USE OF THESES

This copy is supplied for purposes of private study and research only. Passages from the thesis may not be copied or closely paraphrased without the written consent of the author.
Security

AN AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGY

Anthony Burke

A thesis submitted for the
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
at The Australian National University

November 1998
For Michele Turner
and Kamal Bamadhaj
I declare that this thesis is entirely my own work and that all sources have been properly cited and acknowledged.

Anthony Burke
Abstract

This thesis is a study of the deployment and operation of security through Australian political history. In doing so, it takes a distinctive approach to both the concept of security and the historical material which it encounters. Rather than seeing security as an ontologically stable concept or state of affairs, it analyses security as a political technology which has had a profound impact on the political, cultural and economic forms of life which have been held to characterise the Australian nation and the modernisation path of the Asia-Pacific region. In fact, it argues that security needs to be placed alongside a range of other economic, political, technological, philosophic and scientific developments as one of the key events of our modernity. By the beginning of the twentieth century security had been entrenched as a unique and pervasive form which combined ‘totalising’ and ‘individualising’ modes of power—here liberal constructions of atomistic, acquisitive subjectivity were integrated with a strong image of the nation-state, which became the principle for a movement of geopolitical power in which colonisation and trade were portrayed as progressive and universalising forces. In its practical operation, security thus combines modes of personal identity and discipline with macroeconomic management and international policy. The remainder of the thesis describes this technology’s operation through the history of Australia and its region, from the initial impetus for colonisation in the desire of the British to rid their island of an entire criminal class, to the construction of an allegedly whole ‘Australian’ subject at Federation in confrontation with racial, industrial and geopolitical images of the Other. It then traces this politics of security and identity through the vast sacrifice of the Great War, the division and trauma of the Depression, the patriotic struggle for survival of the Pacific War, and the militarism and ‘development’ of the Cold War, concluding with a chapter which examines how dramatic surface changes in the national identity after 1969 were marred by an underlying continuity to which the violence and rigidity of the past remained essential. In this way the tragedies of East Timor, Cambodia or Soeharto’s Indonesia were politically (and ontologically) continuous with the Vietnam war and the genocidal assault on Australia’s Aboriginal peoples. The thesis concludes by speculating that a path beyond security will simultaneously empower subjects to challenge the forms of power which construct them and, at the level of the state and economy, will replace a coercive and exploitative relation to difference with an ‘ethic of engagement’ in which the Other might finally begin to speak on its own terms.
# Contents

**Acknowledgements**  iv

**Abbreviations**  vi

## PART I: FRAMEWORKS

**Introduction: A Study of Security?**  1

- *The Contemporary Moment: The ‘Asian’ Crisis*  2
- *The Australian Subject And The Strategic Imagination*  11
- *Security: An Australian Genealogy*  13

### One: Security as International Theory  20

- *International Relations’ Binary Code*  21
- *Security, Morality and Epistemology*  28
- *The Emergence of National Security*  33
- *Neorealism: The Intensification of Security*  37
- *Rethinking Security: Centerings and Decenterings*  39
- *Security and Identity: The Politics of Location*  52
- *Security and Genealogy*  54
Two: Security and Government 58

The Emergence of Security: Territory, Discipline, Population 59
Hobbes and Locke: The Birth of the Artificial Man 63
Security and the Future: Bentham, Liberalism, Geopolitics 69
Hegel: Security as Realisation 76
Conclusion: Security and Refusal 86

PART II: AN AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGY

Three: The Australian Subject 88
1788-1918

Colonisation and the Strategic Imaginary 90
Federation, Security and the Other 97
Identity, Geopolitics and 'The Anzac Tradition' 109
Conclusion: The Origin of the Future 118

Four: The Pacific War 121
1918-1945

Security and its Enemies 124
The 'Riddle of the Sphinx' 135
The Pacific War: Security, Identity and the Other 139
Conclusion: War, Justice and Subjectivity 156
Five: Cold War, Pacific Order 159
1945-1969

Labor, Reconstruction and Cold War Beginnings 163
Other and Same: Australia's Cold War in Asia 173
Conclusion: The Aporias of Stability 203

Six: After Guam, New Order(s) 206
1969-1995

Consolidating the New Order 209
Security, Justice and Identity: The Whitlam Tragedy 214
Fraser and Hawke: The Second Cold War 237
After the Cold War: The Politics of (Un)Certainty 251
Conclusion: On the Edge of the 'Asia-Pacific Community' 259

PART III: CONCLUDING ESSAY

Conclusion: After Security 264

Bibliography 274
A project like this would be impossible without the support and dedication of many people. Jim George has been an exemplary scholar and teacher, and a marvellous supervisor. He nurtured me and this project for four years, and provided advice and assistance at every turn, in a selfless effort I can never adequately repay. Graeme Cheeseman and Mike McKinley have provided advice and support at crucial times, and their scholarship too has been a valuable resource and inspiration. Christine Sylvester, Jindy Pettman, Marian Simms and John Ballard provided encouragement and practical help in many ways. Over many years my parents Mary and David Burke have provided me with unstinting support and encouragement. Heartfelt thanks in particular go to my partner Jenny Millea, who has been with me through every word—without her extraordinary generosity and support this project would never have been finished. Her love and friendship, and her thoughts during the many conversations we had over the dishevelled state of Australia’s public culture, are invisibly present everywhere in this work.

My postgraduate colleagues and friends have provided inspiration, crucial tips and good company. Thanks to Roland Bleiker, France Desaubin, David McInerney, Lawrie Cremin, Rod McGibbon, Enno Herman, Owen Maguire, Meredith Horne, Lindsay Barrett, Fiona Allon, Bernard Cohen, Nicola Robinson, Kate Krinks, Simon Philpott, Helen Keane, Sasho Lambevski, David Sullivan, Hazel Lang, Meredith Patton, Larbi Sadiki, Tim O’Leary and Leong Yew. For helpful conversations I thank Desmond Ball, Bob Lowry, David Lee, Greg Pemberton, Richard Lloyd Parry, Ariel Heryanto, John Docker, Carol Johnson, David Campbell, Roger Tooze, Barry Hindess, Jane Bennett and William Connolly. Harold Crouch generously helped me in advance of my visit to Indonesia. While there Jenny Grant, Ric Curnow, Ed Aspinall and Rene Vosslander provided great friendship and teaching, and many people gave me their time to sit for

In a previous life at the University of Technology, Sydney, Caroline Graham was a wonderful teacher, friend and inspiration. Terry Flew, Helen Wilson, Stephen Muecke, Amanda Lohrey, Ken Wark, Chris Spurgeon, Gunther Kress and Jeannie Martin all gave me the gift of their teaching and belief. The genesis of this study dates to my time working on regional human rights and decolonisation issues. I acknowledge the friendship, effort and inspiration of all those whom I have had contact with, particularly Joan Simpson, Liz Gardiner, Peter Cronau, Albie Viegas, Max Lane, Pat Walsh, Jose Ramos Horta, Ines Almeida, Lola Reis, Sue Cunningham, Joao Carrascalao, Rex Rumakiek, John Otto Ondawame, Joe Collins, Nico Warouw, Bibi Langkar, Anna Netthiem, Paddy Keneally, Harold Moucho, Estanislau Da Silva and Dawn Aronie.

This work is dedicated to the memory of Kamal Bamadhaj and Michele Turner. Kamal was a tireless and inspired advocate of freedom and dignity for those struggling against the Soeharto regime. He was murdered, with hundreds of others, in the first volleys of gunfire at the Santa Cruz massacre in Dili in 1991. Michele spent ten years compiling personal testimonies from East Timorese for her moving 1992 book, Telling. The despair that overtook her in 1995 was no doubt deepened by her shame at Australia's abandonment of a people who had kept her grandfather alive during the Pacific war. They were both ‘mighty spirits’ whom we all miss.
# Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AA</td>
<td>Australian Archives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AATV</td>
<td>Australian Army Training Team (Vietnam)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABC</td>
<td>Australian Broadcasting Commission (later Corporation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABRI</td>
<td>Angakatan Bersenjata Republik Indonesia (Indonesian Armed Forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACJ</td>
<td>Allied Council for Japan (Four-power occupation advisory council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACT</td>
<td>Australian Capital Territory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACTU</td>
<td>Australian Council of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADF</td>
<td>Australian Defence Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFAR</td>
<td><em>Australian Foreign Affairs Review</em>, Department of Foreign Affairs, Australia (formerly CNIA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFP</td>
<td>Agence France Presse</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AFR</td>
<td><em>Australian Financial Review</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AIF</td>
<td>Australian Imperial Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ALP</td>
<td>Australian Labor Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMS</td>
<td>Agreement on Maintaining Security between Australia and Indonesia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APEC</td>
<td>Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (trade forum)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APODETI</td>
<td>Timorese Popular Democratic Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ARF</td>
<td>ASEAN Regional Forum (security dialogue)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASEAN</td>
<td>Association of Southeast Asian Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAC</td>
<td>Australia and New Zealand Army Corps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZAM</td>
<td>Australia New Zealand and Malaya (strategic area)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ANZUS</td>
<td>Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASDT</td>
<td>Timorese Social Democratic Association (later Fretilin)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIO</td>
<td>Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (internal)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASIS</td>
<td>Australian Secret Intelligence Service (external)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAKIN</td>
<td>Badan Koordinasi Intelijens Keamanan (Indonesian National Intelligence Co-ordinating Agency)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>BCOF</td>
<td>British Commonwealth Occupation Force (Japan)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BHP</td>
<td>Broken Hill Propriety Ltd. (Australian minerals and industrial corporation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CGI</td>
<td>Consultative Group on Indonesia (International aid consortium chaired by the World Bank, formerly IGGI)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CIA</td>
<td>Central Intelligence Agency, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CINCPAC</td>
<td>US Pacific Command, Hawaii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COS</td>
<td>Chiefs of Staff (Military)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPA</td>
<td>Communist Party Of Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td><em>Commonwealth Parliamentary Debates</em> (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CRS</td>
<td><em>Commonwealth Records Series</em> (Australian Archives listings)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CNIA</td>
<td><em>Current Notes On International Affairs</em>, Department of External Affairs, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSIS</td>
<td>Centre for Strategic and International Studies, Jakarta</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DEA</td>
<td>Department of External Affairs, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFA</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DFAT</td>
<td>Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DLP</td>
<td>Democratic Labor Party, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DoD</td>
<td>Department of Defence, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DORCA</td>
<td>Directorate of Research and Civil Affairs, Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DRV</td>
<td>Democratic Republic of (North) Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FAD</td>
<td>Sub-committee on Defence and Foreign Affairs (Menzies Cabinet)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FALINTIL</td>
<td>East Timorese National Guerilla Forces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FPDA</td>
<td>Five Power Defence Agreement (Malaysia, Singapore, New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRETILIN</td>
<td>Revolutionary Front for an Independent East Timor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GDP</td>
<td>Gross Domestic Product</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IADS</td>
<td>Integrated Air Defence System (part of FPDA)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IBRD</td>
<td>International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (The World Bank)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICC</td>
<td>International Control Commission (for Indochina)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICRC</td>
<td>International Committee of the Red Cross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IGGI</td>
<td>Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (Aid Consortium)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IISS</td>
<td>International Institute for Strategic Studies, London</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ILO</td>
<td>International Labor Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IMF</td>
<td>International Monetary Fund</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IWW</td>
<td>International Workers of the World (Socialist organisation)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>JDP</td>
<td>Joint Declaration of Principles (Australia and Papua New Guinea)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOPASSUS</td>
<td>Komando Pasukan Khusus (Indonesian Special Forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviation</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOPKAMTIB</td>
<td>Komando Operasi Pemulihan Keamanan dan Kertertiban  (Operational Command to Restore Security and Order, the peak Indonesian security body)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KOSTRAD</td>
<td>Komando Stregis Angkatan Darat (Indonesian Army Strategic Command)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LCP</td>
<td>Liberal-Country Party (Coalition), Australia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MACV</td>
<td>US Military Assistance Command, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAAG</td>
<td>US Military Assistance Group, Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MCP</td>
<td>Malayan Communist Party</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NATO</td>
<td>North Atlantic Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEI</td>
<td>Netherlands East Indies (Indonesia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Governmental Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NLF</td>
<td>National Liberation Front of (South) Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSC</td>
<td>National Security Council, United States</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSW</td>
<td>New South Wales (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td>Northern Territory (Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NT</td>
<td><em>The National Times</em> (Australian newspaper)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>New Zealand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OPM</td>
<td>Organisasi Papua Merdeka (Free Papua Movement)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PAVN</td>
<td>North Vietnamese Army</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLAF</td>
<td>Peoples Liberation Armed Forces (military wing of the NLF)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDI</td>
<td>Partai Demokrasi Indonesia (Indonesian Democratic Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PKI</td>
<td>Partai Kommunis Indonesia (Indonesian Communist Party)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PNG</td>
<td>Papua New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POW</td>
<td>Prisoner of war</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PRC</td>
<td>Peoples Republic of China</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RA</td>
<td>Radio Australia (shortwave service broadcast into Asia and the Pacific in local languages, managed by the ABC)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAAF</td>
<td>Royal Australian Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAN</td>
<td>Royal Australian Navy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RPKAD</td>
<td>Resimen Para Komando Angkatan Darat (Indonesian Army Parachute Commando regiment, a forerunner of the Kopassus special forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RVN</td>
<td>Republic of (South) Vietnam</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAS</td>
<td>Special Air Service (Australian special forces)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SEATO</td>
<td>South East Asia Treaty Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCAP</td>
<td>Supreme Commander Allied Powers (denotes both US occupation authority in Japan and General MacArthur himself)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abbreviations</td>
<td>Description</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>-------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SCMP</td>
<td><em>South China Morning Post (Hong Kong)</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SDSC</td>
<td>Strategic and Defence Studies Centre (Australian National University)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SMH</td>
<td><em>The Sydney Morning Herald</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SSCFAD</td>
<td>Senate Standing Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence (Parliament of Australia)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SWPA</td>
<td>South West Pacific Area (US-Australia-NZ command area WW2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UDT</td>
<td>Timorese Democratic Union</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK</td>
<td>United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNCHR</td>
<td>United Nations Commission on Human Rights</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNGA</td>
<td>United Nations General Assembly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UNHCR</td>
<td>United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>US</td>
<td>United States (of America)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USIS</td>
<td>United States Information Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USSR</td>
<td>Union of Soviet Socialist Republics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WNG</td>
<td>West New Guinea</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WW2</td>
<td>World War Two</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction
A Study of Security?

Security—it seems to be on everyone’s lips, at the close of a century some claim to have permanently realised the highest ideals and aspirations of humankind, others think more notable for the development of fantastic new technologies of violence and extermination, and which now provides us with stark evidence of global economic turmoil and failure. Through 1998, Prime Minister John Howard was telling Australians that his government had delivered them ‘security, safety and stability’, and that they should continue to place their faith in him to deliver ‘safety and security’ to the Australian economy even as Asia sank deeper into its worst economic crisis in fifty years. (Howard, 1998a) Only a few months before, the Australian Labor Party’s national conference, under the leadership of Kim Beazley, had adopted a new platform which declared the party’s central values as ‘security and opportunity’, and elevated security to an overarching goal which linked, in a seamless continuum, the personal security of individuals and families to the security of the nation itself. (ALP, 1998a) Obviously, a few months out from a general election and in a time of considerable social and economic turmoil, they were seeking to tap into a palpable community mood; however the focus of this work is on the longer political and philosophical history which gives their speech meaning. Long a hegemonic concept in international relations, these men had reminded us of security’s broader function as the most basic ‘governmental’ promise of modernity.¹

¹ Likewise US President Bill Clinton prefaced the 1997 National Security Strategy by saying that ‘protecting the security of our nation—our people, our territory and our way of life—is my foremost mission and constitutional duty.’ Dr Mahathir Mohamad of Malaysia has argued that ‘national security is inseparable from political stability, economic success and social harmony’, while in 1995 former Australian leader Paul Keating argued that ‘a prime minister’s duty, his first duty, is to the security of his country.’ (Cited in Smith, 1997; SMH, 16.12.95)
Introduction

Why is security, the promise of security, so important to Howard and Beazley now? Why has it been elevated from a silent (albeit primary) goal of international policy to the very surface of domestic political discourse? One reason is because, as I have suggested, it has much deeper political roots and a more sweeping organising function within western modernity—which has been forgotten as strategic analysts have sought to narrow and quarantine the space of their inquiry to largely technical issues of defence and ‘strategic stability.’ This is true even as liberal ideologues gloat that ‘the state is in retreat’. The other reason lies in the peculiar crisis of this moment, less than eighteen months from a new century and millennium.

