1909, when there was an Empire scare about the German battleship strength, and war clouds were gathering in Europe, Australia offered the home government the cost of a dreadnought, which they hoped would be employed in the South Pacific. The Admiralty and the British government now accepted the concept of separate navies. They even proposed a subsidy to them, although this was rejected by Australia. A construction program began. Compulsory military training of youths was enacted in Australia in the same year, and extended in 1910 following a report commissioned from Lord Kitchener. On 4 October 1913 a squadron of one battle cruiser, three light cruisers and three destroyers of the Royal Australian Navy entered Sydney Harbour, to great public enthusiasm. The young nation had acquired some of the public symbols of nationhood, and

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3 This change in British policy was due to a tardy realisation that separate Dominion navies would be able to relieve the imperial navy of its responsibility 'in distant seas'. Neville Meaney, *The Search for Security in the Pacific, 1901–14*, pp. 182–3.
some of the means to protect it, but only within an acknowledged imperial set of processes over which Australia and its fellow Dominions had no control and almost no influence.

Thrusting 'colonial nationalists' such as Deakin, despite occasional dreams of imperial unity, did not want control of imperial policies, and often not even to be part of the foreign policy decision-making process; but they did want to be consulted in matters that affected them, and believed that this was warranted by their providing naval defence. Deakin, with reason, felt inadequately informed and consulted, and Australia's interests ignored, over the New Hebrides condominium, which was finally agreed between the Foreign Office and the French government in 1906 in the spirit of the growing European entente. There was token—but only token—discussion prior to the 1911 renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance. Andrew Fisher, Labor Prime Minister 1910-13, found at the 1911 Imperial Conference that he had no support from the Canadian or South African governments when he sought to be consulted about international agreements affecting Australia. The other Dominions saw consultation riding pick-a-back on a responsibility they did not want. Britain, as Asquith said at this conference, had sole authority over foreign policy; that authority could not be shared.

Yet if she had little say in formulating imperial policies, Australia began to develop attitudes and policies of her own. Restrictive immigration (see Chapter 3) was enacted in spite of the fact that it offended Japan, with whom Britain had been allied since 1902 as a restraint upon Russia. In 1907 Deakin forced a reluctant Foreign Office to invite the American 'Great White Fleet' to visit Australia, which it did the following year, creating a great impression and substantially achieving or at least contributing to Deakin's objectives for the visit. In September 1909, after a report of a possible second US naval visit, Deakin wrote a personal letter to the Col-

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4 Deakin consulted with New Zealand to put a common position before the Colonial Office, which that Office found simpler to ignore. Ibid., pp. 94-107.
5 Also in 1908 and in 1914-15.
6 British diplomats in Tokyo had the unpalatable task of negotiating for Australia over immigration and trade matters. In 1904, Deakin had been censured by the Colonial Office for negotiating directly with Japan over passport arrangements. Norris, Emergent Commonwealth, p. 207.
The imperial connection

The colonial Secretary, Lord Crewe, making the 'visionary suggestion' of 'an extension of the Monroe Doctrine to all the countries around the Pacific Ocean, supported by the guarantees of the British Empire, Holland, France, and China added to that of the United States'. After consultation with the Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, Crewe sent Deakin a bland, shrewd reply which concentrated on the problems and ignored the possibilities of such an initiative. The main difficulty was that it would be seen as a defence against Japan (which was intended) or against Germany (which it could become). Britain was allied to the first and did not want unnecessarily to offend the second. Like Lyons 30 years later (see below), it is doubtful whether Deakin had thought the proposal through with any clarity, but his instinct—to get the United States involved in the security of the Western Pacific—was entirely sound.

Australian relations with Britain had always been a function of Australian immigration from Britain. Immigration was never obstructed by Australian governments, but it was periodically encouraged by them through incentives such as assistance with fares or the offer of cheap land. These helped overcome the disadvantages of distance and a more primitive environment which made Australia less attractive to British migrants than the United States or Canada. The economic difficulties of the 1890s continued into the first few years of the new century, and deterred migration. But between 1906 and 1914, nearly 400,000 British migrants reached Australia, almost half of them being assisted. They must have had a considerable effect on Australian attitudes to the Great War (World War I).

Australia had led the colonial campaign for separate defence forces. In tariff matters, with differences to be resolved between the six states, Australia followed Canada and New Zealand in national initiatives, even though Deakin had earlier seen imperial preference as 'the royal road to a united Empire'. In 1894 the self-governing colonies had met at Ottawa, and proposed imperial tariff preferences. Chamberlain, the Colonial Secretary, suggested a zollverein—a customs union of the Empire with a common external tariff. This in fact suited no one: the colonies were not

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1. The texts of Deakin's letter, Sir Edward Grey's comment on it, and Lord Crewe's reply, are attached to Meaney's article.
3. This is discussed in W. K. Hancock, *Survey of British Commonwealth Affairs*, vol. II. *Problems of Economic Policy 1918-1939*, Part 1, pp. 82-94. Australia gave a preferential tariff to South Africa in 1906. Preferences to the United Kingdom from 1908 were 'specific preferences on separate articles'.
prepared to give up their 'tariff personalities', and Britain was reluctant to give up the traditional wisdom of free trade. But she did so, gradually, and under protest, pressed by imperial traders and economic nationalists, beginning in 1897, whereupon Canada followed by South Africa (1903), New Zealand (1903) and Australia (1908) gave her tariff preferences.

Defence, migration and tariff issues were brought together over the Queensland sugar industry. A Royal Commission in 1911–12 saw continued protection of the industry necessary in order to attract white labour to it. White (as distinct from coloured) labour was believed necessary for social coherence. White settlers were necessary to occupy a land which, without them, would constitute a strategic problem, an invitation to invasion.11 These attitudes, and the resulting policy, were unrelated to the imperial connection; they were part of the fabric of the developing Australian nationalism:

But it was still a nationalism strongly overlapped by an imperial spirit. When Britain declared war on Germany in August 1914, the Empire was at war, and no political leader in Australia doubted the fact. An election was in progress. The two principal party leaders, Cook and Fisher, competed in the abundance of their patriotism, an abundance shared by the public at large. Fisher, soon to be Labor Prime Minister, said: 'Australia will stand beside our own to help and defend her to our last man and our last shilling.' The departing Liberal government offered to put the Australian naval squadron under British command, and to despatch an expeditionary force of 20,000 men wherever required; its Labor successor honoured the undertaking, and much more. A young Australian corporal, soon to die at Gallipoli, caught the national sentiment when he wrote:

The bugles of England were blowing o'er the sea,
As they had called a thousand years, calling now to me;
They woke me from dreaming in the dawning of the day,
The bugles of England—and how could I stay?12

The bugles of England, as well as those other bugles and pressures that take men to war—national patriotism, a sense of adventure, the desire for glory, group or community sentiment—took 330,000 Australian volunteers

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11 Australia was never the most attractive land for British migrants. Between 1879 (when immigrations statistics were kept) and 1914, there was a net outflow of about ten million persons from Britain, of whom a net 805,000 emigrated to Australia. R. T. Appleyard, *British Emigration to Australia*, Canberra, Australian National University Press, 1964, p. 29.

12 J. D. Burns, 'For England'. I recall, as a schoolboy at the outbreak of World War II, being greatly moved by this poem.
overseas under British command: at sea, and in the Dardanelles, \(^{13}\) Egypt, Palestine, and France; nearly 60,000 lost their lives. Gradually the level of Australian military responsibility rose. By 1917 an Australian, Lieutenant-General Sir Harry Chauvel, was commanding a mounted corps in Palestine, which included British, New Zealand and Australian divisions or brigades. By 1918 another Australian, General Sir John Monash, was commanding an Australian corps of five divisions in France. He was one of the ablest generals of the war and a legitimate contender (despite the political liability of being an Australian) for the post of British commander-in-chief.

The heightened dangers, the joint and several sacrifices on an unprecedented scale, the four long years of concentrated effort all changed the Australia-Britain relationship. Australian forces had occupied German colonial possessions in the Pacific, including German New Guinea. The heroic failure at Gallipoli came to signify for Australians their coming of age as a nation, despite the presence of greater numbers of British and French troops. But on two occasions the Australian people rejected, by referendum, compulsory overseas service, even though Britain and New Zealand had it, and the British government would have liked the additional Australians so provided. The minority opposed to fighting wars for Britain, \(^{14}\) foreigners, or capitalists, was reinforced by other objectors to compulsion or to the horrifying slaughter on the western front; together they created a majority to defeat the proposal.

The great contribution to the imperial cause brought demands for a greater voice in imperial councils. This was not satisfied until the creation of an Imperial War Cabinet in 1917.

W. M. Hughes (Australian Prime Minister 1915-23) and other Dominion prime ministers had attended occasional meetings of the British Cabinet, and Hughes and Sir George Foster of Canada attended an economic conference in Paris in June 1916 as members of the British delegation, with the right to speak and vote independently. \(^{15}\) The Imperial War Cabinet, supported by a larger advisory Imperial War Conference, was to

\(^{13}\) New Zealand forces joined with Australian to form the Australia and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC) which landed at Gallipoli on 25 April 1915. Australian and New Zealand forces have fought side by side, usually under a joint command, in almost all subsequent conflicts in which their countries were engaged.

\(^{14}\) Including many people of Irish extraction, whose anti-British sentiments were strengthened by events in Ireland during the war.

\(^{15}\) Hughes later wrote: 'As a matter of fact, the delegation cast a solid vote on everything'. The Splendid Adventure. A Review of Empire Relationships Within and Without the Commonwealth of Britannic Nations, p. 44.
an extent a policy-making body, but its decisions had to be ratified subsequently by the British or Dominion governments concerned. Hughes wrote of it:

Gathered around the council-table of Empire, they\textsuperscript{16}...were not only invited, but forced to share the responsibility of guiding and directing the armed forces of the Empire and organising its vast resources for the purpose of this terrible life-and-death struggle on the issue of which the fate of the Empire and of every part of it depended. To this great task they bent all their energies. But although they realised that it was futile to talk of what might have been,...they were firmly resolved that the Dominions must never again be dragged into war without having had the fullest opportunity of expressing their views before the die was cast.\textsuperscript{17}

The Imperial War Conference adopted a resolution in 1917 to that effect.

The Imperial War Cabinet of 1918–19, meeting (with one gap) for over a year, took broad decisions on the conduct of the war and on the proposed terms of peace, including the disposition of the German colonies in the south Pacific and southern Africa.\textsuperscript{18} Contrary to the expressed desire of his own Cabinet, Hughes helped obtain for the Dominions an independent voice at the Paris peace discussions. Writing ten years later, Hughes called the Imperial War Cabinet 'a landmark in development of Empire government',\textsuperscript{19} but it was like a splendid bridge over a river which then changes course, leaving the structure a conspicuous but irrelevant reminder of the former road. The concept of an imperial cabinet ended with the peace treaty, and has not been revived for any subsequent crisis or process. The new road, though it diverged slowly, led not to imperial government but to Dominion independence. Hughes, like the more prominent and less abrasive Canadian Prime Minister, Sir Robert Borden, used his status with the

\textsuperscript{16}Initially eight members of the British Cabinet and six from the Dominions and India. Indian representatives in the Cabinet and the Conference were not considered to be 'members'.

\textsuperscript{17}The Splendid Adventure, pp. 51–2. Hughes states (ibid., p. 76) that the Australian government was informed but not consulted when its troops were sent to Gallipoli and when they were removed, and if properly informed of the situation prior to withdrawal it and New Zealand would have made available the additional forces that could have turned failure into success.

\textsuperscript{18}Under Dominion prompting, the Cabinet decided that these should be ceded and not mandated to the Dominions—South West Africa to the Union of South Africa, Western Samoa to New Zealand, New Guinea and Nauru to Australia. This position became untenable at Versailles under President Wilson's hostility, and the 'C' class mandate was the compromise result. (See Chapter 5.)

\textsuperscript{19}The Splendid Adventure, p. 56.
The British Empire delegation at Lloyd George’s house in the Rue Nitot, Paris, on 1 June 1919, when the German reply to the peace terms was considered.


British delegation to the peace conference to strengthen his position as spokesman for a self-governing Dominion distinct from Britain and worthy of League membership in its own right. Separate signature to the peace treaty and separate membership of the League established in practice the anomaly which had long plagued and would continue to plague constitutional lawyers: the divisibility of the Crown, acting in potentially conflicting ways on the advice of the different constitutional units, each with its own responsible government, its own electorate waiting to pass judgment, and an opposition ready to replace it. The 1921 Imperial Conference, the ‘last flare of war-time unity and power’, formulated imperial policies in a number of areas including the forthcoming Washington naval conference, but failed to provide institutions or processes for continuing inter-imperial cooperation. Hughes’s sense of Empire needed no new legal links. He had no ‘zeal for definition’ of Dominion rights. At Washington,


21 Hughes at the 1921 Conference: ‘The right of the Dominions to an effective voice in moulding the foreign policy of the Empire is incidental to their autonomous powers over domestic affairs...it follows that Britain cannot attempt to entrust to any one Dominion the power to take any action in regard to foreign affairs, except as and to the extent agreed upon by the representatives of the whole Empire.’ Splendid Adventure, p. 148.
the United States would not agree to separate Dominion representation, although it did accept that the Empire as a whole would only be committed to the treaties where all members had signed. Hughes could agree with Lloyd George that there was a joint foreign policy for the Empire, jointly formulated, but this was disproved within months when Lloyd George dramatically, publicly, and without prior consultation, sought help for his confrontation with Turkey at Chanak. He received unequivocal support only from New Zealand, and even that carried the requirement of parliamentary approval. Hughes was prepared to provide forces (the Opposition declared that a referendum would be necessary) but objected to the manner of asking. Fortunately, the crisis passed without the need for action.

During the last decades of the 19th century and the first two of the 20th, it was Canada and not Australia that pressed most for changes in the imperial relationship, other than over defence. Canada was years ahead in constitutional development. Her nearest neighbour was the great American republic, ideologically, culturally and economically overbearing. Equally important was Canada's population, divided between an English-speaking majority and a restive French-speaking minority for whom fine libertarian words buttered no political parsnips unless accompanied by institutional changes. This was even more the case in South Africa and in Ireland, for their separate but similar reasons, during the 1920s. Australia, much more homogeneous, much more British, much more remote, isolated, and conservative, sought instead a closer imperial relationship, and followed somewhat disapprovingly and at a distance along the path of diplomatic autonomy her fellow Dominions were treading.

At the 1923 Imperial Conference, attended for Australia by S. M. Bruce, Hughes's successor, it was agreed that the Dominions could appoint their own diplomatic representatives, and negotiate treaties with foreign powers. In 1924 Britain recognised the Soviet Union, without any prior consultation with Australia. Australia did not protest. In October 1925 the Locarno Treaty for the security of western Europe carried a disclaimer to the effect that it imposed no obligation on any of the British Dominions or India unless they so signified. None accepted the obligation. At the 1926 Imperial Conference, under Balfour's skilfully ambiguous pen, the status of Britain and the Dominions was defined as:

autonomous communities within the British Empire, equal in status, in no way subordinate one to another in any aspect of their domestic or external affairs, though united by a common allegiance to the Crown and freely associated as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.
Yet while acknowledging equality of status, the report denied equality of function: in other words, some of the powers were still theoretical. In matters of defence and diplomacy, for example, (it said) the Commonwealth needed flexible machinery, adaptable to the changing circumstances of the world.22 The report defined the function of the Governor-General, which had been changing under usage, as no longer the agent or representative of the British government, but 'the representative of the Crown, holding in all essential respects the same position in relation to the administration of public affairs in the Dominions as is held by His Majesty the King in Great Britain'.23 It recommended recognition of the right of each Dominion government 'to advise the Crown in all matters relating to its own affairs', and that no British Act should apply to a Dominion without the latter's request and consent.24

These matters were reviewed at an imperial conference four years later (when both Britain and Australia had short-lived Labour governments) and

23 Ibid., p. 164.
24 Ibid., p. 167.
Hughes’s vision of the Peace Conference—*The Bulletin*, 1918

codified in the Statute of Westminster of 1931. Australia acquiesced in the Balfour report, but did not ratify the statute until the next Labor government was in office in 1942. (Legislation to ratify the statute was introduced by the Lyons government in December 1936, but not proceeded with.) It saw no need to put into law a relationship that was already eminently satisfactory and adequately flexible. All the major Australian parties were nationalistic. None wanted to reduce the British relationship, but equally none would knowingly sacrifice Australia’s interests to Britain’s. The statute spelt out in law the right of each of the self-governing Dominions to make its own laws (even laws repugnant to British law) including laws having extra-territorial operation, its own foreign policy, and give its own advice to the King. The statute asserted their right, being ‘united by a common allegiance to the Crown’, to veto any changes in the Royal Style and Titles. Did it also include the right to secede from the Commonwealth? The South African parliament declared that it did, as the Irish had earlier. Australia did not canvass the point. It did insist, as an anachronistic

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25 As from 1921 they were (in order of seniority) Canada, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, the Irish Free State, and Newfoundland. Newfoundland was later incorporated into Canada.

26 General Smuts, then in opposition, would not accept that South Africa had the right either to secession or to neutrality in war.
expression of its federal compact, that individual Australian states should retain their direct relationship with the parliament of the United Kingdom (see Chapter 20).

The Scullin Labor government (1929–31) was too preoccupied with the great economic depression to take initiatives in foreign policy. It did however nominate as Governor-General, for the first time, a native-born Australian, Sir Isaac Isaacs, then Chief Justice of the High Court. The British government, and King George V, strongly resisted the proposal, but Scullin insisted and prevailed. Two expatriate (British) appointees followed Isaacs, then another Labor-appointed Australian, Sir William McKell, then three more from Britain, until a former Australian Minister for External Affairs, Lord Casey, was appointed by a Liberal-Country Party government in 1965. Six Australians have succeeded him. For however long the office remains, it is virtually certain from now on to be filled by an Australian, irrespective of the political party in power.

Australian concern with the facts rather than the forms of imperial cooperation led Bruce in 1924 to establish in London a political liaison officer, R. G. Casey, separate from the Australian High Commission. Casey had an office in the Cabinet secretariat, and provided a confidential channel of communication between the Australian government (especially the Prime Minister) and the Foreign Office. Casey was there for seven years, and Bruce (later Australian High Commissioner in London) managed to have the office retained. He subsequently wrote:

From the time Casey went to London as my liaison officer until I ceased to be High Commissioner in 1945, Australia was invariably better informed on international affairs, and had far more influence on the U.K. Government and its policy, than all the rest of the Empire put together.

Casey, when Minister for External Affairs in the 1950s, lamented to the British government the lack of adequate liaison and information, but never managed to reinstate the office he himself had occupied, nor to produce a comparable effect by other means.

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27 Casey states that he was on an official top secret distribution list known as ‘KCC’, standing for ‘King, Cabinet, and Casey’. T. B. Millar (ed.), Australian Foreign Minister. The Diaries of R. G. Casey 1951–60, p. 59.

28 Quoted in Cecil Edwards, Bruce of Melbourne. Man of Two Worlds, p. 87. Bruce may have been correct about the information obtained, but the degree of Australian influence is less easily weighed and he clearly exaggerates it. See also I. M. Cumpston, Lord Bruce of Melbourne, pp. 44–5.

29 Cited in several places in Australian Foreign Minister.
The experience of World War I had produced a new compound of Empire political relationships. It had equally affected commercial matters. Australian industry was forced to grow by the demands of war and the perils of importing by long sea routes. Hughes had attended the Allies' economic conference in Paris in 1916, as part of the Empire delegation, and pursued a hard post-war economic line against Germany. But Australian tariff preferences to Britain were not yet reciprocated. The British government made a gesture towards imperial preference in 1917, but was in fact not prepared to impose any duties, or duties of a magnitude where a preference would matter, on the major exports of the Dominions and the colonies: raw materials and foodstuffs. A 'Committee on Commercial and Industrial Policy after the War' advocated the economic self-sufficiency of the Empire, on the false assumption (as Hancock has pointed out) that the self-governing communities of the Empire had both the will and the power to shape themselves as a single economic unit, whereas in fact—with modifications—they (including Britain) had neither. At the 1923 Imperial Economic Conference, the Dominions appealed for 'men, money, and markets'—for migrants, capital, and tariff preferences. Australia provided assisted passages for British migrants, helped them settle on the land, and sought assured entry into Britain for the produce of this enterprise.

Where successive Australian governments had been content to leave political negotiations on their behalf to the British foreign office, they had been less willing over trade negotiations. A Commonwealth Trade Commissioner was appointed to the United States in 1918. Another, based on the Australian High Commissioner in London, was appointed to France. In 1921 one was sent to China, with officers in Shanghai and Hong Kong. This appointment was terminated in 1923. An 'Australian Trade Representative in the East' was sent to Singapore in 1922, the post being abolished three years later. Trade with Asian states was easier to envisage than to effect. In 1929 a Commercial Representative was appointed in Canada, and this led two years later to a reciprocal preferential trade agreement.

The reciprocal preferences offered by the United Kingdom after 1919 to selected imports from the Dominions and the colonies were primarily a result not of imperial sentiment nor even of gratitude for favours received but of simple commercial interest. Had Britain been able to maintain the industrial leadership which was both the prerequisite and the beneficiary of

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free trade, she would have done so; but the war, capped ten years later by the world-wide economic depression, had ravaged industry, labour, capital, investments, trade balances, initiative and will; and free trade policies were progressively abandoned on a range of items from 1919 to 1932. In the majority of cases, the preferences automatically conferred to countries of the Empire were of little help to Australia. Britain finally abandoned free trade in 1932. An imperial economic conference in Ottawa later that year found the member governments grasping at imperial preference, especially in the face of savage American tariffs, in order to foster trade. The Ottawa system achieved this, in the short term, between its members. It stimulated—and was maintained by—imperial sentiment. But preferences are two-edged weapons, favouring selected friends and disfavouring everyone else. Arguably, in the longer term, imperial (later called Commonwealth) preferences fostered economic nationalism, envy, hostility and discrimination from outside the Empire, and the protection of uneconomic industries within it. For its beneficiaries, it salved some of the wounds of the great economic depression, but it started other sores in the process. It was a comfort to countries such as Australia, whose trade was predominantly with the Empire and especially Britain, but it slowed the building of new industries and skills appropriate to national development and to the diversification of trade.

Not all Australians agreed with the exclusiveness of the Ottawa system. In February 1933 a conference of representatives of commercial interests was convened in Sydney by the Minister for Commerce, F. H. Stewart. Stewart later wrote:

The depression has taught Australia the lesson that external trade can no longer be left to look after itself. It is now fully recognized that Empire markets are not

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[31] Except in respect of sugar, dried fruit, wine, jams and jellies, which together accounted for a small fraction of total Australian exports to Britain.

[32] A summary of the Australia-United Kingdom Trade Agreement, a unit of the Ottawa Agreement, is given in the *Year Book of the Commonwealth of Australia*, no. 43, 1957, pp. 329–30. The main provisions were: continued free entry for Australian dairy products into the United Kingdom for three years; free entry of wheat and fruit, as against new tariffs on foreign imports; preferences on zinc and lead; an expanded share of the UK meat market; preferential tariff advantages in British non-self governing territories; existing preferences on wines, sugar, etc. maintained. Australia concluded a preferential trade agreement with Canada in 1931, and one with New Zealand in 1933.

limitless in their capacity, and that foreign trade must be fostered and increased if we are to regain our former standard of living.34

As a result of this conference, and the support given to its recommendations by a Federal Advisory Committee on Eastern Trade, a Trade Commissioners Act was adopted by parliament, and trade commissioners appointed (early 1935) to China, Japan, and the Netherlands East Indies. The conference had recommended that a trade delegation be sent to 'the East'. In 1934 the government (moved by wider considerations and after obtaining the reluctant approval of the British Government) had sent the Deputy Prime Minister and Attorney-General, J. G. Latham, on a mission to the three countries, with both commercial and diplomatic objectives.35 (It went also to Malaya, Singapore, French Indo-China, Hong Kong, and the Philippines.) This was the first mission of its kind despatched by an Australian government which was beginning to feel a capacity for initiative independent of London.

Australian feelings about preferential trade within the Empire soon led to a serious error in trade policy. In early 1936, an unofficial trade delegation from Manchester visited Australia to seek to improve the proportion of textile imports from Britain, which had been falling under Japanese competition despite imperial preference. Although it later denied doing so, the British government also made representations. This led the Australian government to adopt what was called the 'trade diversion policy', whereby high duties were placed on foreign (non-British) textiles, and a system of licences established to prohibit certain imports, especially from countries with which Australia had an unfavourable trade balance.36

34 'Australian Commercial Representation Abroad', in Dinning and Holmes (eds), Australian Foreign Policy, 1934, p. 11.

35 See also Chapter 3. The trade commissioner sent to Japan, Lieutenant-Colonel E. E. Longfield Lloyd, of the Prime Minister's Department, had accompanied Latham on his trip. The title of Lloyd's post was changed in December 1937 to 'Commonwealth Commissioner'. In 1940, Latham became Australia's first Australian Minister to Japan. Some State Advisory Committees on Eastern Trade were also appointed as a result of the 1933 conference. The full report by J. G. Latham, 'The Australian Eastern Mission 1934' is in Commonwealth of Australia Parliamentary Papers, 1932–3-4, vol. IV, pp. 437–63.

36 Although some scholars disagree with this interpretation, and the policy had roots several years earlier, the documentation by David Sissons is convincing. See his Pitfalls on the road to N.A.R.A., Sir Henry Gullett's Treaty Negotiations with Japan 1935–36, unpublished paper for the 46th (1975) Congress of the Australia and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science. In this and other papers, Sissons has written a detailed analysis of the trade diversion fiasco.
The three main objectives of the policy were to protect Australia's primary industry markets in Britain, especially in meat, to establish a motor chassis manufacturing industry in Australia, and to reduce the excessively unfavourable (6:1) trade balance with the United States. It was crude, but it was also irrational, for it discriminated heavily against Japan, with which Australia had an extremely favourable trade balance. Neither Japan, fresh from its Manchurian conquest, nor the United States, conscious of its strength and now righteously knocking some bricks from its own high tariff walls, was in a mood to tolerate such actions from so small a power. Australia was forced to reverse the unfortunate initiative—an initiative which encouraged the American government to press more indignantly and successfully for the liberalisation of the imperial preferential system.

In one key economic area—investment—Australia had never been and had no desire nor prospect of being independent. British capital in the hands of British settlers and British companies had developed the Australian colonies. Local capital accumulation was slow and selective. During World War I, Britain lost much of its foreign investments, and Australia, New Zealand and South Africa, all of which used sterling as the basis of their currencies, became more attractive and took a larger proportion of total British investment. All four countries went off the gold standard during the depression. The three southern Dominions used sterling to hold reserves and measure exchange rates. Along with other states that did the same, there thus developed the sterling bloc, or sterling area (as it came to be called). Initially it served mainly the peripheral states, by giving them preferred access to the London money markets. During World War II and for 20 years subsequently, it buttressed the British pound and prolonged the pound's role as one of the major international currencies. The sterling area system is one of the reasons why, despite more than 50 years of economic difficulty, Britain is still a large and at times the largest single investor in Australia.

The decade of the 1930s saw the national preoccupations of Britain and Australia drifting apart under the influence of international events. The world-wide depression turned both countries in upon themselves. Then Japan in Asia and Germany in Europe began to press outwards, and although Britain was both a European and an eastern power, it was in adjacent Europe that she was most affected and apprehensive. Hughes at the 1921 Imperial Conference had proposed a tripartite treaty between Japan, the United States and the United Kingdom, and a conference to negotiate to this end. The proposal lapsed because the United States
planned (through the Washington Conference—see above and Chapters 3 and 4) to achieve stability by other means. Lyons in 1936 floated at home and in the following year at the imperial conference the idea of a Pacific pact, a ‘regional understanding and a pact of non-aggression’, designed to contain Japanese ambitions within an international arrangement that included Japan, Britain, and the United States. Britain was polite but preoccupied. The Soviet Union was interested. Only China was delighted. The fact that the proposal was put forward was evidence of Australia’s fears that Britain could not defend her in a crisis with Japan.

Although Britain’s focus of attention was in Europe, she did not ignore the Far East, nor the broad problems of imperial defence. In 1921, the British government decided to build a naval base at Singapore, capable of servicing a battle fleet. Australia did not object, despite a warning from its Chief of the Naval Staff that Singapore was not ideally located. The 1923 Imperial Conference adopted a resolution on defence which included taking note of the following:

The deep interest of the Commonwealth of Australia, the Dominion of New Zealand, and India, in the provision of a Naval Base at Singapore, as essential for ensuring the mobility necessary to provide for the security of the territories and trade of the Empire in Eastern Waters.

The British (Labour) government stopped work on the base the following year, despite an Australian offer to make a substantial contribution to its cost. Australia then began to expand its navy, and subsequently refused to help pay the cost of the renewed construction. During the variations of British policy towards Singapore from 1924 to 1940, Australia could never quite understand how Singapore would provide the degree of protection ascribed to it, but until the late 1930s was prepared to accept bland British assurances that it would do so if necessary, perhaps with the help of the United States. As has happened so often, New Zealand was much more realistic than Australia, as also was General Smuts. The creation of a base whose effectiveness would depend entirely on the arrival of a main fleet


39 McCarthy, Australia and Imperial Defence, 1918–39, discusses the various attitudes to the base. He also demonstrates that the British government was not very helpful over the establishment of an Australian aircraft industry.
from half way around the world did not unduly trouble either the British or the Australian government until March 1939.40

Throughout the inter-war period, Britain provided Australia on request with a series of military experts to advise ad hoc on defence problems, and to act as chiefs of staff of the respective services. On the outbreak of World War II, all three chiefs were British officers.41 Yet the advice of the itinerant experts was rarely heeded. Admiral of the Fleet Lord Jellicoe in 1919 was discredited by the Admiralty and ignored by Australia when he declared in his report that Japan would one day attack Hong Kong and Singapore, seize the Netherlands East Indies and New Guinea, and from such advanced bases plan an invasion of Australia. (Similarly, Marshal of the Royal Air Force, Sir Edward Ellington was ignored in 1938 when he criticised the use of the obsolete Wirraway as a fighter aircraft.)

Following Latham’s Asian visit, and his appointment as Chief Justice of the High Court, Sir George Pearce became Minister for External Affairs (in 1934). He re-established the Department as a separate entity, with its own permanent head, and with some British encouragement but without undue speed set about the creation of a diplomatic service. It was greatly needed to provide advice on the developing relations with an Asia in which Japan was thrusting and threatening. It was even more immediately needed as crisis followed crisis in Europe. In neither area did the League of Nations offer any hope for the peaceful resolution of disputes or containment of ambitions. Except for her representatives at the League, Australia

40 Sir Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events, p. 22. Menzies apparently made a note as late as January 1941 to seek a firm commitment of British naval reinforcements to Singapore. Lyons, his predecessor, had doubts about the arrival of a British fleet, but did little to remedy the situation. H. L. Harris, in a paper prepared for the 1938 British Commonwealth Relations Conference at Lapstone, New South Wales, scoffed at criticism of the assumption that a British fleet would be available for Singapore in time of need, and claimed that the Singapore base was virtually complete, and ‘Britain now maintains 15 submarines, some of them very powerful, and other units in the East Indian and China sections of the Royal Navy’. Earlier he said: ‘so long as the Singapore base remains, it is doubtful whether any nation would attempt a landing in force on the Australian coast unless it first acquired a base much nearer Australia than at present existing.’ Australia’s National Interests and National Policy, p. 136 (my italics). On the other hand, J. G. Crawford wrote in 1938: ‘if Singapore has only an inadequate fleet, or is incapable of stopping a direct attack from Japan because of the handicap of distance, then military isolation [for Australia] seems inevitable. Our naval fleet and air force must be strengthened’. W. G. K. Duncan (ed.), Australia’s Foreign Policy, p. 99.

41 At the Pacific Defence Conference in Wellington in April 1939, Vice-Admiral Sir Ragnar Colvin, as Chief of the Australian Naval Staff, represented Australia, and simultaneously as an officer in the Royal Navy was a member of the British delegation. Even as late as 1952, a Royal Air Force air marshal was appointed Chief of the Air Staff in Australia.
still relied on London for all her confidential diplomatic information and representation, although in 1937 Keith Officer was appointed a Counsellor at the British Embassy in Washington, the first Australian diplomatic representative in a foreign country and the only one until after the outbreak of World War II.\textsuperscript{42}

It is not surprising therefore that Australia, seeing the disputes of the late 1930s largely through British eyes and cabled British press reports, tended to accept British judgments upon them. When Italy invaded Abyssinia, Australia supported the principle of sanctions, and placed a naval cruiser at the disposal of the British government. But the gesture was regretted, as British policy swung to appeasement of a militaristic Mussolini. When the veteran W. M. Hughes pointed out that economic sanctions must be backed by force or not imposed at all, and that Australia’s defence capability was quite inadequate, he was required to resign from the Cabinet. (He was reinstated three months later.) The Dominions had been informed after a fashion but not consulted about British policy, and this was the case with the Anglo-Egyptian treaty of 1936, and the renewal of the guarantee of Belgian neutrality in the same year. Yet when King Edward VIII sought to marry the divorcee Mrs Wallis Simpson and remain on the throne, Dominion leaders by invitation unanimously spoke out against it, reinforcing the cold, shrewd hand of Stanley Baldwin.\textsuperscript{43}

In July 1938, R. G. Menzies, then Attorney-General in the Lyons government, headed a ministerial mission to Germany, and came away with an appreciation of German industrial strength and some sympathy for her claim to the Sudetenland of Czechoslovakia. Australia, physically and in terms of public opinion, was totally unprepared for war. The policy of the Labor opposition was not to send Australian soldiers to fight on the battlefields of Europe. The Australian government thus gave every encouragement to Chamberlain in his policy of appeasement, urged him to bring pressure on the Czech government to offer ‘the most liberal concessions to Hitler’, and warmly congratulated him on the outcome of

\textsuperscript{42}In 1940, R. G. Casey was appointed Australian Minister to the United States, and Latham became Minister to Japan. Diplomatic representation was established also in New Caledonia (1940), Portuguese Timor (1941), Malaya (1941), China (1941), the Netherlands (1942), the USSR (1943), India (1944) and New Zealand (1944). R. G. Casey, Friends and Neighbours. Australia and the World, p. 32.

\textsuperscript{43}Cecil Edwards claims that S. M. Bruce, Australian High Commissioner in London, was instrumental in clarifying Baldwin’s mind and stiffening his resolve so that the King was compelled either to break off his relationship with Mrs Simpson or to abdicate. Bruce of Melbourne, pp. 250–5.
The imperial connection

The Munich negotiations, which sacrificed Czech territory in the interests of European peace. The other Dominions reacted similarly. Yet had war occurred, Hughes (now Minister for External Affairs) declared, the Australian government would have stood with the Empire: ‘We believe that there is no other way in which we can be true and loyal citizens of Australia.' South Africa certainly, and Canada probably, would not have stood with the Empire, and the British government knew it.

The war, of course, was merely deferred, and—from a military point of view, at least—to a less favourable time. Lyons (alone of the Dominion prime ministers) pressed London to conclude a proposed agreement with Italy, having in mind the Mediterranean-Suez route. Within Australia, expenditure on defence began to be increased, with the tardy support of the Labor party. When Germany occupied the rest of Czechoslovakia in March 1939, and Britain extended unilateral guarantees to Poland, Greece and Romania without consulting the Dominions, the Australian government raised no objection, and although it would have liked to be asked, it knew London knew where Australia stood. It was not a party to the British commitments.

Yet whatever the drama and dangers of Europe, Australia could not ignore the threats to the security of her own region, and the perils of simultaneous war in both places. In March, April and June 1939 the British government repeated earlier assurances to Australia that in the event of simultaneous war it would still send a fleet to the Far East. In fact, it had come to have grave doubts whether it could fulfil this promise. At the


*Lyons urged Chamberlain to get Mussolini to intervene with Hitler, and extend the time available for a negotiated settlement (i.e. capitulation). Chamberlain replied that he had already done this. The Australian government did not hesitate, in the years leading up to the war, to proffer advice to Britain on most aspects of foreign policy. Perhaps because of his combat experience in World War I Bruce, now High Commissioner in London, was the most active Dominion representative in pressing Britain to appease the dictators.

*Journal of the Parliaments of the Empire, 1939, vol. 20, p. 119.

*The evidence on this, and the Australian government’s reactions at the time, are analysed by Sir Alan Watt, The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938–1965, chapter 1.

*DAFP, vol. II, pp. 69–73, 95–6, 144, 151. By July, British assurances had lost almost all substance and credibility. In other exchanges on this aspect, Britain bluntly warned Australia of the danger of making too many concessions to Japan.
suggestion of the New Zealand government, Australian and British representatives met with it in Wellington from 14 to 26 April, in a 'Pacific Defence Conference'. British assurances were repeated, but with the possibility of American help in mind. On the day that Menzies became Prime Minister, on the death of Lyons, he drew attention to the importance of the Pacific to Australia, and the nearness of Asia. These required increased diplomatic contact between Australia and the United States, China, Japan, the Netherlands East Indies, and other Pacific countries. But Australia must always act 'as an integral part of the British Empire'. He went on with emotion but also with some caution:

The peace of Great Britain is precious to us, because her peace is ours; if she is at war, we are at war, even though that war finds us not in European battlefields, but defending our own shores. Let me be clear on this: I cannot have a defence of Australia which depends upon British sea power as its first element, I cannot envisage a vital foreign trade on sea routes kept free by British sea power, and at the same time refuse to Britain Australian co-operation at a time of common danger. The British countries of the world must stand or fall together.49

The new Minister for External Affairs, Sir Henry Gullett, pointed out (with Menzies's agreement) that this did not mean that in every circumstance in which Britain might be committed to war, Australia would automatically be committed also, or vice versa. But in the existing circumstances, where the intention of Britain and the associated democracies was purely defensive against aggression, if Britain were plunged into war Australia would make common cause with the mother country in that war.50 The Labor opposition endorsed this policy.

As war came closer and defence preparations were put in hand, there was little dissent from the government's position except among communists who must nevertheless have been bewildered by the Soviet-German pact. On 25 August Menzies raised the immediate possibility of war in Europe. 'We in Australia are involved, because the destruction or defeat of Great

49 Broadcast 26 April 1939. DAFP, vol. II, pp. 97–8. In September 1938 the Prime Minister of New Zealand, M. J. Savage wrote to Lyons stating that the liaison of each country with the United Kingdom on defence matters was satisfactory, but their liaison with each other was not. He proposed a complete mutual exchange of information, far beyond existing service liaison. Nearly six months later, Lyons agreed, although with reservations, Robin Kay (ed.), The Australian-New Zealand Agreement 1944: Documents on New Zealand External Relations, vol. I, pp. 1–4.

50 HRD, vol. 159, pp. 198–9, 9 May 1939.
Britain would be the destruction or defeat of the British Empire and would leave us with a precarious tenure of our own independence. Two days later he cabled Chamberlain, and proposed standing firm in support of Poland while telling Hitler that the Polish Corridor was negotiable. But Hitler wanted much more than the Corridor. On 2 September, after the British ultimatum to Germany, Menzies declared that 'the British nations throughout the world are at one. There is unity in the Empire ranks—one King, one flag, one cause. We stand with Britain.' At 8 p.m. Eastern Australian time on 3 September, Chamberlain broadcast Britain's declaration of war on Germany, and at 9.15 p.m. Menzies broadcast:

It is my melancholy duty to inform you officially that, in consequence of a persistence by Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her and that, as a result, Australia is also at war.

The phrase 'as a result' suggests a causal relationship between the two declarations, but there could be more than one cause. On another occasion, Menzies had said that if Britain was at war, Australia was at war, but Australia would determine the nature and extent of her participation. Menzies once described the concept that the same King (of Britain and the Empire, and—by that fact—of Australia) could be at the one time at war and at peace as 'a metaphysical notion that quite eludes me'. Nevertheless it was less than a year since Gullett, with Menzies's consent, had effectively said just that. Hasluck suggests the following three reasons why Australia declared war on Germany: (1) because of her view of the meaning of membership of the British Commonwealth of Nations, i.e. that it imposed obligations in the nature of 'family ties' which could only be shed in extraordinary circumstances; (2) because she saw that the defeat of Britain in Europe would mean a threat to Australia by Germany or Japan; and

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52 Ibid., p. 221.
53 Quoted by Hasluck, *The Government and the People, 1939–1941*, p. 155. New Zealand declared war at the same time (this was subsequently ratified by parliament), South Africa (after an internal struggle) on 6 September and Canada on the 10th. After the Japanese attacks on Pearl Harbour and elsewhere, the Australian (Labor) Cabinet did not announce war until it had advised the King that such a declaration should be made, and received his assent—a procedure used for the earlier declarations against Finland, Hungary, and Romania—thus indicating that the King (as Australian Head of State) was acting exclusively on the advice of his Australian Ministers.
(3) because of her view of international morality and the foundations of a stable community of nations.\textsuperscript{54}

These concepts were not always consciously defined or appealed to. During the twelve months before September 1939, the Australian government and people moved with the current of events that led almost inevitably to an Australian declaration of war. There was a sense of involvement; there was a sense of duty. There was still a strong sense of being British. How could British people, how could a British country, be neutral in a British war?

\textsuperscript{54}Ibid., p. 156. The two volumes of \textit{Documents on Australian Foreign Policy}, as well as two biographical works on Bruce, C. Edwards, \textit{Bruce of Melbourne}, and Alfred Stirling, \textit{Lord Bruce, The London Years}, demonstrate that non-public relations between the governments in London and Canberra were by no means always amicable. Australia could be querulous, demanding, didactic; Britain could be headmasterish, irritable, secretive.
Japanese actors appeared in Australia as early as about 1866. The first Japanese known to have settled in the country was an acrobat who arrived in 1871. He later took an Australian wife, became a naturalised citizen, and purchased land. Others came as pearl fishermen or indentured labourers on the Queensland sugar cane fields or elsewhere, but predominantly to Queensland, including Thursday Island. In 1877, the government of South Australia decided to invite Japanese as settlers in the Northern Territory. The Chief Secretary, Henry Ayers, wrote to the Japanese Minister of Foreign Affairs proposing that some 300–400 Japanese—settlers as well as labourers—should migrate, their passages being paid by the South Australian government. Japan initially accepted the invitation, then a change of government in Tokyo brought a reversal of policy, and the scheme was abandoned. During the succeeding two decades, a trickle of voluntary, unplanned Japanese migration continued into the Australian colonies.

As the numbers grew, the Japanese government responded to Australian colonial concern by placing voluntary restraints on emigration, but by 1896 the Queensland government negotiated with Japan a protocol to the Anglo-Japanese Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, which confirmed the right to regulate the immigration of labourers and artisans. In October 1900, the number was held at 3247, and subsequently declined. (The total for Australia in 1902 was 3593.) David Sissons quotes a letter from Kato Takaaki, the Japanese Minister to London, to Lord Salisbury in 1897:

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1 D. C. S. Sissons, 'Immigration in Australian-Japanese Relations 1891–1971', in J. A. A. Stockwin (ed.), Japan and Australia in the Seventies, p. 194. Some other points in this chapter are taken from the same paper.
The point which had caused a painful feeling in Japan was not that the operation of the prohibition would be such as to exclude a certain number of Japanese from immigrating to Australia, but that Japan should be spoken of in formal documents, such as Colonial Acts, as if the Japanese were on the same level of morality and civilisation as Chinese and other less advanced populations of Asia.\(^2\)

The Immigration Restriction Act of 1901, designed to prevent non-white immigration into Australia, was not directed only at the Japanese. There were far more Chinese in the country. The wording of the Act and the way it was administered excluded both peoples, as well as other Asians, Pacific Islanders, or ‘coloured’ people generally, but it was especially directed at and was most offensive to the Japanese. The government of Japan protested in London and in Melbourne, (the seat of the federal government until 1927) before, during and after the introduction of the legislation. Britain, which was in the process of negotiating the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, wanted Australia to pay regard to the Japanese views, also not to offend India by anti-coloured legislation, even though she (Britain) agreed with the principle of the legislation, and did not want to offend fellow Europeans by suggesting that Asians were equal to them. The Japanese protests led to the Bill, which based exclusion on a dictation test, being modified in due course so that the test should not be in ‘an European language’ but in ‘any prescribed language’. By the way the Act was administered, the effect was the same, but the forms of non-discrimination were preserved. Alfred Deakin had tried to appease Japanese sentiment by declaring that their exclusion was due to their high (and thus competitive) abilities—a very backhanded compliment. But the parliamentary debates on the subject clearly showed that the reasons for what was soon known as the ‘White Australia’ policy were a mixture of racial arrogance, apprehension of economic competition, concern over the social and economic problems of a mixed-race community, and ultimately fear of an engulfing, destroying flood of Asian migrants.\(^3\) Some subsequent legislation discriminating against coloured people already in the country was more blatantly racist.

Australia was in no way consulted about the Anglo-Japanese Alliance of 1902, even though, as part of the Empire, she was obviously affected by it. The main operative parts of the treaty were to the effect that if either party

\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 199.

\(^{3}\)Neville Meaney writes that Deakin and others were concerned that a substantial minority of Japanese within Australia might give Japan grounds for intervention in Australian domestic affairs, and might also constitute a fifth column in war. The Search for Security in the Pacific, p. 117.
became involved in war with another power, the other party would stay neutral; if a fourth power joined the enemy, then Japan and Britain would make common cause. The treaty was a relief to Britain, troubled by German colonial expansion in the Pacific, by Russian pressure on Britain's Indian empire, and by a deteriorating situation in the Balkans and the Ottoman empire. The Alliance enabled Britain to maintain a much smaller Pacific fleet. To Japan, it gave a new international status, and assured the neutrality of France in the coming Russo-Japanese war (1904-5). Australia initially saw the Alliance as a support to Britain and thus to the whole Empire, and a valuable counter to Russian power in the Pacific.

Japan's dramatic defeat of Russia immediately awakened or stimulated Australian fears of Japan as a military power. By about 1907, these fears were widespread, reinforcing antagonism to Japanese as possible migrants. Whereas Japan had been a counter to Russia, with Russia defeated there was no visible counter to Japan, although her alliance with Britain (renewed in 1905) would presumably exercise some restraint on any Japanese expansionist ambitions involving the British Empire. From this time until after World War II—that is, for about 50 years—Japan was the principal (if fluctuating) source of Australian apprehension about the outside world, the largest perceived 'threat' or 'menace' to the country and people and way of life. On her part, Australia, through her immigration, trade and tariff policies, aroused continuing and understandable resentment and frustration in Japan.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was renewed in 1911, ahead of schedule, under pressure from Britain and with the support of the Dominions. The British government had been alarmed by the Japanese-US dispute, which raised the technical possibility of Britain fighting with Japan against the United States. Accordingly the British Foreign Secretary, Sir Edward Grey, obtained Japanese agreement to insert in the treaty a clause whereby neither would be obliged to go to war with a country with which it had a 'treaty of general arbitration'. After some difficulty from the US Senate, Britain concluded an agreement with the United States which Japan accepted as being in effect a treaty of arbitration.

During World War I, Japan honoured both the letter and the spirit of the Alliance, within her own limits. She provided warships which convoyed Australian forces to the war zone. She attacked and took over German

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4 D. C. S. Sissons, Attitudes to Japan and Defence 1890–1923, unpublished MA thesis, p. 48. Japan's dispute with the US about migrants to California, which brought the two nations close to war, and her annexation of Korea, confirmed Australian fear and resolve.

5 Unless renewed, it was due to terminate in 1915.
The Motherland’s misalliance

‘London, 12 February.—The Foreign Office has announced the conclusion of a treaty between Great Britain and Japan.’

Britannia: ‘Now, my good little son, I’ve got married again; this is your new father. You must be very fond of him.’—The Bulletin, 1902.

Britain and Japan continued to press for further reform of the Immigration Act.
Sleeping at his homework
From a cartoon by Norman Lindsay in The Bulletin, 19 January 1911.
bases and facilities in China and the northern Pacific, and patrolled the waters of the latter. In 1915, in a secret agreement confirmed two years later, Britain undertook to support at the peace conference Japan's claims to the German islands in the Pacific north of the equator, in expectation of Japanese naval help in the Mediterranean. On her side, Japan agreed to support Britain's claim to Germany's south Pacific territories. The war had not been of Japan's making. Her contribution was significant, if not large, and contrasted with the immense difficulties she could have raised for the allies had she joined cause with Germany. But she also, as Australia saw it, used the preoccupation of the major powers elsewhere to capture some of their markets, and to present exorbitant demands on China. During 1915–17, Japan tried to get Australia to adhere to the Japan-United Kingdom Treaty of Commerce and Navigation, with a view to ending the difficulties which Japanese businessmen and residents experienced when in or entering Australia. The Australian government refused, as it had refused to be associated with the original treaty. It was grateful for Japan's friendly assistance in the war, but not so grateful as to allow a wedge to be driven into the White Australia policy.

At the Paris peace conference, Japan sought to consolidate her wartime territorial gains, and to establish within the Covenant of the League of Nations the principle of racial equality, whose denial by the white powers she had found so humiliating. It was not the major nations but Australia that manned the barricades against this principle, reasonable though it sounded at the time, inevitable as it became later. Hughes, the Australian Prime Minister, gave not an inch, and by obstinacy in debate, by using the Empire group, and by unashamed newspaper politicking, he managed to stop the Japanese move, which he correctly saw (see Chapter 5) as a vehicle for Japan or other countries to attack 'White Australia'. Japan was disappointed, but (perhaps with premeditation), used the failure of the initiative to salvage some of her advantage in China, notably special rights in the Shantung peninsula. Japan was given a 'C' class mandate over the German islands in the north Pacific, and wanted a commercial open door to all mandated territories, especially to ex-German New Guinea, administered by Australia. After some hesitation, Australia, with British support, strongly and successfully resisted the proposal.

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6 A full discussion of this matter is given by D. C. S. Sissons, 'The Immigration question in Australian diplomatic relations with Japan 1875–1919', paper delivered at the 43rd Congress of the Australian and New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science, 1971.

7 Sissons, Attitudes to Japan, pp. 94–9. Relevant documentary extracts on these and other aspects, with a brief commentary, are given in W. Macmahon Ball, Australia and Japan. Documents and Readings in Australian History.
While Hughes was in Europe for the conference, the Australian government established within the Prime Minister's Department of the public service a 'Pacific Branch' to collect information and provide advice to the Prime Minister on matters affecting the Pacific, especially Japan. The Branch did not last very long, as the sense of threat declined after the Washington Conference (see below), and the Australian government was not ready to take responsibility for foreign policy and, as we have seen, did not do so until shortly before World War II.

The Anglo-Japanese Alliance was due to be terminated or renewed in 1921. Australia favoured renewal, as a restraint upon Japanese ambitions. The United States favoured terminating the Treaty, which it believed encouraged those ambitions. At an imperial conference in London in June-July, Lloyd George posed the dilemma: offending Japan or offending the United States. Canada supported the American position. In any case, the Alliance was not entirely compatible with the obligations and procedures involved in League membership. Australia suggested renewal, but with amendments to satisfy the United States. Hughes felt that a tripartite treaty would have been the best solution, but the traditional policy of the United States ruled this out. The matter was made more urgent by the possibility of a naval arms race in the Pacific between the United States and Japan. The imperial conference proposed to the United States a conference of Pacific powers, to resolve the problem. The United States countered with an invitation to the British Empire, among others, to a naval conference in Washington later in the year. This was accepted, and the Dominions, including Australia, sent representatives as members of the Empire delegation, but not as delegates of independent powers, which they would have preferred. This happened partly because the State Department did not believe they were independent powers, and partly to ease domestic pressures on the composition of the US delegation. Recognising Britain's problems, Japan agreed in advance to terminate the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in the event of alternative arrangements being made at Washington.

Three treaties involving Japan came out of the Washington Conference of 1921-22:

1. *A Four Power Treaty* between the British Empire, France, Japan and the United States whereby the parties mutually agreed:

   to respect their rights to their insular possessions and insular dominions in the Pacific Ocean; to hold a joint conference and consider and adjust any controversy

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Hughes discusses this question in Chapter VII of *The Splendid Adventure*. 
arising between any of them out of the Pacific question, and to consult one another in case of danger from another power.

The treaty was for ten years. When it was ratified, the Anglo-Japanese Alliance lapsed.

2. *A Five Power Treaty*, between the same four plus Italy, by which the parties agreed on a limitation of the tonnage of their naval capital ships (ships above 10,000 tons) to the following proportions: the United Kingdom 10: the United States 10: Japan 6: France 3.5: Italy 3.5. Japan resented the overall inferiority of power and status which this involved, but the Treaty in effect assured her of naval superiority in the western Pacific. The Treaty also required that no new fortifications or naval bases, or strengthening of existing military facilities should be undertaken, except in territories adjacent to the United States, the Panama Canal Zone, the islands of Hawaii, British Dominions, or west of longitude 110 E (i.e. Singapore was excluded). This largely assured the security of each of the signatories in its own waters, or at least reduced the risks of a surprise attack.

3. *A Nine Power Treaty*, between Belgium, the British Empire, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and the United States, in which the parties undertook to respect the independence and integrity of China, and assist her in developing and maintaining effective, stable government; to abide by the 'open door' trade policy; and to refrain from seeking special privileges in China.

Australia does not seem to have had any noticeable influence on the outcome of the Washington Conference. The Australian representative, Sir George Pearce, who admitted his apprehension of Japan, saw the main gain of the Conference to be the greatly improved relationship between Britain and the United States, which had been assisted by the grant of Dominion status to the Irish Free State, and which he believed provided the best guarantee of the peace of the world. Some observers predicted at least ten years of peace, as a result of the Conference. Hughes wrote of the Conference some years later (1929):

It ended the acute naval rivalry between the United States and Japan and reacted upon the Empire. It evolved a *modus vivendi* which for the time being removed any

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*House of Representatives Debates (HRD),* vol. XLIX, p. 822, 27 July 1922. In the course of his report Pearce said: 'The Far East is our far-North....Whilst racially we are Europeans, geographically we are Asiatic. Our own special immediate Australian interests are more nearly concerned with what is happening in China and Japan than what is happening in Belgium and Holland'. J. G. Latham in 1934 called the Far East the 'near East', and Menzies in 1939 called it the 'near North'.
danger of war in the Pacific, and it solved happily that problem on which the Imperial Conference had laboured so strenuously, but in vain—how to please America without offending Japan or prejudicing the interests of the Empire. It is unhappily only too true that time has shown that the decisions of the Conference were not solutions of this or any problem.\footnote{The Splendid Adventure, p. 131.}

They did seem, for a time, to provide some kind of a solution. During the next few years, several goodwill missions from Japan, and growing trade favourable to Australia, modified the Australian tendency to be apprehensive of Japan, and reinforced the natural Australian inclination to ignore the outside world. Thus, while supporting in principle the building of a British naval base at Singapore against the possibility of a Japanese threat, Australia made no practical contribution (see Chapter 10).

In 1930 a naval conference was called in London to review the Washington treaties. The five naval powers agreed to continue the proportionate limitation on capital ships. These provisions were extended by Britain, the United States and Japan (but not France and Italy) to apply to cruisers, submarines (which the US and Britain tried to ban altogether) and aircraft carriers. There was to be a five-year moratorium on capital ship construction.

Only a year later, Japan invaded and annexed Manchuria (which she renamed Manchukuo), defying the League of Nations and subsequently resigning from it\footnote{The Sydney Morning Herald of 22 September 1931 went so far as to speak of the ‘wanton aggression by the Chinese which precipitated the trouble’ and of China’s appeal to the League as having a ‘comic side’. This may have been written by F. M. Cutlack, who was in public strongly sympathetic to Japan. Jack Shepherd reports suggestions that it was the Country Party, concerned not to lose primary industry sales to Japan, which influenced the government against any protest over Manchuria. There was also some fear of military reprisals by Japan. Australia’s Interests and Policies in the Far East, p. 36. In 1932–3, Japan took 9.5 per cent of Australia’s exports.} (see Chapter 5). She abrogated the Washington Naval Agreement, with its restraints on ship construction and island fortification, and refused to renew the London Naval Agreement. The Australian (Labor) government, preoccupied with the economic depression and grateful for the expanding exports of wool and wheat to Japan, did nothing. Public opinion was troubled but acquiescent.\footnote{The United Australia Party under J. A. Lyons, which came to office in January 1932, had no desire to offend Japan, and was, if anything, relieved that Japan had struck}
northwest rather than south. Subsequently the Lyons government assured a visiting Japanese mission that Japan had *carte blanche* in Manchuria.¹³

One Australian observer declared in 1934:

Australia’s ultimate relations with Japan will be determined by the success or failure of the Japanese experiment in Manchukuo. Success will commit Japan indefinitely to a policy of continental expansion. Failure in Manchukuo will leave Japan still under the necessity of finding outlets for her population, countries from which to draw her raw materials and food, and countries in which to sell her manufactured goods; and failure in her continental policy will lead her to attempt the successive occupation of the Philippine Islands, Netherlands, India, and the various islands of the West Pacific and eventually the northern portion of Australia.¹⁴

The Australian position over Manchuria was thus a triumph of immediate self-interest and pusillanimity over principles of any kind, of political and economic appeasement. This equally was Britain’s position, although she went along with the American policy of not recognising Japanese sovereignty in ‘Manchukuo’. The United States resented the cool British reaction to Stimson’s overtures to Simon (British Foreign Secretary) for a joint protest, but the fact was that no government, including the American, was prepared to risk military conflict with an increasingly self-confident Japan.

The 1932 Ottawa agreement on imperial preferences troubled Japan, which concurrently renewed its pressure for a treaty of commerce and navigation with Australia. The visit to Asia of a senior minister, J. G. Latham, in the second quarter of 1934 was made with Japan primarily in mind. In detailed trade negotiations in Tokyo, Latham clarified the implications of Ottawa, assured ministers and officials of Australia’s desire for increased trade with Japan, and with excess of zeal and optimism offered to find means for Japan’s return to the League of Nations which would be acceptable to both sides, however unacceptable it might be to China. He did not achieve this, but he returned to Australia convinced that Asia was important to Australia’s trade and defence, and that Japan was the key Asian state in these respects. He told parliament:

¹³This, at least, was what the mission reported to the Japanese government. Japan Ministry of Foreign Affairs file L3.3.0.14 cited by D. C. S. Sissons, ‘Manchester v Japan: The Imperial Background of the Australian Trade Diversion Dispute with Japan, 1936’, *Australian Outlook*, vol. 30, no. 3, December 1976, p. 482.

It is the ‘Far East’ to Europe, to the old centres of civilisation, but we must realise that it is the ‘Near East’ to Australia.... The whole of our interests...lie in doing everything in our power to prevent...war in the East.\textsuperscript{15}

Negotiations for a commercial treaty continued during the year, and a Japanese goodwill mission visited Australia in 1935. An Australian trade commissioner was appointed to Tokyo. Then in early 1936, the Australian government introduced what became known as the Trade Diversion policy, imposing discriminatory trade restrictions on imports from Japan and the United States in favour of the United Kingdom (see Chapter 2). Both Japan and the United States reacted sharply, and Australia was compelled to reverse the policy. She had not fully salvaged the situation before World War II. At one blow, the Australian government had offended both the largest trading nation and the largest military power in the Pacific, stimulated a competitive industry—Japanese staple fibre—seriously damaged her own exports, and done virtually nothing for her imperial relations. The defence implications of antagonising Japan were not lost, post hoc, on the government or on public opinion.

The annexation of Manchuria (like that of Korea and Taiwan earlier) had demonstrated that in her search for outlets for her rapidly growing population, and access to raw materials and markets, Japan was prepared to do what the more richly endowed European powers and America had been prepared to do—establish a territorial empire by military conquest. Fear that their country might one day be a victim of that process brought from Australians proposals for economic appeasement of Japan, for somewhat greater defence effort, and for diplomatic restraints upon Japan.

In 1936 following a British suggestion designed to strengthen the League through regional agreements, Prime Minister Lyons, with primarily Japan in mind, announced and then proposed to the May/June 1937 Imperial Conference a ‘regional understanding and a pact of non-aggression in the Pacific’,\textsuperscript{16} along the lines of the Washington Four-Power Treaty. He

\textsuperscript{15}HRD, vol. 44, pp. 327–38, 6 July 1934 for this address. See also the Department of External Affairs correspondence files for this period in the Commonwealth Archives Office; and Sabine H. Willis, \textit{The Australian Eastern Mission: A Departure in External Relations?} Asian governments strongly criticised Australian tariff and immigration policies, as well as the quality, grading and labelling of Australian goods. Similar criticisms have continued up to the present. Latham was able to point to trade and migration restrictions imposed by his host governments.

pressed it also with the Soviet Union, China, France, the Netherlands, the United States and Japan. Lyons proposed a non-aggression pact rather than a regional arrangement under League auspices because he wanted to include the United States and Japan, one of which had never joined the League and the other had recently left it. Prior to the Imperial Conference, Lyons sent a message to the British government urging it to promote better relations with Japan:

The recent agreement against Communism between Germany and Japan, the attitudes of Japan towards naval disarmament and other international agreements, and the campaign for the Southward advance policy have created a feeling of perturbation in this country.  

The pact proposal was not well thought out, nor canvassed in advance, but it was extensively discussed at the Imperial Conference. The conference decided to leave it with the British government to pursue (which was what Lyons wanted—Australia had no diplomatic posts other than in London), but the British government, perhaps because of strong Japanese hostility to the idea and in any case preoccupied with Europe, did not pursue it very far and the proposal lapsed. The proposal was an acknowledgment that Australia could not defend herself on her own, nor could Britain simultaneously defend herself and the Empire. (The proposal is discussed further in Chapter 4.)

In July 1937 Japan launched a major assault upon China. Following on Italy's invasion of Ethiopia, the failure of the London Naval Conference of 1936, German occupation of the Rhineland, and the virtual collapse of the League, this further aggression enhanced Australian fears of a Japanese 'threat' and indeed brought the threat closer. Australia took part in League discussions on the Chinese invasion, and supported resolutions condemning Japan. Australia also took part in a conference in Brussels in November of the signatories of the Washington Nine-Power Treaty. Japan did not attend, and wrote claiming that it had acted in China in self-defence. In a remarkably weak final declaration, the conference merely urged Japan and China to suspend hostilities.

One of the Australian memoranda prepared for the 1937 Imperial Conference referred to the necessity to improve British relations with Japan by a policy of accommodation, 'to guard against the possibility of the British Commonwealth being faced simultaneously with the hostility of Germany,'
Italy and Japan'. Another memorandum, from the Department of Defence, discussed the strategic importance of the Pacific islands to the British Empire and Japan and declared: 'The only possible enemy is Japan'. At the conference Sir Samuel Hoare, then First Lord of the Admiralty, sounded a cheery note when he said that if by some circumstance there was no British fleet in the Pacific, and the Japanese invaded Australia,

I am convinced that... no measures of local defence, no Army, no Air Force which the Commonwealth of Australia could conceivably maintain could save her from invasion and defeat at the hands of the Japanese.

But Australia should not be concerned. There was Singapore, and it had been calculated that the fleet could get to Singapore in a maximum of seventy days after the decision was taken to send it.

Although conscious of the potential dangers from Japan, which the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Defence were emphasising in submissions to it, the Australian government was caught with two dilemmas, made more acute after the 1937 invasion of China. It did not want to further exacerbate relations with Japan by unilateral imposition of sanctions (which no other country seemed prepared to impose), public statements of condemnation, or by undue emphasis on defence preparations, yet it did want Japan restrained and deterred from further aggression southwards. It did not want to do anything that might adversely affect trade, which was so beneficial to Australia, but some of the trade was in obviously strategic materials such as iron, which could be used in any future war against Australia. A Cabinet minute of 9 March 1937 stated that Japan, through an English company, was almost ready to begin exploiting the iron ore deposits in Western Australia. Cabinet agreed not to prohibit exports, especially as British advice was that Japan had extensive alternative resources. Again, to deny the legitimate export of raw materials to a country like Japan whose living depended on them was to give her a further incentive to acquire by force what she could not get through peaceful means. Japan had spent a lot of money on developing Yampi, and would

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18 Ibid., p. 37.
19 Ibid., p. 38.
20 Ibid., pp. 85, 157.
21 Ibid., p. 40.
22 It was already exploiting iron in Canada and British Malaya.
properly be disturbed at any restraints on exports from there. During 1938, waterside workers in Melbourne, Sydney and Port Kembla refused to load iron for Japan, and although the government was eventually able to ship some iron it did so against much public sympathy. In July, on the basis of a rather alarmist report on Australian iron ore reserves by a geological consultant, it suspended all exports of iron ore. The main purpose was to stop exports from Yampi Sound to Japan, which were due to begin shortly. Having invested a considerable amount in surveys, plant, labour and facilities in Japan, the Japanese were understandably put out, and were not satisfied by the explanation, which they regarded as spurious, nor mollified by the fact that the ban applied equally to the United States, which they considered irrelevant.\textsuperscript{23}

In his first broadcast after becoming Prime Minister in April 1939, R. G. Menzies implicitly recognised the Japanese threat, and focused defence and foreign policy primarily on Australia's neighbourhood rather than on Europe with its gathering storm. 'What Great Britain calls the Far East is to us the near north', he declared.\textsuperscript{24} He said Australia, while acting as an integral part of the British Empire, must regard herself as a principal in the Pacific as, with New Zealand, she bore the primary risk there. He went on, 'With this in mind, I look forward to the day when we will have a concert of Pacific Powers, pacific in both senses of the word'.

When war broke out on 3 September 1939, Australia immediately declared war on Germany, but there were no hostile moves by Japan. Australian expeditionary forces were raised and sent to the Middle East, and Australian naval forces and air personnel were sent to the European and north Atlantic theatre. On 17 June 1940, France asked Germany for an armistice. Two days later Japan began its moves against French Indo-China, and on the same day (19 June) the Australian War Cabinet decided on diplomatic relations with Japan.\textsuperscript{25} Sir John Latham, then Chief Justice

\textsuperscript{23} J. Shepherd, \textit{Australian Interests and Policies in the Far East}, pp. 80-7.
\textsuperscript{24} \textit{D A F P}, vol. II, p. 98.
\textsuperscript{25} Japan had been represented in Australia by full-time career diplomats since the opening of a consulate at Townsville in 1896. She had proposed the exchange of diplomatic representation at legation level in 1919, 1932, 1934 and 1935. In each case Australia had declined, being influenced, among other things, by the fear that the bargaining powers of an independent Australian legation would be weaker than that of the British Embassy exercised on Australia's behalf. In July 1936 the Australian Cabinet approved, in principle, the appointment of Australian Counsellors at the British Embassies in Washington and Tokyo. The Tokyo appointment was deferred. \textit{D A F P}, vol. I, p. 5. Even as late as April 1939, the British government was opposing separate Australian representation in Tokyo on the grounds that Japan would try to use it 'to weaken the imperial bond'. \textit{D A F P}, vol. II, p. 102. Britain was equally
of the High Court, was appointed the first minister, and presented his credentials on 24 December. Paul Hasluck, one of the official war historians, wrote later, 'The appointment was the action of a government that still fervently hoped for peace with Japan and believed in the possibility.'


Although the main substance to Australia's relations with the United States of America seems to begin with the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour in December 1941, in fact the two countries had a long earlier history of inter-connection and contact. In the nature of things, the influence ran predominantly one way: from the United States to Australia. The successful American War of Independence had helped bring about the establishment of the Australian penal colonies as an alternative gaol for surplus British convicts hitherto transported across the Atlantic. American trading ships soon began calling at Sydney, often on the way to China, in contravention of the British East India Company's monopoly (to 1813) and of British navigation laws, but they provided helpful supplies of food and other goods to the infant colony, and unhelpful if profitable quantities of rum, as well as sometimes violent competition in sealing and whaling.\(^1\)

The lessons learned by Westminster and Whitehall from the American British in the 18th century seem to have ameliorated colonial practices in the 19th, so that settlers in Canada, New Zealand and Australia pushed more easily at the doors of self-government and independence. The American struggle, the American example, the American dream, and a sense of American kinship entered the consciousness of many Australians seeking also to create a new nation half a world away from the cultural and familial homeland in Europe. Most of the early Australian settlers were from Britain and Ireland, but many came and went across the Pacific. In

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\(^1\)C. Hartley Grattan, *The United States and the Southwest Pacific*, chs. 8 and 9.
1849, over 6000 from the colonies took ship to find gold in California.\(^2\) Australian flour and coal also crossed the Pacific to San Francisco to help feed and fuel the rush. By the beginning of 1851, the tide of fortune seekers began to flow back. One of the returnees was Edward Hammond Hargreaves, who arrived in February 1851, went prospecting in the way and for the strata California had shown him, and found gold at Ophir in New South Wales. Another was James Esmond, who was among the early discoverers of gold in Victoria. During the next few years, Australia had its own rush, with the population rising in the decade from 400,000 to 1,200,000, including some 12,000 from the United States.

The American Civil War led to tensions between London and Washington that found expression in Australia. Against the possibility of conflict, volunteer units were raised in Sydney, Melbourne and Newcastle. Australian sympathies tended to follow British: when a Confederate vessel, the *Shenandoah*, a former British vessel still with a part-British crew, visited Melbourne in January 1865, it was accorded a far more sympathetic welcome than proper neutrality would allow. The ship's later attacks on Union (United States) vessels led to a demand for compensation by Washington, which after arbitration cost the British government more than £15 million.\(^3\)

The possibility of conflict with the United States ended when the Civil War ended, and has never recurred. Today, it is virtually inconceivable. From about the 1870s, Australians like other British peoples had come to see the United States as an important friendly power, and the Americans themselves as Anglo-Saxon cousins.\(^4\) There was great enthusiasm for the American cause during the Spanish-American war, and support for the United States' decision to annex the Philippine Islands, the Hawaiian Islands, and Tutuila (eastern Samoa). Trade with the US developed steadily, but was only a fraction of trade with Britain. The consistently unfavourable balance at this time was not a problem.

As the six Australian colonies moved in the last decade of the 19th century towards forming a single Australian nation, it was to the American

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\(^2\)Charles Bateson, *Gold Fleet for California. Forty-Niners from Australia and New Zealand*, p. 142, states that there were over 6200 listed passengers from Australia to California, but also many who were unlisted.


model, more than any other, that the colonial leaders turned for constitutional guidance. Alfred Deakin at the 1890 conference on federation drew the delegates' attention to James Bryce's work, *The American Commonwealth*, published two years before. According to J. A. La Nauze, it became virtually compulsory reading for the 1897 Convention, the 'great textbook' for all the framers of the Australian constitution. Various drafts drew on the American constitution, as well as on the Canadian (the British North America Act) which incorporated what the Australians wished to retain and the Americans had fought to end—the English monarch as head of state. The finally agreed constitution for the Australian 'Commonwealth' had some differences from but many similarities to the American, with a lower House of Representatives elected by single-member constituencies on a population basis, a powerful Senate second chamber representing the States equally, and an agreed division of powers between the central and provincial or state governments. It was Westminster with a strong American engraftment.

The predisposition of Australians towards friendly relations with the United States was reinforced by their own fears and by the facts of geography. The main apprehension, which developed in the late 19th century and found expression in the restrictive immigration program, was of attack from or absorption by an Asian power, especially Japan. The plain fact was that Sydney and Melbourne were several thousand miles closer to California than they were to Cornwall. The strategic implications of the presence in the western Pacific of British, German, French, Dutch, Japanese and now American possessions were not lost on the Australians, who had been conscious—perhaps over-conscious—of the relevance of the islands to their own security for the best part of a century, and who had been educated from the cradle in the rivalries of Europe. In May 1898 the Victorian Premier, Sir George Turner, pointed out to the British government the importance on strategic grounds that the Philippines should be in the possession of a friendly power. More euphorically, but with similar considerations in mind, Sir George Reid, formerly Premier of New South Wales and shortly to be Prime Minister of Australia, was reported in the *Sydney Morning Herald* as saying of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1902 that if the United States were a party to it, Australians would welcome this as an important step towards 'the ultimate fusion of the Anglo-Saxon race'.

The United States had its own problems with Japan, more severe than

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Australia's, due to the influx of Japanese settlers into California, and consequent discrimination against them. Such was the tension between the two governments, each of which had recently won a war, that by 1907 the possibility of open conflict was being publicly discussed, and the main US fleet moved into the Pacific. War did not eventuate, but there were lessons for everyone concerned. The British took steps to amend their alliance with the Japanese so that it could not lead them into conflict with the United States (see Chapter 3), while Australia stepped up her own defence measures and sought to create more positive links across the Pacific.

The first of these steps was the invitation to the American 'Great White Fleet' to visit Australian ports during its proposed world tour. Deakin approached first the US Consul General in Melbourne, then the American Ambassador in London, and finally persuaded a reluctant British government to extend a formal invitation. The visit occurred in August 1908, and was a tumultuous, unparalleled success at the Australian end. Deakin's aims in bringing the visit about would seem to have been: (1) to stimulate public support for his naval policy (a separate Australian navy); (2) to indicate Australia's dissatisfaction with Britain's neglect of the Empire in the Pacific, as he saw it (he subsequently invited a visit by a British fleet, but it was declined); and (3) to show both Britain and the United States that they had common interests in the Pacific, and that the United States and Australia had—potentially—common enemies.7 The Melbourne Age believed the visit lessened the danger of 'Asiatic aggression'.8 To the United States, the visit was only one among many, but the warmth of the welcome can only have been gratifying, and may even have offered a little comfort in the light of recent troubles with Japan.

Deakin, a shrewd and discreet politician, did not seek immediately to capitalise on the success of the fleet's visit, but his shrewdness and discretion deserted him the following year when he wrote to the Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Crewe, suggesting 'an agreement for the extension of the Monroe Doctrine to all the countries around the Pacific Ocean supported by the guarantees of the British Empire, Holland, France and China added to that of the United States'.9 Here was an example of a situation that has recurred not infrequently throughout Australia's brief diplomatic history: the launching of a proposal which at first flush in the

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7 This is broadly the assessment of Meaney, Search for Security, pp. 163 ff.
8 Cited by Meaney, Search for Security, p. 192 from the Deakin papers.
9 25 February 1908, cited by Meaney, Search for Security, p. 166. Meaney has an extensive analysis of the events and the significance of this visit.
eucalyptus retreat of Melbourne or Canberra looked eminently reasonable, but which failed entirely to take into account the viewpoints and preoccupations of the people to whom it was directed. The Monroe doctrine, despite the fact that it was made possible for many years by the strength of the British navy, was directed against British (and other European) interests in Latin America. The Deakin proposal, by excluding Japan and Germany, was in effect an invitation to the others to band together against these two powers—an invitation which the recipients could not relish and which could only offend the target states. The proposal would reduce British flexibility in its Pacific negotiations over territory. Deakin was seeking a means to involve the United States in preserving the status quo in the Western Pacific—a sound concept, but unsoundly launched. The British, understandably, were cold to the idea, and it went no further before Deakin was ejected from office. However Theodore Roosevelt, who as President declined an invitation from Deakin to visit Australia, wrote subsequently in his autobiography that the United States 'should be ready to stand at the back of Australia in an emergency.'

In March 1914, with the arms race quickening in Europe, Winston Churchill as First Lord of the Admiralty said in the House of Commons that if British power were shattered in the North Sea, the only course for the five million white people in the Pacific would be to seek the protection of the United States. (He was less enthusiastic when a subsequent Australian Prime Minister, John Curtin, made such an appeal in December 1941, and saw it as evidence of pusillanimity and perhaps disloyalty. Certainly British power had not been shattered, but it had been battered and confined.)

American influence on Australia during World War I was largely indirect. The predominant focus of Australian sentiment was towards the Empire, of action towards winning the war. For a time, American grain displaced Australian grain in Britain, because of the shorter routes and quicker turn-around. The removal of ships from the Australia run led Hughes to acquire fifteen British tramp steamers, to found the Australian Commonwealth Line, and to stimulate an Australian shipbuilding industry. Significant numbers of American troops arrived in France only during the

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11 Great Britain, Parliamentary Debates (Commons), vol. LIX, 1933, 17 March 1914.
first half of 1918. The official Australian war historian, Dr C. E. W. Bean, reported ‘marked comradeship’ between the AIF (Australian Imperial Force) and the AEF (American Expeditionary Force), but the Australians never forgot that they had had three bloody years of war before the Americans arrived. It would be good to think that they also appreciated the winning implication of America’s entry into the war.

At the Peace Conference at Versailles, the confrontation between the gnomic, fiery Australian Prime Minister, W. M. Hughes, and the dignified, precise President Wilson, adversely affected the decorum and the flow of the proceedings. It is discussed elsewhere. Hughes asserts that he had earlier called on Wilson in Washington, and laid his claim to German New Guinea. If so, Wilson was unimpressed both by Hughes and his demands. The clash of wills was resolved by the wit of others and the compromise of the ‘C’ class mandate.

As mentioned earlier, the United States persuaded Britain not to renew the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1921, and set up instead the Washington Conference on the limitation of armaments. The invitation to the British Empire to attend this conference arrived during the 1921 Imperial Conference in London. Hughes had suggested a treaty between Britain, the United States and Japan, but the American attitude made this impracticable. Hughes and the New Zealand Prime Minister, Mr W. F. Massey, then sought to have the Washington conference meet in August, so that they could attend, but this was too soon for arrangements to be made. They supported Curzon in pressing for a preliminary conference, in or near London, to discuss Pacific and Far Eastern problems. This also was unacceptable. The new American government, after the earlier traumas of rejecting Versailles, was determined to control the whole negotiations, to have them in Washington under the eye of Congress and public opinion, and to involve the United States in the outcome. In the event, the Pacific discussions were incorporated in the program. The conference began in November 1921, and Hughes sent his Minister for Defence, Senator George Pearce.

The Dominions plainly wanted to be represented at the conference. Lord Curzon, the British Foreign Secretary, who was more in tune with the 19th century than the 20th, saw no need for separate Dominion representation, and suggested, for ease of discussion, delegations of two or

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three members from each nation, the British Empire counting as one. A figure of four each was agreed with the American Secretary of State, Charles Evans Hughes; this was casually increased by Curzon to 'five or six' to accommodate the Dominions and India. Hughes went along with this, as he did not want to give the impression that the United States resisted Dominion representation, although he did want American equality with the Empire.

Senator Pearce was effectively, and unassumingly, part of the Empire delegation—no doubt a refreshing change from Hughes at Versailles. He returned from the conference impressed by the high degree of understanding and cooperation achieved between the British and American representatives, and by the sincerity of Japan's peaceful protestations, which he had previously doubted. But Pearce was not at all impressed by President Harding or by his Vice-President and successor, Calvin Coolidge. According to Peter Heydon, who was later Pearce's private secretary and still later his biographer, this led Pearce to resist greater Australian intimacy with the United States, and to the deferral of the establishment of formal diplomatic relations.

The Washington treaties were laid before the Australian parliament for approval, thus apparently inaugurating the precedent for such action, which the Constitution did not specifically require. During the 1920s, Australia largely shed, or sublimated, the sense of vulnerability that had prompted Deakin to invite the Great White Fleet and Hughes to support the Washington Conference. Japan appeared peaceful, democratic and unassertive. The Washington treaties (see Chapter 3) were reassuring. The League of Nations was grappling, however clumsily and inadequately, with problems of international security and disarmament. Australia's emergence into the world of nation states, which had been stimulated by the war, slowed down, and was mainly confined to the homely surroundings of the Empire and Commonwealth; any venturing forth was

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13 The American Ambassador in London wrote to the Secretary of State on 26 August 1921 that the question of Dominion representation at the Washington Conference had not arisen in his talks with Curzon. The British, he said, 'consider that a family affair and feel quite competent and authorized to speak for the whole Empire.' He added that he believed that neither Curzon nor Lloyd George wanted Dominion representation on the same plane of authority as themselves. Department of State, Papers Relating to the Foreign Relations of the United States (hereafter FRUS), 1921, vol. 1, pp. 63-4.

14 Peter Heydon, Quiet Decision. A study of George Foster Pearce, p. 109. Australia had a Commissioner in New York from 1918, dealing wholly with commercial matters.

15 Hughes told parliament on 26 July 1922 that the treaties gave an assurance of peace for at least ten years. House of Representatives Debates (HRD), Vol. XCIX, no. 792, 26 July 1922.
done, as it were, within the family outing rather than independently. Australia felt no special debt to the United States during the war, no special need of American support in the postwar decade, and little prospect of active help in any case from a nation that had refused to join the League it had been largely instrumental in creating. As the decade neared its end, the Australian government was less concerned with the tensions of Europe and the various auxiliaries to the League Covenant such as the Kellogg Pact16 than with the difficulties caused by world-wide economic depression and the reduced demand and lowered prices for Australia's primary exports. Until World War II, Australia's dealings with the United States were almost entirely over economic matters, and were (from Australia's viewpoint) almost entirely unsatisfactory.

The first point of contention was raised in January 1927 by S. M. Bruce, then Prime Minister, with the Secretary of State, Frank B. Kellogg. American businessmen were given unrestricted entry into Australia and freedom to operate there. Australian businessmen, on the other hand, had great difficulty in entering the United States. They were required either to enter under the tiny Australian quota for migrants (at that time filled two years in advance), or as temporary visitors, which allowed no freedom to establish and maintain proper business offices. Bruce sought reciprocity, or at least the concessions granted in the USA to British businessmen. He pointed out that Australia imported more American-made automobiles than any other country, and in this regard there were a good many Americans in Australia. Kellogg was unimpressed, and unprepared to make any concessions. The matter was raised again in 1931, with Secretary of State Henry L. Stimson. In October 1932, Stimson offered a draft convention for ten years, providing rights of entry for 'His Majesty's subjects of Australian birth and parentage', but inserted a clause on a wholly irrelevant subject—the freight charge component of import value for duty purposes, over which the Americans fairly claimed Australian discrimination. After Australian protests, this was separated from the convention (now called a treaty), but Stimson reduced the duration of the treaty from ten years to two.

In May 1933, prior to the World Economic Conference, the Australian government sent a memorandum to the Secretary of State to set him on the

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16 At Britain's request, the United States invited Australia (and other Dominions) to be among the original signatories to the Kellogg Pact, by which war was renounced as a means of settling international disputes.
right lines. It pointed out the great fall in the value of Australian exports, and proposed a rise in the price of silver, the universal abolition of notes of small currency, the adherence of the world to silver token currency, and the simultaneous adoption by the majority of stronger nations of a vigorous public works program. The Secretary sent a friendly acknowledgment. Subsequently Australia joined in an agreement with the United States and other nations to mitigate fluctuations in the price of silver, and in another to reduce wheat acreages sown. In both items, Australia was a significant exporter.