THE CONTEMPORARY MOMENT:
THE ‘ASIAN’ CRISIS

As I write, the worst economic crisis to hit southeast Asia in fifty years has taken on global dimensions, as Russia defaults on key foreign loans and its currency goes into free-fall. In a single day, August 28, 1998, the Dow Jones recorded its third largest ever fall, the Japanese share market fell to a twelve year low and gold struck its lowest price in eighteen years. Latin American stock markets fell ten per cent. The Australian dollar, first floated on international currency markets in 1984, slumped to an all-time low of just US$55.04, raising fears of recession if its position worsened. Pressure on the $A has been exacerbated by the Asian crisis, with a $1 billion fall in exports in the first quarter of 1998 pushing the current account deficit to its second highest ever level. Some analysts are now predicting a global recession of a severity not seen since the great depression of the 1930s. (SMH, 29.8.98: 1)

This is hardly news to Southeast Asians, though it is certain to prolong their misery. All of Southeast Asia is now in recession, the effect of massive currency depreciations and capital flight since the first rumblings of the earthquake in July 1997 as the Thai baht crumbled under sustained attack from speculators. In the first four months of the crisis regional currencies lost between thirty and fifty per cent of their value, and companies and banks have gone into liquidation as fantastic rates of growth (between five and ten per cent through the 1990s) came to a shuddering halt. In Indonesia, worst hit, the impact has been little short of catastrophic. The Indonesian rupiah is now trading at around 11,000 to the US dollar, an unsustainable level, having lost eighty per cent of its value since the beginning of 1997. In just three days in January it lost over forty per cent of its value. At that level analysts calculated

2 In September 1998 the executive director of the National Institute for Economic and Industry Research, Dr Peter Brain, predicted that the Australian economy would see zero growth and double-digit unemployment by 2001 as the global economic slowdown—which will see contractions in Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand and Korea of between 5-15% and 2% in Japan and China—takes effect. (SMH, 9.9.98)
Introduction

Indonesia's annual output was worth only $US33 billion in contrast with a total foreign debt of $140 billion. 266 of its 288 listed firms are classed as technically insolvent. In the first quarter of 1998 Indonesia's gross domestic product (GDP) fell by 8.5 per cent, and a full year fall of over twenty per cent is predicted. Inflation has hit 69 per cent, and official unemployment 20 per cent, some fourteen million people. The International Labor Organisation (ILO) estimates that 37 per cent of the population, seventy-five million people, have fallen below the poverty line and that another seventy million will have joined them in another year. The inability to afford food, particularly rice, in such conditions has already produced incidents of rioting, looting and crime, and presages further damaging unrest. (AFR, 25.1.98: 1-3; SMH, 3.6.98: 1; SCMP, 31.8.98)

Worse, the crisis was deepened by weeks of uncertainty, rioting and upheaval as Soeharto, impregnable for thirty years, came under increasing pressure to resign, finally doing so on May 21 after the ruling party, the national parliament, his own cabinet and the military withdrew their support. In the interim violence swept Jakarta and other major cities, millions of dollars of real estate was burned to the ground and wealthy Chinese—the target of much popular hatred—fled the country taking with them valuable expertise and capital. Poorer Chinese, unable to fly out, became targets for an apparently systematic campaign of arson, murder and rape. During these weeks over a thousand people were killed, while unknown soldiers—suspected to have been special forces troops—fired on student protesters, killing four and wounding thirty-five. Special Forces officers were also behind the abduction, torture and murder of scores of radical activists in the course of a shadowy play for power by Soeharto's son-in-law Lt. Gen. Prabowo Subianto. (Asiaweek, 24.7.98)

In this context currency markets and investors punished Indonesia particularly severely, as panic over political instability and uncertainty was added to perceptions of the nepotism and corruption which had distorted investment decisions, disadvantaged foreign investors and enabled banks to lend wildly—many of the ingredients which precipitated the broader regional crisis. While the successor regime led by Soeharto's Vice-President B. J. Habibie has made many dramatic reforms—including the release of large numbers of political prisoners—and promised new general elections in 1999, further violence and uncertainty is inevitable as a traumatised society tries to rebuild from the ashes of an untenable political order. Panic-prone markets are unlikely to allow the Rupiah to recover any time soon.

According to Asiaweek journalists Susan Berfield and Dewi Loveard, who conducted a month-long investigation into the turmoil preceding Soeharto's resignation, 40 malls and 2,470 shophouses were looted or destroyed, 1,188 people were killed, and as many as 468 women were raped. (Human rights groups claim 168 women were raped and 20 murdered, while the Habibie Government denies any rapes). They record graphic eyewitness accounts of Chinese girls being stripped naked, of pack rapes, and of women being killed afterward or committing suicide. They also cite allegations that soldiers (associated with Jakarta military commander Maj-Gen Syamsuddin, a close ally of Prabowo) may have helped mastermind some of the rioting and violence and set fire to packed shopping malls. (Berfield and Loveard, 1998; AFP, 8.9.98)
Introduction

While only a few alert economists had seen the clouds gathering after early 1996, political signposts to Indonesia’s turmoil were visible much earlier—glaringly so from July 1996, when the military intervened to drive the popular Megawati Sukarnoputri, the daughter of Indonesia’s first President, from her position as leader of the rival Indonesian Democratic Party (PDI). A brutal raid on her central Jakarta headquarters—occupied for weeks by youthful supporters—was then followed by two days of damaging rioting. The Government responded by issuing orders to shoot on sight, making mass arrests of activists, and imprisoning a number of high profile government critics. (Asiaweek, 9.8.97) The 1997 general ‘elections’ were the most violent on record, seeing rioting and clashes which left hundreds dead. Yet until well into 1997 the Howard government was publicly expressing confidence in Soeharto, while playing down the deepening repression with which he sought to shore up his ever more unpopular rule. This was perhaps unsurprising, given that for thirty years successive Australian governments had lauded Soeharto’s New Order regime as a bulwark of stability and certitude—as essential not only to the security and prosperity of Indonesia, but to that of Australia and the whole southeast Asian area. This faith also had crucial ontological and economic dimensions—with the New Order projected as central to a structure of renewed Australian identity which could sympathetically integrate with a cohesive, liberalising and economically dynamic ‘Asia-Pacific community’ in which Australian-based corporations could prosper.

To any dispassionate observer, the depth and ferocity of the crisis in Indonesia should have swept those platitudes away. Far from being a bulwark of stability and prosperity Soeharto had—through corrupt economic management and a refusal to clear the way for a more democratic and stable political order—helped bring Indonesia’s social cohesion to breaking point and laid the ground for a disaster which has seen almost a quarter of the national economy vanish in a few months. (SCMP, 31.8.98) The crisis has dealt a severe blow to the central axiom of Australian foreign policy which saw pragmatic accommodation—even partnership—with repressive elites as essential to Australia’s security and ‘national interests’. Just as significantly, the broader Asian crisis has brought the second great plank of Australia’s modern foreign policy—which saw increasingly porous global markets for capital, trade and labour as uniformly progressive and beneficial—into serious question. Given the way massive and volatile flows of portfolio investment had laid the ground for the crisis, and panic-

---

4 This writer was one who, while not foreseeing the depth of the economic disaster, feared the political and social consequences of Soeharto’s dying rule. In September 1997 I warned in The Jakarta Post of ‘the increasing despair over the current political stalemate in Indonesia’, and of the fears of many that ‘the myriad incidents of violence prior to and during the election campaign portend an explosion.’ (Burke, 1997: 4) In a similar vein Jim George and Rodd McGibbon warned in 1997 that ‘Australia’s support for the Soeharto regime is actually undermining, rather than enhancing, the long-term prospects for a stable, secure and prosperous regional environment.’ (George and McGibbon, 1997: 18)
Introduction

stricken currency traders drove it to unseeable depths once it began, only the most blinkered free-market ideologues could still claim that markets, left to themselves, can allocate and price resources rationally, efficiently or responsibly, or that this kind of invisible hand writ large could guarantee the system's long-term survival. While the justice and fairness of late-twentieth-century global capitalism has long been under question, the crisis has raised real concerns about its underlying stability. As always, it is those on the very bottom who suffer most.

The nature of this crisis also presents challenges to the analyst. Given that it is so fluid and volatile, a moment still in the course of playing out, I feel it important to acknowledge that its contours and meaning are still far from clear. For this reason, I have for the moment left the crisis out of the main chronology of the thesis, which stops at the end of 1995—on its edge. This point forms a useful coda: when the aggressive neo-liberal optimism of the Pacific Century was still unshaken, Soeharto was still visibly in control, his regime's importance to Australian security still axiomatic, and when this whole structure of certitude seemed secure. Yet at least since 1969 Australian policy has been driven by an underlying anxiety over the ability of domestic and regional elites to direct and control changing forms of being and international order. The Asian political and economic crisis is only the latest and most serious of such challenges in the last thirty years, which earlier arose after the failure of American arms in Vietnam, and again in the early 1990s as the withdrawal of Soviet forces from Vietnam and the peace settlement in Cambodia destroyed the geopolitical certainties which had underpinned policymaking for decades. In turn such crises echoed earlier events such as the challenge of decolonisation after World War II, or the rise of Asian powers like Japan after the turn of the nineteenth century. What links these processes is that they have all constituted profound challenges to dominant systems of Western identity, belief and economic, political and strategic order. Worlds have been made from the attempt to limit and contain them.

THE CONTEMPORARY RESPONSE:
‘CERTAINTY’

In this way we can begin to understand the function of the Australian Prime Minister's bland assurances that 'safety and security' can be provided through the current crisis. The rhetoric and politics of security, having helped create such a situation, is now

---

5 Even the beneficiaries of rampant liberalism are asking questions about its destructive side-effects. Billionaire financier George Soros, in recent testimony to the US House of Representatives banking committee, said that the prevailing orthodoxy that financial markets, left to themselves, tend towards equilibrium was 'false', and called for the formation of an International Credit Insurance Corporation with powers to regulate and supervise the international banking sector—contrasting the IMF's harsh treatment of governments with the lack of penalties for imprudent lenders and borrowers. (SMH, 16.9.98)
deployed as a refusal to acknowledge the deeper imperatives of the moment. The historical operation of this technology has both helped prepare the ground for the crisis, and in turn affects how it is being interpreted and tackled—as a manageable process viewed through the impoverished prism of self-interest. In line with a deep-rooted Cartesian arrogance the Asian crisis is seen as little more than a series of technical problems, which a calibrated set of strategic interventions can resolve. As the Government’s foreign policy white paper, *In The National Interest*, said on the very eve of the crisis in 1997: ‘Australians should have confidence in Australia’s capacity to shape its future.’ The Government has not since revised this claim, nor have they acknowledged the massive error of the claim, made in the same document, that ‘economic growth in industrialising East Asia will continue at relatively high levels over the next fifteen years.’ (DFAT, 1997: iii-v) Instead we are treated to a repetition of familiar certitudes, with Foreign Minister Alexander Downer arguing in May that for a sustained regional recovery to occur, affected nations must adhere to the conditions of International Monetary Fund (IMF) assistance packages and maintain ‘the momentum for economic reform and liberalisation.’ To this is added an over-optimistic rhetoric which trivialises both the political challenges of the crisis and its human disaster: ‘[Australia] is uniquely placed...to not only pass the tests that confront us, but to ride the crest of the wave of economic resurgence that will inevitably come to the region.’ (Downer, 1998a, 1998b)

At no point is there an acknowledgment that the crisis represents one of the most profound challenges to dominant policy paradigms for decades. Not only has the combined indiscipline of global capital markets and corrupt regional elites destabilised the key assumptions of neo-liberal economics, but political changes forced in its wake have punctured many associated assumptions about political order. Open, accountable and democratic political structures are now being looked to as crucial future frameworks of both financial and political stability, when only a couple of years before commentators were arguing the immutability of ‘Asian values’. In Indonesia hundreds of new political parties have formed, and bastions of the New Order like Habibie and armed forces chief Wiranto have cautiously embraced the cause of human rights and democratic reform—although it is far from clear how far this process will be allowed to develop. In Malaysia former ruling party finance minister Anwar Ibrahim has been dismissed and arrested after attacking cronyism and advocating a freer political system, generating large protests on the streets of Kuala Lumpur. (*The Australian*, 21.9.98) The effects have even flowed through to the region’s key international institution, The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN)6, which at its last meeting split over

---

6 ASEAN was formed in 1967 and for three decades comprised Indonesia, Malaysia, Singapore, Brunei and the Philippines. More recently it has accepted the membership of Vietnam, Laos and Myanmar (Burma), and is poised to accept Cambodia as a full member.
Introduction

a Thai proposal that the hallowed policy of non-intervention in internal affairs—which for thirty years had allowed members to ignore the repression and mismanagement of others—be abandoned. (Asiaweek, 7.8.98)

An August Asiaweek editorial, musing on ASEAN’s failure to respond to the Asian crisis, the terrible forest fires in Indonesia or the India-Pakistan nuclear tests, asked whether the organisation was becoming irrelevant. Most dramatically, the editorial called on ASEAN to present a strong front to the IMF, to develop regional economic initiatives to deal with the crisis, and to seriously consider ‘what kind of governance and political culture it wants to aspire to’—that member nations should nail their colours firmly to the mast of ‘openness, justice and freedom.’ Yet with the Indonesian government stalling for time and new members Burma and Cambodia becoming increasingly repressive, such pressures might well split the organisation apart. Since its formation in 1967 at the height of the Vietnam war and in the wake of Indonesia’s ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia, successive Australian governments have looked to the organisation as a bastion of stability and common regional cause. It still forms a crucial conduit for Australian diplomatic influence, and hosts the eighteen member security dialogue (The ASEAN Regional Forum) which forms a major plank of Australia’s regional defence policy. Yet Asiaweek charged the ARF (of which Australia is a member) with being too weakened by the demand for harmony and consensus to act decisively on security issues. (Asiaweek, 7.8.98) As the challenges of the moment take their toll, another article of Australian policy faith may yet disappear.

Less critical observers even wonder if one of the great structures of regional economic liberalisation, Asia-Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), may be another casualty. Former Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating, who at APEC’s inaugural leaders meeting in Seattle in 1993 declared the birth of a new ‘Asia-Pacific community’, argued that APEC’s failure to develop united strategies in managing the crisis could see it become increasingly irrelevant. He worried that ‘the whole direction in which the Asia Pacific has been moving—towards economic and political openness, towards a sense of Pacific community—is at risk. It is a perilous moment and there are real questions in my mind as to whether we and our institutions can meet it successfully.’ The biggest threat to APEC, he thought, was the recent inclusion of Russia which he called ‘an act of international vandalism’ that would paralyse co-ordination and prevent APEC becoming the basis for a ‘fund to address future balance of payment problems in the region, because the potential additional demands it would create are just too great.’ Yet he then resorted to lecturing APEC to show a ‘determination to move forward on the Bogor free trade and investment agenda.’ (Keating, 1998a)

Such mantras, which still lie at the heart of Australian foreign policy and its response to the crisis, betray a blindness typical of the refusal to see beyond established certitudes. Keating refuses to see both how it was precisely his kind of earlier
boosterism that created an atmosphere in which Russia would be brought in, and how all the rhetoric about ‘community’ and common cause papered over dramatic (and highly political) differences in economic structure and interest. As economies like Malaysia and Hong Kong seek to re-regulate capital flows and trading in a desperate attempt to bring some stability to their currencies, and liberals attack them for betraying free market faiths, such divisions can only grow. (SCMP, 8.9.98; AFR, 25.8.98)

Similarly the classically liberal prescriptions of the International Monetary Fund—which emphasise cutting government deficits and tightening credit—have been blamed for driving economies into recession, increasing market paranoia and worsening the impact of the crisis.7 The IMF’s role and function in the global economy is under intense scrutiny, as its reserves shrivel under the impact of a record $US26 billion in loans last year and the US Congress stalls on the release of new funds. (SMH, 14.9.98)

Liberals cannot see that it has been the darker effects of the globalisation agenda (environmental destruction, labour repression, and capricious flows of capital and investment) which have underpinned the current disaster. Now, afraid Asians will locate the blame where it lies, they offer sage advice to maintain faith in openness. The deeper problem, as Walden Bello reminds us, is that an entire model of development is under challenge—a model which suppressed domestic capital formation and industrialisation in favour of huge inflows of foreign capital, in the illusory belief that countries could ‘leapfrog’ the arduous course to developed country status. Rather than being a rapid path to prosperity, the liberal policies which attracted such inflows increased third world dependence on export markets and foreign investment, weakened domestic markets and sources of supply, and suppressed welfare spending and people-centred development strategies which might have moderated hardship and unrest. Likewise the strikes in Korea over layoffs, and the increased militancy of workers in Indonesia, indicate that one of the key unwritten assumptions behind southeast Asian competitiveness—that labour could be easily beggared and repressed—no longer holds. With the promise of easy prosperity banished, worker rights and social justice are being pushed to the forefront of Asia’s new political agenda. Both critics like Bello and liberals like Keating are also arguing that development strategies based on foreign

---

7 Former Philippines President Fidel Ramos argued in September 1998 that ‘The IMF must rethink its bailout tactics...when typically borrowers need credit, and economies need pump-priming’ and that calls for internal reforms and liberal policies did nothing to curb ‘the volatility of short-term capital movements’. Director of the Harvard Institute for International Development Jeffrey Sachs argues the IMF has pursued the wrong course in Asia—encouraging deflation rather than ‘slightly expansionary monetary and fiscal policies to counterbalance the decline in foreign loans’—and would push otherwise healthy economies into far deeper recessions than they should expect. ‘These bailout operations,’ he said, ‘could end up helping a few dozen international banks to escape losses for risky loans by forcing Asian governments to cover the losses on private transactions that have gone bad.’ (Philippine Daily Inquirer, 16.9.98 www.inquirer.net; Jeffrey D. Sachs, ‘The wrong medicine for Asia’, The New York Times, 3.11.97, and ‘IMF is a power unto itself’, The Financial Times, 11.12.97)
Introduction

investment and ‘easy exports of manufactures’ are no longer viable—Bello because export strategies involve ‘beggaring one’s labour force’ in a ‘race to the bottom that benefits only international investors’, and Keating, pragmatically enough, because ‘the world is becoming clogged with exports’. Both agree that domestic markets will have to be the main source of future growth. (Bello, 1997a; Keating, 1998b)

Having pledged some US$3 billion to bailout programs for Korea, Thailand and Indonesia, the Australian Government clings to the illusion that the IMF programs are basically sound, and that high levels of growth will return within three to five years. We could hardly expect less, given that the Howard Government is the most radically neo-liberal in Australia’s history, and has spent three years obsessed with the need to banish perceived uncertainties of all kinds—economic, strategic, cultural and ontological. Indeed the problem of managing and controlling uncertainty has been a declared objective of Australian policy for at least ten years, and is crucially linked with the problematic of security that is the focus of this study.

An obsession with certitude—whatever that has been taken to mean, and it needs to be placed under question—has been a constant theme of Australian governmental discourse for at least a century, if not longer. It has been a major influence in Australia’s dependence on imperial benefactors—Great Britain as Japan became more powerful during the first decades of the century, and the United States as decolonisation challenged western interests and certitudes after World War II—and fed into a reliance on militarism and repression to ensure security. As a political technology, security has constantly sought to limit and conquer uncertainty, but it has also crucially been employed to produce images of it. Thus the definition of certainty, as of security and stability, has been a highly political affair, being used to define certain political, economic and cultural developments as ideal and others as threatening and disruptive. In turn this technology has been made more effective by imagining such ideals (equated with the state, nation or civilisation) as organic and progressive unities according to a fixed idea of cultural and economic life; political and economic forces which appear to challenge that idea are expelled from the imaginary unity and repressed as threats to security. In its practical operation, this has enabled highly effective, and destructive, forms of political control and intervention.