Successive Australian governments had been concerned at the continuously unfavourable balance of trade with the United States. It did not matter so much during the prosperous period of the 1920s, but it was increasingly hard to live with during the depression. The American Smoot-Hawley tariff of 1930, the highest tariff in American history, was intended to protect American farmers against competition from countries such as Australia. In her main primary exports, Australia competed with the United States on world markets, but whereas the US was also a major exporter of industrial goods, Australia was not, and depended on the income from primary exports to purchase the industrial goods she needed.

In June 1934 the Australian Cabinet decided that the imbalance had gone on long enough. Like a market gardener accustomed to bartering his cabbages for the necessities of life and convinced he's been getting a raw deal, Prime Minister Joseph Lyons suddenly wrote to Roosevelt's Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, seeking a trade treaty between the two countries, and asking for:

1. the free entry of a reasonable amount of Australian wool, and progressive reduction of duty;
2. the importation free of duty or at nominal duty of 50,000 tons of butter, of which a reasonable amount be Australian;
3. the importation during the following few years free of duty of 10,000 tons of Australian beef and the same amount of mutton and lamb, the amount to be increased when Australia could supply more;
4. the regulation of US apple exports to Great Britain and the continent of Europe so that none of them should reach or be stored abroad for sale in those markets between 15 March and 31 August each year;
5. the limitation, in the interest of Australian exports, of US dried fruits exported to Great Britain, Canada and New Zealand, and of canned fruits to Britain and Canada.

If this did not lead to a trade balance, Lyons suggested triple arrangements ‘between Australia, the United States and countries having unfavorable trade balances with Australia’.18

These proposals, breathtaking in their boldness, were based on ignorance of the international trading system, of American domestic politics, of US-British relations, and of the limited propensity for self-abnegation by a great trading nation. The proposals were not entertained for a minute. But Hull had begun elsewhere a series of trade negotiations designed to reduce the general tariff level, and he was prepared to get around eventually to Australia, and to give her in the meantime the benefit of most-favoured-nation tariff reductions. When in 1935 Lyons called on Hull in Washington, the Secretary of State obliterated the Prime Minister’s protests under a deluge of compliments and bland assurances. Or so, at least, Hull recorded.19

In September of that year, a rising American diplomat, Jay Pierrepont Moffat,20 took up the position of US Consul General in Sydney. Moffat found considerable resentment against the United States. Sir George Pearce, by now Minister for External Affairs, told him Australia had been shocked by America’s delay in entering the war, by her refusal to join the League, by her insistence on parity in cruisers with Britain when the Empire needed so many more to defend it than America needed. Another shock was caused by the US decision under the Tydings-McDuffie Act of March 1934 to withdraw from the Philippines within ten years, which had led Australia at large to feel she could not count on American help in case of Japanese attack. With British naval strength below the safety point, Australia thus had no policy open to her other than to try to be friendly with Japan, to give Japan no excuse for an aggressive policy, ‘and to rejoice (irrespective of the moral aspect) every time Japan advanced more deeply

20 Moffat’s despatches, his diaries and other papers, are an excellent source of information on relations between the two governments at this time, from the American viewpoint. The full collection is on microfilm in the National Library of Australia, Canberra. A selection is published in Nancy Harvison Hooker, The Moffat Papers, Selections from the Diplomatic Journals of Jay Pierrepont Moffat 1919–1943.
into Manchukuo and North China', where Pearce hoped her energies would be absorbed for a generation.21

According to Moffat, Pearce said that Australians resented not so much America's favourable trade balance as the fact that it was coupled with arbitrary customs practice and a high tariff that shut out even non-competitive products from Australia. Unless something were done soon to improve the trade balance, Australia would have to restrict US imports. Moffat urged Pearce not to hurry the United States. Hull was proceeding methodically, dealing with non-competitive products first, and aiming at reducing world-wide the barriers strangling international trade. But any state that discriminated against US exports would not receive the benefits negotiated with others.

The warnings, in both directions, were heard, but were not heeded. The United States refused trade negotiations at this stage. Australian discussions with Japan aimed at voluntary restraint on Japanese textile exports to Australia were proceeding simultaneously, were less logical (as Australia sold far more to Japan than she bought from her), but were equally fruitless. On 22 May 1936 the Australian government announced the 'trade diversion' policy, which prohibited except under licence the import of a long list of items from countries outside the British Empire, especially Japan and the United States (see Chapter 2).

In a letter to the Secretary of State the following day, Moffat estimated that about 80 per cent of US total exports could maintain their position, but the remaining 20 per cent could well be lost, by reason of the artificial diversion, chiefly to United Kingdom competitors. As the balance of trade in 1934–5 was 4:1 in America's favour, and even with the new restraints would still be about 3:2, the policy was not gravely prejudicial to the United States. Yet it was totally unacceptable to the American government, and Moffat in his despatches took an increasingly resentful position and advocated an increasingly hard line.22

21 The Moffat Papers, pp. 129–30. In 1937 Moffat recorded two other reasons for anti-American feeling in Australia: (1) a conscious drive by British organs of public opinion to diminish American commercial and cultural interest, and (2) 'a form of inferiority complex which makes the Australian resent in others the accomplishments he most craves for himself'. Ibid., pp. 124–5.

22 Moffat reported the Australian position fairly, but without sympathy. He quoted in his diary Sir Henry Gullett, Minister in charge of trade negotiations, on 4 November 1936: 'Your record has been one of unwillingness to help Australia; in years past you had enormous sales for which you never so much as said thanks. You excluded our goods by tariff; you drove out our shipping by subsidies; you threw our fruit overboard; you surrounded yourself by a tariff wall that could not be surmounted'.
The trade diversion policy offended the United States on several counts: it ran counter to Cordell Hull's mission of lowering world tariff barriers; it implied that Australia had as much right to exclude American industrial products as America had to exclude Australian primary products; it implied that multilateral trade balancing was not a self-regulating mechanism; it reduced American exports, slightly; it was illogical, in that it applied a single principle to both a good customer (Japan) and a bad one (the US); and, worst of all, it was designed to benefit the United Kingdom. Furthermore, Australia had not been impressed by Hull's argument that he was helping other countries to buy from Australia (which was unprovable and probably untrue), nor by his threat to withhold most-favoured nation benefits from Australian exports (which was almost irrelevant in terms of the sums involved). While testy exchanges between the two governments continued, the United States began to buy significantly more Australian wool, and Australia began to run into difficulties in trying to block the US export routes to Australia via Canada.

Australia was in fact a pawn in a much higher game Washington was playing, and the trade diversion policy—a relatively minor irritant in itself—had provided the US with a windfall advantage, a rational resentment. The higher game was for a trade treaty with Britain which would reduce the privileges gained by Britain and the penalties suffered by the United States through the Ottawa imperial preference system. Hull was thus able to use the Australian 'injury' to help persuade both Britain and Australia to mitigate imperial preferences in favour of the Anglo-American treaty. It was not a very strong ploy, but he used it for all it could give.

Japan had reacted much more severely and effectively to the trade diversion policy. When Bertram Stevens, Premier of New South Wales, visited Cordell Hull in Washington in late August 1936, Hull told him Australia was 'putting a knife to our throat', a piece of hyperbole excessive even for Hull. FRUS, 1936, vol. 1, p. 767. Australian imports from and exports to the United States in the years before the war ran as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Imports £</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Exports £</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1934-5</td>
<td>11,041,660</td>
<td>15.3</td>
<td>3,079,113</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1935-6</td>
<td>13,901,857</td>
<td>16.7</td>
<td>9,343,781</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1936-7</td>
<td>12,959,343</td>
<td>14.3</td>
<td>18,763,152</td>
<td>11.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1937-8</td>
<td>17,759,175</td>
<td>15.9</td>
<td>10,859,622</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1938-9</td>
<td>14,648,667</td>
<td>14.7</td>
<td>19,562,376</td>
<td>13.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1939-40</td>
<td>20,122,141</td>
<td>17.2</td>
<td>25,663,162</td>
<td>15.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Australia-Overseas Trade Bulletin
diversion policy, so that the policy as a whole was in disarray. Australian attitudes to the American ‘half’ of it began to change in late 1936 and early 1937 under other influences as well. The economy began to pick up. The bilateral balance of trade was greatly improved by the American wool purchases and the Australian licensing restraints. The more threatening political situation in Europe and the Far East suggested the need for a better relationship between the Empire and the United States. Moffat reported in January 1937 the growing feeling in Australia that the anti-American trade policy would have to be revised. Hull thereupon suggested to Moffat that the United States propose a most-favoured-nation agreement, a treaty, a *modus vivendi*, or an exchange of notes, so that Australia could say that the US made the first move. Moffat disagreed; some iron had entered his soul. ‘Time is on our side,’ he said, which was true if not generous, and the United States returned to a hard line, refusing even to discuss the question of opening trade negotiations until Australian discrimination against American imports had been removed. Lyons was not prepared to do this before the federal election, held in October 1937, but the following January virtually all licences were abolished and the rest scheduled for phasing out. The retaliatory American discrimination was then lifted, but no progress was made on a trade treaty, even after the Anglo-American negotiations had been concluded, with some Dominion concessions. Having achieved her purpose, the United States was not interested in improving Australia’s trading position, and the discussions lapsed on the outbreak of war.

Parallel to and overlapping the trade talks were negotiations over shipping in the Pacific, in which for many years the United States had competed with New Zealand. In early 1930s two new Matson liners, the *Monterey* and the *Mariposa*, were brought into service between California, New Zealand and Australia, and having been given substantial US government subsidies they were able to undercut the rates of other companies and take much of the trans-Tasman (Australia-New Zealand) trade of the Union Steamship Company of New Zealand. Lyons got in a quick, unheeded protest during his visit to Hull in July 1935. In early 1936 the Australian government, like New Zealand, considered the possibility of reserving trans-Tasman trade to British (i.e. Empire) lines, and/or joining with New Zealand, Canada and perhaps Britain in subsidising a British trans-Tasman service. New Zealand adopted legislation enabling trade to be reserved; Australia introduced it but did not pass it, and the matter was dropped in the light of strong American pressure, some easing of the
American subsidies, and British fear of US retaliation.\textsuperscript{24} The Union line went out of business in December 1936.

During his visit to Washington in July 1935, Lyons had called on President Roosevelt and had taken up with him the idea of a Pacific treaty designed to secure the \textit{status quo} in the Pacific.\textsuperscript{25} Lyons later told Moffat about the conversation and said: 'I added, "I suppose, however, that you could not see your way clear to signing an agreement with Japan while she was continuing to violate her Treaties in Manchukuo."' The President replied that that would be going too far, but a lot could be overlooked in the interest of lasting peace. Roosevelt also told Lyons (so Lyons told Moffat) that 'never again would the United States be drawn into a European War, regardless of circumstances'. Lyons later reported to his Imperial colleagues that Roosevelt told him that if serious trouble arose in the Pacific, the United States would be prepared to make common cause with the members of the Commonwealth concerned.\textsuperscript{26}

When Lyons presented to the 1937 Imperial Conference his proposal for a non-aggression pact in the Pacific, he discussed it also with relevant ambassadors in London, including the American Ambassador, Robert W. Bingham. Bingham reported to Hull:

I assured him that in my opinion it would be impossible to secure any form of agreement which would bind our Government in any way whatsoever looking towards the protection of Australia from attack by Japan. He assured me he had nothing of this sort in his mind and had not meant to intimate any such proposal but he insisted that it was his hope that a non-aggression pact in the Pacific might be made between Great Britain, the self-governing Dominions and Japan, which would have at least the blessing of the United States Government.\textsuperscript{27}

\textsuperscript{24}Raymond A. Esthus believes that the most important deterrent was the influence on Australia and New Zealand of the British government, fearful of US retaliation against British shipping lines and anxious for a general Anglo-US rapprochement. From Enmity to Alliance. \textit{US-Australian Relations 1931–1941}, p. 35.

\textsuperscript{25}As recorded by Moffat after an interview with Lyons on 2 October 1935. The Moffat Papers, p. 128.

\textsuperscript{26}To the 1937 Imperial Conference. \textit{Per contra} Mackenzie King, Prime Minister of Canada, told the Conference that Roosevelt had told him that he wanted to see the fortification of the islands of the Pacific dismantled as a measure for furthering peace in the Pacific. \textit{DAFP}, vol. 1, 1937–8, pp. 81–2.

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{FRUS}, 1937, vol. 11, p. 141.
While Lyons was canvassing his ideas, the State Department was discussing a draft proposal of its own for a treaty neutralising the islands of the Pacific. It went to Roosevelt, who considered it did not ‘fire the imagination’ and sent it back for rethinking. But Lyons’s proposal was looked at in foreign offices around the world. Joseph Grew, the American Ambassador in Tokyo, reported on 28 May 1937 that the proposal was ‘received with reticence and suspicion’ in Japan, and that the press were universally critical. The British, seeking a reaction from Washington, suggested that the attitude of the Japanese was the most vital factor. Hull concurred, and Halifax (Foreign Secretary) reported this to the Imperial Conference as being the American attitude. The American attitude was in fact entirely non-committal, ‘watchful waiting’, until the official Japanese position was clear. Only a few weeks later, Japan attacked into China, and became an even more unsatisfactory candidate for a non-aggression treaty. Thus the United States was never required to make up its mind on the proposal, which was a serious one, and taken seriously.

Lyons’s personal diplomacy over this treaty was made necessary because Australia had no diplomatic posts abroad, and no envoys except the High Commissioner in London. In July 1935 Roosevelt had suggested to Lyons that Australia be represented in Washington. Lyons demurred, as he felt it would mean setting up not one but several legations, including one in Tokyo, which would be costly and politically difficult. Moffat raised the matter again in October, and subsequently. In 1937 an Australian diplomat, Keith Officer, was attached as a Counsellor to the British Embassy in Washington. In December 1938 Lord Halifax advocated that Australia have its own Minister to the United States. This was formally put to Washington in November 1939, welcomed by the US government, and an exchange of Ministers agreed to. Earlier representation might have saved Australia some gaucheries and disappointments, would certainly have made her better informed, but might not have made much difference to the relationship or to the outcome of negotiations. Australia’s problem was a general lack of ministerial or administrative experience in international political and economic dealings. The American view of Australia was rather like the Australian view of Fiji—a remote British dependency in the Pacific from which some money could be made but for which no responsibility should be taken.

As the storm clouds gathered in Europe and Asia, and men’s minds were turning to the possibility of a second great war in 20 years, they turned also

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to the potential power and influence of the United States. The US Neutrality Act firmly rejected the idea that the New World should again by blood and treasure redress the imbalance of the old, but the Neutrality Act was not holy writ: it was one Act of Congress, powerfully but not universally supported. The United States was moving away from isolation. She had become involved in League affairs. Roosevelt was ready to offer advice to Hitler, Benes, Chamberlain and Daladier, and to assure Canada of help if threatened by another empire.

It was in the Pacific that Australia felt the greatest sense of threat. While not ready to launch again its own diplomacy for involving the United States in the security of the western Pacific region, the Australian government recognised the importance of strong British-American relations. The frictions of unbalanced trade lost their importance compared with the possibilities of America as a source of war supplies or even, conceivably, hopefully, once again, as an ally against a common enemy.

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29 Menzies protested to Roosevelt against the Neutrality Proclamation of 7 September 1939, which stopped the supply of civil and military aircraft ordered from the US.

30 Speech at Kingston, Canada, 18 August 1938.

31 In September 1938, before Munich, Lyons urged Roosevelt to offer his services as a mediator with Germany. *DAFP*, vol. 1, p. 468.
Hughes was in London in 1918 when it became clear that the 'Great War' was nearing its end, so he decided to stay in Europe and take part in the negotiation of the peace treaty. It seems unlikely that the Australian Prime Minister had any coherent views about going beyond such a treaty to create an international organisation designed to prevent further wars or otherwise to help mankind. Australia was already a member of the largest and demonstrably most powerful group of states, the British Empire and Commonwealth, in which she (or he—Hughes) was playing an increasingly assertive role. He did not go to Paris to reform the world and make it safe. He went to protect and advance Australia's interests.

Hughes and his fellow Dominion leaders were successful in obtaining a separate seat for each of them at the peace table. They first had to convince the British government. This done, Britain with their support forced the issue, against considerable opposition from the United States, which saw the proposal as a device to give Britain six voices and six votes. This was not the intention of either the British or Dominion governments, although in a sense it had that effect. The Empire delegations met frequently to discuss and coordinate their strategy and tactics, sometimes

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1 Hughes did not have the support of the Australian Cabinet, which felt the demand was pretentious and unreasonable, but other Dominion prime ministers shared his approach.

2 India, which was by no means fully self-governing, but which had made a major contribution to the war, was accorded equal status with the four Dominions—Canada, Australia, New Zealand and South Africa. All were allowed two representatives except New Zealand which had one.

3 A lengthy account of Australian participation in the peace conference is given by Ernest Scott, *Australia During the War*, pp. 739–823. See also W. J. Hudson, *Billy Hughes in Paris. The Birthplace of Australian Diplomacy*. 

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amid violent disagreement, but usually with an eventually agreed position which they held to in subsequent plenary or committee meetings. They acted as representatives both of their own countries and of the Empire, thus acquiring a status and voice greater than their individual international positions could warrant. It was a good case of having one's cake as well as eating it.

When it came to signature of the Treaty, the Dominions and India signed as a group within the British Empire, not alphabetically within the whole roll of countries. All five became individual and full members of the League of Nations.

The negotiations of the Peace Treaty and of the Covenant of the League were concurrent and inter-related. The question of reparations came into the former, and on this Hughes took the extreme position that Germany must be made to pay for the whole cost of the war. He estimated Australia's share at £364 million. This was understandable in the early emotional stage of the negotiations. On any practical basis, it was wholly untenable, but nothing would move Hughes from his indignation and his claim. This prompted J. M. Keynes to write later that Hughes's position may have been partly due to the fact that Australia, not having been ravaged by the war, would have no claims at all under a more limited interpretation of the victors' rights.

On two matters Hughes left his mark on the conference and on the Covenant. President Woodrow Wilson had from the beginning insisted on the principle that no former enemy territory should be annexed by the allied powers. General J. C. Smuts, of South Africa, who had done so much in the initial drafting stage of the Covenant, proposed the mandate system, whereby a form of trusteeship would be established by the League and administered by one of the allies. With the hypocrisy that is the political handmaiden of acquisitiveness, Smuts did not see this system applying

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1Hughes, for example led the British team at the Reparations Commission, where he was appointed Vice-President. He also served on the Labour Commission which drafted the Charter of Labour. The Splendid Adventure, p. 105.

2Australia simultaneously joined the new International Labor Organisation (ILO), an affiliated agency of the League, which was set up to facilitate better labour and living standards throughout the world. Under Australia's constitution, many of the decisions on such matters are taken by the state governments, and this has consistently inhibited Australia at the ILO.

3He wanted a further £100 million as representing the capitalised value of pensions, repatriation benefits, losses suffered by civilians, etc.

4J. M. Keynes, Economic Consequences of the Peace, p. 127.
to the German colonial territories in Africa or the Pacific, and he put in a claim for South Africa to annex German South-west Africa, while Australia claimed German New Guinea and New Zealand sought German Samoa. President Wilson remained firmly set against any annexation, and engaged in highly contentious argument with Hughes on the subject. Hughes claimed, with more vigour than accuracy, that the capture of German New Guinea early in the war had entailed great sacrifices in men and money. The Pacific islands 'encompassed Australia like fortresses', and the country's future demanded that she control them. Wilson was unmoved, although angry.

There was a dramatic contrast between these two men, one the President of a great nation, a patrician and a pedagogue, the other a fiery union leader from a remote Pacific country of five million people. Wilson was dignified, patronising, humourless. Hughes was abrasive, humorous, defiant. Wilson saw the principle of 'no annexation' as an inviolable moral imperative. If breached for the German island colonies, it could be breached anywhere else where greed or force were yielded to. He saw Hughes and Australia as almost irrelevant to the international scene, with a propensity to initiate out of all proportion to their power to influence. Hughes saw Wilson as an impractical idealist who would blandly sacrifice other people's security for a theoretical principle. He saw himself as the representative not just of five million people but of 60,000 war dead. He was concerned with the permanent security of his country. He was also, no doubt, acquisitive on its behalf.

Eventually the British Prime Minister, Lloyd George, persuaded Hughes (the loudest of the three claimants) to consider the compromise concept of the 'C' Class Mandate, which included each of the claimed territories within the mandate system but allowed the mandatory power to administer it 'as an integral portion' of its own territory. Neither Wilson nor Hughes liked the proposal at first, but both came to accept it rather than put the conference at risk. Australia was given the mandate, but proved a very indifferent administrator, and successfully resisted any significant degree of accountability. This could perhaps be explained on the grounds that the main Australian interest was to neutralise the territory by occupation rather than to exploit it.

\footnote{Australia was made the Mandatory power for German New Guinea, the Bismarck Archipelago, and Solomon Islands (excluding British Solomon Islands Protectorate). Britain, Australia and New Zealand were made jointly responsible for the phosphate island of Nauru; Australia was deputed to administer the territory for the first five years, and continued doing so thereafter.}
The Japanese delegation objected to the granting of this mandate to Australia, on the grounds that the White Australia policy would be applied to the territory. Japan also later opposed the Australian government's policy of including New Guinea in the ambit of the Australian Commonwealth Navigation Act, which restricted shipping to the territory to Australian bottoms. But the main Australian-Japanese clash was over the Japanese proposal (see Chapter 4) to include in the Covenant a reference to the principle of racial equality. Hughes was unequivocally, unashamedly defiant on the point, as it would challenge Australia's right to exclude coloured immigrants. He received some sympathy within the Empire delegations, but little elsewhere. Hughes records that at one stage in the argument Baron Makino of the Japanese delegation sought an interview with him to get him to change his mind. Hughes told him that he would not object to a declaration of 'racial equality' provided that it were expressed in clear and unambiguous terms that this did not confer any right to enter Australia or any other country except to the extent that the host country's government might determine. Makino replied that what was sought was no more than a recognition of a technical right of free entrance, and that there was no intention to act upon it. Hughes then called a conference of American pressmen and gave them this story. It caused an outcry when printed in California, where there was a long history of anti-Japanese feelings. No doubt some of those feelings were transmitted to Wilson in Paris. When the matter was put to the Drafting Commission for the Covenant, the voting was eleven in favour of the Japanese amendment and six against. To the delight of Hughes and the astonishment and dismay of his opponents, Wilson, as chairman, declared the vote lost because it was not unanimous.

Hughes made other criticisms of the Covenant during the drafting stage. He disagreed with the clauses on sanctions, and suggested that they should be limited to an affirmation of the right of members to make war against a Covenant-breaking state. He felt the proposed League wavered (as it did) between the idea of an international conference and that of a super-state, which would lead to differing interpretations of its role. But he accepted the final draft of the Covenant, and returned to a hero's welcome in

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1 J. C. Rookwood Proud, *World Peace, The League and Australia*, p. 37. This restriction was lifted in 1925.


Australia as champion of the nation’s interests in the world’s highest assembly. Australia was thus a founding member both of the League and of the International Labor Organization.

At subsequent meetings of the League in Geneva, Australia (like the other Dominions) spoke with more weight because of its membership of the Empire group. As a full member of the League, it had an international status never before achieved. It could negotiate treaties or conventions; it was responsible to the League for the administration of a dependent territory; it could dissent from and thus negate League resolutions in certain circumstances.

From time to time, enthusiasts of empire expressed concern lest independent membership of the League would lead to independent foreign policies and thus the break-up of the Empire. This did not occur. All the Dominions, even including the Irish Free State, acknowledged the general foreign policy leadership of the United Kingdom. They did not sit together, but frequent consultation enabled the Empire delegations to speak on most issues with one voice. Differences of opinion tended to get ironed out in the Empire context, and the Dominions on occasions were able to influence British policy.

Yet the Dominions, except the Irish Free State, were distinct from fellow League members in one significant respect: they declared that their relations with each other and with Britain were not strictly international, as there was a common head of state—the British King. This was the *inter se* doctrine, which was to affect their acceptance of a number of League instruments (see below).

Australia suffered in one way by its remoteness from Geneva, the lack of a proper foreign office, and the lack of sustained interest in the affairs of Europe. Rather than put together a professional team for the brief Assembly sessions, the government sometimes selected people who happened to be in Europe at the time. This was not always satisfactory.

The League was understandably preoccupied with questions of international peace and security, but members soon saw that the Covenant had gaps and ambiguities. Most members wanted disarmament, both to save money and to reduce the likelihood of war, but few wanted to give up the tools of self-defence so long as they might be needed. Bruce at the second League Assembly in 1921 strongly supported limitation on arms, and said

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12 New Zealand, after a Labour government came to power in 1935, was something of a maverick in the Empire group.
that Australia could not afford to spend money on both arms and primary production for export. He admonished League members:

...you have got to remember that it is to Australia and countries such as her that you have to look for the production of the new wealth which is going to restore the financial stability of the world so largely destroyed by the expenditure on destructive armaments during the past few years.13

Australia, he said, with pardonable hyperbole, had been 'bled white by her efforts on behalf of civilization'.14 He made a passionate appeal against war, on the basis of the horrors he had seen as a soldier.

From 1922, there were moves to implement or supplement the Covenant by additional treaties. The first of these was the Draft Treaty of Mutual Assistance, designed to ensure that if a nation embarked on an aggressive war, the members of the League would immediately act together and apply the sanctions listed in Article 16 of the Covenant. But Article 5(b) of the draft provided that only those parties should act that were situated on the continent where operations would take place. This did not satisfy Australia, with a continent all to herself, or New Zealand, a small group of islands. Sir Littleton Groom told the fifth Assembly that Australia's armaments were considerably less than she needed for national safety. The League should develop proposals within the terms of the Covenant, and seek to solve international disputes through mediation, arbitration, and the Permanent Court of International Justice.15 Britain opposed the Draft Treaty on the grounds that it would tend to create systems of alliances within the League.

The Draft Treaty was dropped, and replaced by a proposal to add a protocol (the 'Geneva Protocol') to the Covenant. The Protocol was based on the principle of compulsory arbitration to prevent a dispute from deteriorating into war,16 and sanctions against anyone breaching an award. A complex procedure was devised to meet the various possible situations.

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14Ibid., p. 763.
15Proud, World Peace, pp. 18–19.
16Protocol for the Pacific Settlement of International Disputes. The full text of the final draft is given in Australian Parliamentary papers, 1925, vol. II, pp. 1163–6. Correspondence on the subject between the Australian and British governments is given on pp. 1235–46 of the same volume.
There was widespread support for the Protocol among League members, but not within British Empire delegations, which successfully blocked its adoption. The Australian government's view was cabled to London on 4 March 1925. Australia declared its adherence to the principles of the Covenant. It realised that there were defects in the Covenant, because of mistrust between nations and uncertainty as to the methods by which the League could use force. The Protocol was a praiseworthy attempt to go further than was possible in 1919. The Covenant provided that disputes could go to arbitration, judicial settlement, or to inquiry by the League Council. If the Protocol were accepted, all disputes would go to arbitration. This would be less flexible, less responsive to public opinion, and indeed dangerous to peace unless it secured the consent of all countries between which disputes might arise, including major states (such as the United States, the Soviet Union, and Germany) that were not members of the League. Japan had successfully introduced an amendment whereby matters within the domestic jurisdiction of a state could come under the Protocol. This also caused a problem for Australia, fearing for its immigration policy.

Australia was in fact only reinforcing the reluctance of Britain to take on what it saw could be additional responsibilities as an international policeman. The other Dominions and India all had reservations, and it was left to Austen Chamberlain to administer what Sir Joseph Cook (Australian delegate) called 'a cold douche to the flood of warm enthusiasm with which the Protocol was extolled'. Cook said Chamberlain did it so well as to 'enhance considerably the prestige of the British Empire, and at the same time strengthen the position of the League'. In fact it did neither. The Protocol was resurrected in 1927, only to be squashed by Chamberlain once more, but it was a document which only an ideal world could implement, yet which an ideal world would not need.

Much of the effort that had gone into the Protocol was transferred to erect the Locarno treaties of 1925, which established a form of collective security for Europe. Belgium, France, Germany, Great Britain and Italy bound themselves to resist any violation of the existing frontiers between France and Germany, and Belgium and Germany. None of the Dominions took part in the negotiations, none signed the treaties nor was bound by them. All signed the Kellogg Pact of 1928 renouncing war as an instrument of national policy (see Chapter 2).

A major instrument of the League had been the Permanent Court of

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International Justice, designed to apply the judicial process to international disputes or complaints. Originally, the draft statute of the Court had provided for compulsory jurisdiction in all classes of dispute involving threats to or breaches of international peace and security, but in its final form there was an Optional Clause (Clause 36) under which members could if they wished acknowledge the court's compulsory jurisdiction within stated classes of disputes. Australia accepted and ratified the Statute, but not the Optional Clause, mainly on the grounds that there was no complete system of international law on which judicial processes could be firmly built. There was also some fear that the Court might be used to adjudicate on matters within Australia's domestic jurisdiction, or on matters arising between members of the British Commonwealth of Nations.

Before the British election in 1929, the Labour Party led by Ramsay Macdonald had pledged itself to sign the Optional Clause, and subsequently did so. The Irish Free State had already done this, without reservations, but Britain and the other Dominions attached reservations in line with the agreed constitutional relationship between them. In Australia's case, the reservations were:

1. the other party to a dispute must have similarly accepted the Optional Clause;
2. adherence would be for a period of ten years, and thereafter until terminated;
3. it would not apply to disputes where recourse to some other form of peaceful settlement was agreed;
4. it would not apply to disputes with the government of any member of the League which was also a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations, all of which disputes should be settled in such manner as the parties agreed;
5. it would not apply to questions which by international law fell exclusively within the jurisdiction of the Commonwealth of Australia.

Australia attached almost identical reservations to the General Act for the Peaceful Settlement of International Disputes, which had been drawn up in 1928 by the League Assembly at the request of the Council. The General Act eliminated the League Council from the process of settling international disputes, and provided for three different kinds of juridical process: the Permanent Court of International Justice, Conciliation

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18 J. G. Latham, the Australian Attorney-General from 1924 to 1929, stressed to the Seventh Assembly the need for a codified system of international law.

Commissions, and Arbitral Tribunals. It was almost immediately overtaken by events. In 1973, searching for a legal basis for taking France to the International Court over its nuclear testing in the Pacific, lawyers in Australia and New Zealand unearthed the General Act, never implemented but never annulled, and their national complaints were given a technical if spurious and totally ineffective validity.

Disarmament, or at least the reduction of armaments, was a regular feature of League discussions during the 1920s. Australia consistently supported the concept of reducing armaments, felt that she should not wait on a perfect security system, and was impatient with the mutual suspicions of the European powers. On the other hand, Australia and New Zealand, much more than Canada and South Africa, were conscious of their own weakness, vulnerability and dependence on Britain, and had no desire to see British defence capacity impaired. A Disarmament Conference was held in 1932, to which Australia made two contributions. It came out strongly in favour of abolishing chemical and bacteriological warfare. It urged disarmament by stages and pressed for a definite decision on disarmament over a limited term, but the circumstances (following Japan’s invasion of Manchuria) were not appropriate. Arming, not disarming, soon became the favoured occupation of Europe.

To some Australian political leaders the League offered a higher and ‘better’ loyalty than imperial policy, and a potential restraint upon it; to others the League was an arena in which the Empire would cooperate in the cause of peace. Some of those who were troubled by the possibility of Empire dissension on a major issue involving war saw the League as a superior and saving authority. As J. G. Latham wrote in 1929:

…but if the Covenant is obeyed by the nations which have solemnly accepted it, all parts of the Empire will necessarily be in a state of legal belligerency if any one part of the Empire is at war. This proposition is subject to exceptions in the case of matters unanimously found by the Council to be matters of domestic jurisdiction, and in the case of disputes with nonmembers of the League. But these limitations cannot obscure the fact that the establishment of the League has gone far to remove one of the fundamental obstacles to the new idea of the British Empire by greatly diminishing the probability of the Empire breaking up by reason of divergent action of its parts upon issues of war and peace.21

20 A Department of External Affairs submission to Cabinet on the General Act, on 23 January 1939, is given in DAFP, vol. II, pp. 11–17.

This brushed over the fact that Commonwealth members of the League had to contribute to the League's decisions for peace or war, an objection that was in no way diminished by the *inter se* doctrine. In any case, the League was never able to demonstrate its authority—was never given that authority—in a situation affecting Australia.

As one nation after another during the 1930s abrogated the obligations and principles of the League Covenant, Australian governments demonstrated that they had some vague hope of, but little practical commitment to, the League or the Covenant, and no policy other than (to mix metaphors) to follow Britain reluctantly to any wicket she felt compelled to bat on, and once there to shelter under her umbrella.

The first breach, the first irreversible crumbling of the League concept, was Japan's invasion of Manchuria beginning on 18 September 1931, just before the League Assembly opened. It happened a long way from Europe. It was at a time of international economic depression which had reinforced the ideological impetus to disarmament in Europe. (Britain abandoned the gold standard at this moment.) It was accompanied by protests of peaceful intention, and of complex legalities. The Japanese army appeared to have acted without authority. The United States was not a member of the League, and unwilling to go beyond verbal gestures to the readiness to use force which alone would have made Japan pause. It did address a note to the Chinese and Japanese governments in January 1932 declaring that the US would not recognise any agreement between them that might impair American treaty rights in China, nor would it recognise any situation brought about by means contrary to the Kellogg Pact. Britain disavowed this initiative, and France said nothing. The Australian government did nothing. It said nothing. It had no mind for principles or for action, other than to recognise the benefits of sales of Australian wool and wheat to Japan. Canada and Britain were even able to defend the Japanese action, and at the 1933 Assembly, after Japan had withdrawn from the League, S. M. Bruce for Australia opposed the adoption of any resolution that would condemn Japan, because to do so would make it more difficult for the League to be effective. Australia thus condoned aggression, deserted the Covenant, and laid the blame on inadequate League machinery.

During 1933, as we now know, Italy began to plan the conquest of Ethiopia (Abyssinia). The first incident was initiated for her by the

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Ethiopians in December 1934, over a contested boundary with Italian Somaliland. Ethiopia promptly referred the matter to the League. France and Britain were much more sympathetic to Italy than to Ethiopia, to colonial conquest rather than to national independence, to concessions rather than to League firmness. This encouraged Mussolini to overt threats, backed by clever diplomacy to put Ethiopia in the wrong and make Italy seem a counter to an increasingly warlike Germany. In vain did the Ethiopian Emperor, Haile Selassie, appeal to the League, and to the United States, under the Kellogg Pact. Then when the League Assembly met in September 1935, Britain at last gave it a firm lead in terms of upholding the Covenant. Mussolini replied by invading Ethiopia as soon as the weather permitted (3 October). The League replied with an invitation for individual members to impose sanctions against Italy, for which Britain set the pace: an arms embargo, a prohibition on loans and credits to Italy, and prohibition of imports from Italy.24

In the Australian parliament, a strong sense of isolationism among the Opposition was reinforced by a sympathy for Italy among many Catholic members. The government was also divided, confused, and uncertain, but eventually (with nearly fifty other League members) came out in favour of sanctions, following Britain’s public lead and a twinge of its own conscience over the Italian invasion with its inevitable and increasing brutality, including the use of mustard gas against civilians. W. M. Hughes, still a Minister, published a book in late October in which he pointed out that sanctions would only be effective if backed by armed force—they carried the risk of war—and few if any of the League members, certainly neither Australia nor Britain, were in any way prepared for war. ‘The League’, he wrote, ‘is powerless—that is the great outstanding fact. It talks; it appeals; it supplicates; it negotiates; but it cannot act.’25 And if it cannot stop Italy over Abyssinia, he said, how much less can it restrain Germany when she demands, as she surely will when she is ready, readjustment of her boundaries.

He was disowned by Cabinet, and resigned. The Hoare-Laval pact to dismember Ethiopia destroyed almost all hopes within the League, and although it was not put into effect, the sanctions movement, which had undoubtedly had an adverse effect on Italy, was abandoned after the Italian

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24 A full account of the League’s involvement is given in Chapter 53 of F. P. Walters, A History of the League of Nations, vol. II.

Army had completed its task. Australia had publicly advocated the lifting of sanctions and, perhaps fortuitously, was the first nation to do so.\textsuperscript{26} Hitler had taken advantage of the Ethiopian crisis and League fumbling to re-occupy the demilitarised zone of the Rhineland on 7 March 1936. France delayed reacting, thus allowing Germany to present the League with a \textit{fait accompli}. Australia voted with the Council majority to denounce Germany’s violation of the Locarno Treaty, a gesture with some meaning but no effect.

The League was now a broken machine, an ideal deserted by its exponents, and Australia must bear a little of the responsibility. Strangely enough, as the League became less significant, Australia’s position in it became more prominent, although less because of the policies of the home government than the personality of its representative, S. M. Bruce, who was High Commissioner to London. Bruce was elected President of the League Council for 1935–6.\textsuperscript{27} In 1936 he was elected chairman of a special committee of the Sixth Committee, and subsequently of a General Commission to consider the application of the principles of the Covenant, and possible changes in it: (a) to bring it into harmony with the Kellogg Pact,\textsuperscript{28} and with the Treaty of Non-aggression and Conciliation concluded at Rio de Janeiro; and (b) to consider its implications for the supply of arms and war materials to belligerents. Bruce supported and enlarged on British proposals designed to strengthen the machinery of the League for settling disputes and redressing grievances. The Australian government, he said to the Seventeenth Assembly,

feels strongly that the League does not exist to maintain any given status quo but rather to secure peace based on justice between nations.... My Government....is convinced that through the solution of the economic problems that confront us can

\textsuperscript{26} Cecil Edwards quotes in his biography, \textit{Bruce of Melbourne}, pp. 232–5, a note which Bruce wrote during the Ethiopian crisis in which he says he advocated to Anthony Eden, then British Minister for League of Nations affairs, that British policy should be to admit publicly that the League had failed, to acknowledge that she (Britain) was unable to provide the necessary force to make the League work, and to rearm as fast as possible in order to provide that force.

\textsuperscript{27} F. P. Walters, historian of the League and a former Deputy Secretary-General, wrote that Bruce was ‘the best, perhaps, of the many first-rate chairmen who presided over the Council, Assembly, Conferences or Committees of the League.’ \textit{A History of the League of Nations}, p. 695. Bruce was also President of the 1936 Montreux conference on the Dardanelles.

\textsuperscript{28} Also known as the Kellogg-Briand Pact, or the Pact of Paris.
Safety First

'We'd see better without these bandages, P. M.!'  
'Yes, but don't they make you feel SAFE?'

—From a cartoon by Norman Lindsay in *The Bulletin*, 13 November 1935.
"They tell me things are not too good in Europe, Dave."
"What's wrong? Drought?"
—From a cartoon by 'Unk' White in *The Bulletin*, 26 July 1939.

best be secured the maintenance of world peace, the appeasement of the social unrest and the removal of dangers that threaten all countries.  

Bruce himself, inspired by Dr J. B. Orr (later Lord Boyd Orr), of the Rowett Institute near Aberdeen, and encouraged by F. L. McDougall, was active in getting the League to look at the whole question of nutrition for poorer nations and peoples.

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At the 18th (1937) session, after Japan's assault on 'China proper', Bruce proposed that the Council call a conference of the states most vitally concerned, whether League members or not, to arrange a settlement or to concert measures to be taken. This did not occur. At the 1938 session, he was elected chairman of the Committee on the Structure and Function of the Economic Organisation, but the prospect of war in Europe forced him to return to his post in London. The war, when it came, was the *coup de grâce* to the already stricken League.

Australia had been barely a nation when it became a founding member of the League of Nations. It had fought bravely in a world war, but it had no foreign office, no diplomatic machinery of its own, no corpus of policies, no international relations. It drew on the credit and status of the British Empire and Commonwealth, and kept its policies in tune with those of Britain and the other Dominions. In a sense, the League was a nursery school for developing the necessary diplomatic skills, and for weighing the problems of sovereignty at a time when its responsibilities were shared. Yet that process of sharing was too tempting, too inherent, for the time and the opportunities to be well used. World War II was the catalyst and the crucible for the creation of a genuinely Australian foreign policy.
PART 3

1939–1945
The Australian declaration of war on the evening of 3 September 1939 was no token gesture by a government remote from the conflict. It was known to involve the fate of the nation, as part of the fate of the Empire. It was a decision to become actively involved in hostilities with a major power by land, sea and air, possibly to the extent if not necessarily in the same ways that Australia had been involved in what hitherto had been called the Great War of 1914–18. Hundreds of thousands of Australians living in 1939 had taken part in the earlier conflict. Rare was the town or village without its monument to the fallen. Twice each year,¹ the people of Australia stopped (as they still do) to commemorate by religious and patriotic ceremonies those who had given their lives for their country. The nation was conscious of the sacrifices demanded by war. But in 1939 there was a factor not present in the earlier conflicts. This, like the others, began as war at a distance, but there was a pervasive fear, soon to be realised, that the homeland itself and the homes within it might be in danger of attack.

All the evidence indicates that the declaration of war was accepted and supported by a national consensus. When parliament met on 6 September, the Leader of the Opposition, John Curtin, on behalf of the Labor Party, declared that the party would do its utmost to maintain the integrity of the British Commonwealth, of which Australia was a part. This sense of being part of the Commonwealth and Empire meant somewhat different things to different Australians, but it was a common basis for support of the decision.

¹ On 25 April, ‘Anzac Day’, the anniversary of the landing by the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps at Gallipoli in 1915; and 11 November, the anniversary of the armistice in Europe in 1918. Australian fallen of all wars are remembered on these days.
to go to war. Government and other leaders also saw that the defeat of Britain in Europe would leave Australia dangerously vulnerable. The way in which the war had begun—clear aggression by Hitler’s Germany against Poland after occupying first Austria and then Czechoslovakia—was a blatant act of international immorality which if condoned could only lead to further subjugations and the destruction of the whole basis of international society. Hasluck, among other things a historian of distinction, believes that all sections of the Australian community shared the moral judgment on Hitler’s actions, and that it was this moral judgment above all that unified Australia during the weeks leading up to the declaration of war.²

No one could know what obligations had been thus undertaken, and there was no consensus as to the steps to be adopted. The Labor Party had resisted defence preparations during most of the 1930s, had stood firmly against involvement in European, ‘imperialist’ wars, and was totally opposed to expeditionary forces or to conscription for military service. These attitudes broke down during the first year of the war, as Labor leaders realised that they did not fit with the mood of the people or the obligations undertaken by the nation.

In the initial stages, the war was a long way from Australia, and the government saw as its best contribution the provision of supplies, air squadrons, and an expeditionary force to help the Mother Country. Two cruisers and five destroyers of the Royal Australian Navy were placed under the control of the Royal Navy in November 1939, after some controversy as to where the ships would serve. The Australian government was cautious about sending too great a part of its modest forces out of the country, being apprehensive that Japan might take advantage of the pre-occupation of the European powers to launch an attack upon their Pacific dependencies. If Britain did not reinforce Singapore, British territories in the region would be at risk; and if Germany were to attack Holland, the Netherlands East Indies would be equally vulnerable and (because of their oil deposits) an attractive target. Further, the ‘twilight war’ in Europe, seemingly a stalemate behind entrenched defences on the western front, did not appear to be exercising the resources of Britain and France. But Australia’s hand was forced by the Labour government in New Zealand, less fearful of (perhaps because more remote from) Japan, more quickly responsive to British appeals. Without waiting to consult Australia (despite

²Paul Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1939–1941*, p. 156. Much of the information in this chapter is taken from the official histories of the war, and from *Documents on Australian Foreign Policy (DAFP)*. Military detail is taken from Gavin Long, *The Six Years War. A Concise History of Australia in the 1939–45 War*.
a pre-war agreement to exchange decisions on defence policy), New Zealand decided in late November 1939 to send a force to the Middle East; Australia, already contemplating such a move, followed suit with the offer of a division. The British estimate was that Japan was unlikely to attack Australia or New Zealand, and even if she again became aggressive, her efforts would probably be directed at the more accessible Allied interests on the Asian mainland.3

In December, at the suggestion of S. M. Bruce, still High Commissioner in London, the Empire Air Training Scheme was inaugurated. Air crews were trained in Australia, Canada and Rhodesia for service with the Royal Air Force in Britain and Europe.4

After consultation with London, the Middle East was chosen for the training and likely deployment of the Australian expeditionary force largely because of the British and Australian strategic interest in the Mediterranean-Suez-Indian Ocean route. Britain was also concerned with the security of the Palestine mandate, the Anglo-Iranian oil field, and the north-west frontier of India. (War with Russia, which in collusion with Germany had just swallowed the eastern half of Poland, was a possibility.) Australia eventually sent three divisions (6th, 7th and 9th) to the Middle East, where they played a significant—and at times decisive—role.5 They were used in Palestine, in the campaigns in North Africa, in the defence of Greece and Crete, and in the invasion and occupation of Syria against Vichy French forces.

Early in the war, the need for Australia to be represented by its own diplomats in major capitals became more urgent. In January 1940, R. G. Casey, Minister for Supply and Development, was appointed to head Australia’s first foreign diplomatic post, as Minister to the United States.6 In March, High Commissioners were exchanged with Canada, at the suggestion of the Canadian government.

The first of the major changes in the war came in April and May 1940. On 9 April Germany invaded Denmark and Norway, and quickly overran

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4 Some 40,777 Australians graduated from this scheme. When the war with Germany ended, about 16,000 men of the Royal Australian Air Force were serving with the Royal Air Force, many of them being organised into Australian squadrons.
5 Among other things, the 6th Division (with the New Zealand Division) made it possible to assist Greece against Germany; the 7th made practicable the invasion of Syria; the 9th made a major contribution to the defence of Tobruk and took part in the battle of Alamein.
6 Casey’s account of his time in Washington is given in Personal Experience 1939–46.
Invasion of the Low Countries appeared imminent. Ominously, the Japanese Foreign Minister announced that Japan would be deeply concerned by any development in the war in Europe which affected the status quo of the Netherlands East Indies. Australia took comfort from a subsequent declaration (17 April) by the American Secretary of State that intervention in the domestic affairs of the NEI, or alteration in its status by other than peaceful means, would be prejudicial to the causes of stability, peace and security in the Pacific. Then, on 10 May, Germany invaded Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands. The Dutch army capitulated on 15 May, the Belgian on 27 May. Italy declared war on the Allies on 10 June, and one week later France sought an armistice. Thus, in two months, the war, and the world, were transformed. Germany controlled much of Western Europe. Britain was a beleaguered and inadequately defended fortress, vulnerable to invasion. The French and Dutch colonial possessions had lost their imperial protection. Where Australia had considered sending troops to help defend the western front, there was now no western front to defend. A convoy of 8000 Australians and 6800 New Zealanders en route for training in Palestine was diverted, at Britain’s suggestion, to England, but the request for an Australian division to go to Malaya at this time was refused, for lack of training and equipment.

Every day made it more likely that Japan would renew her expansion. In early August, Winston Churchill sent an explicit assurance, on the authority of the Cabinet, that if Japan set about invading Australia or New Zealand ‘on a large scale’, Britain would cut her losses in the Mediterranean and sacrifice every interest except the defence of Great Britain herself to come to their aid. Despite the Japanese threat, the key significance of Singapore, and an Australian official assessment that the US would not come into the war if Japan attacked Australia, the government now sent a second division to the Middle East, and began forming a third to go there.

Japan had long sought the formal exchange of diplomatic relations with Australia. In January 1940, after the decision to send a Minister to Washington, Cabinet began to consider a similar action with regard

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3 Ibid., p. 226.
to Japan. In retrospect it may seem extraordinary that both these appointments were delayed for so long, but Britain discouraged the move, and Australia was still emerging from the lazy comfort of the chrysalis, and was not to be hurried by events. On 19 June Japan demanded that Britain withdraw its Shanghai garrison, and close the Hong Kong and Burma frontiers with China. Australia supported Britain, reeling from Dunkirk, in yielding to these demands. The same day, the Australian War Cabinet decided to take steps to arrange a formal exchange of Ministers with Japan. The appointment as Minister of Sir John Latham, Chief Justice of Australia, was announced on 18 August, and he took up his post in late December. In the meantime, Japan had announced, in July, plans for a new order in 'Greater East Asia', had reached a frontier agreement with the Soviet Union in August, marched into Indo-China in September, and on the 27th of that month signed the Axis pact with Germany and Italy.

What would Australia do, Britain asked, and what should the Commonwealth do, if Japan attacked the Netherlands East Indies? The Australian government decided that it would almost inevitably have to go to war against Japan, but in view of British preoccupations and the uncertainty of American intentions, no unilateral advance commitment to the Dutch should be made. The idea of occupying French colonial territory to pre-empt Japan was considered and rejected as being provocative to Japan, but an official Australian representative was appointed to French New Caledonia, and after cautiously weighing the risks, the Australian government in early September 1940 sent a cruiser which facilitated the assumption of power there by supporters of the Free French movement.

At a joint conference at Singapore in late October 1940, defence staffs from Britain, Australia and New Zealand (with an observer from the United States) agreed that Singapore was central to the security of the Commonwealth countries in the Far East, that it was inadequately defended, and that further forces should be concentrated in Malaya. But the pre-war plans for Britain to reinforce Singapore were nullified by events in Europe. Australia then reluctantly decided to do what she had three times rejected—send ground forces to Singapore/Malaya—and a brigade group of the 8th Division was offered as a temporary measure prior

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10 A legation was opened in China in August 1941.

11 The Burma-China road was by this time the only external road link for supplies (almost wholly from the US) to reach Chiang Kai-shek's forces. Britain agreed to close it for three months during the rainy season. The US publicly disagreed.
to going on to the Middle East (with which the government was still preoccupied).\textsuperscript{12} Britain, stiffening the sinews, and after consulting the Dominions (which agreed) and the United States (which was sympathetic but non-committal) reopened the Burma road. The United States had placed virtually an embargo on the export of aviation fuel, iron and steel scrap to Japan. Australia joined Britain and the Dutch government-in-exile in pressing the US to take still stronger steps to deter Japan. With her war industries now expanding, Australia undertook to supply some munitions to New Zealand and to the NEI, and became part of an Eastern Group\textsuperscript{13} Supply Council in New Delhi, allocating priorities for supplies.

In the Middle East and South-east Asia, Australian forces came under the British commander-in-chief. As in World War I, Australia at times had difficulty in keeping Australian formations together under their own commanders, and not split up and parcelled out to British formations.

On 8 February 1941 President Roosevelt told the British Ambassador, Lord Halifax, that it was uncertain whether the United States would enter the war if Japan attacked only Dutch or British possessions; and that even if America were involved in war with Japan, she would fight a 'holding war' in the Pacific while sending forces and materials to the main theatre of operations, the north Atlantic and Britain. This meant that the US would not be prepared to send naval units to help defend Singapore and Malaya or even to reinforce the Philippines, but would hold them in reserve in the central Pacific (Hawaii). Soon after, to compound the problem, the American government, in consultation with Britain but with Australia and New Zealand informed only after the event, transferred part of its Pacific fleet to the Atlantic. If this appeared to bring a Pacific war so much nearer, the lend-lease program approved in March and the President's offer of 'aid until victory' were welcome reassurances. The Australian government, like the American, was still more troubled by the immediate conflict with Germany than by the potential conflict with Japan.

Casey was an excellent choice as Australia's first Minister to Washington. He was familiar with the Australian and British governments, both the systems and the people. His distinguished service in World War I was a valuable asset in wartime Washington. He was personable, wealthy, and had a flair for diplomatic activity and for public relations. So far as

\textsuperscript{12}A second brigade group and a divisional headquarters were despatched during 1941. They remained in the area and were taken prisoner after the fall of Singapore.

\textsuperscript{13}With representatives from Britain, India, South Africa, New Zealand and Australia.
anyone could do it, he put Australia on the map in America. Like S. M. Bruce, perhaps, he was more at home in foreign fields than in his own, and rendered service to the international community (throughout his career) far beyond what might be expected of a politician from a small antipodean state.

When Casey presented his credentials to President Roosevelt in early 1940, the President indicated that Australia was very low on the list of American priorities and could not expect US assistance if attacked. But Roosevelt, so far as he dared in an election year, was easing the United States towards involvement in the war, and by increasing restraints upon Japan was having—deliberately or not—similar effect on the Japanese government. In seeking to enlist American interest in Australia, Casey made use of his close relations with the British embassy. While this enabled him to 'pack more punch', it probably had the effect at this time of identifying Australia more as a British country—even a British dependency—than as an autonomous Pacific power. Casey himself was highly regarded in both Washington and London, and was used on occasions as a trusted, informal intermediary.

The second great turning point of the war came when Germany invaded the Soviet Union on 22 June 1941. The image of a benign, peace-loving Russia, entertained by a good many Australians on the left of politics, had been shattered by the events of August and September 1939—first the Soviet-German non-aggression pact, and then the carving up of Poland between them. Australia went to war against Germany because of its attack on Poland, but did not (because Britain did not) go to war against the Soviet Union, although the latter had shown her colours and was an ally (in a sense) of the enemy. Soviet bases were set up in the Baltic states, and Soviet forces invaded Finland, which led to the Soviet Union's being expelled from the League of Nations. In Australia, communists with open affiliations to the Soviet Union opposed the war effort and advocated a 'people's peace', and the party was officially banned on 15 June 1941.

When, six days later, Germany attacked her ally, Churchill immediately declared the support of the Empire and Commonwealth for the Soviet Union. Australia, like the other Dominions, was not consulted, due to lack

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16 Alan Watt, *The Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy 1938–1965*, p. 34.
of time, but was informed, and both the government and the opposition agreed with the action. Australian communists now reversed their policies and supported the war effort, although without giving any comfort to either the government or the Labor Party. Soviet resistance to the German military machine evoked admiration and sympathy from Australians of all persuasions. Australian communists were given more latitude, although the party ban was not lifted until December 1942. One effect of this widening of the conflict was that Australia, following Britain’s lead, declared war on Finland, Hungary and Romania.

The Soviet government had every reason to fear a war on two fronts, despite a neutrality pact signed with Japan in April 1941. In October, it asked Britain and the United States to warn Japan not to attack the Soviet Union. When consulted on this, the Australian government favoured Britain’s saying to Japan that any such attack would be forcibly resisted by the British Commonwealth, irrespective of the attitude of the United States. No one seems to have calculated how such resistance would be effected. Australia also suggested that the Soviet Union be invited to give a reciprocal guarantee.

The third—and decisive—major event in the war was the Japanese attack on the United States. Australian policies throughout 1941 had been to support British and American economic measures against Japan, to encourage Britain to act pari passu with the United States in economic matters and also to get her to reinforce the Far Eastern garrisons. Menzies would have liked from the US an implicit guarantee of armed support if the economic sanctions failed, a public warning to Japan. This was not forthcoming. Private negotiations between Japan and the US drifted on until just before the attack on Pearl Harbour on 7 December. Casey in Washington and Latham in Tokyo made strong but ineffective appeals to Japanese representatives. Churchill had already publicly promised to stand by the United States ‘within the hour’ if she were attacked by Japan. Roosevelt, partly from constitutional proprieties, felt unable to give a reciprocal assurance, but the Atlantic Charter of mid-August proclaimed the common purposes, and the attacks on Pearl Harbour and Hong Kong resolved the legal niceties.

By this time Australia had a Labor Party government under John

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17 The Soviet Union denounced this pact in June 1945 as a prelude to getting some of the spoils of the American and British defeat of Japan.

18 Britain joined the United States in freezing Japanese assets on 27 July. Australia denounced her commercial treaty with Japan on 6 August, and imposed export and import controls.
Curtin, with Dr H. V. Evatt as Minister for External Affairs. Curtin was no less committed to the war than his predecessors, but he had consistently given greater weight to the threat of Japan and less to the importance of the Middle East.  

Even before Pearl Harbour, the United States had been taking a greater interest in the Pacific area. It increased the flow of supplies to China. In October, it proposed that an air route be established from Hawaii to Manila via Australia, including bases suitable for heavy bombers at Rabaul, Port Moresby, Townsville and Darwin, and offered equipment under the Lend-Lease program. Australia accepted with alacrity, but nothing practical had eventuated before Japan went to war.  

The rapid successes of the Japanese forces in Hong Kong, Thailand, Malaya, the Philippines, Borneo and the American Pacific islands, and not least the sinking on 10 December of the British battleship *Prince of Wales* and the battle cruiser *Repulse*, alarmed the Australian government and people to an extent unprecedented in the country’s history.  

After Pearl Harbour, the British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, went to Moscow to discuss Soviet proposals for military assistance, political collaboration during and after the war, and a secret protocol on post-war frontiers. The Dominions were consulted in advance. So great were Australian fears, and so exaggerated the Labor government’s sense of Soviet power (which was surprising in view of Soviet defeats and retreats early in the war), that Cabinet cabled the Dominions Office on 22 December advocating the most far-reaching concessions:

> The attitude we are inclined to recommend is to accede to Stalin’s wishes as far as possible, providing he undertakes to commence war against Japan in the near future.... We think there is very urgent need for specific understandings with Russia regarding military, naval and air cooperation. We are not concerned to block Stalin’s wish ultimately to gain territory at the expense of Germany and Japan so long as we can overthrow those powers. In any event in view of the realisation of our unpreparedness for the Far East campaign against Japan, Russia’s assistance may become one of crucial importance. We believe we should bargain frankly for   

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19 The Labor government did not accept the Menzies precedent for an ‘automatic’ declaration of war on Japan following the British declaration, with a formal notification in the Commonwealth *Gazette*. Cabinet, and the Executive Council, met, and the Prime Minister then instructed the Australian High Commissioner in London to place their advice before the King. The King accepted the advice, and only then was the declaration gazetted. The formal approval of parliament was subsequently obtained. See Hasluck, *The Government and the People 1942–1945*, pp. 4–12.
immediate Russian support against Japan. In particular, it should be possible (subject to the United States Government being informed) to convey to Stalin that at the peace settlement Russian frontier claims in the west will receive general support of British countries. As we see it, these frontier claims are no more than we had to recognise de facto in 1939 and 1940, and are of such a nature as would at once be conceded by Hitler without compunction to secure the status quo ante the outbreak of German-Soviet hostilities. We note in this respect that in all the dealings with the Czechoslovakian and Polish Governments, the United Kingdom Government has carefully refrained from giving any guarantees of restoration of complete territorial integrity, and we feel that Finland, Rumania and others are not deserving of any special sympathy. We consider further that such an intimation would be more likely to be acceptable to Stalin if it were accompanied by a similar reference to Russian strategical and territorial requirements in the Far East (i.e. Northern Korea, Southern Sakhalien and possibly the neutralisation of Manchuria) and also to the long-standing Russian objective of an outlet to the Indian Ocean by way of Iran. The present exchanges with Stalin should be conducted on the broadest possible lines. Otherwise it appears only too likely that, by delaying too much as to the question of Russia’s European frontiers, the opportunity for Anglo-Russian understanding and cooperation in the wider theatres of war may be lost. We press these views most strongly.20

Fortunately, Britain did not adopt these ideas. Churchill, in a telegram to Curtin, said the British government could not possibly make a bargain with Stalin involving the forcible transferring of large populations against their will into communist spheres. (Later in the war, he was to become less diffident about contravening in this way Articles 2 and 3 of the Atlantic Charter.) Some weeks later, when Britain consulted the Dominions about proposed discussions between the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States, Curtin favoured not waiting for Roosevelt’s reply but assuring Stalin at once of British readiness to give general support to his frontier adjustments ‘subject to the consent of the peoples concerned being obtained in a way which is deemed proper, having regard to the Atlantic Charter’.21 This was an uncharacteristic piece of doubletalk from Curtin, and could only mean that the allies should give Stalin the territory he wanted, to induce him to enter the war against Japan, and trust him to arrange the forms later. But with Russia fighting for her life in the west, Stalin had no desire whatever for a simultaneous war on her eastern front; and far from wanting to aid in the Pacific her new allies, was desperately taking from them in Europe every bit of help they could give. Australia

20 Ibid., pp. 41–2.
21 Ibid., p. 43.
even provided some medical equipment, and the government gave permission to raise funds for Russian relief. The Anglo-Soviet treaty of May 1942 was warmly endorsed by the Australian government. An element of the Royal Australian Air Force was stationed briefly at Murmansk to assist with air cover of convoys.\textsuperscript{22}

The Australian Labor leaders had an idea that, as representatives of a working class movement, they would be able to deal with greater mutual sympathy with the Russians than a British conservative or coalition government. In December 1941 they sounded out Britain about sending a small Australian delegation to the Soviet Union, but Britain suggested deferring the matter as the Russians were rather preoccupied. It was not until early 1943, after the ban on the Australian Communist Party had been lifted, that the first Australian Minister was sent to the Soviet Union, the Russians reciprocating two months later. The legation was established first at Kuibyshev, under difficult wartime conditions, moving to Moscow later in the year.\textsuperscript{23}

The rapid and seemingly unstoppable Japanese advance southwards towards Australia realised the accumulated apprehensions of two generations of Australians. They were now engaged in a war not simply in defence of the Empire and Commonwealth but for their own survival as a people and a nation, a war against a powerful, populous, determined, and largely unknown Asian state. In the first onrush of fear, the government felt it was receiving less understanding, sympathy and support than it deserved from Britain and the United States, and that it had been consistently misled about British strength in the Far East. The unpreparedness of Singapore became drastically apparent, and the government told Roosevelt and Churchill, meeting in Washington in late December, that Singapore’s reinforcement was essential to avoid the loss of the Netherlands East Indies and the isolation of Australia. But there was little that either great power felt able to do.

Australia also wanted a greater say in the direction of the war. From the outset, the British government had instituted processes for daily communication to Dominion prime ministers of secret military information. The Secretary of State for the Dominions, a member during most of the war of the British Cabinet, or the Deputy Prime Minister, Mr

\textsuperscript{22}John Herrington, \textit{Air War Against Germany and Italy 1939–1943}, p. 295.

\textsuperscript{23}Sir Alan Watt was Australia’s third Minister and first Ambassador to the USSR (1947–50). In his memoirs \textit{Australian Diplomat} (pp. 91–159), he tells of the problems encountered by the early representatives, including the first Minister, a lawyer with Labor Party and trade union sympathies, who remained only three months.
Attlee, had daily briefings with the Dominion High Commissioners in London, and through such offices the Dominion views were quickly transmitted to the British government. Australia did not always feel, even so, that there was adequate information given, or proper consultation. Suggestions made in London for reviving the Imperial War Cabinet system were not acceptable to the British, Canadian or South African governments, although Australia and New Zealand would have welcomed it. Menzies spent several months in London in 1941, which must have helped him understand the problems of the war and contribute to important decisions, even if it did not help him remain Prime Minister of Australia.

In mid-September 1941, Sir Earle Page, Minister for Commerce and former leader of the Australian Country Party, was sent to London 'to discuss with the United Kingdom Government vital war matters of common interest', but 'not...to become a member of the Imperial War Cabinet' (which did not exist). Page’s position was confirmed by Curtin, who took over as Prime Minister a fortnight later.

For a few months Page had the status of Special Representative of the Australian government, with access to the British War Cabinet. After Page returned to Australia, Bruce (High Commissioner) became Australia's accredited representative to the War Cabinet. No other Dominion was given this favour, and indeed Bruce had to press repeatedly in order to continue receiving invitations to War Cabinet meetings. In May 1944, Churchill agreed to have a monthly meeting with the High Commissioners in London, and this was thought to obviate the need for Bruce to attend War Cabinet. The Australian attitude throughout had been that whereas neither Canada nor South Africa was directly threatened in the war, Australia was vulnerable to invasion and occupation, and the British government needed to be reminded of the dangers as they developed. For his part, Churchill felt that Australian leaders exaggerated those dangers and so confused the strategic priorities. He also never quite forgave them for putting Australia first, for wanting to talk as well as listen, and for indicating, undiplomatically and unfilially, that America was more capable

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25 Bruce’s experiences with Churchill and the War Cabinet are recounted in Cecil Edwards, Bruce of Melbourne. Man of Two Worlds, also in Alfred Stirling, Lord Bruce: The London Years, and in I. M. Cumpston, Lord Bruce of Melbourne. Churchill’s briefings proved to be much less frequent than promised.
than Britain of saving Australia from Japanese conquest. Perhaps in some absence of mind, Curtin used the unusual diplomatic medium of an end-of-year message to Australians through a Melbourne newspaper, and the least tactful of times—while Churchill was in Washington—to make the least tactful of claims:

We look for a solid and impregnable barrier of the democracies against the three Axis Powers and we refuse to accept the dictum that the Pacific struggle must be treated as a subordinate segment of the general conflict.... The Australian Government therefore regards the Pacific struggle as primarily one in which the United States and Australia must have the fullest say in the direction of the democracies' fighting plan. Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom. We know the problems that the United Kingdom faces.... But we know too that Australia can go, and Britain can still hold on. We are therefore determined that Australia shall not go, and we shall exert all our energies toward the shaping of a plan, with the United States as its keystone, which will give to our country some confidence of being able to hold out until the tide of battle swings against the enemy.26

This statement had an adverse effect on both Roosevelt and Churchill. Roosevelt told Casey that it did not ingratiate Australia with the United States. Quite the reverse: it smacked of panic and disloyalty.27 Churchill was rather more aggravated, although a little more polite.28

Despite her membership of the short-lived Singapore War Council, representation on an advisory Pacific War Council in London and later on a similar body in Washington, Australia was able to influence the major decisions of the war relatively little. Because of Churchill's personality and capacity, twenty years of constitutional progress within the Empire and Commonwealth had brought not an improvement over the consultative and

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26 *Melbourne Herald*, 27 December 1941. Lloyd Ross, in *John Curtin. A Biography*, p. 247, points out that the article was written at the request of the *Herald* and was intended as an appeal not to the US but to the Australian people. The article was drafted by Curtin's press secretary, D. K. Rodgers.

27 As recounted by Maie Casey, *Tides and Eddies*, p. 83.

28 The exchange of letters between Curtin and Churchill is given in the latter's war memoirs. Churchill wrote (p. 8): 'This produced the worst impression both in high American circles and in Canada.' Winston S. Churchill, *The Second World War*, vol. IV, *The Hinge of Fate*, pp. 8–17. To Attlee, Deputy and Acting Prime Minister in London, Churchill cabled: 'I hope there will be no pandering to this, while at the same time we do all in our power to come to their aid.' Ibid., p. 8. King George VI was alarmed at the Australian feelings. John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *King George VI. His Life and Reign*, p. 681.
executive machinery evolved during World War I, but a retreat from it. The arrangements worked out between Churchill and Roosevelt in effect made the two leaders a joint war cabinet, and set up a Combined (UK-US) Chiefs of Staff to direct the Allied conduct of the war outside Russia. An Allied Supreme Commander for the South West Pacific—General Wavell—was appointed, but Australia was not consulted. Nor was she informed until May 1942 that the two leaders had agreed on a 'beat Hitler first' strategy. To add salt to Curtin’s wounds, Churchill offered Casey a place in the British War Cabinet, and appointed him Minister of State Resident in the Middle East, in spite of Curtin’s public protests.

In August 1943, during an election campaign, Curtin proposed more formal machinery for Commonwealth consultation—'if not an executive body, at least a standing consultative body'. Later he spoke of an 'Imperial Council' of a deliberative but not legislative or executive nature, preferably with a permanent secretariat. He received little support from other Dominion governments, but undeterred he raised it again at the meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London in May 1944, with equal lack of success. The other Dominions felt it was a step against the tide of Dominion independence, a concern with machinery as a creator of policy rather than with policy that evolves its own machinery, an attempt to prolong into peacetime a form of cooperation rendered necessary only by the aberration of war, and to seal off the Commonwealth from the regions and wider world to which each member belonged and for which the proposed United Nations organisation was an ideal.

Yet this oversimplified and misrepresented what Curtin had said, even with his ambiguities. He felt—perhaps excessively—the growing position of the Dominions both vis-à-vis the United Kingdom and as nations in international society. He wanted policies to be coordinated, but responsibility to be regionalised. He felt that the kind of consultation and cooperation that had been achieved in war ought to continue to be used for the less dangerous but equally important problems of peace. His Commonwealth contemporaries thought him behind the times; in fact, he was in some ways ahead of them. The 1944 conference was the first of a new breed of conference. Repeatedly over the succeeding 50 and more years Commonwealth heads of government, or other appropriate ministers, have met to consider the major issues of the day both within the Commonwealth and

After the fall of Singapore, John Curtin's government brought our troops back from the Middle East to defend Australia. Britain and the United States opposed the Australian government's decision.—Daily Telegraph, 1941.

the wider world, and have tried to harmonise policies where possible. A Commonwealth Secretariat was established in 1965.

The fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942 (when some 17,000 Australian servicemen went into captivity) and the continuing thrusts of Japan almost removed Britain from the war in the Pacific (although a major and eventually successful campaign was to be fought against the Japanese in Burma) and required new command arrangements. In March 1942, General Douglas MacArthur, ousted by the Japanese from the Philippines, was appointed Supreme Commander in the South West Pacific Area, including all Australian forces there.30 Australia was consulted and concurred enthusiastically. MacArthur, an American general of long experience, fine presence, complete self-confidence, and keenly aware of the value of good public relations, was accorded by the Australian government something of the deference of a saviour and hero, both because of the leader he appeared to be and the nation he represented. Churchill's assurance at this time, that if Australia were invaded in force Britain would do her utmost at

30Most of the ships of the Royal Australian Navy returned to the Pacific and Indian Oceans after the outbreak of the war with Japan. MacArthur's presence in Australia however, did not improve Australia's opportunities to share in the direction of the war.
the expense if necessary of India and the Middle East, was not unwelcome, but the American presence obviated the need to grasp at such an offer.

In early January 1942 the British government had suggested and Australia quickly agreed that two of the three Australian divisions in the Middle East (6th and 7th) should be sent to the Netherlands East Indies. When it was plain that they would arrive too late to help Singapore, Wavell decided that one division would go to south Sumatra and one to central Java. As the situation in Singapore deteriorated, and while the divisions were on the water, there was widespread Allied uncertainty as to whether the East Indies could themselves be defended. On 15 February Curtin raised with Churchill the possible return of the two divisions to Australia, to strengthen what now must become the main Allied base against Japan. Two days later he cabled a formal request to this effect, and for the return of the 9th Division at a later date. This request crossed a communication from Churchill to Curtin proposing that the divisions be sent to the defence of Burma, where British forces were retreating before the Japanese attack. Churchill even ordered the diversion of the leading Australian convoy, containing one brigade, to Rangoon, assuming a favourable response from Curtin, and asserted that this was the only force that could prevent the loss of the city. The Australian War Cabinet disagreed, and the Australian divisions after an interval in Ceylon returned to Australia to be used in the defence of New Guinea and Papua. Rangoon fell on 8 March, by which time Japan had completed the conquest of the Netherlands East Indies, launched a devastating air raid on Darwin, bombed Broome and Wyndham in north-western Australia, invaded Portuguese Timor and New Britain (in the Australian mandated territory of New Guinea) and landed on the New Guinea mainland and in the Solomon Islands.

The exchange between Churchill and Curtin greatly disappointed the one and angered the other. It soured the relationship between the two countries. By any objective analysis, it is very difficult to see how one or even two brigades of the 7th Division landed without their proper equipment in Rangoon at the end of February could have perceptibly changed events. The mission was distressingly reminiscent of the one to Crete the previous year, taken for political reasons and incapable of succeeding. Churchill hoped—perhaps believed—this one would succeed, and in any case desperately wanted the imperial gesture. Curtin was not interested in gestures that might cost so dearly, and saw his duty in doing everything possible to defend Australia against a powerful enemy now hammering at the very gates.
From this time until August 1945 Australia devoted almost all her attention and energies to the war against Japan. She became the base of the Allied forces in the South West Pacific. The Australian Commander-in-Chief, General Blamey, was made commander of Allied land forces, but as the American strength in the area built up, this office was more honorific than real. MacArthur would not agree to the Australian divisions operating as a single corps under their own commander. He did not want them for the attack on the Philippines and he refused Roosevelt's request to appoint senior Australian officers to his staff. He had little appreciation of the leadership or fighting qualities of the Australian forces, many of them seasoned by three years of combat, and an incomplete understanding of the campaign in Papua and New Guinea.

The Australian government and people feared one thing above all—a Japanese invasion of the continent. We now know that this was mooted but never actually planned by Tokyo, although had Port Moresby been captured it would have been a logical next step. The turning point in the Pacific war came with two naval battles, whose success was made possible by the fact that American intelligence had broken the Japanese code before the war. The first, in the Coral Sea between Queensland and Papua in early May 1942, was indecisive as a naval engagement, but American fleet units (with two Australian cruisers) turned back a Japanese expeditionary force of eleven transports, three aircraft carriers, six cruisers and six destroyers on its way to capture Port Moresby. Had it arrived, it could only have succeeded. The second naval battle, again with the aid of American foreknowledge, was fought in early June between Japanese and American carriers. The Japanese carriers were part of the protection of a force aimed at occupying the American island base at Midway. The engagement was a decisive defeat for Japan. She lost the best part of her carrier fleet, could not hope again to match American naval capacity, and was forced to launch an overland attack on Port Moresby, and to postpone (in effect to cancel) a plan to take New Caledonia, Fiji and Samoa.

By these two battles, the American navy ensured that Australia could not be invaded. This of course was not fully realised at the time, and the war went on for more than three further years. In Papua and New Guinea, Australia inflicted on Japan her first ground defeat of the war, and by early

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3 Many Australian airmen remained in Europe. At the end of the war with Germany there were still some 16,000 of them, of whom 12,300 were aircrew. Gavin Long, *The Six Years War*, p. 393.
1943, with significant American assistance, repulsed the Japanese at Buna, Gona and Sanananda and effectively secured Papua. Japanese submarines shelled Sydney and Newcastle, and sank and damaged coastal shipping. Darwin was repeatedly bombed. An Australian commando force on Timor eventually had to be evacuated. Australians fought in New Guinea, the Solomons, and Borneo, with determination and skill, but with only a minor effect on the outcome of the war. MacArthur was reluctant to have them used in the recapture of the Philippines. Australian naval and air forces made a contribution to the massive island-hopping campaign worked out in Washington which took the war back to within reach of the Japanese mainland before the atomic bomb was dropped on Hiroshima. (Units of the British fleet, transferred from the Atlantic as the German war came towards a close, made a significant contribution to the closing stages of the Pacific war.)

In February 1942 Curtin had sought the return of the 9th Division from the Middle East, but Field Marshal Rommel's advance in the middle of the year to within seventy miles of Alexandria caused the division to be retained. It took part in the defence of the El Alamein area, and then in the offensive beginning in October which was to lead to the defeat of all German and Italian forces in North Africa. Six days after the Alamein break-out, Curtin told Churchill it was vital to have the 9th Division back in Australia, and in good shape. Churchill resisted and Roosevelt supported him, offering an American division instead. MacArthur advised Curtin to keep pressing for the 9th. After further exchanges between the three heads of government, the division was returned to Australia in February 1943, retrained in tropical warfare, and put into the September offensive in New Guinea.

New Zealand also had sought the return of its division (2nd Division) from the Middle East, with the added argument of the Australian precedent. Churchill argued, on the other hand, that the withdrawal of the Australian 9th Division made it all the more necessary that the New Zealand division be retained in North Africa, for new tasks in the Mediterranean perimeter. Curtin pressed the New Zealand Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, to get the division back, in order to present a united Australian-New Zealand front against Japan. Churchill pressed Fraser to leave it to enter Europe as part of the British, American and Allied armies,

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as conquerors, but also as deliverers'. He spoke of 'the sentiments which unite our Commonwealth of Nations', the 'symbolic and historic value of our continued comradeship in arms'. Fraser weakened. Curtin put all the military arguments. Roosevelt backed up Churchill. So did men in the 2nd Division, who said they would rather fight where they were than in the jungles of South-east Asia. In late May 1943 Fraser and the New Zealand parliament acceded to the British request, and the New Zealand Division fought the rest of the war in Sicily and Italy. Curtin wrote a bitter, ungenerous letter to Fraser, in which he said: 'For every soldier New Zealand keeps away from the Pacific theatre either an Australian or an American has to fill his place.' This reflected Curtin's preoccupation with the Japanese war, and his resentment at Britain's (i.e. Churchill's) dominance in Commonwealth war policies. It ignored the fact that Australia herself had the manpower equivalent of a division serving overseas—with the Royal Air Force.

It was not unreasonable that Australia should be primarily concerned with the war on her doorstep, nor that with several divisions and her naval and air forces committed she should seek a voice in the direction of the war effort against Japan. But she was paying the penalty for twenty years of neglect of international relations, twenty years of substantial acquiescence in British foreign policy decisions. Neither the British nor the American government was able or willing to adapt to the speed with which a local war and a Labor administration had thrust Australia into international society, where it wanted a seat and a say. Evatt, a restless, bustling, intellectual Minister, had pushed at the doors of power in Washington and London only to find himself left in the vestibules of the advisory councils. This did not satisfy him or his prime minister. They wanted, and with reason felt they were going to be denied, a voice in shaping the post-war world. 'Australia has done her fair share in putting out the fire that was kindled in Europe', Evatt said in parliament on 14 October 1943. And in her own region, surely, Australia should have special responsibilities. He spoke of a proposal to call a conference between governments interested in the South-west and South Pacific to consider defence, post-war development,

On 1 June 1943. Kay, Australian-New Zealand Agreement, pp. 36-7. New Zealand already had a force of more than two brigades in New Caledonia, garrisons in Fiji, Tonga and Norfolk Island, and seven air force squadrons deployed in the area, a total of some 26,000 men. But she was not engaged in the appalling disease-ridden jungle slogging her troops so understandably preferred to avoid.
native welfare, economics, trade, air routes and communications. He discussed the proposal with the New Zealand High Commissioner in Canberra, Carl Berendsen, who reported to his Prime Minister that Evatt was 'inclined to suggest that it would be wise for Great Britain to transfer all British colonies in these areas to Australia and New Zealand, Australia gradually to take [the] Solomons area and NZ to take Fiji etc. Following Evatt's proposal, Churchill suggested a meeting of Commonwealth Prime Ministers in London in early December 1943. (It eventually took place in the following May.) But in early December another conference took place—between Churchill, Roosevelt and Chiang Kai-shek, in Cairo— which settled the terms for peace with Japan. Australia, not represented nor consulted, again felt her nose put out of joint.

Evatt had proposed preliminary discussions with New Zealand before the wider Commonwealth conference, and these were eventually arranged for Canberra in mid-January 1944, with the two Prime Ministers leading their respective delegations. Agenda and position papers were exchanged. Some time after the conference had begun, the New Zealanders discovered that Curtin and Evatt wanted the conference to be concluded by a formal agreement. Fraser objected, but eventually was prepared to sign 'an Agreement setting out the objectives of the Dominion [New Zealand] and the Commonwealth [Australia] on questions on which we had a single mind and recording the means which we proposed to adopt for future collaboration and cooperation'.

The Agreement, known in Australia as the ANZAC Pact and in New Zealand as the Canberra Pact, reflects the greater claims and deeper resentments of the Australian government. It declared the two governments' 'vital interests in all preparations for any armistice ending the present hostilities or any part thereof', their right to participate in such preparations, their right to be associated with the planning of a 'general international organization' for the maintenance of international peace and security. They agreed that within the framework of a general system of world security, a regional zone of defence should be established, consisting

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34 *HRD*, vol. 176, pp. 570, 572-5.  
36 At the Canberra conference in January 1944, Fraser did not object to Australia's claim on British colonies, but said New Zealand wanted Britain to remain in the South Pacific, and 'would not dream of seeking a change of British rule in Fiji', ibid., p. 122  
of the South-west and South Pacific areas, based on Australia and New Zealand, and involving the United Kingdom, the United States, France, Portugal and the Netherlands. Pending the inauguration of the general security system, 'it would be proper for Australia and New Zealand to assume full responsibility for policing or sharing in policing such areas in the South-West and South Pacific as may from time to time be agreed upon'. It was not clear, and did not subsequently become clear, what was involved in a 'regional zone of defence', or what the term 'policing' implied. There was a section dealing with civil aviation, and another with a permanent secretariat. A reference to the proposed conference of powers involved in the south-west Pacific turned out to be the only section that bore fruit. Although it was considered premature by Washington and deferred until after the war, it led eventually to the establishment of the South Pacific Commission (see Chapter 14). Neither Washington nor London was impressed by the Canberra Agreement, whose reasonable articles were tainted by the pretentiousness of others. On security matters,
the Agreement demonstrated the desire by Australia that if it had to fight
the present war again at some time in the future, it should be more
efficiently screened from attack by the people who had failed it in the past,
stiffened by the United States.

For more than a century, Australia had been a major supplier of food
and fibre to the United Kingdom, and during both world wars this had
been a vital function. During World War II, Australian domestic resources
were increasingly stretched as American forces in large numbers came to be
based in or on the continent, with Australia providing not only the facilities
but also much of the food and other supplies. Such were the demands on
domestic manpower that eventually many thousands of men had to be
released from the armed forces to cope with production.

During 1944, the Australian government began to think about the
post-war situation at home and internationally. Late in the year, parliament
adopted legislation for Australia to become a member of the Food and
Agriculture Organization and of the United Nations Relief and Rehabili-
tation Administration. In October the Dumbarton Oaks draft of the charter
for an international organisation was published. Australian and New
Zealand ministers and officials conferred in Wellington in November, and
set out their agreed attitudes, one of which, to use S. M. Bruce’s phrase,
‘set the cat among the pigeons’ in London:

Powers responsible for dependent territories should accept the principle of trustee-
ship, already applicable in the case of mandated territories. In such dependent
territories the purpose of the trust is the welfare and advancement of the native
peoples. Colonial Powers should undertake to make regular reports to an
international body analogous to the Permanent Mandates Commission set up within
the framework of the General Organisation. This body should be empowered to
publish reports of its deliberations and to inspect dependent territories.

This confused the Dominions Office in London, which was opposed to
the mandates system and to the idea of reporting to a partisan body, and
had heard Curtin in London in May agree with them and accept the idea of
regional colonial commissions.

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*Cited by Hasluck, *ibid.*, p. 496.

*Hasluck, *ibid.* pp. 496–8 explains the complex reasons behind this shift in Australian policy, which had been promoted by officials when Evatt was indisposed but which he later warmly took up.*
The form and charter of the new international organisation was determined at the United Nations Conference held at San Francisco from 25 April to 26 June 1945. A great deal of advance thinking had been done by Australia, in collaboration with New Zealand, and its delegation was well prepared. At a preliminary British Commonwealth conference in London, Evatt indicated that at San Francisco Australia would press her ideas on trusteeship for colonial territories, and on economic and social justice, and would oppose the Great Powers over the voting advantages they had decided, at the Yalta conference in February, to give themselves. He thus demonstrated, then and later at San Francisco, in a way Hughes had never done at Versailles, that the British Dominions were not political dependencies or adjuncts of the United Kingdom. The Dominions went to San Francisco in their own right and as separate states, but they gave a rough precedent for the Soviet Union to obtain two extra votes for the allegedly separate 'states' of the Ukraine and Byelo-Russia.