In the current context a drive for certitude arises not only from the maelstrom of the Asian crisis, but from a broader challenge to long-standing images of security and

---

8 The Howard Government has announced its willingness to provide the funds as a ‘second line of defence’ should the position of the three nations (in regard to external reserves) deteriorate to a point where they could not be managed by existing IMF resources. The monies for Korea and Thailand would take the form of a currency swap at market rates, to be reversed once the crisis had passed. The money for Indonesia would be in the form of a loan, which would eventually be repaid. In all cases strict adherence to IMF programs is a condition. Despite announcements that US$300 million would be brought forward for Indonesia and US$330 million for Korea, at the time of writing no funds had been released. (Press Releases from the Treasurer, 11.8.97, 1.11.97, 4.12.97, 25.12.97, and the Prime Minister, 8.4.98)
Introduction

identity since a range of social movements arose to challenge the Vietnam war, the historic treatment of indigenous peoples, and the broader military and economic structures of western imperialism. After that time governments abrogated the White Australia policy, rejected the cold war premisses of Australia’s strategic planning and—at least rhetorically—proclaimed a new independence of thought and respect for justice as cardinal tenets of a new foreign policy. During the 1980s and 1990s a series of Labor governments accelerated some of these changes, declaring that Australia’s future (and a renewed and modernised form of national identity) lay in the Asia-Pacific region and in a deeper cultural understanding of its neighbours. Most dramatically, they embraced the High Court’s decision incorporating a form of native title into the common law as the basis for a new ‘reconciliation’ between indigenous and non-indigenous Australians.

On the other hand these governments also sought to manage, control and thwart much of the pressure for change, while surface rhetoric embracing change masked deeper structural and discursive continuities with the past. No government sought to challenge the evolving structures (and new hegemonic ideas) of the international economy, or to extricate themselves from the ANZUS alliance, and while direct military deployments into Asia were now ruled out, they were replaced with military aid for Asian proxy armies to defend regional ‘security interests’ which were defined in largely unchanged terms. Thus Australia provided large amounts of military and economic aid to the Soeharto regime while turning a blind eye to the vast massacre which enabled his rise to power, and to the abuses of his army over decades in East Timor, Irian Jaya, Aceh and throughout the Indonesian archipelago. As new uncertainties appeared with the end of the cold war in 1989, such structures of security and being were clung to with even greater fervour. Thus by the time the Howard Government was elected in 1996, the New Order regime had been made into a bedrock of Australian foreign and strategic policy, with disastrous consequences.

In this sense, certainty was an even greater obsession of the Liberal-National Coalition. While continuing the neo-liberal thrust of Australia’s economic diplomacy, and its pragmatic embrace of Asia-Pacific elites, it sought to arrest whatever transformations this might make in the national identity. As the Government’s foreign policy white paper announced, in words chosen by the Prime Minister, ‘..closer engagement with Asia [does not] require reinventing Australia’s identity or abandoning the traditions which define Australian society...Australia does not need to choose between its history and its geography.’ These views were presaged by Howard’s 1996 visit to Indonesia where he said that Australia ‘does not claim to be Asian’ and brings ‘its own distinct culture, attitudes and history to the region.’ The Government sought certainty in a revived strategic partnership with the United States, and edged away from Labor’s (already weak) internationalism with renewed declarations of ‘national interest’
Introduction

as a basic test of policy and action. (DFAT, 1997: iii-iv; Gordon and Walters, 1996: 1; MacLachlan, 1996a)

Any doubts about the Coalition's determination to wind back the clock were erased by their aggressive efforts to reverse the political gains of Aborigines. Funding to the Human Rights and Equal Opportunity Commission (HREOC) and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Commission (ATSIC) was cut, and in response to the High Court's Wik decision—which extended native title to a right of co-existence on pastoral properties—they introduced legislation which sought to extinguish native title on pastoral leases and wind back indigenous rights across a broad range of areas. This course, Howard said in a November 1997 address to the nation, was pursued to deliver 'fairness, justice and certainty.' (Howard, 1997c) With similar symbolism, the Government also refused—after the publication of the Human Rights Commission's landmark report Bringing Them Home—to make an official apology to indigenous Australians who had been victims of the systematic policy of removing children from black communities. This policy, which its practitioners admitted was aimed at causing the permanent disappearance of the Aboriginal race, has been denounced by commentators on right and left alike as an attempt at genocide. (Rowley, 1971: 4; Manne, 1997)

THE AUSTRALIAN SUBJECT
AND THE STRATEGIC IMAGINATION

What was so clear in these gestures was the Government's determination, in defending older forms of 'tradition' and identity from challenge, to maintain a unitary image of Australian character and being—at a time when its claims were never more tenuous, or its social and economic impact more under question. Indeed the rigidity of the Government's approach mirrored the depth of the challenge it sought to contain and banish. Howard's remarks in Jakarta, and their reappearance in the text of the white paper, were less remarkable for their statement of what Australia is—which is largely assumed—than for their statement that it is not Asian. Buried there, and in the refusal to acknowledge the corrosive power of Australia's Aboriginal history, is an ontological anxiety of the most profound kind. This study demonstrates that such a drive for sameness has been a crucial part of security's operation as a political technology—enabling it to not only construct dominant images of domestic life and social organisation, but to generate far-reaching principles for foreign policy and for the structural operation of the international system.

Concepts like 'the national interest', and statements which assume the existence of an unproblematic ontological unity like 'Australia', with an identifiable character and 'way of life', are markers of this political technology in operation. Turned onto
Introduction

citizens, such discourses form an emotional appeal to subjectivity and link it with larger obligations and forms of belonging; turned into the international arena, they make 'sovereignty' into a representational principle for the actions of states and the operation of the global system. Between these realms security constructs ever more tightly woven flows of meaning and power that come to seem inescapable. However by returning to some of the founding texts of western political philosophy and political economy, this study argues that such a system, rather than arising out of ever more refined accounts of reality or universal truth, has been the product of entirely interested and strategic efforts of political imagination. In particular the study demonstrates how both individual experiences of being and larger collectives of social and economic organisation were imagined in remarkably similar ways. The key point here is that the individual, the state, and even interstate forms of co-operation and alliance (although never the international system as a whole) have been imagined as particular kinds of subjects.

At an individual level this subject is imagined as an embodied and psychic unity—a monad—with powers of rationality, calculation and self-knowledge. Although it exists within society, its psychic life is largely self-contained and its priorities generally selfish. Later liberal accounts made key conditions of subjectivity work, desire and self-interest—qualities we recognise in the most contemporary liberal discourses. Yet security in turn introduces the liberal subject into a larger spiral of being in which the fullest realisation of subjectivity takes place only when individual desire is subordinated to, or at least placed in productive tension with, greater structures of identity and obligation. Both Hobbes and Locke maintained that men would only find security and freedom within the protective embrace of the state which, far from being a foreign carapace erected over them through unhappy necessity, was a larger, higher expression of their own being—a body-politic, a subject writ large. Thus Hegel maintained that the ethical life of the individual reached its pinnacle only in the state and in a broader European movement of progress of which colonisation was a natural and inevitable outgrowth. At this point security made the leap from a relation between state and citizen, to a principle for the actions of the body-politic itself in the international system.

I have tried to capture this leap with the term strategic imagination, a technology through which security can simultaneously construct 'national' images of community and identity and intervene in the flows and structure of international space—whether in a cultural, political, economic or strategic sense. The strategic imaginary works through the simultaneous deployment of metaphor, policy and technology, with the explicit aim of making spaces, bodies and populations more flexible, manipulable and productive. This argument contradicts the repeated belief—stated most clearly by Australian foreign minister Percy Spender in 1951, who argued that 'no nation can escape its geography'—that space has an irrefutable reality of its own.
The Hegelian schema has been strongly evident in Australian discourses of nation-building, progress, and broader regional political and economic change, adding a seductive gloss to a complex of otherwise cynical strategies. The influence of Hegel reminds us of a crucial feature of security—which is that the ontological unities it constructs, and in turn protects, exist only in an enabling and generally hostile relation to the Other. The Other is not an essential reality, but a constructed image against which being defines itself and its project. The relation of the ‘Australian subject’ to the Other has exhibited dramatic surface change, while showing a stubborn underlying continuity. Australia’s indigenous peoples have been the most enduring image of otherness, provoking warfare, hostility and deep ambivalence, while communism has had a more patchy (if no less significant) presence as a feared anchor of identity. Longstanding images of fear and threat from Asia have more recently been disavowed, yet the project of a unitary subjectivity has not. Whatever its changes, this study shows the perseverance through Australian life of a destructive and limiting structure of identity which has at its core a fearful and coercive relation to otherness—rather than a recognition of interdependence and ethical responsibility. This failure lies at the centre of many current dilemmas, from the attempt to develop adequate policy responses to the Asian political and economic crisis, to the destabilising force of Aboriginal claims for justice to elite efforts to maintain the fiction of an stable and unitary Australian identity.

SECURITY: AN AUSTRALIAN GENEALOGY

This study attempts to explore and elaborate these themes in the most systematic way possible. It has chosen to do this by combining a broad historiographic method with a theoretical inquiry which interrogates the founding assumptions (and political effects) of the material, concepts and discourse it encounters. With regard to security, I believe this to be the most useful way of grappling with its complexity, its historical force, and its sweeping material effects. In doing so, I have combined the two broad theoretical tendencies of genealogy and deconstruction. Deconstruction generates a scepticism about the claims of concepts (like security, certainty or the nation) to possess a unitary, self-evident and essential status, seeking instead to understand their philosophical structure and undermine their claim to be unproblematic descriptions of the real. In turn, genealogy analyses the historical development of such concepts (and the larger political and discursive apparatus which surrounds them), and traces their deployment into particular systems of being and of social, cultural and economic life. While this approach may seem somewhat painstaking, I have always believed that before security can be superseded or refigured, its sweeping and disturbingly stubborn cultural power must first be understood. This is why this study, after first analysing the philosophical
Introduction

history of security's conceptual armature, then seeks to trace its deployment and operation through Australia's political history—using a method which seeks to bring rhetorics of national identity and economic, defence and foreign policy into an analytical whole.

From another perspective, many may be sceptical of the breadth that characterises this study. More familiar with a late-modern study of security which equates it with primarily strategic issues of defence and military stability, they might wonder whether a stable object of inquiry has not disappeared with this broader approach. While I acknowledge such concerns, I would argue this is primarily a political problem which is no fault of mine. Chapter One analyses this dilemma as it traces the development of security as an object of analysis through International Relations theory. Having undergone a mutation from a founding concept of liberal internationalism, to a central tenet of political realism, and then undergone a series of substantial revisions through the theoretical debates of the last thirty years, the chapter concludes that an agreed, discrete and unproblematic concept of security remains as remote as ever. Across a range of political positions, theoretical discourses and institutional contexts the object of security, the means of achieving it, and the set of priorities and needs it implies, remain diverse and at times in dramatic contradiction. Simon Dalby for instance demonstrates the contradictions between both 'environmental security' and 'economic security' based on liberal-capitalist modes of production and, given that states have so often been threats to their own citizens, between 'human security' and 'national security' based on military force and realpolitik. (1997: 6-18) In such a context, strategic analysts and policymakers remain wedded to (a highly political) illusion that they operate within a stable conceptual framework.

It is also possible to demonstrate that, even within mainstream literatures and policy communities, security is being discussed in ways which suggests that there is a need to go beyond technical questions of defence and strategic guidance. A growing body of literature is seeking to understand the inter-relation of security with economics, or the shift to 'multi-dimensional' security policies. Official statements of Australian strategic policy also make such connections, while assuming stable ontological certainties. For instance the 1993 Strategic Review argued that the Australian Defence Force, by 'contributing to regional resilience and security' could 'protect key trade and commercial interests, and thus our national way of life', while the 1994 White Paper, Defending Australia, argued that Australia's security is 'linked inextricably to the security and prosperity of Asia and the Pacific.' (Ball and Kerr, 1996: 121; DoD, 1994: 3) Likewise passages in the 1997 foreign policy white paper (which argues for 'a whole-of-nation approach which emphasises the linkages between domestic policies and foreign and trade policies') and the statements of Howard and Beazley, all suggest that security must be analysed at the intersection of domestic and international policy,
through a lens which takes questions of metaphor and identity seriously. (DFAT, 1997: vii) However it is acknowledged that the price of such breadth has been that a tighter focus on defence policy and regional strategic dynamics has been eschewed, which does not imply a judgement about their relative importance.

Chapter one opens the thesis by engaging in some path-clearing, analysing how security has been thought within international theory and policymaking, from its beginnings in Wilsonianism and other forms of liberalism, to the development of ‘national security’ within various strands of political realism, and then through a series of de- and re-centerings of security as a concept and a field of practice. It concludes with a survey of more contemporary and critical literatures which have opened up security to greater scrutiny and interrogation. The chapter then outlines more systematically the theoretical and methodological approach I take, in particular explaining how genealogy differs from more traditional forms of historiography, and how it transforms received ideas about knowledge, reality and power. It argues that a history of security should not be a mere chronicle of events but a chronicle of events in discourse, events in knowledge and power which make certain arrangements of the real possible—where only a few years before they might have been literally unthinkable. For this reason I analyse documents throughout the thesis not only for the events they might reveal or illuminate, but for what they can tell us about the aggregation of particular knowledges, institutional frameworks and structures of action. Bearing in mind their function as markers of larger discursive structures and conflicts, they are also analysed as texts with a particular metaphoric and rhetorical structure which is often of crucial political importance. As a result, the analysis often cuts across received historical accounts and political analyses.

Chapter two begins the genealogy proper, through a pursuit of security into some of the founding texts of modern political thought. Using Foucault’s work on governmentality as a template, the chapter traces the emergence of security as a generalised mediation between state and citizen—from the sixteenth and seventeenth century doctrines of reason-of-state to the writing of Hobbes, Locke, Bentham and Hegel. Governmentality here links the development of techniques for the government of selves with the government of human totalities, at which point sweeping cultural, strategic and economic techniques become of great importance. In particular the chapter demonstrates how, under the broad rubric of security, liberal modes of subjectivity and economic organisation were combined with a geopolitical mode of reason in which global economic flows, the strategic and administrative command of vast tracts of non-European territory, and enormous efforts of social engineering came to seem natural. These are the forces which led to Australia’s colonisation in the late eighteenth century, and which are still with us now, having taken on an unparalleled (and poorly understood and controlled) intensity through the twentieth century.
Introduction

The remainder of the thesis, then, traces the further development and deployment of this technology through Australian political, economic and cultural history. It traces a reverse movement to that in chapter two, from the sweeping strategic imagination already present as Australia is first colonised, to the gradual creation and consolidation of an ‘Australian’ subjectivity which might conform to the kind of cohesive body-politic imagined in the thought of Hobbes and Hegel. Chapter three traces the crucial early decades of this process, which began as Aborigines and competing European powers were perceived as the first threats to the security of the colonies. This introduced a strong theme for later history, in that threats to both the physical safety and the ontological integrity of the ideal community came both from beyond its borders, and from its very interior—what Manning Clark has called ‘the enemy without and the enemy within.’ (1981: 68) It then traces how these fears, in the last decades of the century, combined with efforts to increase British control over the South Pacific and growing fears of Asian immigration, social progress and military capability, into a movement for Federation at which many of the fundamental juridical, economic, political and cultural structures of Australian life were established. It also demonstrates, however, that many such structures were deployed as efforts to paper over and manage dramatic social and economic divisions. Federation also appeared to cement the ontological linkage between soil, sovereignty and identity which had been anxiously sought for decades—yet this is an anxiety which has continually reappeared, most recently in Kim Beazley’s warnings against complacency over the claims of a small population to a large continent.9 (The Australian, 16.8.98) The chapter concludes as this process of subjectivity reaches its dark pinnacle in the deployment of hundreds of thousands of Australians to the Great War, after which the sacrificial myth of the ‘Anzac tradition’ emerged as the culmination of a modern Australian identity—despite the enormously divisive political and religious conflicts which raged over the growing slaughter.

Chapter four takes up with Australian Prime Minister Billy Hughes at the 1919 Versailles conference, where in pushing for the Australian annexation of New Guinea—for ‘our safety, security and freedom’—he told US President Woodrow Wilson that he spoke for sixty thousand dead. (Fitzhardinge, 1979: 396) Thus another potent historical theme—which linked Australian security and diplomatic influence with its participation in the wars of its great power allies—became visible. The chapter then

---

9 Australian politicians have been making such statements since the 1880s, when the father of federation Henry Parkes expressed anxiety about the jealousy of emerging Asian powers over the Colonies' hold in the continent. They were repeated by Billy Hughes during the Great War, and by John Curtin at the outbreak of the Pacific War. Kim Beazley made his statements during the launch of his education policy in September 1998, and repeated them when he spoke on election night, saying: 'We are a nation of 18 million people trying to work out a justification for holding a continent, in which used to be called the Far East, a substantial proportion of this region's real estate. You will only do that if you are very, very smart.' (The Australian, 16.9.98)
Introduction

traces two parallel developments which meet in the Pacific War. The first discusses how rhetorics of security and anti-communism were utilised during a time of rising class conflict, which only intensified as rash borrowing decisions (made in the rush for development of the continent) met the wall of global financial meltdown. The second traces Australia’s responses to the regional economic and strategic tensions—exacerbated by the depression—which culminated in the outbreak of the Pacific War and which seemed to bear out the decades-long fears of Japan.