The three Great Powers—the United States, the United Kingdom and the Soviet Union—had one predominant consideration in mind in promoting the organisation that came to be known by the title of the anti-Axis alliance, the United Nations: to prevent a recurrence of the holocaust they had just experienced, 'to save succeeding generations from the scourge of war', to create a workable security system. All other considerations had to subserve this objective and the means to achieve it, especially the full involvement and agreement of the USSR. Britain and the United States thus ranged themselves together at times against their more accustomed partners and allies. It was this situation that gave Evatt his opportunity. With fierce resolve, formidable intellectual effort, an unquenchable desire for publicity, and (let it not be forgotten) the help of his delegation, he led many of the smaller and middle powers in a bid to influence the world system to which they were expected to adhere. Neither he nor Australia carried the day on their own, nor led the field all the time, nor achieved all the successes Evatt later claimed. Among the Commonwealth countries Canada and New Zealand took important initiatives and gave valuable support. But Australia was elected to the Executive Committee of fourteen and hence to the Coordination Committee which prepared the final draft of the charter.

41 More correctly, one of its delegations, as there was a division between the appointed leader, F.M. Forde (Deputy Prime Minister) and the de facto leader, Dr Evatt. Curtin presumably hoped that Forde's status would act as a restraint on Evatt, but this was not the case; it was merely an irritant, and a source of bewilderment or amusement to outsiders. See Paul Hasluck, 'Australia and the formation of the United Nations', Royal Australian Historical Society, Journal and Proceedings, vol. 40, part III, 1954, pp. 133-78.
Evatt made Australia a prominent and constructive member of the conference and his ideas are reflected in sections of the Charter. He pressed unsuccessfully to have the power of veto removed from the Permanent Members of the Security Council: they would not sign a Charter which did not recognise this right, this need of unanimity. But Evatt and others, with American support, got the Permanent Members to agree that the veto power would not apply to prevent an item being placed on the agenda of the Security Council, or discussed there. He managed to get an amendment to the draft of Article 2(7) on domestic jurisdiction, so that the United Nations would not be authorised to intervene by force in a dispute over a matter essentially within the jurisdiction of a state (such as Australia's
immigration policy). Together with New Zealand, he succeeded in getting the Great Powers to accept provisions which required of colonial powers a greater degree of accountability to the world body than some might have wished. With other smaller powers, Australia helped to have the status of the Economic and Social Council elevated to that of one of the principal organs of the United Nations. Australia, euphoric at its wartime employment achievements and post-war plans, wanted the UN to guarantee full employment, but had to be content with an article which said it would 'promote' higher standards of living and full employment. One further achievement for which Evatt could fairly claim credit was the enlargement of the powers of the General Assembly so that it could make recommendations on any matter within the scope of the Charter.\(^4\)\(^2\)

As the end of the war approached, Australia agreed to be part of a British Commonwealth force in the Allied invasion of Japan, but this never came about. The many Australian protests had their effect on British attitudes to the settlements. With the other Dominions, Australia was given the opportunity to comment on proposed peace treaties with Italy and with Hungary, and on the terms for the surrender and occupation of Germany. With Canada, Australia objected (unsuccessfully) to the surrender instruments being signed only by the three chief belligerents on behalf of the others.

For several months before August 1945 the Japanese government had been taking soundings about the possibility of peace. On 21 July, during the conference of the three Great Powers at Potsdam, Japan formally asked the Soviet Union to use its good offices to bring the war to an end. The United States then drafted a declaration, which was approved by Britain and China, and broadcast on 26 July. It reiterated the surrender terms given in the Cairo declaration, spoke of an Allied occupation of key points

in Japan, stern justice to all war criminals, democratic government, reparations, and the elimination for all time of ‘the authority and influence of those who have deceived and misled the people of Japan into embarking on world conquest’. Japan refused the ultimatum. Evatt, not long back from San Francisco, again protested at Australia’s not being consulted, and complained that the terms were too lenient.

The United States dropped the first atomic bomb on 6 August on Hiroshima. Three days later, the Soviet Union declared war on Japan, and a second atomic bomb was dropped, this time on Nagasaki. The following day, Australia cabled London that it believed the Emperor of Japan should have no immunity from responsibility for Japanese war crimes and aggression. Japan now accepted the Potsdam terms, but sought to preserve the Emperor’s prerogatives as ‘sovereign ruler’. Messages between Canberra and London had no effect on the outcome. The surrender terms were completed in Washington without consulting the Allies. They retained the Emperor as an authority, but placed him under that of the Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (MacArthur).

Washington did not want the Dominions to sign the Japanese surrender instrument, but MacArthur was on their side, and General Blamey signed for Australia at the ceremony on the deck of the US battleship Missouri in Tokyo Bay on 2 September. Australian commanders took local surrenders at Morotai in the Halmaheras, in Dutch Borneo, and in British Borneo; at Rabaul, Torokina and Wewak in New Guinea; in Timor, and at Nauru and Ocean Islands. Australian forces were used for a time to maintain order in the Netherlands East Indies against local nationalists and on behalf of the Dutch.

During the war some 550,000 Australian servicemen and women, one in twelve of the population, served overseas. Australia lost 34,376 killed in the war. Of these, 8,031 died in inhumane conditions in Japanese prisoner-of-war camps. Hasluck writes:

> The graves of the Australian fallen were in Europe, the Middle East, in southern Asia and in New Guinea. Australians had served in Arctic seas bringing supplies to Russia through Archangel, in keeping the sea lanes free in the North Atlantic, in supplying beleaguered Malta. Australia had been a fighting ally.

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44 Ibid., p. 623.
Australia had entered the war as a result of a British decision. It had, at that time, only the nucleus of a foreign service, no overseas diplomatic representation other than the quasi-diplomatic activities of the Australian High Commission in London, and the Counsellor attached to the British Embassy in Washington. By the end of 1945, the Australian government had established formal diplomatic relations with the United States, China, Japan (withdrawn during the war), Canada, the Netherlands, the Soviet Union, New Zealand, India, Brazil and France. Political Representatives had been appointed to Indonesia and Thailand, and an Official Representative to Singapore. There was a consulate in New Caledonia, and a political adviser appointed to the Military Mission in Berlin. (A Political Observer was appointed to Japan in late 1945.)

Australian forces had fought under British command in many theatres and oceans, but Australia had also been an ally, in its own right, of the United States, the Netherlands, and New Zealand. It took a vigorous and plainly independent part in negotiating the Charter of the United Nations; expressed its independent views on the terms of surrender, and became an independent member of the new world organisation and its specialised agencies.

Throughout the war, Australia was closest to and had most influence upon the United Kingdom. Alone of the Dominion representatives in London, Bruce sat in the War Cabinet. In Washington, Australia never achieved anything more than the status of a significant but minor ally, one among many, and one who could best be dealt with, when major matters arose, as part of the group for which Great Britain was responsible. In Moscow, Australia was entirely without influence, a remote, antipodean British dependency.

Australia made a contribution to the war that was respectable by any standards, and even more significant relevant to her size. Her demands for a voice in the conduct of the war which so vitally affected her were usually reasonable in themselves, but at times were irritating or embarrassing to her two great partners. Australia protested rather too much, rather too loudly and aggrievedly.

Hughes at Versailles had entered the international scene as the champion of a small British country seeking special consideration for her immigration policy and for her acquisition of New Guinea. He shouted, and he was heard; but it was a brief appearance on a temporary stage, a flash in the international pan. When Evatt played his virtuoso role at San Francisco 26 years later, it was part of an ongoing performance. Australia was not there
to grab some of the spoils of war, but to help sort out the world and put it right and keep it that way. Three years later, Evatt was President of the General Assembly, on his own, and on his country’s merit.

One task that Australia performed unremittingly from 1942 onwards [wrote Hasluck] was keeping the Pacific under notice and bringing others to a truer understanding of the situation there. This was not only a service to Australia but also one to the Allied cause. It expressed, not regionalism, but a view, established when Australia first fought in Europe, that, in the modern world, war, peace and security are global.45

War is always unpredictable in the course it takes and in the changes it brings about. Under the strain of conflict Australia, united as never before, centralised its power as never before, and emerged into the world of nation states. But it was still British, still a member of the Commonwealth and Empire. John Curtin died shortly before the end of the war with Japan, but his prophecy for his country had been borne out, thanks to all the Allied efforts, and Australia’s own, but above all those of the United States: ‘We shall hold this country and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilisation will persist.’46

The United States came to the aid of Australia not because of Curtin’s appeal in late 1941, nor because of any strong sense of affinity with Australians, although that subsequently developed, but because Australia was the most suitable Pacific territory and country in which to build up the forces to defeat Japan.47 Had Japan conquered Australia and New Zealand, the Allies would have had an immensely more difficult task, even though the final outcome would undoubtedly have been the same. The United States thus did not really come to the aid of Australia; it came to use Australia, and in using her, kept her safe.

For the overwhelming majority of Australians, however British they might be by birth or kinship or outlook, the war demonstrated that in an ultimate situation only the United States could secure Australia against a major hostile power. This demonstration, this conviction, has determined the bases of Australia’s foreign and defence policies in all the succeeding years.

46 Ibid., p. 635.
47 See Dwight D. Eisenhower, Crusade in Europe, pp. 21–5 also Roger J. Bell, Unequal Allies. Australian-American Relations and the Pacific War, which by extensive documentation supports that argument.
PART 4

THE

CONSERVATIVE

ASCENDANCY

1945–1972
The impact of Asia and the ‘communist threat’

During World War II, more than 150 years after the first white settlements in New South Wales, nearby Asia for the first time took clear and continuing precedence over distant Europe in Australia’s focus of attention.

In any precise sense, there is no such thing as Asia. It is not even, as with Europe, a state of mind. Geographically, one can define the eastern boundaries well enough, but on the west it runs into Europe and Arabia, it fades out in the north in the Soviet Union, and in the south moves in the direction of Australia, stopping wherever the person who uses the term believes it stops. In the areas which are generally accepted as being in Asia, there is a score of sovereign states, some of them with far deeper differences or antagonisms within their boundaries or against one another than against any outside power. There are a hundred cultures, hundreds of languages, a dozen shades of skin pigmentation. There are great gulfs of communication, greater ones of understanding. Standards of living vary widely, with Japan, economically a ‘Western’ country, at one end and Bangladesh, inexpressibly impoverished, at the other.

For Australians in the 19th century, people from Asia were called Asiatics. They were Indians whom one saw on the Empire route to Europe, or Chinese who came to work the goldfields with excessive industry and a reproachably different culture, or Afghans who brought their camels for the long overland routes. Later, as we have seen, they were also Japanese demanding equal immigration rights with Europeans, convoying Australian ships in World War I, then in the 1930s providing simultaneously a developing major export market and a developing major threat, striking into continental Asia and southwards eventually to attack Australia. After World War II, Asiatics became Asians, and included Koreans needing to
be defended against other Koreans; Malays who visited Australia to learn its skills; Indonesians, a 100 million or so 'just up there', potential friends, potential enemies; Filipinos, English-speaking, Christian, embarrassing Australia by wanting to come and live there, bringing their brown skins with them; Japanese again, with broken sword but with a thrusting economic power and an almost unquenchable thirst for minerals; Vietnamese needing to be defended against other Vietnamese; and Communist Chinese, 700 million or more, industrious, apparently threatening, customers for Australia's wheat, candidates for her hates and fears.¹

These views of Asia are obviously highly subjective and greatly oversimplified, but no more subjective and simplified than contemporary beliefs that Asia was a unity, that it was 'emerging', that there was 'a revolution' there, or that politics in Asia were esoteric or politicians inherently motivated differently from those elsewhere; that Australia's relationship with Asia was an 'either/or' of growing goodwill or growing hostility; or that Australia with her affluence and open spaces had an obligation to solve the population, poverty or dependency problems of her 2000 million neighbours.

Until 1939 Australia remained for the most part at arm's length from Asia. The 'White Australia' policy ensured that Asians would not enter Australia in noticeable numbers. Australia was an outpost of the British Empire, a British country in the south seas, British in her people, her culture, her cuisine, her communications, her perception of the world, her confidence in her own intrinsic superiority. Asia was big, populous, close, worrisome, much of it locked behind imperial walls, little known and less understood, but it scarcely impinged on Australian life.

The war (World War II) changed all that—not totally, but in selective ways. Scores of thousands of Australians were directly involved in some part of the conflict in Asia, and the whole population was indirectly involved. Anti-Japanese propaganda reinforced the brutal reality of Japanese enmity and appeared to demonstrate how valid were the earlier fears of a 'yellow peril'; how uncivilised were the Asians who constituted that peril; how fiendishly capable they could be of overturning friendly European empires and setting up a hostile empire of their own. One legacy of the war shared by the overwhelming majority of Australians was this

¹J. V. D'Cruz, The Asian Image in Australia, discusses some of the situations up to 1941 in which Australians resented, patronised or feared Asians. See also, Werner Levi, Australia's Outlook on Asia.
realised fear of Japan, fear that what Japan had done once she might do again. It was ten or fifteen years before this fear significantly abated, and it has not completely disappeared.

Japan was not the whole of Asia, but it was Asian, and there was in some ways a transfer to 'Asia' of the apprehension and animosity felt towards Japan.

By 1945 China had a very different image, due to its long fight against the common enemy. President Chiang Kai-shek was reported to be a Christian. He stood high in the Allied councils. The failings of his regime were little known. The China that came after 1949 to replace Japan as the enemy most likely to succeed was different again, Asian certainly, communist regrettably, part of the great international conspiracy to conquer or subvert the world beginning (in China's case) with Tibet and South Korea, and extending by subversion throughout South-east Asia. Only in the late 1960s did this begin to change as a national image.

Any map of East and South-east Asia is dominated by the great and populous land mass of China in the north. Australian politicians of the left have at times laughed at their compatriots' fear that China might descend and swallow up Australia—as it were by force of gravity. Maps can indeed be misleading, can arouse erroneous fears, although to ignore the strategic implications of geography can be much more dangerous.

When Australians talked or thought of Asia during the war and early post-war period, it was essentially of China and Japan, and perhaps of South-east Asia. They talked also of the Pacific by which they usually meant the western Pacific, including China and Japan, Australia herself, and the strategic Pacific islands. The Pacific was where the Japanese thrust and threat had been, or could be again. The Pacific was where Australia must exercise power and influence as of right, and in order to prevent or pre-empt any new thrust or threat from Asia.

Australia is directly affected by events in Europe [said Dr Evatt in March 1946]. But 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. Our efforts have had considerable success but they cannot be lessened without danger to our future. Australia stands to Asia, geographically and politically, in something of the same relationship as the United Kingdom to Europe.2

1 Australia. House of Representatives Debates (HRD), vol. 186, p. 200, 13 March 1946.
Geographically? Perhaps to a degree, although Darwin is almost as far from the Malay peninsula as London is from Cairo. Politically? The comparison is even more tenuous. Australia may one day bring to the political and strategic pattern of forces in Asia a major capacity to balance, to contain, restrain or defend, but that time is a long way off. Australia’s gross national product may be equal to that of half a dozen of her neighbours put together, but Australia is not and never has been equal to them, is not a power to compare with Japan, China or India, wears a different face and is not one with them in the way that Britain, for all her insularity, has long been one with the countries of Western Europe.

Evatt was aware that changes were taking place in Asia as a result of the war, the humiliation of the European empires, the defeat of Japan, and the various expressions of nationalism. Like most of his contemporaries, he did not clearly appreciate the nature or implications of these changes, or the ambiguity of Australia’s position: in 1941–42 ignominiously defeated by an Asian power (in Singapore), in 1945–48 hesitantly supporting the nationalist independence movement in Indonesia while seeking the protection and cooperation of the imperialists of Europe. In February 1947 he told parliament:

Just so far as the peoples of South-east Asia cease to be dependent upon the decisions of European Governments, so far do Australia’s interests on the councils of South-east Asia increase. We must work for a harmonious association of democratic states in the South-east Asia area, and see in the development of their political maturity opportunity for increased political, cultural and commercial co-operation.

He proposed—to empty air—a regional instrumentality to ‘facilitate the free and rapid interchange of basic information concerning the problems of administration, education, health, agriculture, commerce and cultural relations’.

In January 1948, in a step more significant for its direction than for its size, the government offered three scholarships for students from South-east Asian countries. In May a mission went to the area ‘to arrange for the distribution of scholarships and relief supplies’. In 1949 the number of

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4 Headed by Professor W. Macmahon Ball, the mission went to Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Siam (Thailand), French Indo-China, China and the Philippines. *Current Notes on International Affairs (CNI A)*, vol. 19, no. 8, August 1948, p. 512.
The impact of Asia and the ‘communist threat’

 Scholarships was magnanimously increased to four. As Chifley made clear in a statement on regional security in May 1949, Australia was far more interested in protection from Asia than in being involved in the councils and problems of the region.

 Strategically, Australia has long been in the Asian area, certainly since Japan began casting about for raw materials and markets for its growing industries and open spaces for its growing population nearly 70 years ago. After World War II, the bursting energies of the Japanese came to be considered, rightly or wrongly, as less menacing to Australian interests. But from 1948–49 onwards, there was a new enemy at or outside the gates. Communism as an ideology ran counter to the democratic practices and capitalist instincts of many Australians. Backed by Soviet armed strength, it had taken over Eastern Europe. Closer to home the massive potential of the Chinese People’s Republic, the nationalist and communist revolutions in South-east Asia (suggesting a world-wide international conspiracy), and the adjacent adventures of Indonesia meant that ‘Asia’ dominated Australian strategic thinking while Europe receded. Because of this, and the disruptive actions of Australian communist trade unionists, Australia under conservative government entered into a series of defence alliances and arrangements, basically with the United States, developed its armed forces, gave economic aid to Asian countries and brought Asian students to study in Australia. If Australia looked with nostalgic longing to Britain or with material expectation to the United States this was mainly because it was apprehensive about what might happen in Asia.

 Shortly after World War II, university and adult education lecturers began to canvass the question as to whether Australia was or was not ‘part of Asia’. This is still a favourite topic of academic discussion. During Indonesia’s war, or ‘confrontation’, with Malaysia and Singapore in 1963–6, an Indonesian journalist wrote of Australia and New Zealand as ‘two little white dots in a vast Asian ocean’. (A year or two later, when the proposal for an association of South-east Asian states was being negotiated, an Indonesian official said to me, ‘You people have to decide whether or not you are part of Asia.’ As it was clear that Indonesia did not want Australia in the Association, I said: ‘Do you mean that you have decided that Australia is not part of Asia?’ He did not reply.) The wartime and post-war contacts with Asian countries and peoples, as well as a measure of cultural enlightenment, forced some Australians to ponder the problem, in effect of reconciling their history with their geography, of being white and Western

while living alongside Asia. Did they somehow have to become Asian, to sink their background in their newly-discovered milieu? The question was never resolved, partly out of inertia but still more because it was not a proper question: 'Asia' was not an identity. And the problem which the question implied could not be resolved in any short term. You cannot, by the stroke of a single government pen or the holding of a multiplicity of university seminars, transform the beliefs, attitudes, tastes and habits of a people. You cannot do it in a dictatorship; still less can you manage it in a hedonistic democracy inhabiting a large, rich, island. Scarcely a single Australian advocated the unrestricted entry of Asian immigrants, and only a handful were prepared to immerse themselves in the language, literature, history or customs of even one of the neighbouring Asian countries.

Yet what occurred during the 30 years after World War II was nothing less than a revolution—not a complete reversal, but a remarkable turning around in the attitudes of Australian governments and people towards Asians, to an extent which earlier generations could scarcely have envisaged or approved. It had long been accepted and recently demonstrated that Australia needed to be protected from Asia. It had come to be seen that Australia had to learn to live with Asia—an Asia that now provided Australia with a dozen new-nation neighbours. The two concepts were by no means incompatible, but the second slowly gained in importance over the first. From 1950, through the Colombo Plan (see Chapter 10), Australian technicians went into many parts of South-east Asia on aid projects. Thousands of sponsored Asian students came to Australia, and far more unsponsored ones came also. These provided Australian communities with their introduction to Asians, from Malaya, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, India and elsewhere. They were found overwhelmingly to be intelligent, literate, cultured, attractive, and usually gentle people. They did not flood in and establish ghettos. They did not compete with Australian labour. Most of the students went home after their courses, but while in Australia they fitted in to the community, and the community, with surprisingly little (for Australians) grumbling and some astonishment, got used to the idea. Australian diplomats and servicemen in Asia married Asian girls and brought them home. Restrictions on Asian immigration began to be lifted, until several thousands each year were admitted for permanent settlement. Trade with Asia increased as a proportion of the total, until Japan surpassed Britain in the mid-1960s as the largest customer. Australian tourists began to flood into Singapore, Bangkok, Hong Kong. Young Australian graduates volunteered for service at minimal salaries in Asian villages, in a process that was expanded, formalised, and eventually
government-assisted. In Australian universities and schools Chinese and Japanese began to be taught more widely, perhaps displacing Latin or Greek; also Indonesian, in some cases displacing French. Asian civilisations, Asian history, politics, geography found their way into the curriculum, slowly, but to stay. By 1975 there was an Australian ambassador who had an Asian wife, and the head of a major research school at the Australian National University was an Asian, and no one seemed to think the situation unusual.

This will be discussed further in later chapters, but it amounted to an important break-down in national attitudes towards Asians, a civilising process upon the Australian community, made possible by the highly selective character of the Asians who came to Australia, by their comparatively limited numbers, and by the sense of fair play which Australians believe to be one of their own characteristics.

Government-to-government attitudes differed according to the circumstances. Diplomatic posts were established throughout the region, and in the non-communist Asian states Australia found it could play a useful role. It had no great power to wield. It was not, for the most part, patronising, didactic, or intrusive. It was a founder member of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE), and of the Asian Development Bank. It had some aid to give. With few exceptions, Australia's relations with the states of South, South-east and East Asia were noticeably better than the relations of these states with each other or with most foreign powers.

Australia's early support of the Indonesian nationalist movement gave it some standing within the regional society of states. It was one of 15 nations represented at the conference in New Delhi in January 1949 to consider the Indonesian situation. A year later, Australia became the principal sponsor of the Colombo Plan. It attended the conference at Baguio in the Philippines in May 1950, along with India, Pakistan, Ceylon, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines, aimed at 'extending the scope of mutual consultation and cooperation within the South and South East Asian areas'. Nothing came of this meeting. Less than a month later, North Korea invaded South Korea, and the non-communist countries of the region began to divide into two basic groups depending on their attitude to communism and communist insurgency: the ideologically uncommitted and the committed anti-communists. Australia, fearing communism both as a doctrine and as the instrument of Soviet and Chinese power, joined the

\*CNA, vol. 21, no. 6, June 1950, p. 404 (report by Spender).
anti-communist group. It saw its own first line of security against communism as lying in the military defence of mainland South-east Asia. It sent air and naval elements to Malaya in 1950, contributed to the United Nations forces in Korea, signed the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty in 1954, and sent ground troops to Malaya in 1955.

When the Afro-Asian Conference of 29 states convened at Bandung, Indonesia, in April 1955, Australia was represented only by observers. India had sounded out the Australian government as to whether it would like to participate in the conference, but the government was apparently reluctant to be the only white and Western state involved. It was not ready to be different from its Western fellows, to launch unattached, unsecured, into the 'Third World'.

Shortly after being appointed Minister for External Affairs in 1964, Paul Hasluck told a meeting of educationalists in Canberra:

...in working out our relationships with our neighbours we will be concerned fundamentally not with acts of helpfulness, nor with expectations of gratitude, but with clashes of material interest, with misunderstanding of motives and with the need for explanation, persuasion, adjustment, the maintenance of our rights and respect for the rights of others and the search for the terms of the creation of the new order in which we can live at peace with one another.\(^7\)

This is the professional's approach to foreign policy. It was spoken before Australia became extensively involved in the Vietnam war, but it provided a welcome corrective to earlier (and later) more emotional assessments. It was a reminder that Australia is sufficiently separate from Asia to tread, in proper circumstances, its own path; that a country so situated can live alongside Asia without becoming identifiably Asian; that it does not necessarily have to shed its historical associations to come to terms with its geographical environment.

That, at least, is the theory. In 1965 Australia went to war simultaneously in two places in Asia with and against Asians: in northern Borneo against Indonesia on behalf of Malaysia; in Vietnam against North Vietnam on behalf of South Vietnam. But the real stimulus to involvement was not from the states under attack but from Australia's own sense of remoteness, vulnerability and dependence on Britain in one case and the United States in the other. When these 'great and powerful friends' (to

\(^7\)Australia and its Neighbours', the Buntine Oration to the Australian College of Education Fifth Annual Conference, 14 May 1964. Official transcript.
quote Menzies) later felt compelled to disengage from South-east Asia, Australia had to follow suit. It is now back to trying to work out the relationships of which Hasluck spoke, in a world from which the former simple alignments have disappeared; from behind the sea barrier which still largely separates Australia from its Asian neighbourhood but which in 1945 was fresh in Australian minds as providing the channels of their vulnerability to Asian intrusion or even conquest.
During World War II, Australia achieved sovereignty and independence defined in the Statute of Westminster. The British monarch was still Australia's head of state, but it was clearly understood that in such capacity he or she would act only on the advice of the Australian government. Australia had her own diplomatic service, conducted her own international negotiations, and signed the United Nations Charter not as a member of a British group of states but alphabetically in the world list. Australia was not only independent; she was active in her independence, taking initiatives, making pronouncements, demanding attention.

There were a few minor and wholly voluntary derogations of sovereignty. There was still a provision in Australian law for appeals from the Australian High Court to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council in London, although the right to appeal was restricted in 1968 and still further in 1975, and was abolished in 1986. Until that year, under the Statute of Westminster, the Australian states continued to have access to the Crown through the British government. Until 1973 Australians travelling abroad did so with a passport stamped on the front 'British Passport'. More significantly, until well after World War II, most Australians (so far as these things can be gauged) still felt themselves to be British, Australians within a British community. Australians of almost every political persuasion were conscious of the heavy burden borne by Britain during the war, and the immense, defiant, saving sacrifice of the British people. There was complete support for an Australian government decision to donate £25 million to Britain after the war (with a further £10 million later), and to sell
her for a time the entire Australian gold output to help ease Britain's dollar shortage.1

Denied—as her government believed—her rightful part in the direction of the war, even in her own region, Australia sought an influential role in formulating the post-surrender terms, and in organising the post-war international system. Again, she had little success, except within the context of the British Commonwealth. Here, thrusting Australian diplomacy led to the unprecedented situation of an Australian commander-in-chief for a joint Commonwealth force—the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan (BCOF). Australia also provided the British Commonwealth representative on the Allied Council for Japan (see Chapter 13). These were more than token acknowledgments of Australia's position, but they offered status rather than power. The United States, and especially General MacArthur, controlled the occupation, and shared authority with no other government, force, or representative. The Australian military function in Japan was limited to the disposal of Japanese armaments and installations, and to ceremonial. (It is safe to assume that if this had been a wartime operational command, the C-in-C would not have been an Australian.) At its peak strength in 1946 Australia provided 12,000 out of 37,000 in the force. The Australian component comprised an infantry brigade group, air force and base units, and most of the force headquarters staff. Britain, India (until mid-1947) and New Zealand also provided components.

Australia's desire for a leading role in her own region, manifested in the ANZAC Pact of 1944, was carried into the post-war period. At the strung-out Commonwealth Prime Ministers' meeting in London in April-May 1946, J. B. Chifley (who had succeeded Curtin as Prime Minister the previous July) told the gathering, as he later reported, that:

...it was recognised that Australia must in future make a larger contribution to the defence of the British Commonwealth, and that this could best be done in the Pacific, and that the approach to a common scheme of defence for this area should be by agreement between the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand, and thereafter with the United States of America, and later with other nations with

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1 The diplomatic representatives of Commonwealth countries in one another's capitals retain the earlier titles of High Commissioner rather than Ambassador, and are accredited not to the common head of state but to the local head of government.
possessions in this area. These views [said Chifley] met with the full endorsement of the United Kingdom and New Zealand.²

Chifley was ‘disturbed at the burden of armaments resting upon the British Commonwealth, and on the United Kingdom in particular’, but despite a generosity of spirit towards the United Kingdom not wholly shared by his Minister for External Affairs, Dr Evatt, and a desire for a greater Australian role which Evatt did share, Chifley was not really ready to shift that burden, even to the extent that it related to the Pacific, on to Australian shoulders or into Australian pockets.

In policy and administrative matters, BCOF was responsible to a body known as the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia (JCOSA), comprised of the Australian Chiefs of Staff and the representatives in Australia of the British and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff and (until Indian independence in August 1947) of the British Commander-in-Chief in India. In late 1947, the three remaining governments agreed that JCOSA should be abolished, and responsibility for the control and administration of BCOF assigned to the Australian government. JCOSA was not properly dissolved before it was re-established to coordinate arrangements for joint operations against communist terrorists in Malaya.

Britain had played a major part in many of the military-scientific developments of World War II, including the atomic bomb that ended it, but then found the United States reluctant to continue the wartime cooperation. Accordingly, Britain and Australia arranged in early 1946 for a joint program to develop guided missile systems, using Australia’s vast empty tracts of desert for testing. Australia was very much the junior partner, but with British help she developed a military scientific establishment which worked with the British in the production of the naval missile Ikara, the anti-tank Malkara, the Blue Streak and Black Knight rockets, and in testing a whole range of missiles. Australia was also host to British atomic weapons testing at the Monte Bello islands off the north-west coast (1952 and 1956), and in central Australia (1953 and 1956). A British proposal at the 1946 Prime Ministers’ meeting to decentralise throughout the Commonwealth heavy industry, stocks of military materials, training establishments and manpower, was a carry-over from the war, and quickly faded. As part of a continuing process, British capital was invested in Australian defence industries, and British assisted migration was resumed.

Britain had returned quickly after the war to being a major power in

South-east Asia, re-occupying her former territories and helping the French (in Indo-China) to re-occupy theirs. Australian forces briefly assisted the British in reimposing Dutch rule in the Netherlands East Indies, a process that appeared at the time both politically proper and strategically desirable. Yet the fearful expenditure of Britain's world-wide economic assets, the national exhaustion of will and spirit after six years of war, the immense destruction and wastage of industrial capital, and the erosion of her Asian empire by Japanese arms and by the various independence movements, left Britain greatly depleted and incapable of recovering her former strength or eminence. Successive Australian governments took note of this change, without perhaps making due allowance for it. They still expected, for example, to be defended even so late as the 1960s by Britain as of right, while seeking assurance from the United States as of necessity.

Labor in Australia lost the election in December 1949 after eight years in office under two Prime Ministers (Curtin, Chifley) and one Minister for External Affairs (Evatt). If the relationship with Britain was more abrasive than that subsequently under Menzies, this is not surprising. The Australian Labor Party was strongly nationalistic. It had always had a significant Irish element, with its sense of injuries against England retained, although diminishing from generation to generation. The party had its roots firmly in the working class, and was inclined to trade-union type confrontations against authority, against the kind of establishment which a British government of any persuasion represented. Evatt, intellectually outstanding, personally thrusting, and immensely energetic, could be suspicious and difficult in personal relations, quick to take offence, devious in operation and inclined to believe others to be the same—not the best man to get on with the British. But except over the United Nations (see below and Chapter 20), the substance of Australian policies towards Britain was probably not so very different under Labor from what it would have been under a conservative government. Evatt concurred with the assessment of the New Zealand Prime Minister, Peter Fraser, in June 1947, when he said that Dominion status was not 'an imperfect kind of independence'; on the contrary, it was 'independence with something added and not independence with something taken away'. He tried to persuade Burma not to leave the Commonwealth in 1948. When India sought in early 1949 to become a republic within the Commonwealth, and offered the formula of having the King not as head of state but as Head of the Commonwealth,

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1 "CNA, vol. 18, no. 2, February 1947, p. 133; no. 6, June–July 1947, p. 405."
the Australian Labor government was prepared to accept but had no desire to emulate it.

R. G. Menzies returned to office at a time of great international concern over the aggressive political and military activities of communist forces—in central Europe, in France and Italy, in China, and in South-east Asia (Burma, Malaya and Indo-China). In Canada a defecting Soviet diplomat had revealed an extensive Soviet spy ring in North America. In Australia, communist-led unions had called a national coal strike, had sought to halt work on the Woomera project (the Joint Long Range Weapons Experimental Project, with Britain), and by waterfront stoppages had tried to 'make' Australian policies towards Indonesia. Fear of communism became the dominant factor in Australian foreign policy for the next twenty-three years—years during which Australia was governed continuously by the same conservative coalition of the Liberal Party and the Australian Country Party. This fear was an important consideration in Australian decisions to engage in an overseas aid program, in collective defence with Britain in Malaya/Malaysia, with the United Nations in Korea, and with the United States in the Indo-China/Thailand area.

In Malaya and Korea, Australians formed part of a wider British Commonwealth force, under British command. The British connection was a significant item in foreign policy (or external policy, as Britain and other Commonwealth countries were not and are not regarded as being wholly foreign) throughout the Liberal-Country parties' long term of office, but it never dominated decisions on the great issues. Menzies, Prime Minister from 1949 to 1966, felt strong attachments to Britain, to the monarchy and to British institutions. At the same time he was a realist in appreciating the international power structure, and the vital role of the United States in protecting Western countries and values. Throughout his record term of leadership he sought to keep Australia's relations with her two major partners in balance, and as good as possible. In this he was supported, guided, and occasionally pushed by four able Ministers for External Affairs—Percy Spender (1949–51), R. G. Casey (1951–60), Sir Garfield Barwick (1961–64) and Paul Hasluck (1964–69).

Only a month after taking office, Spender placed before a meeting of Commonwealth foreign ministers in Colombo a proposal for economic and technical assistance from the comparatively wealthy to the strikingly impoverished Asian member countries. From this, with some British hesitation and some Australian hustling, emerged the Colombo Plan,4

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4 It was originally known as the Spender Plan.
subsequently extended (as Spender had proposed), to both donor and recipient countries outside the Commonwealth. Spender saw this as a genuinely humanitarian program, but he also saw it, as he told the Australian parliament, as designed 'to draw the teeth of Communist imperialism by carefully applied measures of economic assistance'.

The Australian decision to send ground troops to Korea in 1950 was also a function of the British and the American relationship. After the North Korean assault across the border on 25 June, the United States committed forces to the defence of the South, under a subsequently-arranged United Nations mandate. Australia quickly provided naval and air assistance, but not ground troops, Cabinet apparently believing that the United States would quickly clean up the situation. Britain also had no intention of sending soldiers and (despite a recent request from the UN Secretary-General) so informed Menzies when he was in London prior to visiting America. Then, apparently, the United States told the British government it was greatly disturbed by the failure of the Commonwealth to support it, and Britain rapidly reversed its decision, giving Australia a few hours notice of its announcement. During those hours, despite Menzies's absence, the Australian government, concerned by the change and determined not to appear a reluctant British appendage, decided in principle to send ground forces, and made its public statement an hour ahead of the British. (See also Chapter 12.)

The Korean War, the considerable American effort in it, and the value of Japan as a base, led to a 'soft' peace treaty with Japan and the negotiation of the ANZUS Pact (see Chapters 9 and 11). There was misunderstanding at the time and later as to whether Britain was 'excluded' from ANZUS. Despite some British claims to this effect, all the Australian evidence is opposed to it. At one stage in the preliminary negotiations, the United States canvassed the idea of establishing an offshore island chain of defence running from the Aleutians through Japan, the Ryukyus, the Philippines, to Australia and New Zealand. The obligations were not spelled out, but Britain wholly rejected the concept. Spender interpreted this as Britain

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6 Two first-hand accounts of the Australian decision to send ground troops are given in Watt, Australian Diplomat, pp. 173–6, and Spender, Politics and a Man, pp. 280–5. The most complete and authoritative account is given by Robert O'Neill, Australia in the Korean War 1950–53, vol. 1. Strategy and Diplomacy, Chapter 5.

7 This account is derived from the writings of Sir Percy Spender, Lord Casey, and Sir Alan Watt, as well as British parliamentary debates.
rejecting the whole Pacific Pact idea, perhaps out of resentment over the United States assuming responsibility for the security of ‘British’ Australia and New Zealand while simultaneously refusing any responsibility for British colonial territories such as Hong Kong. John Foster Dulles, as the American negotiator, considered that the British opposition ended the matter, but Australia and New Zealand, keeping Britain informed, insisted on a pact as insurance against a rearmed Japan. Britain would have liked to be in a regional security arrangement, but she could hardly join one that excluded her colonial territories, whereas no American government could join one that included them. Neither Australia nor New Zealand was prepared to risk losing the pact by insisting on British membership. Subsequently, Britain sought to send an observer to ANZUS meetings, but the US government would not agree. The British Labour government and even more the Conservative one that succeeded it in October 1951, especially Prime Minister Winston Churchill, were offended by these events and troubled by their implications. They also felt that a commitment by Australia and New Zealand to the defence of American interests in the Pacific would reduce the two nations’ capacity to defend Commonwealth interests elsewhere. Spender, on the contrary, believed that the protection afforded by ANZUS would make it easier for Australia to help in other areas, and this proved to be the case. The two junior partners had written into the preamble of the ANZUS treaty:

RECOGNIZING that Australia and New Zealand as members of the British Commonwealth of Nations have military obligations outside as well as within the Pacific Area...

One of those obligations—or at least, an obligation that was assumed—was to help with the internal security of Malaya against communist terrorism. Another concerned the security of communications and trade routes. Shortly after World War II, Britain had renegotiated the Anglo-Egyptian treaty, reducing her own role although refusing to evacuate the Suez Canal Zone. Australia, feeling dependent on the Canal, felt also that she had not been adequately consulted, and that the Canal was now less secure. In November 1950, encouraged by Australia, Britain again refused to agree to an annulment of the Egyptian treaty. Local terrorist activities against the British installation soon made tenure difficult, while in Iran the radical nationalist government took Britain to the brink of war when it

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8 ANZUS was signed on 1 September 1951.
nationalised the Anglo-Iranian oil refineries at Abadan. This led Britain to propose a Middle East Command, and to invite Australia to join (as well as New Zealand, South Africa, Egypt, the US, France and Turkey). Australia accepted the invitation, but the scheme lapsed. At about this time, at Britain’s request, Australia contributed to Commonwealth interests in the Middle East by stationing two fighter squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force at Malta. In 1954, under the new Anglo-Egyptian treaty, all British forces were withdrawn from Egyptian territory, and the Dominion squadrons returned home from Malta. If Britain was not in control of the Canal, there was little point for Australia in patrolling the sea lanes to the west of it.

This probably would have ended Australia’s involvement in protecting the Mediterranean-Suez route to Britain had President Nasser of Egypt not nationalised the Canal in July 1956. The Australian government felt strongly that Nasser had acted contrary to international law, and that the Canal, being vital to the security of some countries, including Australia, should be returned to international control with guaranteed freedom of navigation. Menzies took an active part in the negotiations and conference in London among the Canal’s users, and was appointed chairman of the committee sent to negotiate with Nasser. The committee did not succeed in its purpose. It may well have failed in any case, but President Eisenhower ensured its failure by publicly ruling out, at a crucial moment in the negotiations, any resort to arms.

Menzies and his Minister for External Affairs (Casey) had very different views on the question of using force, as became evident in the period leading up to the Anglo-French invasion in collusion with Israel in October. Menzies believed it would be legitimate and possibly desirable for Britain to resort to military action to ensure that the Canal Convention was observed. He was unaware of the deviousness of the British and French governments. Speaking in parliament on 25 September, Menzies declared that if the United Nations, frustrated by the Soviet veto, again proved ineffective, ‘we the user nations must in the absence of willing and proper negotiations, be ready to impose sanctions ourselves’. Casey did not rule out force in all circumstances, but he disagreed strongly with unilateral action by the United Kingdom, and he so informed relevant British ministers. With considerable if not complete prescience, he told Menzies on 29 September that if without physical provocation Britain resorted to force:

1. Seventy-five per cent of countries would immediately forget the rights and wrongs of the affair.
2. A war would start, which could spread to a world war.
3. The Commonwealth would split, some members be openly hostile, and one or two might leave it.
4. The United States would probably not cooperate with Britain.
5. Animosity would result between Australia and South-east Asian countries.
6. The only country to gain would be the Soviet Union.

He said that it was inevitable that Britain would lose face over the affair, and he was concerned that she should lose as little face and influence as possible.10 Casey had little support in the Australian Cabinet, although perhaps rather more in the British, and certainly in the British Foreign Office. When the war gravely strained Anglo-American relations, Casey did his best to heal the wounds, although with no initial success. His views on the whole affair received little publicity, whereas Menzies’s were widely broadcast. The latter earned Australia some gratitude in London, none at all in Washington, and hostility in Egypt. An Australian offer to provide troops for the United Nations peacekeeping force was predictably refused.

A steady aim of the Menzies government was to bring Britain and the United States together in securing peace in the South and South-east Asian area. ANZUS did not do that, but ANZUS was not the ultimate pact. Its preamble referred to the Parties ‘Desiring further to co-ordinate their efforts for collective defence for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area’. ANZUS was designed to protect Australia and New Zealand from external attack, but the lesson of World War II was that the security of the antipodes depended on the situation in South-east Asia. Britain had a rebellion on her hands in Malaya, as did France in Indo-China. In October 1952 military staff officers of the US, Britain, France, Australia and New Zealand met in Washington for talks on the security of South-east Asia, to little effect except to provide a basis for further meetings. Casey wanted to see some special liaison between ANZUS and ANZAM (the arrangement between Britain, Australia and New Zealand over the defence of Malaya—see Chapter 11), but the Americans would not agree. As the situation deteriorated in French Indo-China, more staff

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10 Casey, Australian Foreign Minister, p. 246. This account of the Australian position is based on Casey’s Diaries as well as on the chapter ‘My Suez Story’ in Sir Robert Menzies, Afternoon Light: Some Memories of Men and Events.
talks were held. In May 1954 Anthony Eden proposed a ‘Five Powers Staff Agency’ located in Singapore to monitor the situation in South-east Asia. The United States wanted talks at a more senior level to produce a political arrangement, but Britain refused this until after the Geneva Conference on Indo-China, when the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty was quickly negotiated (see Chapters 9 and 12). This treaty, usually known by the organisation it created (SEATO), brought Britain and the United States together, but whatever the contingency planning that occurred, Britain was never prepared to contribute directly to the defence of Indo-China, nor the United States to the defence of Malaya/Malaysia. In the event, SEATO provided a context for the exchange of information and views between the two, but not for joint action. To put it baldly, Australia found herself with the delicate task of making a sufficient contribution to the causes each major partner held dear, in order primarily to preserve their sense of obligation to Australia, but not to do so much for one as to arouse the resentment or suspicion of the other, nor to do so much for both as to take vital funds from Australia’s own development program.

In 1955 Australia sent ground troops to help in the anti-terrorist campaign in Malaya, but by political sleight of hand made them appear simultaneously a contribution to SEATO. In September 1963 Australia decided to add her forces to those of Britain, Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand in the defence of the two South-east Asian states against the small but noisy war launched by Indonesia under the name of ‘confrontation’. A major factor was the relationship with Britain. A secondary factor was a sense of ‘Commonwealth’ obligation. A third, vital factor, was the relevance of the two states to the security of Australia. But the decision was still more one of principle than of practice. Not until 19 months later, in April 1965, when the first Australian battalion went to Vietnam, was a battalion sent at the same time to northern Borneo to help British and Malaysian troops defend it against Indonesia. Both London and Washington occasionally expressed some concern at the undue influence of the other upon Canberra. When Duncan Sandys, British Minister for Defence, proposed in 1957 that Australia make a larger contribution to ANZAM, and that all Commonwealth forces in the area be integrated into a single ANZAM command, the Australian government saw little merit in it, partly because the United States would see little merit in it.\(^{11}\)

From the time of the 1956 Suez war, Australia’s defence connection with Britain became predominantly the relationship over the defence of Malaya

\(^{11}\text{Casey, Australian Foreign Minister, pp. 267–9.}\)
(later Malaysia) and Singapore, with Britain periodically trying to get Australia to do more, and Australia seeking to ensure that Britain did not do less.

At least until 1968, Australian governments appeared to believe that Britain had an obligation to defend Australia, and would strengthen their arguments by referring to Australia's military contribution to the Empire and Commonwealth in two world wars. Polite as they might be, British ministers and officials must have become somewhat tired of these protestations, although for their part they kept assuring Australia that Britain would come to her aid in time of need, even if this meant sending forces from the United Kingdom. With successive reductions of British defence capacity at home and abroad after 1966, these assurances became more expressions of goodwill than promises of decisive help.

During 1966 Britain began the moves which were to lead within ten years to the total withdrawal of her military power from the world east of Suez, except for the modest garrison at Hong Kong. She had decided to give up the base at Aden, in the face of nationalist pressure. She now canvassed with the Australian government the use of military facilities there if Singapore were to cease to be available. This appeared at the time, and appears still more in retrospect, as a somewhat obscure ploy by the British Minister for Defence, Denis Healey, who also said that Britain would not 'rat' on her agreements. There was not the slightest sign that Singapore would cease to be available. There were increasing signs that Britain would cancel her agreements. The Australian Prime Minister, Harold Holt, who succeeded Menzies in January 1966, flew to Britain in June 1967 in an unsuccessful attempt to persuade the British government from taking any final decision about withdrawing from east of Suez. The following month a British defence White Paper recorded the stages for the retrenchment: half the forces deployed in Malaysia and Singapore would be withdrawn by 1971, the rest by 1973–76. The Australian government publicly deplored this decision, on the grounds that the situation in South-east Asia could deteriorate at any time, not least in Indo-China. But the new British imperatives, reversing recent assurances, led Prime Minister Harold Wilson to announce in January 1968 that Britain would withdraw completely from everywhere east of Suez except Hong Kong by December 1971 (extended from March—an earlier decision—at the request of Singapore). Indonesian confrontation, American and antipodean pressure,

There were, and still are, numerous arrangements over training, procurements, and the exchange of military information.
and the persistence of the image of empire and Commonwealth had delayed this process, but economics demanded it, and the British government had become wearied of empire and its responsibilities, the antagonisms it aroused and the costs it involved.

Until 1957 the (British) Commonwealth was a relatively sedate group of states in which the 'white' members were predominant. India and Pakistan had become independent members in 1947, and Ceylon (later known as Sri Lanka) in 1948. With the independence in 1957 of Ghana (formerly the Gold Coast) and Malaya, followed by Cyprus, Nigeria, Tanganyika and others, the character and tone of the Commonwealth began to change fundamentally, in ways as uncongenial to Menzies as to his British counterparts. Its meetings became noisy, public and combative. The new members were critical and demanding. Britain came under bitter and continuing attack for her colonial policies. South Africa was attacked for her racial policies. India, although not independent at the time, had been a foundation member of the United Nations, and as early as 1946 raised in the General Assembly the question of the treatment in South Africa of persons of Indian origin living there. Australia tended to abstain on votes on this issue, recognising that India had an interest but that South Africa had jurisdiction. Evatt and his successors consistently defended South Africa on that ground. In 1952 a group of Asian and Middle Eastern states, including India, attacked South Africa on the wider issue of apartheid, the policy of racial segregation which had existed for many years but which had been strengthened by the advent of an Afrikaner-based National Party government in 1948. Australia voted consistently at the UN with a minority which considered that however offensive apartheid as a policy might be, it was within the domestic jurisdiction of the South African government. This was also the attitude Australia took at the 1960 and 1961 meetings of Commonwealth Prime Ministers. At the latter, African and Asian members imposed such conditions on South Africa's remaining in the Commonwealth as a republic that she withdrew from the association.

Although he deplored apartheid, Menzies regretted both South Africa's going and the manner of her going. He pointed out:

It is not the Verwoerd Government that is out. It is the Union of South Africa; the nation evolved by the great liberal statesmanship of 1909; the nation of Botha and Smuts; the nation from which, in two world wars, soldiers fought side by side with our own, ... the nation, over 45 per cent of the voters of which voted to remain within the direct allegiance to the Throne; the people, three quarters of whom, as men of colour, to whom we have a great and brotherly responsibility, might
reasonably be presumed to find some of their future hopes of emancipation in the membership of the Commonwealth.¹³

He feared for the Commonwealth with such a precedent established. He feared, also, attacks on Australia over her policies towards Aborigines, Papua and New Guinea, and restricted immigration, all of which had elements of racial discrimination.

Issues concerning race were at the root of Commonwealth and United Nations action over Rhodesia. Southern Rhodesia, in south-central Africa, had become an internally self-governing British colony in 1923 after its white inhabitants had rejected union with South Africa. Its white population, holding virtually all political and economic power, was much smaller in proportion to the blacks than was the case in South Africa. In 1953 it became part of a British instituted federation with Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, which broke up eleven years later, the two black states being known as Zambia and Malawi respectively. Southern Rhodesia (later called simply Rhodesia) was the object of attacks in the UN from 1962 and in the Commonwealth from 1964 by Commonwealth African states seeking a change of government into the hands of the black majority. Until 1953 the Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia had attended meetings of the Commonwealth Prime Ministers and subsequently the federal Prime Minister did so until there was no federation.

At the July 1964 Prime Ministers' meeting, with the new African leaders present, Rhodesia was discussed in an informal session. Menzies believed with the others that it was an internal matter for the United Kingdom, but did not believe (as many of the others did) that Britain should be instructed how to handle the problem. All agreed that they would not recognise a unilateral declaration of independence (UDI) by Rhodesia. At their meeting the following year the Prime Ministers urged Britain to call a constitutional conference and, if the Rhodesian government refused to attend, to suspend the Constitution and appoint an interim government 'which should repeal oppressive and discriminatory laws and prepare the way for free elections'. Menzies still believed that the matter was for Britain to decide, in her own

¹³*HRD*, vol. 20, p. 654, 11 April 1961. Menzies indicated how difficult Dr Verwoerd, the South African Prime Minister, had made his position by refusing to accept diplomatic representatives from coloured Commonwealth states. One cannot be sure that Dr Verwoerd did not in fact achieve his objective: English-speaking and Afrikaans-speaking South Africans united outside the Anglo-centred Commonwealth. Perhaps the Boer War had at last been won by the Boers.
way. Australia had offered its advice to the Rhodesian government, in effect advocating elections on a roll which included an African majority, and opposing UDI. A British proposal for a Commonwealth mediatory mission led by Sir Robert Menzies was rejected by Rhodesia.

At the United Nations, and in the Organisation of African Unity (OAU), African Commonwealth countries threatened the use of force to bring down the white Rhodesian government which on 11 November 1965 declared its independence from Britain while maintaining loyalty to the British Crown. Australia was opposed to the use of force (which the Africans wanted Britain to do) but was prepared to impose restraints on trade under United Nations resolutions.

The Commonwealth debates on Rhodesia coincided with a successful move by the African members to have a Commonwealth Secretariat established in London. Menzies claimed to have proposed this before, during and after World War II, without getting any support. When it came into being in 1965, with a Canadian, Arnold Smith, as Secretary-General, it relieved the British government of some of the administrative load of the Commonwealth relationships. Despite Menzies's claim, Australia was not very enthusiastic about establishing, maintaining or strengthening the Secretariat, and contributed only modestly to new, Commonwealth-wide activities.

For nearly 20 years, a major issue affecting the Commonwealth and Australia was whether Britain would or should be a member of the European Economic Community (see also Chapter 17). The British decision in 1957 not to sign the Treaty of Rome and thus be an original member of the Community was taken partly because of the Commonwealth: Britain’s own sense of being part of an alternative, world-wide association, and the benefits of the Commonwealth trade preference system especially in providing Britain with comparatively cheap food and Commonwealth countries with preferred markets. Britain was also concerned at the derogation of sovereignty inherent in a supranational European body, and at the effect of European agricultural policies on her own protected farming industry. Commonwealth pressures on Britain supported this decision. In January 1959 an unofficial Commonwealth Relations conference, sponsored by the several Institutes of International Affairs and held in New Zealand, recommended joint British and Commonwealth negotiations with the EEC. In the following year the British government

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began the review which led to a formal application for EEC membership in 1962, with greatly reduced assurances to Commonwealth countries about safeguarding their interests.

Menzies, 'British to his boot heels' as he said on one occasion, and greatly attached at least to the 'white' Commonwealth, expressed in August 1961 'grave doubts' that the Commonwealth would continue unimpaired, or Britain be able to retain her traditional role of adjusting the European power balance, if it entered the EEC. He pointed out that the Commonwealth took 42 per cent of British exports and the EEC 14.5 per cent, and that the former could not grow if EEC membership affected the export earnings of Commonwealth countries.  

For Menzies himself, the principal objection to British membership of the EEC was the political effect on Britain's sovereignty and span of interest. British membership of an actual European federation 'would be a mistake', and who could say federation would not eventuate? Many more Australians, including Menzies's Country Party associates, and other Commonwealth governments, were much more exercised by the economic implications, especially the possible loss of free entry of major items into Britain, tariff reductions on others, and preferred access to the London capital market. At a meeting of the Prime Ministers in September 1962 the fact that they were economic competitors overshadowed both the feeling that the Commonwealth was a unity and the appreciation of the potential value of Britain helping to guide the destinies of Europe.

In January 1963 President de Gaulle of France resolved the Commonwealth dilemmas by vetoing the British application. One factor was undoubtedly his view that Britain's protests to the Six about safeguarding Commonwealth interests demonstrated that she was not a good 'European'. This was a surprising argument from the mentor of the Francophone (former French colonial) states, who had also defeated attempts at greater political unity among the EEC and had proclaimed a 'Europe des patries'. Four years later, under a Labour government, Britain applied again. By this time the Commonwealth countries, other than New Zealand, were more acquiescent. Menzies, who had been disappointed at the African and Asian impact on the Commonwealth, had by now retired. Australian trade had diversified, with expanded markets in Asia (especially Japan, by 1965–66

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Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations

Australia’s largest customer) and even in the EEC. But de Gaulle again prevented Britain’s entry in what was effectively a tribute to the influence Britain could have in the Community and a stimulus to further British disaffiliation from the Commonwealth.

Britain’s final, and successful, attempt came in 1971, after de Gaulle had left the scene. The centrifugal trends in Commonwealth trade had continued, with some African members even giving preference to the EEC over Britain. By now Britain had come to mean less to the Commonwealth and the Commonwealth less to Britain—even something of an albatross around her neck in the negotiations. It had never really been a coherent economic alternative to the Community. It no longer gave any appearance or staked any claim so to be. It was an alternative only to a not very splendid isolation clad in the tatters of empire and faintly warmed by lingering preferences and the European Free Trade Area. The only major concession obtained for an ‘old’ Commonwealth member was that New Zealand was given special treatment for a period by the Six, in recognition of her overwhelming dependence hitherto on the British market. One result of Britain’s membership of the EEC was that citizens of France or Germany now legally enjoyed unrestricted entry into Britain, whereas Australians of more than one generation, though wholly of British descent, did not.

The change in the Anglo-Australian relationship is probably most noticeable in the pattern of trade. In 1948–49 Britain still supplied 50 per cent (by value) of Australia’s imports; in 1959–60, it was 36 per cent; in 1969–70, 22 per cent; in 1975–76, 13.5 per cent; in 1988–89, 7.3 per cent. This is still a sizeable percentage. In exports to Britain from Australia, the decline is greater: from 42 per cent in 1948–49 to 26 per cent in 1959–60; to 12 per cent in 1969–70; to 4.2 per cent in 1975–76, to 3.5 per cent in 1988–89. In a sense the disparity is larger than the figures suggest, in that some of the drop in imports is due to the manufacture of British products by British subsidiaries in Australia. In 1956 Australia renegotiated her trade agreement with Britain to enable her to diversify markets in the light of declining British purchases. In 1966–67 Japan replaced Britain as Australia’s largest customer.

The changing trade pattern has affected the balance of payments. The UK had a favourable balance with Australia in 1948–49 of $20 million, in 1959–60 of $83m, in 1969–70 of $356m, in 1975–76 of $706m, in 1988–89 of $1,931.3 million.

These figures reflect changes in both countries and in the international trading system. Australia has been steadily diversifying both her production and her markets, seeking to take advantage of the shorter distances
to Asia. As recently as the 1950s, agricultural products provided over 80 per cent of export earnings, the major outlet being the world's largest importer of food, the United Kingdom. Exports to Britain were then 89 per cent agricultural. In 1976 they were 27 per cent, under the impact of Britain's entry into the EEC and the application of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common External Tariff. For some Australian agricultural products, such as dairy products, and fresh and canned fruit, there was and still is no significant alternative market. Dairy products sold to Britain dropped from £22 million in 1955–56 to £74 thousand in 1975–76.

Two other major changes in the Australian scene have affected the trade flows. The first was the discovery and development of extensive new mineral resources. Thirty years ago, minerals constituted 8 per cent by value of Australia's export earnings; in 1976 they constituted 28 per cent, and Australia became the world's largest exporter of bauxite, iron ore, mineral sands and lead, as well as a major exporter of other minerals and of coal, with Japan by far the largest market. The proportion has since declined to 10.3 per cent. The second major Australian change has been in industrial production, in which one Australian worker in four is now engaged. In the past thirty years manufactured goods rose as a proportion of exports from 8 per cent to 20 per cent in 1975–76, and to 54.9 per cent in 1988–89, including basic metal products. Much of this has been financed by overseas capital, of which a fairly steady quantity but a declining proportion has come from Britain. The considerable change in the general direction of export trade is shown in comparing the figures for 1949–50 with the figures for 1987–88: to the United States, from 9 per cent in 1949–50 to 11 per cent in 1987–88; Asia, from 16 per cent to 50 per cent—half going to Japan; Europe, including Britain, from 65 per cent to 23 per cent in 1975–76 to 39 per cent in 1987–88. In total exports and imports Japan is Australia's largest trading partner. (See Chapter 21.)

Until the 1960s the Australian currency was tied to sterling, and Australia went off the gold standard when Britain did. With New Zealand and South Africa, they helped form the sterling bloc or sterling area, which gave the southern Dominions preferred access to the London money market but also enabled them to bolster the pound for twenty years after World War II. This preferred access lasted until the early 1970s. Then, the cost of money in England, the steady depreciation of the pound, the flow of capital into Australia from other Western sources and Japan, and a noticeable and understandable reluctance in the City of London to accord special terms to Australian loans meant that Australia did less direct borrowing there, and only a small proportion of its overseas reserve was kept in sterling. In the
1980s, the situation changed again as the Australian dollar weakened on world markets. In fact, Australia also consciously if slowly bought back securities held in Britain, and in recent years has been investing in foreign companies. Britain is now the principal host for this—$4.7 billion in 1987–88. Total Australian investments in Britain at that date amounted to $14.1 billion, second only to the investments in the United States.

British investment in companies in Australia, including undistributed income, continued at a high level up until 1972, and for the ten years ending June 1975 averaged $288m. per year. It was exceeded only by the US with an average of $342m. per year. In recent times, Britain has overtaken the US and in 1986–87 the investment flow to Australia was $6.7 billion. Total British investment at 30 June 1988 was $44 billion.

To sum up these economic changes: Australia’s exports to Britain have fallen over the past forty years from 42 per cent to 3.5 per cent; imports from Britain have fallen from 50 per cent to 7.3 per cent; the balance of trade is running increasingly in Britain’s favour; securities in sterling have dropped but direct, portfolio and institutional investment has considerably increased.

Britain’s first application to join the EEC coincided approximately with the decision to limit Commonwealth immigration, including migrants from Australia, other than anyone whose father was born in the UK. The reasons for this were not fully understood or welcomed in Australia, where migration from Britain had been assisted or encouraged for a century, and (at that time) between 80 and 90 per cent of the population were of British stock.

After World War II, migration was considered essential to Australia’s national security as well as a humanitarian response to the displaced persons of Europe. Apart from such persons, there was a consensus for some years that the majority of immigrants ought to be from Britain, and so it was. Of 4.4 million permanent and long-term arrivals in Australia between 1945 and 1975, 2.6 million (59 per cent) were British, although this term included people who were ‘citizens of the UK and colonies’. Of these 2.6 million, 1.2 million (nearly half) were assisted to the extent of almost the whole of their expenses. Under the Australia-Britain migration agreement, Australia took a ‘reasonable cross-section’ of the British community, including significant numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers. The agreement ceased in 1972, and in 1973 the Australian Labor government determined on a global immigration policy that could not be accused of racial bias, so that the criteria applied to all countries. Until that time a British subject could get Australian citizenship after one year.
compared with five years for non-British. The time is now three years for everyone (except special relations). In 1974 economic constraints led to occupational restrictions on migrants, which still largely apply. The effect of these actions was to convince many people in Britain that Australia did not want them, which was only selectively true. With a longterm zero natural population growth in Australia, and with a net migration outflow in 1975 of 8000, the Fraser government began re-activating immigration, though at a low key. Some 18 000 migrants went to Australia from Britain in 1975–76, and the trend is upward. The terms of entry of Australians into Britain, and of Britons into Australia, are broadly comparable. There is almost automatic entry for patrials, i.e. those with a parent or grandparent born in the other country. The restraints don’t seem to have had very much effect: some 375 000 Australians visited Britain in 1976. As at June 1989, 22 per cent or 3.73 million of the Australian population were born overseas, the most common source being the United Kingdom and Ireland (1.2 million).

It is hard to assess with any precision the implications of migration on the people themselves or the governments concerned. A recent survey showed that 11 million Britons have relatives or close friends in Australia. There can surely be no other country with which Australia has so great a quantity of personal relationships. Well over 3 million Australians have relatives or close friends in Britain, and probably another 7 million are of British descent. There is a remarkable quantity and diversity of informal relationships between Britain and Australia, from cricket to vice-chancellors and parliamentarians.

Perhaps partly to balance, for Australia and New Zealand, the move into Europe, the British Conservative government that negotiated the third attempt also reversed the process of total military withdrawal from Southeast Asia. The January 1968 decision to hasten withdrawal had been canvassed with the Australian Prime Minister, John Gorton, who protested publicly and privately. He said that questions of security were global questions, and it was vital not to damage the security system of the Southeast Asian region; that 'a continued presence of British forces in Malaysia and Singapore could provide a greater contribution to peace and security than the deployment of those forces in the European region'. He suggested that the British government make its economic savings in other areas.\textsuperscript{17} Wilson showed his respect for this view by ignoring it completely.

\textsuperscript{17}For text of statement, see \textit{CNA}, vol. 39, no. 1, January 1968, pp. 29–30.
Australia, like New Zealand, then had to decide whether she would retain forces in the area after the British withdrawal had been completed. This decision was of an order without precedent in Australian history. In every previous situation where Australia had committed her forces, Britain had been an ally and partner, except in Vietnam, where the ally had been the United States. Pressed by the other members of ANZAM, Britain reluctantly agreed to leave naval and air elements in the area, and promised rapid reinforcement on the ground in an emergency. This was not completely reassuring to Gorton, but it was a factor to consider. New Zealand wished to remain. Malaysia and Singapore wished both Australia and New Zealand to stay, although to pay more for the privilege for defending their Asian Commonwealth partners. When in late March 1968 President Lyndon Johnson decided to reduce the scale of American activities in Vietnam, and not to seek re-election as President, this raised the more imminent possibility that the United States might withdraw completely from South-east Asia. Gorton had strong nationalist feelings that tended to erupt from time to time. The government wavered for a year, then in February 1969 the Prime Minister announced that Australian forces would remain in Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal. By the opposition in parliament, the decision was seen as 'imperial nostalgia'. This did not reflect the complexity of the problem nor the nature of the decision. Certainly the decision was encouraged by the Conservative British opposition, which was to become the government in 1970, and which kept British ground forces in the area although in reduced numbers.

This was negotiated with the four regional partners in what came to be known as the Five Power Arrangement, replacing the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement. The Australian, New Zealand and British forces were grouped into an ANZUK force, and an integrated (with Malaysia and Singapore) air defence system was established (see Chapter 10). With the advent of a Labor government in Australia in late 1972 (see Chapter 18), most of the Australian ground force was removed, a decision emulated by Harold Wilson when the Labour Party returned to power in Britain in 1974. By the following year, as Wilson had decided ten years before, the only British forces permanently east of Suez were based in or on the largely token garrison at Hong Kong. (There was also a Gurkha battalion in Brunei.)

More than twenty years earlier, in the Anglo-Iranian crisis of 1951, a British government had decided that there were circumstances in which it did not pay to protect British overseas investment by British arms. Within
the Empire and Commonwealth much more than investment was involved. The whole system, as well as its component parts and its lines of communication, had to be defended. During the process of decolonisation, the British government took responsibility both for internal and external security. Australia’s partnership with Britain in the Malaysian area occurred in the imperial and decolonising stages, carried over into the post-colonial period because of Indonesian adventurism. By 1975, ten years after the fall of Sukarno, the partnership could not easily be justified on military grounds, and still less for Britain on economic grounds. But, more significantly, the attention and interest of the British government, of Whitehall, of British institutions, of the press, had turned significantly away from the world outside Europe and the North Atlantic.

In the political processes of the 20th century in which nationalism and internationalism have both competed and cooperated, the Commonwealth has provided a context for containing some of the excesses of nationalism while offering a nursery for the exercise of internationalism. In these processes, Australia was something of a late developer, perhaps through being a self-satisfied island, perhaps also because the imperial pouch was comfortable enough and saved taking unpleasant decisions or exercising unsought responsibilities. The American alliance (see Chapter 9) continued the habit of dependence, extending its scope and changing its emphasis, but it was an alliance shared, in essence, with Britain.

Both Britain and Australia are seeking a role in their own environment, a search delayed by the habits of empire and the opportunities of Commonwealth. The equator has risen between them, but the equator is an imaginary line. If Britain has to choose, on a significant issue, between Australia and Europe, she will choose Europe. If Australia has to choose, on such an issue, between Britain and America, she will choose America. This is a fact of life, a function of survival, and such choices are still more rare than the opportunities for cooperation.

Because of the Commonwealth, its historical development and on-going existence, Australia has many more contacts in many more cooperative activities with other member countries than would otherwise be the case. There are over a hundred official and semi-official Commonwealth-sponsored conferences each year, on a wide variety of subjects. Little of great moment may result, but policies are affected, harmonised, helped to a degree. Information is exchanged. There are aid programs. There is an undoubted effect on people who take part. The governments and the individuals are not strangers, not foreigners. The Commonwealth is not a
miniature United Nations, but being a smaller international association its members can express themselves more often, play a bigger part, and engage in less posturing. It is a club—not wealthy, not powerful, but not insignificant.¹⁸

¹⁸ See Biennial reports of The Commonwealth Secretary-General, for details.
The American lifeline

The Pacific war left Australia preoccupied, in foreign affairs, with the problems of security. The war had demonstrated the vital importance of the United States and its willingness to help in the defence of Australia against a major regional power that also threatened America, but the end of the conflict demonstrated equally that the US government, unlike the British, did not see the security of Australia as a continuing commitment, responsibility, necessity or problem. The Australia-Britain defence link was thus re-energised, whereas that between Australia and the United States quickly deteriorated. The United States did not expect to fight another Pacific war in the foreseeable future, was intent on rapid demobilisation, and was in any case much more concerned about events in Europe.

During the war, American forces had established a number of major military bases in the Pacific, including one on the League-mandated territory of Western Samoa, administered by New Zealand, and another at Manus, in the Admiralty Islands north of New Guinea, in part of the mandate administered by Australia. The Samoan base was the subject of an agreement between the New Zealand and American governments signed in March 1942. Under League mandate agreements, fortifications were prohibited, but wartime necessity had overruled this ban. Late in the war, the United Nations (the nations opposed to Germany, Italy and Japan) moved towards the concept of trusteeship for certain dependent territories, under international supervision. The terms were not negotiated until late 1946, and the obligations and restraints imposed by the mandate legally remained in force until each trusteeship agreement was signed.

In the January 1944 Australian–New Zealand Agreement (ANZAC Pact), the two governments had sought a conference on Pacific problems,
and had looked towards a general system of security and regional zone of
defence. Cordell Hull had felt that a conference on Pacific problems was
premature, and that an attempt to establish a security system in the Pacific
might provide an unfortunate example elsewhere and affect the proposed
their allies that the wartime control of bases would not automatically con­tinue. Paragraph 16 of the Agreement stated:

The two Governments accept as a recognized principle of international practice that
the construction and use, in time of war, by any power, of naval, military or air
installations, in any territory under the sovereignty or control of another power,
does not, in itself, afford any basis for territorial claims or rights of sovereignty or
control after the conclusion of hostilities.

In subsequent (April 1944) discussions in Washington, New Zealand
indicated that continued American use of the Western Samoan base would
be comparatively easy to arrange; Australia took a somewhat harder
position.\footnote{This account of the Manus negotiations is taken from publicly available official documents especially the Department of State, Foreign Relations of the United States (FRUS) and from analyses (inter alia) by Alan Watt, Evolution of Australian Foreign Policy; Trevor R. Reese, Australia, New Zealand and the United States, chapter 4; and John J. Dedman, 'Encounter over Manus', Australian Outlook, vol. 20, no. 2, August 1966. Dedman was Minister for Defence in the Chifley government of 1946–49, and while writing the article was given access to the relevant confidential official files to refresh his memory.}

According to Forrestal, US Secretary of the Navy, President Roosevelt
told a Cabinet meeting on 9 March 1945 that ‘the Australians had advanced
the thesis that they would take by direct acquisition everything south of the
equator, leaving to us [the US] those islands north of that line’, but that
this was unacceptable. Forrestal mentioned a number of places that the US
‘ought to have’ for its naval security—Kwajalein, Truk, etc. Roosevelt also
included Manus in this category.\footnote{Walter Millis (ed.) The Forrestal Diaries, p. 50.} In June the Australian government
advised General MacArthur that it expected that, when the South Pacific
Command was dissolved, control over the Australian-administered
mandated territories would revert to Australia. The Command was
dissolved on 2 September, but MacArthur, evidently on instructions from Washington, exempted the Admiralties from the transfer of authority.

Both the Australian and the American governments were interested in modest acquisitions of territory for strategic purposes. Australia, with much less power and rather more conscience, quickly abandoned the notion. While seeking to restrain Australia's somewhat expansionist tendencies,4 the United States put in a claim in late 1945 for twenty-five Pacific islands over some of which either the United Kingdom or New Zealand had declared sovereignty, and also sought long-term military base rights in a number of other territories, including Manus.5 Within the United States—in Congress, the navy, and the press—there was some pressure for retaining sole control or acquiring sovereignty over Manus, but this was never the policy of the Truman administration. It was determined to hold on to former Japanese-mandated territories, and was interested for a time in maintaining bases on Manus and some other islands.

The Australian government was aware of the military capacity and strategic importance of the Manus base, and would have liked the United States to continue to maintain at least some of the facilities there. But Dr Evatt saw the American interest in Manus as a lever with which he might effect broader objectives—the use by Australia of appropriate American bases, and if possible a formal defence treaty by which the United States would in substance guarantee the security of Australia and New Zealand. In November 1945 he suggested publicly in Washington that the United States remain in Manus, accept responsibility for the area served by the base, and that Australian forces be given the right to use American bases in the region.

Formal negotiations over Manus began in January 1946. In February the United States presented New Zealand with a draft agreement over continued use of the base in Western Samoa, and on 14 March offered an almost identical draft to Australia relating to the Admiralty Islands. This comprised two documents: the preliminary draft of a proposed base agreement, and a draft of clauses which the United States wanted included in any UN trusteeship agreement over New Guinea. Although the United States declared both documents "informal working papers" and "not to be considered as expressing at this time the final views of the United

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2FRUS, 1945, vol. VI, p. 206. C. Hartley Grattan claims that Britain was prepared to transfer Christmas Island to the United States, at its request, but Australia objected and prevented the move. The United States and the Southwest Pacific, p. 201.
States Government’, they were serious proposals.6 In brief, they suggested that:

1. The Admiralty Islands be declared a strategic area within the Trust Territory of New Guinea, under Australian administration;

2. The military facilities therein be available to the Security Council, with the agreement of the United States, but to no other government except by agreement of both Australia and the United States;

3. The United States have full rights to occupy, maintain, improve, operate and control the various base facilities, or to evacuate them if it so wished;

4. Australia undertake to maintain at its own expense such existing installations as both countries consider necessary, with new installations to be paid for by the initiating government;

5. The United States have the right to assume full control over the base at any time and eject Australian personnel; for such periods it would pay the costs of upkeep.

The ‘strategic area’ concept was unacceptable to the New Zealand government, and the Western Samoan negotiations eventually lapsed. It was one of several aspects equally difficult for Australia to swallow, but Evatt kept pondering them in the hope of a wider bargain, especially the proposed regional defence agreement which he kept pushing at the Americans and which they kept politely ignoring or rejecting. They did offer Australia use of Canton Island airfield,7 and of the US base in American Samoa, in return for Manus, but this did not satisfy Dr Evatt. He obtained support within the British Commonwealth for a joint approach to the United States, but the latter would not agree to be approached. Evatt could not understand why there should not be a United States agreement with Australia and New Zealand on the lines of the ones with Canada and Latin America, and held out over Manus in order to obtain it. The US government rejected the proposed agreement on the grounds (as Acheson told Truman in May 1946) that it was premature, inadvisable, and likely to encourage the Soviet Union to advocate similar overall arrangements elsewhere not to the advantage of the United States or the United Nations.8 He insisted on separating the issue of base rights from

6 Dedman was not quite correct in his analysis of them. Texts given in FRUS, 1946, vol. V, pp. 16–20.
7 Canton Island was under joint American-British administration. An airbase had been built there by the United States.
8 Acheson (Acting Secretary of State) to Truman, 7 May 1946, in advance of the visit by Prime Minister Chifley. FRUS, 1946, vol. V.
that of a regional agreement. He later argued that such an agreement 'would lack the historical foundation of the Pan American system'. The point really was that the United States just did not want to take on such an obligation, and saw no reason why it should.

Meanwhile the lever itself was being weakened. On 7 November 1945 the US Joint Chiefs of Staff had listed Manus as one of seven bases not under sole American jurisdiction which were 'essential' to be retained. On 5 June 1946, with their budget cut, the Chiefs recommended the reduction of Manus to the category 'required, if reasonably attainable by negotiations'. In August Australia showed the United States the draft Trusteeship agreement. It included none of the American suggestions, although there was provision for defence. Evatt told Robert Butler (US Ambassador in Canberra) that the suggestions had been too elaborate, and implied that the strategic area concept would not have survived a Soviet veto. He asked for Australian use of Guam in return for American use of Manus. Both the State Department and the US Navy refused to consider this. On 9 December Hickerson, Acting Secretary of State, told Butler he could continue his discussions with Evatt towards an agreement on the lines proposed, but that the Navy had decided to withdraw from Manus completely within a few months, as it did not any longer consider its facilities of significant importance to the United States. The Trusteeship agreement was completed in December, and the Manus negotiations ran out by the following June, residual equipment (after removals by the US and big Chinese acquisitions) being sold to Australia for a nominal amount.10 American strategy was now related to the central and northern Pacific, but not to the south-west. It was plain enough in Washington, even if it was still obscure in Canberra, that with Japan exhausted and occupied, with US forces implanted in Japanese bases in the Philippines, and in the islands of the western Pacific; and with Britain, France and the Netherlands re-established in South-east Asia, the United States had no further military need of Australia or of bases in her vicinity.

9 This is taken from FRUS, 1946, vol. I, pp. 613, 621, 680–1, 709–10, 1112, 1174–6. The Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, later told the Danish Ambassador when negotiating over the US base in Greenland of an idea he 'had advanced for dealing with the Manus situation under which the U.S. would pay a certain sum of money annually to Australia and receive in return rights to use facilities maintained by Australia; the rights would include the right to conduct maneuvers in peacetime and of course unlimited use in wartime'. FRUS, 1947, vol. III, p. 671.

10 $1.25 million, according to Dedman. 'Encounter over Manus'. The United States claimed to have spent $156 million on the base. Dedman states that Forrestal blamed the abandonment of Manus wholly on the cut in the naval budget.
Differences of policy and consequent dissension between the two governments were more significant in relation to Japan. Australia provided the British Commonwealth Representative on the Allied Council for Japan, the Commander-in-Chief and about a third of the personnel of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, and the President of the International War Crimes Tribunal in Japan (the International Military Tribunal for the Far East). It was a member of the Far Eastern Commission in Washington. These gave Australia opportunities to speak about occupation policies, but not to exert influence on those policies. Over the treatment of the Emperor, the new Constitution, reparations, economic restraints, and rearmament, Australia differed sharply from the United States, and voiced its views in the Allied Council. General MacArthur treated the Council (which included a representative of the USSR and of China) with obvious contempt as a body whose powers were at best advisory and whose ideas were generally either impertinent or irrelevant. Although not giving a mandate to MacArthur's behaviour, the American government was not prepared to concede authority either to the Allied Council for Japan or to the larger Far Eastern Commission in Washington, being determined to conduct the occupation in its own way, on its own responsibility. In retrospect, the American occupation must be conceded to have been astonishingly and unforeseeably successful, but at the time its concern with exclusive control, although more tactfully expressed in Washington than in Tokyo, was galling to the Australian government, aware of its new status as a middle power inflated by being the representative of the Commonwealth group, proud of its part in the defeat of Japan, conscious of its intellectual capacity to contribute to allied policies, and fearful that the wrong policies might allow Japan to threaten the peace again. These matters are discussed at greater length in Chapter 11, but they helped foster in Australia a querulous attitude to the American relationship. This was not improved by American suspicions, which deepened as the Cold War became colder, that the Australian Labor government and administration did not share America's forthright opposition to communism, and included elements that would not be trusted to keep confidential information secure. These suspicions were not without foundation.

Well before World War II, the United States had sought the reduction of national restraints on trade, especially high tariffs, and other trade discriminatory measures including the Ottawa imperial preference system. To further this policy, the American government did not hesitate to use its greatly enhanced economic and political strength vis-à-vis Great Britain as a result of the war. Churchill managed to have a saving phrase inserted into
the Atlantic Charter, but Article 7 of the Anglo-American Mutual Aid Agreement of 23 February 1942 on Lend-Lease provided that the final accounting at the end of the war should include a provision for joint action directed 'to the elimination of all forms of discriminatory treatment in international commerce, and to the reduction of tariffs and other trade barriers'. A similar agreement with Australia was announced in September 1942. Then and later the United States government found it easier to press other countries to reduce tariffs or discrimination than it did to counter domestic American pressures for its own protective trade barriers. The duty of 34 cents per pound on Australian wool had for a time been greater than the cost of production. The third year of the war was not the best time to persuade Britain to remove economic concessions from those Commonwealth partners who alone had stood by her in her hour of desperate peril, or to renounce the support which reciprocal concessions from them might play in Britain's own post-war recovery.

Yet, as explained in Chapter 2, the Ottawa agreements were selective, temporary, and of uncertain overall benefit to the participants, and the world was stumbling in the direction to which the United States was pointing. Few Commonwealth countries, and certainly neither Britain nor Australia, could assume that the benefits of Commonwealth preferences would continue to outweigh the advantages of wider international markets and freer trade. But both could reasonably feel that they should not give up these preferences in favour of the United States and suffer a net loss in the process.

While the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development was in progress in Geneva in 1947, the US Congress adopted a Bill increasing the tariff on wool. This would have rendered further Australian-American negotiations difficult, but President Truman vetoed the Bill, and the tariffs on wool and other primary products were in fact reduced, with reciprocal concessions by Australia in its own tariffs and in Commonwealth preferences afforded. Australia became a signatory to the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade, accepting a reduction of preferences on 21 per cent of her trade with Commonwealth countries.

11J. G. Crawford et al., Australian Trade Policy 1942-1966. A Documentary History, p. 9. Lend-Lease arrangements with Australia resulted in a small net deficit by Australia. This was converted into American-owned real estate and, after an unconscionable delay by the Australian government, into an exchange of scholars under the Fulbright Act.

12Despite this high tariff, the United States had become Australia's largest market for wool.
An American proposal for a double taxation agreement was rejected by the Australian Labor government on the grounds that it would result in a net loss of dollars at a time when dollars were extremely scarce within the Commonwealth group.

Labor went out of office in the December 1949 election. Throughout the four post-war years of office it—and especially the Minister for Foreign Affairs—hankered after a military agreement with the United States, preferably one that involved the British Commonwealth more widely. The New Zealand Labour government had similar desires: in March 1948 the Minister of Finance, Walter Nash, suggested an association including the three countries and Canada. In April, Evatt repeated in parliament the Australian government's wish for a Pacific security arrangement, and in November tried it out once more in Washington, still meeting a negative response. Communist military activities in Europe, culminating in the takeover of Czechoslovakia and the blockade of Berlin, were visible threats to the post-war system, as the equally portentous communist/nationalist activities in East and South-east Asia were not. Washington and the Western European capitals were understandably preoccupied with the former situation, and created the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation to meet it. There was no parallel situation in the South-west Pacific, so that however much Australia and New Zealand might see NATO as a precedent, however much it might emphasise their isolation, to the United States NATO was \textit{sui generis}, and its nature precluded adherence by the two antipodean countries.

Evatt was not troubled by communist activities in Asia, but rather by the increasing evidence that the United States was going to offer a 'soft' peace treaty to Japan, and withdraw both the military forces occupying Japan and the massive subsidies that had made possible the country's economic recovery and perhaps thereby also its political stability. Little though he liked to acknowledge it, Evatt appreciated that the United Nations had not been an effective guarantor of international peace and security. The Liberal opposition in the Australian parliament, and both government and opposition in Westminster, supported the idea of a Pacific pact, not all for the same reasons. The United States was not wholly unresponsive. In March 1949 it sent a military mission to Australia which discussed possible defence cooperation and agreements. Chifley in a broadcast on 13 May repeated his June 1946 statement that a Pacific defence scheme should be between Britain, Australia and New Zealand and thereafter with the United States, but three days later Dean Acheson, Secretary of State, firmly repudiated
the notion of a formal treaty, without suggesting any lessening of American interest in the security of the region. He cited in support a statement from the Indian Prime Minister, Jawaharlal Nehru, that a Pacific defence pact could not take shape until the existing internal conflicts in Asia were resolved.

Yet Acheson, and a new Asian conflict, were to contribute to events that made a Pacific pact possible. On 12 January 1950 the Secretary of State spoke to the National Press Club in Washington and defined America's 'defensive perimeter' in the Pacific as running along the Aleutians to Japan, to the Ryukyus and then to the Philippine Islands. He went on:

So far as the military security of other areas in the Pacific is concerned, it must be clear that no person can guarantee these areas against military attack. But it must also be clear that such a guarantee is hardly sensible or necessary within the realm of practical relationship.