In particular the chapter suggests that it was in the crucible and rhetoric of war—in which Labor Prime Minister John Curtin utilised the language of the Anzac tradition to convince Australians to make sacrifices in the larger, urgent cause of their own survival—that the ontological purchase of the Australian subject was strengthened, in the face of the unprecedented threat of the Other. None other than the conservative politician and historian Sir Paul Hasluck has argued that the reconstruction of a strong image of national identity—which had been undermined by the division and suffering of the depression—was crucial to the war’s outcome. (1952: 1) Chapter five concludes, as Australian leaders ponder the possibilities of the postwar international order, with a meditation on Labor’s claim to have provided justice to Australian workers and security to the nation as a whole, an achievement which they thought could be mirrored in the new structures of the international system. This married one potent philosophical universal—security—with another—justice—in a rhetoric which would be echoed by the Labor governments which followed. My major concern is that the persistent overstatement of the gravity of the military threat, and a general demonisation of the Japanese people, only intensified a hostile image of otherness within the Australian identity—allowing it to be twisted into the service of a very different kind of politics in the subsequent twenty years.

Chapter five examines this politics, by tracing the evolution of a rigid and increasingly violent set of discourses which would eventually serve to define the Australian identity and the global ‘realities’ of the Cold War. The terrible irony is that their success, played out as a response to the unprecedented challenge of anti-colonialism, emerged as a victory over a very different vision of international life. This vision, which the Labor Governments of Curtin and Chifley supported, was laid out in the Atlantic charter signed by the western allies in 1942, which supported democracy, self-determination, fair trade and social security, and provided for a renunciation of territorial aggrandisement and the establishment of a system in which force might eventually be abandoned as an instrument of national policy. Labor hoped that the new United Nations Organisation (UN) would be the vehicle for such aspirations, and in 1947-8 used it to support the independence of Indonesia against the opposition of the Netherlands, Britain and the United States.
Introduction

However in Labor’s dispatch of arms to help the British fight the Malayan Communist Party (MCP), their relief at the Nationalists defeat of an Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) rebellion in 1948, and their reluctance to confront the US over its sabotage of Japanese reforms—which effectively buried hopes for a just political and economic order in Asia—were the seeds of the politics which followed the election of the Menzies Government in 1949. The chapter traces this politics through the attempt to ban the Communist Party of Australia (CPA), the establishment of a formal military alliance with the United States, Australian military deployments to Korea, Malaya, and South Vietnam, and the support for General Soeharto’s murderous takeover in Indonesia in 1965. Successive Liberal-Country Party (LCP) Governments utilised the language of the ‘political double-bind’, intense secrecy and disinformation, and alarming images of fear and threat from Asia to coerce public support for their policies. The broad discursive architecture took the form of a quasi-Hegelian geopolitics, in which support for capitalist economic modernisation and consumerist subjectivities (which implied a gradual movement from Other to Same) combined with the violent suppression of movements designated threats to security. These forms of otherness were to be absolutely extinguished, whatever the human or social cost.

Chapter six concludes the genealogy, by focussing on a period in which the geopolitical and ontological certitudes established over the previous decades came under increasing pressure. A constant theme through this time is how longstanding images of national identity were abrogated or transformed—yet never at the price of a singular image of identity itself—and how this was paralleled by a drive to recover lost certitudes, even if this meant the embrace of otherwise disturbing change. Thus the analysis cuts across claims of a radical reorientation of national identity and international policy after the Vietnam war, seeking instead to outline how the embrace of the New Order regime of President Soeharto, qualified support for ANZUS and the United States’ global policies, or the acquiescence in a neo-imperial restructuring of the global political economy, betrayed deep-seated structural and discursive continuities with the past. Perhaps the most profound example of this failure is the case of East Timor—here successive governments refused to support their legitimate claims to self-determination or take up Indonesia’s appalling and systematic record of human rights abuses, in the fear of alienating a power which had been designated essential to the security of Australia’s very being. Even as the White Australia policy was buried by the discourse of multiculturalism and the declaration of a new sensitivity to Asia, and the terrible crimes against the continent’s original owners finally addressed by a limited form of land rights, the drive for a unitary and progressive Australian identity remained, fundamentally undisturbed by the death which had gone on under its name. Yet the Howard Government has placed even this (problematic) legacy under attack,
Introduction

a drive to reconstitute an older and more stable image of being, with the ironic effect of matching an increasingly illusory unity with deepening fragmentation.

Thus to questions about this politics of identity, which effaces social conflict and division under cliches such as 'the national interest' or 'the way-of-life', are added questions that undermine the moral claims of the Australian subject to represent a cohesive and ethical movement of historical progress. This is revealed as simply another rhetorical move, another exercise of the 'political double-bind', if one which retains a disturbing power. The hope which animates this study is this—that, confronted with the terrible historical violence of its realisation, and the limits of the politics which still claims to make it secure, this narrow vision of the Australian subject might lose its hold on our future.
PART I

Frameworks

The essential political problem for the intellectual is not to criticise the ideological contents supposedly linked to science, or to ensure that [their] own scientific practice is accompanied by a correct ideology, but that of ascertaining the possibility of constituting a new politics of truth...of detaching the power of truth from the forms of hegemony, social, economic and cultural, within which it operates at the present time.

Michel Foucault, 1984: 51.
One
Security as International Theory

The first step is to ask whether the paramount value of security lies in its abnegation of the insecurity of all values.


This chapter begins the genealogy through a study of how security has been thought in international relations theory. In parallel with the subsequent chapter, Security and Government, it does so to elucidate the theoretical development of concepts which would have an enormous effect on Australian history and the global processes in which it has been entangled. Chapter Two traces security’s evolution through western political philosophy, to a point which largely precedes its twentieth century appearance in the discipline of international relations; this chapter traces its changing role as both an object, and a theoretical underpinning, of international policymaking. Many of the themes I isolate have had a pervasive, and continuing, influence on Australian defence and foreign policy. The IR theory is taken up first to hollow out the space in which this study can take place at all, tracing the theoretical debate over security to a point where my enquiry becomes both plausible and necessary—while also analysing some key events in security’s solidification into a sweeping political discourse, which the following chapter then takes further. Having traced the debate to this point, the conclusion of this chapter will outline my own methodology, in particular the historical approach that is genealogy, in more detail.

At the outset, I have taken a very different analytical orientation to the role and status of theory to that of the positivist tradition still dominant in International Relations. This tradition claims a transcendent epistemological authority for theory—that it not only ‘reflects’ the real but, by deriving universal principles, laws and norms from it, functions as a form of knowledge which would bind, clarify and systematise the real, as if it could be made to reproduce the form of a perfect, autonomously functioning machine. In contrast, I argue that theory is a technological and programmatic production of the real, a discursive strategy for linking truth with reality according to an historically contingent, rather than universal, system of rules. We
Security as International Theory

cannot find the real in its finality, but are instead confronted with *multiple and conflictual versions* of the real, each with their implied social model. Thus theory is approached with both respect for the potential power of its systematising claims, and incredulity toward those claims. From this it can be gathered that in international theory I do not expect to find clues to the truth of security, or trace a process of its gradual refinement and consolidation; rather I am seeking to elaborate the hegemonic ideas and discursive forms within which it has been thought—as a practice, a goal and an object of study.

REALISM AND INTERNATIONALISM: INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS’ BINARY CODE

Debates about security in the first half of the twentieth century centred around the respective merits of ‘the balance of power’ and ‘collective security’; by the time writers such as Hans Morgenthau and E.H. Carr had developed power balancing into a full blown philosophy of Political Realism, they had been reified into two antithetical approaches to the study and practice of international relations. While there are substantial differences between the two approaches there are also large areas of common ground; together these form a powerful discursive field limiting the ways security can be conceived, thought and performed.

In the first years of the twentieth century security was for European states a question of territorial ‘integrity’, and for imperial powers like France and Great Britain that of protecting their domains. The Monroe Doctrine or the Anglo-Japanese alliance showed that security spheres were already being defined well beyond national boundaries. Up to the first world war security was defined through calculations of ‘national interest’, and systematised through a shifting system of military alliances—the ‘balance of power’. This combination of principles—whose ultimate objective ostensibly was ‘equilibrium’—Kissinger called *Realpolitik*. Yet at this time European diplomatic and military machinations were being played out above massive subterranean shifts: the growth of Germany and Russia, the breakup of the Ottoman Empire, and a far-reaching acceleration in technological modernisation that would change the nature and consequences of warfare forever. Kissinger’s analysis of the drift to war in 1914, however, asserted that ‘it was not so much the balance of power as Europe’s abdication of it that had caused the debacle’:

The leaders of pre-World War 1 Europe had neglected the historic balance of power and abandoned the periodic adjustments which had avoided final showdowns... While paying lip service to equilibrium [they] had catered to the most nationalistic elements of their public opinion. Neither their political nor their
Security as International Theory

military arrangements allowed for any flexibility; there was no safety valve between the status quo and conflagration. This led to crises that could not be settled and to endless public posturing that, in the end, permitted no retreat. (Kissinger, 1994: 226)

There is much that is insightful in Kissinger's account of the crisis; yet his conclusions are simplistic and self-serving. He does not explore what structural elements of the balance of power system contributed to the crisis, such as its reliance on military force and consequent tendency to arms racing, particularly as economic and technical capabilities increased; its vulnerability to personality and national hubris; its belief in the inevitability of power calculation; and its dependence, as a system, on ultimately arbitrary calculations of interest and rationality as if they were stable values. This last element saw a moral relativism invoked that would make British defence of its imperial interests 'rational' and German or Russian expansion 'irrational'. Similarly, the important role of national ideologies (at a time when powerful representational technologies of mass society were being developed) is not theorised; their irruption into the field of diplomacy, again, is simply irrational. Thus any detailed analysis of the interdependent production of international and domestic society is closed off, preserving the ideal relative autonomy of the two spheres. (1994: 200)

It was to some of these problems that Woodrow Wilson's philosophy of international relations was addressed, a philosophy according to which international order would be based upon justice rather than power. Wilson attacked the balance of power as 'an unstable equilibrium of competitive interests'; peace would now be assured through a system of collective security which would be activated on moral, rather than geopolitical, grounds. Appearing before the US Senate in 1917 he argued that

Right must be based upon the common strength, not upon the individual strength, of the nations upon whose concert peace will depend. Equality of territory and resources there of course cannot be; nor any other sort of equality not gained in the ordinary peaceful and legitimate development of the peoples themselves. But no one asks of expects anything more than an equality of rights. Mankind is looking now for freedom of life, not equipoises of power. (Cited in Kissinger, 1994: 227)

The fundamental categories of Wilsonianism would be the ideas of democracy, collective security and self-determination. In this view war too often resulted from the frustration of self-determination, and democracies would not be inclined to self-aggrandisement or aggression. These precepts would be based on the idealism and
Security as International Theory

altruism of the United States, which would seek a new global role on the basis of its values rather than its national interests. ‘This age’, he stated, ‘rejects the standards of national selfishness that once governed the councils of nations and demands that shall give way to a new order of things in which the only questions will be: Is it right? Is it just? Is it in the interest of mankind?’ Despite the extravagant liberal rhetoric Wilson employed, a close reading of some his statements does reveal power calculation. Stating that ‘we insist upon security in prosecuting our chosen lines of national development’ he asserted that the US demanded it also for others: thus national and global security were inseparable. On another occasion he argued that American power hinged on the spread of its values: ‘We set this nation up to make men free, and we did not confine our conception and purpose to America, and now we will make men free. If we did not do that, all the fame of America would be gone, and all her power would be dissipated.’ (Cited in Kissinger, 1994: 46-50)

The institution that was to enforce Collective Security was the League of Nations, an idea to which Wilson was converted quite late. Its system of collective security was embodied in Article 10, which said that league members undertook to ‘preserve’ (rather than ‘guarantee’) the territorial integrity and political independence of all League members against aggression; in such a case the League council would ‘advise’ upon the means of countering it. As Roland Stromberg comments, ‘exactly what sort of obligation this was became a vexed question; it was evidently something less than an automatic commitment to march whenever a frontier was crossed.’ The US opposed French requests for an international standing army under League jurisdiction, and instead signed a supplemental three power treaty under which they and Britain guaranteed France’s border with Germany. Article 10, with its application to all instances of war, appeared to contradict the more detailed Articles 12 through 17, which obliged member states not to resort to war without putting the dispute to the League, and if not, provided for automatic economic sanctions and recommended military actions. Other critics questioned the effect of Article 10, with its ‘flat guarantee of existing frontiers’, in preserving the status quo: anticolonial revolts remained outside League jurisdiction. The League Collective Security system disappointed purists on both sides: ‘realists who favoured the guarantee treaty [of French borders] feared that Article 10 might smother it, while idealists deplored the guarantee as a betrayal of true internationalism.’ The US Congress eventually thwarted American accession to the League, and thus any formal participation in its security guarantee beyond that involved in the French treaty. (Stromberg, 1963: 26-31)

As Stromberg’s comments suggest, the rhetoric and practice of Wilsonianism often diverged: fearing difficulties with the US Congress Wilson asked the Paris Conference for a number of amendments to the League Charter, including the exemption of the Monroe Doctrine and of other ‘domestic questions’ from League jurisdiction; similarly
the man who proclaimed the inviolability of 'territorial integrity' was the same as that who had sent US troops into Mexico in 1916 and provided American support for the White Russian forces attempting to overthrow the Bolsheviks. And only through the most ethnocentric lenses could American history be seen as a basis for universal ideals of freedom, progress and justice—lenses through which the systematic murder and dispossession of Indian tribes, or the annexations of New Mexico, Texas, California, Hawaii and the Philippines, were barely visible. Gabriel Kolko has also emphasised how American internationalists like Wilson 'in reality defined the tangible mechanisms of world organisations in such a way that they have principally served US national interests.' (Stromberg, 1963: 29; Buckley and Strong, 1987: 53; Chomsky, 1992: 14; Kolko, 1988: 13)

Nevertheless, many of the underlying principles and ideals of internationalism were in stark contrast to those of an earlier realism, of which Kissinger took Theodore Roosevelt to be a paradigmatic figure. Rather than adhere to Liberal ideas of the essential rationality and perfectibility of human nature (which expressed in democracy would lead to increasing peace), realists clung to a more pessimistic, Augustinian view of human nature, which sought to 'place man's demonstrated selfishness in the cause of a higher good'. While both groups saw states as the fundamental units and objects of security, Wilson sought to think security on the basis of universal legal and moral principles that would advance the cause of peace rather than balance a system perpetually geared to war. Nevertheless the debates over the League of Nations showed that such universalism encountered its own set of problems, namely the particularism of the historical and political contexts in which those principles were to be implemented and were often found wanting. Also, by invoking justice and self-determination, internationalists unwittingly raised questions of human security: as Kissinger comments, faced with 'doctrines of self-determination and collective security...European diplomats [were] on thoroughly unfamiliar terrain. The assumption behind all European settlements had been that borders could be adjusted to promote the balance of power, the requirements of which took precedence over the preferences of the affected populations.' (1994: 222)

However imperfectly, Wilsonianism thus opened up questions of justice, right, peace and self-determination in the thought and practice of security, and in turn a series of (highly problematic and complex) questions of the relations between force, right and legal instrument as a basis of international order. It also had some far less benign

---

Security as International Theory

effects. Such American versions of internationalism cleaved well with established cultural mythologies of mission and ascendancy such as ‘manifest destiny’, which had not only legitimised the dispossession of Indian tribes and the acquisition of Pacific colonies, but buttressed the arguments of American economists and businessmen that the US economy needed increased overseas trade, resource and investment access if its growth was not to falter. The ideas of international economic co-operation, legal agreements and international institutions based on free trade and market access supported these objectives, though they were not to be realised until after the Second World War, when figures such as J. M. Keynes, Cordell Hull and Franklin Roosevelt took up these elements of Wilson’s vision. (Brockway, 1968: 44-7)

These elements of Wilsonianism were to become an enduring feature of US foreign policy, as was much of the rhetoric of freedom and American values: however the moral and legal ideas behind collective security were to be effectively subordinated to a hegemonic western security system based upon American military power and formal alliance structures. While collective security as an idea was enshrined in the UN Charter, the Cold War and the Soviet Union’s use of its veto in the Security Council effectively buried efforts to revive security along Wilsonian lines, as politicians like Australia’s postwar external affairs minister H.V. Evatt had hoped. In this context, liberal rhetorics would function as little more than propaganda. A thoroughly amoral realism governed attitudes to the use of force and questions of democracy and self-determination—as another comment by Kissinger illustrates, whilst grateful for much of Wilson’s legacy, later realists were wary of the limits to action which a thoroughgoing internationalism implied:

Wilsonianism also accentuated another latent split in American thought on international affairs. Did America have any security interests it needed to defend regardless of the methods by which they were challenged? Or should America resist only challenges which could fairly be described as illegal? Was it the fact or the method of international transformation that concerned America? Did America reject the principles of geopolitics altogether? Or did they need to be reinterpreted through the filter of American values? And if these should clash, which would prevail? (1994: 53)

---

2 American President John Tyler argued in 1842 that America needed to seize commercial opportunities in China because ‘in some nations steady and industrious labor can hardly find the means of subsistence, the greatest evil we have to encounter is the surplus of production beyond the home demand, which seeks, and with difficulty finds, a partial market in other regions’. (Hietala, 1985: 55-60) Financial journalist Charles Arthur Conant also wrote in 1898 that America could not afford to adhere to a policy of isolation while other nations were reaching out to ‘the new markets’ of Africa and Asia. He called for infrastructure investment and ‘free markets in all the old countries which are being opened to the surplus resources of the capitalistic countries and thereby given the benefits of modern civilisation.’ (Brockway, 1968: 46)
Security as International Theory

The clear implication is that Kissinger would prefer—indeed as a policymaker he aggressively sought—the freedom to define security in terms of ‘interests’ and to intervene on that basis rather than legality; to go to war in the Persian Gulf, for instance, to ‘defend vital oil supplies’ rather than resist aggression. Indeed he laments that ‘the implication of Wilsonianism has been that America resisted, above all, the method of change, and that it had no strategic interests worth defending if they were threatened by apparently legal methods.’ (1994: 53) No doubt the election of the socialist Salvador Allende as President of Chile in 1971 was one example of this problem.