Should such an attack occur—one hesitates to say where such an armed attack could come from—the initial reliance must be on the people attacked to resist it and then upon the commitments of the entire civilised world under the Charter of the United Nations...

The 'perimeter' thus excluded Australia and New Zealand, and also excluded Korea. It seems likely that this statement would have encouraged the North Korean government, which five months later launched a war on the South.

Whether by accident or design, Acheson's statement was made while the Foreign Ministers of the Commonwealth were meeting in Colombo. Australia had a new government, elected only a month previously. The Minister for External Affairs, Percy Spender, promoted the idea of Commonwealth economic and technical cooperation (what became the 'Colombo Plan') at the conference, with the hope of subsequent US participation. He also noted the Asian members' resistance to a New Zealand proposal for a Commonwealth-US security pact in the Pacific. Far from being put off by either this or the American resistance, Spender began to devote his considerable energies towards bringing a pact into being. Initially (in March 1950), he suggested a 'defensive military arrangement' between Australia, Britain, other Commonwealth countries and the United States. He soon realised that there was no point in trying to include the Asian

19Department of State, American Foreign Policy 1950–5: Basic Documents, ii, 2317–18.
Commonwealth states, and that the North Atlantic Treaty was not a relevant model. In early June he told parliament that Australia was prepared to have a bilateral treaty with the United States. On 25 June North Korea attacked South Korea. Britain, Australia and New Zealand quickly contributed naval and air forces alongside those of the United States, and in late July, ground forces. Spender kept urging a Pacific treaty, with now less support from New Zealand, none from Washington, cold water from Canada, marked unenthusiasm from Britain which was concerned about setting up a 'White man's pact', and without even the backing of his own Prime Minister, R. G. Menzies, who believed the United States was so friendly to Australia that no pact was needed.

But Spender was a persistent man. He wanted not only the protection which a treaty with the United States would provide, but the opportunity it would offer to influence policies and events in Australia's own region. In mid-September 1950, he called on President Truman, who expressed some sympathy. Spender lobbied extensively in Washington, recalling Australia's contribution in two wars and in Korea, but he realised that his country was, in the American scene, 'small fry', and the State Department was much more concerned by the attitude of Asian states. At this time he envisaged the treaty members as being perhaps Australia, New Zealand, the USA, the UK, and possibly the Philippines, although he did not rule out others and did not insist on Britain's inclusion, having good reason to believe Britain had no desire to be included. The kind of pact he wanted was along the lines of Article 5 of the Atlantic Treaty, whereby an attack on any one member would be considered an attack upon them all.

The lever which Australia was able to use was the American desire for a 'soft' peace treaty with Japan which would concede the latter's right to rearm, with no restraints assumed other than the presence in Japan, for a period, of American forces and bases. In Washington at this time, in subsequent diplomatic contacts, and when John Foster Dulles came to Canberra the following February, Spender insisted that Australia would not sign such a treaty. He pressed, although deliberately not as a *quid pro quo*, for a regional defence pact with mutual obligations, and for an organic link between Australia and other regional security organisations, to allow Australia to take part in discussions of global strategy that affected her. Spender was troubled about the possibility of a rearmed Japan, and about

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15 Spender claims to have discussed his proposal in August 1950 both with Attlee (Prime Minister) and Bevin (Foreign Secretary), neither of whom showed the slightest interest or gave him the slightest encouragement. *Exercises in Diplomacy*, pp. 35–7.
Australian public opinion on the subject of a peace treaty that allowed it. He was even more concerned about the growth of communist military power throughout the world and especially in Asia. He knew that Britain would not oppose American policy on Japan, and that Australia would eventually have no alternative but to live—however uneasily or unwillingly—with the US decisions. He claims he kept the UK informed about his negotiations with Washington.

Before visiting Australia, Dulles, who was responsible for the American negotiations over the Japan treaty, visited Tokyo. Here he put before the British political representative, Sir Alvary Gascoigne, some ideas about multilateral security in the Pacific based on an island chain defence line, to include Australia and New Zealand. Whatever form these ideas took (and whatever misunderstandings ensued), they were immediately rejected by Gascoigne, presumably on instructions from London. One stated reason was that a Pacific pact would diminish the capacity of Australia and New Zealand to contribute military assistance elsewhere, e.g. in the Middle East. But Spender was convinced that the British government was not prepared to enter any kind of Pacific pact at this time and was also reluctant to see the two Dominions do so. Britain suggested to Dulles that some form of declaration by the American government, guaranteeing the sea approaches to Australia and New Zealand, would be adequate.

This did not satisfy Spender. Talks on the Japanese Peace Treaty took place in Canberra in mid-February 1951 between Dulles, Spender and Doidge of New Zealand. Spender went to the outer limit of his Cabinet brief, or even just beyond it, during the discussions, and refused at one stage to discuss the Peace Treaty further until he knew the United States position on a Pacific security pact. Dulles canvassed the idea of a pact that would include Japan and the Philippines, but neither Spender nor Doidge could extend their commitments to Japan, so recently an enemy. Both, especially Doidge, were reluctant also to include the Philippines, but probably would have done so if necessary to get the treaty. The discussions concluded after a draft security pact had been initialled by the three ministers, and Spender and Doidge had agreed, provided this pact was acceptable to the American administration, to recommend to their governments a Japanese peace treaty acknowledging, if still with some reservations and conditions, Japan's right to rearm. Such a peace treaty (see Chapter 15), and a Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS), were signed in San Francisco in September.16

16 The ANZUS Treaty was signed on 1 September 1951 and came into force on 29 April 1952. The Japanese Peace Treaty was signed on 8 September and came into force on 28 April.
ANZUS has been acknowledged consistently over the subsequent decades, and still is, as the main pillar of Australian foreign policy—certainly of security policy. Sir Robert Menzies, at his retirement, and without the modesty that would have become him, considered it the greatest achievement of his Prime Ministership. It was not sought by the United States, which acquiesced only with reluctance. A climate had been established which made a pact possible: the United States wanted a peace treaty with Japan that would enable the latter to carry some of the burden of defence against communist military activities; it preferred Australia and New Zealand to sign such a treaty; it respected their contributions in the two world wars and in the Korean war; it saw itself as the principal bastion against communist aggression in Europe, in Korea, and potentially elsewhere. NATO was a precedent at least for the principle of legal commitments with like-minded friends. On his side, Spender pressed, professionally and relentlessly, for a treaty. Denied other Commonwealth support, he ensured that Australia and New Zealand constituted a united front in the negotiations. He presented Australia as no beggar of favours but a ‘producer’ of security as much as a ‘consumer’. Without the coincidence of the peace treaty proposals, he would almost certainly not have succeeded, but he legitimately used that coincidence, and he succeeded.

Why would the United States agree to underwrite the security of Australia? In fact it did not, in the treaty, go as far as that. The support was general, not specific. There was to be no secretariat, no contingency planning, no force standing ready for action under the treaty. Only the periodic meetings of ministry, officials and senior representatives. The main operative paragraphs are contained in Articles IV and V:

**Article IV**

Each Party recognises that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes....

**Article V**

For the purpose of Article IV, an armed attack on any one of the Parties is deemed to include an armed attack on the metropolitan territory of any of the Parties, or on the island territories under its jurisdiction in the Pacific, or on its armed forces, public vessels or aircraft in the Pacific.

To ‘act to meet the common danger’ could conceivably vary from a message of sympathy or regret to the provision of massive military forces or even nuclear weapons, and decisions would be taken by each government,
as required, in the light of external and domestic circumstances. Although, in the years since it was signed, ANZUS has never been formally invoked in a war situation, it has provided the principal legal basis from which the Australian government has developed a wide range of contacts with the State Department and the Pentagon, has had access to US policy makers and to confidential information, and has enjoyed, justifiably or not, a feeling of assurance of American help in the event of a future attack upon Australia by a major power. There is no doubt that successive American administrations felt a sense of commitment to Australia: it was an ally, to defend if necessary, to work with in the meantime. From time to time Australia pressed for this to be made more definitive, but with very limited success, so far as the public record shows.

Both the United States and Australia, as well as Britain who was not a member, envisaged ANZUS as a prelude to a wider security arrangement in the Pacific. Article VIII of the treaty specifically refers to such a scheme. But once ANZUS was achieved, neither Australia nor New Zealand saw the need to widen their commitments and the United States developed bilateral agreements with the other Pacific states in whose security it was interested—Japan, the Philippines, the Republic of (South) Korea, and Taiwan.

One British concern about ANZUS was that it might involve Australia in a major contribution in the defence of essentially American interests, for example the defence of Taiwan. There were some Australians who saw the treaty obligations as larger for Australia than for the United States. This approach discounted the latitude of action which the treaty afforded all three members. There was nevertheless a sense in which this fear was justified. The treaty has always meant far more to the two antipodean states than to the United States. They were conscious of the need to pull their weight, 'pay their insurance premiums'. They were often tempted to be obsequious, and—except when it hurt the pocket—compliant, attitudes encouraged by Washington. One can make a case, which will be discussed later, that Australia contributed more to ANZUS than she drew from it, or at least paid a higher price than was customarily acknowledged.

During the period of negotiations for ANZUS, and in subsequent years because of what ANZUS meant to Australia, the American view of the world became an important—sometimes the most important—factor in Australia foreign policy, although until the files are opened (and even afterwards) it will be difficult to allocate a weight to this influence compared with others, foreign and domestic. It was a factor in the Australian decision to send forces to Korea; an important factor in the decision not to recognise
the Chinese People's Republic, in the decision to label China an 'aggressor' in the United Nations, in the decision to fight the Vietnamese, and in an attempt to boycott the Moscow Olympics. The access to American thinking and information which ANZUS provided and formalised meant that the United States with its far greater intelligence resources and far greater international role was able to affect Australian policies much more than Australia was able to affect those of the United States. Yet the influence was by no means complete. Australia opposed MacArthur's desire to widen the Korean war. It was concerned at Washington's inflexibility over peace negotiations. It accepted Eisenhower's demilitarisation of the Taiwan Straits in early 1953 as a local action, not a widening of the Korean war and (by implication) not a matter involving Australia through ANZUS.

Throughout 1953 and early 1954 France struggled, with increasing US help and fading effectiveness, to maintain control of her empire in Indo-China. In mid-April 1954 France, the US and Britain agreed to examine a possible collective defence system in South-east Asia, along with other countries concerned. Australia supported the proposal, but when Dulles pressed for immediate preliminary discussions, Britain refused to take part until after the Geneva Conference on Korea and Indo-China, due to start on 27 April. Alarmed at the deteriorating situation, Dulles sought British and Commonwealth (especially Australian) support for a massive air intervention in Indo-China. Britain, deeply troubled at the implications of recent hydrogen bomb tests, refused. Casey, who had replaced Spender as Minister for External Affairs in April 1951, demurred on the grounds that his government was facing a general election, but he confided to his diary and three months later to parliament, that such intervention would be wrong because it would not stop the loss of Dien Bien Phu; it would have no United Nations backing; it would 'put us in wrong' with world opinion, particularly in Asia; it 'would probably embroil us' with Communist China, and it would wreck the Geneva Conference. He did raise with Dulles, unsuccessfully, the idea of recognising the Chinese communist government, but as a bargaining device and not as something desirable in itself. The Geneva Conference on Korea ended, like the war, in a stalemate; the conference on Indo-China brought agreements on the cessation of

17 Australian Foreign Minister, p. 138. (A misprint puts this dairy entry at 15 April, instead of 25 April.) For once Casey's diplomatic instinct played him falsely. He would have done a greater service by being frank with Dulles. However he later (10 June) told Nehru that 'we' (presumably Britain and Australia) 'had been hanging onto American coat tails and arguing against intervention', and believed this had had some effect. See also HRD, vol. 34, p. 97, 10 August 1954.
hostilities, the temporary partition of Vietnam at the 17th parallel, an international supervisory commission, and the withdrawal of French forces. To retain some flexibility and to allow the conference to end, none of the participants signed the consensus ‘Final Declaration’ on the basis for subsequent action. No one nation or group was prepared to guarantee the arrangements. The United States declared it would refrain from the threat or use of force to disturb the agreements, but ‘would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid Agreements with grave concern and as seriously threatening international peace and security’. Fortified by such company, Australia made a similar statement, and began working for the international security agreement which seemed necessary if Geneva was to be other than a stage on the way—as it much later turned out to be—to total communist control of Indo-China.

For Australia, such an agreement was the purpose of the conference at Manila in September that led to the South-East Asia Collective Defence Treaty. It was considered desirable to include local governments in a common defence scheme; it was important to include the two colonial powers, France and Britain; but it was essential to include the United States, the only power with the capacity and the will to act, and to provide for the kind of joint planning that would make the treaty demonstrably more than an expression of pious intent. The ANZUS Treaty assured Australia of American support if attacked by a major power, but Casey had spent too long looking at the world from London and Washington to believe that defence began at the edge of territorial waters. The Manila Treaty was intended to ensure that any threat from China or Indo-China to the security of the region and thus of Australia was contained on the Asian mainland. For Australia, SEATO (the treaty soon took the name of the organisation it came to establish) was primarily a treaty with the United States to that end.

The two main operative paragraphs are contained in Article IV:

1. Each Party recognizes that aggression by means of armed attack in the Treaty Area against any of the Parties or against any State or territory which the Parties by unanimous agreement may hereafter designate, would endanger its own peace and


19 The Treaty Area was defined as ‘the general area of South-East Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general area of the South-West Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north latitude’. The Parties to the treaty were: Australia, France, New Zealand, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, The United Kingdom and the United States.
safety, and agrees that it will in that event act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.

2. If, in the opinion of any of the Parties, the inviolability or the integrity of the territory or the sovereignty or political independence of any Party in the Treaty Area or of any other State or territory to which the provisions of paragraph 1 of this Article from time to time apply is threatened in any other way than by armed attack [i.e. by subversion] or is affected or threatened by any fact or situation which might endanger the peace of the area, the Parties shall consult immediately in order to agree on the measures which should be taken for the common defence.

The United States did not want, in South-east Asia, a treaty or a commitment of the kind it had (with NATO) in Europe, and the American Administration believed that Congress would only accept even the limited and imprecise obligations of SEATO if they were specifically related to communist aggression. John Foster Dulles, now US Secretary of State, accordingly made such a reservation to the treaty. Casey was under instructions to do the same, but would almost certainly have wrecked the treaty had he so acted. The provisions of the treaty were extendable by protocol, with their consent, to Laos, Cambodia, and 'the free territory under the jurisdiction of the State of [South] Vietnam'.

The treaty did not specify that military planning would occur, although it provided for consultations on the subject. Casey kept pressing Washington, and after SEATO headquarters was established in Bangkok in 1956, contingency planning was undertaken. It was never effectual. The United States was not prepared to commit specific forces to SEATO in advance of a requirement; there was little—and steadily decreasing—community of interest between the eight members; the level of security of information was too low for detailed planning; and with some states there was a clear reluctance to act (see also Chapter 14).

The Australian government was itself inclined more to rhetoric than to action. A battalion group was sent to Malaya in 1955 to help combat communist terrorism, in the later and easier stages of the Emergency. Menzies would have liked the United States to view this force as a contribution, if necessary, to SEATO contingency planning; he seemed also to be encouraging Washington to promise support to British forces in Malaya. The US

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20 Casey later tried some parliamentary sleight of hand to cover his (or the government's) position, by saying that 'resistance to Communism is the immediate objective of the Treaty, and it is to this principal purpose that the Australian government is prepared to commit itself in this Treaty.' *HRD*, vol. 5, p. 2387, 27 October 1954. In Manila he made clear to Pakistan and Thailand that Australia would not regard the treaty as relevant to a conflict that either had with a non-communist neighbour.
Administration was understandably not very warm on either point. Britain did not need US help in Malaya, a colonial situation, and appeared most unlikely to help defend Thailand or Indo-China. An Australian battalion could not fight in two places at once. It was a very small promise, even if a more credible one than the two divisions Menzies rather grandiloquently suggested Australia might supply. But in so far as it represented the commitment of a specific force, located in the region, this was exactly the kind of commitment that America—from whom so much more was expected—was not prepared to make. Putting the battalion into a ‘Commonwealth Strategic Reserve’ was—to borrow a later jargon—a form of packaging rather than a change in content.

The Australian government, and especially Casey, saw an Australian role in encouraging Britain and the United States to cooperate in support of general Western interests. This became more necessary after the Anglo-French invasion of Egypt in October 1956, but in that situation Australia appeared to be less an honest broker than tarred with the British brush, and Anglo-American reconciliation took place only after Harold Macmillan replaced Sir Anthony Eden as British Prime Minister.

Australia had no significant differences in policy with the United States during this period, but it did have occasional differences of emphasis. Casey was interested in the possibility of having normal diplomatic relations with China, but deferred to passionate American resistance to the idea. Over the off-shore islands of Quemoy and Matsu fortified by the Nationalist Chinese, who were effectively supported by the United States, Menzies said bluntly on 9 February 1955: ‘Australia would not think the destiny of these islands worth a great war’. The United States believed communism had to be held wherever it tried to advance. When tension increased in 1958, Casey told Washington that its friends could more easily support its position over Taiwan than over the islands, but the difficulty was resolved by Peking, which reduced the level of hostility. During the Laos crises of 1959–60 and 1961–62, Australia appeared to take a more conciliatory position than the United States, and was less convinced that intervention or a show of force by the SEATO powers on the side of the right-wing elements in Laos would be effective. However, with SEATO as such unwilling to act, and after the 1961–62 Geneva conference resulted in the ostensible neutralisation and de facto partitioning of Laos, Australia followed the US (1) in declaring the treaty obligations to be individual as well as collective, and (2) in sending into Thailand a small ground force on a

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21 *CNA*, vol. 26, no. 2, February 1955, p. 117.
brief demonstration, and establishing a more permanent air base there—at Ubon in the north-east.

Australian trade relations with the United States during the 1950s and 1960s expanded steadily, and continued broadly within the framework of the GATT, with Australia exporting primary products and importing industrial goods. An American proposal for a bilateral treaty of commerce and navigation did not materialise. The American tariff on raw wool was a continuing problem for Australia, as were other commodity import restraints. Similarly the export of American wheat surpluses as food aid to developing states, acknowledged by Australia as generous and humanitarian, nevertheless affected Australian wheat sales. For her part, Australia's remaining trade preferences towards the United Kingdom irritated the United States, compounded by a general discrimination against dollar goods until 1960. Part of the surpluses in the American balance of payments with Australia were taken up by investment, but as the United States' own overall trading position deteriorated during the 1960s, it imposed restraints on foreign investment, which alarmed Australia enough to invoke a special plea to Washington in early April 1965 by the Australian Treasurer, Harold Holt. It was at least an unfortunate coincidence that this plea, which led to an easing of restrictions, occurred within a few days of the Australian decision to commit an infantry battalion to the war in Vietnam.

That decision (see Chapter 10) was part of an on-going process of cooperation between Australia and the United States in defence or defence-related fields: in the exchange of information, space tracking and research, geophysical research, and the production of non-nuclear weapons under the Mutual Weapons Development Programme Agreement, signed in August 1960. This Agreement, under which the United States made a modest input of funds and technology, formalised Australia's dependent status and attitude vis-à-vis the United States, apparently at the insistence of the latter.

The Australian commitments to the Republic of (South) Vietnam of military training instructors (May 1962), further instructors and light transport aircraft (June 1964), an infantry battalion (April 1965), and subsequently of two more battalions and naval and air combat elements to

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22 Australian Treaty Series no. 11 of 1960. The Ikara anti-submarine missile system was the most notable product of this cooperation. Under the Agreement, Australia undertook to 'make, consistent with its political and economic stability, the full contribution permitted by its manpower, resources, facilities, and general economic conditions to the development and maintenance of its own defensive strength and the defensive strength and of the free world'.
an eventual total of some 8000 personnel were made primarily in the context of the Australian-American relationship, and in fear of Communist China as the perceived major threat to the peace of the region. During 1962–64, the United States (initially, the State Department) pressed Australia to become involved in Vietnam. The watershed decision to send a ground combat force was essentially an Australian offer made to—indeed, urged upon—the United States, although in the context of other American requests; at all stages, also, the South Vietnamese government sought in general terms, encouraged, or acquiesced in, the Australian commitments, although not always with enthusiasm. Increases in the Australian commitment after April 1965 were due to American urging, and were made possible by the introduction of selective military conscription, which, as the war dragged on, became increasingly controversial and eventually politically divisive within Australia.

From April 1965 until the last combat and base troops were withdrawn in early 1972, cooperation in the Vietnam war dominated Australia's relations with the United States. While there was a strong element of defence in the relationship based on the earning of favours to come, Australian assessment of the political and strategic situation was very similar to that of the United States, perhaps partly because of Australian access to American intelligence and analysis. The policy of the Australian government was not to differ from her allies in public, but on political issues there seems also to have been little difference in private. Harold Holt, Prime Minister from January 1966 to December 1967, epitomised the identification with US policy in a statement at the White House in Washington in June 1966. Picking up a slogan used in President Lyndon Johnson's election campaign, he exuberantly declared that Australia was 'all the way with L. B. J.'—a more total alignment than he perhaps intended, and one that limited the flexibility of Australian policy. In com-

\[23\] See *Australia's Commitment to Vietnam*, a paper prepared in the Department of Foreign Affairs and tabled in Parliament in accordance with a statement by Prime Minister Whitlam on 13 May 1975. On the April 1965 decision the paper states (p. 13) 'The basic concept behind the Australian action was that of forward defence. This rested in turn on a belief in the fundamental importance in Australia's defence of the South East Asia area, and on the necessity to prevent the spread of communism and political instability in the area. Given Australia's military weakness, this policy had to depend for success upon membership of ANZUS and SEATO, and above all upon the presence of the United States in the area. To this end it was Australia's aim to ensure that the United States did not waver in its commitment to South East Asia and to support the American presence politically, diplomatically and if necessary militarily.' There is now a considerable secondary literature on this subject. See especially Glen St J. Barclay, *Friends in High Places*, Frank Frost, *Australia's War in Vietnam*, and Gregory Pemberton, *All the Way: Australia's Road to Vietnam*. 
bat in Vietnam, Australian ground forces substantially operated in their own allocated area of Phuoc Tuy province, cooperating with American forces and making use especially of American combat transport and logistics, but developing their own philosophy, their own 'civic action' programs and maintaining their own professionalism. This latter aspect was usually overlooked by Australian critics of their country's involvement in the war. Some of the more cogent criticisms of American action, such as the rating of successful operations by 'body count' irrespective of whose bodies they were, just did not apply to the Australian forces.

The implications of Australia's involvement in the war for her regional diplomacy and relations are discussed in Chapter 10, but that was not the main purpose of the involvement. The main purpose was to show the United States that Australia was a willing ally, one that stood up to be counted and thus deserved to be stood up for if necessary, as well as to encourage the United States to remain committed to the defence of Australia's South East Asian neighbourhood against militant communist action. In such terms, the policy must be voted, on balance, successful. There were some Americans—as there were Australians—who would have liked Australia to make a greater contribution, as a state more closely affected than the United States by the outcome. There were others who would have liked her to act as a restraint on what they saw as the follies of the US Administration. But decisions are taken by governments, and between the two governments, at almost all levels, there was an unusual degree of confidence while the war lasted. During the bitter months and years of the struggle when to most Americans the cause seemed just even while the casualties mounted, they may not always have been clear where Australia stood on the map, but they knew where it stood in the conflict. These attitudes have had an undefined but evident legacy.

As the war dragged on, the Australian political left became less divided and more outspoken in criticism of American and Australian policies in Vietnam. Labor may have exaggerated the extent to which Australia could have affected American decisions, but in retrospect it would seem justified in suggesting that Australia should not have accepted uncritically American assessments of the nature, conduct and progress of the conflict. If anything, Canberra took a harder line than Washington, on occasions finding itself, unconsulted, clinging to a limb which Washington had cut off.

In Vietnam, Australia paid its overseas premiums to the American insurance policy. Some Australians disagreed on the premiums; few disagreed on the policy. There were other premiums paid at home. In May 1963, after extensive negotiations, an agreement was signed allowing the
United States to lease from the Australian government at a peppercorn rental for a minimum of 25 years an area of 28 square miles at North West Cape, Western Australia, and to erect there a naval communications station.\textsuperscript{24} The purpose of the station was and is to relay administrative and operational signals between US naval headquarters and ships at sea, especially submerged submarines. By an exchange of letters, Australia had access to the station, but no control over its operations. Such a derogation of sovereignty may have been unpalatable but was acceptable to the Liberal government. The probability that the station would offer a target in the event of nuclear war raised greater questions, the only answer being the judgment that it constituted an important part of the American global strategic capacity which deterred such a war and thus on balance served to protect Australia.

Whereas the Vietnam war was controversial and ultimately divisive within Australia, it had far greater effects domestically and in terms of foreign policy in the United States. President Johnson was discouraged by his failure to 'win' the war or to obtain an 'honourable peace', and decided in March 1968 not to seek re-election. His successor, Richard Nixon, with Dr Henry Kissinger as principal security adviser, moved to withdraw the United States from the war, while enunciating a policy first at Guam in July 1969, and then to Congress in February 1970 which, while ambiguously phrased, emphasised that America's allies and partners must accept primary responsibility for their own defence. The Congressional message, 'A New Strategy for Peace', offered a pledge to provide a nuclear shield to allies or other nations whose independence was considered vital to the United States. A third element, an undertaking to maintain existing treaty commitments, had the imprecision of those commitments compounded by an obvious mood of retrenchment. All these aspects affected Australia. Australian forces were withdrawn from Vietnam \textit{pari passu} with those of the United States, so that by March 1972 all combat and base units were out, and only a few instructors remained in support of the anti-communist South Vietnamese government.

The new American policy was far more than a phased strategic withdrawal from an unwinnable war. It was the end of the attempt to contain by military means communist-nationalist forces in South-east Asia. Australia was not quick to see the nature or implications of these changes which meant, even more than the British run-down (see Chapter 8), the

\textsuperscript{24}The text of the agreement and a discussion of its implications are given in \textit{CNIA}, vol. 34, no. 5, May 1963, pp. 7–32. The station was available for communication with Australian ships and, by agreement of both states, with their allies.
end of Western intervention in the area. A Minister for External Affairs, Gordon Freeth, in a pre-election speech in August 1969, saw the Soviet Union as a possible counter to Chinese power. Such a policy came to be disowned by his Cabinet colleagues and by the electorate, as both communist states were greatly feared. But with neither of her 'powerful and willing friends' willing to deploy power in her Asian neighbourhood, Australia eventually saw that it had no alternative to adopting a similar policy.

In July 1971 President Nixon sent Dr Kissinger to Peking in a process of normalising relations with the People's Republic. Australia, still fervently anti-Chinese and opposed to such a policy, was again caught unprepared by her ally's change of policy.

With the wind-down in the Vietnam war, the emphasis of Australia's relations with the United States reverted to the situation before the first Australian troops had gone into Indo-China ten years earlier: they were mainly concerned with American facilities in Australia, problems of trade, and investment. During the 1960s, Australian-American cooperation in defence and scientific installations in Australia and her territories had expanded steadily. The scientific installations were usually manned entirely or predominantly by Australians, the defence installations by American defence personnel.


26 The leader of the Opposition, E. G. Whitlam, was in Peking at the same time as Dr Kissinger, making the contacts which the Australian government, out of habit, belief, and deference to Washington, had been unwilling to make.

27 In December 1969, installations involving the United States, were as follows: US National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) stations for deep space tracking, tracking and data acquisition, applications technology satellite communications, or camera information, located at Woomera (South Australia), Tidbinbilla, Honeysuckle Creek, and Orroral Valley (near Canberra), Carnarvon (Western Australia), and Cooby Creek (Queensland); a geodetic satellite tracking station at Smithfield, South Australia, for the US Navy; a balloon-launching station, to monitor upper atmosphere radioactivity, at Mildura, Victoria, for the US Atomic Energy Commission; a geological and geophysical research station at Alice Springs in central Australia, for the US Air Force; a radio receiving station on Norfolk Island for the US Air Force; optical tracking stations for the US Geodetic Satellite Observation Program at Culgoora (New South Wales), Perth, Cocos Island, Heard Island, Mawson and Casey (Antarctica); and tracking systems at Smithfield (South Australia), Darwin and Manus Island; a joint defence space communications stations at Woomera; the 'Harold E. Holt' US naval communications station at North West Cape; a US station at RAAF Base, Amberley, Queensland, for research into atmospheric or space disturbances; and a joint defence space research facility at Alice Springs (Pine Gap). There were also several joint programs with the United Kingdom, and with the European Launcher Development Organisation. CNIA, vol. 40, no. 9, September 1969, pp. 547-9.
'revelations' in the press, accusations that the United States through its 'bases' could involve Australia in nuclear war without her consent, and charges of improper activity in Australia by the American Central Intelligence Agency—none of which were confirmed. In June 1967, the American government approached Australia about the possible erection there of an Omega navigational transmitter. In March 1971 the Australian Prime Minister reported that the government had agreed in principle to build a transmitter 'somewhere in the vicinity of Bass Strait'. An agreement was drafted, but not signed before the government changed in December 1972. (It was eventually signed in September 1977.) The delay would seem to have been due to government caution based on public objections to the station, mainly the assertion that the station would be used to help the navigation of American nuclear-powered submarines, and might thus offer another Australian target in the event of nuclear war.28

The immense expenditure by the United States on the Vietnam war eventually weakened her external economic position and the international standing of the dollar. This had its effect on Australia. In January 1968 restrictions were imposed on the outflow of American capital, and Australia was limited to 65 per cent of the 1965–66 figure. In August 1971 a temporary import levy of 10 per cent was placed on about half of America's imports. Fortunately for Australia, this did not include beef, alumina, or beach sands, which together comprised some 70 per cent of Australia's exports. Japan was the country most seriously affected, and Australia was thereby disadvantaged indirectly because Japan processed Australian materials and re-exported them to the United States. The 10 per cent levy was eventually removed in December 1971.

The balance of trade continued strongly favourable to the United States, and is currently about 2:1. This has offered an argument for Australian leaders on marginal matters. Thus Australia eventually provided all the refined sugar used by the two countries' forces in Vietnam, obtained a good price for sugar in the United States, a reasonable quota on beef and some other items. But the high duty on Australia's principal export—wool—remained, with no hope of change. Australian trade ministers referred from time to time to the drift to protectionism in the United States, against which Australia could not retaliate, even though it was itself highly protectionist in both manufacturing and rural industries. The plain fact is that Australia has needed the capital goods, machinery, chemicals, ships, air-

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craft, etc. that the United States could supply, far more than the United States has needed Australian primary exports. The United States provided 10 per cent of Australia's imports in 1948–49, 25.1 per cent in 1966–67 (when it exceeded the United Kingdom for the first time), 21 per cent in 1976–77, and 22 per cent in 1988.

In July 1970, the two governments agreed to share equally the US-Australia air passenger traffic.

In the period after World War II, Australia became a major area of US investment, and by 1961 the US exceeded Britain as a source of Australia's annual capital inflow, as it has done in many subsequent years. American investment became predominant in oil exploration and processing, and in car manufacturing. Such investment, and the technology accompanying it, undoubtedly stimulated Australian industrial development, but it raised questions of 'cost' and other objections that had been less pronounced about British investment presumably seen as being more 'in the family'. Australians did not want to see their country emulate Canada, economically virtually a province of the United States. The growing industrial capacity fostered industrial exports, including goods produced by Australian subsidiaries of American companies taking advantage of remaining Commonwealth preferences. Foreign investment increased so dramatically in the period 1969–72 that it began to exceed, by a large amount, Australia's deficit on current account, and to cause some alarm about foreign ownership and control of significant proportions of strategic industries. Thus, to take an extreme case, by 1968, 58.1 per cent of the mining industry, in terms of value of production, was under foreign control. The McMahon government eventually introduced restraints on overseas ownership, and investment guidelines. The door to the Australian frontier was no longer wide open (but see below).

An unusual three-cornered relationship developed over these years between Australia, Japan and the United States. The United States became Australia's largest supplier and Japan's largest market. Japan became Australia's largest market. Australia depended on American investment and technology. Japan had depended on American technology but developed

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9 See Donald T. Brash, *American Investment in Australian Industry*, and Ian Potter, 'American Investment in Australia', in Norman Harper (ed.), *Pacific Orbit. Australian-American Relations since 1942*. The ultimate ownership of foreign capital is often hard to determine, e.g., most Canadian investment is American, and some American is Japanese or British.

10 *Overseas Investment in Australia*, p. 25.

11 *HRD*, vol. 80, pp. 1916–25, 26 September 1972.
predominantly from its own capital base and re-exported the fruits of that technology, brilliantly adapted and expanded, to compete successfully with American products on their home ground. Both Japan and Australia were or felt dependent on the United States for their security. This interdependence led to consideration of some form of economic agreement for the Pacific basin, but it did not become more than an interesting academic exercise. Apart from the restraints of the GATT, the United States was in no position to extend, into the Pacific, preferences it could not project across the still more vital Atlantic.

In the 23 years of continuous conservative rule in Canberra (1949-72), Australia had fought alongside America for ten of them—three in Korea and seven in Vietnam. The spirit of ANZUS had been honoured by Australia—in Vietnam and in hosting the various American installations on Australian soil. The costs and benefits of the alliance relationship are difficult to compare, but there were costs. Australia was involved in a war not of her making, not really of her choosing. She had less flexibility in her foreign relations, and less rapport with the Third World, although more than was generally accorded her: only the communist states objected publicly to Australia's part in the Vietnam war; for a time during the war, Australia represented Cambodia in Vietnam and the United States in Cambodia. Some of the US installations in Australia must be assessed to be targets in a nuclear war. The physical benefits actually received were mainly in terms of access to American political and military intelligence, to government at a high level, and to military equipment. One may thus reasonably conclude that at least during the period under review, Australia contributed substantially more to ANZUS than she received from it. But the main benefit received was intangible, a sense of assurance of help in future danger. The fact that there was, as it turned out, no danger of attack upon Australia does not invalidate the assurance experienced. Australia has had no cause to claim on its insurance policy, but this does not demonstrate that the policy ought not to have been taken out.

Throughout the post-war years there has been a steady pressure of American influences on Australia as on other countries. Increasingly,
graduate students went to Harvard and Stanford rather than to Oxford and London. American modes and fashions of intellectual thought penetrated Australian universities. American civil and military technologies, management techniques, capital and consumer goods, corporations, television, music, magazines, operated on the Australian scene. While they created all kinds of links and affinities and even dependencies, they did not make Australia more than superficially and selectively American. There was no hankering to be the 51st state of the Union.
It took a long time for white Australians to become conscious of South-east Asia. The prevailing trade winds and the inhospitable nature of much of the continent had restricted the passage of Malay and other Asians to Australia. When the islands of the archipelago were distributed between the Dutch, British and Portuguese empires, their lines of communication were as spokes to the hub of the imperial metropolitan wheels. It was the rapid Japanese advance in 1941-42 through the archipelago to the very gates of Australia that compelled successive Australian governments to look at the strategic implications of the island chain. The nationalist and communist insurgencies throughout the years during and after World War II dramatised the problems for Australia, arousing sympathy in their demand for independence, alarm in their assault on the imperial regimes, and fear of the power of an alien philosophy upon prolific alien peoples.

Australian involvement in South-east Asia in the early years after World War II was limited by the fact that all the countries of the region except Thailand quickly re-exchanged the colonial rule of Japan for that of one or other of the European powers (or, in the case of the Philippines, of the United States, briefly); by Australia's understandable but unjustified primary concern with the possibility of a rearmed Japan; by Evatt's preoccupation with the wider international issues and with struttings the world stage; and by lack of real Australian interest in the area combined with strong racialist prejudices which the war had reinforced. The Labor government's Minister for Immigration, Arthur Calwell, in his policies and statements, accurately represented those prejudices, the lack of conscience of the rich, the determination to keep Australia (apart from its unfortunate Aborigines) white, its culture European, its standards of living and employ-
ment unchallenged by 'cheap Asian labour'. Australia had been a willing host to wartime refugees from the north, most of whom agreeably went home when peace came. But a number did not want to leave, and Calwell, resentful at such ingratitude, used the full powers of the law to seek them out and deport them, even when they were married to Australian citizens. Indonesians, Malays and Chinese were among those sent home, while the Japanese wives of Australian servicemen in the BCOF, and the Filipino husband of an Australian woman, were prevented from entering the country. Although this policy seemed to have the support of most Australians in principle, individual cases pricked the conscience of some people, and gave opportunities for press and parliamentary opposition criticism at home and for resentment abroad. The case of the Filipino, Sergeant Gamboa, incensed the newly independent government in Manila. The conservative Australian government elected in 1949 made some modest adjustments to the policy so that it was administered less badly and less vigorously (Gamboa was allowed entry to Australia soon afterwards), but not before it had given considerable offence in the Asian neighbourhood. Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs from December 1949 to April 1951, made a special visit to Manila in March 1950 to help dispel Filipino hostility. Although Spender had some personal success, 'White Australia' was in varying measure to dog the footsteps of succeeding Australian prime ministers and foreign ministers visiting Asia, and affect the atmosphere of discourse or negotiations, even though every one of the Asian states concerned had immigration policies more restrictive than Australia's. The point was that Australia's immigration policy was discriminatory, barring Asians while simultaneously encouraging Europeans.

In 1948–49 a series of events convinced the Liberal and Country parties, then in opposition, that a giant communist conspiracy organised and propelled by the Soviet Union threatened to take over the world: the subjection of Czechoslovakia, communist insurgencies in Burma, Malaya, the Philippines and Indonesia, the continuing struggle against the French in Indo-China, and the complete mainland victory of the communist armies in China. Within Australia, communist-dominated trade unions disrupted key industries, and threatened to disrupt a joint defence operation with Britain. The North Korean invasion of South Korea in June 1950, launched with Soviet arms and both Soviet and Chinese approval (See Chapter 12), appeared to give dramatic proof of the conspiracy and its aims. Compulsory military training was reintroduced, for home service; forces were sent to fight in Korea; and legislation was passed (later declared invalid by the High Court) to ban the Communist Party.
Fear was thus the dominant element of Australian perceptions of its Asian neighbourhood. There were other considerations—economic, humanitarian, inquisitive; but a concern for physical protection over-ruled them all.

Indonesia

Indonesia is Australia’s nearest large neighbour. Less than 150 kilometres separate them at the closest points. It has a population of around 180 million people, increasing by about three million a year. Its wealth lies also in its mineral deposits (it is a large oil producer, and has extensive deposits of other minerals such as bauxite, tin, and nickel) and its fertile soil (it is the world’s second largest producer of natural rubber). Much arable ground is still unused. Once part of the land bridge between Australia and Asia, the islands of Indonesia now lie between the two, across lines of sea and air communication. Through the strategic Indonesian straits just north of Australia pass the vital iron ore traffic between north-western Australia and Japan, the oil traffic between the Middle East and Japan, and the commerce and naval vessels of many countries moving between the Indian and Pacific oceans.

Australia has had a variety of involvements with Indonesia since World War II. Until 1949 the area was known as the Netherlands East Indies, and was under Dutch rule.1 During the war, Australia had been host to Dutch forces, refugees and a government-in-exile, and Australian troops were part of the British force which entered the East Indies and facilitated the restoration of Dutch administration. This was strongly opposed by revolutionary Indonesians, some of whom had collaborated (for their own reasons) with the Japanese occupation authorities during the war. Between 1946 and 1949 Australia played a different part again, or rather it played several parts simultaneously. It encouraged the revolutionary leaders, from a number of

1For a full account of Australia’s policies during this period see Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian Revolution*; also J. A. C. Mackie, ‘Australia and Indonesia, 1945–60’, in Gordon Greenwood and Norman Harper (eds.), *Australia in World Affairs, 1956–1960*. Margaret George after reading the Netherlands archives of the period, reports that there was talk in Canberra in late 1942 of Australia assuming a mandate over the NEI based on assumptions that Australia would take responsibility for allied recovery of the outer NEI islands, at least the Soembas, Timor and New Guinea. In April-May 1943 Evatt was reported to have proposed to the United States that Australia assume post-war control of Dutch Timor, Dutch New Guinea, and the adjacent Kei, Aru and Tanimbar islands. Evatt publicly denied that he had done this. In 1947 Australia unsuccessfully sought from the Dutch a base in Dutch New Guinea, and the right to administer Dutch Timor.
motives: support for a colonial independence movement; latent hostility to the Dutch as a legacy of wartime experiences; anger at the brutality and deception involved in the two Dutch 'police actions'. On the other hand, the Australian government had periodic qualms as to the status and popularity of the revolutionary movement. It was not very confident in the Dutch capacity to act as a barrier to any hostile forces threatening Australia from the north, but was still less confident in the capacity of an independent Indonesia. It was alarmed by the communist revolt in Madiun in 1948. It thus encouraged a devolution of power, but not total independence. The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr Evatt, sought the support of the Netherlands in his campaign for the office of President of the United Nations General Assembly, which he achieved in September 1948. Three months later, following the second Dutch 'police action', an Australian representative, Colonel Hodgson, speaking vituperatively in the Security Council, demanded that the Netherlands be expelled from the United Nations.

The Australian public had little understanding of or sympathy for the Indonesians, and the Opposition Liberal and Country parties were clearly pro-Dutch. Waterside workers under communist influence put bans on Dutch shipping, which, although embarrassing, the government found convenient in that they expressed sympathy for the revolution but could be explained to the Dutch as not being official policy. Australia was nominated by the Republican leadership to represent it on the United Nations Good Offices Committee (subsequently the United Nations Commission for Indonesia). Here and generally the Australian government increasingly supported the Indonesian cause, somewhat equivocally over the question of total independence, which came in late 1949 as a result of other pressures. The question of West New Guinea (West Irian) was left to bedevil Dutch-Indonesian relations and encumber Indonesian-Australian relations for a further thirteen years, but never seemed to affect the considerable and not wholly deserved appreciation which Indonesians then and since have felt for Australia's support of their struggle to be free.

Indonesian independence in December 1949 coincided almost to the day with a change of government in Australia, when Chifley's Labor government was replaced by a coalition of the Liberal and Country parties led by R. G. Menzies.

Presumably under instructions from Evatt, the Australian representative in the UN Commission for Indonesia, T. K. Critchley, had put up two proposals for dealing with West New Guinea in the Indonesian independence talks: (1) that the territory be placed under international trusteeship
Dr Evatt and Mr Hyde

There is a widespread conviction that Australia can have no possible place at the New Delhi Conference on Indonesia—Sydney Morning Herald, 24 January 1949.

—this the Indonesians rejected; (2) that it be excluded from the transfer of sovereignty and its status be maintained while negotiations took place during the following year. The second was agreed, but the negotiations dragged on until 1961 and depended on the internal situations in both the Netherlands and Indonesia, the attitudes of the great powers and Australia, and the changing character and membership of the United Nations.

The eastern half of New Guinea was divided into two territories: the Australian territory of Papua on the south, and the former German colony of New Guinea on the north, which had become a 'C' class mandate of the League of Nations, and after World War II a trusteeship of the United Nations, administered by Australia (see Chapters 5 and 14). Since 1945 they had come under a single administration. Australian interest in the territory had been initially economic, then strategic. During World War II, Japan seized the Netherlands East Indies and occupied West New Guinea and most of the mandated territory and Papua before their advance was halted by Australian troops only a few miles from Port Moresby, and
slowly reversed by American and Australian forces. The mandate had prohibited the erection of defence facilities, but the trusteeship agreement specifically made Australia responsible for the defence of the Trust Territory.

World War II and subsequent problems with Indonesia made defence considerations predominant in Australian concern about Papua New Guinea until the mid-1960s. From 1962 United Nations and local pressures for economic, social and political development in the territories forced Australian attention and finance into these channels.

There has never been much Australian interest in West New Guinea, which had been Dutch since 1828, although eyes were cast on the territory from time to time. The Labor government's attitude was that the Dutch government was responsible for deciding whether or not West New Guinea should be transferred to Indonesia. The new coalition government, with Spender as Minister and public opinion behind it, went further. It told the Indonesians at once that it was unsympathetic to their claim, and Spender informed the Dutch government and the Australian parliament that Australia had 'vital' interests in West New Guinea, the island being 'an absolutely essential link in the chain of Australian defence'. Australia, he wrote to the Dutch, would have profound misgivings over any transfer of the territory to Indonesia. He indicated that Australia might be able to help the Netherlands administer, develop and defend West New Guinea, or even go further than that. His offer was not taken up at the time.

The coalition government had come to power preoccupied in its foreign policies with the possibility of World War III initiated by aggressive, united or monolithic communist forces. Economic aid programs such as the Colombo Plan and military pacts such as ANZUS were directed primarily towards containment of that threat. Whatever politics or stability Indonesia might come to possess, the islands were Australia's 'last defence against aggression'. The Australian government wanted to take part in any decision on the future of West New Guinea. If Indonesia's claim to West New

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2 For more extensive coverage of this period see Mackie,'Australia and Indonesia’ and Nancy Viviani, Australian Attitudes and Policies towards Indonesia 1950–1965.

3 Percy Spender, Politics and a Man, p. 290; also Nancy Viviani, Australian Attitudes and Policies, p. 163. Viviani quotes Spender's letter held in the Netherlands Archives. Defending his use of the word 'vital', Spender wrote: 'Was it in 1950 of no fundamental importance to Australia, in terms of her national security, what nation exercised sovereignty or control over any part of New Guinea or what policy that nation might pursue? Was it then—or is it now—safe to assume that Indonesia could never in the reasonably near future fall under the domination of one of the two great Communist powers? And should this happen, would it not be of any cardinal significance to Australia?'
Guinea were conceded, the government felt, it might only be a matter of time before the claim was extended to the eastern half of the island.4

Australia’s policy on this issue between 1950 and 1959 had three continuing strands: discouraging the Indonesian government from pressing its claim, in the hope that the claim would fade away; encouraging the Netherlands to stand firm against the claim; and lobbying at the United Nations and in major capitals to prevent the claim being discussed at the UN. Privately and publicly it countered, point by point, the Indonesian arguments. Sometimes the Dutch needed stiffening, sometimes not. The Indonesian government pressed its claim with varying degrees of fervour, dependent on the domestic situation. The United States and Britain were polite to Australia’s representations but reluctant to take sides. Over Australian objections, Britain eventually sold arms to Indonesia. The United States did the same, and provided extensive aid after being caught redhanded helping the failed PRRI rebellion in 1958.

Casey, who became Minister for External Affairs in 1951, maintained Spender’s policies, although with less enthusiasm for an Australian part in administering or defending West New Guinea.5 He was more sensitive to the feelings of Asian leaders. In mid-1953 the government apparently told the Dutch that Australia would not contribute development funds or defence capacity to Dutch New Guinea,6 but would improve communications between the Australian and Dutch territories, as well as cooperate in agricultural, health, quarantine, and educational matters. In fact nothing significant eventuated, and Australia offended the Dutch by doing so little and the Indonesians by doing anything at all.

The Netherlands had been an original member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation in 1949. It now sought to join ANZUS and later tried to get West New Guinea covered by the South East Asian Collective Defence Treaty (SEATO). Australia would not support these moves, which were unsuccessful. In 1955 the United States privately suggested that Australia purchase the territory from the Dutch, or else take it over as

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4 His fear had been reinforced by a reported assertion by Mohammad Yamin, then an adviser to the Indonesian delegation to the Dutch-Indonesian Round Table conference, and later a Cabinet Minister, that ‘the whole of New Guinea is Indonesian’. He also claimed Portuguese Timor and British North Borneo, *Sydney Morning Herald*, 31 January 1950.

5 Casey’s diplomatic and Cabinet activities and private reflections on this issue are recorded in his published diaries, Millar (ed.), *Australian Foreign Minister*.

6 This is reported by Viviani, Australian Attitudes and Policies, p. 176 on the basis of confidential material.
a UN trusteeship. Casey rejected both as impractical. From 1956 the Dutch began to quicken the development of self-governing institutions. The next year further administrative cooperation with Australia was agreed, although again little eventuated. The Dutch publicly mooted an eventual union of the two halves of the island. Australia was non-committal. In late 1957 and 1958, the Indonesian government began to seize Dutch property in Indonesia, sought arms from communist countries and the United States (eventually acquiring from each arms to the value of more than $1000 million), put down the PRRI rebellion (in which Australia was publicly neutral but privately sympathetic to the rebels), instituted increasingly authoritarian government ('guided democracy') with direct participation by communist elements, and began to utter threats against West New Guinea.

The Dutch government pressed Australia for military aid and cooperation. Australia decided to agree only if the United States did likewise. Subandrio, the Indonesian Foreign Minister, came to Australia in early 1959, and won what appeared as a major concession. The key paragraph in the joint communique at the end of his visit in effect withdrew Australia's claim to a say in the outcome of the dispute, and made a gesture towards the principle of self-determination which was immediately nullified by an acknowledgment that Australia would not oppose whatever agreement was reached between Indonesia and the Netherlands. Despite Australian protests to the contrary, the Dutch government could only interpret this statement, in the context of other events, as a weakening of Australian support and resolve, although Casey and Menzies claimed that policy had not changed, and the government under public pressure acted for another two years as though it had not. During those two years Indonesia infiltrated soldiers into West New Guinea, assured Australia that it would not resort to force, and inspired by India's occupation of Goa in December 1961 began to mobilise the armed forces. It became clear that the United

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7Reported by Casey, *Australian Foreign Minister*, p. 226. In June 1950 Dr Evatt, by now in opposition, had proposed that Australia buy West New Guinea from the Dutch. The idea was reiterated by a Liberal MP, D. J. Killen, in February 1959. *HRD*, vol. 208, pp. 3975–6, and vol. 22, p. 122. A Melbourne journalist, Bruce Grant, reported an interview with Dean Acheson in May 1971 in which he quotes Acheson as saying he had proposed to the Dutch that West New Guinea be given to Australia, but Menzies rejected the idea. *The Age*, 15 October 1971. See also Chapter 14 for a further discussion of East and West New Guinea.

8These events are chronicled by Viviani, *Australian Attitudes and Policies*.

Nations would not accept West New Guinea as a trusteeship—a move which Australia had supported—and that the United States would not fight to defend the territory. After a brief show of force, the Netherlands conceded defeat in negotiations under American chairmanship. West New Guinea, thereafter called West Irian, or Irian Jaya, after an interim period of UN administration, passed under Indonesian control on 1 May 1963. A provision for an 'act of free choice' by the inhabitants no later than the end of 1969 was a formal but entirely dishonest concession to the UN Charter principle of self-determination. When the act was eventually carried out, the 'choosers' were carefully chosen to support integration.

Barwick had become Minister for External Affairs in December 1961. He quickly came to feel that Indonesia was not in ideology or capacity an expansionist power, and would be less of a threat to Australian interests if it were conceded this remnant of the Dutch empire than if it were not. Thus while urging the Indonesians to practise restraint, he—with some help from President Kennedy—brought the Australian government to accept a total reversal of the policies it had pursued over West New Guinea during the twelve years since it had come to power. This was done in the teeth of most press and public opinion.

West New Guinea, lurking in the background or thrust by Indonesia into the spotlight, dominated Australian-Indonesian relations and Australia's policies towards Indonesia during the 1950s. It caused dismay on both sides: to Indonesia because it could not understand why—especially after the events of 1945–49—Australia should put her relations with a fading colonial power before those with her permanent nearest neighbour, unless Australia herself had designs on the territory; to Australia because of Indonesia's patent instability, her potential susceptibility to communist power without or within, her potential threat to the security of Papua and New Guinea or even to Australia. To assuage public fears of this threat, to warn Indonesia, and to remind the United States, Australia arranged for the communique of the May 1962 ANZUS meeting in Canberra to reiterate that the treaty applied to the defence not only of the three states but also to 'any island territory under the jurisdiction of any of the three governments in the Pacific', i.e. to Papua and New Guinea.

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*Between 1945 and 1960, over 100,000 Dutch citizens including several thousand from the NEI, migrated to Australia.*

From the beginning, Australia had denied herself any real measure of flexibility in the situation. Rather more subtlety was in fact shown in the next crisis which followed hard on the heels of the West Irian settlement.

Australia had had forces in Malaya since 1950 (see below) as part of the campaign against communist insurgency and subsequently also as a potential contribution to SEATO. Malaya became independent in 1957, Singapore in 1959, and the Malayan Emergency was formally declared ended in 1960. The Australian, New Zealand and British forces remained in the area, constituting what had been called since 1955 the ‘Commonwealth Strategic Reserve’. Continuing the process of decolonisation which had been proceeding throughout the British Empire, Britain in conjunction with Malaya and Singapore proposed to create of those two plus the British dependencies in north Borneo a new state of Malaysia. British North Borneo and Sarawak were considered unable to exist as independent states, while their populations would help to balance the influx of Chinese into the federation with the accession of Singapore. Oil-rich Brunei was invited to join, but its Sultan eventually declined. Indonesia at first welcomed the proposal, but an anti-Malaysia campaign began to grow following the unsuccessful revolt in Brunei in December 1962, in which the Malayan Prime Minister suspected Indonesian complicity. The policy of ‘crush Malaysia’, or ‘Confrontation’ gathered strength during 1963, partly under pressure from the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) which helped constitute the government and whose influence on Sukarno and his policies was out of proportion to its numerical strength as a political party. The date for the new nation to come into being was announced as 31 August, later retarded to 16 September (as a concession to Indonesian objections, and to a UN inquiry into the attitudes of the two Borneo states). Confrontation took the form of public abuse, political manoeuvrings in association with the Philippines (where a claim to sovereignty over the whole of the Sulu sultanate—partly already incorporated in the Philippines, partly in northern Borneo but also in Indonesian Borneo or Kalimantan—was generated), trade embargoes, then—from April onwards—military activities across the borders in Borneo and by raids on the Malayan peninsula. Sukarno supported his actions by arguments that

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12 This Reserve included all the Australian and New Zealand forces in the area but only part of the British.
13 A merger of these two states was agreed in principle on 23 August 1961.
14 The most comprehensive account of the origins and development of confrontation is given in J. A. C. Mackie, Konfrontasi. The Indonesia-Malaysia Dispute 1963–1966.
Malaysia was a neo-colonialist construction—a facade of independence masking continuing British control and military occupation; and that as such it was a threat to Indonesia, and to the wider regional association of independent nations which Indonesia sought to lead.

Australia had consistently supported the Malaysia concept as the post-colonial arrangement most likely to give peace and stability to its members and be sympathetic to Australia's trade and defence interests;15 Menzies welcomed the first joint UK-Malaya statement that the proposed federation was a 'desirable aim', adding, 'We know that the question of the use of the Singapore base is a very important one and we have emphasised this.'16

During the Brunei revolt, Australia readily agreed to a British request to make available a Hercules aircraft of the RAAF 'to assist in transporting troops and supplies [to Brunei] in performance of Britain's treaty obligations'. New Zealand gave similar assistance.17

Australia did not have at this or any other time any treaty obligation to defend Malaysia, as Britain did. Australia associated herself by exchange of letters with that part of the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement which afforded Britain the right to maintain in the federation a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve with an unspecified role.

Australia's public support of Malaysia as a 'major act of orderly decolonisation', which was reaffirmed by Sir Garfield Barwick in Manila on 13 March 1963 and in parliament a fortnight later,18 was given in full knowledge that such support might not be welcomed by Indonesia or the Philippines, to whom Barwick did his best to explain Australia's reasons. The complex negotiations involving Indonesia, the Philippines, Malaysia and Britain failed to be resolved peacefully,19 or rather failed to deter Indonesia from proceeding with military confrontation. Malaysia was formed on 16 September, the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement was extended to the federated territories, and by an exchange of letters with the new Malaysian government Australia continued to associate itself with the

15 See statement issued by Menzies, 17 November 1961, Department of External Affairs, Malaysia, Select Documents on International Affairs No. 1 of 1963, Canberra, p. 38, and subsequent official statements.
18 Malaysia, pp. 133-9. Barwick pointed out on 28 March that Australian trade and business had important interests in Malaya and Singapore.
19 These are described at length in Mackie, Konfrontasi.
Agreement so that Australian forces had a legal basis to operate in Malaysia as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. In this role they were used to intercept Indonesian naval craft and round up parachuted infiltrators.

During the next eighteen months, as Indonesian military activities and Sukarno’s verbal fulminations continued, the Australian government moved slowly towards direct military conflict with Indonesia. On 25 September 1963 Menzies undertook to add Australia’s military assistance to the efforts of Malaysia and the United Kingdom in defending Malaysia’s territorial integrity and political independence in the event of armed invasion or externally-directed or inspired subversion. Yet Australia delayed committing troops alongside the British fighting force in Borneo. In April 1964 it decided to send army engineers, after Barwick had felt reassured by the United States that Borneo was ‘in the Pacific’ for the purposes of ANZUS, and thus Australian forces fighting there would come if necessary within the terms of Article V of the treaty. In February 1965 Australia decided to send its infantry battalion from the peninsula to Borneo, and did so shortly afterwards. The conflict became less significant after the unsuccessful communist attempted coup in Jakarta on 30 September 1965, with the subsequent manoeuvrings for power in the capital that toppled Sukarno. Confrontation formally ended the following August.

Why was Australia not prepared to risk war with Indonesia over West New Guinea, but was prepared to risk it over Malaysia? In the earlier situation, the Australian government, especially after Barwick took the External Affairs portfolio, had some sympathy for Indonesia’s claim. No other power was prepared to support the Dutch, and the Dutch themselves began to waver. In the case of Malaysia, Australia had no sympathy for Indonesian military action which was patently aggressive, illegal, possibly imperialistic, and directed against a fellow-Commonwealth country to whose defence Australia had long been—at least implicitly—committed.

She supported the formation of Malaysia, as the best possible post-colonial arrangement for the territories concerned and for the region. The Australian government believed that Malaysia had the right to be formed, to take its place in the community of nations, to exist free of threats to its

20 *Malaysia*, p. 306.

21 *HRD*, vol. 40, p. 1339.

22 Details of the extra military aid rendered by Australia at this time were announced by the Minister for Defence, Hasluck, on 16 April 1964, *HRD*, vol. 41, pp. 1192–3.
territorial integrity or political sovereignty. Australia had forces already in Malaya and Singapore, and a history of military cooperation in defence of the local polities. The attitudes of the Australian and Malaysian governments were similar in many respects, with long ‘Commonwealth’ associations, and with a common opposition to communism. The British government kept pressing Australia to join Britain’s far larger forces in active resistance to Indonesian military activities in the peninsula and north Borneo, and could fairly say that Australia had in the long term much more interest than did Britain in the outcome of the conflict. But Australia also had, in the long term, far more interest than Britain in friendly relations with Indonesia, and right through the three and a half years of confrontation, including the period when Australians were fighting Indonesians in Borneo, the Australian government did everything possible to keep on good terms with Jakarta, and to influence it towards a peaceful solution. Good (if occasionally tense) diplomatic relations were maintained. Economic and technical aid for the most part continued.

In an address to the Australian Institute of Political Science in January 1964 Barwick said:

It may, of course, emerge that seeking friendship on the one hand and pursuing an inflexible determination to defend what and whom we believe to be right may on occasions prove incompatible. If they do, the latter must prevail and we shall find ourselves set on a collision course. I would hope that day does not arrive. But if it does Australians will face it with calmness and resolution, as indeed they have in the past when, all else failing, they have stood up and been counted in a proper cause.24

The collision only came after the Australian defence forces had begun to expand, after considerable pressure from Britain, and above all after Australia had received assurances from the United States that if the situation got out of control the ANZUS Treaty could be invoked. Australia feared involvement by a major communist power. The Soviet Union had provided Indonesia with weapons of war on a scale and sophistication beyond anything Australia possessed. The Chinese People’s Republic had

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2 Australian ground troops were not used in action against Indonesians until October 1964, and initially this was only to round up infiltrators on the peninsula.


become Indonesia's main political ally, and the idea was frequently canvassed in Australia that China had thereby 'leapfrogged' SEATO to land near Australia's doorstep. While in retrospect this was clearly exaggerated, a different outcome of the September 30 incident would have produced a very different situation.

The Australian-Indonesian collision, when it came, was cushioned by the smallness of its scale, by continuing diplomacy, and by the fact that neither country really wanted a war with the other. On the Australian side, there was some fear and distrust, but little animosity: on the Indonesian side, there was neither. In military terms it made no sense for Indonesia, whose limited logistical capacity was already strained by relatively small operations in the north, to have a simultaneous war in the south. The downfall of Sukarno and the installation of an anti-communist military-dominated government brought Australian-Indonesian relations to the 'normality' they had never quite been able previously to achieve.

Between 1966 and 1974 economic issues—aid, trade and investment, but especially aid—virtually constituted the relationship. Aid had begun much earlier, in 1952–53, under the Colombo Plan. Up to 1965–66 it averaged about $A1 million a year, and fluctuated between 0.8 and 4.5 per cent of all Australian aid. Like all Australian aid, it was in the form of grants. H. W. Arndt wrote in 1970 of this aid as:

...a trickle of projects and technical assistance and recently of more substantial commodity aid and balance of payments support, pushed along by a handful of Australian officials in the face of heart-breaking frustrations arising from conditions in both countries: in Indonesia, the practical obstacles due to administrative inefficiency and all the other factors limiting the country's capacity to make effective use of aid; in Australia, the low priority accorded to foreign aid relative to competing claims on resources, aggravated vis-à-vis Indonesia during the decade 1955–65 by strained relations between the two countries, an administrative establishment for foreign aid policy formulation and implementation grossly inadequate even to the modest role assigned to foreign aid and, last but not least, the pushes from a Department of Trade interested only in export promotion and the pulls from a Treasury jealous of the taxpayer's money and sceptical about the value of foreign aid in general and aid to Indonesia in particular.27

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26 A discussion of these up to 1965 is contained in Viviani, Australian Attitudes and Policies, ch. 9. See also H. W. Arndt, 'Australian Economic Aid to Indonesia', Australian Outlook, vol. 24, no. 2, August 1970.

Most of these problems were to continue as the quantity of aid multiplied following the Indonesian change of government in 1965–66, a change warmly welcomed in Australia. Small emergency grants were made of cash and food, and the total value of aid rose to $5.2 million in 1967–68, $12.7 million in 1968–69, and $15 million in 1969–70. Australia joined the consortium of nations forming the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI) in 1967, and was a sympathetic exponent of lenient terms for the alleviation of Indonesia’s massive debt. By 1968–69 Indonesia had replaced India as the largest recipient of Australian aid, with the exception of Papua New Guinea. Australia’s commitment for the three-year period to 1976 was $69 million. Yet at most Australia provided less than three per cent by value of Indonesia’s aid intake, and it was almost entirely tied to the provision of Australian exports or experts.

From the mid-1950s aid to Indonesia has included military aid of a direct or indirect nature, from training Indonesian officers in Australia28 to the provision of fighter and other aircraft and naval patrol boats as well as communications equipment. Up until the end of confrontation, such aid was hotly criticised within Australia, but the government was not deterred. In retrospect, this was probably wise. Part of the strength of the anti-communist group within the army in late 1965 and early 1966 lay in those officers who had received training in the West, and especially in the United States. The Labor government continued the policy of military aid to and cooperation with Indonesia, including joint naval exercises and the exchange of intelligence information.

Trade between Australia and Indonesia has always been small. For many years, oil accounted for up to 90 per cent of Australia’s imports from Indonesia, but Australian domestic oil production has changed that and given Australia a favourable trade balance. Under stimulation from both sides, trade has increased, although not dramatically in real terms.

The shared boundary in Papua and New Guinea after 1963, especially in the context of some West Irianese resistance to Indonesian rule, provided a succession of border incidents. Australian policy was, wherever possible, to encourage refugees to return, and to prevent overt anti-Indonesian activities among expatriates in Papua and New Guinea. The border, which had been the subject of some uncertainty, was determined precisely and an agreement signed in February 1973. In May 1971 an agreement was signed establishing the seabed boundaries between Australia and West Irian, and between the latter and Papua and New Guinea. A similar agreement in

28Australian officers have also trained at the Indonesian staff college.
October 1972 delineated the seabed boundaries between Australia and Indonesian Timor, and the Tanimbar Islands.  

Between the time of Indonesia's acquisition of West New Guinea (West Irian, or Irian Jaya) in 1963 and the independence of Papua New Guinea in 1975, Australian and Indonesian territories were separated only by the thickness of a line, and a rather uncertain line at that. But much more than a line divided the two countries. By history, race, temperament, religion, population, language, physical features and resources, it would be hard to think of two neighbouring states anywhere more dissimilar than Australia and Indonesia. At times these differences became emphasised, as during the West New Guinea and confrontation crises, and gave rise to anger on Indonesia's side and fear on Australia's. Large and apparently aggressive or acquisitive states usually alarm their smaller neighbours. The immense slaughter following the 'Gestapu' attempted coup of late September 1965, and the imprisonment without trial of many thousands of the government's opponents, troubled some Australians. But the differences have also been mitigated: by continuing Indonesian appreciation of Australia's help over attaining independence; by deliberate diplomacy on both sides; by a genuine concern among some Australians to understand and help Indonesia develop; by official and unofficial aid; by the sea that must be crossed to get from one to the other; and by a streak of easy-going amiability which appears in the character of both peoples. These positive aspects would all shortly be tested under the impact of the Portuguese revolution, and the casting adrift of its overseas territories, especially East Timor.

Malaysia and Singapore

For more than fifty years Singapore has been important to successive Australian governments because of its strategic position on the south-eastern tip of the Asian continent, at the gateway between the Indian and Pacific oceans. The Malay peninsula has been important mostly as the hinterland of Singapore.


Variously estimated at between 200 000 and 800 000 Indonesians, only a fraction of whom could have been communists or communist sympathisers.
One of the Australian legacies of World War I was a realisation of the importance of the British Empire’s sea lanes of communication, and their vulnerability to interdiction by hostile naval forces. The treaties stemming from the Washington Naval Conference of 1921–22 (see Chapter 3) gave the Australian government an initial comfort, so that expenditure on the navy and army was reduced while that on the air force was postponed. But none of the treaties of the 1920s gave any lasting assurance of peace.

The League of Nations—especially with the United States not a member—was also demonstrably incapable of preventing war. And with Britain fighting for her life in Europe and for her communications in the Middle East, the Singapore base was false comfort, a trap for its garrison. Without adequate naval and air support, the combined British, Malay, Indian and Australian forces were no match for the Japanese. More significantly for Australia, the course of the war demonstrated the fallacy of basing the defence of Australia on the security of a single vulnerable island fortress 3000 km to the north-west.

After the war, Malaya came to be seen in Australia as a country in its own right, and not simply the Singapore hinterland—one of the world’s leading producers of tin and natural rubber, an important source of dollars for the sterling area, an area of petty kingdoms, burgeoning nationalism, racial conflict, and incipient revolution. In 1948, when Britain constituted the states of the peninsula into a federal political structure, a communist insurgency erupted, largely among Malay Chinese. Australia under Labor had already committed itself in principle to a ‘common scheme of defence’ for its region, in conjunction with Britain and New Zealand, initially, and subsequently the US and other metropolitan powers, but it saw the Malayan ‘emergency’ as the responsibility of the United Kingdom, and in good measure a result of British imperial policies. It was prepared to send on request—and did send—arms, munitions, food, drugs, etc. but not forces. The Liberal and Country parties government that came to office in December 1949 was much more alarmed by communist military activities in Asia, and elsewhere, and quickly agreed to a British request for military help. The ‘Joint Chiefs of Staff, Australia’ (JCOSA), between Britain, Australia and New Zealand, had been established in Melbourne in 1946 to manage the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan. In May

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1948 the Australian government had authorised 'strategic planning to be developed on the official level through the Australian defence machinery in conjunction with representatives of the United Kingdom and New Zealand for the regional defence of the South-West Pacific area, the boundaries of which include Malaya'. This was the beginning of what came to be called ANZAM, referring to Australia, New Zealand, and Malaya (or the Malayan area). It was an arrangement for joint planning and (from 1950) operations. New Zealand had stationed a transport flight in Singapore in September 1949. On 20 April 1950, Percy Spender, Minister for External Affairs, said the government regarded Malaya as being 'of vital concern to the security of Australia'. Australia announced on 31 May that it would send a squadron of Air Force Dakota aircraft to Malaya for supply dropping and general transport services in connection with the campaign against the communist terrorists. Today, 40 years later, there is still an RAAF base at Butterworth opposite Penang, with a detachment at Tengah in Singapore. Ships of the Royal Australian Navy began to operate in the waters of the Malay archipelago with greater frequency from 1950.

Communist military activities at this period and later engendered some unfortunate over-simplifications among Australian politicians on both sides. Thus Spender said of the Malaya Emergency in September 1948: 'We cannot but view with alarm the possibility of Russia making a thrust down through the Malayan archipelago to the very fringes of Australia'. On the left wing of the Labor Party were those who claimed that the insurgency was really a rural economic movement of wholly reasonable indignation.

Less than a month after the Australian decision to send air force elements to Malaya, North Korea invaded South Korea. Australia despatched a bomber squadron to Malaya, but for several years Australian effort and attention were diverted to the Korean theatre. In 1955 Australian ground troops and fighter and bomber aircraft were sent to Malaya, but in the meantime Australia had negotiated the ANZUS and South East Asia Collective Defence (SEATO) treaties, while Malaya had taken further

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33 These words were used 31 May 1950 by Menzies as Prime Minister referring to an earlier decision by the Labor government. HRD, vol. 208, p. 3645, 31 May 1950.


steps towards independence and insurgency had become increasingly contained.

The new Australian contribution,\(^{37}\) which followed the January 1955 Commonwealth Prime Ministers' Conference and a subsequent visit by Menzies to Washington, must thus be seen in a much wider context than the Malayan emergency. The Korean and Indo-Chinese wars had borne out Australian fears of communist militancy in Asia. What Menzies called the 'near north' was seen as an invasion route not for Japanese aggressors but for those of 'international communism'. In March 1950 Spender had enunciated an early form of what came to be called the 'domino theory' for South-east Asia:

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 direct object of further Communist activities.\(^{38}\)

These fears were reinforced by the events in Indo-China culminating in the fall of Dien Bien Phu in May 1954. In September the Minister for Defence, Sir Philip McBride, spelt out in simplistic terms the government's fears and beliefs which were the basis of Australian strategy for nearly 20 years thereafter:

It is a matter of vital importance to maintain the gap between Australia and the present high-water mark of the southward flow of communism. Should this gap narrow, the nature and scale of attack on Australia would become intensified as distance shortened. Finally, should the tide of communism lap on our shores, we would face an intolerable defence burden and a scale of attack which would be beyond our capacity to repel alone. There is, therefore, every reason strategically and economically why Australia should co-operate to keep aggressive Communism within its present boundaries, and to stem its onward flow.\(^{39}\)

Menzies put the situation with slightly more sophistication in a statement on 1 April 1955 and again in a speech on 20 April. In the former he

\(^{37}\) As announced by Menzies on 1 April, it comprised an infantry battalion group, an air fighter wing of two squadrons, a bomber squadron, an airfield construction squadron, two naval destroyers or frigates, and an aircraft-carrier on an annual visit. *C N I A*, vol. 26, no. 4, April 1955, p. 279.

\(^{38}\) *HRD*, vol. 206, p. 627, 9 March 1950.

\(^{39}\) *HRD*, vol. 5, p. 1630, 28 September 1954.
suggested that Malaya was vital to Australia’s defence. In both he saw Australian security as depending in war on the existence of powerful and willing friends (Britain and the US). Also,

If communist forces again come on the march and a great war ensues, the farther north the lines of defence are drawn, the better for those communities of Viet Nam, and Laos, and Cambodia, and Thailand, and Burma, and Malaya, and the Philippines, and Indonesia and all the rest of us who wish to retain control of our own future and govern ourselves in our own way.40

The dispatch of forces to Malaya was thus designed to satisfy Britain, which had been pressing Australia since 1953 for more active participation;41 the United States, which under the Manila Treaty (SEATO) was committed to the defence of parts of South-east Asia; and Australia’s own concern about communist threats through South-east Asia to Australia. Malaya was not independent until 1957, and thus could not be a signatory to the South East Asia Treaty, even if it had wanted to be, which its government did not. Britain was a signatory, and thus an attack on Malaya could presumably be considered, until 1957, an attack on a member state. Australia committed herself alongside Britain and New Zealand to ‘the establishment in Malaya, as a very important part of the Manila Treaty area,42 as a contribution to the defence of the treaty area of a strategic reserve….’43 On 20 April, Menzies’s further statement by implication emphasised America’s reluctance to underwrite in any formal way the strategic reserve concept, or the security of the archipelago and sea between Singapore and Australia, which he had requested. All the United States would do was give a vague assurance of cooperation under the Manila Treaty, and indicate a willingness to consider improving Australia’s military equipment position.44 The United States could hardly be expected to

41 The Chief of the Imperial General Staff had visited Australia for talks on the defence of the region in October 1953. Military staff talks between the three countries were held in early 1954.
42 Article VIII of the Treaty defined the ‘Treaty Area’ as ‘the general area of South-East Asia including also the entire territories of the Asian Parties, and the general area of the South-West Pacific not including the Pacific area north of 21 degrees 30 minutes north Latitude’, i.e. excluding Hong Kong and Taiwan.
underwrite a British colonial or post-colonial presence in Malaya, despite the association with America’s ANZUS partners in the process.

For Australia, and probably for New Zealand also, the forces in the Strategic Reserve contributed to the defence of Malaya against external threat; they could thus demonstrate taking an active role in the defence of an important part of the Treaty area. The Reserve—if not otherwise occupied—must also be available for use elsewhere in the region, and Menzies said that in the event of war Australia must be ready to contribute ‘substantially greater forces’, probably ‘of the order of two divisions’. In June he announced that the Australian component, like those of Britain and New Zealand, would be available for use against communist terrorists.

Because of its strategic position, Singapore was the first British colonial territory in which Australia had diplomatic representation. The Australian government had placed an Official Representative there in September 1941, who was shot five months later by the Japanese. Another Representative was appointed in November 1945, who was absorbed in a Commission established in March 1946. In early 1953 Casey sent the Secretary of the Department of External Affairs, Alan Watt, to Singapore for three months as a kind of roving ambassador. Less than a year later Watt became Australian Commissioner for South-east Asia, ‘accredited’ to the British authorities in Singapore, Malaya, and the British Borneo territories. With an Embassy in Jakarta and Tokyo, a High Commission in India and Pakistan, a Legation in Burma, and a representative in Hong Kong, Australia was now developing a diplomatic presence in Asia necessary for proper political representation, reporting and assessment. In September 1955 a Commission was established in Kuala Lumpur, and this became a High Commission when Malaya achieved independence in August 1957.

In parliament, the Labor opposition had strongly criticised the despatch of Australian forces in 1955, contending variously that the decision would ‘exacerbate the Emergency, injure Australia’s image in Asia, incur Malayan

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*In his 20 April speech, Menzies referred to the ‘Malayan plans’ being integrated into the over-all defence of South-east Asia. The SEATO Council, patently at Australia’s prompting, welcomed the Australian decision for ‘participation by Australian forces in a strategic reserve to be established in Malaya as an important part of the Treaty Area’. McBride denied that the Reserve would be used elsewhere in South-east Asia. In fact, a part of the Australian force went to Thailand during the 1962 crisis.

*CNIA*, vol. 26, no. 6, p. 419, June 1955.

** At about the same time as one to the Netherlands East Indies.

* Australian Diplomat, pp. 201–3.
disapproval, and be strategically disadvantageous by repeating the mistakes of 1941-42. Labor claimed, with some justification, that the government was unclear about the role of the Reserve.

With Malaya's independence, Britain negotiated a Defence Agreement under which Britain undertook 'to afford to the Government of the Federation of Malaya such assistance as the Government of the Federation of Malaya may require for the external defence of its territory'. For its part, the Federation agreed that the UK could, for the purposes of the Agreement, maintain 'naval, land and air forces including a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve', and maintain and use bases and facilities in the Federation, as negotiated. The two countries would consult and cooperate to meet any attack against the territories or forces of the Federation or against the territories, forces or protectorates of the United Kingdom in the Far East. In the event of a threat to the preservation of peace or the outbreak of hostilities elsewhere, Britain undertook to 'obtain the prior agreement of the Government of the Federation of Malaya before committing United Kingdom forces to active operations involving the use of bases in the Federation...'. There was some ambiguity as to whether the term 'United Kingdom forces' was deemed to include the Australian and New Zealand components of the Strategic Reserve, that is, for example, whether Australia could deploy forces direct from bases in Malaya to (say) the defence of Thailand. Britain certainly could do so only with the agreement of the Federation government. Australia was not a party to the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement (AMDA), but by an exchange of letters in March and April 1959 Australia was associated with those treaty provisions that related to the Reserve. This gave Australia the right to maintain forces, as part of the Reserve, in the Federation and enjoy certain privileges for the forces and their dependants. When Malaya joined with Singapore, Sabah and Sarawak to form Malaysia, AMDA was amended accordingly and another Australian-Malaysian exchange of letters occurred to fit the new situation. Australia still had no formal obligation for the defence of

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49 This summary is from R. Catley, in his unpublished Ph.D thesis, Australia, Malaysia and the Problem of Confrontation. Catley explores in detail the ambiguities of Australia's position and attitude to the Reserve, and to the Malaysia Proposal.

50 Article 1 of the Agreement between the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the Government of the Federation of Malaya on External Defence and Mutual Assistance, signed 12 October 1957, hereafter called the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement, or AMDA.

51 Articles III, IV, VI, VII and VIII.
Malaysia, but an obligation was implicit in the relationship and in the concept of the Strategic Reserve. Similarly, with forces on the peninsula, Australia could not easily stand by in the event of a resuscitation of communist insurgency beyond Malaysia’s capacity to control.

The Emergency in Malaya had been declared to have ended on 31 July 1960. The Australian forces remained in the area as part of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, for the general defence of the region within the purposes, if not formally under the aegis of SEATO. Incorporating Singapore in Malaysia meant, in the terms of Article VIII of AMDA, that Britain would not be able to use the bases there for SEATO purposes without the prior agreement of the Malaysian government. Whether this was a real or a theoretical restraint was never put to the test, although everyone had to act as though it was a real restraint, accepted to satisfy the *amour propre* of Malaya/Malaysia. Australians deployed to Thailand in 1962 did so via Singapore.

Australian attitudes to the developing situation of ‘confrontation’ between Malaya (later Malaysia) and Indonesia during 1963 are related in the previous section. In his statement of 25 September 1963 committing Australia to the security of Malaysia against Indonesian attack, Menzies indicated that the decision fulfilled an unwritten obligation to Britain no less than to Malaysia: ‘our vital engagements with the United Kingdom are not written or in any way formalised. Yet we know and she knows that in this part of the world we look to her, and she looks to us.’ So that there should be no ambiguity about Australia’s position in relation to Malaysia, he went on:

I, therefore, after close deliberation by the Cabinet, and on its behalf, inform the house that we are resolved, and have so informed the Government of Malaysia, and the Governments of the United Kingdom and New Zealand and others concerned [i.e. presumably Indonesia and the Philippines], that if, in the circumstances that now exist, and which may continue for a long time, there occurs, in relation to Malaysia or any of its constituent States, armed invasion or subversive activity— supported or directed or inspired from outside Malaysia—we shall to the best of our powers and by such means as shall be agreed upon with the Government of Malaysia, add our military assistance to the efforts of Malaysia and the United Kingdom in the defence of Malaysia’s territorial integrity and political independence.52

Singapore had become internally self-governing in 1959. Australian leaders had qualms about the radical People's Action Party government, but these were soon assuaged as the Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew, showed himself to be pragmatic, anti-communist, and encouraging to private enterprise. Singapore, predominantly Chinese, was an uncomfortable neighbour of Malaya, and an even more uncomfortable partner in Malaysia —so much so that the partnership was dissolved in August 1965, at the insistence of the Malay Prime Minister, Tunku Abdul Rahman, and without any consultation with Britain or Australia.\(^5\) For Australia, now involved in military action in Borneo,\(^4\) this raised the question whether a Federation so lightly broken up by its own political leaders was worth defending against external enemies. However, the issues were much wider than that. Defence cooperation between Singapore and Malaysia continued despite the political separation. Menzies on 10 August said Australia was determined to play her part with all the other countries concerned 'in continuing a common resistance to attacks upon the Malaysian area'.\(^5\) Full diplomatic relations were immediately opened with the Singapore government.

If the United States had been reluctant to underwrite Australian participation in the Commonwealth Reserve, it was apparently a little less reluctant to indicate backing for the commitment to Borneo. On 17 April 1964 the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, shortly before his translation to be Chief Justice of the High Court of Australia, said at a press conference on his return from a SEATO Council meeting: 'The [ANZUS] Treaty expressly covers attacks on Australian military personnel or aircraft or ships in the Pacific area. Borneo was, for this purpose, in the Pacific area.... America is not in doubt about this.'\(^5\) Subsequent questions in parliament on this issue were answered equivocally by Barwick and Menzies, although giving the same broad assurance. The tenor of their replies suggested that although the United States had agreed that Borneo

\(^5\) Statement by Menzies on 10 August 1965, *CNIA*, vol. 36, no. 8, August 1965 pp. 504–5. In March-April, Lee had visited Australia and was received by the government with unusual warmth.

\(^4\) Australian military aid to Malaysia included also the provision of military stores, small craft, assistance in training the Malaysian armed forces, and the secondment of Australian personnel to those forces.

\(^3\) See note 53.

\(^2\) *Sydney Morning Herald*, 18 April 1964.
was in the Pacific for the purpose of ANZUS, the American government at this time did not want to say anything provocative of hostility by Indonesia, and also saw no likelihood of committing forces to the defence of the Malaysian Federation, where some 65,000 members of Commonwealth armed forces were engaged in what was, after all, a very small if troublesome war.

The Australian commitment to help defend Malaysia against Indonesia had the broad support of the Labor opposition, although it would have preferred that action to have flowed from a mutual security agreement, with commitments on both sides.

By the time that Confrontation had ended in mid-1966, Australia was heavily involved in the Vietnam war, and the British government was beginning to consider the reduction of its Asian military commitments, for economic reasons. In July 1967 it announced that half of the British forces in Malaysia and Singapore would be withdrawn by 1971 and the rest within two to five more years. In January 1968, the final deadline was brought back to March 1971 and then extended (at the pleading of Singapore) to December of that year. Australia regretted the decision to withdraw, but was not enthusiastic about a British suggestion that British forces might be located in Australia as an alternative to the Malaysian area, should they be unwelcome there. In fact the suggestion was only a gambit: the British forces were leaving in any case. On 25 February 1969 the Prime Minister, Gorton, announced that the Australian forces would remain in Malaysia and Singapore, although most of the ground troops would move to Singapore. This was the first time Australia had committed forces outside its immediate area without the company of either Britain or the US. By the opposition in parliament, Gorton’s speech was seen as ‘imperial nostalgia’. In fact the policy was urged upon Australia by three of the four partners (Malaysia, Singapore and New Zealand) and with encouragement from the British Conservative opposition, which the following year became the government and then negotiated the Five Power Defence Arrangement which succeeded AMDA and required Malaysia and Singapore to cooperate in defence. This arrangement was born of controversy, first, because

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57 The questions and answers are reproduced in CNIA, vol. 35, no. 5, April 1964, pp. 56–60.
58 The implications of this were considered by a seminar at the Australian National University in September. See T. B. Millar (ed.), Britain’s Withdrawal from Asia.
of the changes in British policy and capacity; second, because of offensively blunt speaking from Gorton in which he almost entirely dissociated Australia from any plans to defend Eastern Malaysia (the Borneo states); and third, by the May 1969 racial riots in Malaysia which demonstrated the fragility of the Federation's social structure. Australia created further problems by withdrawing most of its ground elements from the peninsula to Singapore, for what turned out to be illusory financial reasons.

Britain had borne the greater part of the burden of defending Malaysia and Singapore for a good many years, and her intention to retrench was wholly understandable. Such was the resistance by her four partners, however, that the Labour government of Harold Wilson had made provisions for retaining some naval and air elements in the area after 1971, and for training exercises whereby ground forces would be deployed to the region in simulated emergencies. When the Conservative Party won the election in 1970, it undertook to retain ground forces as well, although to nothing like the former extent, and not under the blanket guarantee of AMDA, which ceased to apply as from 31 October 1971.

The Five Power arrangements which came into effect on the following day were not a formal treaty but a declaration and a series of administrative and planning measures which flowed from the declaration. In terms of the communique which followed a meeting in London the previous April of Ministers of Malaysia, Singapore, Britain, Australia and New Zealand, the five declared that:

in the event of any form of armed attack externally organised or supported or the threat of such attack against Malaysia or Singapore, their governments would immediately consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately in relation to such attack or threat.60

The documents establishing the Five Power arrangements consisted of exchanges of letters between the five governments, with detailed annexes. They were not a new venture but the latest expression of the cooperation begun under ANZAM 23 years before. An integrated air defence system was established involving the air forces of all five powers. The forces of the three external partners were formed into a single joint force known as

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An Air Defence Council was made responsible for the integrated air defence systems, and a Joint Consultative Council was established. The first commanders were Australians. Indonesia gave public assurances that it had no objection to the Five Power arrangements. The Philippines was less welcoming.

What purpose were the arrangements to serve? Each member no doubt saw them differently. Britain had extensive economic interests. All parties were interested in the continuing availability of Malaysian rubber and tin. All would be adversely affected if a different hegemony—by the Soviet Union or the Chinese People's Republic—were established over this gateway between the Indian and Pacific Oceans. The existence of the agreements, and the military contribution of the three external powers, must have given Malaysia and Singapore additional confidence at a time when the United States was winding up its commitment on the mainland of South-east Asia. It also encouraged them to work together in their joint defence. Despite the Australian reservations, 'Five Power' could be presumed to restrain Indonesia or the Philippines if future governments there reasserted claims against Malaysia or asserted them against Singapore. The ANZUK forces would not be used in the event of communal disturbances, but they might be usable should communist insurgency erupt again, as it showed signs of doing. For the external powers there was another factor: their forces were already there. To remove them would be a gesture of renunciation, of lack of confidence in the two local governments, and almost certainly irreversible.

Yet the arrangements were clearly transitional in character. Britain faced chronic economic problems. Australia faced the possibility of a change of government to a party which had undertaken to remove Australian forces from the area. The whole power balance in Asia was shifting, and the basis

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61 It consisted of the following forces: Britain—one battalion group (in Singapore), up to 6 frigates, up to 4 Nimrod maritime reconnaissance aircraft, a squadron of helicopters, one submarine (on rotation with Australia) and combat ships and units on visits; Australia—two squadrons of Mirage fighter aircraft, one battalion group, one destroyer or frigate; New Zealand—infantry force of a battalion, one frigate, and a contribution to air defence.

62 Rajaratnam, Foreign Minister of Singapore, was reported in November 1972 as saying that the Five Power Arrangements, despite their weakness, should be maintained as they helped prevent a power vacuum in the area.

63 McMahon, who replaced Gorton as Prime Minister, did not help matters when he said on television in October 1972 that the Australian battalion might help prevent hostilities between Malaysia and Singapore.
of security for small states was moving away from reliance on a single major power. The alternatives were more theoretically attractive if less demonstrably practical: the concept of a multiple balance of major powers; economic and social groupings of small states; and/or the psychological walls of non-alignment, and a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality'. Malaysia pressed the last of these upon its partners in the Association of South-east Asian Nations (ASEAN), none of which had the same faith in the concept, but none also felt inclined to reject it out of hand.

Australia's interest in and relationships with Malaysia and Singapore since 1950 have been dominated by defence considerations, and by the question of whether or not to have Australian forces located in the area. Defence aid has gone far beyond the stationing of troops, involving gifts of many kinds of military equipment, and extensive training of Malaysian servicemen in Australia and in Malaysia. Details of defence aid are not easy to obtain, but in October 1967 the Australian Minister for Defence announced a 'further allotment' of $A16 million to Malaysia and $4 million to Singapore up to 1970, making a total of $45 million to the two. A further $20 million, in the same ratio as the first, was allocated for 1970-74. On 8 May 1974, the 200th Malaysian serviceman to train in Australia arrived in Sydney.

Both Malaysia and Singapore (to a lesser extent because of its higher living standards) have also been consistent recipients of Australian aid under the Colombo Plan and through multilateral programs. Several thousand students have come to Australia under the Colombo Plan, and many thousands more under their own government, private, or other auspices. A few of the students have caused political incidents through their reluctance to honour their undertaking to return home at the end of their course, or through engaging in public protest in Australia about the activities of the home government. The freedom with which Malaysian and Singapore students, officials or businessmen have been able to enter Australia contrasted with the reluctance of the Australian Department of Immig-

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4 Formed in 1967 as a loose association between Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Thailand and the Philippines. ASEAN has slowly developed a sense of cohesion and purpose.


67 Department of Defence Press Release 265/74.
'We bring you here to teach you the fundamentals of democracy and you abuse your privilege by exercising them.'

Asian students protest at the immigration policy—*The Bulletin*, 1965.

...tion to allow citizens of the two countries to enter and remain as settlers. This caused some resentment.68 There has been significant private Australian investment in both states, including joint ventures.

More than twenty years of defence cooperation within the context of common memberships of the Commonwealth, common dependence on Britain, common use of the English language, close contacts between officials—all these involved and maintained a less-than-foreign relationship. This diminished somewhat as the two South-east Asian states came to have less need of their Commonwealth partners, could rely less on Britain, and (like Australia and New Zealand) had to make their own terms with their neighbours. But it continued to exist. And for Australia, in Asia but

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not of it, the special relationship with Malaysia and Singapore offered a cultural and political vestibule for the society of South-east Asian states which Australia had sought to foster and, occasionally and selectively, to enter.

**The South-east Asia Treaty Area**

Spender saw the needs of South-east Asia as being (1) economic, in raising living standards, and (2) military, in resisting communism. To do something about the former would help with the latter:

The consolidation of Communism in China and the evident threat of its emergence as a growing force throughout South and South-east Asia, underline the urgency of international efforts to stabilise governments and to create conditions of economic life and living standards under which the false ideological attraction which communism exerts will lose its force.²⁹

Neither Spender nor his colleagues could see that the communist insurgencies drew much of their support from their nationalist content, nor feel reassured by the suggestion that even if they were communist they might if successful be dissident communists in the Yugoslavian mould. If the Vietnamese communists were to overrun the whole country, Spender said, their regime would be ‘scarcely distinguishable from the communist satellite Governments’; Laos and Cambodia ‘could scarcely be expected to offer much resistance’; and Thailand, despite its long and proud tradition of independence, would have a doubtful capacity to withstand the ‘formidable pressure’ of a communist regime in Indo-China. If Vietnam ‘came under the heel of Communist China’, Malaya would be in danger of being outflanked, and together with Thailand, Burma and Indonesia would ‘become the next direct object of further Communist activities.’³⁰ Beliefs and fears such as these were to permeate government thinking until at least 1971, and to find wide acceptability within an Australian community accustomed to feeling vulnerable and becoming aware of the turmoil in their Asian neighbourhood.

Spender acted intelligently and vigorously within the limits of his vision. At the Colombo conference of Commonwealth foreign ministers in January 1950 he promoted a scheme for regional bilateral economic cooperation that

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³⁰ Ibid.
became known as the Colombo Plan, and subsequently engaged in it the interest of the United States as the essential large donor. Such cooperation, designed to help raise living standards, promote stable government, and oppose ‘communist imperialism’, was essentially long term, and events in Asia might well move too quickly to allow it to take effect. There must therefore be as well a ‘regional pact for common defence’, not a NATO of the Pacific, nor just a treaty of political, economic or cultural cooperation, but something between these two conceptions—a military pact but with also the positive aims of promoting ‘democratic political institutions, higher living standards, increased cultural and commercial ties’.

The circumstances of the time were not conducive to such a pact, and it did not eventuate, although (see Chapter 9) Spender did get, in draft form, a security treaty for Australia (ANZUS) before he retired as Minister for External Affairs in April 1950 to become Australian Ambassador to the United States.

The communist/nationalist movements active, in varying degree, in Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia were helped psychologically and militarily by the communist takeover of China. Chinese arms and supplies could now be sent straight across the border. At almost the same time (December 1949), the French government conferred powers of internal government on the three states, and obtained American military aid for them, which began to arrive the following June. The stage was set for 22 years of war, from which the French were to withdraw after four while the United States fought on for the next 18, first by proxy and increasingly after 1961 by direct involvement.

Australia was quick to recognise the new states in 1950. The Department of External Affairs had a realistic assessment of events in Indo-China. Casey, who succeeded Spender, believed in seeing things for himself. He was an indefatigable traveller and roving diplomat, and visited South, South-east and East Asia repeatedly during his nine years in office. In August 1951 he recorded in his diary:

There is no indigenous Communist menace in South-east Asia which would be of any consequence without outside fomentation and aid.... There are Nationalist

71 A foreign minister or prime minister will usually get the credit or blame for his country’s policy, whatever support or ideas he may draw from the public service. If the Colombo Plan concept was not wholly Spender’s, he introduced it and followed it through to a successful outcome.

movements. The Nationalist movement in Indo-China was captured by the Communists—but this has not happened elsewhere.\textsuperscript{73}

He supported the French and American-aided resistance to communist military action in Indo-China, but Australia was an interested spectator and not a participant in these matters. It was a participant in the wider struggle—in the Korean war (against Chinese and North Korean forces) and in the Malayan Emergency (against Malay Chinese terrorists).

In March 1953 the French Minister in Charge of Relations with the Associated States (of Indo-China), Jean Letourneau, visited Canberra, seeking help in Vietnam other than manpower, which he said in existing circumstances was sufficient to restore the situation. The Australian government said it was ready to give certain military and air supplies and (under the Colombo Plan), livestock and various kinds of equipment to the three states. France was fighting a great battle in Indo-China, Casey said, on the successful outcome of which depended the security of many other countries, including Australia.\textsuperscript{74}

But the French situation did not improve; it deteriorated. The key question in Western minds was whether or in what circumstances Communist China might intervene, as it had done in Korea. Casey felt that the presence of Western forces in North Vietnam could well provoke Chinese intervention. A conference was called in Geneva for late April 1954. This, and a Viet Minh threat to the beleaguered French and South Vietnamese garrison of Dien Bien Phu, focused Australian attention on the Indo-China situation. Casey told parliament on 7 April: ‘if Indo-China were to fall to the Communists there is no doubt at all that the whole of South-East Asia would be threatened.’\textsuperscript{75} He subsequently recorded in his diary:

9 APRIL
I believe (and have told the French) that it is an urgent and important matter that France should give as complete a degree of independence to Vietnam (and the other component States of Indo-China) as soon as possible and before the Geneva Conference…. We [presumably, Cabinet] had a few hours again this afternoon on the Indo-China problem…. The general line was to avoid commitment in respect of troops, or in warning Communist China—as a ‘warning was a commitment’. The

\textsuperscript{73} \textit{Australian Foreign Minister}, pp. 35–6.
\textsuperscript{75} \textit{HRD}, vol. 3, p. 124, 7 April 1954.
desire to avoid any commitment conflicted with our desire not to appear to the Americans to be dragging our feet on the first instance when the Americans had asked us to join with them in action to repel what is the obvious menace to us in the future.

12 APRIL

The first thing to get straight in our minds is the answer to the question—where does the menace come from in Indo-China. My answer is—the Viet Minh, not Communist China. The latter provides arms and equipment and some staff officers and technicians to the Viet Minh, but probably much less aid than the Americans are giving to France and Vietnam....

I believe that getting into direct holts with Communist China is the most vitally important thing to avoid....

Probably the only people who can beat the Viet Minh are the non-Communist Vietnamese, adequately supported and helped—and against the background of something very close to complete independence, if the French can be induced to give it to them.76

In Singapore on his way to Geneva (where Australia was a participant in the Korea conference), Casey was told by the British that the alternatives in Vietnam were either to have a composite communist and non-communist government or to partition the country, giving the Viet Minh a ‘slice’ in the north. Casey found the second alternative the least unpleasant, and raised the possibility at Geneva. This offended the Americans, who did not like the word ‘partition’ although they came to accept the concept. Casey felt that there might be no alternative to recognition of the Chinese communist government, and its seating at the United Nations, but this was quite unacceptable to Washington. He opposed, as did the British who were asked to participate, a massive Western air strike to save Dien Bien Phu (see above). He welcomed the American proposal, announced in a joint US-UK statement on 13 April, to examine ‘the possibility of establishing a collective defence, within the framework of the Charter of the United Nations, to assure the peace, security and freedom of South-east Asia and the Pacific’.77 But Britain was not prepared to discuss the proposal in detail until after the Geneva conference.

Just prior to the conference, the US Secretary of State, Dulles, told Casey that France was in the death throes of her existence as a great power.

76 Australian Foreign Minister, pp. 124–5.

She had been incompetent and indecisive in Vietnam, where a good American general was needed to instil both military effectiveness and the spirit and will to fight. He believed Congress would authorise President Eisenhower to deal with the Vietnam situation as he thought fit, including by armed intervention, if necessary, provided members of the British Commonwealth, especially Britain and Australia, cooperated. If they did not cooperate, Dulles said, the US might well wash its hands of responsibility in South-east Asia. This was the last thing Australia wanted, but Casey had a temporary let-out in that his government had to face an election at the end of the month. At an ANZUS Council meeting on 2 May, he told Dulles that he believed it was 'not possible to hold Indo-China or South-east Asia by force of arms alone—i.e. without most active support of local populations'. Also, 'We must avoid becoming embroiled in a war with China, which could be a great disaster'. He said that if his government were re-elected, it would join in discussions about a South-east Asian defence organisation, but would be reluctant to include either Indonesia or the Netherlands in such a body.

Back in Australia for the election (which the Liberal and Country parties won), Casey recorded on 4 June:

I believe that we should go for guaranteeing the autonomy of Laos and Cambodia plus whatever could be saved of Vietnam, and that we should endeavour to get as much support of this as possible by Asian and Western Nations. In particular I do not believe that the Americans have thought it through, and we have been unable to get them to state their political and military objectives; but they seem intent on injecting themselves physically, into the area, which might well bring Communist China in and lead us all into a third world war. Apart from a couple of voices that hold that the USA is our only standby in this part of the world, and that we should follow them whatever they did, my colleagues appear to support my attitude, and think that I ought to go back to Geneva.

Casey did return, calling at New Delhi en route to try to enlist Nehru's sympathy for a South-east Asian security treaty. At Geneva the Korean section of the conference ended in deadlock, but the Indo-China section, under Eden's patient chairmanship, and with the help of Chou En-lai, and an ultimatum from the French premier, Mendès-France, led to a settle-

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78 Australian Foreign Minister, p. 137
79 Ibid., p. 147.
80 Ibid., pp. 151–2.
ment signed on 20 July by France and the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam. Vietnam was to be divided temporarily at the 17th parallel of latitude, pending general elections. New military bases, and the introduction of military reinforcements, were prohibited. An International Commission, comprising India, Poland and Canada, was established to control and supervise the application of the agreement. The two parties undertook that 'the zones assigned to them do not adhere to any military alliance and are not used for the resumption of hostilities or to further an aggressive policy'.\footnote{\textit{Full text in Viet Nam Since the 1954 Geneva Agreements}, Department of External Affairs, Canberra, Select Documents on International Affairs, No. 1 of 1964, pp. 1–3.} In the ‘Final Declaration of the Geneva Conference’ on 21 July, the conference ‘took note’ of the agreement on the cessation of hostilities and associated agreements and declarations by which the territorial integrity of the three Associated States was to be respected, and asserted that the general elections would be held in July 1956 under the supervision of an international commission. The State of (South) Vietnam disclaimed any acceptance of this Declaration. The United States took note of it and of the agreements, declared it would refrain from the use of force to disturb them, but also that 'it would view any renewal of the aggression in violation of the aforesaid agreements with grave concern as seriously threatening international peace and security.' The Australian Prime Minister on 22 July issued an almost identical declaration.\footnote{Ibid., pp. 18–19.}

On 5 August Menzies warned that communist groups in both North and South Vietnam would probably be the best organised and an election might well establish a communist government in both sections unless in the two intervening years economic and spiritual encouragement were given to non-communists in Indo-China, supported by the opinion and influence of the new democracies of South and South-east Asia. Carried away by his own eloquence and a vision to which he hoped others would rally even if he had not weighed the implications for Australia, Menzies said:

It is desperately important that the world should see this as a moral contest; a battle for the spirit of man. There can be no easy or enduring compromise between people who affirm the existence of a divine authority and the compulsion of a spiritual law and those others who see nothing beyond an atheistic materialism. The issue, so stated, presents us with a dual problem; a problem both moral and military; a problem as real in Asia as in Australia. We must, by peaceful means, extend the frontiers of the human spirit, patiently, understandingly, tolerantly…. We must, by armed
strength, defend the geographical frontiers of those nations whose self-government is based upon the freedom of the spirit.\textsuperscript{83}

The next step was the security treaty. Casey told parliament five days later the Australian attitude to such a pact, that:

1. It should be in accordance with the UN Charter.
2. It should include as many as possible of the 'free States of Asia'.
3. It should also include the United States, Britain and France.
4. Laos and Cambodia should not be members, but their security and integrity should be supported by the pact.
5. The pact should be one of mutual defence, in no sense aggressive, but directed against aggression by an external threat.
6. It must be based on a recognition of the sovereign independence and equality of all members.
7. It should have economic provisions, although not so as to supersede the Colombo Plan, and with economic aid kept separate from defence machinery.
8. 'Members of the pact must be prepared to accept obligations and make contributions to carry out those obligations'.\textsuperscript{84}

Eight governments were represented at the conference in Manila in September 1954 (see Chapter 9) which produced the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty: the Philippines, Thailand, Pakistan, the United States, the United Kingdom, France, Australia and New Zealand. From Australia's point of view the treaty supplemented both the benefits and the commitments of ANZUS. It involved three Asian states in a mutual defence pact, and the United States in the defence of mainland South-east Asia against communist aggression. It dealt with subversion as well as overt aggression. It was to provide opportunities for joint military planning. It offered economic and technical assistance. Laos, Cambodia and South Vietnam were prohibited under the Geneva agreements from entering a military alliance, but the SEATO protocol which extended to them the economic provisions of the treaty also gave them the benefit—if they and the treaty members so wished—of the military protection of the treaty. Here was the principal motivation and central core of the treaty: it offered Western (especially American) military aid in the event of further communist attacks in Vietnam or Laos, or aggression against Cambodia. As a party

\textsuperscript{83} HRD, vol. 4, p. 66, 5 August 1954.
\textsuperscript{84} HRD, vol. 4, pp. 122-7, 10 August 1954.
to the treaty, Australia undertook the treaty's obligations, which were wider (in principle) for all other members than for the United States by not specifying a particular enemy (communist aggression). The United States, however, was the only party that did not have a direct territorial concern in the area. Casey got the conference to agree that Papua and New Guinea came within the Treaty Area. He also saw the foreign ministers of Pakistan and Thailand and they agreed that it was inconceivable that under the treaty other members would be involved in any conflict (respectively) with India or Burma. 85

Both Australia and Britain sought to interest other regional powers in the treaty, but without success. The country they would especially have liked to see in the treaty — India — was strongly critical of it, for several reasons. SEATO was designed to contain possible Chinese aggression, but India and China, at this time, were brother nations, bound by the Pancha Sheel — the five principles of peaceful coexistence. India had adopted a policy of not being aligned with any power bloc. Nehru had taken a violent dislike to the United States. But above all, India saw the treaty as providing active help and encouragement to its neighbour enemy, Pakistan, which was precisely why Pakistan had joined.

Casey justified the treaty in parliament in terms of 'checking the growth of Communist tyranny', and the defence of Australia against what Eisenhower had called the 'domino' effect. 86

If the whole of Indo-China fell to the Communists [Casey said], Thailand would be gravely exposed. If Thailand were to fall, the road would be open to Malaya and Singapore. From the Malay Peninsula 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. 87

If in retrospect these compounded probabilities have a resultant improbability, it must be remembered that the conventional wisdom of the time was in the context of (1) recent experience, when Japanese armies had reached the gateway of Australia by just such a route; (2) an alarming

85 *Australian Foreign Minister*, p. 183.
86 *Public Papers of the Presidents of the United States. Dwight D. Eisenhower, 1954*, pp. 382–3. Eisenhower saw the domino effect as reaching Australia and New Zealand, and by cutting Japan off from its trading areas sending it 'toward the Communist areas.'
87 *HRD*, vol. 5, p. 2383, 27 October 1954.
extension of communist power by military means in Europe and Asia; and
(3) subversive propaganda, into an area where there were millions of ethnic
Chinese, by a China against which the Western allies had only recently
stopped fighting (in Korea).

And yet on the evidence it is difficult not to conclude that if the
Australian government took seriously the communist military threat in
South-east Asia, it wanted other people to bear the costs of meeting that
threat. The Liberal government had reintroduced military conscription in
1950, but it was for home service only, and with only a bare three months'
full-time training. This was reduced in scope during the 1950s, and from
1957, disbanded. After the peak (Korean war) year of 1952–53, national
defence expenditure declined in real terms, and between 1953–54 and
1962–63, it fell from 3.9 to 2.7 as a percentage of gross national product.
This failure to match words and deeds was very apparent to Australia's
allies.

The Geneva settlement on Indo-China failed in the long run because it
did not represent the basic power balance in the region. It failed in the
short run for several reasons. The communist forces in Vietnam did not all
regroup in the north, as required, but many remained in the south, with
concealed arms and supplies, should they be needed. The general elections
were not held, because the government of South Vietnam (and its Western
friends) feared it might lose them, and believed in any case that there
would be no free expression of opinion in the North. Elections in commu­
nist states are taken just as seriously as in democratic states. True, their
purpose is different: it is not to choose a parliament and government, but to
put a stamp of approval on the party in power. This did not prevent the
North Vietnamese government from feeling cheated when the elections
were not held, and resorting once again to armed struggle, using and
massively reinforcing its cadres in the South. There is every reason to
believe that, if elections had been held and the communist party had lost,
Hanoi would have resorted, just as certainly, to arms. If it had won the
election, it would probably have extinguished the opposition just as it
extinguished its own opposition in the north, by massive executions. It was
interested in one thing: power. The renewed struggle brought Western
intervention in support of the South, and Chinese, Soviet and East
European intervention (of a different kind) in support of the North.

The first test of SEATO was in Laos, which on 4 September 1959
appealed to the United Nations for an emergency force to resist aggression
by Viet Minh (communist Vietnamese) forces. Laos was an unstable,
fragile country, a construction of the French administration, scarcely a
'That's Carmichael our commitment to Malaysia, Shadbolt our commitment to Borneo, O'Toole our commitment to Vietnam and Gribble our defence of the mainland.'—The Bulletin, 14 November 1964.

nation, and including mutually hostile ethnic elements which were closely connected with populations across the borders in Thailand and Vietnam. In the complex politics of this tiny buffer state, the Viet Minh supported left wing Laotian elements (Pathet Lao) and after 1956 the United States, with some confusion, misgivings and vacillation, supported right-wing and later neutralist elements gathered into the Royal Laotian government.88

88For a history of Laos and the involvement of SEATO, see Hugh Toye, Laos: Buffer State or Battleground.
The 1959 crisis was partly manufactured, partly genuine. A UN mission reported inconclusively. Casey at the SEATO council meeting in Washington in late September, unconvinced on the extent of Viet Minh attacks, favoured a political solution if possible. If this were not possible SEATO should (he said) be prepared to send in a force—not to reintegrate the northern provinces but 'to protect the main seats of Government and the important lines of communication'. SEATO did nothing in the event, although the Council claimed to have made preparations 'to defend the integrity of Laos against outside intervention'. When civil war erupted, with Soviet arms backing neutralist and Pathet Lao forces, the United States under its new President, John F. Kennedy, contemplated and hinted at physical intervention but agreed to a Soviet suggestion for a second and wider Geneva conference to deal specifically with Laos.

The conference met intermittently between May 1961 and July 1962, and ended in agreement that Laos would be a neutral state, and thus removed from the ambit of SEATO. Foreign aid from communist powers was equally prohibited. Australia was not a participant. It had favoured throughout a political solution leading to a neutral government, had been troubled by Soviet aid to the Pathet Lao, and spoken about honouring SEATO commitments. But the SEATO members were not of one mind as to what to do, or indeed whether to do anything. To reassure Thailand, alarmed by increased communist military activity near its border in north-western Laos, the United States Secretary of State, Dean Rusk, declared in March 1962 that the US would act to defend Thailand under the terms of SEATO whether or not its treaty partners gave prior agreement, as the treaty obligation was 'individual as well as collective'. Two days later the Australian Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, made a similar statement, adding that Australia would take into account what other treaty members would be prepared to do, individually or together. In May the United States and Australia responded to a for-
mal request from Thailand to station forces in that country. In Australia’s case, a fighter squadron of the Royal Australian Air Force was stationed at Ubon in North-east Thailand. Britain, Australia and New Zealand also sent a token joint ground force briefly to Thailand as a gesture of support. The Australian government affirmed on several occasions that it was acting in pursuance of its obligations under the Manila treaty (SEATO). This was the first time in its history that Australia had stationed forces in a foreign country as a contingency contribution to the defence of that country. In this situation, the force was perhaps equally relevant to the defence need of another state in the region—the Republic of (South) Vietnam.

The initial Australian military involvement in Vietnam was announced four days before that in Thailand. The first intimation that the United States would like Australia to make a contribution to Vietnam had been given the previous November. Two approaches for help were made to Australia by Vietnam in March 1962, but the successive Australian offers, as reported above, were essentially responses to American pressures or suggestions, or to acquire merit with the American government. A retrospective official Australian analysis, prepared from official files for the Whitlam government, declared:

Australian military assistance to South Vietnam was not at any time in response to a request for defence aid from South Vietnam as a Protocol State to SEATO as a Treaty organisation. Although successive Australian Governments sought publicly to justify their actions as being ‘in the context of’ or ‘flowing from’ Australia’s membership of SEATO and the theory of the Protocol State or on the ground that military assistance under SEATO could be on a bilateral as well as a collective basis, the commitment was in fact made as a projection of the forward defence policy to which they were committed.

The form of Australian aid was determined by Australia, in the context of what defence officials believed the armed forces could most conveniently and appropriately provide.

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*The American decision was announced the day before a meeting of the SEATO Council Representatives on 16 May; the Australian decision was announced the day after the meeting.


*The sequence of events of Australia’s involvement is given in Department of Foreign Affairs, Australia’s Military Commitment to Vietnam, (unpublished).

*Ibid., p. 2.
Yet if the Australian commitment, begun with 30 instructors in 1962 and culminating five years later with more than 8000 men of the three services, was a response to American pressure or inducement, it was also and perhaps more fundamentally a response to Australia's fears for her own security. South-east Asia was seen as vital to that security—not in itself, as a key area of resources, trade or communications, but as a thoroughfare, a bridge, by which aggressive, militant communist forces in Asia could and presumably would push down aggressively and acquisitively towards the Australian continent. Thus when Australia committed an infantry battalion in April 1965, the Prime Minister, Sir Robert Menzies saw this as 'the most useful additional contribution which we can make to the defence of the region at this time', and declared:

The takeover of South Viet Nam would be a direct military threat to Australia and all the countries of South and South-East Asia. It must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.98

The Australian government was considerably—and properly—concerned at communist insurgency in South Vietnam, its barbarity and often indiscriminate terror, the increasing infiltration of forces from the North, and the aid given North Vietnam by China, the Soviet Union and East European countries. Australian help to South Vietnam, comprising extensive economic, technical, medical and agricultural aid, often intelligently conceived and courageously implemented, had begun well before the military involvement. But the commitment of operational armed forces, once embarked upon, had a momentum of its own that demanded total loyalty to its rationale, and was made possible by conscription reintroduced in late 1964 for two years' service on a birthday ballot system. There is no evidence that the government appreciated the serious internal weaknesses—the corruption, brutality and authoritarianism—of successive South Vietnamese regimes, beginning with that of Ngo Dinh Diem who was initially so remarkably successful in unifying the country, establishing a viable administration and moving towards more democratic processes.99 Nor did the government treat official American publicity releases with proper professional scrutiny.


*For an analysis of Australian attitudes to the war see Henry S. Albinski, Politics and Foreign Policy in Australia. The impact of Vietnam and Conscription.
Australian participation in the war, and even the use of conscription, enjoyed wide support within the community until 1969. But as the war dragged on, with rising casualty lists, with massive television coverage of South Vietnam’s allies and virtually none of the North Vietnamese and their allied National Liberation Front in the south, and with the objectives of the war becoming blurred and increasingly remote of attainment, it was understandable that the Australian electorate should become increasingly troubled and divided by the war. With the British retrenchment east of Suez, the apparent stability of Malaysia and Singapore, the establishment of an anti-communist government in Indonesia, the Vietnam war’s connection with the defence of Australia became more and more obscure. Conscription in so uncertain a cause troubled many consciences. It is perhaps remarkable, remembering these circumstances, that the electorate supported it for so long.

The Nixon government that took office in Washington in 1969 began negotiations with the Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam, which led to the withdrawal of American forces in 1970–72. Australian forces began withdrawing in 1971, the withdrawal being completed by the following March, except for a military assistance team with the South Vietnamese army. Total Australian casualties in the war were 423 killed in action, 2398 wounded, and 2 airmen missing.

Australia had maintained embassies in Laos and Cambodia throughout the war, respected their neutrality, and engaged in aid programs under the Colombo Plan. Relations with the Cambodian government of Prince Norodom Sihanouk were especially cordial, and for several years when Cambodia had no diplomatic relations with South Vietnam, Australia acted for her in Saigon. Neither China, North Vietnam nor the United States respected the neutrality of Laos; it and Cambodia were used as communist supply routes into South Vietnam, suffered American bombing and invasion in retaliation, and were gradually engulfed in the conflict. In May 1970 Australia was one of the eleven countries who sent representatives to a conference in Jakarta, in an unsuccessful attempt ‘to enable the people of Cambodia to solve their own problems without outside interference’.

The war did not stop with the American withdrawal. Only in January 1973 was a cease-fire arranged, after resumed US bombing of North Vietnam. In early March 1975 the communist forces renewed their offensive, decisively defeated the Republic of Vietnam’s armies by the end of April and rapidly occupied almost the whole country. Soon thereafter, Cambodia suffered a still more bloody communist takeover, and by means less violent and more political Laos came under the control of the Pathet
Lao responsive to Hanoi. The communisation of Indo-China was complete even though it was not homogeneous.

Both Thailand and the Philippines had contributed to the defence of South Vietnam, were on-going military partners with Australia in SEATO, and recipients of Australian Colombo Plan and SEATO aid. Both countries and especially Thailand felt the threat of communist subversion, but not of a takeover. The Australian air squadron was withdrawn from Thailand in 1968. Australian relations with both were close and friendly, although somewhat soured in the case of the Philippines by continuing resentment at Australian immigration policies. Unlike Filipinos, Thais seem to feel little urge to migrate.

Like little Peterkin long after the battle of Blenheim, one is tempted to ask what good came of Australian participation in the Vietnam war; whether it would have been better if the United States had never intervened; whether SEATO made a positive or a negative contribution to the security of the countries it was intended to protect. Any answers must be subjective. It is impossible to be sure what would have happened in different circumstances—if Diem had not been assassinated; if the United States had used different strategy and tactics; if it had not invaded Cambodia; if it had managed to seal off the ‘Ho Chi Minh trail’; if Sihanouk had not been overthrown; if the United States had recognised and dealt with the Peking government in 1954 instead of 1971; if Australia, already engaged in fighting in Malaysia, had refused to send men to Vietnam—and so on. Clearly American involvement in the war had a continuing domestic impact in the United States and complex implications for its foreign policy in Asia, Africa and Europe. Massive and lasting scars have been left on the countries and peoples of Indo-China, and several million premature marked or unmarked graves. In late 1964 it seemed that South Vietnam was about to succumb to communist military assault. The western intervention delayed that process by ten years, by which time the world had changed considerably, with the possibility of major conflict greatly reduced. The communist Vietnamese achieved a remarkable, almost incredible feat of arms; they wrote a new chapter in the history of war. Yet in the South their opponents displayed no less courage, sacrifice and devotion to a cause which surely had great inherent validity and which it was not dishonourable to support: the right of people not to be attacked, terrorised, murdered; their right to live out their lives in peace and safety.
All wars leave trains of animosity, resentment, and fear, and World War II was no exception. It may not have been logical for Australians to continue to fear Japan after 1945, when the country was physically and psychologically exhausted, and occupied by a great power, but they did—not Japan as it then was, but Japan as it might become once it had recovered its strength, its arms and its ambitions.

Before the end of the war, the British government proposed the formation of a British Commonwealth Force to take part in the operations against the Japanese main islands. Australia agreed subject to having an important part in the direction of such a force, but the war ended before the force came into being. On 6 September 1945 President Truman issued a directive on the Occupation, which stated that it would have the character of an operation on behalf of the principal allied powers, and the participation of the forces of other nations that had taken a leading part in the defeat of Japan would be welcomed and expected. The key words here were 'leading part'. What the United States did not want, and indeed would not countenance, was that the Soviet Union take any part in the Occupation, or have any control over it. This, as well as America's own sense of pre-eminent power and responsibility, made it more difficult for Commonwealth countries to have a role. Australia was keen to be part of the force, on her own terms. A joint British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) was established, with Australia providing the Commander-in-Chief, most of

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the headquarters staff, and about a third of the men (some 12,000). Negotiations with the United States were protracted, and the force did not reach Japan until six months after the end of the war. The force was controlled by the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Australia (JCOSA).

Australia had repeatedly sought, with little success, a greater say in the political and strategic direction of the war against Japan. She now sought a similar role in the occupation and post-war policies generally, and despite appearances was no more successful. She was a member of the Far Eastern Commission in Washington, set up to formulate the general lines of Occupation policy, and was the British Commonwealth Representative (for Britain, India, Australia and New Zealand) on the Allied Council for Japan, whose purpose was ‘consulting with and advising the Supreme Commander’ over implementing the surrender terms and the occupation and control of Japan. In fact it was General MacArthur, under very loose supervision from the US government, who ran the occupation, with a minimum of consultation and even less heeding of advice. Australia strongly objected to this procedure, without effect, but the Australian government broadly supported the post-surrender policies. It wanted Japan demilitarised and made incapable again of waging war.

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2 Originally known as the Far Eastern Advisory Commission.

3 These bodies were set up under the Moscow Agreement of 27 December 1945.


5 Article IX of the Japanese Constitution thoughtfully provided by General MacArthur in 1946 to the Japanese government and people stated (in the English text):

1. Aspiring sincerely to an international peace based on justice and order, the Japanese people renounce forever war as a sovereign right of the nation and the threat of or use of force as a means of settling international disputes.

2. In order to accomplish the aim of the preceding paragraph, land, sea, and air forces, as well as other war potential will never be maintained. The right of belligerency of the state will never be recognised.

For a discussion of this article and translation doubts over the word ‘never’, see D. C. S. Sissons, ‘The Pacifist Clause of the Japanese Constitution, Legal and Political Problems of Rearmament’, International Affairs, January 1961, pp. 49–55. Australia accepted the substance of the Constitution, but objected to the way it was brought about. Macmahon Ball writes in Japan, Enemy or Ally? (p. 127): ‘They (the Japanese) do not take this renunciation of war and of armed forces with the least seriousness’.
her reduced to her four main islands. It wanted the zaibatsu economic combines dissolved. It wanted ‘war criminals’ prosecuted and punished.\(^6\) It wanted democracy introduced (or re-introduced) and land ownership rearranged. Although lenient in its own claims, it wanted reparations paid for damage inflicted.\(^7\)

MacArthur broadly followed these policies for a time, with pragmatic variations, but from late 1947 the variations began to take over. Australia still saw Japan as potentially the major if not the only threat to peace in the Far East, whereas the United States increasingly saw the Soviet Union in this role. Japan’s chronic economic difficulties led the US to pursue less vigorous deconcentration of economic power and more sympathetic trade arrangements. Against bitter Australian opposition, MacArthur allowed Japanese whaling expeditions to the Antarctic. Australia wanted Japan economically weak so that it would be militarily weak. The United States wanted Japan economically strong so that it would be less susceptible to communist influences, less dependent on US economic support, more able to stand on its own feet and be a host to American power needed for whatever anti-communist purposes might arise, perhaps even to be an ally of the United States. The communist successes in China confirmed American views. The Australian Labor government, and especially Dr Evatt, felt this was using a known evil (Japanese strength) to combat an uncertain and possibly lesser one.

Yet both evils began increasingly to trouble Australia. American policies of building up Japan, and the hint of an American withdrawal, lent substance to the first, while the 1948 coup in Czechoslovakia, followed by the Berlin blockade, with concurrent communist activities in Asia, lent substance to the second. It was in this dual context that Evatt in 1949 proposed to the United States a Pacific defence pact comparable to NATO, but was rebuffed. The concept was taken up by Evatt’s Liberal Party successor, Percy Spender, in early 1950, again without success.

Since 1947 Australia had pressed several times for a peace treaty, but it

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\(^6\) This included the Emperor, but the United States refused to agree. Sir William Webb, Chief Justice of Queensland, was appointed President of the International Military Tribunal for the Far East, which tried Japanese accused of war crimes. In its own area Australia tried 924 Japanese on war crimes; 644 were convicted, and 148 were sentenced to death.

\(^7\) Australia originally claimed 28 per cent of all Japan’s reparations, was offered 8 per cent, accepted 3 per cent, and ended up getting none at all (when the US stopped further reparations) except for some payments through the International Red Cross to former Australian prisoners of war. W. Macmahon Ball, ‘Australian Policy Towards Japan Since 1945’, in Greenwood and Harper (eds), *Australia in World Affairs 1956–1960*, pp. 257–9.
had been resisted by the American military who could see restrictions on their rights in Japan, and was complicated by the Soviet, Chinese and Japanese attitudes. The key problem was Japan’s right to have armed forces. If, as the Constitution required and Australia preferred, Japan had little or no defence capacity, she would have to be defended by the allies, primarily the United States. But could the United States be expected to bear such a burden indefinitely? The North Korean attack on South Korea in June 1950 forced a resolution of the situation. A peace treaty was drawn up, ending the occupation. Japan undertook (Article V) to ‘settle its international disputes by peaceful means’, to ‘refrain in its international relations from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state’, and to ‘give the United Nations every assistance in any action it takes in accordance with the Charter’. The Allied Powers for their part recognised that ‘Japan as a sovereign nation possesses the inherent right of individual or collective self-defence referred to in Article 51 of the Charter of the United Nations and that Japan may voluntarily enter into collective security arrangements’. Japan concurrently entered into such an arrangement with the United States, and under American prompting began to re-arm, rather modestly, with what were euphemistically called ‘self-defence’ forces.

Australia objected to the treaty on the grounds that it allowed for Japanese armed forces to be raised, did not provide adequate safeguards against renewed Japanese aggression, and did not give the Allies continuing supervision; but in the face of American determination and British acquiescence Australia could hardly join the Soviet Union in refusing to sign the treaty. Australian fears of Japan were however substantially allayed by the security pact with the United States and New Zealand, ANZUS (see Chapter 9) signed on 1 September 1951, a week before the peace treaty, and by the provisions agreed in 1947 with the United Nations and confirmed by the treaty whereby former German, Japanese-mandated Pacific island

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*The Philippines wanted restrictions on Japanese arms.

6Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945–1951*, p. 212, believed Australia would have refused to accept the lenient peace treaty with Japan if she (Australia) had not secured a defence pact with the United States. This is not quite the tenor of Spender’s own account of the negotiations with Dulles in Canberra in February 1951, when, supported by his New Zealand counterpart, Doidge, Spender refused to conduct discussions of the peace treaty until they had explored the extent to which the United States was prepared to guarantee their security. Cabinet reluctantly would have been prepared to settle for less than a treaty, but Spender pressed for it and won. See above, Chapter 11, and Spender, *Exercises in Diplomacy*, ch. 17.
territories north of the equator would become a UN strategic trust territory administered by the United States.

Dr Evatt, now leader of the Opposition, bitterly opposed the peace treaty on the grounds that a rearmed Japan might join either the United States or her enemies—whichever best suited Japanese interests. In fact the Korean war had overwhelmingly convinced Japan that she was in danger from the communist powers and that the United States was an effective and desirable protector. To the Australian Liberal-Country parties government, the communist 'threat' had come to outweigh, at least in the short run, any from Japan.

R. G. Casey, who succeeded Spender as Minister for Foreign Affairs in April 1951, visited Japan the following August. A civilised and sophisticated man, Casey was probably less bitter than most Australians towards Japan. Six years had elapsed since the end of the war. Reporting to parliament after his visit Casey said:

In speaking to the press in Japan I made it clear that it would be misleading for the Japanese to expect Australia quickly to forget the past. At the same time I expressed the view that if Japan by her actions demonstrated in the future that she had in fact, cast off for all time the ambitions and objectives of Japanese Imperialism, then Australians would be prepared to meet the Japanese people half way.\(^{10}\)

On some issues, it was a long time before Australia felt able to meet Japan half way. Bitter memories of the war remained. The first major negotiations concerned fishing and pearl fishing in the waters of the Australian continental shelf, where Japan had taken thousands of tons of pearl shell before World War II. To meet the renewed 'threat' from Japan in August 1953, Australia proclaimed the following month that she had 'sovereign rights over the sea-bed and sub-soil of the continental shelf contiguous to Australia and its territories'.\(^{11}\) Also, the Pearl Fisheries Act was amended to confer authority on the Australian government over vessels and persons operating in Australian 'proclaimed waters'. Japan sought to invoke the jurisdiction of the International Court of Justice. Australia agreed but negotiations on the terms of reference dragged on until Prime Minister Kishi visited Australia in December 1957, and Japan accepted the exploitation limits set by Australia. A decline in the world demand for mother-of-pearl shell in the early 1960s deterred further Japanese operations, but joint

\(^{10}\) *HRD*, vol. 214, p. 155, 27 September 1951.

\(^{11}\) *CNIA*, vol. 24, no. 11, November 1953, p. 650–1.
Japan-Australia companies have developed much of the pearl culture industry on the north and north-west coasts. In fisheries, also, Australia took account of Japanese demands, while still exercising restraint over them.12

Australia was less forthcoming over a relatively minor incident in 1954, when American maritime surveys began in the area of New Britain, in the Trust Territory of New Guinea. The United States proposed to use Japanese technicians, but this was abandoned when Australia protested vigorously, and Filipinos were substituted for the Japanese crew members.

Since this time, Australia's relations with Japan have been dominated by economic issues, just as Japan's external policies have been dominated by economic considerations.

Trade between the two countries resumed in 1947, and built up steadily, with the balance consistently in favour of Australia. By 1955-56, Japan was already the second largest market, taking 11 per cent of exports with the balance of trade 4:1 in Australia's favour, and with Australia discriminating in various ways against Japanese imports. Australia feared a flood of cheap imports and the competition this would give to local industry. But the terms of trade needed to be adjusted, both in fairness and in wisdom, in view of Japan's accelerating potential, and the possibility of alternative sources of imports, i.e. Japan going elsewhere for wool and wheat to meet her own social and economic objectives, and to replace the declining British market Australia needed increasing exports. For her part, Japan saw Australia (according to a senior Australian official of the time) as 'a potentially important economic partner, important enough also to influence the attitudes of other countries (e.g. in GATT) towards the expansion of trade with Japan'.13 In 1957, in the teeth of considerable opposition from Australian industrial employers and trade unions, a trade treaty was negotiated under which:

1. each country guaranteed to the other most-favoured-nation (MFN) tariff treatment, and no discrimination in trade that was not also applied to third parties;

2. Japan guaranteed Australia more liberal access to the Japanese market for wool, wheat and other primary products, with no duty on wool for at least three years;

3. Australia was allowed, after consultation, to take immediate action to

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12 'Australia's Relations with Japan Since 1951', *CNA*, vol. 42, no. 6, June 1971, pp. 304-5.

protect any Australian industry seriously damaged by imports from Japan. (Australia rescinded this provision in 1963, thereby according Japan full rights under the GATT.)

More than any other instrument, this treaty, amended in 1963 and repeatedly extended, provided the framework for Australia's remarkable economic growth during the ensuing 15 years, based on exports of staple primary products and minerals. In 1966–67 Japan displaced the United Kingdom as Australia's largest export market, a predominance it has subsequently maintained, while Australia is Japan's second largest market after the United States. By 1974 Australia was supplying Japan with 79 per cent of wool imports, 75 per cent of beef and veal, 100 per cent of alumina, 55 per cent of bauxite, 47 per cent of iron ore, 24 per cent of coal, 27 per cent of nickel concentrates, 16 per cent of wheat, 10 per cent of raw sugar imports. The two economies had become complementary to a high degree. Japan was, as it still is, far more important to Australia than Australia to Japan, yet there have been considerable benefits to Japan in having assured supplies relatively close at hand of most of the primary requirements of modern industrial production (with the notable exception of oil) controlled by a democratic government in an open society to which Japan has relatively easy access and where her citizens and businessmen have substantial freedom of movement. Australia also constitutes a sophisticated, high-income market for Japanese manufacturers. A comprehensive double-taxation agreement signed in 1969 has facilitated investment in both directions.

Most of this investment has been by Japanese companies operating in Australia. Japan was slow to engage in this activity, in view of balance of payment problems, having met local resistance in South-east Asia and preferring to use long-term contracts and credits and small but selective injections of capital in order to ensure continued supplies of resource materials. After 1968 there was a spectacular increase in Japanese overseas balances, some of which were taken up by Japanese investors under liberalised capital market controls. Where Japan engaged in direct overseas investment it was in particular industries in a pattern very different from that by other major investors such as the United States and the Federal Republic of Germany. Thus, as at 1974, 31.3 per cent of total direct investment assets were in mining, and only 26.8 per cent in manufacturing. In Australia, Japanese investment has been concentrated in resource projects

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such as iron ore, coal, alumina and wood chips.\textsuperscript{15} It has shown a preference for joint ventures. Although it has built up in recent years, because of its late start, Japanese investment in Australia is still only about 8 per cent of all foreign investment.

Despite its modest size, Japanese investment roused fears in Australia which—no doubt for historical reasons—were not raised by British or American investment. A Senate inquiry in 1972 was told that Japanese participation in raw materials projects would disadvantage Australian interest in that the Japanese partner might seek to limit a project's sales to non-Japanese markets; in times of oversupply Japanese importers might give preferences to supplies where there was Japanese equity; and the Japanese participant in a joint venture might be more interested in achieving a measure of control over a particular resource and obtaining supplies of that resource at the lowest possible price than in the profitability of the project itself. On the other hand, Japanese investment had evident advantages for Australia. It spread the foreign ownership component more widely, offered partnership with Australian concerns, introduced a welcome technical expertise, and helped to ensure a market for the product.\textsuperscript{16}

The contacts developed as a result of the economic interdependence of the two states led to a number of proposals for widening the ambit of cooperation. Japanese suggestions for joint Japanese-Australian ventures in South-east Asia were treated cautiously, partly because it was considered that Japan was unpopular in the region. A Pacific Free Trade Area was proposed by Japanese academics in the 1960s, but not pursued. An Australia-Japan Business Co-operation Committee was inaugurated in 1963, contributing to the establishment of a Pacific Basin Economic Council involving businessmen of the two countries plus the United States, Canada and New Zealand.

There was one further situation where Japanese technical competence and Australia's natural resources seemed complementary: atomic energy. By 1970 it was clear that Australia had considerable deposits of uranium.

\textsuperscript{15} This information is taken from \textit{Japan}, Report of the Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1973, ch. 4. Appendix VII lists major Japanese interests in Australian mineral projects where the equity ranges from 15 to 50 per cent in projects costing in total at least $1500 million. See also Koichi Hamada and Sadao Nishimura, 'Japanese Direct Investment in Australia', Annex A5 of Sir John Crawford and Dr Saburo Okita, \textit{Australia, Japan and Western Pacific Economic Relations, A report to the Governments of Australia and Japan}. See also Australian Bureau of Statistics, \textit{Foreign Ownership and Control of Registered Financial Corporations}, June 1986.

\textsuperscript{16} \textit{Japan}, pp. 64–5.
which could be used to fuel the nuclear reactors which increasingly were being used to supply Japan’s electric power requirements. In February 1972 the two governments signed an agreement providing for the export to Japan of uranium, ores and concentrates under international safeguards, and for collaboration in nuclear research and in commercial ventures.17

The mutual dependence of the two economies has been based on the continuing political stability and economic growth in each state. For Australia, fear has been expressed that excessive dependence on Japanese markets may one day require deference to Japanese political or even defence interests. Some Australian strategists see Japan as the only long-term threat to Australia, in view of Japan’s resource weaknesses, her large population with risen expectations, and Australia’s relative proximity and wealth. A Japanese professor once said to me: ‘The lesson of World War II for Japan was that to seek economic objectives through military means is a very uneconomic thing to do.’ Another said: ‘It is almost inevitable that at some time in the future Japan will use at least the threat of force to secure markets or supplies.’ During the 1973 oil crisis, the Japanese government succumbed rapidly to blackmail by the Arab oil producing states, demonstrating that political considerations go out the window when a vital economic consideration is at stake.

Another area for Australian concern about Japan has been in Papua New Guinea, where the predominant earner of export income is copper, the predominant purchaser of which is Japan. Japanese consumer goods have flooded the Papua New Guinea economy, yet that economy is heavily subsidised by Australia. Papua New Guinea is Australia’s nearest neighbour and is—as demonstrated during World War II—strategically of immense importance to her.

The Australian government was slow to realise the unique significance of its relationship with Japan, and the special measures needed to manage it. The volume of contacts between officials of the two countries increased steadily. In 1967, annual consultations were established between the Department of External Affairs and the Japanese Foreign Minister. An inter-departmental committee of Australian officials was set up in 1970. Following Japanese proposals, a joint Ministerial Committee was established and first met in 1972. The existence of this committee did not smooth the way for a general treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation, long sought by Japan to create a formal obligation upon Australian

to treat Japanese visitors, migrants or investment as favourably as those from Britain or America.\textsuperscript{18} Successive Liberal and Country party governments had resisted Japanese pressures. The plain fact was that despite the mutually profitable trade and commercial enterprise between the two countries, despite the intellectual and cultural links laboriously developed (yet still tenuously and on a small scale), there were wide gaps in attitude and experience and temperament,\textsuperscript{19} and lingering suspicions and resentments (some of them affected by racial considerations) on both sides. The wartime enemies had become peacetime partners, but the partnership was unequal, uneasy, and unpredictable. It has nevertheless been immensely profitable to both sides, and has provided Australia with a heavy anchor to her Asian environment.


\textsuperscript{19} W. M. Morgan, 'Negotiating with the Japanese' and Peter Robinson, 'Australian-Japanese Relation', ibid.
JUST AS FEAR OF JAPAN DOMINATED AUSTRALIAN POLICIES towards the outside world during the first half century of federation, fear of China was to dominate the following 20 years.

Australia had had a small Chinese population from the 1840s, initially a few thousand farm labourers, then miners on the goldfields, when the Chinese population rose to over 38,000, then general migrants replacing returnees. Only a tiny proportion were women, and intermarriage with Caucasian Australians was not widespread. By the time of federation in 1901, there were still nearly 30,000 in the country.¹ The numbers declined to under 7000 by 1947, and have since slowly increased again. The 1971 census showed 17,601 Chinese in Australia, or about 0.1 per cent of the population.

The Chinese immigrants during the 19th century had aroused racial antagonism and anti-Asian sentiments, and Chinese were vaguely identified in Australian minds with the concept of a 'yellow peril'; but until after World War II China herself, preoccupied with internal divisions, civil war, and war with Japan, was no threat to any of her neighbours, let alone to the island continent nearly 5000 kilometres to the south. The Chinese in Australia after 1900 were barely visible in the community. They were mainly miners, market gardeners, storekeepers or labourers. (Contrary to a popular image, very few were laundrymen.)

From the time of the Boxer uprising, when an Australian naval unit was among the Western military forces that intervened, up to World War II,

¹Census figures from 1861–1901 are given in Official Yearbook Commonwealth of Australia, 1925. See also Arthur Huck, The Chinese in Australia, and C. Y. Choi, Chinese Migration and Settlement in Australia.
Australia had almost no contact with the government of the Republic of China. An Australian doctor, George Ernest Morrison, was in a personal capacity one of the most influential Europeans who ever lived in China: as Peking correspondent of the London *Times* from 1897 to 1912, and then as political adviser to Yuan Shi-k'ai, first President of the Chinese Republic. Another Australian, W. H. Donald, also a journalist, was a long-time adviser to President Chiang Kai-shek. A senior minister in the Lyons government, J. G. Latham, went to China in late 1934 during an Asian goodwill visit, and recommended on his return some slight relaxation of immigration restrictions on Chinese. A trade commissioner was appointed the following year. But the Australian government had uneasily condoned the Japanese invasion of Manchuria in 1931, and made no protest at the further attacks launched on China after 1937.

In August 1941, as the possibility increased that Australia might also soon be at war with Japan, a legation was established at Chungking, later moving to Nanking with the seat of government and with other foreign diplomatic missions. China was an ally, in name at least, deploying massive forces against the common enemy (Japan), highly respected by the United States, and exerting power and influence in the councils of the United Nations.

Australians sympathised with Chinese wartime suffering, and from 1944 onwards made substantial gifts to China through the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration (UNRRA)\(^1\) and further relief after UNRRA was disbanded. Yet much UNRRA aid to China was misused by inefficient or corrupt Chinese officials, as the Australian press reported.\(^3\) The Nationalist Chinese government had little sympathy for Australia. At Manus Island, after the United States had decided to withdraw from its wartime naval base it gave the Chinese (through an UNRRA grant) the right to take remaining movable property from the base. This the Chinese did, but also destroyed or damaged everything they could that was to be taken over by Australia. At the United Nations, as a reaction to Australia's immigration and colonial policies, China (the Nationalist government) sought to extend Australia's obligation as the administering power in the

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\(^1\) Australia was a founding member of UNRRA, in November 1948, making an initial payment of £12 million. Prime Minister Curtin stressed Australia's special interest and responsibilities in the Far East. N. O. P. Pyke, ‘Australia's UNRRA Contribution’, *Australian Outlook*, vol. 3, no. 1, March 1949, pp. 70–81.

\(^3\) Cited by Henry S. Albinski, *Australian Policies and Attitudes toward China*, p. 7. Much of this chapter draws on Professor Albinski's research.
trusteeship for New Guinea, and was for some years an outspoken critic of Australian policies in the trust territory.

These events, and the patent military and administrative incompetence and malpractice of the Kuomintang government, meant that, if there was little enthusiasm for the Chinese communists, there was almost no sympathy with the Nationalists among the Australian people or parliament, although there was some in the churches which had Chinese missionary activities.

As the Chinese communist armies steadily increased their area of control during 1949, the Australian government saw the need to have practical working relations with 'the Chinese Government of the North', as Evatt called it. He was in fact already anticipating a communist victory, and had some qualms about the regime's external policies. He went on: 'If there is a threat by the Chinese Communist Government to the territorial integrity of any of its neighbours, I think that United Nations intervention would be certain and would have every chance of success.' On 1 October the Central People's Government of the People's Republic of China was declared established in Peking, the Nationalist rump withdrawing to Taiwan, and foreign diplomatic representatives, including Australia's, were asked to recognise the People's Republic as the only legal government in China. Chifley, the Australian Prime Minister, was initially prepared to recognise the communist government but, according to his biographer, some of his Cabinet colleagues and the New Zealand (Labour) Cabinet believed that, as both parties were shortly to face a general election and were being labelled pro-communist, both should delay recognition until after the election. The New Zealand government went to the polls first, and lost.

But the Australian Labor government had already publicised its attitude. On 25 October 1949, claiming quite improperly and incorrectly that Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States were in one accord on the subject, Evatt said that the democratic countries (including Australia) must be assured that:

(i) the Government which was set up on 1 October is, in fact, in control of the area it claims;

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Statement by Evatt 25 October 1949, *CNIA*, vol. 20, no. 10, October 1949, p. 1084. Albinski claims (p. 25) that an unofficial communist request for recognition was made several months earlier, but was ignored.

*Crisp, Ben Chifley*, p. 294.
China and Korea

(ii) it is, in fact, prepared to and capable of carrying out its international obligations; and

(iii) it is a government supported by the free will of the majority of the peoples it rules.7

This was the American position, and Evatt very much wanted a Pacific pact guaranteed by the United States. It was not the British position, although Evatt knew that Britain was fearful for Hong Kong.

We certainly wish to maintain the friendly relations with the people of China [Evatt went on]. But in the absence, however, of firm and specific assurances that the territorial integrity of neighbouring countries, notably Hong Kong, will be respected and that the new China will carry out all its international obligations, recognition cannot be granted any more than admission to the United Nations could be granted.

Chifley was later to claim that he had not recognised Peking because the subject was of ‘such importance that with a general election pending it should be decided by the incoming government’; also, that if his government had won the election, it would have supported China’s admission to the United Nations, on grounds of realism.8

But his government did not win the election. The Liberal and Country parties had not taken, in opposition, a public position on the question of recognising the People’s Republic, even though they had fought the election on a strongly anti-communist platform and proposed to ban the Communist Party in Australia. After coming into office in December, they were faced with the question of recognition, and by early January with the fact that, in addition to other communist states, India, Pakistan, Burma, Ceylon and Britain had all recognised the Chinese communist government. The British Conservative opposition was just as much in favour of recognition as the Labour government, on the general principles of international law applied to the subject. As Churchill said,

One had to recognise lots of things in this world of sin and woe that one does not like. The reason for having diplomatic relations is not to confer a compliment, but to secure a convenience.9

But how much of a convenience was it? Spender was out of Australia for most of January and February 1950, first at the Colombo Commonwealth meeting, then visiting Asian capitals. By the time he returned, and for a period thereafter, recognising Peking seemed to confer no obvious advantages. British property in China was seized and diplomats maltreated, just as American consuls and other officials ‘were subjected to continuing snubs, beatings and jailings’. Civilised diplomatic discourse seemed impossible. The United States, with which Spender also was now pressing for a security treaty, was strongly discouraging its friends from recognition. Within Australia recognition of Peking would not have helped the government in its campaign for banning the Communist Party; and Australian Roman Catholics, electorally important, were becoming incensed by Chinese duress against Catholic missionaries.

On 9 March 1950, shortly after returning from his Asian trip, Spender made his first speech in parliament as Minister for External Affairs. He dwelt at length on Soviet policies in Europe. He referred to the new Sino-Soviet Treaty. He did not know whether China would want to invade or intimidate its neighbours, but it could well foment disaffection and disorder in other countries, using the ‘ready-made instrument’ of the many millions of Chinese scattered through South-east Asia. He said:

The Government’s attitude towards the Communist regime in China is necessarily influenced by our judgement of what China will try to do to stir up unrest and rebellion in Asia, especially having in mind the avowed intention of the new government to strengthen ties between Russia and China. It is not for us to question the kind of government the Chinese people choose to live under.... We should like to think that the Chinese Communists would look for the sympathetic help of the Western democracies in the work of uniting and rehabilitating their country. But such evidence as we have of the Communists’ behaviour up to date, including their treatment of United States property and citizens, and their eager recognition of the rebel forces in Vietnam, leaves us uncertain whether the Peking Government will conduct itself in accordance with recognised principles of international law and refrain from interfering in the affairs of neighbouring states. Above all, we shall watch closely for evidence of China’s interference in the neighbouring state of Vietnam.

And if Vietnam came ‘under the heel’ of Communist China, then Thailand, Burma, Malaya and Indonesia (and, by extension, Australia)

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would be endangered. This view was not so far from that held by Chifley, who in December 1948 had seen Chinese communism as 'a grave danger to peace in Asia', although Chifley never implied a 'domino' effect, nor did he see Australia as an ultimate target of Chinese aggression. It was this concept of China as a threat to the peace of Asia, a concept fed by China's own radio and newspaper propaganda on behalf of communist insurgencies, stimulated by Chinese participation in the Korean war, and reinforced by American influence and pressure on her allies, that kept Australia from adopting at this time an attitude that would have made recognition possible.

The United Kingdom had incurred the wrath of the Peking government by establishing a consulate in Taiwan, even though it was accredited not to the government of General Chiang Kai-shek in Taipeh but to a provincial government in Tamsui. The government of the People's Republic claimed to be the government of Taiwan—an 'inalienable part of Chinese territory'. Britain neither recognised nor disputed this claim, but indicated that it regarded Taiwan's position as indeterminate. The Peking government was not the first to claim sovereignty over territory it did not control (Britain had done the same for all or part of France for centuries), and the exiled Nationalist regime in Taipeh also claimed to be the government of China, including the mainland from which it had so recently been so decisively expelled. Australia in 1950, while not recognising the People's Republic government, did not establish either an embassy or a consulate on Taipeh. It did retain a consulate-general in Shanghai until August 1951, and allowed the Nationalist embassy to remain in Canberra. Peking's resentment against the western powers might have been mitigated somewhat had she been accorded the right to speak as 'China' in international assemblies including the United Nations, but under American pressure this right remained, with increasingly transparent impropriety, with the government in Taipeh. Australia willingly concurred in this impropriety.

At the end of World War II Japan had relinquished sovereignty and control over Korea, and the country was divided at the 38th parallel of latitude between Soviet and American forces. In December 1945 a meeting of the foreign ministers of the United States, the Soviet Union and the United Kingdom agreed on the following:

With a view to the re-establishment of Korea as an independent State, the creation of conditions for developing the country on democratic principles and the earliest
possible liquidation of the disastrous results of the protracted Japanese domination in Korea, there shall be set up a provisional democratic Korean government....

When the Soviet government refused to agree to an American proposal in August 1947 to have elections in the north and south for a provisional national legislature, the United Nations General Assembly set up a Temporary Commission on Korea (UNTCOK), comprised of nine members including Australia, to observe elections in the whole of Korea. The Commission was refused entry into the North, but observed polls in the South in 1948. The government so elected was recognised by the General Assembly, and independently (in August 1949) by Australia. The Assembly recommended the withdrawal of both occupation forces, which occurred (in the North, without UN verification) during 1948 and 1949. The Commission, with Australia still a member, was made more permanent (UNCOK).

On 12 January 1950 Secretary of State Dean Acheson made a speech in Washington which excluded Korea from the US defence perimeter in the Pacific. According to Khrushchev, Kim Il-sung, the President of the Democratic Republic of (North) Korea, visited Moscow and sought Soviet agreement to a North Korean invasion to 'liberate' South Korea. This was given in principle, Kim went home to work out a plan, returned with it to Moscow, and Stalin endorsed it. At this time Stalin consulted Mao Tse-tung, who also agreed, and expressed the view that the United States would not intervene because the war would be an internal matter of the Korean people. Extensive quantities of Soviet arms were provided to the North Koreans, and Soviet aircraft were stationed in the country to protect the capital, Pyongyang.

A second general election was held in South Korea on 30 May 1950, under the observation of UNCOK, and resulted in the return of the government of Syngman Rhee. In the early hours of 25 June, North Korean forces successfully attacked in strength across the 38th parallel by land, sea and air. The same day, the UN Security Council called for the cessation of hostilities and the withdrawal of forces. On 27 June, the United States President, Harry S. Truman, ordered US air and sea forces to give cover and support to the South Korean troops, and the Seventh Fleet to prevent any attack on Taiwan. A few hours later the Security

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14 Khrushchev Remembers, pp. 400–2.
Council adopted a resolution which recommended that ‘the Members of the United Nations furnish such assistance to the Republic of Korea as may be necessary to repel the armed attack and to restore international peace and security in the region’.15

The first Australian reaction to the invasion was to deplore it as evidence of communist aggression in Asia, and to announce the despatch of a squadron of heavy bombers to Singapore. ‘The immediate problem of Korea must, if it is to be dealt with at all, be dealt with by the Great Powers,’ said Prime Minister Menzies, on 27 June (before the UN resolution was adopted) but the attack could not be viewed in isolation from the communist-led campaign in Indo-China and the operations of communist guerillas in Malaya. The preservation of British authority in Malaya was vital to Australia’s security, he said.16 The following day, 28 June, Britain placed its naval forces in Japanese waters at the disposal of the United States to operate on behalf of the Security Council in support of South Korea. On 29 June Australia did the same,17 and on the 30th it placed an air force fighter squadron, stationed in but just about to return home from Japan, at the service of the UN through the American authorities. A specially convened meeting of federal parliament ratified these actions, with bipartisan support.

Within a few days, American land forces were in action in Korea. The Australian government did not contemplate providing ground troops, and just before Menzies went overseas in mid-July Cabinet decided against doing so. However, the American forces, hastily provided from the occupation of Japan, were unable to stop the North Korean advance. The United States sought allied assistance, and on 26 July Australia, Britain and New Zealand offered ground forces.18 Menzies was in mid-Atlantic when the decision was taken. Arriving in the United States he was given a warm welcome, addressed both houses of Congress, and negotiated a sizeable loan. An Australian battalion became part of a British Commonwealth brigade, which with subsequent reinforcements from Britain, Australia, Canada and New Zealand became a division.

15 Resolution S/1508, adopted in the absence of the Soviet Union, which had earlier withdrawn from the Council in protest at the presence of the Chinese Nationalist representative.
16 *CNA*, vol. 21, no. 6, June 1950, pp. 420–1.
17 This force consisted of a destroyer and a frigate of the Royal Australian Navy.
18 The story of how Britain decided to send troops, and Australia, not wanting to appear a British appendage, made its announcement an hour ahead of London’s is given above (Chapter 9).
During September the United Nations' forces reversed the tide of battle, inflicting heavy defeats on the North Koreans. The question whether the war should be taken across the 38th parallel was not debated in such terms or voted on at the UN, although it was inherent in UN resolutions on unifying Korea and in the establishment on 7 October of a United Nations Commission for the Unification and Rehabilitation of Korea (UNCURK), of which Australia became a member. The parallel was crossed on 8 or 9 October, the North Korean army was very soon virtually destroyed, and the UN forces continued up to the Yalu river, on the Chinese (Manchurian) border, in the face of warnings from China that it would intervene. The Australian government took no public position on crossing the parallel, but it did strongly oppose bombing targets in China or blockading the Chinese mainland. Contact with Chinese troops was reported on 5 November, and the whole character of the war changed.

Jawaharlal Nehru, the Indian Prime Minister, had advocated in September that China be seated at the United Nations. He had also proposed that the UN forces not cross the 38th parallel until further negotiations had taken place. Both these ideas were rejected, although in retrospect they were almost certainly wiser than the alternatives adopted. Australia voted against seating Communist China at the UN, on the ground of her 'ill-inspired actions and words in recent months', her opposition to the UN force, her 'provocative language'. She must give evidence and promises of good behaviour.

Communist China has her destiny in her own hands. She can subordinate herself to the rulers of Soviet Russia or she can deal with all nations on an equal basis of international law and respect.... If there is forthcoming a substantial earnest that she is prepared to co-operate genuinely with the United States and other nations in the maintenance of peace and in the other tasks of the United Nations, the whole question of her admission to the organisation can be considered in an entirely new light.19

It was a further six weeks before China, with American forces approaching her border, actually intervened in the conflict, having a little earlier invaded Tibet 3000 kilometres to the west. An assault on the UN forces began in late November, and by January 1951 all of North Korea had fallen to the Chinese, Seoul had been taken, and the battle line was well inside

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South Korea. On 1 February Australia supported an American move to have China declared an aggressor in Korea. Not until June did the UN forces recapture the area up to and over the 38th parallel. To regain control of the north would have required the use of either atomic weapons or conventional forces of greater magnitude than any of the UN partners was prepared to provide. Truce negotiations began in July 1951, lasting through a further two years of inconclusive combat. An armistice followed the death of Stalin and the failure of a Chinese summer offensive.

Until China's intervention in the Korean war, Australia's attitude towards recognition was based more on fear of what the Chinese might do than concern for what they had done. But now China had justified those fears. It had become an enemy in war; it killed, imprisoned, 'brainwashed' and treated inhumanely Australian servicemen; it engaged in a campaign of abuse of the Australian government. What it had done in Korea, it was presumably ready to do elsewhere. This assessment did not stop Casey from appreciating the changes that he believed had taken place within China. He wrote on 3 August 1951:

The best information available is that Chinese Communism has made a very considerable change for the better in the condition of China and in the well-being of the Chinese people. The administration has been greatly improved, taxes are collected, graft has been very largely eliminated, the trains run, food is distributed and the people work.

In early 1953 President Eisenhower withdrew the Seventh Fleet from the Straits of Taiwan, where it had 'neutralised' the Taiwan–China conflict. His intention was to present an additional strategic problem for China. Australia was non-committal, Britain strongly critical.

Within Australia, there was a recurrent debate over the question of recognising Peking. The government remained ambivalent: reluctant to recognise in the face of American policy, but equally reluctant to put a diplomatic post in Taiwan in case it should make recognition of Peking more difficult at a time when it might be more desirable. Strangely enough, the conservative government was for some years more open to the idea of

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20 This in effect disqualified China from UN membership which under the Charter was restricted to 'peace-loving states'. Britain had opposed this move, believing it was at least premature. Australia supported it, conscious of the fact that Foster Dulles was on his way to Canberra to discuss the Japanese peace treaty and a Pacific security pact.

21 Australian Foreign Minister, p. 30.
recognition than was the Labor opposition. There was still little sympathy for the Nationalists on Taiwan. In April 1953 Burma complained to the United Nations about Chinese Nationalist forces operating in the north of the country and being supplied with arms from Taiwan. Australia was among the strongest critics, taking a much harder line than the United States.

On a number of occasions in his diaries Casey records his belief that the recognition of Peking and/or her seating at the UN would be desirable. But his record implies that he believed the United States was immovable, and for Australia to press the issue or to go ahead herself in the face of American opposition might well jeopardise important Australian interests, notably (1) having American military support in the security of mainland South-east Asia, and (2) having her diplomatic support to resist Indonesian ambitions to take over West New Guinea.

At the Geneva conference for the settlement of the Korean war, which began on 27 April 1954, Casey proposed free elections under UN supervision, throughout the whole country, based on proportionate representation as between the north and the south. This was totally rejected by the communist states. Somewhat to Casey’s surprise, the proposal was almost equally unacceptable to the South Korean government. Each regime feared what the other might do, and the allies of the South feared the help which North Korea would have so much closer at hand if—as seemed proper—all foreign forces were withdrawn. Thus the conference did nothing more than help to freeze the cease-fire, establish the demilitarised zone, and provide the framework for conversations between the two sides which were to be held periodically, without noticeable change in position, for nearly 20 years. The Australian forces were withdrawn by 1955, and diplomatic relations established with the Republic of Korea in 1962.

At Geneva Casey had met the Chinese premier, Chou En-lai, and was impressed by him. At the conference he had been accommodating, helpful and comparatively restrained. This meeting could have been the beginning

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22 Albinski, Australian Policies, pp. 112–18.
23 Australian Foreign Minister: for example in December 1951 (p. 65), June 1954 (p. 164), September 1954 (p. 189), September 1955 (p. 214).
24 The United States asked Australia to leave some military elements in Korea, but this was refused, apparently to enable units to go to Malaya. Casey was embarrassed by his government’s decision. He wrote on 19 May 1955: ‘It is humiliating for us to have to argue with the United States about whether or not to withdraw a battalion from Korea, and at the same time try to maintain, with a straight face, that we should have a voice in high policy.’ Australian Foreign Minister, p. 211.
of a much more normal relationship between Australia and the People's Republic; but it was not, for reasons which on the whole reflected unfavourably on the sophistication and independence of the Australian government. After Geneva, a burst of western diplomatic effort went into the erection of the South-east Asia Collective Defence Treaty (SEATO). This was understandable and in western terms desirable. But the history of the region, and indeed of this century, might well have been very different had an equivalent effort gone at this time into bringing the People's Republic into the society of states.

It is often impossible to detect an overriding consideration behind a particular foreign policy. If there was such a consideration in Australia's reluctance during the next 18 years to have diplomatic relations with the world's most populous state, it was that this was the policy of the United States, the senior and vital partner in ANZUS and SEATO, Australia's ultimate protector. Yet there were other, reinforcing aspects, and above all the genuine widespread fear of China as an aggressive communist power; China representing the universal evil of communism, with its universal designs upon the democracies. What was the threat? What was the enemy? It was communism: communism as Russia; communism as China; communism as terrorists in Malaya, Indo-China, Burma, the Philippines, Indonesia; communism as trade unions dominated by communists and financed by the Soviet Union (and later by China) disrupting the economy and white-anting the national will and capacity; communism as a giant international conspiracy. These fears were not irrational. They had much evidence to support them, but they were simplistic, undiscriminating and frequently exaggerated. China was not subordinate to Russia; the two were partners for less than ten years and public enemies thereafter. China supported but did not launch or maintain the insurgencies in South-east Asia. It had some grounds for feeling apprehensive in Korea in 1950, misled at Geneva in 1954, and provoked in India in 1962. Certainly its language was intemperate, its propaganda offensive, its ideology and domestic policies repugnant. It wanted to regain 'lost' territory—in Tibet and Taiwan. It wanted secure and perhaps somewhat extended borders and a regional influence or hegemony. The West was understandably troubled by such activities. But China did not demonstrate, then or since, that it had wider imperial ambitions. It did declare its refusal to have diplomatic relations with any government that recognised the government on Taiwan, but Britain managed to retain its consulate at Tamsui, and the United States in 1971-72 was able to circumvent this demand very substantially. No other country, and certainly not Australia, seemed prepared during that long
interval to jump into the water to see how cold it was—to say that it recognised Peking irrespective of whether or not Peking returned the courtesy. Within Australia after 1955, successive Liberal-Country Party governments were under no electoral pressure to recognise Peking. They had a heavy electoral debt to the breakaway labour party that came to be known as the Democratic Labor Party, which was fiercely anti-communist and largely Roman Catholic. It strengthened rather than determined the government's China policy.

In the early post-war years, Australian alarm about 'communism' was directed mainly at the Soviet Union, the mainspring of international communist activities. From 1949 onwards, China began to overlap and gradually to outweigh the Soviet Union in this role. It was China, not Russia, that intervened in Korea and was actively supporting the South-east Asian insurgencies. In Malaya, the terrorists were of the Chinese race. There were some 15 million 'overseas' Chinese in South-east Asia. China was thus much more disturbing to the Australians than the Soviet Union because it was closer, more populous, appeared more threatening.

When Menzies in April 1965 referred to the Vietnam war as evidence of a thrust by China between the Indian and Pacific oceans, he elicited the desired response from the Australian electorate—support for the despatch of an Australian ground force. But it was a very inexact description of what was occurring.

A continuing concern of the Australian government was that no action should be taken by the United States which would provoke in South-east Asia the kind of intervention China had made in Korea. Menzies equally saw no point in provoking a major war over the off-shore islands between Taiwan and the mainland. The Australian press and opposition were at times disturbed that if American defence of Taiwan led to a Sino-American conflict, Australia might be automatically involved under the ANZUS treaty, and thus find herself in a war not of her making. The government's attitude on this point was never entirely clear, but the wording of the treaty is clear: that the nature of each nation's commitment is its own prerogative through its own constitutional process. Nothing was automatic.

Australia's apprehension or alarm at China as a military and diplomatic power did not extend to China as a trading power. Trade with the People's

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25 France in 1964 recognised Peking without publicly breaking with the Taiwan government, but the latter, perhaps with France's foreknowledge, promptly broke off relations with France.

26 Gregory Clark, *In Fear of China*, examines this at length.
Republic began when the People’s Republic began—or, one might say, trade with China went on—though on a small scale. It continued during the Korean War, in what were called ‘non-strategic’ items such as wool and wheat. It began to build up in 1956, jumped in 1961 to $80 million of exports and $8 million of imports, and reached a peak in 1963–64 of $168 million of exports and $16 million of imports.27 Wheat had been the major Australian export. In 1966–67 wheat purchases by the People’s Republic accounted for 34 per cent of the total Australian wheat crop. More controversial, though of much smaller value commercially, were the export of iron and steel products and scrap, copper, lead, zinc, rutile, power machinery, a second-hand rolling mill, aircraft engine parts, electrical appliances, and scientific instruments. This trade was not well regarded by the United States, and some of it obviously had a strategic significance, but other countries, allies of the United States—notably Britain, France and West Germany—sold the People’s Republic much larger quantities of far more strategic materials than Australia did during the 1960s, at a time when the United States was trying to prevent all such transactions.

Apart from the strategic items, Australia’s trade policies towards China met with general acceptance within the three major political parties. The Democratic Labor Party and some right-wing members of both the Labor Party and the Liberal Party periodically objected to the large wheat sales, which were usually at a lower price than general commercial sales. But the government was held in power by the junior coalition partner representing rural interests, the Country Party. Its leader, John McEwen, Deputy Prime Minister, gravely declared in May 1966: ‘I know of no incident in history where peace and goodwill have been fostered by a government setting out to deny the people of another country ordinary foodstuffs.’28 Australian policies towards China were thus highly ambiguous, or perhaps one could

2 Exports to Taiwan in 1963–4 were valued at $7.3 million, but the proportion steadily increased thereafter until in 1968–9 it was 39 per cent of the Peking figure.

27 HRD, vol. 51, p. 1427, 4 May 1966. J. Wilczynski pointed out at this time that Chinese ate twice as much Australian wheat as Australians ate. ‘Sino-Australian Trade, and Defence’, Australian Outlook, vol. 20, no. 2, August 1966, pp. 154–67. He also drew attention to the political leverage which Australia’s dependence on the Chinese wheat market gave to the Chinese government. Not until much later (1971–72) did that government give evidence of using the wheat trade to foster diplomatic recognition, although in 1964 it did press Australian businessmen to urge the Australian government to influence the Brazilian government to release Chinese journalists and commercial officials imprisoned in Brazil for unjournalistic and uncommercial behaviour. Albinski, Australian Policies, p. 283, records that to mid-1964, Australia had sold China wheat to the value of £250 million, roughly the size of the Australian 1963 defence budget.
call them ambidextrous: on the one hand based on fear of and antagonism towards a country seen as the major disturber of the peace of Australia’s Asian neighbourhood, with whom diplomatic relations would be improper; on the other hand, a valued customer with whom trading delegations should be exchanged whenever possible. This may have reflected the gulf between the two relevant departments in Canberra—the Department of External Affairs and the Department of Trade, but the triumph of pragmatism over principle would probably have occurred in any case so long as it succeeded.

The Peking government was equally unconcerned by the ambiguity. What it needed, it bought, and went on buying even after Menzies’s successor as Prime Minister, Harold Holt, a novice in international politics, established an Australian embassy in Taipeh in 1966. The Minister for External Affairs, Paul Hasluck, subsequently rationalised this decision in parliament:

The presence at Taipeh of an Australian ambassador, in addition to underlining the point that I have just made [that Australia is determined that ‘the Government of the Republic of China and the people of Taiwan should not be abandoned’], is necessary for the conduct of our affairs in a country where economic progress has led to a rapid expansion in trade and travel and it will also facilitate the growing co-operation in international organisations for economic development and political co-operation of which the Republic of China and Australia are both members. Indeed, the lack of representation in Taipeh was a gap in our effective participation in the diplomacy of the region.29

Yet this action could only make more difficult the ultimate recognition of the government in Peking, for which there was some sympathy within the Australian Cabinet. The incident was part of a consolidation on the right of Asian politics about this time, due partly to the Vietnam war and partly to the economic ‘take-off’ of South Korea and Taiwan. South Korea contributed two divisions to combat in Vietnam. In September 1964 it proposed a meeting of foreign ministers from the Pacific and South-east Asian area, which eventually took place in Seoul in June 1966 and formed what became known as the Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC). The members were Australia, Japan, South Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and South Vietnam. The declared purposes of the association were vague—cooperation and coordination in economic, technical, social and cultural matters. The tone was patently anti-communist,

by implication anti-Chinese. Japan, which had made handsome profits from both the Korean and the Vietnam wars without being involved physically in either, was an uneasy member. The whole operation had an air of impermanence and artificiality about it—even of superfluity; it was a club too exclusive, too sectarian for its own good. It encouraged some slight feats of cooperation and consultation, but fell apart in 1972-3 as the People's Republic of China emerged into the world community.

Both Taiwan (the Republic of China) and South Korea had active diplomatic policies towards Australia. Taiwan should have felt rewarded by Australia's continued refusal to recognise the People's Republic or to vote for her seating at the UN. South Korea was a recipient of Australian aid under the Colombo Plan, including a dredge, and help with the establishment of a sheep farming industry. A trade agreement was signed in 1965.

The People's Republic did not help its own cause over diplomatic recognition and seating at the UN. In addition to its support of 'people's war', and its demand that the Nationalist government be expelled from all UN organs and agencies, Peking made some impossible demands—assuming they were meant to be taken seriously. On 29 September 1965, Marshal Chen Yi, Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister, said:

The United Nations must rectify its mistakes and undergo a thorough reorganisation and reform.... Among other things, it should cancel its resolution condemning China and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea as aggressors and adopt a resolution condemning the United States as the aggressor;... all independent States should be included in the United Nations; and all imperialist puppets should be expelled.  

Australia rejected this 'hectoring' approach. It refused to abandon Taiwan, a country with a population larger than that of Australia or of two-thirds of the UN members. It did not accept that China was 'peace loving', as required by the Charter, but believed China should somehow, some time be reformed and brought into the family of nations. It supported the view that to seat China was an important question requiring a two-thirds majority of voting members. It did not want to be the first non-communist government in the Asian region to vote for Peking. This was still the government's position after Canada exchanged diplomatic relations with the People's Republic in October 1970.