While the League of Nations was thought of as a highly imperfect attempt to institute the principles of collective security, the 1928 Kellogg-Briand Pact and the Washington Conference were pre-World War Two examples of further efforts in that vein. The Kellogg-Briand Pact, signed by fifteen nations in 1928 (the number later rising to sixty including Germany, Japan and the Soviet Union) renounced war as an instrument of national policy and pledged all signatories to resort to ‘pacific means’ to settle disputes. Earlier the 1921 Washington Conference on the Limitations of Armaments attempted to negotiate significant naval disarmament amongst the major powers, particularly Japan, Italy, France, Great Britain and the United States. The four treaties eventually signed provided for a ten year delay in the construction of capital ships (but no restrictions on smaller vessels) and the scrapping of seventy vessels either existing or under construction, all derived from proportional strength ratios between the fleets. Other elements included an agreement to respect the territorial integrity of China and the economic ‘Open Door’, a Japanese undertaking to withdraw from Shantung and Siberia, and US and Japanese undertakings not to fortify their bases in the Pacific. While both agreements did display evidence of idealist thinking, the Washington agreement in particular (with its proportional limits on arms acquisition and its agreements on China) would have also appealed to balance of power strategists. Nor did it include any limits on ground forces and technologies. While the London Naval Conference of 1930 extended parity controls among Britain, Japan and the USA to smaller vessels such as cruisers, destroyers and submarines, France and Italy did not accede to the treaty. Japan eventually withdrew in December 1934 after its demand for parity across all categories of naval armaments was rebuffed by the western powers. (Buckley and Strong, 1987: 65-89; Morgenthau, 1978: 397)

These grand visions of peace faltered as economic tensions began to rise around a combination of German war reparations and the global retreat into rival trading blocs following the Wall Street crash. The flow of loans to the German economy faltered at the same time as the US began to close down its markets to European producers, and the resultant economic depression was clearly exploited by the Nazis in their rise to
Security as International Theory

power. At the same time Japan and the US entered into extended competition for resources on the Asian mainland and in the Dutch East Indies. As a new arms race began and Japan invaded Manchuria and China the linkages between resource access and strategic capability became entrenched: League-style sanctions became tainted with self-interest and were manifestly incapable of dealing with the underlying structural grievances. The rise of highly authoritarian governments in Japan, Germany and Italy, and the intransigence of western powers, particularly the United States, further deepened the schisms. The inability to think the economic imperatives to war was one of the most serious flaws in early liberal thinking about security; to this date the relation of economic processes and inequalities to security remains a destructive aporia in liberal internationalist policy and thinking. (Buckley and Strong, 1987: 86; McQueen, 1991: 36-45)

Thus liberal discourses of collective security were undermined by their inability to deal with economic disputes, their exclusive focus on (already existing) sovereign states as the primary object of protection and policy, their practical combination with the pursuit of national interests and power balancing which marked an earlier realism, and by their protection of the imperial interests of the great powers. Thus the universalist rhetoric deployed was too often marred by hypocrisy and self-interest, and obscured the concrete practices within which it would be effectively expressed. This marks a deeper problem, focused on liberalism’s universal language, which more contemporary critics have sought to explore. Jim George in particular has located a powerful essentialism in early liberal internationalism, which links a modernist positivism with an Enlightenment universalism derived from Kantian rationality. In this way positivist claims to truth were linked with the imminent culmination of an Ideal in which the rational and the real would finally coincide. ‘Their progressivist aim’, he writes, ‘was to intellectually and structurally reformulate the nature of modern relations between states in line with actual (rationally derived) ‘reality’, as opposed to the ‘irrationality’ of the past’:

In the inaugural address of the first chair of International Politics...[Webster] bemoaned the lack of rational-scientific principles in the study of the state system, reflecting that if an ‘ordered and scientific body of knowledge had existed in 1914...the catastrophe might have been averted.’ Understanding world history through this dominant modernist prism...International Relations was now set to enter the next stage of its rational development, in which the language and structural principles of the domestic (democratic) realm became directly appropriate. (George, 1994: 75)
Security as International Theory

This set the scene for a dangerous reification, in which the knowledge-forms produced by liberal internationalism became impervious to critique, given that they now claimed to embody not merely a particular, but an ideal and universal reality. What must be said in response is that however universal a principle—including widely accepted principles like human rights—they are always expressed through the particularity of a concrete historical practice; thus they must be interrogated at the level of those practices and at the limits of how such practices can be thought. This creates scope for understanding how such principles are historically defined, and how they can be compromised—the irruption of ‘national interests’ into Wilsonianism can perhaps be understood, in part, by acknowledging the enormous systemic (socio-economic, technological, military) forces which enter politics as ‘interests’ and whose aggregation generates sweeping processes which frustrate human attempts at intervention. As George points out, this positivist impulse was consistent with a general philosophical and scientific modernism which formed the fundamental epistemic ground for both realism and liberal internationalism. In particular the later realism of Morgenthau and Carr would still embody such a universalising claim to rationalism, though it would be one largely stripped of its moral idealism. It is to this we now turn.

Carr and Morgenthau: Security, Morality and Epistemology

Realist frameworks for thinking security have been remarkably powerful; it would be no exaggeration to say that, notwithstanding the hopes that were raised by the end of the Cold War, they remain the cornerstone of defence policies around the globe. Military expenditures, strategic anxieties and levels of conflict remain high, whilst progress on disarmament is painfully slow. Force and military capability remain for many states the ultima ratio of their diplomacy. Whilst any genealogy which sought to explain this would need to refer to a range of broad international forces—such as the arms trade, the power of military bureaucracies, economic colonialism and transnational capitalism—what I wish to explore here is the way Realism’s power has been founded upon not merely a material but a closely related discursive hegemony; a hegemony which is buttressed by a range of other (apparently unrelated) societal discourses which facilitate its production of space as real. Realism’s power is founded not only on its world view, its account of the dynamics of international society, but on the way it has sought to ground this set of views in a rational theory of knowledge which would claim universal validity. This is to analyse how realism has come to constitute what Foucault would call a ‘regime of truth’, a social, political and economic ‘ensemble of rules according to which the true and the false are separated and specific effects of power attached to the true.’ (Foucault, 1984: 74)
Both Morgenthau and Carr claimed to present not only a unifying theory of international politics, in the way I discussed earlier, but a science of international politics. Morgenthau in particular founded realism on a profound essentialism, opposed to idealist rationality, which found its ground in an ahistorical account of human nature. ‘The world,’ he wrote, ‘is the result of forces inherent in human nature.’ From this flowed a set of assumptions about morality, conflict, legal principle and reality:

To improve the world one must work with those forces, not against them. This being inherently a world of opposing interests and of conflict among them, moral principles can never be fully realised...[Political realism] then, sees in a system of checks and balances a universal principle for all pluralist societies. It appeals to historic precedent rather than abstract principles, and aims at the resolution of the lesser evil rather than the absolute good. (Morgenthau, 1978: 16)

Morgenthau founded political realism on a theory of knowledge which has its roots deep in western culture, but drew its basic inspiration from the post-enlightenment period. In a formulation with strong Cartesian echoes, Morgenthau posited an ahistorical essence of the ‘human’ as the fundamental site of truth, ‘the objective laws’ of political society; this then would also form the basis for a rational theory of knowledge (‘method’) which would reflect and codify these laws:

Political realism believes that politics, like society in general, is governed by objective laws that have their roots in human nature...the operation of these laws being impervious to our preferences, men will challenge them only at the risk of failure. Realism, believing as it does in the objectivity of the laws of politics, must also believe in the possibility of developing a rational theory that reflects, however imperfectly and one-sidedly, these objective laws. It believes also then in distinguishing between truth and opinion—between what is true objectively and rationally, supported by evidence and illuminated by reason, and what is only a subjective judgement, divorced from the facts as they are and informed by prejudice and wishful thinking. (1978: 4)

This epistemology was thus founded on a humanism which is also what Jacques Derrida has called a logocentrism: a version of reason (logos) whose certitude is founded on a relation of ‘absolute self-presence’, of the proximity of reason to self, thought to speech, knowledge to the real—in the form of a pure correspondence. Following the impact of Descartes, argues Derrida, ‘this objectivity takes the form of representation, of the idea as the modification of a self-present substance, conscious and certain of itself at the moment of its relationship to itself....’ (Derrida, 1978: 97-8)
Security as International Theory

Such forms of knowledge, which he calls 'metaphysics', are also organised by a 'system of oppositions' in which concepts are constituted as essential and self-present by virtue of something they supersede or expel: rationality by irrationality, truth by opinion, facts by values, objectivity by subjectivity. Political realism, along with the ontological structure of security as a concept, is thoroughly organised by this series of dichotomies. And while there is also a strong universalism at work in political realism, it is of a different order to that in liberal internationalism; what is universal is struggle and agonism, the permanent clash of interests, or the mechanism of 'checks and balances', rather than moral or legal principles which are now relativised.

Morgenthau's six principles of political realism were fundamentally an attempt to fix and codify a system of knowledge which would provide a guide to interpreting and acting on the real. The fundamental tenet of political realism, from which the rest of the theory flowed, was the concept of interest defined as power: this Morgenthau described as providing 'the link between reason trying to understand international politics and the facts to be understood...[it] imposes intellectual discipline on the observer, infuses rational order into the subject matter of politics, and thus makes the theoretical understanding of politics possible.' For policymakers it provided 'rational discipline in action': in the terms of an endlessly circular and self-referential system of justification, interests are by definition rational and rationality flows from acting in one's interest. (1978: 5)

Thus the fundamental dichotomy organising political realism (apart from its declared antipathy to utopianism) was that which subordinated the irrational to the rational. Linking utopianism with rationality, Morgenthau declared that whilst realism 'does not condone indifference to political ideals and moral principles', it required 'a sharp distinction between the desirable and the possible'; in the same way, as political realism aimed to encourage a foreign policy that separates the rational from the irrational elements of 'experience', political transformation could be achieved only through the workmanlike manipulation of the perennial forces that have shaped the past as they will the future. The realist cannot be persuaded that we can bring about this transformation by confronting a political reality that has its own laws with an abstract ideal that refuses to take those laws into account. (1978: 11)

In this way the claim for a universal morality was subordinated to the real—the ahistorical law of contending forces—in terms of an apparently unarguable logic: the real itself provided a principle for rationality. From this realism derived a view of morality and its place in international life that was of great moment for the ways in which it would be possible to think security: affecting the ways security could be
Security as International Theory

defined, its geopolitical sphere and limits, the mechanisms that could be brought to bear in its achievement and the constraints on their operation, particularly in the conduct of war. While realism was 'aware of the moral significance of political action', wrote Morgenthau, it was

also aware of the ineluctable tension between the moral command and the requirements of successful political action. And it is unwilling to gloss over and obliterate that tension...universal moral principles cannot be applied to the actions of states in their universal moral formulation, but...must be filtered through the concrete circumstances of time and place. (1978: 10)

This in turn generated a final principle, that of 'prudence—the weighing of the political consequences of alternative political actions' which he described as the 'supreme virtue' in politics. There can be no political morality without prudence, he declared, a prudence which would subordinate moral actions to the ultimate test of their 'political' consequences. (1978: 11)

While there are also problems with moral absolutism, the human consequences of this subordination of morality to prudence have been disastrous. A disturbing example of this logic at work, in the self-conscious pursuit of security, was provided by George Kennan, head of the US State Department's Policy Planning Staff and architect of containment. In a 1948 memorandum he argued that in the immediate postwar period the United States held half the world's wealth but only 6.3% of its population, a discrepancy which would make it the 'object of envy and resentment'. Our 'real task', he wrote,

is to devise a pattern of relationships which will permit us to retain this position of disparity without positive detriment to our national security. To do so, we will have to dispense with all sentimentality and day-dreaming; and our attention will have to concentrated everywhere on our immediate national objectives...We should cease to talk about vague—and for the Far East—unreal objectives such as human rights, the raising of the living standards, and democratisation. The day is not far off when we are going to have to deal in straight power concepts. (cited in Chomsky, 1987: 48)

In Morgenthau's text, however, there was a form of moral constraint which may have caused him to baulk at Kennan's mercenary ethic. This again was 'the concept of interest defined as power' which 'saves us from both moral excess and political folly': it demands that justice must be done to all nations in the pursuit of their interests; foreign policy should 'respect the interests of other nations ... moderation in policy
Security as International Theory

cannot fail to reflect the moderation of moral judgement.’ (1978: 11) Similarly E.H. Carr argued that while morality will always be ‘entangled’ with power, it would be ‘an unreal kind of realism which ignores the element of morality in any world order’ because ‘mankind in the long run will always revolt against naked power.’ In particular he made a strong argument that ‘the recognition that what is economically good is not always morally good must be extended from the domestic to the international sphere.’ (Carr, 1974: 238)

The problem with Morgenthau’s formulation was both its naivete (the belief that once interests were proclaimed as the basis for moral action they would be willingly subordinated to those of others) and the limitations of those considerations to states—individuals, or smaller community groupings, could not have interests which do not coincide with those of the state. Similarly the notion of ‘interest’ is an almost infinitely malleable criterion: virtually anything could conceivably be shuttled in under its rubric and thus freed from judgement. Thus when security comes to be thought within this epistemic field, it can only be the security of states based upon the principle of interest defined as power. We can despair at the belated ethical vision of these men, and the insistent disavowal of the prescriptive and normative dimension of their theory, which refuses to admit that it does more than submit reluctantly to historical and political inevitability. Thus we confront a rationalism (no less essentialist than that underpinning liberalism) anchored to a powerful epistemological chain which first posits human nature as an essence which would ground history, reality and experience (which would in fact be their point of origin), and from this derives essential principles for rationality, truth and political conduct.

Yet what a deconstructive strategy emphasises is that such absolute claims to truth are founded on little more than their own self-assertion, and are derived from a mythical origin: ‘human nature’, in particular, is not a universal, transhistorical essence as Morgenthau claims, but an historically constructed object of western science, medicine, philosophy and political theory. As Foucault has explained ‘Man’ in this sense did not exist prior to the eighteenth century: ‘the world, its order and human beings existed, but man did not’. Man became a finite and conceivable unity as an object of modern economics, the human sciences and developing techniques of ‘discipline’ which created the conditions of possibility for ‘man’ as a living, speaking, labouring being on the basis of a ‘political technology of the body’. Emphasising the epistemological status of this figure Foucault described how Man became—in a way central to Morgenthau—a ‘strange empirico-transcendental doublet, a being such that knowledge will be attained in him of what makes all knowledge possible.’ And, he added, as merely ‘a new wrinkle in our knowledge’ we could hope that Man ‘will disappear again as soon as that knowledge has discovered a new form.’ (Foucault, 1973: 318-9, 1991: 24)
In both Carr and Morgenthau 'security', as a term, was primarily associated with liberalism and collective security. Morgenthau contrasted collective security to an older approach which saw security as 'the concern of the nation, to be taken care of by armaments and other elements of national power.' Thus security within realism would fundamentally be thought as national security rather than 'international' or 'collective security', and would be derived from realism's account of the international system (as ungoverned or anarchic) and from its emphasis on power. Morgenthau declared that the struggle for power was universal in time and space, and that international politics was 'of necessity' power politics. Power was thought as a finite, empirical category—not a general power to do things but as 'control over the actions and minds of other men'; political power, in particular, was 'a psychological relation between those who exercise it and those over whom it is exercised'. National power was something that could be sought, possessed and accumulated, and (in a significant modern development of raison d'etat) Morgenthau devoted considerable space to its limits and possibilities in terms of geography, natural resources, industrial capacity, military preparedness, population, national character and morale, and the 'quality' of diplomacy and government. Not limited to narrow notions of defence, national security would be thought increasingly on the basis of national power—a power not limited by national borders and which required the integration of all these elements into a co-ordinated systemic whole. Because national power was, however, 'uncertain' and difficult to quantify, this task would be driven by a permanent anxiety. Security would become increasingly subject to—and name—a complex task of sweeping societal and economic management. (Morgenthau, 1978: 35, 210)

War—and foreign policy in general—would be closely tied to this conception of national power. In line with Clausewitz' dictum that war is the continuation of politics by other means, E.H. Carr stated that 'the ultima ratio of power in international relations is war'; thus military strength became 'a recognised bearer of political values'. For Carr war 'lurks in the background of international politics just as revolution lurks in the background of domestic politics' while for Morgenthau all nations were

3 Raison d'etat is a reference to the 17th century doctrines of 'reason of state', which Foucault has described as the search for 'a rationality specific to the art of government'. He used reason of state to coin his neologism 'governmentality' which combines two levels of power—'individualising' power by which individuals rule themselves, and 'macro-power', the centralising and disciplinary forms of power exercised by the state in the administration and control of populations. Here there are no clear divisions between the international and domestic or state and society—'governmentality' is a generalised series of strategies which links all spheres. These themes are discussed in more detail in the following chapter, where I will argue 'security' emerges in western culture as a key term linking the government of society and individuals. (Foucault, 1988: 59-73 and Gordon, 1991)
‘continuously preparing for, actively involved in, or recovering from organised violence in the form of war’. Among all the elements of national power military strength was seen as the most fundamental: Carr argued the foreign policies of states were limited not only by their aims, but ‘by the ratio of [their] military strength to that of other countries.’ Military strength was thus a ‘decisive’ and ‘determining’ factor in foreign policy. In this way the power seeking tendencies of states tended towards war because military power, ‘being an essential element in the life of the state, becomes not only an instrument, but an end in itself.’ (Carr, 1974: 109-110) Nor did he see any practical distinction between security and aggression—war, in his mind, had its own unique rationality:

It is necessary to dispel the current illusion that the policy of those states which are, broadly speaking, satisfied with the status quo and whose watchword is ‘security’ is somehow less concerned with power than the policy of the satisfied states...The pursuit of security by satisfied powers has often been the motive of flagrant examples of power politics...Wars, begun for motives of security, quickly become wars of aggression and self-seeking...territorial ambitions are just as likely to be the product as the cause of war. (Carr, 1978: 105-113)

Here Carr presciently isolated a rhetorical phenomenon with which we will become all too familiar—the deployment of ‘security’ as a mask for aggression and intervention. However he did not explore this further; it merely formed an example which justified making power into a universal principle.