By early 1971 Peking was edging towards the western world, and the

\[^{26}\textit{New China News, 20 October 1965.}\]
west was edging towards her. The Australian cabinet realised that there could well be that year a majority of UN members in favour of seating Peking. It accordingly bent its efforts to finding a means whereby the Republic of China on Taiwan could also retain its UN membership. Peking had begun its ‘ping pong diplomacy’, sending table tennis teams abroad and inviting tennis teams (including one from Australia) to visit China. The United States relaxed travel restrictions to China. It began to remove troops from Vietnam. Australia invited a Chinese opera company to tour. In July, the leader of the parliamentary Opposition, E.G. Whitlam, visited China, provoking some scorn from the government. A few days later President Nixon announced that his Assistant for National Security Affairs, Dr Henry Kissinger, had just returned from China, and that the President himself would be going in a few months. Prime Minister McMahon welcomed this without reservation. He said that the normalisation of relations with China had been Australia’s publicly announced policy for some time, pursued through diplomatic channels in Paris. The stumbling block was the status of Taiwan. Australia was trying to promote a ‘two Chinas’ policy in the United Nations, which was an advance on its established policy of excluding the People’s Republic altogether.

At the 1971 General Assembly session commencing in September, Australia with American encouragement voted with the majority to admit the People’s Republic and have it occupy the seat of ‘China’ in the Security Council; and with a minority in seeking unsuccessfully to prevent the exclusion of Taiwan from the world body.

In February 1972 President Nixon visited China, and forms of diplomatic relations were exchanged, although not full relations. In the communiqué issued at the end of the visit, each government stated its position over Taiwan. The United States said it wanted a peaceful solution to the question by the Chinese themselves, and declared its ultimate objective of withdrawing all US forces and military installations from Taiwan, doing this progressively ‘as the tension in the area diminishes’. Commenting on this, McMahon said:

I note that in respect of the United States, the PRC is prepared not to make Taiwan the stumbling block in the way of normalising relations. It may be that Peking will now be prepared to do the same in our case; we shall certainly test out the Chinese on this.\(^{31}\)

\(^{31}\) Report of the visit, the communiqué and comment by the Australian Prime Minister are given in *CNIA*, vol. 43, no. 2. February 1972, pp. 48–54.
If any such testing was done, it yielded no results before the Australian election in December and the change of government.

China's trade with Australia had fluctuated considerably over the previous few years, depending mainly on wheat imports. The size of the wheat purchases depended partly on the Chinese harvest, but in 1971 appeared to be related also to the question of recognition. Late in that year the Chinese government invited a junior minister in the McMahon government, Andrew Peacock (Minister for the Army), to visit China, but McMahon refused permission, offering a trade mission instead. This was declined by the People's Republic. An opportunity for political dialogue was thus lost; indeed, it was specifically repudiated, perhaps because of internal bickering within the Australian governing coalition.

As the record shows, it was in foreign policy a very conservative coalition, reluctant to explore alternative policies, bound by its own fears, (stimulated by the Chinese explosion of a nuclear device in October 1964), a sense of vulnerability, and dependence. In refusing to break with Taiwan it showed a commendable loyalty to principle. In refusing for so long to talk with Peking it showed a regrettable lack of national maturity.
The leaders of the Australian colonial governments and successive federal governments were conscious of India as a part of the Empire, their Empire, a populous, Asian dependency of Britain ruled by British administrators, in the interests of the imperial community. There were only a few Indian migrants in Australia. For various reasons, it had been by-passed in the movement of scores of thousands of Indian indentured labourers to British colonial territories.\(^1\) The British government viewed Australian restrictive immigration policies before and after federation with some concern, because of a desire not to offend Indians as well as Japanese nor to create a second-class citizenship within the Empire. Yet the Australians saw Indians as second-class citizens, as constitutionally inferior. As J. C. Watson, the Labor Party leader, said: Australians were 'citizen-subjects' of the Empire whereas Indians were 'subject-citizens'.\(^2\) Australia wanted to keep all Asians out, whether British subjects or not, for broadly the same reasons, as discussed earlier, including a basic assumption that white men were racially superior. It was unable to be totally exclusive, and the very limited opportunities for entry afforded to Japanese were afforded equally to Indians.

During World War I, India made a massive contribution of men to the Empire's fighting capacity, and its representatives were warmly welcomed to the Imperial War Conference despite India's much slower progress to self-government. By the 1923 Imperial Conference, the Australian and

\(^1\) The various attempts to import Asian labourers into the Australian colonies and Commonwealth are discussed by R. G. Neale, 'Australia's Changing Relations with India', in J. D. B. Miller (ed.), *India, Japan, Australia. Partners in Asia?*, pp. 69–77.

\(^2\) *HRD*, vol. IV, pp. 4634–5, 6 September 1901.
New Zealand prime ministers were declaring with more cordiality than judgment that India was no longer a dependency but a component part of the British Commonwealth and a complete equal with the Dominions.³

But Indian representatives, whether English or Indian, wanted more than cordiality. They wanted constitutional progress at home and reciprocity abroad. All the Dominions restricted Indian entry, by one means or another. Indian leaders were prepared to accept their restrictions, indeed to advocate them, out of deference not to Dominion racialism but to Indian nationalism, protecting Indians from further humiliation in their adopted countries. Where sizeable numbers of expatriate Indians were discriminated against, especially in South Africa, the Indian government campaigned vigorously for their rights. Australia gave little offence. Indian residents were prevented from voting at federal elections and in two states, and suffered other minor discriminations. These restrictions were almost completely removed by 1926 and Indians were subjected to fewer restraints than migrants from any other Asian country.

World War I demonstrated India's strategic and military importance to the Empire and Commonwealth, and thus to the security of Australia. Defence matters were imperial matters, involving imperial communications, imperial sea routes and bases, imperial forces. As the possible threat of Japan loomed larger, India became more obviously relevant to the imperial containment of that threat. Some Australians had been conscious of growing Indian nationalism.⁴ Indian representatives attended the imperial conferences and increasingly gave voice there, but there were no areas of either significant contention or cooperation between Australia and India. When war came again, the Indian armed forces again took a major part in it, and Australians campaigned alongside them under British command in the Middle East. While Australians were fighting the Japanese in Papua and New Guinea, British and Indian forces were fighting them in Burma. After the war, Indians formed part of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force in Japan until Indian independence in August 1947. An Indian ambulance unit was part of the British Commonwealth brigade (and later, division) in Korea.

The Indians who led the nationalist movement and to whom Britain handed over power in August 1947 had a very different view of the world


⁴Such as Senator Matthew Reid, who argued in the early 1920s that India should be given self-government as of right, and that this was essential for Australia's defence. HRD, vol.104, p. 2367, 9 August 1923.
from that of their opposite numbers in the ‘white’ Commonwealth. They had made many sacrifices in the cause of independence. They had much less sense of being British, in any respect. They had a sense of being, first of all, Asians. They were much more sympathetic to the Japanese, as fellow Asians—hence the prompt withdrawal from BCOF and a refusal to sign the Japanese peace treaty. They felt they had thrown off the imperial yoke, white man’s rule. They were deeply opposed to all European colonialism. This applied to those parts of the sub-continent with a Muslim majority which combined to form the new nation of Pakistan, as well as to the remaining areas which constituted ‘India’.

The Australian Labor government had some sympathy with the anti-colonial attitudes of the Indian leaders. Evatt in 1942 had publicly hoped that India would be given Dominion status. Australia was the first Dominion to exchange High Commissioners with India—in March 1944. But Australia, its Labor government equally with the conservative opposition, was also very conscious of the advantages of being British. When the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, announced on 20 February 1947 that Britain would transfer power in India by June 1948, Evatt expressed the hope that there would be ‘no permanent severance of association between the British Commonwealth of Nations and India’. In June he went further: ‘The complete severing of the links which join the British and Indian peoples would be greatly prejudicial to them both and to all mankind.’ It was in this context that he commended New Zealand’s Peter Fraser’s statement that Dominion status was ‘independence with something added and not independence with something taken away’. In June 1948 Evatt claimed, a little boldly, that Australian representations ‘contributed largely’ to the decision by India, Pakistan and Ceylon to remain in the Commonwealth. He also pressed the view that ‘the proper solution of the Burmese problem was not for Burma to leave the British Commonwealth’, but here he was less successful.

India’s sense of independence did not take it out of the Commonwealth, but it went further than any other member had gone: after so many years with the trappings of British vice-royalty, it wanted its own head of state. A special Commonwealth Prime Ministers’ conference in April 1949 accepted a new formula which allowed India as a republic to remain in the Com-

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monarchy, with the King as 'the symbol of the free association of its independent member nations and as such the head of the Commonwealth'. Chifley, the Australian Prime Minister, issued a brief and cryptic statement:

While I regret that the decision of India to become a Republic rendered necessary the calling of the conference to discuss her future relationships with Australia and the other Dominions whose allegiance to the Crown remains unchanged, I feel that in all the circumstances the agreement reached is in the best interest of the British Commonwealth.

Despite the different attitudes of Australia and India to the Commonwealth connection, it provided a less-than-foreign relationship between them and opportunities for contact and discussion that two such disparate states otherwise probably would not have had. The Colombo Plan, an Australian initiative, provided friendly grounds for contact and cooperation and a useful addition to India's foreign aid intake. The two countries cooperated to a degree over UN initiatives on behalf of Indonesian independence. Yet for the most part the opportunities tended to emphasise their rational differences rather than their historical affinities. These differences were as much matters of temperament and culture as of national interest.

For some years at the United Nations India was highly critical of Australia's administration of New Guinea and Papua and of Nauru, sometimes with good reason, sometimes with less. This provoked tart rejoinders from Australian delegations. When India pressed the question of how Indians, and subsequently all non-whites, were treated in South Africa, Australia took its ground on Article 2(7) of the UN Charter, claiming not only that the matter was within South Africa's domestic jurisdiction but that even to discuss it constituted 'intervention'. Australia was conscious of being vulnerable over its restrictive immigration policies, over the treatment of Aborigines, and over racialist legislation in Papua and New Guinea. Few if any countries can have such extensive built-in discrimination as India, but the Indian government felt not at all vulnerable, nor hesitant about belabouring South Africa.

Australia also entered the India-Pakistan dispute over Kashmir, if only marginally and in an attempt to help resolve it after Commonwealth and

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8 Text of final communique given in CNIA, vol. 20, no. 4, April 1949, pp. 515–16.
UN efforts had failed to do so. In 1950 Sir Owen Dixon, a Justice of the High Court of Australia, accepted appointment as United Nations' Representative for India and Pakistan. It was a worse than thankless task; it invited recrimination. Each party was determined to hold on to what it had, and to claim the rest. Dixon's report was a succinct, logical and convincing document, but nothing could have convinced Nehru that he should hold a plebiscite he might lose, or accept any *de jure* partition of the territory he wholly claimed. Subsequently both Casey through personal and informal mediation and Menzies at and outside Commonwealth meetings sought to effect a reconciliation and resolution of the dispute. Although Nehru showed more restraint over such well meaning attempts than over others, he was clearly unprepared on grounds of reason, justice, or moral obligation to make any concessions whatever. Several wars and over 40 years later, the territory is still in dispute and divided at a cease-fire line. For many years Australia has provided UN military observers to watch over the cease-fire and report breaches of cease-fire agreements.

From the early days of Indian independence the Indian approach to security was very different from Australia's. Australia saw itself as remote and vulnerable, and sought security through military agreements with powerful friends. India did not see itself as vulnerable in that way. It had a much 'greyer' view of the world. It saw value in weighing issues on their merits, i.e. on how they related to Indian national interests. It saw advantage in not antagonising or lining up against any major power. Accordingly it (or rather Nehru) developed the policy known as 'non-alignment' which clearly excluded (at the time, although not subsequently) military alliances.

'We do not intend to be the playthings of others,' Nehru told the Asian Relations Conference in New Delhi on 23 March 1947, and later in that year he said, 'We are not going to join a war if we can help it'. He was opposed to the creation of power blocs, and to their mutual confrontation once created. Although he had come to have little sympathy for Soviet communism, he had equally little for the western imperialism he had

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11 Recorded in various places in *Australian Foreign Minister*.
14 Ibid., p. 200.
experienced from Britain and now discerned, in different form, in the United States. Australian proposals for a Pacific or Asian pact thus met no response in India, although it raised no objection to ANZUS. SEATO was far more offensive in that it included Pakistan, providing it with arms and psychological support and stimulation. It was also directed against movements in South-east Asia which, although communist, were anti-colonial. Casey tried without any success to interest India in SEATO. He also encouraged the Pakistanis to 'throw in their lot with the West',\textsuperscript{15} which they did in SEATO and the Central Treaty Organisation (CENTO). In Korea (see Chapter 12) India had sought to play a mediating role, especially as between China and the Western powers. It failed because the United States saw India as not in the middle but leaning to the communist side, condemning the West but refusing to condemn China, given to excessive moralising, intemperate in speech and hypocritical in action. The merits of the Indian case, here as elsewhere, lost force through the means used to present it.

It cannot be said that Australia featured largely in Indian considerations. By casting in her lot with the United States, Australia could not fail to be identified, in Indian minds, with some of the less attractive features of American foreign policy. The Indian government objected to Australia's policies over Kashmir and over Suez. India could not feel happy with Australian immigration policy, although it did not formally complain about it. Even so, Australia was not beyond the pale. As mentioned earlier, the Indian government raised with Australia the possibility of attending the 1955 Afro-Asian conference at Bandung. And at the end of the conference (to which Australia only sent observers) Nehru said:

\begin{quote}
We send our greetings to Australia and New Zealand. And indeed Australia and New Zealand are almost in our region. They certainly do not belong to Europe, much less to America. They are next to us and I should like Australia and New Zealand to come nearer to Asia. I would welcome them because I do not want what we say or do to be based on racial prejudices.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

There was a degree of personal incompatibility between Nehru and Menzies which good manners generally concealed but which burst forth at the United Nations General Assembly in 1960. Menzies had helped (or been used) to save President Eisenhower from embarrassment and France

\textsuperscript{15} Australian Foreign Minister, pp. 165–6.

and Britain from loss of ‘face’ over a UN resolution sponsored by India and four other states. Menzies proposed an amendment which, although it received only five favourable votes, succeeded in its purpose and forced the original motion to be withdrawn. Nehru was moved to public anger, but the incident blew over.

A year later, on 18 December 1961, after a specious propaganda campaign, Indian forces moved into Goa, Daman and Diu, the three remaining Portuguese territories on the Indian sub-continent. Menzies, at this time both Prime Minister and Minister for External Affairs, issued a statement regretting India’s use of force to pursue its claim. He said he recognised that Indian public opinion felt strongly about the dispute, which was of long standing, but nations had a responsibility to seek their objectives through legal processes or peaceful negotiations in accordance with the UN Charter. Under the Charter all members, including India, had expressly undertaken to refrain from the threat or use of force in their international relations except in self-defence.17 The Australian press were less restrained in their condemnation.

Ten months later, India itself was appealing for help against an invader. On 27 October 1962 Menzies (along with many other national leaders) received a letter from Nehru seeking ‘sympathy and support’ against China, which after some three years of border incidents had launched extensive and highly successful invasions deep into Indian territory. Menzies replied immediately with a brief and sympathetic cable. On 8 November he wrote a letter of support which nevertheless implied that the situation was rather more complex than Nehru had indicated. Subsequently Australia supplied India with small arms and ammunition, blankets, military clothing, and wool tops, and sent air force officers as part of a joint US-Commonwealth mission to help with air defence.18 Britain, the United States and Canada also provided arms and other military equipment, as subsequently did the Soviet Union. After fifteen years of lecturing the West, Nehru had at last discovered that in international affairs a high sense of moral rectitude needed to be supported by efficient armed forces, intelligent and patient diplomacy and, in the ultimate, powerful and willing friends.


18 CNIA, vol. 33, no. 10, October 1962, p. 41; no. 11, November 1962, pp. 64–5; vol. 32, nos 1 and 2, January-February 1963, pp. 48–50. Australian aid was valued at about £2 million.
This incident noticeably warmed Australian-Indian relations, and gave the Indian government (finally without its enfant terrible, V. K. Krishna Menon) a view of the world much closer to that of Australia. Although they had different ideas as to what to do about it, both governments now believed, correctly or not, that China was the principal threat to peace in Asia. India's conversion to this view dismayed those Australians who had come to see India as the representative of 'Asia' and/or of enlightenment.

Throughout this period Australia had had a more sympathetic relationship with Pakistan. The two were partners within SEATO, even though this had little practical effect. Australian political leaders found it easier to deal with Pakistanis, who appeared more friendly, more straightforward, less complicated, less devious and were less captious than their Indian counterparts. Where India was for many years the largest recipient of Australia's Colombo Plan aid, Pakistan ran a close second, thus receiving more pro rata. Although Casey had made clear at Manila in 1954 that Australia would not help Pakistan against India, to Pakistan Australia was nevertheless an ally, and thus in a sense an ally, or at least a factor, against India. This was not how Australia saw itself; but a country, like a man, is judged and is affected by the company he keeps. As J. D. B. Miller has pointed out, to those countries such as Britain, the United States and Australia who were friendly to both states, the Kashmir dispute was a 'supreme nuisance' hindering the possibility of bringing India and Pakistan together in cooperation for economic and military advantage. By failing to resolve their argument, indeed by nourishing it with continued rancour, India and Pakistan not only wasted their resources but forced other states to take sides and encouraged some of them to take advantage of the situation. The Sino-Indian war had a further, unexpected effect. On the basis that 'my enemy's enemy is my friend', Pakistan began to develop closer relations with China, a process which inevitably changed the substance if not the form of its connections with western states, including Australia, and encouraged India to closer links with the Soviet Union. In the brief India-Pakistan war of 1965, Australia took a completely detached position, but Australian-Indian relations were now assuming the priority which logic would always have expected. There were meetings of ministers and annual meetings of officials. Cultural contacts expanded. Different policies over Vietnam did not lead to contention. In May 1968 Mrs Indira Gandhi visited Australia, the first Indian Prime Minister to do so. In Canberra she

spoke of Australia’s being a bridge between the Indian Ocean and the developing monsoon lands of Asia on the one side, and the Pacific and the affluent ‘new world’ on the other.20

Such a bridge—whether or not Australia could provide it—became needed during 1971 with the breakdown of internal security in East Pakistan, and the exodus of some seven million refugees into India. Australia contributed aid in the form of food, blankets, tents, medical supplies etc. and counselled restraint on both governments as tension increased. In August India signed a treaty of ‘peace, friendship and cooperation’ with the Soviet Union, which included provisions for mutual assistance in the event of external threats. In late November, full-scale war broke out, leading to India’s conquest of East Pakistan and then withdrawal, a deterioration of India’s relations with the United States, and the establishment of the new state of Bangladesh under the leadership of Sheikh Mujibur Rahman. Australia, under Prime Minister William McMahon, declared itself neutral in the conflict, but was exceedingly active diplomatically, sending message after message to the two governments; endeavouring to get a cease-fire, disengagement and withdrawal of forces; encouraging Pakistan to release the Sheikh from gaol, arranging the distribution of aid, and ensuring the safety of Australian citizens.21 This may well have appeared to both governments to be an excess of diplomatic zeal, if not a display of self-importance.

Pakistan had no alternative to acknowledging the independence of Bangladesh, but the Pakistan government asked Australia and other Commonwealth countries if they would defer recognition of the new state until after Indian forces had withdrawn completely from Bangladesh and further talks were held with Mujibur Rahman. The Australian government considered that this could result in ‘unacceptable delay’ and recognised the new government on 31 January 1972 in company with ‘a representative group of states’. Soon after, and apparently as a result of the actions by Australia and other Commonwealth states, Pakistan left the Commonwealth. It did not break off relations with countries that had recognised Bangladesh. Bangladesh joined the Commonwealth a few months later. (Pakistan rejoined the Commonwealth in 1989.)

The Indo-Soviet Treaty had insured India against Chinese participation in the war with Pakistan. It also more clearly aligned India, temporarily at


21 Details of aid to East Pakistan’s refugees and to Bangladesh are given in CNIA, vol. 43, no. 11, November 1972, pp. 569–70.
least, with the Soviet Union. This was to contribute to different assessments by India and Australia over the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean, discussed in Chapters 15 and 16.

The Commonwealth which provided the initial context for Australia’s relations with India continues to give opportunities for meetings and exchanges, but the relationship has developed a substance of its own. Australia came to acknowledge India’s importance as the world’s second most populous state and by far the most populous democracy, wrestling and sometimes succeeding with immense problems, a country with international weight and moral force despite its failures, a significant power in Asia, a restraining influence on China’s borders, an important part of the Indian Ocean littoral. To India, Australia was small, remote, western, but not without interest; a donor of useful if limited aid, a country with growing diplomatic strength and economic potential. Mrs Gandhi was probably not simply being the gracious guest when she said during her visit: ‘Australia is a living symbol of the endurance and perseverance of man and his indomitable spirit. It is a land of achievement as well as of promise and hope.’

The Pacific neighbourhood

The island continent of Australia fills the south-west corner of the Pacific Ocean. Its early settlements faced south-east into the Pacific, due to Captain Cook's discovery of the land following his observation of the transit of Venus at Tahiti. For the first thirty years of Australia's occupation by white men, the Pacific was their horizon, and although an archipelago of settlements developed around the long coastline, it was in the south-east adjoining the Pacific that the main centres of population, industry and agriculture grew. Despite its concern with Asia, therefore, and especially after the war with Japan, Australia remained very much a Pacific nation.

Papua New Guinea

The state now known as Papua New Guinea occupies the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. It was formed from the Australian Trust Territory of New Guinea (the northern half and adjacent islands) and the Australian colonial territory of Papua (the southern half with some adjacent islands).1

It was on 4 April 1883 that Henry Chester, Resident Magistrate at Thursday Island off the tip of the colony of Queensland, sailed north to the New Guinea coast and on the authority of the Queensland government

1 For summaries of the early history see R. B. Joyce, 'Australian Interest in New Guinea before 1906', ch. 1 in W. J. Hudson (ed.), Australia and Papua New Guinea; J. D. Legge, Australia's Colonial Policy. A Survey of Native Administration and European Development in Papua, ch. II; and Van der Veur, Search for New Guinea's Boundaries, ch. 2. which includes a discussion of Dutch actions in Western New Guinea.
took possession of ‘all that portion of New Guinea and the adjacent islands not already in occupation by the Dutch’. The action was disowned in London, but between October 1884 and early 1885 the British government declared and reaffirmed a protectorate over the southern portion. In April 1885 a *modus vivendi* was reached with the German government, which had hoisted its flag in various places in the north-east of the island, and the half island was divided roughly along its backbone. In 1888 the British protectorate was changed to a colony, with the colonies of Queensland, New South Wales and Victoria contributing to the cost and exercising some supervision in conjunction with the British crown colony machinery. The Australian interests in the territory were in gold, pearls, bêche de mer, sandalwood, copra, missionary activities, indentured labour (for a time), and keeping out the Germans. In 1902 supervision was transferred to the new Australian Commonwealth government, but appropriate legislation was not enacted and brought into force until late 1906. The territory was seen as important to the defence of Australia, but rather as an inert shield. No military or naval base was established.

In early August 1914 the British government suggested to Australia that it seize the German wireless stations at New Guinea, Yap and Nauru. Japan in fact seized Yap before any Australians could get there, and went on to take over the parts of German New Guinea (Kaiser Wilhelmsland) north of the Equator, (the Mariana, Caroline and Marshall islands) which it subsequently retained under the secret treaties with Britain (see Chapter 2) and League mandate. Australian forces easily occupied the rest of German New Guinea, including Rabaul, as well as the island of Nauru, and administered them by a form of military government until after the territories became Australian mandates under the League in 1920.2 From then until World War II, Papua, and ‘New Guinea’ as the former German portion was called, were administered as two separate entities, the legacy of German rule being conducive to different and harsher government in the north. They had limited relations with each other. As Lucy Mair records, the two territories might almost have been foreign countries.3

Prime Minister Hughes at the Versailles Peace Conference had tried desperately to have New Guinea annexed to Australia. He failed, but the

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1See Chapter 7. An account of this administration is given by C. D. Rowley, *The Australians in German New Guinea 1914–1921*. As mentioned earlier Nauru was administered by Australia on behalf of Britain, Australia and New Zealand, the phosphate deposits being exploited by a three-nation company, the British Phosphate Commission.

mandate looked almost like annexation, the next best thing. Australia had complete control. It could exploit the resources. It could (and did) keep out foreigners. It could not erect military or naval bases, but then nor could any other power. The Dutch controlled the western half of the shield; Australia now controlled all the eastern half. Although the Mandate declared (Art. 2) that 'the Mandatory shall promote to the utmost the material and moral well-being and the social progress of the inhabitants of the territory', this had a very low priority with the Australian government. But then, the territory as a whole had a low priority with the government. It had a much higher priority with some of the Australian officials and officers who actually administered the territory.4

Each year, a report on the administration of the Mandate was required to be submitted to the Permanent Mandates Commission, a distinguished body of individuals nominated not by governments but by the League Council. Although limited by the fact that it had no authority to visit the territories and see for itself, it could by pertinent questions and comments and discreet publicity bring pressure on governments to mend their ways. Some small influence was exerted over Australian educational policies in this way, but almost none anywhere else. The Commission did not appreciate the very great differences between New Guinea and other colonial territories: the often appalling terrain and jungle, the multiplicity of languages, the extreme primitiveness of many of the peoples. Australia on the other hand had no real philosophy for administering the territory, little desire to spend money on it, and equally little interest in satisfying the curiosity or adjusting to the convictions of the Commission. The subject raised no political dust in Australia, and the Australian representatives before the Permanent Mandates Commission did their best to ensure that the same situation applied there. Especially from the mid-1930s, when Germany was demanding the return of its colonies, the Australian government sought to give every appearance of fulfilling the terms of the mandate, or at least of not refusing her trust. But by the beginning of World War II, after over a quarter of a century in control of the territory, Australia had done little positive there. Much of the territory was unadministered, isolated, lacking communications or development. Education was limited, and mostly carried out by missions. The territory's economy depended on copra, with an uncertain market, and gold which was difficult to extract. Institutions of

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The Pacific neighbourhood

self-government were primitive and few. Change was not catered for; it was contained.

A committee was set up in 1939 to consider whether the two territories should be amalgamated. It found that the government had two different objectives: in Papua, to train the people to be Australian citizens; in New Guinea, to fit them for ultimate independence. Specious though these both were, they indicated the Australian government's disjointed approach, which was changed only by war.

Until after Pearl Harbour, Australia did almost nothing about the defence of either territory. Under the Mandate, New Guinea could not be fortified, but there was nothing to stop its being defended. Papua was Australian territory. Yet the war was a long way away, in Europe and the Middle East. A Papuan Infantry Battalion of a new Pacific Islands Regiment was raised in mid-1940. In August the two territories were proclaimed the 8th Military District of the Australian army. The three services were represented by small base organisations and small combat elements; there were a few coastal and anti-aircraft guns, and a modest coast-watching service. By January 1942 three untrained militia battalions had arrived in Port Moresby, and there was about a battalion at Rabaul, but there was no plan for the defence of the territories; aircraft were obsolete and sacrificial; there was no proper air raid warning system; there were no arrangements to evacuate civilians. Rabaul was quickly overwhelmed by the Japanese assault later in the month. Landings on the mainland followed in several places, and Port Moresby was bombed. Civil administration ended in New Guinea on 21 January and in Papua on 14 February 1942, with control passing to the army. Two military specialist units were established to deal with territorial administration; these amalgamated in April 1942 to form the Australian New Guinea Administration Unit (ANGAU), operating subordinate to the military command, in support of it, and parallel to it throughout the war. It was the first attempt to combine administrators and indigenes from both territories into a single venture. Although the indigenous soldiers remained (after an initial period) segregated by territorial origin, the war itself knew no boundaries. The terms of the mandate became irrelevant. On the Australian side, it was one campaign, one command, one land for virtually every purpose.

Just as the war changed Australian attitudes to the outside world, it changed also attitudes to dependent territories. Dr Evatt worked hard for the establishment of the United Nations trusteeship system, and for includ-

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ing in the Charter a degree of accountability to the UN by metropolitan powers for their colonial possessions. The Australian Labor government realised that the old colonial order was passing. It wanted to exercise responsibility in Papua and New Guinea for the development of the indigenous peoples. It was prepared to spend money doing so. It saw the importance of a single administration. When Australia submitted a draft trusteeship agreement to the UN Trusteeship Council for approval, a provision was included (Art. 5) to the effect that the Administering Authority (the Australian government) would be free to bring the Territory into a customs, fiscal or administrative union or federation with other dependent territories under its jurisdiction or control, and to establish common services. The reasons given were (1) economy of administration; (2) ease of recruiting personnel for a larger, amalgamated service; and (3) the fact that the two territories were almost identical in character. Some other UN members, especially the Soviet Union, the Republic of China, and India but also the United States, opposed this provision. With Australia's record at Versailles, and with a single administrative capital established at Port Moresby on the Papuan coast, there were grounds for suspicion that Australia might want to incorporate the two territories within Australia rather than give both their independence. Australia forced the issue, got what she wanted, and eventually justified the trust. In late 1947 the government decided on a permanent union with a single administrative head, a single legislation, and a common public service. This was enacted in 1949.

The trusteeship agreement signed in late 1946 included other provisions not contained in the Mandate. The United States (see Chapter 9) had wanted Australia to put Manus Island, with its wartime base, into a strategic trust territory. This was not done, but the mistake of preventing any fortifications was not repeated. Indeed, the right to provide for the defence of the territory was stated twice (Arts. 4 and 7). The objectives of the trust, to which Australia was committed both as a UN member and a trustee state, were given in Article 76 of the Charter, and included the following:

(b) to promote the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the inhabitants of the trust [territory], and their progressive development towards self-government or independence as may be appropriate...
(c) to encourage respect for human rights and for fundamental freedoms for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion...

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The Trusteeship Council was a much more political body than the Permanent Mandates Commission had been. It comprised the representatives of governments. It was given greater powers. It could receive and hear petitions. It could visit the territory and make reports. It could indulge in highly critical, highly publicised comment. And it did all these things.

The Papua and New Guinea Act of 1949 took account of Trusteeship Council objections. The trust territory retained its separate identity. Separate annual reports were drawn up for each territory. The Legislative Council was required to include five non-official members from the trust territory. The name of the combined country, increasingly called Papua-New Guinea, was formally designated the Territory of Papua and New Guinea. The government was required to spend in the trust territory an amount no less than the revenue there collected. In fact, both parts began to be subsidised from Canberra: over $4 million in 1946–47, rising to $10.5m in 1951–52, $44m in 1961–62, $168m in 1974–75, the last year of dependency. The increased subsidy brought increased external controls.

Although both the Labor government and its Liberal and Country parties' successor had few expectations that Papua and New Guinea should or could progress rapidly to self-government and independence, it was never in doubt that this was the ultimate goal. Union of the two territories was another consistent goal. Both objectives were eventually formally achieved, but both were fragile constructs.

The Australian government was required to submit an annual report to the Trusteeship Council on the administration of the trust territory, and to report to the General Assembly's Fourth Committee on Papua as a non-self-governing territory. The Trusteeship Council also sent periodic (triennial) visiting missions to the territory. From 1961 the territory was subject to further inquiry and comment by the Special Committee of Seventeen (later, of Twenty-four) on the granting of independence to colonial countries and peoples.

Whereas Australian officials did their best to nullify or forestall the criticisms of the Trusteeship Council, the government's view tended to be that UN bodies were uninformed and interfering. Australia would listen to their views, and then do what it thought best almost irrespective of UN recommendations. Hasluck, who initially (1951) saw Australian tutelage lasting a century or more, was especially contemptuous of UN comments.

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7 This comes clearly through the official statements from 1945 onwards, and in the book by Hasluck, *A Time for Building*. 
and resolutions, and in his record of his long stewardship he strongly implies that they were irrelevant to developments in the territories. This is ungenerous and inaccurate. While he undoubtedly had grounds for objecting to some of the criticisms, which could be ignorant or malicious, many were thoughtful, helpful, stimulating, and unquestionably influential.

There is not space here to list the many suggestions made by the various UN bodies, some of which were heeded, some delayed, and some rejected. The Trusteeship Council kept urging greater participation by indigenous people in central and local legislation and administration, the recognition of traditional courts, economic development planning, the determination of land tenure, the elimination of corporal punishment and of racial discrimination, target dates for stages towards independence, more extensive education and health care, better communications. The visiting missions, whose members had to be acceptable to the Australian government, saw things for themselves. They presented a combined report which tended to be much more understanding both of the problems and aspirations of the New Guineans and the efforts of Australia. The constant scrutiny and ever-ready advice could be irritating, but they were a continuing stimulus to Australia to do more in the territory, and to do it more speedily.

This was so especially after the combination of vocal newly independent African states and Khrushchev's shrewd histrionics led to a more radical attitude to colonialism at the UN in 1959-60.

The 1962 Visiting Mission to Papua and New Guinea, under the chairmanship of Sir Hugh Foot, recommended an economic survey of the territory by the World Bank, a new program of university and other higher education, and immediate steps for the election of a representative parliament. The World Bank survey was requested and carried out. A committee was appointed to look at tertiary education, which led to the creation of the University of Papua and New Guinea. The election which took place in February-March 1964, while not following at all precisely the Foot mission's recommendations, represented a longer political step forward and a bigger risk than the Australian government would have been prepared to take without the pressure of opinion at the UN. The Mission suggested that all surviving racial discrimination be eliminated, and this was made the subject of legislation. Contrary to earlier attitudes, the Mission endorsed

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‘the desirability of forging the two territories more completely into one so that both can go forward to self-government as a single country’.

Papua and New Guinea include only the eastern half of the island of New Guinea. Sovereignty over the western half was in dispute, after December 1949, between the Netherlands which occupied it and Indonesia which wanted it. The ill-defined boundary separating the two halves cut through homogeneous indigenous groups, who saw no reason why an imaginary line drawn by alien intruders should restrict their traditional movements. But the administration in Port Moresby and Canberra had to take note of developments, whether comparable or not, in Dutch New Guinea. Administrative contacts between Hollandia and Port Moresby began in 1950, and were slowly strengthened in certain functional areas such as health and agriculture.10

The Australian-Indonesian dispute over West New Guinea is discussed in Chapter 10. Hasluck believed, as did Casey, that the Dutch should be encouraged to stay in West New Guinea. He writes:

The Dutch would be like-minded and predictable neighbours, while we did not know what an Indonesian rule led by President Sukarno would mean in West New Guinea. I also thought that the long-term interests of the people of the whole of New Guinea were more likely to be served if two governments, both committed to the goal of self-government for the people, were to work towards that end.11

In November 1957 the Netherlands Minister for Overseas Territories, G. P. Helders, visited Port Moresby and Canberra, and the two governments signed an agreement on administrative cooperation. They announced ‘jointly agreed principles’ which both were following in their respective territories:

1. The Netherlands and Australian governments base their policies with regard to the territories of New Guinea, for which they are responsible, on the interests and inalienable rights of the inhabitants in conformity with the provisions and the spirit of the United Nations Charter.

2. The territories of Netherlands New Guinea, the Australian Trust Territory of New Guinea, and Papua, are geographically and ethnologically related and future development of their respective populations must benefit from co-operation in policy and administration.

3. The Australian and Netherlands Governments are therefore pursuing, and will

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10 These are discussed by Hasluck in *A Time for Building*, pp. 359–73.

11 Ibid., p. 361.
continue to pursue, policies directed towards the political, economic, social and educational advancement of the peoples in their territories in a manner which recognizes this ethnological and geographical affinity.

4. At the same time, the two Governments will continue, and strengthen, the co-operation at present existing between their respective administrations in the territories.

5. In so doing the two Governments are determined to promote an uninterrupted development of this process until such time as the inhabitants concerned will be in a position to determine their own future.¹²

The two governments agreed to appoint liaison officers in Port Moresby and Hollandia, to have an attaché at the Netherlands embassy in Canberra to deal with New Guinea affairs, and to hold periodical conferences of ministers and of officials.¹³

Hasluck believed that the Dutch sought administrative cooperation for four reasons: to help the advancement of the territory; to get Australia more deeply involved in West New Guinea and thus more committed to Dutch resistance to Indonesia; to promote internationally the idea that the island of New Guinea was a unity, and so make the Indonesian claim appear to be an attempt to divide a single country and people; and to increase domestic Dutch support for the government's West New Guinea policies. The Australian government was prepared to go some distance to help. The idea of a Melanesian union, to include all of New Guinea and perhaps the British Solomon Islands Protectorate, was being canvassed in public unofficially¹⁴ and in private officially (by Hasluck and his department) at this time.¹⁵ But Casey, too much the diplomat, too little the politician, in effect 'sold the pass' to the Indonesians during Subandrio's visit to Canberra in early 1959 (see Chapter 10). New steps towards self-government in both territories and the prospect of closer ties between them probably hastened Indonesian readiness to use force to acquire West New Guinea. Neither the United States nor Britain and therefore not Australia was prepared to counter with force, and after a brief period under UN administration the territory passed into Indonesian control, as West Irian, on 1 May 1963.

¹² CNIA, vol. 28, no. 11, November 1957, p. 882.

¹³ Hasluck, A Time for Building, p. 362. Hasluck relates (p. 363) that he had to restrain the enthusiasm for cooperation of Australian officials in Port Moresby.


¹⁵ As he related in A Time for Building, pp. 364–5.
This situation increased the urgency that the border between Indonesian and Australian New Guinea should be properly defined, mapped and marked. Hasluck had seen the need for this, but managed to obtain funds for aerial mapping only in July 1963. The Indonesian government saw the necessity for establishing the border accurately, and this was done by joint operations and negotiations over a period of years. The boundary agreement was signed on 12 February 1973, the signatory for ‘Australia’ being Michael Somare, Chief Minister of Papua New Guinea.

The progress to self-government and independence was impelled by forces external to the territory as well as by pressures within it. In June 1960, after a heady but troubled visit to the UN, Prime Minister Menzies seemed ready to push ahead quickly in the territory:

Whereas at one time many of us might have thought that it was better to go slowly in granting independence so that all the conditions existed for a wise exercise of self-government, I think the prevailing school of thought today is that if in doubt you should go sooner, not later. I belong to that school of thought myself now, though I didn’t once.

Hasluck soon put the record straight in August:

It is for the inhabitants of the Territory to say, when the time comes, what form of government they wish to have.... We are not going out of the Territory in a hurry... the Territory will need our help for many years to come.

This was effectively government policy for the next ten years, and the question remained during this time undetermined as to which group would be considered eligible to speak for ‘the inhabitants’. Constitutional change kept pace with internal pressures, was ahead of popular capacity to understand what it involved, and was behind the more extreme international pressures. The House of Assembly had an elected indigenous majority

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16 The long history of problems associated with this border is given in Van der Veur, *Search for New Guinea’s Boundaries*, pp. 61–124.
from 1964. Some confusion was caused by the presumably impromptu remarks of Hasluck's successor for nine years, C. E. Barnes, who occasionally referred to the possibility that Papua New Guinea (as the country was formally denominated in 1971) might have a special relationship with Australia, or even perhaps become an Australian state. Only in July 1969 did the then Prime Minister, John Gorton, state firmly again, in language reminiscent of Hasluck, that the government saw the future of the territory as 'an independent, self-governing state in its own right'.

The general thrust of Australian policies towards the territory changed as a result of the World Bank's report in 1964, the recommendations of which were broadly accepted by the government. Swallowing her pride, Australia now sought some aid and advice from overseas. A second Bank mission in 1967 looked at projects that might be acceptable for loans. The Goroka Teachers' College received aid from UNESCO and the UN Special Fund. UN aid of one form or another was used to improve roads, telecommunications, agricultural development, and to provide a wide range of expert advice on social, industrial and administrative matters. These supplemented the far more extensive aid provided by the Australian government, but they were a useful addition. Teachers and university staffs were recruited from other countries as well as Australia, so that the almost purely Australian flavour to education and administration began to be diversified.

As it became clear that Australia was moving the country rapidly to self-government (substantial powers were transferred from Canberra to the elected minority in Port Moresby in 1970), was heavily subsidising the economy, was seeking and accepting UN aid and advice and trying new ventures, criticism of the Australian performance became much less stringent and at times almost ceased. During the late 1960s a problem emerged which threatened the whole edifice of emerging nationhood. The discovery of extensive quantities of minerals on the island of Bougainville led to the development of a major copper industry by the Conzinc Riotinto group. Land alienation and compensation were effected in a ham-handed way; this reinforced feelings of neglect and separateness by some of the islanders,

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20 Prime Minister's Department press release 6 July 1969.
22 A summary of the steps to independence is given in *CNIA*, vol. 46, no. 9, September 1975, pp. 484–90.
and led to a move for independence from the rest of the territory. One possibility was amalgamation with the neighbouring British Solomon Islands. As Bougainville copper rapidly became the major earner of export income for the whole territory, the prospect of its going its own way threatened economic as well as political disaster for the rest of the country. Bougainville was part of the trust territory, and Australia could not allow the secession of an important part of that territory. Had a confrontation occurred, the Australian government would probably have been assured of UN support in preventing secession. This did not happen, due to revised terms of acquisition and royalties, and Bougainville remained within Papua New Guinea up to and beyond independence. But it was an uneasy, demanding, partner, and something of an example to the rebellious Tolai in New Britain, and even to the Papuans, some of whom were reluctant to leave the Australian fold and join an independent, uncertainly viable, heterogeneous, new state.

In September 1972 the House of Assembly, which also acted as a constituent assembly to establish a national constitution, decided that Papua New Guinea should become internally self-governing on 1 December 1973 or as soon as possible thereafter. This was entirely acceptable to the Liberal and Country parties government, to the Labor government that succeeded it in December 1972, and to the UN Trusteeship Council and General Assembly. The Assembly was less certain when it wanted full independence, but the Labor government pressed the New Guinea ministers to move rapidly, and independence came at one minute past midnight on 16 September 1975.

Australia had discharged its trust, in its fashion. It largely shaped the institutions and expectations of the new nation. But the country which now joined the international society of sovereign states, the United Nations, and the Commonwealth of Nations had more problems as an independent state than it had had as a dependency. It had little sense of national identity. It was a developing country in every sense. It was heavily dependent on Australian financial support for its budget, expatriate public servants, Australian capital and technology. It had real problems of cohesion and internal security, and in the event of a crisis would almost certainly need Australian military help to contain the situation. It even had a border problem with its former metropolitan state.

The maritime boundary of the colony of Queensland had been defined by the British government in 1859, and extended in 1879 to within a few hundred yards of the Papuan coast. Various attempts at a more equitable
division failed. The Australian constitution which came into effect in January 1901 declared (Sec. 111) that whereas the parliament of a state could surrender any part of that state to the Commonwealth (the national government), the federal parliament (Sec. 123) could only increase, diminish or otherwise alter the limits of a state with the consent of the parliament of that state and the approval of the majority of the state’s electors voting upon the question. This means that to alter the boundary between Australia and Papua New Guinea requires the consent either of the Queensland parliament on its own or concurrently with a referendum. No Queensland government was prepared to sacrifice some of its northern islands. Shortly before independence, Chief Minister Somare said in a speech in Melbourne: ‘My Government believes that a border which comes within yards of our mainland is unjust and ridiculous.’ The situation was complicated by the fact that residents of the islands concerned apparently wished to remain Australian, perhaps partly because of the social security benefits to which they are thereby entitled.

Papua New Guinea was Australia’s nearest neighbour. It needed Australia’s friendship and help, and could need her protection. Australia would be best served by a friendly, united, economically viable state of Papua New Guinea. The course was set, but the winds were variable. (See p. 355.)

New Zealand

There are probably no two other nations so close, in most respects, as are New Zealand and Australia. Both were British colonies of settlement in the South Seas. Both populations are still predominantly of British stock, speaking English, and sharing a common head of state. They have similar systems of law and government derived from Westminster, and many common institutions. There is a continuous and free movement of people between them, as tourists, visitors, settlers. There is no passport control. They constitute a free trade area. Their military officers train at the same (Australian) establishments. Their servicemen have fought side by side in

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23 These are described in Van der Veur, *Search for New Guinea’s Boundaries*, ch. 3. See also J. R. V. Prescott, ‘The Boundary between Australia and Papua New Guinea’, *Australia’s Neighbours*, Fourth series, no. 83, November 1972-January 1973, pp. 8–9 and James Griffin (ed.), *The Torres Strait Border Issue: Consolidation, Conflict or Compromise?*

one conflict after another, usually under a joint command. There are important national differences, and they are two separate nations, but they are more kin than foreign to one another, and each has closer links to the other than to any third country. Australia’s identity as a nation has developed largely as a process of separation from Britain; New Zealand’s has similarly, at a slower pace, but also developed as a process of distinguishing itself from Australia.25

Up to World War II, the links between them were mainly due to propinquity, similarity, and common Britishness rather than to conscious diplomatic effort. They involved the movement of goods (trade) and people. On foreign policy issues, both Canberra and Wellington were more in touch with London than they were with each other. On defence there was a fundamental, often unstated, identity of interest. Both felt, in their remoteness, dependent on the protection of the Royal Navy. In 1933 the two governments decided to exchange information between service Chiefs of Staff; in 1938–39 they agreed to a full exchange of information on defence policy and planning.26 Some joint naval exercises were held. The Pacific Defence Conference (see Chapter 2) between representatives of Australia, New Zealand and Britain held in Wellington in April 1939 was the first such conference to take place.27 It was held because of a growing feeling in New Zealand that the United Kingdom might not be able to defend the two antipodean countries in the event of war in both Europe and the Pacific, or even to prevent the fall of Singapore; and that accordingly they should strengthen their own domestic security. But it was a further five years, all but a few months being years of war, before the two governments set up any joint machinery. They had representatives in Washington and Ottawa before High Commissioners were exchanged between Wellington and Canberra in 1943. Their cooperation in the Middle East had been as separate parts of a British campaign. In their own areas, New Zealand concentrated on protecting Pacific islands to her north, Australia on fighting the Japanese in Papua and New Guinea, then in Borneo as well. At US insistence, Australian operations came under the Supreme Allied Commander for the South West Pacific Area, General MacArthur; New Zealand’s under the American admiral commanding the South Pacific Area.

25 See the introduction to the AIIA book on Australian-New Zealand relations, *The Australia and New Zealand Nexus* by Alan and Robin Burnett. This chapter has drawn from that work.


27 Ibid., vol. 11, p. 99: *CNIA*, vol. 6, no. 7, 15 April 1939, p. 168.
The two governments' first product of joint diplomacy—the ANZAC or Canberra Pact of 1944 (see Chapter 6)—probably lost more by its infelicitous wording than it gained by its more reasonable intentions. It had two useful outcomes: the establishment of a continuous joint secretariat which functioned briefly, and the South Pacific Commission, discussed below. In October 1944 a meeting in Wellington enabled the two governments to coordinate their ideas first for the preliminary Commonwealth conference and then for the San Francisco conference on the proposed world organisation. At San Francisco, each played a part disproportionate to its size. During and after the war, New Zealand resented and protested probably as much as Australia over decisions taken by the major allies, without consulting her, on the direction of the war and the post-war settlement in the Pacific, managed to do it less abrasively, but was equally ineffectual.

The ANZAC Pact was oriented towards the Security of the South-west Pacific. Para. 13 states:

The two governments agree that, within the framework of a general system of world security, a regional zone of defence comprising the South-west and South Pacific areas shall be established and that this zone should be based on Australia and New Zealand, stretching through the arc of islands north and north-east of Australia, to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.

Whatever may have been intended by the term 'regional zone of defence', in the early post-war years the available armed forces of both states were preoccupied elsewhere—first in the British Commonwealth Occupation Force, then as part of the Commonwealth force in Korea, and in Malaya under ANZAM, as mentioned in earlier chapters. New Zealand took part in the joint direction of BCOF and ANZAM through the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Australia (JCOSA) and the ANZAM Defence Committee. New Zealand units became part of the 'Commonwealth Strategic Reserve' in Malaya (later, Malaysia) along with Australian and British units. In Vietnam, New Zealand elements formed part of the largely Australian task force operating in Phuoc Tuy province. The processes of command and liaison were established and implemented almost as if the forces came from one country, even though individual national rights of decision and direct access to the home government were always ensured.

World War II demonstrated what New Zealand had earlier appreciated: the two states' common and inter-related vulnerability. The ANZAC Pact

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28 These operations, and the processes of command, are discussed in ch. 3, 'The Defence Relationship' in Burnett, *The Australia and New Zealand Nexus*. 
may have been pretentious, but it recognised that fact. When Dr Evatt was casting about unsuccessfully for a Pacific security arrangement, he wanted Britain and/or the United States committed to the defence of both Australia and New Zealand, as well as to the islands of Oceania. Spender made common cause with Doidge of New Zealand in the negotiations that led to ANZUS. Each country gained weight from the other’s representations and needs. Yet if the needs were the same, or similar, the perspectives were different. Australia is some 5000 kilometres closer than New Zealand is to Asia. New Zealand, although aware of Asia and quick to establish posts there after World War II, is much more a country of the Pacific, of Oceania; Australia is much more involved in South-east Asia.

Defence has never been the main element in the Australia–New Zealand relationship. The main element has been the consciousness of proximity and similarity. New Zealand is just ‘over there’: from Sydney to Auckland is only about half as far as from Sydney to Perth. White New Zealanders (Maoris are somewhat different) are indistinguishable from Australians. Even their accents, they may be distressed to discover, and despite their much higher proportion of people of British descent, are almost identical with some Australian accents. They may play better rugby and worse cricket, but in Australia they merge into the population. This is at the ‘people-to-people’ level. Some of this attitude rubs off on the two governments, and there is continuous and easy contact between officials. But ministers also have national interests, electorates, their own status and personal ambitions to satisfy. To Australian political leaders, New Zealand rarely matters very much: it can be taken for granted; it is small and can be pushed around a little. New Zealand political leaders understandably resent such attitudes.

Proximity and similarity are most evident in the free movement of people between the two countries. Until 1947 the nationality of both Australians and New Zealanders was that of ‘British subject’. In that year a Commonwealth conference agreed on the right to separate citizenship within individual Commonwealth countries, as well as the common status of British subject. The status of Australian citizen became a matter of law on Australia Day (26 January) 1949. This did not affect New Zealanders in Australia or Australians in New Zealand, as both governments agreed that their citizens should have unrestricted travel between the two countries, and be treated not as foreigners while they were there.29 This applied

29 There have been occasional lapses in these arrangements, and liaison is maintained to restrict the movement of known criminals. See ch. 2, ‘The Movement of Peoples’ in Burnett, The Australia and New Zealand Nexus.
equally to Maoris and to Australian Aborigines, although not to Pacific islanders resident in New Zealand, and (until 1973) not to non-European Australian citizens normally resident in Australia. When both states began to place conditions on the entry of citizens of the United Kingdom, they did not apply these restraints to one another. The advent of Labor governments in both countries in late 1972 led to an agreement that:

citizens of each country and citizens of other Commonwealth countries who have resident status in either Australia or New Zealand should henceforth be able to travel between Australia and New Zealand, for permanent or temporary stay, without passports or visas.30

As some 800 000 people came to cross the Tasman Sea each year, this agreement led both governments to review the situation because of the possibility of abuses of the system by illegal entrants, drug offenders, or criminals.

The second main element in the Australia-New Zealand relationship has been trade. This developed slowly, because they produced the same things—wool, meat and dairy products—in the export of which they were competitors for the British market. Australia, having a more temperate and in places a tropical climate, also exported grains and sugar, as well as the minerals with which it is so richly endowed. Britain supplied both countries with people, capital, capital goods, technology, banking services, trading and shipping companies, and preferred access both to the London capital market and the British consumer, so that for many years, although Australia and New Zealand were competitors in their largest market, they also constituted, internationally, a single economic area. Where they negotiated reciprocal tariff agreements, as they did in 1922 and again in 1933 under the Ottawa arrangements, these tended to operate to the advantage of Australia, with its larger resources, secondary industries, and markets. For its part, New Zealand has been a far more efficient producer of dairy products and meat, which is why they were kept from the Australian consumer through import restraints and subsidies to Australian rural industries.

'Against a fifty year background which was characterised by acrimony and distrust',31 the first post-war trade arrangement between Australia and New Zealand was negotiated in 1956. It did not last long, but it revealed

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Australia's interest in having New Zealand as a market for manufactured goods and New Zealand's interest in having Australia as an increasing market for forest products. Because of their similarities, the two countries' trading relations with each other have tended to be a function of their relations with Britain, Japan, the United States and the European Economic Community. In 1956 Australia renegotiated her preferential (Ottawa) agreement with Britain, a declining market, in order to develop markets elsewhere under the terms of GATT, and to offer reciprocal arrangements less inhibited by preferences to competing British products. A new agreement was achieved, and Australia similarly reduced New Zealand preferences. New Zealand, much more dependent on primary exports to Britain, managed to obtain a similar treaty. In 1957 Australia negotiated a trade agreement with Japan, with assured access for certain primary products. New Zealand was able to use her now less competitive situation to arrange a similar agreement. It was becoming apparent to the two governments that although they were competitors there was mutual profit in rationalising their competition, as in the American market. In the early 1960s, when Britain moved hesitantly and for so long unsuccessfully towards the EEC, Australia tried to ensure that New Zealand was not given preferred treatment in any UK-EEC arrangements made, but eventually had to concede the issue.

Because of the short distances involved and the ease of contact, it made a great deal of sense to expand trade with each other wherever there was comparative advantage. Steps were taken by ministers in 1958, 1960 and subsequently by officials which led to the signing in 1965 of the New Zealand-Australia Free Trade Agreement, or NAFTA. Some of the established preferences under the 1933 agreement were retained. NAFTA covered approximately 60 per cent of total trade between the two countries. Most of the items included were already traded on a duty-free basis; duties on the remainder would be phased out, and almost all forest products would be admitted duty free to Australia. The agreement ensured that New Zealand would remain Australia's largest market for manufactured goods. It still left a large area of trade uncovered, and represented only a modest advance on the previous status quo. It was supplemented by an interim Agreement on Preferences in 1973 following Britain's entry into the EEC.


Text in CNA, vol. 36, no. 8, August 1965, pp. 471–80. In 1960 Australia had abolished import licensing. This left New Zealand without special access to the Australian market and led directly to the establishment of a joint consultative committee on trade.
setting the margins of preference on goods not covered in the NAFTA schedules, and by an Agreement on Rules of Origin designed to establish procedures for determining whether goods traded were eligible for the tariff or other NAFTA concessions.

While NAFTA helped to expand trade between the two countries, it did not noticeably affect the balance of trade, which was consistently between two or three to one in Australia’s favour.³⁴

Australian and New Zealand forces have been operating together overseas continuously from the beginning of the post-war occupation of Japan up till the present day. With so small a military-industrial base, it would have been profitable for the two countries to have combined their defence procurement requirements, but this happened only to a limited extent, mainly through the America-Britain-Canada-Australia (ABCA) arrangements for standardisation of certain items of military equipment, in which New Zealand was associated through Australian sponsorship. Following Britain’s decision to withdraw from east of Suez, a Memorandum of Understanding between New Zealand and Australia was signed in September 1969,³⁵ listing objectives in defence procurement cooperation. As happens so often in international agreements, it is much easier to list objectives than to attain them. There was a loss of momentum although Australia bought numbers of the New Zealand CT4 Airtrainer with some Australian components, and New Zealand produced parts for the Australian Nomad aircraft.

Australia’s decision in early 1969 to retain forces in Malaysia after the proposed 1971 British withdrawal was made in consultation with the other ANZAM powers, and jointly with New Zealand. Subsequently, when the Whitlam Labor government decided to withdraw the Australian ground units in 1973, it did so in opposition to the policy of the New Zealand Labour government, which left its army elements in the region and kept them there even after the subsequent withdrawal of virtually the whole British component. It seems likely that New Zealand’s action encouraged Australia to leave air force and naval units in Malaysia and Singapore.

³⁴P. J. Lloyd, Economic Relations Between Australia and New Zealand, pp. 42, 128. Lloyd (ch. 2) shows that for some years there has been a net flow of migration from New Zealand to Australia, and a net flow of capital in the reverse direction, but the two economies are not closely integrated.

In ANZAM and its successor, the Five-Power arrangements and the ANZUK force, Australia and New Zealand cooperated with Britain in helping ensure the security of two Commonwealth partners, Malaya/Malaysia and Singapore. The commitment was made in the Commonwealth context, before the United States was an ally; that is, it was in part an insurance operation with Britain. The commitment continued beyond the need for it, even beyond British participation, presumably because of the strategic importance of the two states, the fact that it fostered cooperation between them, and because the defence arrangement gave Australia and New Zealand a basis for a special relationship with two Asian neighbours, a relationship which is unique and probably irreplaceable. In Korea, Australia and New Zealand were part of a Commonwealth subsidiary of an American expedition in the name of the United Nations to stop Asian communist aggression.

In ANZUS, Australia and New Zealand, fearful both of a rearmed Japan and of communist aggression in Asia, sought the joint protection of the United States. This was the one surviving agreement, perhaps because it cost little to any of the partners. It was not essential to the Australia-New Zealand relationship, but both considered it essential to their security. The two antipodean states were part of the wider SEATO defence measures designed to stop further communist military encroachments in Indo-China and against Thailand. In Vietnam, although they cooperated, Australia was a larger, more enthusiastic, more uncritical participant than New Zealand, which would have liked to see stronger and earlier attempts at reaching a negotiated solution.

All five situations demonstrated New Zealand's dedication to the principle of collective security, on the basis that, alone, it could not defend itself. As the 1961 Review of Defence Policy stated, neutralism or non-alignment was 'alien to the traditions, sentiments, and temperament of New Zealanders'. New Zealand, it said, must join with the United Kingdom, the United States and Australia 'in defending what they regard as their vital interests as well as our own, and make the best contribution we can'. By the mid-1970s, Britain and the US had left South-east Asia, and collective security seemed both less needed and less possible.

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*Michael Stenson, 'The origins and significance of "Forward Defence" in Asia', in McIntosh, *New Zealand in World Affairs*.

Oceania

From the earliest days, Australian colonists, traders, missionaries, travellers and governments were aware of the islands of Oceania, scattered and small though the settlements were.

Over time, Australian companies became the largest national group of entrepreneurs in many of the territories, and in World War II the Australian government began to feel a degree of responsibility and care for those islands it did not administer. This was not in order to compensate them for the profits they had generated for Australian pockets. It was partly because of their strategic importance, and even more because of the developing though selective conscience of the Australian Labor leadership and administration.

In the ANZAC Agreement of 1944 the Australian and New Zealand governments demanded to take part in any post-war decisions not only on the interim administration and ultimate disposal of Japanese territories in the Pacific, but in any ‘change in the sovereignty or system of control of any of the islands of the Pacific’, whether (in effect) Japanese, French, British, Dutch or American (Arts. 26 and 27). They declared (Art. 28) that the trusteeship principle was applicable to all colonial territories, in the Pacific as elsewhere, (except Papua and New Guinea) and its main purpose was the welfare of the native peoples and their social, economic and political development. They proposed the establishment of a South Seas Regional Commission (Arts. 30, 31) to secure a common policy on such development.

Not content with voicing the principle, the two governments set about calling a conference to put it into effect. Not surprisingly, they did not receive warm responses from the colonial powers in whose affairs they proposed to interfere. The British answer was dusty and delaying, although it supported the idea of regional cooperation. The US Secretary of State was ‘frankly disturbed’ at the proposal for a conference, and would not agree to its being held in 1944.39

In the event, with British support, it was held in Canberra in January–February 1947, with representatives of Australia, France, the Netherlands, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States—who between them administered virtually all the islands of Oceania—and resulted in an agreement to set up the ‘South Pacific Commission’.40 The Commission as

39 The British and American replies are given in Kay, The Australian-New Zealand Agreement, Documents 58, 59 and 61.
established was a consultative and advisory body. As agreed before the conference, it did not concern itself with political development, defence or security. It has concerned itself with the development of the economic and social rights and welfare of the inhabitants of the territories, with research in these fields, with coordination of local projects, providing technical assistance and advice, and with promoting cooperation with international institutions such as UN specialised agencies, non-participating governments and non-governmental organisations. The Commission has a small secretariat, with a Secretary-General rotating between member countries. Australia has consistently provided about 30 per cent of the Commission's modest budget, and has twice provided the Secretary-General. The headquarters are at Noumea in New Caledonia. To advise the Commission there is a Research Council and a 'South Pacific Conference' with wider representation of indigenous delegates from the dependent territories.

The South Pacific Commission did not revolutionise the South Pacific. It was a small cooperative venture between administering powers. It had machinery for joint endeavours, and it promoted by slow degrees a sense of community among the territories and their peoples, a forum for meeting and discussion, a regional outlook, as well as some cooperative ventures in agriculture, fisheries, education, and communications. Apart from these matters, its most productive effort has probably been the research program undertaken with UN help to eradicate the rhinoceros beetle and related pests afflicting the coconut.

At the same time as a sense of community was growing among the island territories, they were developing, at different rates, in their political institutions. Some became independent states, and the South Pacific Commission and Conference proved inadequate for their needs. In 1971 some of the island leaders proposed to the Australian and New Zealand governments a forum for political discussions between self-governing and independent states. Both governments welcomed the idea, and in August the President of Nauru, the Prime Ministers of Western Samoa, Tonga and Fiji, and the Premier of the Cook Islands met with New Zealand and Australian ministers in Wellington to establish what became known as the South Pacific Forum. The Forum was concerned with doing something concrete and constructive about the problems affecting them, such as

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41 *CNIA*, vol. 41, no. 1, January 1970, pp. 10–21, has a review of the origin and working of the Commission.

42 The University of the South Pacific was established in Suva, Fiji, in 1968, to serve the region. Other institutions of regional cooperation are discussed in ‘Regional Co-operation in the South Pacific’, *CNIA*, vol. 43, no. 2, February 1972, pp. 42–8.
inter-island trade, a proposed regional shipping line, civil aviation, telecommunications, tourism and investment, migration, the law of the sea, developing the ocean's resources, French nuclear testing, a regional disaster fund, and the possibility of joint diplomatic representation. Australia had been reluctant to contribute to aid programs while the territories were under the administration of other powers, but became more generous as the islands moved to independence.43

Nauru had been German territory from 1888, was occupied by Australian forces in November 1914, became in 1921 a territory under League of Nations mandate granted to the British Crown and administered by the Australian government on behalf of Britain, New Zealand and Australia. Its extensive phosphate deposits were discovered by a New Zealander in 1900 and mined by a British company, the rights subsequently being purchased by the British Phosphate Commissioners representing the three governments. The island suffered considerable war damage in 1942–45, and was occupied by Japan. Australia resumed administration after the war and the island became a trust territory under the United Nations, administered by Australia.

An independence movement developed during the 1950s. With only one source of income, and that depleting before their eyes, the islanders began to seek an alternative home. The three governments offered to resettle the Nauruans in any of the metropolitan homelands, but this was not acceptable to them as it meant dispersal. Negotiations with Australia over providing an Australian island came to nothing, partly out of mistrust by the Nauruans and insensitivity by Australian officials, but even more because the Nauruans wanted a degree of self-government Australia was not prepared to concede. Eventually the 3000 Nauruans opted for independence where they were, and the territory became an independent republic in January 1968 and joined the Commonwealth.

When Australians looked apprehensively at the Pacific in the 19th and the first half of the 20th century, it was to an area where potentially hostile forces ranged: those of France, Germany, Russia, Japan. So Deakin, Lyons, Curtin, Evatt and Spender reached out for American insurance against such forces. The ANZUS Treaty, also called the Pacific Pact, was the culmination of that process, ironically achieved at a time when it was no longer needed, when the United States was supreme in the region, and no hostile forces capable of harming Australia ranged there. Any threat to

43 A total of $4.8m. in bilateral aid to the South Pacific was contributed between 1965/6 and 1970/1, most of it going to Fiji. Ibid., p. 44.
Australia, real or imagined, was in the future, and would be a threat from or via South-east Asia, down the archipelago. 'The Pacific' thus became an area of peace, with continuing opportunities for trade, investment, aid, and a limited exercise of conscience.

By the time of the change in government in late 1972, Australia had only just begun to develop, in any coherent way, a 'Pacific policy', in the sense of a positive policy towards the islands of Oceania. Policies tend to develop as a response to demands, and the Pacific Forum was the first expression of a coherent demand upon Australia from the region. Australian preoccupations between 1945 and 1970 were with Asia (see Chapter 10), and with Papua New Guinea and its policies reflected those preoccupations. The exaggerated claims of the ANZAC Pact quickly yielded to the facts of island sovereignty, the economic and political costs of intervention, and the realities of the world power system. Australia continued to show an interest in Oceania, but only by occasionally glancing over the shoulder or dipping into the pocket.

**Latin America**

Australia's history might well have been different if the early Spanish explorers, searching westwards from the South American colonies, had sighted and claimed Australia. But they did not. Torres, who sailed along the south coast of Papua, probably saw the great south land, but would have had no idea how great it was.

During the 19th century there was some trade between the Australian and the South American colonies, but it was marginal to the trade both had with Europe. There were few other contacts. In 1893 a leading Australian socialist, William Lane, set off with a band of followers to found in Paraguay the utopia he could not create in Queensland, but New Australia (as the settlement was called) ran into the practical human difficulties of all utopias and gradually failed. Until World War II, apart from discussions in the League of Nations, when Australians thought of the countries of Latin America at all it was mainly of Argentina, an advantaged competitor (because so much nearer, reducing transport time and costs) in the British wool, meat and wheat markets.44

Of the South American states only Brazil was an active ally of the United

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44 Britain had extensive investment in Latin America—over £600 million in Argentina alone in 1932. See Glen Barclay, 'Strangers in the Hemisphere: Australian Relations with Latin America,' *Australian Outlook*, vol. 23, no. 3, December 1969, pp. 234–45.
Nations during the war, although some others cooperated with the United States and several declared war against the Axis powers just before the end. At the San Francisco conference in 1945, Dr Evatt established with leaders of some of the Latin American delegations a community of interest and a common approach in many aspects of the evolving UN Charter. Australia established diplomatic relations first with Brazil, in 1945, apparently because of its size, wealth, and comparatively liberal politics. Argentina, on the other hand, had collaborated with Germany and had strained relations with the United States, as well as with Britain concerning the Falkland Islands (Malvinas), over which both claimed sovereignty. Relations were not established until 1962. An Australian legation was set up in Chile in 1946, only to be closed in 1949 and reopened in 1968. The Australian international airline, Qantas, began a direct air service to Mexico in 1964, subsequently discontinued. A shipping service was opened to Brazil. By 1977 Australia was represented in 13 Latin American states, although not always by a resident ambassador. Over the years there have been trade missions, visits by ministers and parliamentarians and officials, but there is little mutual interest, little trade, a little migration. Australian primary exports are more competitive than complementary with South American production in the markets of Europe and Japan, and secondary exports run into intense competition from the United States. Some cottage industry products were admitted into Australia under a preferential tariff. There is no threat to Australia from the continent, and little basis for cooperative effort. The Australian government appreciated that the Latin American states constituted an important caucusing group at the United Nations, but largely sought to influence them there rather than in the home capitals. It has welcomed the Latin American nuclear-free zone and diplomatic support against French nuclear testing in the Pacific. It was surprised but eventually stimulated by unilateral declarations of 200-mile exclusive fishing zones. On the initiative of E. G. Whitlam, the first Australian Prime Minister to visit Latin America, Australia obtained observer status with the Organisation of American States and the Andean group of states. With some Latin American states, Australia was a founding member of the Organisation of Iron Ore Exporters (APEF), and has observer status with the Group of Copper Producing States (CIPEF).

Two matters have been contentious between Australia and South American governments. The first was Antarctica, to which Australia, Chile and Argentina all had claims. A conference on the Antarctic was held in

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Washington in October-November 1959, in which Casey played an important part in reconciling differing points of view and claims, and in defeating a Chilean proposal that after ten years any state could denounce the treaty on two years’ notice.\textsuperscript{46} Chile and Argentina had competing claims, but neither contested the Australian claim. Their views on the territory have long been similar to Australia’s.

The second matter was the violent overthrow of the Chilean government in September 1973, and the death of President Allende. There was a strong emotional reaction from the Australian Labor government. Whitlam said that as a democrat and a socialist he had been ‘greatly saddened that men who had sworn to uphold the constitution of their country had betrayed a long and noble Chilean democratic tradition of which Salvador Allende had been the authentic representative’.\textsuperscript{47} When Allende had come to power, the numbers of Chilean migrants to Australia increased. A second, somewhat larger, wave now came, escaping from the military regime. The Australian government withdrew its ambassador from Chile, and ordered a report from the Department of Foreign Affairs. That report apparently indicated that Senor Allende’s government was rather less democratic than the government had believed, and included corrupt, violent, and incompetent elements. A new Australian ambassador was not sent to the post until July 1976.

Australia since World War II and the Latin American states for 150 years before that have all lived in the shadow of the same great power—the United States. In both areas the shadow has shortened in recent years, as the United States has contracted its influence, made concessions to nationalist pressures and to the changing balance of world power. One Latin American state, Brazil, despite a massive foreign debt, is moving towards becoming a world power of the second rank. There and elsewhere are markets about which Australian governments keep talking a good deal and doing little. Some Japanese investment has moved from Australia to Latin America, where costs are lower and industrial dislocation is less. The Pacific could be a highway between its two southern sides, but it continues for the most part to act as a barrier.


\textsuperscript{\textcircled{g} AFAR}, September 1973, p. 614.
The Middle East

Australia's concern with the Middle East has centred on three separate but eventually related issues: the Suez Canal as a 'life-line' of the Empire and of Australian trade with Britain and Western Europe; oil; and the creation and maintenance of the Jewish state of Israel.

When the Suez Canal was opened in 1869, it revolutionised Britain's communications with her empire in the Indian Ocean, reducing by 7200 kilometres (42 per cent) the sea voyage between London and Bombay. London to Australia was only 1900 kilometres shorter than by the Cape, but even this made a noticeable difference to voyage times and freight rates. The new route was quickly established. The empire and the bases developed along its lines of communication became mutually supportive, and the Canal became an important, even a vital, element in imperial strategy, especially as Middle Eastern oil replaced coal as the principal fuel for locomotion. Britain occupied Egypt from 1882 to 1922, and dominated it for a further 30 years. In both World Wars, Australian forces were used to help protect the Canal and its environment.

Britain had held a League of Nations mandate in Palestine since after World War I, but the mandate became increasingly hard to administer as the Jewish population was swollen with refugees and used violence as a means of obtaining the 'national home' promised by Balfour in 1917. In April 1947 Britain referred the Palestine question to a special session of the United Nations General Assembly, which appointed an 11-nation Special Committee on Palestine. This Committee presented a majority report recommending the partition of Palestine into an Arab state, a Jewish state, and an international regime for Jerusalem, all within an economic union; and a minority plan for a federal Arab-Jewish state with Jerusalem as its
The Australian Minister for External Affairs, Dr Evatt, was chairman of a special Ad Hoc Committee of the whole General Assembly which considered the two reports. Perhaps by conviction, perhaps because of representations by leaders of the Australian Jewish community, Evatt voted for partition as the most just and acceptable solution, and it was adopted in the Committee and the General Assembly thanks to a large number of abstentions at the committee stage. It was a victory for the Zionist cause, a victory the Arabs were not prepared to accept.

This led immediately to the first of four wars (in 25 years) between Arab and Israeli forces. Evatt opposed the American suggestion of a temporary UN trusteeship, as contrary to the Assembly's decision, and sought to have that decision reinforced by the Security Council and adhered to by the combatants. But their tempers ran too high, and by force of arms Israel established itself as an independent state recognised by the Soviet Union, the United States and other governments including Australia.

Both the Labor government and its successor in late 1949, the Liberal-Country Party government, were sympathetic to Israel, although Labor believed more strongly that the UN could and should resolve the conflict, and Jerusalem be under international control. Menzies had little faith in the UN, believed firmly in the rights of empire, and saw the Canal as still vital to imperial communications. Under pressure of Egyptian nationalism, Britain had withdrawn its forces (in Egypt under a 1936 treaty) to the Canal Zone after the war, but refused to agree to Egyptian demands in 1950 to annul the treaty. Menzies supported the British decision, but tenure of the Canal Zone became difficult under local harassment. In May 1951 Iran nationalised the Anglo-Iranian oil fields and refineries. Britain contemplated then rejected the use of force. In October it proposed to the United States, France, Turkey, Egypt, South Africa, Australia and New Zealand that they set up a joint Middle East Command, or defence organisation. Australia agreed to participate, but Egypt refused, unilaterally abrogated the 1936 treaty, and the Command proposal lapsed. In May 1952, at Britain's request, two fighter squadrons of the Royal Australian Air Force were sent to Malta. They did not stay long. Britain began to withdraw its forces after 1954 under a new Anglo-Egyptian treaty which Australia publicly supported, and the two RAAF squadrons also went home, their mission having become redundant.

Australia's support of Britain over its intervention with France in Egypt

Evatt's account of the UN proceedings, in which he was prominent, leading to the creation of the state of Israel, is given in The Task of Nations, chs. X-XIII.
in late 1956 is discussed in Chapter 8. It is unlikely that Menzies would have been so firm a supporter of the Anglo-French position had he known of their collusion with Israel, but he did not know. The British government was able to draw upon Menzies's formidable capacity as an advocate, his imperial sentiments, his concern for Australian trade, perhaps even some racial prejudices. Casey did not have the intellectual skill to out-argue Menzies, nor the political strength to convince him, the Australian cabinet, or British ministers that military intervention would be unwise. Cabinet, which accepted Menzies's case for sanctions against Egypt if necessary, does not appear to have considered the implications of such a policy. It was a game of bluff which, if called, someone else would have to answer. Without considerable notice Australia's armed forces were in no position to make more than a token contribution: it was perhaps as well that Britain's deception of everyone except France and Israel precluded any appeal to Australia to help. In leading the Users' delegation to Nasser, Menzies had acted with dignity and doubtless negotiated with the 'competence and tact' attributed to him by Guy Mollet, the French Prime Minister.2 His difficult task was probably rendered impossible when Eisenhower ruled out the use of force. But by subsequently encouraging Britain to consider physical intervention as a viable, legally acceptable option, Menzies misunderstood the temper of the times, misjudged the realities of power, contravened the United Nations Charter, and helped to promote the very failure he had sought to avoid.

The Egyptian government understandably saw Australia as an opponent, and effectively a supporter of Israel. Diplomatic relations, which had been established in 1950, were suspended in late 1956. At the United Nations, Australia was almost alone in supporting Britain, France and Israel. Australia abstained on the vote to establish a UN Emergency Force between the combatants, and Menzies criticised the exclusion of British and French units from the force. Two years later, Australia supported the Anglo-American decision to send forces briefly into the Lebanon and Jordan at the request of their governments to strengthen their defence against neighbouring states. Australia also proposed a UN commission on the Middle East, backed by a police force to deal with threats to borders.3 Although this proposal came to nothing, it was evidence that the Australian government was taking a more international, less automatic, less partisan view of the situation.

2 Quoted by Menzies, *Afternoon Light*, p. 171.

This was only logical. The Australian and other governments soon discovered that the Canal was not the vital artery of defence and commerce they had believed it to be. Australia found the Cape route a little longer but adequate, and larger ships reduced unit costs. Also, Australia's trade with Britain, recently a half of all her trade, began to decline steadily as a proportion of an increased whole. The sea lanes to the Indian and Pacific oceans became less important to Britain as more Commonwealth countries in Asia and Africa achieved independence. Australia realised that other Middle Eastern states besides Israel affected Australian interests. It had useful wheat sales to Egypt. The closure of the Canal made Australian exports more competitive in the (Persian) Gulf and on the east coast of Africa. Some 60–65 per cent of all Australian oil supplies at this time came from states sympathetic to Egypt, mainly Iran, Kuwait, Bahrain and Saudi Arabia. Under the impact of deteriorating security situations in South-east Asia, and British and American involvement, Australia's focus of attention reverted to its northern neighbourhood. Support of Israel thus became less positive. The Australian embassy in Cairo was reopened in January 1960. (While relations were suspended, an Australian diplomat had been attached to the Canadian Embassy in Cairo.)

The Third Arab-Israeli war, in June 1967, erupted after Egypt had closed the Straits of Tiran and thus prevented Israeli shipping from using the Gulf of Aqaba. In late May, Australia 'reaffirmed' its policy that the Straits must be regarded as an international waterway. (It had been more equivocal over Egyptian interruption to Israeli shipping in the Canal.) It declared, tongue somewhat in cheek, that 'redress of grievances should be sought in the first instance by making full use of United Nations organs and machinery'. After the Six Day war was over, Hasluck took Australia's policy a little further: Israel must be recognised as having a national existence and status; the territorial integrity and political independence of Israel and the Arab states must be respected and supported; ships of all nations had the right of transit through both the Suez Canal and the Gulf of Aqaba. Other questions—on the Palestine refugees and the status of Jerusalem—were raised but no position taken. At the United Nations a

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1 Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs report on the Middle East Situation, Canberra, 1968, pp. 44–5.

5 Statement by Hasluck, 25 May 1967. CNIA, vol. 38, no. 5, May 1967, p. 209. According to President Lyndon B. Johnson, the Australian Prime Minister (Harold Holt) who was in Washington at this time offered two Australian 'cruisers' (presumably destroyers) as part of a suggested international naval force to break Egypt's blockade of the Gulf of Aqaba. The Vantage Point. Perspectives of the Presidency 1963–1969, p. 295.

fortnight later, Australia was closer to a middle position than it had ever been. Its representative declared:

My Delegation fully recognises that the Arab states and Israel have legitimate grievances of one kind or another and that these are sharpened by great and understandable bitterness in this aftermath of battle.7

He stated that people of Moslem, Jewish and Christian faiths should all be assured of access to their Holy Places in the city of Jerusalem. He advocated a 'just' settlement to the problem of refugees. Later Hasluck favoured the Israeli position against the Arab states in advocating that they negotiate directly with each other. Australia supported Security Council resolution 242 adopted in November, which with some calculated ambiguities called for the withdrawal of Israeli forces from occupied territories, acknowledgment of the sovereignty, territorial integrity and political independence of all nations in the area, and their right to live in peace within secure and recognised boundaries free from threats or acts of force. Australia also consistently supported the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine refugees.

By 1970 Australia's public attitude had moved to what its Prime Minister called 'strict neutrality' with regard to both Israel and the Arab countries,8 and from this time onwards the Liberal-Country Party government abstained on resolutions politically favouring one side or the other. This was broadly the approach of the Labor Party which came to power in December 1972. It was not an approach that commended itself to most of the Australian Jewish community.9 It took account of the growing Muslim population in Australia, due mainly to migration from the Lebanon, Egypt, Turkey and Cyprus.10 It was to draw strength, when war came again in 1973, from Australia's capacity by then to supply two-thirds of its own oil requirements.

9 A Jewish journalist, Sam Lipski, believes that Australian Jews number about 72 000, mostly in Sydney (29 000) and Melbourne (35 000), and that between 60 and 70 per cent are either post-war migrants or the children of those migrants. 'Australian Jews and the Middle East', in John Knight and Gunther Patz, Australia and the Middle East. Papers and Documents, pp. 16–24.
10 The 1971 census showed 62 844 Australian residents as born in Arab countries.
Africa and the Indian Ocean

Until Ghana became independent in 1957, Australia had dealings in sub-Saharan Africa only with South Africa. Australian forces fought alongside the British in the South African war of 1899–1902, but there was no legacy of animosity, and in both World Wars, South Africans and Australians were together as parts of British formations. White South Africans had much in common with Australians: European pioneers in a vast, temperate land in the southern hemisphere, with a Westminster form of government and, until 1960, a common head of state. South Africa was a fellow Dominion at imperial and Commonwealth conferences. But there were important differences between them: in the composition of the population, in their ties and allegiances, and in the social system and legislation by which a white minority in South Africa exercised political and economic supremacy. At World War I and inter-war imperial conferences, Indian delegates raised repeatedly the question of the treatment of Indians in South Africa, with almost no success. They took the question up again in the United Nations. Australian attitudes to successive resolutions on this, and on the general racial policy known as apartheid, are discussed in Chapter 8. On the ground that, however discreditable the policies were, they came under South Africa's domestic jurisdiction, Australia voted with a decreasing minority opposing UN consideration. In 1959 its vote changed to an abstention, and in 1961 after South Africa left the Commonwealth it changed again to support the majority. Menzies, who had repeatedly condemned apartheid, greatly regretted South Africa's departure from the Commonwealth (see Chapter 8), but he was not prepared to be the only soldier in step. On 1 May 1961 he was reported as saying:

What would have happened to Australia if we had been the only country holding out? We would have been misrepresented all over Asia about our attitude, and we were not going to be misrepresented. We had had enough, so we voted with the United Kingdom.\footnote{The Times, 1 May 1961. My italics.}

The Australian position on South West Africa (Namibia) was that while South Africa should place the territory under UN trusteeship, until she did she was legally responsible for the territory.

Australia's interest in black Africa was confined to the Commonwealth states, and was even then not particularly enthusiastic. Menzies had little sympathy for the loud complaints and demands of African representatives
at Commonwealth and UN meetings, and their hectoring approach to the United Kingdom. By weight of verbal assault they changed the tone, emphasis and preoccupations of both institutions. Ghana became independent in 1957, Nigeria in 1960, Sierra Leone and Tanganyika (later Tanzania) in 1961, Uganda in 1962, Kenya in 1963, Malawi (formerly Nyasaland) and Zambia (formerly Northern Rhodesia) in 1964, and the Gambia in 1965. Australia supported the Commonwealth African Assistance Plan, supposed to be the African equivalent to the Colombo Plan, but made only a small contribution to it other than the training of diplomats. Black Africa was more remote. It was not, like India, on the regular route to England. Its problems and tensions did not impinge on Australia. Its cultures were less known, less attractive. An Australian, Dr G. A. Chambers, was appointed first Bishop of Central Tanganyika in 1927. Australian missionaries have continued to operate in the country, and to conduct a hospital. Numbers of Africans have received theological training in Australia. But revolution in Australian attitudes to Asia in the 1950s and 1960s did not 'spill over' to Africa. There was undoubtedly some sympathy in Australia for the white minorities in Africa, especially in South Africa and Rhodesia. There was also a sense of racial incompatibility with black Africans that had been largely broken down towards Asians. Australia could not look with sympathy at the overthrow, usually with violence, of established African Commonwealth governments, and the erection in one after another of authoritarian one-party civilian or military regimes. In the Nigerian civil war, Australian involvement was limited to the provision of relief supplies and medical assistance. Special contributions were made to the UN High Commission for Refugees to help with resettlement of Asians expelled from Uganda.

As mentioned in Chapter 8, Australia took the view that political change in Rhodesia (formerly Southern Rhodesia), a self-governing British colony, was the responsibility of the British government. Black African governments found themselves in a dilemma: while opposed in principle to imperial rule, they could not advocate independence for Rhodesia while it was ruled by a white government representing only 8 per cent of the population. Britain, under African pressure, was not prepared to concede independence to such a government, and so that government declared its independence unilaterally on 11 November 1965, an act recognised by none of the Commonwealth states. The matter was the subject of repeated discussions in the UN and at Commonwealth meetings. On 16 November, in line with UN resolutions and UK sentiments, Menzies announced a ban on the export of arms to Rhodesia; a ban on the import of Rhodesian tobacco; suspension of Commonwealth tariff preferences (in cooperation
The Middle East, Africa and the Indian Ocean

with the UK) and exclusion of Rhodesia from the sterling area; and termin-
ation of Australia’s trade representation in Rhodesia.\footnote{HRD, vol. 49, pp. 2767–71, 16 November 1965.} The following day, Hasluck drew attention to Soviet and Chinese activities in Africa, in con-
trast with the US, Britain and Commonwealth countries. He pleaded for understand-ing of the white Rhodesians’ position, despite their ‘great fool-

ishness’, and ‘the simple fact that they have acted in fear’.\footnote{HRD, vol. 49, p. 2852, 17 November 1965.} In December, the Australian government prohibited the import of ferro-alloys, chrome and asbestos from Rhodesia. The purpose of the sanctions was to induce Rhodesia to ‘see reason’ and return to the imperial fold. As total Australian imports were valued at less than £2 million annually, the sanctions could not have hurt Rhodesia very much. Australia continued to sell wheat to Rhodesia, taking advantage of a ‘humanitarian’ loophole in the relevant UN resolution. It refused (as, for different reasons, did Ghana and Tanzania) to participate in the January 1966 Commonwealth Conference on Rhodesia at Lagos on the grounds that this constituted intervention in Britain’s affairs. (An Australian diplomat was an observer at the public sessions of the conference.)

In November 1967, the UN General Assembly adopted by 92 votes to 2 with 18 abstentions (including Australia) a resolution calling on Britain to take immediately ‘all necessary measures, including the use of force’ to end the rebellion. Australia spoke consistently against a resort to arms, on the grounds that Britain was not prepared to use force, and it would be improper to ask her; also, that the consequences would be unpredictable, except that they would be tragic and would involve many innocent people. An ostensible British naval blockade of the port of Beira—a strange piece of pseudo gunboat diplomacy—was circumvented by South Africa maintaining land communications into Rhodesia.

The United Nations urged trade sanctions also against South Africa. These were almost totally ineffective. Britain, France, the United States, Australia and other western powers continued to trade, but so did some of the African, Asian and communist states which had voted for the resol-

ution. Australia’s trade with South Africa, which had never included arms, was heavily in Australia’s favour.

The long years of closure of the Suez Canal, Britain’s much reduced military presence ‘east of Suez’, and the entry of a Soviet naval squadron into the Indian Ocean in early 1968—all provided reasons why Australia should seek to maintain amicable relations with South Africa. Successive Canberra governments did this, although with more correctness than
warmth, while continuing to condemn apartheid. Some members of the
governing parties, and some elements in South Africa, would have liked to
see formal or informal defence links between the two states. Yet the mili-
tary grounds for a treaty were not obvious, while the political reasons for
Australia’s not having a treaty were overwhelming. Australia had no
capacity to patrol the sea route across the Indian Ocean, and South Africa
would be unlikely, in a crisis, to deny access to its port facilities by ships of
the one country in the region with which it had any noticeable affinity. The
Australian government feared guilt by association. Fairly or unfairly, South
Africa had become the pariah of all pariah states; discrimination by whites
against blacks, the worst of all crimes. No Australian government had the
courage or will or saw the need to swim against these tides of world
opinion.

Developments in the Indian Ocean during the 1960s made it an area of
strategic competition and concern. The British largely withdrew, leaving
opportunities for other powers. The United States had a small force of
three ships based in the Gulf, although substantially augmented briefly
during the 1971 Indo-Pakistan war, as a warning to India not to attack
West Pakistan. In 1963 an American station was built at North West Cape
in Western Australia capable of communicating with submerged nuclear-
powered submarines. In 1966 the British and American governments
signed an agreement whereby the island of Diego Garcia in Britain’s
Chagos archipelago should be available for the defence purposes of both
states for at least 50 years. In 1968 the Soviet naval squadron appeared, and
stayed. In 1971 the United States began to build a communications facility
on Diego Garcia, to replace the one at Asmara in Ethiopia. Australia
supported this move. According to Australian parliamentary committee
reports,¹⁴ Soviet naval shipping in the Indian Ocean for the four years from
March 1972 consisted of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guided missile destroyers</td>
<td>33 ship/months</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided missile cruiser</td>
<td>17 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided missile frigate</td>
<td>8 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cruiser</td>
<td>4 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Destroyers</td>
<td>23 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarines</td>
<td>45 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nuclear-powered, nuclear armed subm.</td>
<td>3 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diesel-powered nuclear armed subm.</td>
<td>3 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submarine tenders</td>
<td>16 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Landing ships</td>
<td>23 &quot; &quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

¹⁴ *Australia and the Indian Ocean Region*, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Ser-
vice, 1976, Appendix A, and Report from the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs on the
This was not a large naval presence, and was concentrated mainly in the north-west corner of the ocean, but it constituted a public (and well-advertised) change in the balance of forces in the region, a piece of flottenpolitik. With the erection of Soviet base facilities in Somalia, it became more self-supporting and more demonstrably permanent. Buoys were laid in the Mozambique channel, near Socotra, the Chagos archipelago, and elsewhere. The reasons for the Soviet activities were widely debated, and would seem to have been related to a general world-wide extension of Soviet interest and power, political and strategic competition with the United States and with the People's Republic of China in Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East oil-producing region, protection of Soviet sea communications between its western and eastern ports, and the Soviet space program. The Soviet presence caused some unease, even alarm, in Australia, as mentioned in Chapter 16. The Joint Parliamentary Committee on Foreign Affairs in 1971 (paras. 104–5) took a more relaxed view:

The evidence received by the Committee and other sources refuted any suggestion that the Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean represented a direct threat to Australian security or our lines of communication unless under the possibility of a situation of general war or just short of general war.

...when considering the extremely remote possibility that the Soviet Union may threaten Australia's trading communications, [40 per cent of Australia's exports and 50 per cent of imports were transported through the Indian Ocean at this time] it must be remembered that a high proportion of our trade is carried in foreign vessels including Soviet. To interfere with our trade is to interfere with international shipping which would undoubtedly lead to far wider and graver consequences than the original acts.

The Committee advocated more expansive Australian policies towards the countries of the region, more generous aid, increased trade, more emphasis on portraying Australia as interested in maintaining economic and political stability, and the more rapid development of a naval facility at Cockburn Sound, near Fremantle. There is no evidence that any of these suggestions was adopted, other than in the appointment of a High Commissioner to Mauritius, resident in Tanzania.

In September 1970, with the urging of Ceylon (Sri Lanka), a conference of non-aligned states at Lusaka adopted a declaration:

calling upon all States to consider and respect the Indian Ocean as a zone of peace from which great power rivalries and competition as well as bases conceived in the context of such rivalries and competition, either army, navy or air force bases, are excluded.
The declaration went on: 'The area should also be free of nuclear weapons.' The Commonwealth heads of government meeting in Singapore in January 1971 gave some support in principle. The Australian Prime Minister, John Gorton, said that while the idea of a peace zone was unexceptionable, there would be immense practical difficulties in implementing it. Australia abstained in UN resolutions attempting to give some substance to the proposal.

In the 27 years between the end of the war and the return of a Labor government in Canberra, the region to Australia's west and north-west changed almost beyond recognition. The Indian Ocean was no longer a 'British lake'. The dissolving empire had left a score of new states, usually with untried systems, inexperienced leaders, urgent needs, and no star to steer by. The Australian government had no natural or educated inclination to consider the problems of the region, but it was forced to begin such a consideration: by the new international mores promoted by the African states, by the British withdrawal and the Soviet intrusion.


\[17\] Cited Indian Ocean Region, p. 75.
The Soviet Union and Eastern Europe

By early in this century the development of a naval base at Vladivostok and of a Russian Pacific fleet had given some substance to both Japanese and Australian apprehension. Hughes in 1903 spoke against the proposal that the British squadron based on Australia could be deployed wherever the Admiralty needed it, believing it could well be needed against the East Asian concentration of Russian vessels, leaving Australia unprotected. This reflected Australian fears of being dragged into a war with Russia on the coat-tails of the Anglo-Japanese alliance of the previous year. From Britain’s perspective, the alliance allowed her to concentrate on restraining Germany and to be less concerned about events in the Far East. Japan’s defeat of Russia—narrow though it was—in the war of 1904–5 raised other problems for Australia while eliminating for the time being any sense of a Russian threat to this country or to the Empire.¹

During World War I, Australia and Russia were formally allies, but there was virtually no contact, each being preoccupied with its own widely separated campaigns and domestic political problems. Nor was Australia involved in the Allied forces supporting the White Russians after the Revolution.

The Revolution itself, and consequent events in what became the Soviet Union, were part of the news of the day within Australia, generating sympathy among ‘socialists’ in or outside the Australian Labor Party, and fear of ‘Bolshevism’ elsewhere. The Communist Party of Australia was formed on 30 October 1920, with an initial membership of 26, and was soon

¹There was some resentment in Australia in 1904 when Russian naval vessels fired on British fishing trawlers on the Dogger Bank in the North Sea, but this soon abated.
affiliated with the Communist International in Moscow. It adopted a policy of working within the Labor Party and converting it to communism, but after some success it was expelled, joint membership was forbidden by the ALP, and Communist Party members could only operate there surreptitiously. They could be—and were—more openly active within the trade union movement, and at different times within front organisations.2

In 1924 the United Kingdom recognised the government of the USSR and exchanged diplomatic representatives. It did so without consulting the Commonwealth countries. S. M. Bruce, the Australian Prime Minister, raised no objection. The government apparently gave no thought to whether British recognition would have implications for Australia. There was as yet no Australian diplomatic service, and British diplomats would act on behalf of Australia or of Australians in Moscow as elsewhere. There was no direct diplomatic contact between Australia and the Soviet Union until legations were exchanged in 1943.

But events in Europe in the 1930s, and Soviet reaction to them, were attracting the attention of some Australians, outside the CPA, to the Soviet Union. The CPA customarily followed the Comintern line, however un-Australian this appeared, but in some areas it coincided with wider sympathies within the community. Apprehensive of developments in Western Europe, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations in 1934, and began—somewhat tardily—to promote the concept of collective security. In Australia a front organisation, the Movement Against War and Fascism, was organised and grew rapidly, encouraged by German re-occupation of the Rhineland, Italy’s conquest of Abyssinia, and the Spanish Civil War. Where the ALP was isolationist and the conservative parties inert and apprehensive, the Communist Party—and the Soviet government—appeared to stand for worthy ideals. When J. E. Lyons proposed to the 1937 Imperial Conference and to a number of foreign ambassadors in London a ‘regional understanding and a pact of non-aggression in the Pacific’, he had a good (prima facie) reception from the Soviet Union, although Japanese opposition and British preoccupation effectively stopped the idea.

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2 This is not the place to detail the complex history of the Communist Party of Australia and its relations with the Comintern (dissolved in 1943), the Cominform (dissolved in 1955) or the Communist Party of the Soviet Union. See Alastair Davidson, *The Communist Party of Australia. A Short History*. This book was published before the split which established the CPA as a demonstrably Australian party, with the breakaway Socialist Party of Australia retaining its links to Moscow. See also Chapter 1 of Leicester Webb, *Communism and Democracy in Australia. A Survey of the 1951 Referendum*. 
Australian attitudes and policies towards the Soviet Union during World War II are described in Chapter 6. The massive Soviet military achievements and human sufferings throughout the war received wide sympathy in Australia, although understandably they were less reported and appreciated than the campaigns where Australians, British or Americans were involved. By the end of the war, the Communist Party of Australia was at its peak of status, and controlled a large proportion of the major unions. There is no reason to believe that the Soviet government saw Australia other than as a small, remote, capitalist, British dependency which had made a small contribution to the war but was substantially irrelevant to the international scene.

The post-war souring of relations between the Soviet Union and her wartime allies gave strength to the different approaches to communism within the ALP. On 1 April 1948 Russia imposed a blockade on Berlin. A week later Evatt made in parliament a plea for better understanding of the Soviet Union and deplored equating her with Hitlerite Germany. He quoted Churchill's gratitude in January 1945 for the Soviet offensive, and went on:

...it would be a disgrace to all concerned in the leadership of the nations who were allies in war if something could not be done to recapture the spirit which prevailed three years ago, and to complete the peace settlement....

He saw the falling-out between the United States and the Soviet Union as a tragedy. Later in the year, after being elected President of the UN General Assembly, Evatt tried to mediate in the Berlin crisis but in doing so gave the impression that he believed—as perhaps he did—that there was much to be said on both sides. Chifley had a more forthright view of Soviet policies and a more balanced attitude to communist activities. He did not believe that every nationalist bush in South-east Asia was a communist bear, or that all communist trade union leaders in Australia were serving the Soviet government rather than their union members. But he did have strong views on what was legitimate political or union activity. The Australian government offered help to the Berlin airlift, and during the 13 months of the blockade, Royal Australian Air Force planes carried more than 7000 passengers and 7000 tons of supplies. At home Chifley knew of the links between the Communist Party and Moscow, and was pre-

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1 HRD, vol. 196, p. 740, 8 April 1948. Evatt did not mention Churchill's more recent address on Russia, his 'iron curtain' speech at Fulton in March 1946.
pared to use the army to break strikes by communist-controlled coal miners and ironworkers, both in essential industries. Chifley also established the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, demonstrating, as L. F. Crisp wrote, that 'Where law enforcement machinery proved insufficient to cope with the Communists' operations in depth, Chifley was prepared to reinforce it.'

He was encouraged in this by the British government, which had become dismayed by the apparent leakage of confidential information to Moscow out of Canberra.

The coalition of the Liberal and Country parties which took office under R. G. Menzies in December 1949 had a very different approach from its predecessors to both communism and the Soviet Union. Percy Spender, who was Menzies's first Minister for External Affairs, characterised the attitude Evatt so deplored. Following a visit to Europe in 1947, Spender had told the House of Representatives that the world was entering a new era of appeasement, but this time the power being appeased was not Germany but the Soviet Union. 'Stalin has seized in his iron hand [millions] of people. Poles, Germans, Austrians, Hungarians, Romanians, Bulgarians, Czechs, Chinese and others...We are witnessing Munich in reverse.'

At the same time Russia was adopting fifth column methods in the democratic countries, he said, the purpose being to white-ant and weaken those countries.

By the end of 1949 such fears had an even stronger basis. Czechoslovakia had been taken over. Berlin had been blockaded. The Soviet Union had exploded an atomic bomb. In Asia a communist government had complete control of China, and a series of communist insurrections, or wars of national liberation, had erupted throughout South-east Asia. In Australia, communist-dominated trade unions had created widespread industrial havoc, including within key defence areas.

In his first statement to the House of Representatives as Minister for External Affairs, in March 1950, Spender gave his understanding of Soviet policies:

(a) Soviet Russia's foreign policy is essentially global in character. There is a necessary interdependence, recognized by it perhaps more than any other nation, between European and Asiatic policies. In Russia's case each is harmonized with the other.

(b) Its ultimate objective is world communism, a universal form of communism with Moscow as the controlling centre, either inspired by a belief that only by the

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destruction of other forms of government can communism be secured, or inspired by no other motive than aggression.

(c) Its immediate purpose is to work towards its ultimate objective by communist infiltration in all democratic countries—organized from the centre, Moscow—so creating unrest, causing economic disruption and discrediting governments. The means employed may differ from time to time—'peace offensives', propaganda and industrial dislocation may be used and discarded as circumstances dictate—but the purpose will remain constant.

(d) This purpose will be pursued in the belief that the democratic or so-called capitalist countries possess no inherent internal cohesion and will separately collapse, that they can be divided between themselves, and that time works in Russian interests.  

It is probably true to say that this understanding, with only slight variations of emphasis, has been shared by the great majority of members of the Liberal and Country parties since that time, and was the basis of the policies which their governments formed.

The Menzies government came into office with a platform which included banning the Communist Party. A Bill for this purpose was introduced in April 1950. The Party was to be declared illegal and dissolved; organisations affiliated to or controlled by it could be dissolved by the Governor-General, who could also 'declare' specific individuals who had been members, who would then be prohibited from holding a position in the public service or in important trade unions. The Bill made no mention of the Soviet Union, but said that the Australian Communist Party was 'an integral part of the world communist revolutionary movement, which, in the King's dominions and elsewhere, engages in espionage and sabotage and in activities or operations of a treasonable or subversive nature...'. In speaking to the Bill, Menzies was able to refer to resolutions adopted at the 1948 Australian Labor Party Conference which stated that communists received inspiration and direction from the Soviet Union. He declared that there was imminent danger of war with the Soviet Union, and that communists were a potential fifth column.

After extensive parliamentary and public debate, and a dramatic reversal of attitude by the Labor Party, the Bill was adopted. It was then challenged...
in the High Court, and declared invalid under the Constitution. There was
a double dissolution of parliament which gave the government a majority in
both Houses. The Prime Minister asked the States to refer to the federal
government the power to deal with communism. They would not. An Act
to change the Constitution and give it this power was adopted, the
proposed amendment put (as required) to a federal referendum, and lost. It
would be fair to say that it was lost not out of sympathy for the Communist
Party or the Soviet Union but out of concern for safeguarding civil liberties
in the whole community.

The simple process of identifying the objectives of communism as prac­tised by Australian trade unionists with the foreign policies of a single state
(the Soviet Union) began to be blurred as from the establishment of the
Chinese People’s Republic government in 1949. Australia responded quite
promptly to the United Nations call for forces to defend South Korea, but
Menzies did not specifically blame the Soviet Union. The guilty party was
now communism itself. ‘It is quite clear,’ he said on 27 June 1950, ‘that,
although the invading forces are those of the North Korean Government,
they represent Communist expansion.’ He referred to communist military
activities in Indo-China and Malaya, and the ‘menace of Communist
aggression in Asia, an aggression which is full of menace to us.’ Similarly,
when Spender reported to parliament about the Colombo Plan, which came
into being largely because of his initiative and persistence, he saw as one
important function of the Plan, the defence of the countries concerned, and
thus of Australia, against communism.

From the general sense of ‘aggression from any quarter and in any
guise’, which could be launched before long-term economic measures had
taken effect, Spender, with NATO in mind, went on to advocate a ‘form of
regional pact for common defence’, a proposition made more urgent and
more possible by the Korean War, and for which he pressed until it eventu­ally took shape as the ANZUS Treaty (see Chapter 9).

In March 1951, after the first general agreement for an ANZUS treaty
had been reached by the three parties, Menzies said in parliament that
major war within three years or even less was a distinct possibility. There is
in the world, he said, ‘a pattern and a scheme of Communist aggression
which, if it is allowed to continue, must reduce the Western democracies to
impotence and put our national and individual lives and freedom in jeop­
dardy.’ On a recent visit to London he had learned that the Chinese People’s
Republic and the Soviet Union had differences in administrative principles

1 *CNIA*, vol. 21, no. 6, June 1950, p. 421.
and perhaps in ultimate ideals, but (such was the ‘vital belief’) there was
the closest collaboration in military planning.\textsuperscript{10} Communism was seen as a
monolith, with a Chinese emphasis in Asia and a Soviet emphasis in the
rest of the world and (through party, union and front activities\textsuperscript{11}) in
Australia. It was against the predations of this monolith that the South-east
Asia Collective Defence Treaty (1954) was erected.

The death of Stalin in 1953 brought a number of conciliatory moves
towards the West by his successors. The Australian government regarded
them with caution. The Minister for External Affairs, R. G. Casey,
magnanimously told the United Nations General Assembly in September:
‘It is not impossible to believe that these gestures may be genuine.’ It was
up to the Russians to prove their new faith by their works, but the West
should remember the communist dictum that the easiest way to take a for­
tress was from within.\textsuperscript{12}

This dictum hit the world’s headlines the following April, when
Vladimir Mikhailovich Petrov, Third Secretary and Consul in the Soviet
Embassy in Australia since February 1951, and the senior representative in
Australia of the Soviet MVD (the Ministry directing non-military espion­
age), sought and was granted, along with his wife, asylum in Australia.
This occurred on the eve of an Australian federal election. Petrov gave
documents and oral information to the Australian security service. The
Soviet government promptly recalled its ambassador and all staff, and
ejected the Australian embassy staff from Moscow. In Australia, a Royal
Commission, comprising three judges from State Supreme Courts, was
appointed to inquire into the affair.

After a controversial, largely public, inquiry, in which the Leader of the
Opposition, Dr Evatt, appeared as counsel on behalf of his staff and was
then barred by the Commission, it presented its report in September
1955.\textsuperscript{13} This included the following findings:

4. All the Petrov Papers are authentic documents.
5. From these documents alone it plainly appears that for many years the

\textsuperscript{10} HRD, vol. 212, pp. 72–81, 7 March 1951.
\textsuperscript{11} See article on the ‘World Peace’ Movement as a vehicle for Soviet propaganda, \textit{CNIA},
vol. 22, no. 2, February 1951, pp. 79–85.
\textsuperscript{12} \textit{CNIA}, vol. 24, no. 9, September 1953, p. 528.
\textsuperscript{13} \textit{Report of the Royal Commission on Espionage. Presented 14 September 1955. Australian Par­
liamentary Paper no. 113 (group G), 1954–5.}
Government of the U.S.S.R. had been using its Embassy at Canberra as a cloak under which to control and operate espionage organizations in Australia.

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14. The evidence shows clearly that it was only amongst Communists (in which terms we include Communist sympathisers) that the M.V.D. could expect to find in Australia willing helpers. The only Australians who, so far as the evidence shows, knowingly assisted Soviet espionage, directly or indirectly, were Communists.

We believe that the Soviet deliberately refrained from using the Australian Communist Party, for espionage purposes lest exposure should lead to its serious political embarrassment and, possibly, its outlawry.

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25. In June 1952 international tension was such that war involving Australia and the U.S.S.R. was not improbable. The 'Plan of Work' directed Petrov to enliven the general M.V.D. activities here and immediately to set about the establishment in Australia of an 'Illegal Apparatus'—an espionage organization or fifth column which could operate in Australia if war destroyed the 'Legal Apparatus' by causing the withdrawal of the Soviet Embassy.14

Dr Evatt did not help either his own or his party's case when he revealed in parliament that he had written to the Soviet Foreign Minister, Molotov, who solemnly assured him that the charges of espionage were false. Within the Labor Party, strongly anti-communist and predominantly Roman Catholic elements left the party, thereby helping to ensure that the ALP stayed out of office for the next 18 years.

The suspension of formal diplomatic representation occurred in the middle of the Geneva conferences on Korea and Indo-China. It did not restrict Casey in his contacts with Soviet representatives there, but it did affect other direct discussions. During 1955 the Russians made it known that they were interested in doing research during the forthcoming International Geophysical Year (1957–58) in that part of the Antarctic claimed by Australia. In November the Soviet government raised informally in New York the possibility of resuming representation, but Casey felt the Petrov dust had not settled.15 Then in February 1956 the Australian Antarctic expedition discovered a well-established Soviet base on an island off Queen Mary Land, in the Australian territory. In April, the Minister for Immigration, Holt, issued a statement appealing to Bulganin and Khrushchev, then in London, 'in the name of common humanity', to reunite with their relatives in Australia members of divided families living

14 Ibid., pp. 295ff.

15 Australian Foreign Minister, p. 219.
in Russia or Eastern Europe. In May, Cabinet agreed to respond to any fresh approach by the Soviet Union, on the clear understanding that they (the Russians) had taken the initiative. In December 1958, and again a year later, Soviet and Australian leaders exchanged rather tart New Year messages of goodwill. In March 1959 the Soviet government used the occasion of a conference near Brisbane of the Economic Commission for Asia and the Far East to make an approach. A Soviet Deputy Foreign Minister, Nicolai P. Firubin, led the Soviet delegation, and spoke to Casey. A communique was issued on 17 March about the return of diplomatic missions 'as a result of a display of mutual interest' by the two governments. The Russians agreed to look sympathetically at the question of reuniting families. Casey also raised the question of Antarctica. Here Firubin did not say so, but events had gone out of Australian control, and the best that Australia could get out of the subsequent Antarctic conference and treaty was a freezing of territorial claims and demilitarisation of the area.

When diplomatic posts were once more established, the first accredited Soviet diplomat to arrive in Australia (on 2 June 1959) was Ivan Fedorovich Skripov, who shortly began to set up another espionage operation. Unfortunately he was incautious enough to recruit for this purpose a young lady from the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation, and after observing his activities for some time the Australian government declared Skripov persona non grata on 7 February 1963, and made a strong protest to the Soviet Union. The Soviet reaction, after a modest interval, was to expel an equivalent Australian diplomat on similar but rather more disreputable and less believable grounds.

Throughout the 1950s and early 1960s, Australia and the Soviet Union traded predictable insults at the United Nations. Casey had never felt it possible to consider Vyshinsky a rational man, and came to very much the same view about Khrushchev, a view Menzies was to share at the 1960 General Assembly session. It was here that Khrushchev called on Australia to give immediate independence to Papua and New Guinea. He assaulted (verbally) the colonial powers, including Australia, referring to the ‘ overseer’s lash’, the ‘executioner’s axe’. Menzies replied that these ‘must relate to areas with which he [Khrushchev] is more familiar than he is with New

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Guinea and Papua'. The Soviet Union, Menzies said, was the chief current practitioner of colonialism.\textsuperscript{19} Soviet representatives consistently attacked Australia's administration of the two territories, reinforcing the demands and comments by the increasingly numerous African and Asian UN members. Unpleasant though these criticisms were, they made Australia more sensitive, more considerate of change, and when allied to more reasonable approaches by bodies such as the World Bank they stimulated an accelerated preparation for self-government and independence.

For its part, Australia had no effect whatever on the Soviet Union. It tended to sound like an echo of Britain or the United States. An Australian diplomat, K. C. O. Shann, was rapporteur of the Special United Nations Committee on Hungary which reported in 1957 on the brutal Soviet action of the previous autumn. He wrote a fine report which unfortunately only confirmed the indignation of the already indignant.

One area where Australia had direct cause for concern was in Soviet arms aid to Indonesia, including the provision of long-range bombers, submarines, and a heavy cruiser. These appeared to constitute a real threat to Australia, at the time of tension over first West Irian and then Malaysia, especially as some Soviet military personnel were employed. Between the two events were the 'thirteen days' of Cuba, when the Soviet Union placed nuclear missiles on the island, denied point blank that it was doing so, and then removed them under President Kennedy's brinkmanship. The Australian government strongly supported Kennedy's determination.

Despite these considerations, the Soviet Union was becoming less cause for concern to Australia. After the Cuban flash, the cold war fires burnt lower in Europe. President Sukarno of Indonesia had worn thin the Soviet patience and purse, and had turned aberrationally to Peking. The Sino-Soviet split was beginning to gape. Events in Asia—Indo-China and Indonesia—were beginning to absorb Australian attention. Sir Garfield Barwick, Minister for External Affairs, told the January 1964 Australian Institute of Political Science Summer School that there were clear signs that the Soviet leaders were more interested in internal progress than in foreign adventures. They were departing from earlier Marxist theory. They accepted that war with the Western powers was not inevitable. They were developing views of coexistence of a kind they would not previously have entertained. 'The omens for some reasonable basis of cooperation between the Soviet Union and its Eastern European confederates on the one hand, and the Western world on the other, are more promising...than they have

\textsuperscript{19} CNIA, vol. 31, no. 10, October 1960, pp. 544ff.
been for some time,’ he said. They had suffered so many casualties in war, civil war, and revolution that they must be anxious to avoid war in the future. Barwick was more anxious about China, and felt that the Sino-Soviet split diminished—although it did not remove—the immediacy of the threat China posed. Later that year Barwick’s successor, Paul Hasluck, became the first Australian cabinet minister in office to visit Moscow. A trade mission followed, and a simple most-favoured-nation trade treaty was signed in October 1965.

By 1965 the Australian foreign and domestic scene was increasingly occupied by the war in Vietnam. Despite the fact that the Soviet Union was known to have trained many of the communist Vietnamese leaders, encouraged them in the war, and supplied vast quantities of equipment, Australia laid far more blame for the war upon China. In January 1966 Hasluck referred approvingly to détente with the Soviet Union. By February, he saw the Soviet government as more self-confident, less afraid of encirclement, and ‘less unwilling’ to help get a settlement in Vietnam—a view that was to be repeated at various times, without noticeable evidence, in the coming years.

But original sin will out, and in August 1968 Soviet tanks bore down on the spirit of liberalism in Czechoslovakia. Few people in Australia, including communists, did not deplore this action. Distress and abhorrence were expressed publicly and privately. Hasluck spoke of the setback to a wider détente. He saw the Soviet leaders’ action as being prompted by fear of the movement towards liberalism and relaxation among their own people, especially youth. He compared this with their helpful mediation between India and Pakistan three years earlier at Tashkent. When Gromyko at the General Assembly in October kept referring to the ‘Socialist Commonwealth’, Hasluck retorted that the concept of a commonwealth includes the right of a member to leave it, whereas Gromyko and other Soviet spokesmen had specifically denied any such right to Czechoslovakia. The invasion, he said, had reawakened distrust of undertakings given by the Soviet Union.

Thousands of Hungarians came to Australia after the crushed 1956

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20 John Wilkes (ed.), Australia’s Defence and Foreign Policy, pp. 3–36.
revolution, and after the Prague debacle over 5000 Czechs, adding to the
total of East European immigrants. Most of these were refugees from
totalitarianism—either of Hitler or of Stalin—and some were highly vocal
in their support of anti-communist policies. This has constituted a lasting
factor in Australian domestic politics, and in the shaping of attitudes to the
Soviet Union.

In early 1968 the British government began the final wind-down of its
forces east of Suez. In April, a small Soviet naval squadron, detached from
the Pacific, showed the Soviet flag in the Indian Ocean, the forerunner of a
permanent Soviet naval presence in the Ocean, concentrating on the
north-western sector. In June of the following year, Brezhnev introduced
the notion of a Soviet-backed security system in Asia, an idea whose per­
iodic re-emphasis appeared to coincide with tense moments in Sino-Soviet
relations. If it had any precision to it, this did not appear in public
statements. The Chinese government saw the concept as a Soviet-pattern
Dullesian encirclement. Other observers drew the conclusion as events
unfolded that the system Brezhnev was proposing was a series of individual
friendship and security treaties with Moscow, for which Egypt, Syria,
India and Iraq provided repetitions of the model. The governments of
other Asian states were not enthusiastic. At a speech in Moscow on 10 July,
Gromyko singled Australia out for special attention: ‘The prerequisite and
potential for an improvement of our relations with Australia exist,’ he told
the Supreme Soviet.24

On 14 August 1969, shortly before a federal election, the Minister for
External Affairs, Gordon Freeth, gave a major address to parliament on
foreign policy. It was on the whole a balanced, thoughtful, reasoned state­
ment. He referred to the limited Soviet naval penetration of the Indian
Ocean, her development of diplomatic and trade contacts with Malaysia
and Singapore, and the Brezhnev and Gromyko statements cited above. He
went on:

The Australian Government has naturally kept these and related developments
under observation. Australia has to be watchful, but need not panic whenever a
Russian appears. It has to avoid both facile gullibility and automatic rejection of
opportunities for co-operation. The Australian Government at all times welcomes
the opportunity of practical and constructive dealings with the Soviet Union, as
with any other country.... In principle, it is natural that a world power such as the
Soviet Union should seek to promote a presence and a national influence in import-

ant regions of the world such as the Indian Ocean. Reason for concern arises when the scale or methods or objective of the promotion are calculated to jeopardise our direct national interests or to endanger the general security and stability in the region. In judging this, we cannot cast out of our minds the Russian intervention in Czechoslovakia and the pernicious doctrine of 'limited sovereignty' which the USSR attaches to other communist states.25

He referred to Brezhnev's still vague collective security proposal, and to a suggestion by the Australian Prime Minister, Gorton, in February that a series of non-aggression pacts between countries of the region might help remove suspicion or fear of resort to force from inside the region, so that South-east Asia was not a source of weakness in the total pattern of world security. 'If the Russian proposals prove to be in line with these general objectives, and would assist to facilitate their achievement,' Freeth said, 'we would naturally consider them with close interest.'

He said that the most likely source of large-scale invasion or aggression from outside the region was China, possibly using its nuclear capacity as blackmail to support its large conventional forces and subversion. He implied, or at very least allowed the inference, that the Soviet Union might be a useful counter to China.

It is not usual for Australian foreign affairs ministers to make speeches that are in any way provocative of thought. It is almost unheard of that they should introduce new ideas. This speech was widely reported, almost as widely misrepresented, and heavily criticised from many angles. In the subsequent election, and apparently partly because of this speech, Freeth lost his seat and thus his portfolio. Not all of his Cabinet colleagues gave him the support to which he was entitled, although they were prepared to adopt the policy he presented. To be fair, a little more care with his phrasing might have saved him a lot of trouble.

The thaw with Moscow that had begun under Barwick, was promoted by Hasluck, and given this sudden, unbalancing push by Freeth, was taken a step further when William McMahon became Prime Minister. Responding, he said, to Soviet representations, the Australian government had agreed to allow a Soviet Trade Office and a shipping office to be established in Sydney. There would also be more exchange visits by ministers and by parliamentary delegations. This, McMahon said, showed Australian

goodwill, even though the Russians were suspect in some regards and were building up their forces in the Middle East beyond what was necessary for peacekeeping purposes there. In fact these were reasonable responses to reasonable requests, although McMahon may not have foreseen the rapid increase in the extent to which Soviet merchant and passenger ships would use Australian ports and carry Australian passengers and cargo. In October 1972, apparently on Canberra's initiative, the two countries exchanged goodwill messages commemorating 30 years of diplomatic relations. There was no tartness in the exchange. Relations by now were about as normal as relations between a small capitalist state and a communist superpower could be.

This was partly a sign of maturity on both sides. It reflected also the progress of détente in Europe. But a cloud no bigger than a ship's funnel was hovering on the horizon. The Soviet naval presence in the Indian Ocean gradually increased in size, became permanent, attached itself to shore establishments in Somalia, put down buoys, and became a matter of international debate. In March 1972 the Joint Foreign Affairs Committee of the Australian parliament presented a report on the subject which, while not alarmist, indicated that a change in the strategic balance was occurring which could have implications for Australia and needed to be watched.

**Eastern Europe**

Australia had not begun to expand its diplomatic service significantly after World War II before the whole of eastern Europe had come under the dominance of the Soviet Union. Only Yugoslavia showed any measure of independence, but it was also a communist state. The other states—Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia, East Germany, Hungary, Poland and Romania—were either occupied by Soviet forces or largely controlled by the Soviet government. Australia saw no reason to seek diplomatic relations with these 'satellites', many of whose citizens had fled their country and settled elsewhere, including in Australia.

In March 1949 Australia joined with some Latin American states in raising at the UN General Assembly the question of the observance of funda-

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mental freedoms in Bulgaria and Hungary, specifically as related to the recent trials of church leaders in both countries. A resolution was adopted, but it had no effect on the governments concerned.

The Berlin blockade of 1948–49, the East German uprising of 1953, and the Hungarian rebellion of 1956 only confirmed Australian views that the governments of these states were neither independent nor representative of their own people. Australia had very little trade with them, and little reason (it felt) to establish normal international intercourse.

In 1964 the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, discussed changes in the east European countries that could bring them to act in favour of a saner East-West relationship: 'the shattering of the monolith, the stirrings of independent thought and even action, the opening of windows on the West, the sense of disenchantment with doctrinaire socialism'. This being so, he said:

We should be both sensitive and alert, ready to explore on one hand the possibilities of genuine accommodation, and on the other cautious and hard headed to guard against deceit. It is in our interest to encourage diversity and the seeds of independence among Communist countries, and to see the penetration of western ideas among their peoples. In this respect there can be value in the natural growth of non-political contacts of all kinds—in the arts and sciences, in sport, in travel—between the Communist and non-Communist world.28

There was no suggestion that such contacts would be fostered, or political changes encouraged or even studied, by normal diplomatic processes.

East Germany was a particularly obtuse case. Australia still supported the general Western position that Germany should one day be re-unified, and that until that happened the (East) German Democratic Republic was regarded as a 'zone under Soviet military occupation not possessing national sovereignty or independence'.29 Recognition was therefore out of the question. This, of course, was exactly the policy desired by the Federal Republic of (West) Germany, with whom Australia had had diplomatic relations since May 1950.

Yet Hasluck, who made this statement, had already begun to appreciate the need for dealing with governments whether or not one liked their ideology. He had visited Moscow several months earlier. In April 1966 he announced that diplomatic relations had been agreed with Yugoslavia, which 'had special contacts with other countries in Eastern Europe', a role

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in the meetings of uncommitted countries, and had supplied many Australian migrants.\textsuperscript{30} With Britain seeking membership of the European Economic Community, Australia had to search for additional markets. Before long, she had long-overdue most-favoured-nation trade treaties with Hungary, Poland, Bulgaria, Romania and the USSR, as well as formal links with Czechoslovakia under GATT. In 1968 Hasluck made the first visit by any Australian Minister to Yugoslavia.

The Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in August 1968, and the general appeal for help by the Czech National Assembly (a ‘sister parliament’, as Hasluck called it), brought a wave of sympathy throughout Australia, and abhorrence and condemnation of the Soviet action. Hasluck was impelled to remind Australians that what the Russians had crushed was a nationalist and a liberalising movement in Czechoslovakia, but it was a movement within the communist system and it acknowledged Soviet leadership. It was in no way a turning towards western democracy.\textsuperscript{31} Thousands of Czechs migrated to Australia; there were 17 000 shown in the 1971 census. Some government scholarships were provided for Czech students resident in the country.

The most numerous group of central and east Europeans who migrated to Australia were the Yugoslavs—130 000 at the 1971 census. A good proportion of these were Croatians, opposed to rule from Belgrade; some were members of the extreme right wing Croatian Ustashi (or Ustase) movement; some had been members of the royalist underground army, the Chetniks, led by Mihailovich, who had at times collaborated with the Germans and the Italians. Not all of them left their political passions behind in Yugoslavia. As at April 1971 there had been six attempts to blow up Yugoslav government property in Australia (embassy, consulates, etc.).\textsuperscript{32} Some migrants, having acquired Australian citizenship, returned to Yugoslavia to take an active, illegal part in Yugoslav politics. These incidents embarrassed the Australian government, but did not noticeably affect relations between the two governments or the continuing flow of Yugoslav migrants, which for several years was assisted by Australian subsidies.

\textsuperscript{30}HRD, vol. 51, p. 1134, 26 April 1966.

\textsuperscript{31}HRD, vol. 60, p. 695, 29 August 1968.

\textsuperscript{32}The incidents are listed in CNIA, vol. 42, no. 4, April 1971, p. 228, along with all other incidents up to that time against foreign government property. Diplomatic premises of the United States and the Soviet Union were also subject to bomb attacks. In 1977, attacks were made on the Indian High Commission and an Indian attaché in Canberra.
The efforts by the Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany to improve relations with the Soviet Union, eastern European countries and especially the German Democratic Republic led in 1970 to treaties with the USSR and Poland, and an acknowledgment of the legality and permanence of the post-war European boundaries. The Australian government welcomed these steps, established relations in 1972 with Hungary, Bulgaria, Czechoslovakia and Poland, but was unwilling even to talk to the East German government while its protracted negotiations with the Federal Republic over normalising relations were taking place. The Basic Treaty between the two German states was signed on 21 December 1972, by which time the Australian Liberal-Country Party government was out of office.

The unconscionable Australian delay in recognising the other east European states was not due to any precedents or pressures from Bonn, or from Britain or the United States, which had re-established relations quickly after World War II. It was not due to financial constraints, as recognition does not require an expensive diplomatic mission or even a mission at all. There may have seemed little need to strain the limited resources of the too-rapidly expanding diplomatic service. But the implications of the rare ministerial statements are that these states were not quite worthy of Australian recognition; as communist countries, they were 'beyond the pale'; as Soviet satellites, they were not full members of international society. Not to recognise them was to take a high moral position. The embassy in Moscow could give, it was felt, adequate reporting coverage.

The 23 years of conservative rule in Australia were broadly the period when the threat to Australia's vital national interests was discerned primarily to be not so much a particular state as a particular ideology: communism. Like the earlier 'yellow peril', it had enough substance to be credible, enough evil to catch the imagination, and it encouraged fears by its very imprecision. But these images were not conducive to a rational foreign policy, to coming to terms with the diverse world of governments of varying degrees of inefficiency conducted by impermanent coalitions of imperfect men. Here Australia discarded the wisdom of her British mentors, who for centuries had lived alongside their enemies in relative comfort and security, and followed the attitudes and absolutes of her American protectors, who for most of their history had kept aloof from the world, since 1812 had never been attacked at home, and until Vietnam had never known national defeat. They were not a good guide for a small European state off the coast of South-east Asia.
Approximately 95 per cent of the Australian population are of European stock, they or their ancestors coming directly or indirectly from the United Kingdom, Ireland or continental Europe. Speaking in parliament in March 1964, the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, declared:

...we have a special community of interest with the countries of Europe and very particular ties with them. Though our country is physically remote, we are ourselves a European people; the society we have established here is European in its values and traditions, its civilization and language, its whole nature. Remoteness has not meant isolation: not only do we continue to draw upon Britain and Europe in a vast variety of ways—whether as a source of population, capital, and technology, or of inspiration in the arts—but also we ourselves have actively shared in shaping Europe's own destinies.¹

Australia most noticeably shared in shaping Europe's destinies during World War I. Nearly 60,000 Australian graves in France, Belgium and the Dardanelles are evidence of that contribution. Australian troops were important in some of the decisive battles on the western front. In World War II, Australian divisions served in North Africa to protect the Suez Canal and one flank of the states on whose oil the allies vitally depended, in the gallant and impossible defence of Greece and Crete, in Syria against the Vichy French forces, as well as in South-east Asia. Scores of thousands of Australian airmen fought in the skies of Europe, while men and ships of the Royal Australian Navy served in the North Atlantic, the North Sea, and

the Mediterranean. Again, in the Berlin blockade of 1948–49, Australian airmen and aircraft flew thousands of missions to help keep the beleaguered city alive. Australians in the 1950s and afterwards shared West European fears of the Soviet Union, just as a century earlier they had built forts and raised volunteers against a conceived Russian threat—conceived because English and French soldiers were fighting Russians in Sevastopol and Balaklava. As mentioned earlier, the beliefs, fears, values, images, and causes of the Australians’ European cousins were translated with few changes to the South Seas. The influx of more than a million refugees and other immigrants from Europe to Australia after World War II, many of them anti-totalitarian and especially anti-communist, added to the climate of concern about Europe and its re-division into two armed camps.

It did not add to any desire to become involved in that confrontation in Europe, for the tensions extended far beyond Europe into Australia’s near environment. World War II had directly threatened the Australian homeland and concentrated the minds of Australian politicians on the country’s immediate vulnerability. The continuing sense of threat from Asia, notably from communist forces in Asia, reinforced that preoccupation. As the Empire faded into the Commonwealth, the Commonwealth lost much of its cohesion and common purpose. Britain retired to Europe, the possibility that Australia might ever again send forces to take part in war in Europe or the Mediterranean virtually disappeared.

Among the countries of Western Europe, Australia maintained relations during World War II only with the Netherlands. The government and many Dutch citizens and officials from the Netherlands East Indies found refuge in Australia. In London a Minister was appointed to the Dutch government-in-exile. After the war, Australian troops helped the return of the Dutch administration in the East Indies, but the sympathies of the Labor government were divided between having a friendly European power as its neighbour and supporting the indigenous revolutionary nationalist forces opposed to it (see Chapters 10 and 14). Evatt personally was torn between anti-colonial sentiments and the sense of added security provided by a friendly European power. He also sought Dutch support for his candidacy for election as President of the United Nations General Assembly. As Dutch measures to maintain control became more repressive, Australia sided increasingly with the republican movement, and used increasingly intemperate language against the Dutch at the UN. This created a degree of tension and animosity that had to be dissolved by the Liberal-Country Party government which came to office at almost the same time as ‘Indonesia’ was conceded its independence. Australian-Dutch
relations over New Guinea are discussed in Chapter 14. Australia supported the Dutch claim to West New Guinea until it was patent that no one else would do so and the Dutch government was itself irresolute on the issue. This did not stop the Dutch feeling that Australia, after years of standing firm, had finally let them down.

In Western Europe Australia's relations after World War II with individual countries began largely over migration which gave a reason for diplomatic contact and continuing consular activities. Germany, Italy, the Netherlands and Greece were the principal sources of migrants.

For the older generation of Australians, ties with Europe have probably been closest with France, an ally in both world wars. Until recently French has been traditionally the main foreign language taught in Australian schools and universities. Alliance Française societies spread around the country, holding classes, functions, examinations, awarding certificates. Goethe and Dante Alighieri societies have also been established, but with a lesser range of activity and membership. France is the only country of continental Western Europe with which Australia has had a continuing dialogue on important matters of common interest.

The first of these was the South Pacific, where France had been active for 150 years. In September 1940 the Royal Australian Navy had helped install a Free French administration in New Caledonia. In 1947 the government obtained French participation in the South Pacific Commission (Chapter 14), on behalf of New Caledonia, French Polynesia, and the Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides. Australia and France cooperated in scientific research operations in the Antarctic. The Liberal government saw the French defence against communism in Indo-China to be important, and an Australian legation was opened in Saigon in 1952. The following year, as the situation deteriorated, Australia provided military and other supplies at the request of the French government. When SEATO was established, Australia and France were two of the eight military partners, although France soon came to believe that her residual interests in the three states were best maintained by diplomatic and economic means rather than by contributing to the military confrontation. After a few years, she ceased to take part in SEATO discussions. President de Gaulle's attitude to American intervention in Vietnam appeared based on the view that barbarians were attempting to achieve what civilised men had found impossible and they were even more certain to fail.

In July 1966, in London, the new Australian Prime Minister, Holt, attacked those countries (by implication, especially France) who had 'most cause to be grateful for Marshall aid' but were 'coasting along on the
American effort’ in South-east Asia.2 This undiplomatic, even impertinent, outburst may have gained him some political credit in Australia and some marks with President Johnson, but it ignored the great effort France had already made in Indo-China, where some 49,000 French soldiers lost their lives.3 It also could be seen as a petulant reaction to a decision taken a little earlier to use French Guiana and not Darwin as the site for launching a rocket by the European Launcher Development Organisation (ELDO), which Australia had joined in 1962.

A more serious and lasting matter of contention between the two states concerned French nuclear tests in the Pacific. In developing a nuclear weapons program France had established test facilities in the Sahara, but these became untenable as French African territories, especially Algeria, became independent. The site was shifted to the Pacific (French Polynesia) in 1963 where, ignoring the partial test-ban treaty between the Soviet Union and the United States (to which Australia adhered), France began to prepare for both atomic and hydrogen bomb tests. Australia expressed its ‘deep regret’ at this action. There was a public outcry in Australia and New Zealand, which brought an official French protest, and assurances that Australian (and other foreign) territory would be protected against any danger of radio-active fallout. In his reply, the Minister for External Affairs, Sir Garfield Barwick, pointed out that ‘scientific knowledge of the effects of radio-active fallout was incomplete’, and the effects of a small increase in the general level of radio-activity were unpredictable. Contrary to the French understanding, Australia had also protested, albeit privately, to the United States and the Soviet Union at their earlier resumed tests. Barwick told the French that Australia’s concern ‘was not merely with hazards to health, but at the danger of further testing and the proliferation of nuclear weapons’. French testing could provide a pretext for other countries not to sign the test ban treaty, or for some who had signed to use the escape clause and renew testing.4

Australia did not deter France in the slightest way. It now sought to monitor French safeguards, and France willingly accepted Australian observers. Then in 1966 the Australian government required that before any flight over Australian territory or into Australian airfields by French

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2The Times, 8 July 1966.

3French casualties in Vietnam have been variously reported. This figure, understood to be official, is taken from Keesing’s Contemporary Archives 1952–54, p. 13741A. Australians killed in action in the war totalled 423.

aircraft which might in any way be connected with French nuclear operations in the Pacific, the French government must give 'an explicit assurance that the aircraft will not carry any implements, devices or materials connected with the proposed nuclear test'.

This was a much stronger protest than a mere expression of regret. It was a measure of Australian public opinion, and of Australia’s sensitivity to opinion in the South Pacific territories. To the French government, Australia’s position must have appeared to include elements of hypocrisy and self-righteousness. British atomic tests had been carried out on Australian soil. British nuclear bombers regularly exercised from Australian airfields. American nuclear-armed warships visited Australian ports without hindrance. Australia had said it was not prepared to undertake never to produce nuclear weapons. Had the tests been in Algeria, Australia would almost certainly not have protested at all. Nevertheless, in continuing with its tests after the test ban treaty had been negotiated, France was acting, in the view of many more governments than Australia’s, in a manner which was irresponsible, self-willed, and potentially dangerous to human life and to world peace.

With each successive French atmospheric test, Australia renewed its protests, and monitored the radiation fall-out, which, as reported, has not created any significant biological hazards for Australia. In 1971 the first meeting of the South Pacific Forum expressed its concern at 'the potential hazards to health and to marine life which is a vital element in islands subsistence and economy', and appealed to France to make the current series of tests the last in the Pacific. France ignored all protests and appeals. The new tack taken by the Whitlam government is discussed in Chapter 18.

Australia and France are significant trading partners. French purchases of Australian wool, and a trade balance favouring Australia, may have been one factor in establishing an important defence production link between the two countries. In 1961 the Royal Australian Air Force ordered the French Mirage III to replace its obsolescent interceptor fighter aircraft, the British Avon Sabre. The total order was for 100, all except two being partially built, partially assembled in Australia. The aircraft remained in service for over 20 years. During the 1967 Arab-Israeli war France cut off supplies of military equipment to Israel. This raised the question whether she might do the same to Australia if the latter were engaged in a conflict (as perhaps

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in Vietnam) of which France disapproved. Sweden had refused for a period to supply ammunition for its anti-tank weapon bought and used by Australia in Vietnam, and Switzerland made difficulties over the Pilatus Porter aircraft.

Australian post-war attitudes to Italy and Germany were very different from attitudes to the other Axis member, Japan. There may have been a racial element to this, but fewer Australians were concerned in the war in the Middle East and Europe than in South-east Asia; prisoners-of-war were not treated with inhumanity; the countries concerned did not pose a direct threat to Australian homes and families. Italians never seemed to have their heart in the war, and got rid of Mussolini before it ended. Germans opposed to Nazism replaced Hitler's regime, and West Germany was soon a western ally, a front line state against the forces of communism. Australia strongly supported the development and strengthening of West Germany as a democratic state. Along with most other members of the wartime alliance, Australia terminated the state of war with Germany on 9 July 1951, and the two governments agreed the following January to an exchange of embassies. An Australian Military Mission had been established in Berlin in 1945, accredited to the Allied Control Authority.

The Australian government during the 1950s and 1960s subscribed to the conventional wisdom that Germany should be reunified, and one day would be, if Moscow had sufficient goodwill and agreed to nationwide free elections. The thaw after the death of Stalin, and the summit meeting in Geneva in July 1955, seemed to hint at the possibility. But to believe in it at that time was to fail to appreciate Soviet fears of Germany and Soviet attitudes towards both genuine democracy and its own satellites.

West Germany's remarkable economic recovery provided opportunities for trade with Australia, and for German investment in and the sale of high technology goods to Australia. In October 1967 Australia raised its first public loan in the Federal Republic. Three years later a double taxation agreement was arranged. By 1976 Australian government securities held in deutschmarks amounted to some $400 million (DM 1100m.).

The establishment of the European Economic Community in 1957, and the successive attempts by Britain to join it, substantially altered Australia's relations with Britain and with the countries of Western Europe, forced changes in the pattern of Australian trade and irreparably damaged some

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8 *CNA*, vol. 22, no. 7, July 1951, p. 405.
Australian primary industries. Australia in principle supported the concept of the Community, as it would provide its members with the economic strength which was essential to 'that political strength which is eminently to be desired for Western Europe'. However, the Rome treaty, contrary to the provisions of GATT, provided for the use of non-tariff barriers against agriculture and for a new series of preferences for French overseas territories. Australia feared, correctly, that her agricultural exports to Common Market countries would be subject to restrictions in order to support less efficient industries within some member countries taking advantage of the common market and the evolving common agricultural policy.

For several years this aspect was subordinate to the larger Australian concern about the economic and political impact on Britain if the latter were to join, and the consequent effects on the Commonwealth and on Australian exports to the UK. This is discussed in Chapter 8. Britain did not at first join the Community; it helped create the alternative European Free Trade Area, and assured its Commonwealth suppliers that in any case their preferences on foodstuffs would remain. This was important to Australia, and considered vital by the Country Party, the minor partner in the government coalition representing rural interests, whose leader, John McEwen, was Minister for Trade. The Commonwealth preference system was under pressure from the US, from GATT, and from widening general trading opportunities, so that Commonwealth member countries agreed that trade had to expand outwards rather than consolidate. But there appeared to be no alternative markets for Australian primary produce comparable with the United Kingdom. Britain made three successive moves to join the Community—in 1960–63, 1966–67, and 1970–72. In the first, the British government tried to safeguard the diverse interests of her Commonwealth partners, but the application was vetoed by President de Gaulle. Australia was probably the loudest, most demanding, least diplomatic of the partners, pressing for its detailed special interests to be favoured. The British government resented this, while Australia felt Britain had not had its interests at heart. In any case, Australian trade was diversifying, some of it slipping under the barriers into the EEC.

When Britain applied for the second time, it no longer accepted responsibility for the interests of Commonwealth countries other than New Zealand, or for commodities other than sugar. Again the application was vetoed by France. The Common Market Commission, as well as individual

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9 'European Economic Integration', *CNA*, vol. 29, no. 9, September 1958, pp. 556-67.

10 A more extensive analysis is given by J. D. B. Miller, 'British Entry and Australian Policy', in his book *The EEC and Australia*, pp. 75–100.
EEC governments, were by now familiar and not especially sympathetic with Australia's special pleading. On the occasion of the third and successful attempt, Britain leaned over backwards to demonstrate that, with one or two reasonable exceptions, she was unencumbered by the interests or demands of her former colonies. She was especially unencumbered by Australia, which was considered too prosperous to need special consideration and too remote and irrelevant to demand it. Australia's preferential treatment in Britain was to be phased out, and its canned and dried fruit industries went into decline.

But before this the Australian government had come to see that it must make its own deal with the Community, individually and collectively. Formal diplomatic relations had been established in 1960. Australia sought, separate from Britain, the support of the United States, on the basis of their political and security partnership, but the United States wanted to see the EEC successful and Britain a member, and had never favoured imperial or Commonwealth preferences. In its representations in Brussels, at the headquarters of the EEC, the Australian government for years sought compensation for the losses it would sustain from the reduced British market. It had no other grounds for special consideration, but this approach was entirely fruitless, and the government eventually came to see that it had to take part in the expanding world trade with the Community, on the Community's terms. Australia was not a poor country. It had one of the world's highest standards of living, as well as one of the world's highest cost structures. In 1966 it became a member of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), a donor-country organisation. In 1971 it became a member of the OECD. No one owed Australia a living, but a sense of economic dependency on Britain—a sense of dependency in principia—was so ingrained, so traditional, that Australian governments could hardly believe that they could survive without it. Britain's entry into Europe, and the vigorous Australian efforts before and after that event to find alternative trading arrangements, proved that they could survive without it. The British defence withdrawal from east of Suez, the United States' withdrawal from Vietnam and most of South-east Asia, and the failure of Australia's negotiations with Europe, roughly coinciding in time, were together finally forcing Australia to stand, a little bewildered, on her own feet.

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12 Australia's disappointment with these arrangements was voiced by the Minister for Trade, J. D. Anthony, in parliament on 19 August 1971. HRD, vol. 73, pp. 354-5.

PART 5

THE LIBERAL TENDENCY
1972–1990
The Whitlam experiment
1972–75

In December 1972 E. G. Whitlam became the first Labor Party Prime Minister of Australia since 1949. He and his party held office for almost exactly three years.¹

The international environment within which Australian foreign policies operate had changed remarkably during the previous decade. By late 1972 the American forces had withdrawn from Vietnam, and Australia had similarly taken out all except a small group of military advisers. The United States and China had embarked on friendly, semi-formal relations, vastly different from the long years of suspicion and animosity. The British military commitment ‘east of Suez’ had almost disappeared. At the same time, a modest Soviet naval force had been established in the Indian Ocean with a base in Somalia, and Soviet diplomatic and economic initiatives throughout South-east Asia had established a general—and generally respected—Soviet presence in the region. Both the United States and Britain were following policies which virtually precluded further involvement in conflict on the mainland of Asia, except perhaps (for the US) in Korea. It took some time to seep into the Australian consciousness—and still has not entirely done so—that Australia, never committed in Asia except in the company of one or both of its major partners, thus now appeared unlikely, in the future, to be committed at all.

Three days after his party won the election, on the day that he was sworn in as Prime Minister and Foreign Minister,² Mr Whitlam set the tone for the new Australian view of its place and role in the world:

¹An extensive analysis of the government’s foreign policy and relations is given by Henry S. Albinski, *Australian External Policy under Labor: Content, Process and the National Debate.*

²Whitlam remained Foreign Minister until November 1973, when Senator D. R. Willesee was appointed.
...the general direction of my thinking is towards a more independent Australian stance in international affairs and towards an Australia which will be less militarily oriented and not open to suggestions of racism; an Australia which will enjoy a growing standing as a distinctive, tolerant, co-operative and well-regarded nation not only in the Asian and Pacific region but in the world at large.¹

The only significant, specific difference at this time between the declared foreign policies of the Liberal and Country parties and the Labor Party which had just succeeded them was over diplomatic relations with the People’s Republic of China, to which Labor was committed. The Department of Foreign Affairs had recommended recognition to the Liberal government, even if this meant breaking off relations with Taiwan, but the government was not prepared to act on that basis (see Chapter 12). Labor on its election acted to reverse this policy with a speed that could have been, but was not noticeably, disadvantageous.² This was the first of a string of changes in foreign policy which reflected a different ideology, a different attitude to the world, and—as suggested—a different world.

The ‘more independent...stance’ meant, particularly, more independent of the United States. Labor had been in office during most of World War II, when America came to the defence of Australia. The Labor Party, except for its left wing, had accepted the initial rationale for American involvement in Vietnam, but became increasingly disenchanted with it and with the techniques employed—the massive bombing, the indiscriminate killing, the ‘body-count’ philosophy, the support for corrupt, inefficient and highly authoritarian governments whose existence appeared to have very little relevance to the security of Australia. More than anything else, it was fear of China that had prompted Australia to back the United States in Vietnam. Most Labor representatives saw no reason for anyone to fear China, and certainly not for Australia to do so. Many saw wars of national liberation in Asia or elsewhere as genuinely populist movements to overthrow repressive regimes. These sentiments were reinforced by concern that young Australians had been conscripted to fight and perhaps die in Vietnam. The international pastime of abusing the United States also found a ready echo in some sections of the Labor Party.

When President Nixon ordered the resumption of bombing in North Vietnam in December 1972, Whitlam sent a strong protest to Washington. Three of his ministers made highly undiplomatic remarks, and the Prime

²After negotiations through the respective ambassadors in Paris, Australia formally recognised the People’s Republic on 21 December 1972.
Minister acquiesced in a maritime unions' ban on American shipping—a ban that was quickly lifted when American unions retaliated. Relations between the two governments dipped badly. They later improved, but never returned (under Labor) to the previous level of intimacy, a level which depended in part on Australian readiness to share America’s basic assumptions about the world. Labor did not share some of those assumptions.

Whitlam, who had been an air force officer during World War II, did not want to shed altogether the American connection and the ultimate guarantee which the connection appeared to provide. He wanted to shed the image of dependence and subservience, of following the United States irrespective of where it led, of being ideologically right-wing, which he believed reduced Australia’s position and influence, restricted her freedom of action, and blurred her identity. From their remarks, it would seem also that he and his colleagues did not feel that Australia would need the American alliance in the near future, as they considered that they could not foresee an attack on the country within the next ten to fifteen years.

More independence also meant a different relationship with the United Kingdom. This was more a psychological than a political matter. On entering office, Mr Whitlam cancelled arrangements whereby honours to Australians for distinguished service were part of the British honours system, and awarded (in name) by the Queen of the United Kingdom even though she was also Queen of Australia. (The arrangements survived, at the state or provincial level, in those states which did not have Labor governments.) Except for vice-regal occasions, the Australian national anthem was changed from the British ‘God Save the Queen’ to ‘Advance Australia Fair’, by a largely spurious process involving sampling public opinion and holding a competition. The Queen’s Style and Title were changed to be more distinctively Australian. Whitlam sought to abolish all legal appeals to the British Privy Council, but ran into constitutional difficulties over the traditional rights and procedures of the Australia state governments. He and some of his colleagues generally adopted a more truculent approach to the British relationship, and he accused Britain of seeking to perpetuate its dominance of the Commonwealth through multinational corporations. Whitlam showed more sympathy than did his predecessors for the Commonwealth as an institution, but it is hard to see what this amounted to in practice. He tended to defer to Canada’s ‘elder brother’ position and experience.

It is fair to say that the foreign policies of Labor during its three years in office were largely shaped, introduced and pressed by Whitlam himself, more noticeably than any Prime Minister since Hughes. The party
provided a context more than an influence. Except for a very few issues such as the counter-revolution in Chile and the Middle East War, the parliamentary caucus played very little part, because little legislation and little emotion were involved. The trade union movement, from which Labor draws most of its financial and electoral support, was preoccupied with domestic matters. Ministers' personal and departmental staffs provided some of the ideas and phrases, but the direction and thrust of the new policies were given by the Prime Minister, and he continued to guide foreign policy during his three years in office.

A more widely acceptable status demanded wider diplomatic relations. After opening an embassy in Peking, Australia also established relations with North Vietnam, East Germany, Cyprus, Poland, and the Vatican, with North Korea (broken off by that government in early November 1975), Saudi Arabia, and a number of other states. Cuba, which the Liberal government had recognised, was allowed to establish a consulate in Sydney.

Whitlam's complaint about the military orientation of foreign policy had substance to it. Australia had had troops stationed in Asia since 1941, including a force in Vietnam for seven years (1965–72). Some 3000 men of the three services were still in Malaysia in late 1972, six years after the end of Indonesia's small war of 'confrontation'. As a member of SEATO, Australia had subscribed to a treaty and contingency plans which at least in theory could have committed two or three Australian divisions to the defence of Thailand, the Philippines, Pakistan, or non-communist Indo-China. The United States had military installations in Australia under the ANZUS Treaty. The basis of these military policies for Australia—known as 'forward defence'—was fear: firstly (during and after World War II) fear of Japan, and subsequently fear of China and of Chinese-backed Asian communist and/or nationalist movements which could threaten the peace of the region or even continental Australia. The US was considered the only power capable of ensuring Australian security in a crisis, although Britain was still a special friend deploying power in the neighbourhood. So for more than 20 years after World War II Australia encouraged the United States and Britain to remain committed in the South-east and East Asian region. She provided modest forces to work with these allies, and used regional diplomacy and economic aid as subsidiary means of promoting national security. By 1972 Australian forces were still not unwelcome in South-east Asia, but were not obviously necessary. They were also becoming increasingly lonely, as Britain and the United States took their forces home.

Whitlam had objected to the latter stages of the Vietnam war, and as
Prime Minister he withdrew the few remaining military advisers and stopped all military aid to Vietnam and Cambodia. He objected to Australian 'garrisons' overseas, and began to wind down the forces in Malaysia and Singapore, and withdrew almost all the ground combat element. He downgraded SEATO, and took the lead in getting the organisation to redefine its objectives and activities closer to reality. He did not take Australia out of SEATO, from deference to American and New Zealand sentiment. He (or, his government, because this was strongly urged within the Labor Party) abolished what was left of selective national service which had provided many of the men for overseas operations, and began to reduce relative spending on defence: significant equipment orders were either cancelled or deferred. His Minister for Defence, Lance Barnard, renegotiated the agreement over the US facilities, to give Australia more say in their use. To internationalise Australia's defence role and make it more respectable, the government offered forces to the United Nations for peacekeeping purposes in the Middle East and in Cyprus.

The Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore were there under the Five-Power arrangement between these three states, Britain and New Zealand. The Whitlam government saw the Commonwealth forces, including the Australian component, as having imperialist overtones. It may also have seen them as the thin end of a potentially large wedge of Australian commitment in some future crisis. With the very small continuing British presence and the much reduced American one in South-east Asia, Whitlam saw the security of the region as depending on different factors from those operating hitherto, with external military forces less relevant, less acceptable, and less available.

The process of withdrawing the Australian battalion was a gesture of disengagement, of dis-commitment, which no words could conceal. The subsequent British decision to withdraw altogether from the region may have been taken in any case, but it was encouraged by Australia's action. Except for some temporary (and still continuing) assistance, the Australian land-based contribution to the security of the Malaysian area, including Singapore and the strategic Straits of Malacca, appeared to have ended.

After a year in office, Whitlam elaborated on the philosophy behind the government's attitudes to Asia and to Australian security:

5 The main change was to provide for an Australian deputy commander of the US communications station at North West Cape, and some limited access to confidential processes.

6 The offer does not appear to have been accepted, although there is some evidence that, with regard to the Middle East, it was withdrawn when it looked like being accepted.
We consider that political, economic and social change in Asia will occur and is indeed desirable; we believe that Australia should not intervene militarily even when the contest for power and for control over the change leads to violence. Australia shall never again send troops to fight in Asian mainland wars. Australia shall never again garrison troops abroad as part of a military commitment to involve this country in Asian wars.

He implied that there would be no help to any small state threatened by a larger neighbour. The regional defence role for Australia proclaimed by Curtin, Chifley and Evatt had ceased to exist. Australia would accept the political realities of her region and try to remove from it causes of tension and conflict that could directly or indirectly affect her security. In phrases which were reminiscent of Evatt and which appeared to ignore the experience of the intervening quarter-century, he went on:

The United Nations, despite its imperfections, still represents for us our best hope of producing through international goodwill and collaboration a more peaceful and secure world in which all mankind can live and prosper.7

From the beginning of his term of office, Whitlam had turned to other, non-military, regional arrangements:

To meet the new realities and our perception of them, we shall be seeking new forms of regional co-operation.... We shall be charting a new course with less emphasis on military pacts. It will be based on an independent outlook in foreign affairs and will be directed towards a new regional community geared to the realities of the 70s.

The guidelines of the regional community that I foresee will be an organisation genuinely representative of the region, without ideological overtones, conceived as an initiative to help free the region of great power rivalries that have bedevilled its progress for decades and designed to insulate the region against ideological interference from the great powers.8

The region already had some institutions for cooperation. What more did it need, or could it use?9 Apart from the military treaties, there were the

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9The various existing and suggested regional arrangements are discussed by John Knight, 'Australia and Proposals for Regional Consultation and Co-operation', Australian Outlook, vol. 28, no. 3, December 1974, pp. 259-73.
Asian and Pacific Council (ASPAC), the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Far East (ECAFE, later ESCAP), the Asian Development Bank (ADB) and some ministerial assemblies. ASPAC, whose members included Taiwan and South Korea, quickly faded after the American rapprochement with the Chinese People’s Republic, and Australia mildly encouraged its demise. ASEAN had been in existence for some years, and gave form if not very much substance to non-military cooperation between Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand, Malaysia and Singapore. Some observers saw in Whitlam’s proposal the intention to get rid of ASEAN, from which Australia was excluded. He promptly denied this. Periodically he resubmitted to regional leaders his still imprecise idea for a wider organisation. Some made polite rejoinders, some impolite. The scheme had in-built problems. Whitlam plainly intended it to include China, but several countries in the region had no relations with China, and feared its dominance. Japan similarly could not be excluded, and would tend to overshadow the smaller members. Whitlam had to leave India out of the proposal, because of Sino-Indian relations, but India and Bangladesh would be the two regional states most in need. The Soviet Union claimed, with some reason, to be in Asia, but could the Chinese and Russians both be included? And the Soviet Union had its own equally nebulous, scheme for an Asian ‘security system’ (see Chapter 16). Indonesia did not welcome the idea of a new regional association. Her Foreign Minister, Adam Malik, proposed that Indonesia, Australia, Papua New Guinea, and New Zealand might form an association, interlocking with ASEAN on one side and a South Pacific organisation on the other. This seemed designed to deflect Australia from entering or impairing ASEAN, and it was not taken up. The Australian counter-offer was to give practical help, under the aegis of ASEAN, to the ASEAN states, thus putting more flesh on the bones. This was accepted. No one seemed to mind or feel that it was alien flesh.

The lesson of this venture was that Australia could not easily take a major initiative in the South-east Asian region. It just did not carry the political or economic weight, and no amount of rhetoric, no change of posture, could conceal this fact. Small in population, wealthy, white, Western-oriented, territorially large but almost empty, separated from mainland Asia geographically and psychologically, Australia was at best an associate member of the Asian group of states, capable of making a contribution but incapable of leading. This is less the case in the South-west Pacific, where Australia is a bigger fish in a pond that has become accustomed to her pres-

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10 To the National Press Club, Canberra, 8 November 1973. Official transcript of address.
ence. In the Pacific, the Whitlam government took no new initiatives other than over French nuclear testing, but pursued with slightly disconcerting vigour a policy of active cooperation. It was uneasy about a New Zealand proposal for a nuclear-free zone in the Pacific, but did not want to appear publicly opposed to the principle.

Two Asian initiatives have been accepted by Australia. Whitlam's predecessors went along with Malaysia's proposals, later taken up equivocally by ASEAN, for a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality' in South-east Asia. No one, including Malaysia, could see how the neutrality could be assured, but the objective was irreproachable, in all the circumstances. Whitlam repeated Australia's acquiescence, rather more precisely. His predecessors did not agree with the concept, promoted mainly by Sri Lanka, for a zone of peace in the Indian Ocean. They claimed that it was unachievable in practice. The Whitlam government supported the proposal, and obtained a place for Australia on the relevant United Nations Committee. If there were any substance to the concept, it lay in the extremely remote possibility that the super-powers might agree to a ceiling on their arms, including nuclear weapons, deployed in the Indian Ocean region. There would still be no way of ensuring that the ceiling was adhered to.

Regionalism as a concept, in a region filled (except for Australia and New Zealand) with Asian and Pacific peoples, fitted with another basic desire of the Whitlam government: to express a greater sympathy for and identification with the causes espoused by the majority of the Afro-Asian world—for their 'legitimate aspirations'. Evatt in the 1940s had won for himself and for Australia the respect of smaller and middle powers, white and coloured, over his stand against colonialism, and against great power predominance in the United Nations. Whitlam sought to recapture that respect, not simply as a piece of politicking, but because he approved of the causes concerned and appeared to believe in them. He may have felt also that to show these sympathies would deflect criticism of Australia's 'colonial' policies towards Papua New Guinea and her 'racial' policies towards her own Aboriginal people. Simultaneously he began to remove the causes of such criticism by hastening the independence of Papua New Guinea (despite resistance from political leaders in the territory)\(^\text{11}\) and introduced a more dynamic, centralised, supportive and less patronising policy towards Aborigines. At the same time, the government made clear to Papua New

\(^{11}\) Papua New Guinea became internally self-governing on 1 December 1973 and independent on 16 September 1975.
Guinea that there were strict limits to Australian military help to the new
country in the event of a breakdown in internal security.

The most dramatic public change in Australian foreign policy under
Labor came in the voting at the United Nations on anti-colonial issues.
Successive Liberal-Country Party governments had moved away from a
fairly rigid application of Article 2(7) of the UN Charter (on domestic jurisdic­tion), but by 1972 were still reluctant to support resolutions which
appeared to advocate the use of force to change colonial-type situations, or
resolutions which they knew neither they nor many of the proponents
would in fact implement. Australia's representatives at the United Nations
suddenly found themselves in late 1972 advocating more radical policies
over South Africa, Rhodesia, Portuguese colonies, and dependent
territories generally, and doing so in polemical language hitherto the pre­
rogative of Afro-Asian or communist delegates. An Australian sat once
more on the Committee of Twenty-four (on decolonisation). Australia
voted for rather than abstained on a resolution condemning South Africa
for its continued presence in Namibia (South West Africa), and acted simi­
larly over Rhodesian resolutions while explaining that any condemnation
was of the Smith regime and not of the British government. She recognised
Guinea-Bissau well ahead of its formal independence. She banned exports
to Rhodesia of Australian wheat which had been reconciled with the UN
sanctions resolution by being classified 'humanitarian'. 'Racially selected'
sporting teams from Rhodesia or South Africa were prevented from coming
to or even transiting through Australia. Sympathy and some humanitarian
assistance were given to African liberation movements, but requests for
arms were refused.

Dr Evatt had never managed to make his internationalism at the United
Nations match up with his nationalism at home, nor his advocacy of inde­
pendence for other peoples' colonies appear coherent with Australian
administration of its own dependencies. This was less of a problem for
Whitlam, as the principal dependency—Papua New Guinea—was clearly
set (by his predecessors) for independence. In United Nations debates
Australia called herself a 'practising decoloniser'. There was still a problem
over small island territories. On 14 December 1972 Australia voted in
favour of a resolution calling for a timetable to be established for the self­
determination and independence of 17 such territories, including the Cocos
(Keeling) Islands in the Indian Ocean, administered by Australia, with a
total population of some 650. Questioned in parliament as to when the
government planned to give independence to these islands, Whitlam
replied:
Cutting the apron strings
No consideration has been given to independence for the Cocos Islands. I do not think anybody seriously believes that independence would be appropriate. ... If a resolution is 90 per cent acceptable, one votes for it. It does not mean that one votes for every individual aspect of it.\textsuperscript{12}

Yet if independence was not appropriate for Cocos, for which tiny islands was it appropriate?

The same problem of principle versus practice, or rhetoric versus national interest, was presented by South Africa. Australia voted in favour of sanctions and for condemning the Republic over Namibia. In June and July 1973 Senator Willesee made a successful goodwill tour of seven African countries. At a press conference in July, Whitlam said that Australia would not forbid trade with South Africa unilaterally—a reference to the fact that several of the major powers and some of the Afro-Asian states were trading with South Africa. But Australia would support in the UN or elsewhere any economic sanctions designed to bring down the South African or Rhodesian governments. Then in late 1974 Australia voted in the General Assembly and the Security Council for resolutions advocating the expulsion of South Africa from the United Nations, using the following justification:

1. South Africa for twenty-five years by its ‘unbending policy of apartheid’ had consistently violated the principles of the United Nations Charter and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. It had refused to comply with UN resolutions over Namibia.

3. It had openly assisted the illegal Smith regime in Southern Rhodesia, including military support in violation of Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

The government said it believed that these offences outweighed the principle of universality, and it rejected the view that South Africa might be more responsive to international opinion if she continued to be a member of the United Nations: experience did not justify such a conclusion. And although other—and perhaps most—members had offended against the Charter at some time, South Africa was a special case because of its persistent defiance.\textsuperscript{13}

\textsuperscript{12} \textit{HRD}, vol. 84, p. 2255, 17 May 1973.

\textsuperscript{13} See Statements by the Australian Foreign Minister and by the Ambassador to the UN issued 30 October 1974. \textit{AFAR}, vol. 45, no. 10, October 1974, pp. 171–18, and no. 11, November 1974, pp. 744–5. The resolution for expelling South Africa was vetoed, expectedly, by France, Britain and the United States. Australia voted against the proposal not to accept the credentials of South Africa’s representatives in the General Assembly, on the grounds that this was an improper use of the credentials processes.
In an obvious reference to Israel, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Senator Willesee, said that expulsion procedures must on no account be indiscriminately applied to countries which a majority of members wished to condemn. But a precedent was set for precisely such action. The government denied that the Australian vote on South Africa had any relevance to Willesee's candidacy for President of the General Assembly in 1975. Not everyone believed this. Some of those who accepted the condemnation of apartheid could not understand the Australian government's reluctance to condemn far greater breaches of human rights elsewhere. But such breaches were not criticised by the African and Asian states whose friendship Australia was now cultivating.

It is always difficult to assess the extent to which a government—and especially a new government—is moved by genuine idealism or beliefs and how much by calculations of national, party or personal self-interest. The happiest situation is where the motivations coincide. With the Labor government during its three years of office, there were undoubtedly strong elements of idealism. In domestic policies, this was tempered by the realities of office and power. In foreign policy, rhetoric is less frequently put to the test, and is more generally a camouflage for policy. And because there is no coherent electorate, in a national sense, inconsistencies between domestic and foreign policies, and between different foreign policies, are less brought to account.

Occasionally, domestic pressure forces some accounting or some consistency, and this happened over nuclear testing. Whitlam's predecessors signed but did not ratify the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. The Whitlam government quickly ratified it. His predecessors had made vigorous protests to France about her nuclear testing in the Pacific. The Whitlam government did more—in company with New Zealand it took the matter to the International Court of Justice, a clever consultant having found a disused but never abrogated international treaty (the General Act of 1928—see Chapter 5) to which Australia and France were both parties. The action offended France, and no doubt affected Australia's relationship with the EEC, but it appeared to please Australia's Pacific neighbours. Considerable indignation was generated in Australia on the subject, and trade unions supported the government by various bans against France.

\[14\] Willesee later withdrew from the contest, when Australia's Security Council vote to expel South Africa lost him the support of Western European states.

\[15\] During visits to the Philippines and Indonesia, Whitlam had the courage to take up with their governments the question of political prisoners.
When China then tested nuclear weapons in the atmosphere, consistency would have dictated an equal reaction, but Australia was trying to develop friendly relations with the People's Republic, and would have preferred to ignore the matter. Public opinion and the feeling that 'even-handedness' was a virtue would not allow this, so a protest was made, in a muted way. Fortunately, perhaps, China was not a party to the General Act. Then the Soviet Union, Britain, and the United States all conducted nuclear tests, and finally India tested a nuclear explosive device declaredly (but not quite credibly) for peaceful purposes. Again public opinion, expressed or anticipated, requiring some degree of consistency, encouraged the government into protests, although it was snubbed by the Soviet Union, as it had been by China, for its pains. No mention was made of the fact that Britain and the United States were both parties to the 1928 Treaty. It must have been a relief to the government when the International Court decided in late 1974 that a statement by France that she did not propose to conduct further atmospheric nuclear tests absolved the Court from taking a decision in the matter. Australia understandably claimed some credit for the French move.

The concept of even-handedness was developed by the Whitlam government as an approach to contentious international issues, least likely to give offence. As a principle, it must almost inevitably conflict with other principles, and to the recipients of the policy it must appear to ignore the merits of the case. It came to be the policy adopted over the Arab/Israel dispute, and especially after the development of oil blackmail by the OPEC countries in late 1973. Producing two-thirds of its own oil, Australia was less vulnerable to blackmail, so even-handedness was more possible than for other more dependent countries which simply surrendered to Arab demands. Even-handedness in this dispute marked a shift of sympathy away from Israel. It was taken after a calculation that Arab sympathisers in the Australian electorate were probably as numerous as Jewish sympathisers. The Labor Party itself was violently split on the subject, with the President of the Party and of the Australian Council of Trade Unions, R. J. Hawke, openly supporting Israel.\(^{16}\) The government consistently upheld Israel's right to exist and to be a member of the United Nations.

Even-handedness was somewhat stretched over American proposals to

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\(^{16}\) The Labor government stated that even-handedness and neutrality had been the policy of its predecessors. This had indeed been the formal position (see Chapter 15), but informally there was some leaning towards Israel.
expand the facilities at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. Australia could hardly support this and work for a ‘zone of peace’ in the region, yet the reason for the American action was a considerably increased Soviet naval presence—larger and better based than the small US forces.\textsuperscript{17} India appeared willing to seek a restraint on Soviet activities while Australia approached the United States. In the event, India was not willing, being dependent on Soviet military aid, and Australia was left having to approach both, which she did. This would have made more sense if Australia had not been an ally of the United States, or if the presence of Soviet and American forces could be equally disadvantageous to Australia. Through diplomatic representation, the ambiguities and implications of the Australian government’s position were brought home to it, and it eventually appeared to adopt two positions—a public one critical of the United States, and a private one that accepted the need of the American presence, but at a low level.

The various ‘wars of national liberation’ posed problems of recognition for a Labor government which included strongly left-wing elements. Recognition of North Vietnam and of North Korea were straightforward enough. Guinea-Bissau, over which Australian officials restrained for a time the government’s enthusiasm, did not matter very much. Cambodia and South Vietnam were more difficult. Whitlam’s legal training and concern for the forms of international law conflicted with his (and still more, his colleagues’) opposition to right-wing governments and sympathy for revolutionary movements. In Cambodia, so long as the Lon Nol government just managed to survive, Australian recognition of it just managed to be maintained. When the government fell, Australia hurried to recognise the communist administration, even though its composition and writ were uncertain. Before South Vietnam fell, recognition of the Republic government was essential for consular purposes, but the February 1975 Labor Party Conference directed the government to allow an office of the Provisional Revolutionary Government to open in Australia. After North Vietnamese forces overran the whole country, the Australian government accepted the fiction of a separate communist government of the south, and formally recognised it. The Palestine Liberation Organisation was not formally recognised, and Australia abstained on the UN resolution inviting the PLO to participate in relevant General Assembly deliberations. With Chile, following the overthrow of the Allende government in September

\textsuperscript{17}Only two or three US vessels were actually stationed in the Indian Ocean, in the Gulf, but larger forces deployed there from time to time, as during the East Pakistan war.
1975, the Australian government and the trade union movement expressed strong disapproval of the coup. The ambassador was withdrawn and not replaced for three years, but the military administration was recognised quite promptly after consultation with various friendly governments. Principles were thus confused by practice. The government recognised the independence of Namibia, severed relations with Taiwan, and acknowledged Soviet sovereignty over the three Baltic states.