Extended into the international system, these writers argued, the drive for national power generated ‘the balance of power’, in which power is ideally distributed amongst nations more or less equally. Although Morgenthau considered the concept to have many practical flaws (including what he calls its ‘uncertainty, its unreality, and its inadequacy’) he insisted that it was inevitable—‘a particular manifestation of a general social principle’—and that it was ‘an essential stabilising factor in a society of sovereign nations’. What this general social principle was is ‘equilibrium’ which ‘signifies stability in a system composed of a number of autonomous forces’. (Morgenthau, 1977: 173-227)

Again making recourse to a grounding humanism, Morgenthau conceived the international system on the model of the body, with its organic laws. A healthy body possessed stability and equilibrium: disease or illness disturbed that stability and initiated the search for a new equilibrium. Writers such as Foucault, Elizabeth Grosz or Donna Haraway have challenged such accounts, arguing that the body is not so much a natural form as a cultural product—it is constructed by social, psychological, moral and disciplinary practices and can only be known through historically specific medical and
Security as International Theory

scientific metaphors. In Morgenthau, the body-as-nature metaphor serves to naturalise the (entirely historical) functioning of the international system and to conceive it as an imaginary harmonious whole—legitimating a global application of policy and effacing conflicts which challenge elite interpretations of stability. In this metaphor was also a global, homogenising image of Sameness, which has been particularly damaging and still constructs elite thinking about the nature of ‘order’ in the international system. (Morgenthau, 1977: 173-227)

Guides for the ways realism would be able to think security were further contained in Morgenthau’s nine concluding prescriptions (or ‘rules’) for the future conduct of diplomacy:

Four fundamental rules:
1. Diplomacy must be divested of its crusading spirit;
2. The objectives of foreign policy must be defined in terms of the national interest and must be supported with adequate power;
3. Diplomacy must look at the political scene from the point of view of other nations;
4. Nations must be willing to compromise on all issues that are not vital to them;

Five prerequisites of compromise:
5. Give up the shadow of worthless rights for the substance of real advantage;
6. Never put yourself in a position from which you cannot retreat without losing face, and from which you cannot advance without grave risks;
7. Never allow a weak ally to make decisions for you;
8. The armed forces are the instrument of foreign policy, not its master;
9. The government is the leader of public opinion, not its slave.

(Morgenthau, 1978: 550-60)

In his discussion of the second rule (the objectives of foreign policy) Morgenthau made a highly important linkage. Whereas he and Carr had heretofore associated security with liberalism, here he argued that security must now be central to a foreign policy based on a philosophy of political realism, that:

...the national interest of a peace-loving nation can only be defined in terms of national security, and national security must be defined as integrity of the national

4 A further effect of this metaphor is indicated by the still pervasive conceptual separation of mind and body initiated by Descartes. Thus to conceive the international system as an organic body is to engender a panoptic global political gaze (analogous to the rational ‘mind’ of the statesman and the international policy machinery) which would survey and control its functioning and protect it from various ‘threats’ to its unity and equilibrium. An example of this thinking in practice is Kennan’s 1946 comment that ‘World communism is like a malignant parasite that feeds only on diseased tissue.’ (cited in Campbell, 1992: 28)
Security as International Theory

territory and its institutions. National security, then, is the irreducible minimum that diplomacy must defend with adequate power without compromise. (Morgenthau, 1978: 553; emphasis added)

However he adumbrated this by saying that with the advent of the nuclear age no state could purchase its security at the expense of another; now diplomacy must seek to make all nations equally secure. It is this consideration which required the third rule, which sought to avoid generating excessive security fears in any potential enemy in an attempt to avoid the classic ‘security dilemma’. Yet Morgenthau avoided the complexities of this issue by limiting his discussion to a bipolar system in which the two sides would ideally first define their national interests in national security terms, and then step back from those ‘outlying positions’ and ‘retreat into their respective spheres, each self-contained within its orbit...each bloc will be the more secure the wider it separates the distance that separates both spheres of national security.’ And the definition of national security in terms of the ‘integrity of the national territory and its institutions’ is itself sweeping. If we consider that the economy is one of those institutions we can understand how American national security was effectively defined in near global terms after 1945. (1978: 553-5)

Security’s new primacy in political realism was thus one of the founding (theoretical) gestures of twentieth century geopolitics—although one whose ground was laid by the global political, diplomatic, military and economic machinery developed by the United States during and immediately after World War 2, and which would be formalised by the establishment of the US National Security Council (NSC). National security would be secured within the dynamics of the international system: it would be based upon the designation of vast ‘security zones’ which designate the outer limits of a state’s security interests, yet must incorporate a buffer area (of both territory and interests) which is subject to compromise. The sheer imprecision of this prescription (How, after all, should the link between the security sphere and the national interest be defined?) has helped legitimate a series of destructive historical practices. Whilst Morgenthau was aware of the unique dangers inherent in the nuclear confrontation, his theory was silent on the broader arena of superpower competition—in third world conflicts in the Middle East, Africa, or South and Central America. What he would have made of the American doctrine of ‘credibility’ (which linked self-perceived obligations to its allies with the superpower struggle, grossly inflating the importance of local conflicts) we are not to know; nor are firm moral limits to intervention implied. We can only interpret this to mean, as Kissinger might suggest, that all is permitted. On the other hand there are passages in both Carr and Morgenthau’s work which argue that moral considerations do have a place in diplomacy—for Morgenthau this is particularly strong in the conduct of war and for Carr in the need to ensure a fairer international
Security as International Theory

economic order. However we do not have to look far to understand why their arguments were forgotten: the realist doctrine of prudence, abstracted into a universal maxim, undermined any moral restraints or imperatives their work may have otherwise advocated. (Morgenthau, 1978: 553-5, 246-7; Kolko, 1988: 5, 293; Carr, 1974: 237)

NEOREALISM: THE INTENSIFICATION OF SECURITY

Neo- or 'structural' realism, as it emerged most strongly in the late 1970s, did not constitute a break with classical realism but a modification of some of its premises. The effect of this modification, for this study, has been to make a militarised and coercive security an even more central discourse (and problematic) of international policy. Jim George has argued this work arrives in a particular historical context, soon after the American defeats in Indochina, when mainstream international relations scholars were 'recovering their sense of identity and analytical equilibrium, after a short period when ambiguity, ambivalence and difference threatened.' The virulence of this 'realist backlash' was demonstrated by his citation of Robert Tucker's book The Inequality Of Nations, which argued that political radicals did not understand the universality of anarchy, that this naturally generated inequality among states and that 'self-help' had to be the basic principle of national interest and security, being 'the right of the state to determine when its legitimate interests are threatened or violated, and to employ such coercive measures as it may deem necessary to vindicate those interests.' (George, 1994: 117-8)

'Self-help'—with all its everyday connotations of masculine, suburban isolation—was a major conceptual anchor for Kenneth Waltz's structural realism, particularly in his 1979 book Theory Of International Politics. His chapter on the international system ('Anarchic Orders and Balances of Power') opens with a familiar mantra: 'The State among states, it is often said, conducts its affairs in the brooding shadow of violence. Because some states may at any time use force, all states must be prepared to do so—or live at the mercy of their militarily more vigorous neighbours. Among states, the state of nature is a state of war.' (Waltz, 1986: 98) What was perhaps unique about Waltz's realism was that national interest and power (and the questions of rationality and will

5 Morgenthau was scathing about the Indochina war, which had 'obliterated the distinction between civilians and combatants', and denounced modern warfare as 'push button war, anonymously fought by people who have never seen their enemy alive or dead and who will never know whom they have killed...such a technologically dehumanised war is bound to be morally dehumanised as well.' (1978: 246-7) Carr argued that 'conflict between nations like the conflict between classes cannot be resolved without real sacrifices, involving in all probability a substantial reduction of consumption by privileged groups and in privileged countries.' (1974: 237) He advocated Keynesian, New Deal style policies of economic reconstruction—while still consistent with the modernism of the time, they were sharply antithetical to the unholy alliance of Wilsonian economic liberalism and realism that Kennan was advocating in 1948.
that went with them) fell away in importance, in favour of an account of international
dynamics which emphasised the very structure of the system as its fundamental
determinant. The particular characteristics of states (and the thinking of those who
govern them) became largely irrelevant; states were largely faceless entities which
interact within ‘anarchy’ as ‘like units’. The nature of anarchy, and the ‘loose
connection’ among states, itself generates the working of the international system,
elevating the potential for conflict and making the need for self-help even more central:

When faced with the possibility of co-operating for mutual gain, states that feel
insecure must ask how the gain will be divided. They are compelled to ask not
“Will both of us gain?” but “Who will gain more?” If an expected gain is to be
divided, say, in the ratio of two to one, one state may use its disproportionate
gain to implement a policy intended to damage or destroy the other...the
impediments to co-operation may not lie in the character and the immediate
intentions of either party. Instead, the condition of insecurity—at the least, the
uncertainty of each about the other’s future intentions and actions—works against
their co-operation. (Waltz, 1986: 101-2)

Thus not only was national security a primary element of the national interest, as
Morgenthau asserted, but insecurity became a permanent and inescapable condition of
the international system. This in turn generated other compromises. While aware that
defence spending is unproductive, Waltz argued that it was necessary for the
maintenance of autonomy: ‘States do not willingly place themselves in situations of
increased dependence. In a self-help system, considerations of security subordinate
economic gain to political interest.’ Insecurity was further universalised through an
argument that the ‘self-help situation is one of high risk’ and the bizarre argument that
states ‘are insecure in proportion to the extent of their freedom. If freedom is wanted,
insecurity is accepted.’ The self-help system meant that the national interest must be
placed over the international interest and thus global problems and solutions must be
subordinated in priority; this modified even those elements of classical realism which
saw international co-operation and mutual regard as having some importance. (Waltz,
1986: 106-110)

It seems hard to understand why Waltz’s theory has been so influential, given its
extreme reductionism and abstraction, which was exacerbated by his constant recourse
to the banal, homespun metaphors of microeconomic theory. His work, and this
tendency within it, has been subject to exhaustive criticism—by writers such as Robert
Cox and Richard Ashley (1986), R.B.J. Walker (1993) and Jim George (1994)—to
which I can add little. What I would emphasise within this genealogy is that such work intensified the movement of security into a problem of primary significance for
Security as International Theory

international relations, that its reduction into a system condition made it appear universal, and that the questions of diplomatic practice and moral complexity present in Carr and Morgenthau were now of little or no relevance. This is in marked contrast to a ‘realist’ scholar like Stanley Hoffmann, whose response to the challenges of the post-Vietnam era was to take up the questions of ethics and morality with a genuine (if somewhat tortured) seriousness. One effect of this was that he specifically rebuked the kind of alarmist vision of renewed vigilance and structural insecurity which characterises Waltz or Tucker’s work. This he saw as a ‘gloomy’, Weberian view which amounts to ‘an abdication of moral judgement.’ (Hoffmann, 1981: 14)

I have emphasised the nuances of Carr and Morgenthau’s work for good reason, so that the contrasts between it and the practical policy interpretations of realpolitik in the USA, Australia and elsewhere can appear, and the alleged unity and self-evidence of realism be placed under stress. Such policy discourses (rather than theory alone) are for me a more significant object of a genealogy; what I have sought to do here is to identify a series of underlying discursive frameworks in which security could come to be thought, and to suggest how—as texts—they might dictate their own interpretation. In general, I would argue that realism effected a significant subordination of moral principles to the results of political action, brought security into national policy as a central and over-riding goal, limited its application to actors called states, and suppressed (beyond arms control) avenues of international co-operation and disarmament. Later theoretical interpretations of security would question its order of priority, its field and object of application, and eventually its meaning.

RETHINKING SECURITY:
CENTERINGS AND DECENTERINGS

This section traces the evolution of a more critical series of discourses on security, which I characterise as having effected a series of decenterings and recentreings of the concept and its practice. These range from work which, while accepting many realist precepts, challenges the primacy of military security as an objective, to work within the loose rubric of peace studies which—while retaining a vision of security’s unity and making appeals to it as a legitimate goal—radically refashions its meaning, objects and field of operation so that they are virtually unrecognisable by any realist discourse.

INTERDEPENDENCE AND REASON OF STATE

Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye’s 1977 book Power and Interdependence, seen as a key text in ‘interdependence theory’, could be thought of as an early gesture in security’s slow decentering—although it also powerfully recentered security in the
broader terms of a modern obsession with *raison d'etat*. Appearing at the same time as *The Anarchical Society*, Hedley Bull's 'Grotian' compromise between classical realism and liberal internationalism, their account of 'complex interdependence' challenges realist assumptions that states are the only significant actors in world politics, that there is a clear hierarchy of issues headed by military security, and that force is at all times the most effective and determining instrument of policy. Criticising the division of international diplomacy into the 'high politics' of war, peace and domination and the 'low politics' of trade, welfare and economics, they argue that there is now a higher level of complex interaction among nations which challenges the unity of states as actors, and elevates other transnational institutions (such as corporations, NGOs and international organisations) into significant players. Interstate relations are now organised around a multiplicity of issues which have no clear hierarchy, thus 'military security does not consistently dominate the agenda.' (1977: 24) They argue that the use of force among states declines as complex interdependence prevails, yet outside a bloc constituted by such interdependence (or on a different set of issues) force may still be relevant:

Military force could, for instance, be irrelevant to resolving disagreements on economic issues among members of an alliance, yet at the same time be very important for that alliance's political and economic relations with a rival bloc. For the former relationship this condition of complex interdependence would be met; in the latter, it would not. (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 25)

They argue that the use of force amongst industrialised, 'pluralised' countries has almost become unthinkable, and that force is not an appropriate strategy for resolving ecological or economic problems. While it would not be 'impossible to imagine dramatic conflict or revolutionary change in which the use or the threat of military force over an economic issue or among advanced industrial countries might become plausible', in general the 'effects of military force are both costly and uncertain.' Despite this caveat they go on to argue that force still has political uses—the deterrence value of US arms against the Soviet threat can be a bargaining chip with other allies, and force is wielded in North-South conflicts such as Soviet control over Eastern Europe or the US in Central America. Using the Indochina wars as an example they argue however that force as an instrument 'to control socially mobilised populations' is of 'limited use'; the use of force against a state with whom one has a variety of relationships can also have 'costly effects on non-security goals'. (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 26-8)

I would argue that their view is not a fundamental challenge to realist precepts or objectives, but an attempt to reinscribe that work within a more complex field. Citing
Kissinger’s 1975 comment that ‘the problems of energy, resources, environment, population, the uses of space and the seas now rank with questions of military security, ideology and territorial rivalry’ they argue that the multiplicity of issues, relationships and actors now makes determinations of the national interest and the co-ordination of policy more difficult. Similarly the increase in interdependence fractures the distribution of power among actors according to different issues (trade, shipping, oil), and the devaluation of military force makes it more difficult for militarily strong states ‘to use their overall dominance to control outcomes on issues in which they are weak.’ Power and interest are still key categories: it is their distribution and determination which is now more problematic. Nor do they manifest any significant moral qualms over the use of force—their criteria for critique appears to be efficiency rather than morality. (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 27-30)

Thus their key preoccupation is with the same questions of *raison d’etat* and governmental rationality which preoccupied Morgenthau: they argue that the relative distribution of power on discrete issues becomes of key importance and that ‘the politics of agenda formation and control’ (the attention paid to issues by government officials) will become more salient as the ability to force linkages across issue areas declines. Another key problem is posed by the ambiguity of the national interest and the increasing propensity of bureaucracies to contact each other directly, which thwarts the ‘centralised control’ of government and foreign policy:

The state may prove to be multifaceted, even schizophrenic. National interests will be defined differently on different issues, at different times, and by different governmental units. States that are better placed to maintain their coherence (because of a centralised political tradition such as France’s) will be better able to manipulate uneven interdependence than fragmented states that at first glance seem to have more resources in an issue area. (Keohane and Nye, 1977: 37)

This is enormously revealing, and of great significance. The key terms here are ‘coherence’ and ‘manipulation’, signifying the desire to refine a technical rationality of government whose objective is still the maximisation of national power, in an historical context where that power is more diffuse and its exercise more problematic and precarious. While the critique of force as the *ultima ratio* of politics effects a small decentring of security, particularly as it was thought by the cruder forms of realism and by military bureaucracies, I would argue that their concern with *raison d’etat* in turn effects a powerful recentering of security in a way that is both central to our modernity and close to Morgenthau’s idea of national security as synonymous with national interest and power. Their concerns closely reflect contemporary forms of foreign policy (motivated by the problem of combining force with other elements of national policy),
and are closer to the broad project of societal management with which national security has become synonymous. Such concerns also underpin recent rhetorics of ‘multidimensional’ security in which military force is only one of an available series of policy techniques.

In an American context their concerns reflect the elite anxieties produced by the defeat in Vietnam, associated structural problems in the US economy, and the effects of the oil shocks, the breakdown of the Bretton Woods financial system and the threats of broader third world commodity cartels. Also by the 1970s the US economy had become deeply dependent on a range of imported raw materials, of which 16 per cent (without which the US could not function militarily and would be severely damaged economically) came from the Soviet Union and Central and Southern Africa. As Gabriel Kolko has commented ‘the United States’ objective need to exploit the world’s poorer nations was greatest at that time after 1945 that its power to control them was relatively the weakest.’ (Kolko, 1988: 228-33)

**An Unstable Neorealism**

By the early 1990s security had become both a central concept linking international relations, strategic analysis and foreign policy studies, and a *contested* one. The geopolitical assumptions of neorealism and the practical terror of the second cold war were challenged by elite forums like the 1982 Palme Commission, which formulated the idea of *common security* (emphasising co-operative and interdependent security relationships) and by the global peace, human rights and environmental movements, whose academic wings began to question the form and status of the concept itself and press for the inclusion of other actors, objects and agendas—women, the environment and indigenous peoples. Closer to mainstream agendas, and more problematic, were calls to broaden security agendas to take in other issues and processes: environmental destruction, refugees, piracy, drug smuggling and crime. One intriguing (and deeply contradictory) attempt to theorise the concept itself came with the publication of Barry Buzan’s 1991 book *People, States and Fear*, which sought to lay out the theoretical framework for a new discipline of ‘international security studies.’ His gesture was potentially far-reaching, but ultimately disappointing.

Buzan opened the book with a series of questions addressed to security as both a stable concept and an achievable practice; questions which assume, from the outset, that security is itself ‘an essentially contested concept’:

What does security mean, in a general sense? How is this general meaning transferred to specific entities such as people and states that must be the objects of security policy? What exactly is the referent object of security when one refers to
Security as International Theory

national security? If it is the state, what does that mean? ..how do individuals relate to an idea like national security in terms of their own interests? At the other extreme, what does international security mean? Does it apply to some higher entity than states, or is there some sense in which security among states is an indivisible phenomenon? (Buzan, 1991: 15)

He also acknowledged that security’s theoretical contradictions flowed into practical ones for policymaking and analysis. Identifying major contradictions between defence and security, individual and national security, national and international security and violent means and peaceful ends, Buzan added that any analytical exercise needed to be as much ‘philosophical as empirical’:

Add to these the difficulty of identifying the referent object of security (ie. what it is that is to be made secure) and the pitfalls of applying the idea across a range of sectors (military, political, economic, environmental and societal) and the scope of the task becomes clear...Are objective and subjective aspects of security separable in any meaningful way? Is war the only form of threat relevant to national security? How can relative security goals be defined? Is national security really national, or is it merely the expression of dominant groups? What right does a state have to define its security interests in terms which require it to extend its influence beyond its own territory..? (Buzan, 1991: 15)

In what was a valuable contribution, Buzan here revealed a whole series of key conceptual aporias at the centre of security, which underlined its diffuse and contradictory practice. We were encouraged to ask about its diverse definitions, its organising role in a system of knowledge, and its political function as a weapon of particular societal groups. Yet having done this he rapidly, and almost imperceptibly, slid back into a closed logocentric space which would stabilise security’s meaning, objectives and field and reinvigorate security as a key mediating term between the hitherto irreconcilable verities of ‘peace’ and ‘power’. The policing function of this move was clear: ‘international security studies’ would ideally undermine the raison d’être of peace and conflict studies, ‘or at least confine it to a smaller and more radical constituency’, and in the course of the transition peace studies would have to abandon ‘simple-minded anti-militarism’ and accept ‘anarchic structure as a framework of analysis.’ (Buzan, 1991: 374)

Thus Waltz’s neorealism becomes his starting point, and with it security is powerfully recentred as a key concept to rival those of power, wealth and peace: ‘the anarchic context sets the elemental political conditions in which all meanings of national and international security have to be constructed.’ From this flowed the assertions that
states must be the 'principle referent object of security' despite the fact that 'there is no necessary harmony between individual and national security'. While he does nuance the idea of anarchy, saying that 'it does not merit the Hobbesian implications of disorder and chaos' and that it is merely a technical description for a 'decentralised form of political order', it remains a powerful constraint against thinking critically about security. In particular what this formulation does is to reify sovereignty as the central normative basis of the international order. (Buzan, 1991: 22, 50)

While any international study needs to be aware of the limits to international organisation implied by sovereignty, it does not have to accept them; however under the assumptions of anarchy, sovereignty—as a political practice, a form of identity and juridical effect—is effectively quarantined from deconstruction. Sovereignty's ontological, juridical or political claims cannot be opened to question, despite the fact that many conflicts and security problems arise from efforts to assert, challenge or extinguish claims to sovereignty. Anarchy, however minimally it is defined, is not a neutral or essential description of reality, but a highly loaded and reductionist way of representing international relations. It carries within it a whole series of normative assumptions about international conduct and process, and has an inbuilt logic which creates its own conditions of possibility, rather than responding to an essential set of pre-existing realities: which is to argue that, if states assume 'anarchy', they will begin to act in ways which engender 'anarchy'. Nor is there any natural correspondence, as neorealism would have us believe, between anarchy and 'self-help'—'anarchy' minimally defined could just as well produce efforts at co-operation and demilitarisation.

Buzan's relation to neo-realism is thus ambivalent: while he argues that security relations between states are 'highly relational and interdependent' this occurs in a global context in which states are reified as units and remain the 'principal referent object of security'; similarly the 'durability' of anarchy means that the 'practical meaning of security' can only be constructed within an environment in which 'competitive relations are inescapable.' These powerful acts of closure, though, jostle with other openings: arguments that the manifest contradictions between individual and national security undermine both the logic of deterrence (in the nuclear age, national security is bought at too high a price) and engender new struggles around human rights which make the individual the prime object of security. This leads to the ironic insight that 'security can only be relative, never absolute.' (1991: 22, 50) The conceptual and political spaces opened by Buzan's work are matched by a closure which retains force as a central factor, the state as primary object and actor, and entrenches the logocentrism of the epistemological tradition in which it grounds its claim to the real.

Because, above all, Buzan makes the claim that security can be known, and known comprehensively and systematically. Security is, in its most general form, about the
Security as International Theory

'pursuit of freedom from threat'—end of story. The dialectic of security and threat is thus universal and given, and derives from a much older western political discourse in which security is a generalised mediation between states and those they govern. Buzan—citing Hobbes, Waltz, Locke and Berki—sees security as a political and juridical overcoming of the 'state of nature' in which the modern state is born as individuals abrogate part of their freedom for the security it can provide. (1991: 38)

While it may be difficult to temporally locate, we cannot overestimate the importance of this as an event in western culture—security must be placed alongside a range of other economic, political, technological, philosophical and scientific developments as one of the central constitutive events of our modernity. We can see, in embryo, security's close relation to the practice of raison d'état and its key function as a promise made by the state to its subjects—a promise which underpins the state's legitimacy and provides strong clues to security's enormous societal power. A more detailed analysis of this event (as it unfolded through western political philosophy) is made in the following chapter; the balance of the thesis is then dedicated to a critical description of this formation as it has been deployed through Australian history.

MULTIDIMENSIONAL SECURITY

A more interesting and potentially more open displacement than that of Buzan or Keohane is visible in a recent essay by Alan Dupont, entitled New Dimensions Of Security (1996b), which closely reflects contemporary mainstream policy shifts, and arises out of a specifically Asia-Pacific context. In many ways his thinking has strong analogies to Gareth Evans' later work, with its attempt to broaden security agendas and promote human security; taken together, their writing demonstrates the limits to mainstream policy discourse, whilst also suggesting (often problematic) ways in which they may further develop. Dupont begins by destabilising the self-evidence of security, arguing that it is 'one of the least understood and most contested concepts to enter the lexicon and discourse of international relations' and that particular dispute arises when attempting to designate the who (primary reference point) and what (nature and

6 Another good essay is Muthiah Alagappa's Regionalism and Security: A Conceptual Investigation (1994), whose focus is developing patterns and rhetorics of regional economic and security co-operation in the Asia-Pacific. Despite adhering to a predominantly logocentric and state-centric definition of security, he pays serious attention to intra-state conflicts—which arise out of a 'dissonance between power and legitimate authority', particularly in states where there is 'a hegemonic attempt to forge a national political community' by suppressing claims to self-determination by minorities. Thus both the neo-realist assumption of the state as the single object of security and the sole legitimate bearer of sovereignty is undermined. He also challenges the positivism of the literature with his insight that 'the definition of the national interest is embedded in norms and values and not endogenously given'—identities and understandings of self do affect security behaviour. He also makes a valuable critique of Southeast Asian patterns of regionalism which, by promoting 'stability', can create conditions for governments to eliminate domestic opposition and support repressive regimes like that in Burma. (1994: 163-5, 177)

45
Security as International Theory

hierarchy of threats) of security. Arguing this partial decentering Dupont cites the appearance of discourses about human security, particularly in organisations like the United Nations, of which its 1994 Human Development Report argued that ‘the concept of security has for too long been interpreted narrowly...forgotten were the legitimate concerns of ordinary people who sought security in their daily lives.’ Nevertheless like Buzan he locates a stable ontological ground for security in its etymology (from the Latin, securus, to be free from danger), returning us to the essentialised dialectic of security and threat we locate in Hobbes. Whatever its uncertainties, security remains a locatable value and threat is universal. (1996b: 2)

From here Dupont cites a definition (from Richard Ullman) which attempts to ‘balance’ the concerns of the state and individual with ‘those of subnational and non-state actors.’ In this definition, which appears to provide a starting point for Dupont’s analysis, threats to national security are defined more broadly and diffusely as

an action or sequence of events that (1) threatens drastically and over a relatively brief period of time to degrade the quality of life for the inhabitants of a state, or (2) threatens significantly to narrow the range of policy choices available to a state or to private, non-governmental entities (persons, groups, corporations within the state). (cited in Dupont, 1996b: 2)

Here again we can see the simultaneous de- and recentering of security that I have argued is characteristic of this group of texts: security is still concerned with the scope and effectiveness of governmental rationality, can still be broadly interpreted (‘quality of life’) in ways synonymous with the national interest, yet admits other actors as having legitimate security interests: individuals, organisations, or smaller units of political identity. Similarly the definition creates scope for considering a range of other processes—such as the social and economic welfare of individuals or the global impact of environmental degradation—as security concerns. At the same time there appears little awareness of a history in which the security of states and corporations has been made to coincide, to the serious detriment of individuals and larger communities.

Citing the Palme Commission’s formulation of ‘common security’ and the notion of ‘comprehensive security’ developed by Japan, Malaysia and Indonesia (linking conventional military threats with concerns about economic well-being, resource and market access, and internal stability), Dupont argues that ‘neither fully recognises import of an emerging range of new security issues which fundamentally challenge the norms and utility of both the Realist and Liberal concepts of security’:

These issues tend to be complex, multidimensional and transnational in form and impact. For the most part, they stretch the boundaries of traditional thinking about
Security as International Theory

security. Some are economic; others relate to the earth’s physical environment; many are new manifestations of age old phenomena. They range from concerns about international financial flows and market access, to food scarcity, resource depletion, global warming, transnational crime, illegal migration, virulent new strains of diseases, and a host of other[s] not previously associated with security and foreign policy. Together they form a new security agenda. (1996b: 4)

Of course the test of their challenge to existing paradigms comes when the new security agenda is fleshed out. Dupont criticises the realist concern with economic resilience as having underplayed the ‘role of trade and resource issues as causes of conflict’; similarly ‘disruptions to global commerce and financial transactions, economic coercion, trade sanctions, protectionism, resource disputes and arguments over market share and market access constitute a whole range of potential security challenges which may be just as serious as traditional politico-military threats.’ (1996b: 5) Whilst this first point is incisive (and can be addressed to liberalism as well), the alarmist tone of the second bandages together an amorphous set of complex processes, whilst leaving their relationship and consequences unclear. They are also primarily elite, corporate and governmental concerns, ignoring the economic security concerns of individuals—particularly those who are starving, landless or miserably poor—which must be linked to questions of democracy and corruption, debt, and the exploitative international division of labour.

Environmental security, he argues, is part of the new agenda because ecological destruction has ‘the capacity to erode the very foundations of global order’ and if unchecked ‘threatens the security of humankind’. The environment interacts with security as a cause (or contributing element) of serious conflict and also constitutes a much greater threat to human well-being than military threats. Thus Dupont critiques realism’s obsession with military security and insightfully observes that environmental security concerns ‘are not amenable to resolution by military force or coercion.’ Unregulated population flows are another issue, he argues, that interact with alleged threats from transnational crime in which drug smuggling, terrorism, illegal immigration, bank fraud, computer crime, corruption and the traffic of nuclear material form what former CIA Director James Woolsey termed a ‘poisonous brew—a mixture potentially as deadly as some of what we faced during the cold war.’ (1996b: 6) Yet we should resist such alarmism, and ponder what self-interest motivates it, as large security bureaucracies try to preserve their funding and status after the cold war. We can also point to how elite policies have exacerbated such problems—citing capital flight from corrupt third world elites, the way debt and low commodity prices fuel the north American cocaine trade, or the CIA’s own record in drug trafficking to fund the Nicaraguan contras or Afghani Muhajadeen. (S. George, 1992)
There is much of value in the Dupont essay, particularly his challenge to state-centric, narrowly military interpretations of security—which further implies that the roles of defence forces will change to incorporate monitoring of the environment or assisting in the rehabilitation of damaged ecosystems. Yet this begs the question of whether other agencies and organisations are not more relevant; nor does it address the deeper systemic processes which contribute to such problems. I would argue that addressing them requires less a rearticulation of security concepts than a thoroughgoing rethink of both the unrestrained push for development which underpins dominant models of growth—insofar as it contributes to the resource depletion, pollution or widespread poverty, dispossession and economic dislocation—and of democracy and political participation, insofar as corruption contributes to the flouting of environmental standards and the perpetuation of severe inequities. Yet while arguing that ethnic or religious minorities may see the state as a threat to their well-being (thus depriving national security of ‘any theoretical, let alone operational, utility’), Dupont also asserts that democratisation ‘may actually assist centrifugal tendencies within states, particularly in developing countries...’ (1996b: 11)

Thus while I have few problems with asserting the importance and challenge of transnational processes as being of equal or greater importance than military security, I am suspicious of doing so by bringing them under the highly loaded rubric of security. In this case a whole range of highly complex processes, filtered through elite lenses, have been thrown together in a confusing melange which undermines attempts to further distinguish their priority or elucidate their causes. While I would endorse efforts to link environmental and poverty issues to conflict (in Bougainville, Papua New Guinea or Irian Jaya, for example), the question of what policy or societal responses are appropriate is not dealt with here, despite an implication that a range of non-military agencies and non-state actors would be relevant. There is a danger that underlying systemic causes will be neglected and misunderstood, policy responses militarised, and security (with its heightened notions of threat) reinvigorated as a viable political concept. While Dupont’s essay is largely innocent of such charges, ‘multidimensional’ security as understood in Southeast Asia is not. What his essay does do, along with all these texts, is to cling to the illusion that security can be made whole.

Feminism and Human Security

Pushing further, a range of recent scholarship has made a more radical challenge to mainstream discourses of security—questioning their objects, their underlying assumptions about the international system, their analogous policy responses, their ethical implications and, in its most exciting form, issuing a serious challenge to security’s epistemological foundations and unity as a concept. This work has arisen out
of the peace movement and its academic arms in ‘peace studies’, global and critical theory approaches, feminist reinterpretations of international relations, and poststructuralism. One key early text was Rob Walker’s 1988 book *One World Many Worlds*, which took the development of ‘critical social movements’ as a cue to develop a new agenda for thinking about international politics and processes which would escape the narrow boundaries and concerns of mainstream scholarship and, in particular, focus on marginalised groups and ways of thinking. Its fundamental concerns were grassroots rather than elite, its normative ideals peace, diversity and justice rather than interest and power, and its political project the development of grassroots forms of democracy and co-operation rather than the refinement of technical forms of governmental reason. This agenda implied, he argued, a critical engagement with ‘what it means to be human’ and a ‘serious rethinking’ of our ‘dominant concepts’ of security, development and democracy. These were all key elements in a ‘transformative assault on our inherited notions of authority, legitimacy and power’:

Only with a clearer sense of what it means to have security for all people rather than the national security that now renders everyone increasingly insecure; only with an empowering development for all rather than the mal-development of both rich and poor; only with more effective processes of democratisation everywhere rather than self-perpetuating structures of domination, bureaucratisation, and exclusion; and only with a clearer sense of how all these fit together can a just world peace cease to be a utopian dream and become an ongoing process to which ordinary people may contribute wherever they are. (Walker, 1988: 1-9)

In Australia the work of the Secure Australia Project has been highly significant to efforts both to expanding the aporias in mainstream ideas of security and to rethinking security in terms of other agendas: women, the environment, human rights, indigenous peoples, conflict resolution, self-determination and sustainable development. This began as a critique of Australian defence and security policies with the publication of *The New Australian Militarism* (Cheeseman and Kettle ed. 1990), and a broader focus on security in *Threats Without Enemies* (Smith and Kettle ed. 1992). The critique of Australian defence and foreign policy continued in numerous publications by Graeme Cheeseman (1990, 1992, 1993), Peter King (1992) and St John Kettle (1989), and most recently in a volume of essays *Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers* (Cheeseman and Bruce ed. 1996) which made a more self-conscious use of poststructuralism and critical theory to question Australian policy after the cold war.