The Whitlam government, with its colourful and dynamic Minister for Immigration, Al Grassby, took Australia's immigration policies a long further step in the direction they had been going. Race or pigmentation ceased to be a factor in the formal criteria for selecting or admitting migrants, although a points system stressing family reunion and education favoured western and southern Europeans. By July 1973 the assisted passage scheme was extended to all races, discrimination was abolished in migration from New Zealand (of Pacific islanders), the five-year naturalisation period was reduced to three. British settlers no longer received preferential treatment. An easy-visa system for non-European tourists was introduced but had to be abolished when it was abused by some scores of thousands of visitors staying and working illegally in Australia at a time of rising unemployment. Political influences left their mark on refugee admissions: the entry was facilitated of people fleeing from Chile after the coup against President Allende, while the intake of Vietnamese refugees and some Europeans was restricted. Rising economic difficulties forced a reduction in settler intake both from Europe and in general. The migration policies of the post-war Labor and Liberal governments had finally run their course.

Which countries and which external relations were most important to the Whitlam government? China was the most important country initially, as a great nation and culture with which normal relations had to be built from a very small base. Early in his term, Whitlam said that Indonesia was the most important foreign country, presumably because of its closeness, size, and needs. Aid to Indonesia was continued at a high level, and new forms of military assistance and cooperation developed.

But Japan remained, with the United States, the most significant

18 An impending visit by Whitlam to Moscow may have contributed to this.

19 Grassby lost his seat in the 1974 election.

international associate. Japan was still Australia's largest export market, and third largest source of imports. It was an economic super-power with whose prosperity Australia's prosperity was inextricably entwined. As earlier chapters show, Japan had long sought a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation with Australia which would safeguard Japanese rights in trade, investment and migration. Every government up to 1972 had refused the proposal. The Department of Foreign Affairs suggested to Whitlam that this policy should be reversed. He went further, and proposed a wider agreement. Negotiations began, but foundered on Japanese demands for treatment more advantageous than that then accorded to any other country, which no Australian government could accept.

Whitlam must surely be Australia's most travelled Prime Minister on a miles per year basis. By extensive overseas visits he familiarised himself with most parts of the world and registered a distinctively Australian personality there. The policies he developed made governments take more notice of Australia, projected a more 'liberal', more humanitarian international image. He demonstrated a more independent stance less publicly aligned with the United States; less racist, perhaps, than his predecessors (both Liberal and Labor); not particularly more tolerant; better regarded in some quarters, less in others; and rather more open to charges of ambiguity.

Being the policies of a new, ideologically inclined government, Labor's policies reflected in the early stages ideas and initiatives rather than a pragmatic reaction to events, a determination to change the world a little or at least to leave a mark upon it rather than to live as comfortably as possible with the world as it is. This approach began to change under the sometimes harsh realities of international life. Labor was out of office before the new conventional wisdom in foreign policy, downgrading the old Western associations and upgrading the new Afro-Asian ones, was required to deal with a major crisis, but it contributed to the crisis.

Following the coup in Lisbon in 1974, the new Portuguese government had offered independence to its colonies, including East Timor, where nationalist movements mushroomed. Indonesia, which had hitherto shown almost no interest in the territory, now discovered a passionate interest in it and an ethnic affinity with the people. In a visit to Jakarta in September 1974, Whitlam expressed the view that East Timor was a natural extension of the Indonesian Republic. Considerable resistance to this concept developed within Australia, as it did in the territory, where a civil competition for power became, with Indonesian encouragement, a civil war into which
Indonesian forces increasingly intervened. Australia offered to mediate between Portugal, Indonesia and the nationalist groups, but the offer was not taken up before the Whitlam government was dismissed on 11 November 1975 in a national political upheaval that took the headlines away from the neighbouring conflagration.

ON 11 NOVEMBER 1975 THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNOR-General, Sir John Kerr, dismissed the Whitlam Labor government, on the grounds that it could not, in the existing parliamentary situation, ensure supply (the provision through legislation of funds to pay public service salaries and other expenses of government). Malcolm Fraser, leader of the conservative Liberal Party, was commissioned to form a caretaker government in coalition with the National Country Party (later to be called the National Party), and at an election on 13 December this government was confirmed in office by a record majority of seats.

It already had a foreign policy crisis on its hands, for six days earlier Indonesia had launched a major invasion of Portuguese East Timor to 'restore order' following a unilateral declaration of independence from Portugal by a left wing anti-Indonesian Timorese nationalist group, Fretilin. After some savage fighting, the Indonesians gained control of the towns and much of the territory.

Within Australia, there was a legacy of pro-Timorese sentiment from World War II, when an Australian guerrilla force operated for a year there in the mountains against the Japanese. This sentiment was reinforced by some skillful propaganda by Fretilin representatives. On the other hand there was also some pro-Indonesian feeling (worn thin by 'confrontation'), and a belief among political leaders and the foreign affairs and defence establishment that in the long run it was more important for Australia to have good relations with 130 or more million Indonesians than with 650,000 Timorese. Again, some very vocal Australians, seeing Indonesia's show of strength, which was massive, brutal, and accompanied by transparent propaganda, deplored its violence and illegality, and feared that the Indonesians might at some stage take similar action against all or part of Papua New Guinea.
There is little doubt that the Labor government had encouraged Indonesia in her acquisition, although it would have preferred more peaceful means, including negotiations with Portugal, and had declared itself to be 'firm in the view that the people of Portuguese Timor should be allowed to determine their own future'. This statement was made at a time when the Australian government had clear indications that Indonesia was preparing for invasion, and was determined to take over Portuguese Timor one way or another. (It had controlled the Dutch or western half of the island since the transfer of power in December 1949.)

The new Liberal-National Country Party government was caught not only with the dilemma of the situation and increasingly vocal public opposition in Australia to Indonesia's crude show of strength, but also with the legacy of its predecessor's ambiguity. The conservative government continued this ambiguity, on the one hand assuring Indonesia that while it regretted the means of the takeover it accepted the result; and on the other hand supporting resolutions in the Fourth Committee and plenary session of the UN General Assembly and in the Security Council which deplored the invasion, called for the withdrawal of Indonesian forces, favoured self-determination for the Timorese people, and sought to have a UN fact-finding mission go to the territory.

No Australian government could have intervened physically on behalf of the East Timorese, nor could it base its whole relationship with its large neighbour on this one situation. Australia hoped that the situation would be resolved by force majeure, and this has broadly occurred, although stubborn Timorese resistance continued, as did support for it in Australia. The government accordingly tried to reconcile its dual policies, but with little success, like a man marching to two different drums. Indonesia was unable to understand why Australia, alone of all countries in the region, made so public a fuss about so small a matter as invading a neighbouring territory with 20 or 30 thousand soldiers. Unable to reconcile virtue with necessity, the re-elected Fraser government formally announced on 20 January 1978 that it recognised East Timor as part of Indonesia.

One might have expected a conservative government to have disowned some of Whitlam's initiatives and changes, but this happened scarcely at all, for three reasons: (1) The Liberal and National Country parties had had time in opposition to draw breath and think about where Australian foreign policy should be going, rather than simply keeping it going in the same direction; (2) the world had moved on, and quite demonstrably

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Labor’s policies were generally relevant to it; and (3) the Liberal Party discovered within itself, especially in Prime Minister Fraser and Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock, a cast of mind distinctly more liberal and less conservative than had been the case during the twenty-three continuous years in government, when anti-communism had been the touchstone of all policies.

It was still a conservative government, and made some public readjustments to the balance even if it was substantially the same balance. The new government believed that Washington’s confidence in Australia had been shaken, and acted quickly if a little self consciously to restore trust. It supported proposals to upgrade the US facilities at Diego Garcia, and announced that American nuclear-powered warships could call at Australian ports. The government was aware of the debate within the US Congress and administration over Indian Ocean policy, and accordingly, after some over-reaction to the Soviet naval presence, it supported a US-Soviet balance in the ocean at a low level. This accorded with President Carter’s desires to reduce American commitments and confrontations.

During their brief period in opposition, conservative leaders had quickly seen that their China policy had been mistaken and in any case was history, irretrievable and irrelevant. They whole-heartedly endorsed the Whitlam initiative. In June 1976 Fraser visited China. His declared distrust of the Soviet Union, reaffirmed in Tokyo en route to Peking and again when he arrived there, may have helped to ensure him a warm Chinese welcome, but must have looked to Moscow as if Australia was doubly aligning itself against the Soviet Union: with the United States on one side and with the People’s Republic on the other. In fact Fraser did not align Australia with China in the Sino-Soviet dispute. He suggested that China, Japan, the United States and Australia had interests in common which could be developed, especially in containing Soviet military expansion. The Chinese agreed. He expressed his regret and concern that China should continue to support revolutionary movements in South-east Asia. The Chinese leaders explained that they were committed to this, and would go on doing it, but that good relations with the relevant incumbent governments would always have priority. It was unfortunate that a summary of one of Fraser’s discussions with the Chinese Prime Minister, Hua Kuo-feng, was leaked to the press, allegedly by an accident within the Australian delegation, and that it included frank, unnecessary and not wholly favourable comments by Fraser on some Asian governments and leaders.

What prompted Fraser to change so radically his views on China—at one time seen as a potential enemy, the principal threat to Australia and its
interests; three years later, a friendly power, even (at least by implication) a potential ally? One factor presumably was the degree of responsibility recently shown by China in the international community; its failure to behave as unpleasantly and as aggressively as had been predicted and feared; its remarkable if still limited rapprochement with the United States. China was also a considerable importer of Australian wheat. Another factor may have been the continuing expansion of Soviet influence and power in Australia's region, for which the United States was not necessarily a complete counterbalance. Gorton in 1969 had been prepared to offer the Russians a modified welcome in order to contain the Chinese. Fraser seven years later saw the reverse as more appropriate to the facts.2

When Whitlam formally acknowledged Soviet sovereignty over Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, he offended sizable Baltic communities living in Australia. During the 1975 election campaign, Fraser undertook to reverse this policy, and less than a week after the poll Australian diplomatic staff in Moscow were instructed not to make official visits to the three territories. This was primarily a matter of Australian domestic politics, but the Fraser government, influenced by NATO assessments of Soviet power, had been troubled by the Soviet Union's assertive foreign policies and growing military strength vis-à-vis the West, its Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation with Vietnam in November 1978, and its introduction of 12 000 Cuban troops into Angola. The number was later substantially increased. In a major foreign affairs statement on 1 June 1976 Fraser had said:

Stability is disturbed and tension increased if the Soviet Union makes geo-political gains through its support of wars of national liberation, by the use of surrogates. A tangible signal is required from the USSR in the form of a restraint in its military expansion. While the NATO powers' capability remains relatively static, why is the Soviet arms build-up proceeding apace? It is reasonable to ask: Why does the Soviet Union desire a military power far greater than any needed to secure her own frontiers, or the expanded frontiers embraced by the Warsaw powers?3

The Soviet Union does not seem to have obliged him with an answer, but was not noticeably less cordial to his government than to Whitlam's.


The relationship became much more intense when the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan in the closing days of 1979. Australia immediately issued a diplomatic protest, comparing the intervention with the Soviet invasions of Hungary in 1956 and of Czechoslovakia in 1968. President Carter placed a grain embargo on the Soviet Union, thus cancelling a Soviet order of 17 million tonnes of US grain. Australia agreed not to pick up the shortfall: it nevertheless did very well out of Soviet grain imports. On 9 January 1980 Fraser announced a series of measures against the USSR. Australia would consult with the United States over doing more patrolling and surveillance in the Indian Ocean (it offered the small Cockburn Sound naval base in Western Australia as a ‘home port’ for US ships, but this was not accepted), it would suspend agreements with the USSR over fishing, review Soviet shipping and air (Aeroflot) operations, put a ban on Soviet scientific research vessels in Australian controlled areas, suspend scientific collaboration, and ban new initiatives under the cultural program. The most controversial Australian government decision however, following a strong lead from US President Carter, was to oppose Australian participation in the Olympic Games, due to be held in Moscow in the northern summer. It was felt that this would demonstrate to the Soviet people the international community’s disapproval of Soviet foreign policy and especially of the invasion of Afghanistan, and might bring some revision of that policy. The international community, however, was divided over the question, and in any case the Soviet government had not shown itself especially responsive to public opinion at home or abroad. In Australia, a sports-loving country, sympathy for the athletes outweighed moral indignation, loyalty to the American alliance, or the desire to teach the Russians a lesson, and the Australian Olympic Federation decided, albeit by a narrow majority and despite the individual withdrawal of some athletes, not to boycott the Games. The government, although not of one mind, was not pleased.

In foreign affairs it was simultaneously concerned with reacting to the seizure in Iran on 4 November 1979 of 52 American hostages. Australia was not as alarmed by this event as was the United States, but it did impose restrictions on non-food trade with Iran, indicated its displeasure through diplomatic channels, and was disturbed at the effect of the crisis on the US-Soviet balance, on Soviet power, and American leadership and will.

The most significant development in Australia’s external relations during the Fraser government, at least in formal terms, was the treaty with Japan. Japan had been seeking better access to Australia for three quarters of a century. The Fraser government took a position similar to Whitlam’s: it
would welcome a treaty but could not agree to giving Japan especially favoured treatment. Japan also had a new prime minister, Takeo Miki, who was keen to conclude a treaty, and a form of words was found which satisfied both sides. On 16 June 1976 the two prime ministers signed in Tokyo the 'Basic Treaty of Friendship and Co-operation between Australia and Japan', plus a Protocol, two exchanges of notes, some agreed minutes, and a record of discussion.

By this agreement, for the first time, Japanese nationals and companies in Australia were guaranteed treatment as favourable as was accorded to the nationals and companies of any other country (including Britain) except:

1. where special concessions had been made to a developing country;
2. in the case of reciprocal double-taxation agreements with third countries;
3. where special visa or passport arrangements or a migration agreement existed with a third country;
4. where Japan had made concessions to its former territories;
5. where Australia had afforded preferences to nationals within the Commonwealth, Ireland, or Papua New Guinea;
6. where arrangements had already been made under the GATT, the IMF, OECD, or other multilateral agreements.4

In view of the reduced relations between Britain and Australia, and the greatly limited scope of Commonwealth preferences, there were thus now few practical differences between the formal status in Australia of Japanese and British subjects or enterprises. For the majority of Australians, with their predominantly British heritage and strong anti-Asian prejudices, this was the culmination of a revolution.

But the existence of the Basic Treaty, with its splendid sentiments about friendship, cooperation, widening opportunities etc. was not automatically translated into improved relations. Japan was difficult over beef, intransigent and quite prepared to dishonour contracts over sugar when the world price dropped. Industrial strife in Australia seriously affected some deliveries to Japan—a fact played up by the Japanese media. Formally, the Treaty redressed discrimination suffered by Japanese people and enterprises in Australia for a century. An Australia-Japan Foundation was established to promote cultural contacts.

The Whitlam government had taken a significantly greater interest in the Commonwealth of Nations than its conservative predecessors. Mr Fraser

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4The full text of the Treaty and its attachments is given in *AFAR*, vol. 47, no. 6, June 1976, pp. 315–20.
quickly appreciated the opportunities which the Commonwealth offered for
middle-power diplomacy. He picked the ball up and ran with it, supporting
the work of the Secretariat, promoting ‘Third World’ causes (including the
1977 ‘Gleneagles’ agreement on sporting links with South Africa), and
extending the Heads of Government meetings into regional groups in the
Asian-Pacific area.

Fraser was probably most effective as a Commonwealth statesman in the
processes leading to the independence of Southern Rhodesia, as Zimbabwe,
in 1979. He early saw that no internal settlement would last which did not
accommodate the major revolutionary groups led by Robert Mugabe
(Zimbabwe African National Union—Patriotic Front) and Joshua Nkomo
(Zimbabwe African People’s Union). He tried to persuade the new British
Conservative Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, to this effect, but the
Conservatives, although realising the need for an African majority govern­
ment, had been beguiled by the possibility of a ‘moderate’ government led
by Bishop Abel Muzorewa. They also resented Commonwealth inter­
ference in what they saw as a British responsibility. Fraser realised that
Muzorewa did not have the necessary popular support or political power,
and with Peacock and the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Shridath
Ramphal, he campaigned among the Commonwealth leaders and with the
US (an influential outsider) for the constitutional changes and political
processes that would make a genuine African government possible. The
crux came at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting at Lusaka
in August 1979. Here Australian diplomacy was continuously active, with
Fraser exceeding the normal proprieties by leaking to the Australian press a
confidential draft communique on possible options. Whether the purpose
of the leak was to acquire merit with the Australian media or to paint Mrs
Thatcher into a corner from which she could not easily retreat, the effect
was the latter, and an angry but acquiescent British delegation took back to
London the basis for a conference at Lancaster House which led to nation­
wide elections, the end of the Civil War, and a ZANU(PF) government.5
At Britain’s request, Australia provided part of the force monitoring the
cease-fire that preceded the elections. Later (in 1982), Australia’s high
credit rating with African Commonwealth countries helped save the Com­
monwealth Games in Brisbane, under threat because of the presence of a
team from New Zealand whose government had permitted a Springbok
(South African) tour.

5This account of a process for which the British (and even the Canadian) delegation took con­
siderably more credit than is suggested here is largely taken from Patrick Weller, Malcolm
Fraser PM. A Study in Prime Ministerial Power, pp. 323ff.
On the Middle East, Fraser tried to steer an even-handed line. In his speech on 1 June 1976, he said:

...the only future lies in negotiation—in a proper and broad recognition of the rights of all groups within that troubled area; in an absolute recognition of the right of Israel to survive as a nation; and an equal recognition of the problems of the Palestine refugees.6

He did not acknowledge the right of the refugees to a state of their own, nor give status to the Palestine Liberation Organisation.

Following the Camp David Accords of 17 September 1978, President Carter tried to put together an international peacekeeping force to monitor the cease-fire in the Gaza Strip and the Sinai peninsula as and after the Israeli troops withdrew. An almost certain Soviet veto ruled out action under the Security Council. Australia was reluctant to contribute forces outside the aegis of the United Nations, fearing the effects on the now extensive trade with Arab states. The Labor opposition was also opposed, fearing the loss of Australian lives. The assassination of President Sadat changed the circumstances, arousing the possibility of an unstable Egypt. Israel adopted more aggressive policies, bombing the Iraqi nuclear facility at Osiraq, invading the Lebanon and annexing the Golan Heights. With some reluctance Australia decided to contribute troops to the Multinational Force and Observers. The force was effective, the two local powers behaved circumspectly, and Australia suffered no trade penalties. The Australian component was withdrawn in 1986.

After the Iran-Iraq war began in September 1980, the US approached Australia about taking part in naval patrols to ensure free passage of ships through the Straits of Hormuz. Although the government initially had seemed receptive to using its carrier for this purpose, it became increasingly reluctant. The Gulf was too far from Australia, and the objectives of the proposed force inadequately defined.7

The South Pacific

Fraser's concern with assertive Soviet policies prompted him to offer increased aid to small nations of the South Pacific whom he thought susceptible to Soviet influence.

7See my Working Paper no. 27 of November 1980 for the Strategic and Defence Studies Centre at ANU: 'Global and Regional Changes and their Defence Implications for Australia to the year 2000'.
In June 1980, shortly before the Anglo-French condominium of the New Hebrides was to become independent (and to assume the name Vanuatu), a rebellion broke out on the island of Espiritu Santo. The two administering powers acted ineffectively (and in the case of France, equivocally), and in an unprecedented move the New Hebrides government requested military aid from Papua New Guinea. This was given, using Australian aircraft and some Australian non-combatants in support of the PNG force, which put down the rebellion and arrested the leader, Jimmy Stevens.

From 1965, Australia's trade with New Zealand had been governed primarily by the New Zealand-Australia Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA). This ensured a market in Australia for New Zealand forest products, and in New Zealand for Australian manufactured goods, but it left out more than a third of all trade between the two neighbours. Recessions in both states, and the cost of exporting to third countries, forced them to re-examine the whole relationship, resulting in an agreement on 'Closer Economic Relations' (CER) concluded in November 1980. This provided for progressive and automatic reduction of tariffs and other import restrictions, and of export incentives, on both sides. The CER was a long (though not final) step towards a full Australian-New Zealand free trade area.

For some years both Australia and New Zealand had been concerned about nuclear testing in the South Pacific. The small island states were virtually unanimous in condemning such testing and in seeking to have the Pacific as a nuclear-free zone. Despite some sympathy with the idea, Australia and New Zealand as American allies could not see such a zone as being either practical or desirable, and they managed for a time to carry the South Pacific island countries with them. (But see next chapter.) The Forum also provided a context for Australia to further her desire for an exclusive maritime economic zone (EEZ) on which successive UN Law of the Sea conferences had been unable to concur. At a meeting on 31 August 1977 the Forum members agreed to establish 200-mile fishing or economic zones as quickly as possible 'to the fullest extent permissible under international law', and a South Pacific Regional Fisheries Agency open to all South Pacific countries 'who support the sovereign rights of the coastal state to conserve and manage living resources including highly migratory species in the 200-mile zone'. The Agency has proved valuable in negotiat-

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1Department of Foreign Affairs *Backgrounder*, no. 104, 2 September 1977, pp. 24-9.
ing the fishing agreements which the EEZs somewhat provocatively had made necessary.

The Liberal-National Party government was proud of the role it had played in the independence of Papua New Guinea. On 18 December 1978, Australia and Papua New Guinea signed the Torres Strait Treaty defining the boundaries between the two states. This removed the last major issue between them.10

Law of the Sea

Australia is an island—the world's largest. All but a tiny fraction of its international commerce is by sea. It thus has a considerable interest in ensuring that the use of the sea and of the world’s waterways and access to the resources of the sea and seabed are governed through an equitable international system. It has accordingly been consistently involved in the United Nations Law of the Sea debates which after 16 often painful sessions produced a Convention that laid down rules covering exploitation of resources, navigation and overflight rights, territorial waters and sovereignty, exclusive economic zones, research, pollution control, and access to the sea for landlocked states. With some acquisitive misgiving Australia subscribed to the principle acknowledged by the Conference, that resources of the seabed beyond national jurisdiction are 'the common heritage of mankind'. To Australia's regret, neither the United States nor the United Kingdom signed the Convention,11 although the USSR did so.

The declaration of an EEZ of 200 miles from the coast gave Australia an additional area of economic exploitation almost equal again to the size of the continent. Applied to the small island territories of the South Pacific it closed off large areas to foreign exploitation except by arrangement with the island governments or by unauthorised action. The Australian government offered to help a number of these states with surveillance of their zones, and lobbied with the United States to control American tuna boats.

Kampuchea and Vietnam

In 1975 forces controlled by the government in Hanoi completed their victory over the rest of the country. One result was an outflow of refugees, by

sea and land, which still continues 15 years later. Australia, with some reluctance, became one of the major destinations of this flow.\textsuperscript{12}

The Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Kampuchea in late 1978 and 1979 presented the region's non-communist countries including Australia with a diplomatic dilemma: should they acknowledge the \textit{fait accompli} and recognise the Vietnamese-backed Heng Samrin regime; or should they continue to recognise the Khmer Rouge regime of Pol Pot, which had murdered hundreds of thousands—perhaps millions—of its countrymen and now controlled only a small fraction of the country, as the legitimate government of Kampuchea? Australia's Asian neighbours, including China, favoured the latter course, which initially Australia also adopted; but in October 1980 the government took an intermediate course by announcing that it would withdraw recognition from 'Democratic Kampuchea' without conferring recognition on any other administration. At the same time, under pressure from ASEAN, it voted for Democratic Kampuchea to hold the Kampuchean seat in the UN General Assembly. De-recognition was effected as from 14 February 1981, but it left Australia in an ambiguous position unacceptable to a growing proportion of public and political opinion. At the 1980 General Assembly Australia co-sponsored an ASEAN draft resolution calling for the withdrawal of foreign (i.e. Vietnamese) troops from Kampuchea, the holding of free elections under UN supervision, and the convening of an international conference aimed at producing a comprehensive settlement. The aid program was suspended. This was to remain Australia's position for some years, but unlike its ASEAN neighbours Australia could not live with the contradictions of its policy. At the 1981 General Assembly it abstained on the vote on Kampuchean representation, and did this for several years to the time of Vietnamese withdrawal.

\textit{The Third World}

Fraser's first foreign minister, Andrew Peacock, was by inclination a man on the left of conservative politics, reinforcing those tendencies in Fraser himself, naturally a man of the right. Such attitudes were publicly expressed in North-South issues, or those affecting the less-developed

\textsuperscript{12}It is estimated that 111,000 refugees from Indo-China entered Australia during the period 1975–87. Department of Immigration, Local Government and Ethnic Affairs, \textit{Australia's Refugee Settlement Programs: an outline}, Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service, 1988, p. 1. This has been the highest intake, per head of population, of any country. Public opinion polls indicated considerable opposition to the Vietnamese as immigrants.
Third World group of states. On issues of decolonisation, or ones with racial overtones, the Fraser government barely shifted ground from its Labor predecessors. It was at least as condemnatory of South Africa, just as vigorous in attacking other injustices in the Third World and more active in pressing for black government in Rhodesia (Zimbabwe). Australia continued its membership (arranged under Labor) of the UN Council for Namibia, and voted for Third World resolutions on the subject, with appropriate and unexceptionable reservations. It gave aid to Mozambique. It retained membership of the UN Committee of Twenty-four on decolonisation. It spoke on human rights (where it was vulnerable over the treatment of Aborigines) with less selective indignation. The government may have concluded that it had nothing to gain by standing out from the crowd on these matters, and Fraser was to an extent hoist with his predecessor's petard. But he also had a genuine feeling for the underprivileged in the world, and a desire to improve their lot. Fraser, an Oxford graduate from a wealthy Victorian farming family, obviously found congenial the company of Third World leaders such as Obasanjo of Nigeria or Manley of Jamaica.

In 1978 Peacock commissioned a high level committee of public servants to review Australia's relations with the Third World. In a balanced and sensible report, it took the basic position that while Australia remained a Western country, it was 'Western with a difference', the difference being due to geography, and the Third World offered Australia opportunities to associate with its growth, to derive benefits from expanding trade, to extend political initiatives, to demonstrate Australia's technological skills and special experience, to exercise Australian idealism and to enrich Australian culture. There might also be some advantages for the Third World countries with whom Australia associated. A parliamentary joint committee, and a group of experts commissioned in August 1979 by the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Lusaka, supported the Report's general conclusions.

But as so many governments before and since have discovered, it is one thing to establish attractive or virtuous economic principles, quite another to translate them into acceptable and effective policies. For the most part, nationalist preoccupations tend to override internationalist sentiments. The government endorsed international efforts to strengthen commodity

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markets, and supported the concept of a Common Fund, which the US bitter­ly opposed and which accordingly came to nothing. On other issues, such as a campaign to reduce the effects of the European Community's Common Agricultural Policy, and to phase out protectionist measures through global negotiations, Fraser was no more successful, no doubt in part because although Australia had a genuine complaint against the Community for dumping its subsidised surplus commodities on traditional Australian markets, Australia itself had so often seemed reluctant to take the steps it so earnestly advocated for them. In the new Reagan administration, also, it met a hard-nosed super-power government that shared its general strategic concerns and prejudices but not its assessment of the links between North-South (developed-underdeveloped) and East-West issues.

Yet if North-South questions were important for the Fraser government, they were still subordinate to the main issues of international security and defence. Decisions were taken to upgrade major items of defence equipment, notably to replace the Mirage fighters by 75 American F-18s, the very latest and most expensive technology. The government also decided with some misgiving to replace the ageing aircraft carrier HMAS Melbourne with a second-hand British carrier, Invincible, but the latter became important in the British naval campaign in the Falklands, and Australia rather gratefully let the British keep it. Additional maritime surveillance capacity was ordered. The United States was given the right to stage B52 bombers through Australia en route to Diego Garcia, with Australia insisting on consultation before nuclear weapons were carried. After a lengthy inquiry, it authorised the mining and export under safeguards of uranium. It joined the UN Committee on Disarmament. These events were concurrent with a more vocal but still minority Australian movement to promote nuclear disarmament and to abandon the American alliance, with decisions by State Labor governments to prohibit visits by nuclear-powered warships.

But the Fraser Government was the government of a nation that was coming to have less impact in international affairs, to have a lower profile, to be less relevant to and more remote from the great international issues of the time. Because of the US defence facilities, Australia was still an important American ally, but Australians generally had come to see also that this made them vulnerable in the event of an East-West war. In economic terms, Australia was gradually slipping down the international scale, and despite the government's hopes for a resources boom, its trade and growth performance was dismal compared with that of the newly industrialising
countries of Asia, especially the Republic of Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. The professionalism and the mechanisms Australia had developed and refined over the previous 40 years for coping with the world had a very different world to cope with: there were three major highly competitive trading blocs; there were three times the number of sovereign states, many of them vociferous, with urgent economic and social claims, arbitrary and incompetent political systems, and impatient with the bipolar world to one of whose great powers Australia was still so firmly and fearfully attached.
The Australian Labor Party which was elected to government in March 1983 was not concerned (as the Whitlam government had been) to change the world or Australia's place in the world. Nor was it concerned with ideological purity. It, and especially its new leader, Mr Bob Hawke, was concerned to retain power. The party had elected him because of his charisma and despite his inexperience (he had never held ministerial office and had only briefly been in parliament), and had to accommodate itself to both characteristics. Hawke himself had to work, in foreign affairs, in harness with the man he had displaced, Bill Hayden, a man of the Centre-Left where Hawke was determinedly to the Centre, his deputy and Treasurer (Paul Keating) being on the right side of the Labor spectrum.

Foreign affairs did not enter into the election campaign. The world continued to exist, but it posed no threat to Australia and demanded no effort from Australia. The foreign relations of the Hawke government, which remained in office for the rest of the decade, thus concerned themselves overwhelmingly with the problems of making a living in a competitive world, with mending neighbourhood fences, and with global issues such as the maintenance of an orderly trading framework, disarmament, and the environment.

Nevertheless old habits die hard. One might have thought that a Labor government in the 1980s would take a relaxed view of the world, be less of a dependent ally and more of a free spirit. Not a bit. Hawke and most of his Cabinet held a view of the world remarkably similar to that of their Liberal-National Party predecessors: that it was a dangerous place, and that Australia needed the American alliance as its ultimate guarantee of safety. This led Hawke to make the standard pilgrimages to Washington and
engage in the accepted (and, on the face of it, not unreasonable) rhetoric about Soviet expansionism. But Hawke went further than most Australian politicians when he advised the Australian-American Association that Australia and the US would be 'together forever'. The government declared that its strategic interests coincided with those of the US, and that it was unequivocally committed to the ANZUS treaty. Mr Hayden saw the US facilities on Australian soil as a positive contribution not only to deterrence but also (with curious logic) to Australia's moral standing over its disarmament policies in the United Nations.

But the Labor government which despite its general right-wing cast included elements of the left, was not simply an echo of Washington. It criticised the US invasion of Grenada, and Hayden publicly disagreed with the Reagan policies in Central America. When Hawke, with limited consultation among his colleagues, confirmed a decision of the Fraser government to allow testing of the MX missile in Australian waters, or at least to use Australian facilities in the test monitoring, opinion within the ALP forced him to reverse his position, to his considerable embarrassment. Again, when the Reagan administration launched the Strategic Defence Initiative (SDI), quickly named 'Star Wars', designed to provide at enormous expense a layered defence in space against Soviet missiles, and invited paid participation from selected allies in the appropriate research, Australia refused to take part. Left-wing objections on ideological grounds were reinforced by the common-sense logic that such a defence, which would distort both the defence budget and the defence debate, had obvious defects and could not be tested for effectiveness except in what might well turn out to be the ultimate cataclysm.

The Labor government's more natural proclivities found expression in other ways. It campaigned, with France, to prevent the economic exploitation of Antarctica. It appointed an Ambassador for Disarmament, based in Geneva, and established a Peace Research Centre at the Australian National University. The government's ambitious objective was to produce a freeze on the development of nuclear weapons, followed by a process leading to total nuclear disarmament. Whatever the virtue of this position in principle, it had practical ambiguities for Australia, which wanted the US to deter Soviet nuclear power, offered it facilities for that purpose, and had no way of affecting the 'nth country' problem—the capacity of almost any country with moderately sophisticated technology to produce nuclear explosive devices.

1 The Age, 20 June 1983.
As part of its pro-active policy on arms control, the Australian government took up the question of chemical warfare, and in September 1989 convened in Canberra a major international conference of governments and chemical manufacturers from over 60 countries.

Australia had a nuclear problem in its own backyard—the South Pacific. Four of the five nuclear weapons states—the US, USSR, France and China—had used it for tests, while the United States and France continued to do so and the US deployed nuclear-armed warships there. The UK had conducted nuclear tests in the region in the 1950s and 1960s—in retrospect, inadequately monitored and safeguarded. Many of the small island states objected to these activities, and especially to French testing, but Australia could hardly protest at an American presence which it deemed vital to its own security. When the matter was discussed by the Pacific Forum with the objective of producing a nuclear free zone treaty, Australia managed to convince enough of the members that a watered down treaty was better than either of two alternatives—a treaty that was totally unenforceable, or no treaty at all. The resulting ‘South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone Treaty’, or Treaty of Raratonga, which entered into force on 11 December 1986, required members not to develop, acquire, manufacture or station nuclear weapons on their territory, nor to allow the dumping of nuclear waste. In an alternative to banning all nuclear activities, which would be declaratory but irrelevant, the Treaty states that partners retain their ‘unqualified sovereign rights to decide on access to their ports and airfields of vessels or aircraft of other countries’.

This last aspect had come up early in the first Hawke government. The British carrier *Invincible* on a goodwill tour of the region had sought and obtained from the Royal Australian Navy a berth at the Garden Island dockyard, Sydney, for repairs. The Minister for Defence, Gordon Scholes, under pressure from the left wing of the party, the State government, and from dockyard unions, decided to refuse the ship entry, on the grounds that it must be presumed to be carrying nuclear weapons which would therefore technically be on ‘Australian soil’, contrary to party policy. The question that immediately arose was whether an American ship in similar circumstances, committed to the defence of Australia and dangerously in need of repairs, would be similarly treated. The Australian government hurriedly assured the US that this would not be the case, and beat an unqualified retreat from the policy, announcing that in future each situation would be considered individually.

Yet what in 1983 was an embarrassing aberration by Australia became in 1985 the declared policy of the New Zealand government. At the 1984 elec-
The Labor conservatives

tion, the New Zealand Labour Party led by David Lange declared that if elected it would ban the visit to New Zealand of nuclear armed or powered ships or planes. When it duly became the government, it implemented this policy, despite considerable pressure from the United States and publicly revealed representations from Mr Hawke. Mr Lange made clear he wanted to maintain the ANZUS Treaty and New Zealand’s part in it. He just did not want to be protected by nuclear weapons or to play a part in their support. The notion that the United States Navy could or would divide its fleet on this basis required a considerable measure of naivety. As a policy, it was possible only if there was no threat to New Zealand, for (as was the case) between New Zealand and any potential major threat to its security there lay the three million square miles of Australia. Despite a good deal of huffing and puffing from its allies, the New Zealand government supported by public opinion stood firm. The United States, troubled by the message that might be conveyed to other governments such as Japan or Denmark or even Australia, or to Opposition parties such as the British Labour Party, decided to exclude New Zealand from the protection and facilities of ANZUS which thus effectively turned into two treaties—between the US and Australia and between Australia and New Zealand.

In line with its pursuit of pragmatism the government effectively reversed, by stages, Labor’s position barring the mining and export of uranium, and instituted not wholly convincing safeguards.

Between 1952 and 1963, Britain with Australian assistance had conducted a number of nuclear tests in Australia, mainly at the Maralinga and Emu sites in central Australia and at the Monte Bello islands off the north-west coast. Over the years some disquiet was voiced over the residual effects of these tests on the areas concerned and on people who might have been exposed to radiation. In 1983, an advisory committee appointed by the Fraser government issued a critical report on the tests. This led the Labor government in July 1984 to appoint a Royal Commission to inquire into the tests, and especially the measures for protection against ionisation radiation, and the dispersal of radioactive substances and toxic materials arising from the tests and minor trials. The Commission’s chairman was Mr Justice J. R. McClelland, a New South Wales State judge and a former Minister in the Whitlam government.

The Royal Commission, or at least its chairman, took a high public profile, complaining especially at the lack of cooperation from relevant British authorities. Whether the British deliberately withheld relevant information, or only withheld items of extreme secrecy irrelevant to the Commission, or were simply incompetent, the Commission eventually
obtained the information it sought and presented its report to parliament on 5 December 1985. It recommended, *inter alia*, that the British government pay for cleaning up the three sites. Britain had already been absolved of all further claims by Australia, but it willingly cooperated in the various activities and studies arising from the Report.

**Australia's Neighbourhood**

From its inception, the Hawke government in foreign affairs was predominantly concerned with Australia's neighbourhood. This involved (1) living with the economic dynamism of North-east Asia (see next section); (2) relations with Indonesia, and with the other states of ASEAN; (3) an attempt to resolve the situation in Indo-China; (4) the Five-Power defence arrangements; (5) relations with Papua New Guinea; and (6) relations with New Zealand and the small states of the South Pacific.

The Whitlam Labor government had acquiesced in Indonesia's takeover of East Timor. In opposition Labor reversed this position. It recognised the 'inalienable right of the East Timorese people to self-determination and independence', and opposed defence aid to Indonesia so long as its forces occupied East Timor. Having become the government again, in 1983, the Labor leaders appreciated that Australia's relations with its populous (150 million plus) neighbour involved far more than the fate of the East Timorese. They therefore acknowledged the takeover, continued defence aid, and deliberately set about cultivating friendly relations with Djakarta. When in 1984 Indonesian resettlement policies in West Irian led to the flight of thousands of refugees across the border into Papua New Guinea, some of whom were part of the Free Papua Movement (OPM), Australia was reluctant to criticise it, despite the obvious problems created for Australia's former colony. After negotiations, a Treaty of Mutual Respect, Friendship and Co-operation between Papua New Guinea and Indonesia was signed on 27 October 1986.

At the same time, negotiations to delimit the seabed boundary between Australia and East Timor dragged on, complicated by the presumed existence of subterranean oil. Relations between the two states remained prickly and at times strained for most of the decade. The Dibb Report (see below) was correctly interpreted in Djakarta as implying that Australians saw Indonesia as a potential threat to their security. This was irritating, but an article in the *Sydney Morning Herald* by its foreign editor, accusing the

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1 *Sydney Morning Herald*, 10 April 1986.
Indonesian President (Suharto) and his family of widespread corruption, deeply incensed the Indonesian authorities, even though it said what many Indonesians believed to be true. The Indonesian government took a series of retaliatory measures and made accusations against the Australian government (banning ministerial visits), media, tourists, and the ALP. Australian opinion was divided between those at one extreme who saw a continuing necessity to appease Indonesia (a line favoured by the Foreign Affairs establishment) and those at the other extreme who wanted Australia to defy what they saw as Indonesian bullying tactics. The situation was not helped by the East Timor irredentist movement, which used Darwin for radio contact with its sympathisers on the island. Amnesty International published reports of Indonesian atrocities in East Timor, and Australia supported criticism of Indonesia in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights. Like many another authoritarian regime, the Indonesian government resented attacks on the more brutal aspects of its policies. But neither Indonesia nor Australia could allow relations to remain strained indefinitely, and in 1988 the two governments finalised an agreement over boundaries in the Timor Sea, parts of the area constituting a 'zone of cooperation', with the sharing of royalties from any successful oil exploration.

The Labor government's desire to exert a beneficial influence and a degree of leadership in the region ran up against the Indonesian desire to be the dominant power, and the feeling among some other ASEAN governments especially Malaysia and Singapore that Australia was in the region but not of it. Whitlam had run up against these attitudes a decade earlier, as did Hayden who also felt he had to be seen to be 'doing something about' the problems of the area. The most obvious 'problem' was the Vietnamese occupation of Kampuchea (Cambodia)—what Hayden called 'the greatest unresolved source of tension in South East Asia'. The ASEAN states were not of one mind on this question. Thailand had a vast refugee problem on its north-eastern border, and saw Vietnam as a threat to its security, to which the expelled Khmer Rouge forces of Pol Pot were a valuable if uncomfortable counter. Malaysia and Singapore had some sympathy for the Thai position or at least supported it in their own interests. Indonesia was less concerned about Vietnam than about China. The Fraser government had suspended aid to Vietnam after the latter invaded Kampuchea. The ALP wanted to resume such aid and this was initial Labor government policy. On a visit to ASEAN capitals shortly after becoming Foreign Minister, without giving sufficient time to reflection and consultation, Hayden presented a series of proposals involving the phased withdrawal of Vietnamese forces, a form of self-determination
for Kampuchea, and the restoration of normal relations with Vietnam by China, the US and ASEAN states. The only problems with these proposals was that they were unacceptable to all the parties from whom action was required. Vietnam had no intention of leaving. Neither China nor the US nor the ASEAN states were prepared to recognise Vietnam, and objected to any aid being given it.

This did not stop the Hawke government from taking repeated initiatives over the rest of the decade, in the belief that a stalemate would operate in favour of the Khmer Rouge. The ASEAN states were especially discomfited by the continuing flow of Indo-Chinese refugees by land and sea. While not wanting the Pol Pot regime back in murderous power, they saw a coalition between the Khmer Rouge and two non-communist Kampuchean factions, under the leadership of Prince Norodom Sihanouk, as the best counter to Vietnam. The problems with this for Australia were that the coalition showed considerable reluctance to coalesce, that Sihanouk’s undoubted charisma tended to be overshadowed by his mercurial nature, and that the Khmer Rouge dominated the partnership by its energy, numbers, and the abundant supply of Chinese arms. Accordingly Hayden followed his predecessor’s policy of abstaining on voting on the credentials of Democratic Kampuchea (Khmer Rouge) at the UN.

The Hawke government saw itself as well placed to mediate in the dispute, to be the honest broker. It had good relations with all the parties concerned, including China and indeed Vietnam itself. But to be an honest broker requires that the parties concerned wish to come to an accommodation, and wish the broker to bring it about. Throughout most of the 1980s this was not the case. Nevertheless Mr Hayden continued his efforts, and the government granted some relief aid to Vietnam and to civilian refugees displaced by the fighting in Kampuchea. When Vietnam decided to withdraw its forces from Kampuchea, Australia was quick to offer aid (through multilateral agencies) and to come up with further proposals to bring stability to the area, with the assistance of a United Nations peacekeeping force. While gaining wider international support for the proposals, the new (September 1988) Australian Foreign Minister, Gareth Evans, could not effect complete accommodation between the parties. With the bulk of Vietnam’s forces withdrawn, the Khmer Rouge could see the prospect of returning to power in their own right, by force of arms. By September 1990, partly due to Australian diplomatic efforts, all four Cambodian parties accepted a framework to proceed, formulated by the five permanent members of the Security Council and including a UN role in the transitional period to free elections. There is still a long way to go to resolve the situation.
Australia’s relations with Papua New Guinea were both a function of the colonial past and of the connection both countries had with Indonesia. On Papua New Guinea’s independence in 1975 Australia was careful not to commit herself to the security of the new state, because of the Indonesian implication and the fact that the PNG polity was a fragile construct which might at any time develop strains or fissures too great for the indigenous government to contain. At the same time Australia had an undoubted emotional involvement in the state, considerable investment, a large expatriate population, an ongoing aid program vital to the PNG economy, and a host of formal and informal agreements and links, including arrangements over defence.

Since the Sukarno era, no one has seriously proposed that Indonesia had designs on the territory of Papua New Guinea. The tension between the two states has been stimulated by the OPM movement, by the influx into PNG from West Irian of refugees displaced physically or psychologically by the Indonesian program of settling in West Irian people from more populated parts of the republic. In the first half of 1984 the refugees probably numbered 9000 or more. Racially, these people were Papuans, distinct from the rest of Indonesia, and their plight aroused sympathy among the PNG population which heavy-handed Indonesian diplomacy only exacerbated. Australia consistently took the view that the problem was the sole concern of the two states. It tried to dampen the issue wherever possible, and to hope it would go away. It has not gone away, and an investigative team from the Australian Broadcasting Commission helped to keep the issue alive and Australia involved.

In May 1987 there was a military coup in Fiji to prevent the Indian community from exercising political power. Australia expressed strong disapproval, and cut off most economic aid for a period.

Economic Initiatives

Traditionally, Australian governments have sought to maintain close regulation over financial institutions operating within the country, sources of capital and control being limited to Australia, Britain and New Zealand. (The post-war Labor government of J. B. Chifley even tried to nationalise all the banks, but was prevented from doing so by High Court decision and by the failure of a referendum.) Like protective tariffs, this policy had visible short-term benefits but its shortcomings were increasingly apparent in a world where Australia was a small player, was a substantial importer of capital, and where unregulated institutions became increasingly competitive and clever at substituting for regulated ones. In January 1979 the
Fraser government established a Committee of Inquiry into the Australian Financial System (chairman: J. K. Campbell), which reported in 1981 and recommended that foreign banks be permitted to operate in Australia, that controls over exchange, deposit, and interest rates be abolished, that exchange rates be determined by the markets, and that banks be permitted to operate with a minimum of regulation and government intervention. These recommendations were implemented progressively over the following four years. The revolutionary decision to allow foreign banks into the Australian system was taken by the Hawke government in 1984. After an initial flood of entries, leading to 'overcrowding', there was some rationalisation. Fears that the great foreign banks would take over Australia were not realised—the major Australian banks have held their position at around two-thirds of the domestic market, new foreign banks taking only about five per cent. The Australian share market was also deregulated by the Hawke government, a move that proved a mixed blessing, opening Australia not only to the benefits of foreign transactions but to their perils: in the October 1987 stock market crash the Australian all-ordinarys index fell by fifty per cent.

In July 1987, the Department of Trade was amalgamated into the Department of Foreign Affairs, a long-overdue move which took account of the growing dimension of economic matters in Australia's external relations.

Labor also inherited and gave further momentum to the regional economic initiatives of its conservative predecessors. In 1980 Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser, supported by the Japanese Prime Minister Mr Ohira, called a Pacific Community Seminar in Canberra. From this grew the Pacific Economic Co-operation Conference (PECC), an informal and non-official organisation of industry representatives, government officials and researchers from Australia, Brunei, Canada, China, Indonesia, Japan, the Republic of Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Singapore, Taiwan (Chinese Taipei), Thailand and the United States, plus Pacific Island countries participating jointly through the South Pacific Economic Commission. There is a Standing Committee, a Co-ordinating Group, a number of specialist Task Forces and Forums and (since January 1990) a Central Secretariat. Where it could have become just one more talking shop producing mountains of paper, PECC has in fact generated a sense of regional awareness and economic interdependence, stimulating as well as

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helping to manage cooperatively the increasing flow of goods, people, money, information and technology throughout the Pacific.

The PECC was probably the most significant part of a fitful movement during the 1970s and 1980s in which Australia was involved, designed to serve greater cooperation between the countries bordering the Pacific. The European Community with its dynamic growth offered an example and a warning of what like minded nations in a single region could achieve through a common market. Unfortunately the ‘Pacific Rim’ countries were far more divided geographically, politically and culturally. The proponents of Pacific economic cooperation saw it as offering a prospect for containing American and/or Japanese hegemony, of managing the rivalry between these two economic super-powers and of profiting from the increased trade and investment it was hoped would be generated. Yet many of the smaller powers throughout the region feared that any scheme would end up with their being manipulated by the larger ones, especially by the US or Japan. Filipino officials, for example, referred openly to the proposal as designed to achieve Japan’s ‘Greater East Asia Co-prosperity Sphere’ by non-military means. The US, Japan and Australia accordingly adopted for some years a relatively low profile, preferring like W. S. Gilbert’s Duke of Plaza Toro to lead the regiment from behind.

During his third term of office, Mr Hawke decided to give impetus to this idea. Speaking in Seoul on 31 January 1989, he launched a proposal for an Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) Forum, initially excluding but subsequently including the US and Canada and designed to create an ‘intergovernmental vehicle’ for regional economic cooperation. This was followed up by a meeting in Canberra in November, attended by 27 ministers and 211 observers from twelve countries. China, because of the ‘three Chinas’ problem and in the light of the Tiananmen Square incident earlier in the year, was not invited. The meeting addressed world and regional economic developments, the role of the region in global trade liberalisation, specific opportunities for regional cooperation, and future steps. It may be, as Richard Higgott argues, that the fact that the meeting of such a group was held was more important than the very limited agreement reached and the many issues (including membership) left unresolved. The ASEAN group feared the dilution of their identity. Whatever difficulty members may have in surmounting conceptions of national

interest and mutual suspicions, APEC is a worthy initiative. In this case the main suspicion is of Japan, for whom some see Australia as a naive stalking horse.

The PECC and APEC initiatives were manifestations of a continuing concern by Australia over its vulnerable international trading position—vulnerable because of its heavy dependence on commodity exports subject to fluctuating prices, and its high standard of living making for high cost productivity and heavy import bills. Successive governments have tried to mitigate this situation through both bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations, sometimes quietly, sometimes abrasively, but always with only modest results. In August 1986 Australia hosted a conference in Cairns, Queensland, of agriculture exporting countries, to promote reform in international agricultural trade, as part of the eighth (or Uruguay) round of multilateral trade negotiations under the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT). The other members of what came to be known as the 'Cairns Group' were Argentina, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Fiji, Hungary, Indonesia, Malaysia, New Zealand, the Philippines, Thailand and Uruguay. All members of the Group felt themselves affected by the growth of illiberality in agricultural trade in general and especially the policies of the United States and of the European Community under its Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). The Group has laboured and lobbied to get major reforms over tariffs, non-tariff barriers, export subsidies and other distorting internal support measures into the GATT system as applied to agricultural exports, and special treatment for developing countries. At time of writing the prospects cannot be considered favourable.

Early in its term of office, the Hawke government took special note of the economic dynamism of North-east Asia, and its implications for Australia. It accordingly commissioned a 'Review of the implications for Australia of economic growth and structural change in East Asia', by a professor of economics who had been Australian Ambassador to China, Ross Garnaut. Garnaut noted in his report that over recent decades the Northeast Asian economies have grown more rapidly for a longer period than any others in world economic history, so that it has become 'one of the three main centres of world production, trade and savings'. Further, that relations with

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5 See Richard A. Higgott and Andrew Fenton Cooper, 'Middle power leadership and coalition building: Australia, the Cairns Group and the Uruguay round of trade negotiations', *International Organization*, vol. 44, no. 4, 1990.
Northeast Asia ‘are of an order of magnitude more important to economic development in Australia than are relations with any other region’. While concentrating on developing a new professionalism in these relations, the Report also addressed wider issues, especially ‘the 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; to maintain a strong economic orientation in a non-discriminatory immigration program on the current scale; and to continue with liberal, non-discriminatory policies on direct foreign investment’. These were a lot easier for a professor to propose than for a government—especially one with a large trade union electorate—to implement. Even so, the government’s liberal fiscal policies led to the most massive deficit internationally in Australia’s history.

Relations with Britain

Despite being a former Rhodes Scholar, and holding an Oxford university record for beer drinking, Mr Hawke and his government paid little deference to the British relationship. The United States and the Asian-Pacific region were seen as considerably more important. This attitude began to change as the 1980s progressed, for two reasons. Statistics showed that the European Community was still a very large and important market and source of capital, and would become more so as it approached the single market objective after 1992. And it became clear that the numerous commercial and other links with Britain offered Australia the most favourable entree into the Community. In 1986–87 alone Australian investment in Britain nearly doubled to $A12 billion—18 per cent of Australia’s total offshore investment. By 1990 this was up to $A15 billion.

In the approach to the Bicentenary of British settlement in Australia (1988), the Australian Federal and State governments finally managed to agree on terminating remaining constitutional links with Britain other than the monarchy. Accordingly, on 3 March 1986, during a visit by the Queen to Australia, the British and Australian legislatures each adopted an ‘Australia Act’, in virtually identical terms. The Queen’s position as ‘Queen of Australia’ was not affected, but there could no longer be appeals from State courts to the Judicial Committee of the Privy Council. The High Court of Australia was thus the final court of appeal for Australian courts on all matters. The Act also provided that State governors would be appointed by the Queen on the direct advice of the State government, without (as heretofore) having the British government as intermediary. Residual
anachronistic formalities (no longer exercised) of control by Britain over State governments were duly repealed.

In 1988 the British royal family and the British government played important parts in the Bicentenary celebrations, and a clear new impetus was given to the relationship which over the years had tended to sag. The British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, put it in these terms: 'Britain can provide a springboard for Australia into the European market, and we hope that our trade and investment with you will help us do better in the great market of the Pacific.' The first proposition is demonstrably true; the second has yet to be given substance.

National and International Security

In line with its general policy of stealing the conservatives' clothes, the Hawke government adopted a vigorous defence policy under an able young minister, Mr Kim Beazley. Beazley commissioned Paul Dibb, an academic who had been an official intelligence analyst, to review Australia's defence capabilities. Dibb's report, widely acclaimed at the time and widely criticised subsequently, was based on strategic guidance that Australia 'would receive at least ten years' warning of a substantial military threat', and that it would continue to have close defence relations with the United States. Dibb concluded that 'Australia is one of the most secure countries in the world', even though strategic circumstances could change and challenges develop. In defence terms, Indonesia is Australia's most important neighbour, a protective barrier to her northern approaches, but also the area from or through which a military threat to Australia could most easily be posed. He recommended that Australia concentrate on defending itself and its immediate environment, and suggested a 'layered strategy of defence within our area of direct military interest', a 'strategy of denial' with priority given to countering low-level conflict. A White Paper subsequently set out the government's policy implementing the basic recommendations of the report, including a substantial defence re-equipment program. In November 1989 an agreement was signed with New Zealand for the joint (mainly Australian) construction of naval frigates.

1 International Herald Tribune, 4 August 1988.
On 2 August 1990 Iraq invaded and occupied Kuwait. On 10 August, after consulting a few of his colleagues, but without Cabinet or parliamentary consideration, and after a personal appeal from United States President Bush, Mr Hawke offered to send two guided missile frigates of the Royal Australian Navy to be part of a multinational force imposing sanctions on Iraq, and to help deter further aggression by Iraq. The move was subsequently supported by other major parties in the parliament, although there was some dissent from Labor's left wing and from other groups. Speaking in parliament on 21 August the Prime Minister declared:

We have a real stake in supporting proper norms of international behaviour between nations in the post Cold War world which is emerging. We have a real stake in doing what we can to prevent the Middle East from being engulfed in a widening conflict, and we have a real stake in the affairs of a region which provides the bulk of one of the commodities most vital to the health of the international economy.10

What he did not say, although it was probably decisive, was that the Australian government also had a real stake in preserving the goodwill of the United States.

From its early days the Hawke government was aware of the links between domestic and external priorities, and the need for structural adjustment of the Australian economy if it were to meet the new international challenges. The government was unusually successful in capitalising on its relations with the trade union movement, but after eight years in office it still has not managed to dampen the desire of Australians to 'take the cash in hand and waive the rest', to live beyond their means in an increasingly competitive world.
EVERY SOCIETY IS A PRODUCT OF GEOGRAPHICAL AND historical factors, but in few has the contrast and contest between them been as marked as in Australia. A map of the world centred on Australia shows it to be the most isolated of continents, almost surrounded by great oceans and with only a thin broken chain of islands to the Asian mainland nearly 3000 kilometres away. Wherever the Aboriginal population came from, they began to arrive probably at least 50,000 years ago, settling into a multiplicity of tribal groups who never developed conventional agricultural arts but lived by hunting and forage and movement. The sea, the prevailing winds, and the inhospitable north and west coastal regions were barriers to further immigration for an astonishingly long time. When, following Cook's discoveries in 1770, Australia was settled by white men, they were themselves initially protected by the same facts of geography from the prolific populations of Asia, while threatened by climate—aridity, drought, flood, fire—and all the problems of enormous distance. Technology and hard work have enabled Australians largely to tame or manage or at least live with their environment. But the technologies of transport and weaponry have also increased their vulnerability to hostile external forces.

In Asia, Africa and the Americas the European imperialists and colonists came to areas often with substantial populations and sophisticated civilisations but lacking effective organisation and modern military power. The Europeans came, saw and conquered by weight of arms, superior organisation, and the seductions of trade. They were themselves later conquered by numbers, and by the ideas they fostered and the technology they had transplanted. The white colonists of Australia, on the other hand,
came to an almost empty continent. The inhabitants were uncoordinated, technologically primitive, limited in number, scattered, terribly vulnerable to the white man's diseases, easily suppressed, rounded up, dispossessed, even massacred. When Europeans first settled in Australia, the number of Aboriginal inhabitants was not known. Retrospective estimates range from 300,000 to three quarters of a million. At the 1986 census, out of a total population of 16 million, only 1.4 per cent were Aborigines of full descent or of partly Aboriginal descent and declaring themselves to be of the Aboriginal race. Aborigines have never been a factor in Australian foreign policy except as a mild embarrassment to Australian diplomats involved in discussing racial questions.

Geographical factors have influenced almost every facet of Australian life. The size of the country—some 3000 kilometres across, an average of 2400 kilometres from north to south, and with much of the interior desert or semi-desert—meant that British settlement took the form of a number of separate colonies, whose links in many cases were with London rather than with one another. This led to the federal system of government, with States (provinces) jealous of their rights, with separate representatives ('Agents-General') in Britain. In some cases they imposed tariffs against each other, and even indulged in the absurdity of different railway gauges which caused endless problems especially when the nation was at war. Climatic and soil conditions, difficulties of transport and communications over huge distances, and the unwelcome severity of so much of the land, led to coastal fringe settlement, to a relatively small population, to extensive rather than intensive cultivation, and to pastoral activities requiring limited manpower, creating an archipelago of settlements with no heartland. Success in growing wheat and wool, exchanged in Britain for the products of Britain's industrial revolution, gave Australia by the end of the 19th century one of the world's highest standards of living but delayed Australia's own industrial development and its emancipation from dependence on British markets, capital, technology, even economic controls, and foreign policy. The Bank of England was a dominant influence on Australian economic policy during the Great Depression. Pressure from Manchester and Whitehall led to the disastrous import controls against Japan a few years later in the Trade Diversion Policy. Even today, despite the massive expansion of the American, West European and Japanese economies, Britain is still the largest overall supplier of capital to Australia, but the discovery of vast mineral deposits shifted Australia's dependency after World War II from the declining economy of Britain to the bursting economy of Japan.
Australia is a nation of migrants and their descendants, and the great majority have come from Europe, especially from Britain and Ireland. They brought with them their European eyes and attitudes to the world, including the fear, pervasive in Britain since 1066, of invasion by neighbours. The first significant Australian local defence measures against external attack were taken at the time of the Crimean War 1854–56, when it was quite erroneously assumed that because Britain was at war with Russia, the Australian colonies were threatened. Continuing family, institutional and government links with Britain, cheap Empire postal and press rates, the movement of peoples, and the lack of an independent Australian diplomatic service or foreign office meant that until very recently Australians had a substantially ‘British’ perspective on the world,
and were regarded by most other states and peoples as being 'British' despite living off the south-east corner of Asia, 10,000 miles from Britain.

The white immigrant settlers in Australia from imperial Britain brought with them attitudes to coloured peoples and their cultures which have only recently begun to change. Australian Aborigines, Chinese, Japanese, Indians, South Sea Islanders etc., all tended to be thought of as 'lesser breeds without the Law', people unfit for self-government at home or for assimilation into a Caucasian community abroad, uneducated because they did not speak English, inferior because they were not white. It is true that the immigration exclusion policies of the six colonies and of the Australian Commonwealth were believed justified on economic and social grounds as
much as on straight colour prejudice: cheap industrious labour could only depress standards of living, and the miscegenation of races lead to social problems. It is true also that Alfred Deakin, Australia’s second Prime Minister, related the early Commonwealth’s ‘White Australia’ policy to the ‘high abilities’ of the Japanese which would make them such ‘formidable competitors’. Japan’s victory over the Russian fleet at Tsushima sent a shiver down many an Australian spine. Whatever the reasons or the rationalisations, until very recently most Australians acted mainly from a gut fear and hostility to support their governments in excluding all but a small number of permanent coloured settlers. The long-time motto of the Sydney Bulletin, ‘Australia for the White Man’, found a deep response among the white immigrants from Europe. All nations operate restricted immigration policies, but Australia’s has been so blatantly on the basis of skin pigmentation that it has constituted a factor in international relations, especially during the period of racial rehabilitation since World War II, when coloured people have been determined to establish their legal equality — perhaps even superiority — to the white men who were once their masters.

The war with Japan in 1941–45 demonstrated to Australians that their fear of a ‘yellow peril’ were entirely valid. But the war also brought about the collapse of the European empires, the emancipation of hundreds of millions of ‘coloured’ people from colonial rule, and a global movement emphasising human dignity irrespective of race, colour, religion or culture. Within Australia entrenched racism began to fray at the edges, and people began to realise that they had to be able to live with coloured people even if they continued to discriminate against and look down upon the Aborigines in their midst. Since about 1950 Asians especially have become widely accepted in the Australian community—as tourists, students, businessmen, professional people, wives, husbands and (especially since the end of the Vietnam war) refugees.

Since World War II there has been a sizable immigration program, including people from Western and Eastern Europe and the Middle East, so that Australians of ‘British stock’ are today probably less than 60 per cent of the population. The following table shows the changing pattern of the Australian people by place of birth:
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Africa</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>2,869</td>
<td>7,537</td>
<td>15,826</td>
<td>61,935</td>
<td>90,237</td>
<td>108,547</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(a)</td>
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<td>53,752</td>
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<td>47,014</td>
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<td>167,226</td>
<td>371,588</td>
<td>536,152</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>753,832</td>
<td>651,606</td>
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<td>2,212,718</td>
<td>2,221,802</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK and Eire</td>
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<td>679,159</td>
<td>541,267</td>
<td>664,205</td>
<td>1,088,210</td>
<td>1,132,601</td>
<td>1,127,196</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
<td>(a)</td>
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<td>14,567</td>
<td>66,422</td>
<td>110,811</td>
<td>110,758</td>
<td>114,810</td>
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<td>(a)</td>
<td>878</td>
<td>12,291</td>
<td>25,862</td>
<td>160,200</td>
<td>146,625</td>
<td>137,637</td>
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<tr>
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<td>(a)</td>
<td>5,678</td>
<td>33,632</td>
<td>119,897</td>
<td>289,476</td>
<td>275,883</td>
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<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>5,866</td>
<td>22,856</td>
<td>129,816</td>
<td>417,966</td>
<td>417,916</td>
<td>430,241</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>29,765</td>
<td>43,983</td>
<td>258,822</td>
<td>417,966</td>
<td>417,916</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>(a)</td>
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<td>43,610</td>
<td>43,350</td>
<td>80,466</td>
<td>176,713</td>
<td>211,670</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>15,566</td>
<td>5,708</td>
<td>6,149</td>
<td>17,461</td>
<td>36,331</td>
<td>52,751</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overseas</td>
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<td>857,576</td>
<td>744,187</td>
<td>1,286,466</td>
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<td>7,700,064</td>
<td>10,176,320</td>
<td>11,393,861</td>
<td>12,110,456</td>
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<td>7,922</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>178,635</td>
<td>244,379</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>3,773,801</td>
<td>7,579,358</td>
<td>8,986,530</td>
<td>12,755,638</td>
<td>14,576,330</td>
<td>15,602,156</td>
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<td>(a)</td>
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<td>0.2</td>
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<td>Asia</td>
<td>(a)</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>0.6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Europe</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>20.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>UK and Eire</td>
<td>30.6</td>
<td>18.0</td>
<td>7.1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Germany</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greece</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
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<td>(a)</td>
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<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yugoslavia</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Europe</td>
<td>(a)</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>2.9</td>
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<td>2.9</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>(a)</td>
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<td>0.6</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
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<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>0.3</td>
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<td>Overseas</td>
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<td>22.7</td>
<td>9.8</td>
<td>14.2</td>
<td>20.2</td>
<td>20.6</td>
<td>20.8</td>
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<td>Australia</td>
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<td>90.2</td>
<td>85.7</td>
<td>79.8</td>
<td>78.2</td>
<td>77.6</td>
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<td></td>
<td>1.2</td>
<td>1.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td>100.0</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(a) Included in 'other', except for UK and Eire. (b) Included in 'Other Europe'. Percentage distribution may not equal totals due to rounding error.
The change in composition of the population has coincided with the
decline of the British Empire, a reduction in the power and influence of
Britain in the world, and Australia's involvement in local conflicts in East
and South-east Asia. But it is not easy to gauge the effect on Australian
foreign policies and attitudes of the composition of its population. There is
no automatic identification by the migrant with his home country, nor any
renunciation of it. Loyalties may or may not be transferred. Until World
War II, most Australians seemed to combine a certain pride in being
British with irritation over the implication that Australia was adolescent
and dependent. At times of crisis, when Britain and the Empire were
threatened, there was no question about where the Australian government
stood and popular opinion rested. The colonies of New South Wales and
Victoria competed to send contingents to the Sudan in 1885. Limited dis­
sent was drowned in an outburst of patriotism over the Boer War at the
turn of the century, when from a tiny population the Australian colonies
sent eight battalions. In 1914 Prime Minister Andrew Fisher pledged
Australian support of the Empire 'to the last man and the last shilling'; and
in 1939 R. G. Menzies declared Australia to be automatically at war with
Germany because Britain was at war with Germany. Two years later, a
Labor government, no less Empire minded but determined to be master in
its own house, made its separate declaration of war against Japan, and
sought help from the United States when Britain, fighting for her life in
Europe and the Middle East, was brushed aside by the southward thrust of
Japanese power.

As with so much of the world, the war was a watershed for Australia in
all sorts of ways. It demonstrated that Australia was attractive and vulner­
able to regional enemies; that it could not rely on British protection in a
major assault upon it; that only the United States could give such protec­
tion. These lessons were seared into the Australian consciousness and are
still there, even though the world has so greatly changed in the past half
century. The present group of leaders were children during the War, or
perhaps not even born, but the apprehensions of earlier generations
substantially remain, based on remoteness from the global centres of power
and decision, vulnerability to alien attacks on the affluence won
comparatively easily from soil and climate, and thus a sense of inevitable
dependence upon major friends and allies. The war brought other changes:
it confirmed the federal government's legal and professional capacity to
manage the economy, including social services; it stimulated industrial
development; it consolidated the nation; it required the creation of a
foreign service with judgments based on Australian national interests; and
it led to the influx of refugees from the culturally diverse displaced populations of Europe.

More than 40 years after World War II, there is still a measure of confidence between the British and Australian governments rarely found between sovereign states. They consider each other less than foreign in a variety of respects. Even so, British interests and desires now constitute only one of the many factors in the making of Australian foreign policy (as Australian interests and desires have ever constituted with Britain), and it is close to inconceivable in the foreseeable future that Australia would again create an imperial force and send it to fight under British command in Europe or the Middle East or anywhere else. Celebrations marking the 1988 bicentenary of British settlement in Australia gave a push to two opposite aspects of the Australia-Britain relationship. They stimulated the expressions of an immature 'we're the greatest' Australian nationalism, and they also strengthened, at least temporarily and at some levels, the psychological links with the 'Mother Country'.

Throughout the 20th century, and especially since 1941, the Asian-Pacific region, in all its diversity, has been impinging increasingly upon Australia. In the 1920s and 1930s, Australia developed a profitable trade with Japan concurrent with apprehension at expanding Japanese military power. The war took thousands of Australians into combat, to horrific prisoner-of-war camps, and to graves in Asia, especially in Malaya, Singapore, Thailand and Japan. It also stimulated tremendous animosity towards Japan, which was not dissipated by Japan’s becoming by 1967 Australia’s largest market, and has not yet totally disappeared. As discussed in Chapter 7, the war made Australians conscious of Asia and Asians, the impact being made more threatening by the success of communist revolutionary activities there and in Europe. Australians realised they had to learn to live with Asia no less than be protected from Asia. Maybe, it was thought, the two could be combined, as in the Colombo Plan. This turned out to be disingenuous, grossly underestimating the size of both problems, and overestimating the effects and the effectiveness of economic aid. The ANZUS Treaty epitomised Australia’s desire to be protected in its geographical vulnerability.

Thus Australian foreign policy in the second half of the 20th century has been a series of compromises between historical and geographical factors, with geography—the Asian Pacific region, and the physical characteristics of the island-continent—gradually assuming more importance. The Colombo Plan was but the forerunner of a more widespread but ever modest aid program largely focused on the region. Nearly 40 per cent of
Table A
Major Recipients of Australian Aid 1988–89

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<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>$ million</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
<td>313.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indonesia</td>
<td>84.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Malaysia</td>
<td>48.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bangladesh</td>
<td>33.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philippines</td>
<td>33.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>China</td>
<td>30.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thailand</td>
<td>30.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vietnam</td>
<td>19.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>18.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mozambique</td>
<td>16.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Egypt</td>
<td>15.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>14.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pakistan</td>
<td>11.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>9.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Samoa</td>
<td>8.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>8.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hong Kong</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zimbabwe</td>
<td>7.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ghana</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laos</td>
<td>6.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Australian aid (all grants) is in the form of food. Aid to Papua New Guinea has been mainly in support of its budget.

Trade has been diversified geographically and also to a degree in a move towards greater manufacturing exports, although here Australia has run into the lower cost structure and greater entrepreneurial activities of Japan and the newly-industrialising countries of South Korea, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore, as well as the Chinese People’s Republic.

Table B shows the shift in size (at current prices) and direction of Australian trade over the past two decades. The most notable feature relates to East and South-east Asia, whose share of Australia’s exports has grown from 38 to 50 per cent, and share of imports from 20 to 37 per cent.

Foreign investment by Australia and (with the exception of Japan) foreign investment in Australia have tended to follow historical patterns rather than geographical imperatives, straight profitability, or the flow of trade. Table C shows the accumulated levels of investment, and makes clear that no single foreign country dominates the Australian economy, or
any part of the economy, although the original source of investment is not always clear.

History (the British and Commonwealth connection) and geography (the strategic importance of the straits) took Australians to Malaya for the Emergency and kept them in Malaysia for the small war against Indonesia. Geography keeps them there, in what has become a partnership of equals, to help maintain regional stability, although they will undoubtedly one day
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<td>OECD—</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USA</td>
<td>20,320</td>
<td>26,819</td>
<td>31,903</td>
<td>40,845</td>
<td>39,234</td>
<td>46,808</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16,200</td>
<td>20,840</td>
<td>21,321</td>
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<td>33,265</td>
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<td>5,856</td>
<td>7,502</td>
<td>7,439</td>
<td>7,041</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>20,631</td>
<td>26,138</td>
<td>29,318</td>
<td>37,127</td>
<td>44,019</td>
<td>47,153</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other (a)</td>
<td>8,054</td>
<td>10,441</td>
<td>14,443</td>
<td>17,842</td>
<td>18,461</td>
<td>19,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28,685</td>
<td>36,579</td>
<td>43,761</td>
<td>54,968</td>
<td>62,479</td>
<td>66,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other OECD (a)</td>
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<td>3,801</td>
<td>4,541</td>
<td>8,888</td>
<td>8,200</td>
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<td>International institutions</td>
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<td>365</td>
<td>332</td>
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<td>2,527</td>
<td>4,111</td>
<td>3,808</td>
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<td>11,108</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>81,873</td>
<td>111,318</td>
<td>139,437</td>
<td>175,803</td>
<td>190,980</td>
<td>229,314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Until 1985–86 Spain and Portugal are included in 'Other OECD', from 1985–86 they are included in 'Other EEC'. (b) Until 1983–84, Brunei is included in 'Other countries', from 1983–84 it is included in 'ASEAN'.

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<tr>
<td>Agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting</td>
<td>528</td>
<td>591</td>
<td>558</td>
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<td>Mining</td>
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<td>19,462</td>
<td>17,949</td>
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<td>Manufacturing</td>
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<td>8,400</td>
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<td>849</td>
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<td>Total all industries</td>
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<td>111,318</td>
<td>139,437</td>
<td>175,803</td>
<td>195,648</td>
<td>229,314</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) The industry categories shown relate to the predominant activity of the enterprise group receiving the investment funds. This is not necessarily the industry of the end use of the funds. (b) For 1988–89, 'Reinvestment of earnings' is not classified by industry and is therefore included in 'Unallocated'. (c) Includes the Reserve Bank and the State Government component of General government. (d) Includes the Commonwealth Government component of General Government. (e) Consists of: Division H—Communications, Division K—Community services, and Division L—Recreation, personal and other services. (f) Details of accounts payable/prepayments received are not classified by industry and are therefore included in 'Unallocated'.

Geography versus history

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<td>USA</td>
<td>10,195</td>
<td>11,906</td>
<td>13,081</td>
<td>20,880</td>
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<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>928</td>
<td>927</td>
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<td>UK</td>
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<td>3,652</td>
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<td>12,288</td>
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<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
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<td>856</td>
<td>1,437</td>
<td>1,803</td>
<td>1,499</td>
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<td>Other countries (b)</td>
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<td>3,977</td>
<td>7,038</td>
<td>7,222</td>
<td>9,262</td>
<td>7,223</td>
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<td>Reserve Bank gold (c)</td>
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<td>3,772</td>
<td>4,014</td>
<td>4,951</td>
<td>4,509</td>
<td>3,861</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unallocated</td>
<td>949</td>
<td>1,691</td>
<td>1,838</td>
<td>1,555</td>
<td>2,549</td>
<td>2,234</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>26,706</td>
<td>33,760</td>
<td>43,283</td>
<td>61,430</td>
<td>69,868</td>
<td>84,052</td>
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</table>

(a) The foreign exchange part of reserve assets, with the exception of those held in the USA, are not available by country and are therefore included in 'Other OECD'. (b) Until 1983–84 Brunei is included in ‘Other countries’, from 1983–84 it is included in ‘ASEAN’. (c) gold held by the Reserve Bank as part of reserve assets which cannot be allocated by country.

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics.
come home. Australia put its flag alongside America’s in Korea and a decade later in Vietnam almost solely for protective reasons—to make it more likely that the United States would come to Australia’s aid if necessary to ward off some future threat from Asia. Participation in the 1954 Manila Treaty arrangements (SEATO) combined working with some Asians to be protected from other Asians, but again essentially in the context of American power. In all four situations—Malaya, Korea, Malaysia, Vietnam—the situation had to be relevant to the security of Australia (if a little obscurely in the case of Korea). In all four Australia wanted its history, in a sense, to protect it from its geography: the relationship with Britain, and with the United States especially from 1917 onwards—the many historical, cultural, and institutional links, the remembered partnerships, the commitments entered into, the common social and political objectives—to constitute a shared national interest and to infuse a sense of concern, of obligation, of willingness in a crisis to offer practical help.

The same basic considerations lay behind the Australian government’s decision to allow the United States to build in Australia defence space facilities and a VLF communications station which—it had to be assumed—might invite nuclear attack in the event of an East-West war. Here is the perpetual dilemma of the dependent ally: that the alliance which offers protection may also invite an attack that might not otherwise occur.

The Whitlam and Hawke Labor governments inherited foreign policies they largely agreed with. But they lived in worlds significantly different from the ones in which those policies had evolved. Mr Whitlam did not bring the Australian forces out of Vietnam: all but a handful were already out when he was elected, and the military commitment had been terminated. Whereas many Australians may have felt in 1965 that Menzies was right in warning them of a Chinese thrust down between the Pacific and Indian Oceans, who now believes this to have been true, or that it is likely ever to become true? During Hawke’s term of office, the polarised world of the Cold War has changed into something very different, the ‘iron curtain’ is torn and tattered, the possibility of nuclear war has receded, and we have had the remarkable sight of the two super-powers acting in concert to restrain the excesses of a Middle East despot. Since Vietnam’s withdrawal from Kampuchea, South-east Asia has become less likely to spill over into wider conflagrations.

In these new circumstances, does Australia still need its history to protect itself against its geography? Does it need ‘great and powerful friends’? Certainly, those friends are less great, less powerful and need Australia less, and as discussed in the last chapter Australia’s voice has counted for less in
international councils. It seems most unlikely that the US will fight another war in Asia, and thus that it would want an Australian flag alongside. It has shown no deference to sentiment, or to strategic considerations, in deciding economic policies. Governments and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade have observed this, and consequently have realised that any influence they can exert in Australia's interest must come through ideas appropriately and professionally presented, through being a good 'citizen of the world'. Hence the Cairns Group, APEC, the initiatives on disarmament, chemical warfare, and human rights. The Australian naval contribution to the Gulf in 1990 was a combination of wanting to be a good citizen of the world and a good friend of the United States, but perhaps not in that order.

Is there any analogy between Britain as an island off the coast of Europe and Australia as an island off the coast of Asia? The differences in the two situations are greater than their similarities. Culturally, Britain is part of the European tradition. Its history is interwoven with Europe, especially of France and the Low Countries. Britain has been a key element in the European power structure for a thousand years. People, institutions and ideas have moved between them with comparative freedom for millennia. Distances are short. A good swimmer can swim the Channel. Australia is not culturally part of Asia. Despite the Asian inoculations of recent years, it is still alien to Asia. A lot of Australians now visit Asia, but overwhelmingly as tourists, and it is a recent phenomenon. Few Australians learn Asian languages; fewer still identify in any way with Asia.

Does Australia need to be protected against Asia? This is a subjective question. There is no enemy knocking at Australia's gates, or lurking visibly on any horizon. The only countries capable of launching a successful invasion of Australia are the United States or (more problematically) the Soviet Union, neither of which has the slightest reason or incentive to do so. Japan obviously could develop such a capacity, but only in defiance of all logic. And to what end? Certain destruction of all that half a century of hard work has gained. China has no tradition of expansion across water, and it is almost impossible to conceive of a scenario in which it would attack Australia. Today most Australians who fear an attack from Asia have Indonesia in mind. Every five years its population increases by roughly the population of Australia. The pressure on resources, already severe in some areas, will inevitably increase; even so, there is still a lot of under-utilised land. If there were not, that would not necessarily mean that some future Sukarno would embark on external military adventures. To do so against Australia in any substantial way—even if, as seems highly unlikely, it were
contemplated—would require a massive diversion of resources over a period of years to military preparations, from a very limited economic, industrial and technological base. Australia and the neighbourhood would have plenty of warning of the possibility.

Dean Acheson once wrote of Britain that it had lost an empire and had not found a role. Australia has not had an empire, although it was part of one, and was for a time a modest ‘imperial’ power in the South-west Pacific. But in the process of disengaging from the British Empire, it also has been looking for a role in its region, wanting to identify itself with its geography. Being a liberal democracy, its politicians feel under constant public pressure to be visibly active, internationally as well as nationally. The problem is that Australia is not powerful enough, economically or politically or militarily, to influence affairs in Asia other than in modest ways by reasoned argument. It can try to be a good neighbour; it cannot be a balancer; it cannot knock heads together; it cannot force issues. Perhaps it is as well for everyone concerned that this is so.

If the contest between history and geography is an ongoing theme in Australia’s external relations, a second theme that has become apparent since the withdrawal from Vietnam in 1971–72 is that economic considerations have a growing, inexorable, although by no means universal tendency to override political considerations. There are of course many situations where the pursuit of power for racial, tribal, religious or nationalist ends promotes tension or conflict, or where physical security is the prime consideration. But many of the matters with which Australia has to deal are basically economic, and the 1987 amalgamation of the Departments of Foreign Affairs and Trade was a recognition of this fact. Successive Australian governments have been chagrined that their splendid record in defence of Western interests butters no economic parsnips. ‘What is the point of being in ANZUS,’ they say to the Americans, ‘if you dump wheat and sugar on our traditional—or newly found—markets?’ The Americans reply, quite properly, that ANZUS has nothing to do with wheat and sugar. Australia has all kinds of affinities with the Europeans, including Britain, but their agricultural policies have wrought havoc and disaster upon Australia. It hoped at first that the British would seek special consideration for Australia, but they had enough problems of their own, and it was the Commonwealth connection that made de Gaulle so reluctant to have them in the Community. Australia’s strategy for some years on this issue was to have its politicians go to Europe and shout, a process which was not noticeably effective. The Hawke government has come to take a more intelligent, pragmatic and professional approach, although over
agriculture it has yet to prove it can climb the community’s high walls. What the Hawke government, like its predecessors, has not been able to do, has been to improve significantly Australia’s competitiveness in world markets. Australians seem too attached to the good life to make the necessary effort. Immense effort has gone—as it went with Fraser—into global trade negotiations, especially into trying to bring primary produce under the provisions of the GATT, and in trying to build some kind of mutually supportive economic community among the Pacific Rim nations. The prospects for both do not yet appear very favourable.

Thus, whereas the trend is for economic issues to take precedence over political issues, and whereas the Australian foreign and trade services have spent the last 40 years developing considerable professional skills, and whereas the only way Australia can make a mark is by the use of those professional skills, it in fact has little influence because it has little power, economic or political. It has become expert at preparing briefs for international conferences, for calling such conferences in Canberra and having busy people come to them, which is an achievement in itself. It doesn’t—it can’t—carry anything through; it does not have the clout. But it contributes intelligently and usefully to the international debate.

In the foreseeable future, four states—Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Japan and the United States—as well as the European Community, will be most relevant to Australia’s peace of mind and prosperity. Of them, Japan may well turn out to be the most decisive for Australia. Japan is an Asian power. Her destiny is bound up with the destiny of her neighbours. She is beginning to want to exercise the political power to which she believes herself entitled by her economic capacities. By the ways in which the one is translated into the other she will affect for good or ill the peace, order and development of Australia’s region.

Other individual powers may exert an important influence on Australia: China, as the forces of change begin once more to operate; India, by her role in the sub-continent, in the Indian Ocean, and among the Third World. Also groups of powers, such as ASEAN, demanding that Australian trade barriers be lowered; and the South Pacific Forum, seeking leadership and generosity. Through the ending of the Cold War, neither the United States nor the Soviet Union is likely again to be the determining factor each was on Australian foreign policy. Similarly, with the decline of the Cold War and the public failure of communist systems, the tensions in the Third World associated with it have turned upon themselves. The movement towards liberal democracy in Europe and elsewhere (even, it seems, in South Africa) is producing a more complicated but potentially more
stable world, although the sub-nationalisms released by the breakdown of Soviet imperial control are a destabilising factor.

Will Australia's geography eventually predominate over its history? Will it inevitably become eventually an Eurasian society? It is too early to say that Australians must reconcile themselves to that situation, to forfeiting their Judaeo-Christian heritage with its values, attenuating out of recognition their Western cultural traditions. Those traditions, indeed, are permeating the non-Western world, as one sees demonstrated especially in Japan. It is surely not beyond the wit and will of the Australian people—so difficult to arouse, so formidable when aroused—to continue to defend and retain and perhaps refine those inheritances in the Asian-Pacific world, so that Australia is both a producer and a consumer of what is best in her own changing environment.


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AUSTRALIA IN PEACE AND WAR is the first work to trace the development of Australia's external relations from their colonial origins to the present. It shows how successive Australian governments have seen the world, what their attitudes have been, their actions and (much more often) their reactions.

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