Many of the authors in *The New Australian Militarism* cast a critical eye over developments in Australian defence policy during the 1980s, including the acquisition of potent new capabilities and weapons platforms, which they thought were potentially
Security as International Theory

destabilising and threatening to regional neighbours; the use of Australian naval forces
to spy on Soviet forces in the North Pacific, and Australia’s role in US nuclear strategy;
a heightened willingness to deploy Australian forces overseas, particularly in the South
Pacific; the diversion of funds from social expenditures to defence; and the
inappropriateness of Australia’s high-tech force posture to the real nature of the threats
it faced. They argued for a ‘non-offensive’ and de-aligned defence policy and an
Australian commitment to its region based on greater development aid rather than
defence co-operation or arms exports. Somewhat problematically, Jo Vallentine and
Peter Jones called this ‘common security’. (Cheeseman and Kettle ed., 1990)

Threats Without Enemies expanded this critique to take in questions of human
rights, social and economic security, self-determination, the arms trade and
demilitarisation. This security agenda was now framed in starkly opposed terms to that
of both classical realism and liberal internationalism. Destabilising the (existing) state as
the prime object of security, Peter King and Alan Smith argued that conflict resolution
and self-determination were preconditions for human security, and explored
peacemaking opportunities through the UN and in East Timor, West Papua (Irian Jaya)
and Papua New Guinea. Gary Smith and Graeme Cheeseman explored options for
demilitarising security, adopting affordable and non-provocative defence postures, and
democratising policy processes. In one of the most thoughtful contributions, Janet
Hunt explored the broad impacts of Australia’s foreign policy on the economic security
of third world populations. Examining the impacts of debt, structural adjustment and
underdevelopment she made a powerful argument for a ‘new vision of security [which]
must be based on international co-operation to achieve more equitable and ecologically
sound development.’ She caustically criticised Australian aid and foreign economic
policy for its adherence to an economic orthodoxy which is exacerbating economic
insecurity for the world’s millions of absolute poor. She also castigated Australia’s
push for economic security through arms exports and the signing of the East Timor
Gap Treaty as buttressing injustice, repression and the exploitative development models
that often go with it. (Hunt, 1992: 240-266)

Such themes have also been explored by J. Ann Tickner, whose book Gender and
International Relations attempts to forge a feminist approach to ‘achieving global
security’. This pathbreaking work critiqued the fundamentally masculine bias of
dominant approaches to national security, economics and the environment, and
explored how feminism might provide different models of international life based again
on human rights and needs, the elimination of sexual exploitation and sustainable
economic practices. After Sarah Brown, Tickner argues that ‘a feminist theory of
international relations is an act of political commitment to understanding the world from
the perspective of the socially subjugated.’ She shows how Realism’s models of
interest, rationality and power derive, in part, from a socially constructed ‘hegemonic
50
Security as International Theory

masculinity' which is sustained though the subordination and devaluation of various feminities, including feminised masculinities like homosexuality. These characteristics are then 'projected onto the behaviour of states whose success as international actors is measured in terms of their power capabilities and capacity for self-help and autonomy.' (1992: 19, 7)

In the realm of national security, she argues, hegemonic masculinity generates solutions based on force, amorality, aggression and control, along with a belief in the objective rationality of the policymaker; in economics, it results in the reduction of human needs and passions to the self-interested utilitarianism of 'rational economic man' and the incorporation of women into an exploitative sexual and international division of labour; in ecology, it underpins an historical shift from a view in which humans and the natural environment were deeply interdependent, to one in which 'nature' is a passive resource to be tamed and exploited; and, in an overarching cultural effect, it generates a division of society between public and private realms which excludes women from the spaces (and forms of rationality) believed proper to public life. (1992: 45, 72, 101-4)

What I find more problematic, as I do in all this literature, is the unself-conscious and essentialist deployment of security as a concept. Tickner argues for a 'genuine security' based upon 'the elimination of unjust social relations, including unequal gender relations' and for a reformulation of international relations—'the discipline that analyses international insecurity and prescribes measures for its reformulation'—in terms of the 'multiple insecurities' represented by ecological destruction, poverty and (gendered) structural violence, rather than the abstract threats to the integrity of states, their interests and 'core values'. I am fully in accord with her agenda, and believe her insight that 'social justice, including gender justice, is necessary for an enduring peace' should be shouted from the rooftops. Yet I also believe there are real problems with a use of the concept—however radically refashioned—which assumes it can be 'reformulated' as whole and self-present, in which the ideal and the real would finally coincide. This again is to remain trapped within a certain logocentrism.

My own feelings about this problem are ambivalent. Given security's demonstrated cultural power, to be able to criticise elites for increasing insecurity, rather than the security they promise, and to lay claim to 'genuine' security around a radically different political agenda, can appropriate for this politics enormous rhetorical power. On the other hand, it is also to leave in place—and possibly even strengthen—a key structural feature of the elite strategy it opposes: its claim to truth and the real. Totalising and emotionally laden concepts like security, reason, and democracy work by obscuring their concrete historical embeddedness (in a network of institutions, knowledges and practices) by appealing to an ideal, absolute and unsurpassable state of affairs—a form of ontology central to modern enlightenment thought. Security remains a
Security as International Theory

metadiscursive given, and the particularity of the practices through which it operates is effectively removed from question and critique. At its worst, debate becomes confined to whether a certain program achieves the state of an abstract absolute like 'security', rather than focused on that particular (and thoroughly historical) network of practices and their material effects. If progressive and critical thought wishes to retain its integrity it ought to be willing to (self-reflexively) expose its own claims to a critique of the practices and mechanisms it would itself seek to engender. In turn, political strategies can be opened up and made more flexible, creative and democratic.

In particular, in all this work the ontology of security/threat or security/insecurity—which forms the basic condition of the real for mainstream discourses of international policy—remains powerfully in place, and security’s broader function as a defining condition of human experience and modern political life remains invisible and unexamined. This is to abjure a powerful critical approach that is able to question the very categories in which our thinking, our experience and actions remain confined. What if human experience could be reconfigured outside the terms of security and threat, into something radically other, a possibility floating unseen at the outer edges of our thought? What if security has a history, and thus could be laid open to change or escape? Thus my search, through deconstruction, for the possibility of this new thought; and, through genealogy, for a strategy which could question the very promise, structure and deployment of security as a concept.

SECURITY AND IDENTITY:
THE POLITICS OF LOCATION

At this point I will briefly credit some recent theoretical work in international relations which has asked the most searching questions of security and suggested the most interesting lines of historical and methodological enquiry. In particular, the value of this work lies in its focus on the political function of rhetoric, representation and narrative in international life—on what Foucault has called the ‘politics of truth’. (1984: 74).

Alone among the Secure Australia group Jan Jindy Pettman explored this phenomenon in her essay ‘National Identity and Security’, in which she opens by arguing that ‘the national interest’, ‘Australia’ or even the pronoun ‘us’ are not stable but ‘socially constructed’ categories. Nation, race and ethnicity are not essential forms of identity but are contested and imagined; and the strategic use of language and metaphor is essential to the construction of such identities. In this process, she argues, ‘competing social interests, some more powerful, organised and visible than many others, get authenticated or authorised as public goods and goals.’ The unity of the state and its claim to sovereignty is ‘highly problematic’; the state is itself a highly contested site. She then pursues an incisive and far reaching analysis of the historical construction
Security as International Theory

of Australian identit(ies) through the exclusion and demonisation of 'others': women, asians, immigrants and aborigines. In the realm of security, this leads to the insight that 'different rhetorics of security in themselves predispose us to identify different kinds of threat and policy option.' She argues that we should make explicit 'our mental maps, of Australia, of our region, of the West, and the world. This is an intriguing exercise in the politics of location which recognises many forms of connection and exclusion, and moves us beyond the simplistic countering of our history against our geography. It also helps problematise the identities, categories, definitions and values that inform political contests.' (1992: 53-66)

Such an approach is also advanced by James Der Derian and David Campbell. Der Derian, in his 1993 essay *The Value of Security*, argues for a theoretical strategy which aims to 'make philosophically problematic what has been practically axiomatic in international relations'. Making an incisive reading of Hobbes he locates the cultural force of security in its mediation between state and citizen, and in the fact that

within the concept of security there lurks the entire history of western metaphysics, which was best described by Derrida 'as a series of substitutions of center for center' in a perpetual search for the 'transcendental signified'. From God to Rational Man, from Empire to Republic, from King to The People...the security of the centre has been the shifting site from which the forces of authority, order, and identity philosophically and physically kept at bay anarchy, chaos and difference. (Der Derian, 1993: 95)

This is to explore the operation of what Pettman aptly calls the 'politics of location', in which political communities are constructed and policed according to a mobile partitioning of security and otherness, sameness and difference. By tracing Nietzsche's critique of Hobbes, Der Derian questions the strategy which would make identity perpetually conditioned by a structure of fear and threat that is universal. He argues that any attempt to demonstrate that this structure is not universal, that it does in fact have a history, must be genealogical: 'to understand the discursive power of [security], to remember its forgotten meanings, to assess its economy of use in the present, to reinterpret...a late modern security *comfortable* with a plurality of centres, multiple meanings and fluid identities.' (Der Derian, 1993: 97)

Campbell, in his 1992 book *Writing Security: American Foreign Policy and the Politics of Identity*, also makes such a reading of Hobbes, which both challenges Realism's appropriation of his writing and explains his appeal. This contributes to a more extensive and pathbreaking work which interweaves philosophy with an analysis of the historical construction of American national identity based upon the exclusion, dispossession and fear of the Other—from Indian tribes, Mexicans and Blacks to
Security as International Theory

Communists, Terrorists and Drug Traffickers. He argues that ‘danger is not an objective condition’ and that in American politics security has always reposed on otherness: ‘the boundaries of the state’s identity are secured by the representation of danger integral to foreign policy.’ Through this insight, the analysis of many key foreign policy texts and rhetorics, and through his discussion of the ‘war on drugs’, he illuminates the general societal power and function of security. The power and contingency of truth—in its Foucauldian sense—is acknowledged through a form of analysis that considers ‘the manifest political consequences of adopting one mode of representation over another.’ And in its form and movement the book is itself a genealogy—one of the very few in international relations—which traces the discontinuous and conflictual evolution, solidification and deployment of a power-knowledge formation that dominates and structures American politics and national security policy. (Campbell, 1992: 1-4)

This study draws much inspiration from these writers. It will retrace their readings of Hobbes, adding to them readings of Locke, Descartes, Bentham and Hegel, who absorb Hobbes’ account of security as a mediation between state and citizen, and introduce it into a temporal movement which underpins pervasive modern discourses of historical progress, political identity and human subjectivity. Der Derian and Campbell’s neglect of Hegel here is a gap in their work, rendering their account of the identity/otherness relation too static; elsewhere I have tried to show how such oppositions were central to powerful discourses of global mission and ascendancy which drove and legitimated both the United States geopolitical role and a more general project of liberal economic modernisation. (Burke, 1994: 39-66) Both Campbell Pettman’s work encourages a focus on how constructions of Australian national identity and security have historically engendered and produced one another, and thus laid the basis for a generalised Australian experience of self and other. Above all, what I find remarkable is how such work identifies elements of security’s discursive operation which are not visible in mainstream international theory—thus paving the way for a far-reaching critique of security’s operation as a general social principle.

SECURITY AND GENEALOGY

It should be clear that a major objective of this study is to cut through the mainstream view of security’s naturalness—that security is a finite, knowable and achievable state, and bears almost universal status as a virtually organic human need. Yet it should be clear, even in this initial survey, that security has named vastly differing doctrines, objectives and visions of order—each of which claimed to be universal. Worse, such claims to universality rest on a constricting positivism: security becomes a monological narrative which closes off the ability to make judgements about international policy,
Security as International Theory

except within the most narrow of terms—so that the range of questions we can ask, and the solutions we can pose, are defined in advance. A major aim of this study is to open up this space of judgement, and to thwart the blackmail which says we must accept a given line of policy because it buttresses our security. This opens up space both for a broader agenda of reform and a more sweeping reassessment of some of the fundamental structures of Australian government, society and identity. It is to say that against this single concept of security there are other lines of policy, other ways of conceiving reality, and other groups and forms of society we should be defending and seeking to build.

This type of ‘realism’ has been successfully challenged by a range of thinkers working in the areas of semiotics and the philosophy of language. Michel Foucault, in a series of histories and philosophical studies, built on this work to develop a far more useful account of the relations between language and power. A number of arguments he made are particularly crucial for this study. First, he argued that knowledge is irrevocably linked to power, that it is itself a practice: ‘power and knowledge directly imply one another; there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge which does not presuppose and constitute at the same time power relations.’ The form, space and order of knowledge, he argued, is specific to different cultures, times and political and social orders, and is closely enmeshed with the operations of particular social, technological, scientific and institutional deployments of power. (Foucault, 1991: 27; Rabinow ed. 1984)

Second, he further traced how systems of knowledge, deployed in this way, have the ability to constitute powerful fields of reality—whether in the shape and character of institutions, the arrangement and flows of space, or the most private experiences of subjectivity, embodiment and being. Such fields will in turn be contested by differing power-knowledge formations which imply alternative forms of reality and being; between them ranges an endless conflict which is the very stuff of the modern social order. Thus he conceived power not as a static quantity which could be possessed, but as a set of relations which could only be exercised. In this sense power itself implies resistance and, however overwhelming it seems, is always at risk—not least because it rests on a hegemony of ideas as much as force; on the ability of particular metaphors to be translated into force and achieve transformations of the real. In this way the political use and effectiveness of rhetoric—what Aristotle described as finding ‘the available means of persuasion’—becomes important, given that rhetoric is the bridge between language and force. (Dixon, 1971: 14)

Of most relevance for this study were Foucault’s discoveries of the techniques for the management and production of disciplined (or what Toby Miller has called ‘well-tempered’) selves, and the links between these and other techniques which aimed for the management of populations through government and economic policy. In his book
Security as International Theory

Discipline and Punish Foucault combined his analysis of how the human sciences developed ‘man’ as an object of knowledge, with an historical study of the development of new technologies of power which took the body and the self as their object. Foucault demonstrated how in workplaces, schools, bureaucracies and communities the body is a site crossed and recrossed by moral, medical, political and technical discourses which, in their aggregation (and in the individual’s own struggle with them) give shape and form to subjectivity. (Foucault, 1991; Miller, 1993)

This process involves the application of material techniques (forms of training, coercion, observation and management) and, most effectively of all, the application of a discourse which can tie the regulation of behaviours to the innermost core of the self. It is in the social, economic, cultural and political constitution of the individual subject that truth and power most effectively coalesce. This explains why discourses of security have emphasised representations of fear, threat and identity—representations which provoke immediate emotional responses and initiate a process where complex political abstractions can be easily assimilated into the structure of subjectivity and recalled as truths of the self. Thus the following chapter analyses security as a political technology which links such ‘individualising’ techniques to larger operations of power which seek to shape the nation-state and the vast spaces and flows of geopolitics. In this movement from the individual to the total, security adds a seductive appeal to its rhetoric of fear and threat, imagining the nation and the international order as higher, progressive manifestations of our very being.

Genealogy is the form of history which is able to work at this level, to get below the immediate threshold of events and representations to the underlying systems of knowledge and strategy which are in play. Thus this study is a history of events in truth and power—a history of discourses, seen not in terms of a long development towards perfection, but in terms of the complex emergence, development and inter-relation of knowledges, norms, institutions, techniques and subjectivities. (Foucault, 1977a) Its aim is to explore security’s conditions of possibility—the political, cultural and discursive space in which it could emerge, and the space it would in turn enable and continue to transform. To explore how it is possible to think security in any particular time and place, and how security in turn makes it possible to think and act within a given political and cultural community. Only then, aware of security’s cunning and limits, might it be genuinely possible to recast its terms in the way writers like Tickner have envisioned. Prior to that, this study’s task is more modest—to seize security from its emotive rush into the future, its narration as a disciplinary task, and its dangerous call to being as a simultaneous blackmail of safety and realisation. It is not as if we can force time to stop, but we can slow it down, and reconfigure the present as a space of suspicion and displacement where accountability can be forced on institutions who conceal their operations behind the veil and ultimate promise of security. Yet security’s
Security as International Theory

historical force, and its ontological rigidity, makes this a formidable challenge. This demands that we first pursue security into the depths of our political thought—we must understand its animating function at the very base of our culture.
Two
Security and Government

Maybe the [task] nowadays is not to discover what we are, but to refuse what we are. We have to...get rid of the political 'double-bind,' which is the simultaneous individualization and totalization of modern power structures. The conclusion could be that the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try to liberate the individual from the state and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state.

Michel Foucault, 1984: 22.

This chapter turns on the assertion that security derives its enormous cultural power from its place at the centre of modern political thought—at the centre of a thought which, after first establishing the founding myths of modern political society (in its emergence from the state of nature), has further sought to think the juridical basis and function of the state, its enabling relation to a broader cultural and economic modernity, and to the imagination of modern forms of political subjectivity. Just as Foucault sought, through the study of governmentality, to trace the emergence of simultaneously totalising and individualising forms of state power—a technique he called ‘the political double-bind’—the chapter argues that security occupies a key enabling position at their junction; and furthermore, that it has been a key term in the historical emergence of this unique strategic combination. Thus security needs to be placed alongside a range of other economic, political, technological, philosophic and scientific developments as one of the central constitutive events of our modernity, and remains one of its essential underpinnings.

Using Foucault’s lectures on government and reason as a theoretical template, the chapter traces the emergence of security as a mediation between state and citizen, from the 16th and 17th century doctrines of raison d’etat, to the writing of Hobbes, Locke, Bentham and finally Hegel. This matches the development of new strategies for exercising state power with the arguments which laid its juridical and philosophical basis in modern understandings of sovereignty, right, international society and human progress. It is my contention that these thinkers form a continuum in which we can
Security and Government

trace a simultaneous essentialising and universalising of state, society and subject into an entirely rigid ontological form which can barely be called into question. Any attempt to critically rethink security must first deal with this rigidity—with not only security’s embeddedness in this matrix, but its animating power for the whole machine. It is not to argue that such writings perfectly mirror the rhetorics of contemporary politics (their articulation would need to be described genealogically) but rather that they illuminate the deep-seated assumptions central to many contemporary state forms and political discourses. The chapter seeks to demonstrate how, through a prolonged act of forgetting, they form a political condition of the real and thus have come to appear essential; but also how as such, they are in fact thoroughly historical and contingent events of political imagination, albeit with momentous material consequences.

THE EMERGENCE OF SECURITY: TERRITORY, DISCIPLINE, POPULATION

In a 1978 lecture at the Collège de France, Governmentality, Foucault traced the emergence of security within Western political thought through two linked developments: the first, during the 16th and 17th centuries, of the administrative and governmental apparatuses of the territorial monarchies, of mercantilism, statistics and the Cameralist’s ‘science of police’; and second, of what he called an ‘anti-Machiavellian literature’ which sought to formulate an ‘art of government’ against that narrower focus on the Prince, his sovereignty and preservation. Security and its associated problems of ‘government’ lie, he argued,

at the crossroads of two processes: the one which, shattering the structures of feudalism, leads to the establishment of the great territorial, administrative and colonial states; and that totally different movement which, with the Reformation and Counter-Reformation, raises the issue of how one must be spiritually ruled and led on this earth in order to achieve eternal salvation. (Foucault, 1991c: 87-88)

What he was implying here were two linked modes of ‘government’: a new set of understandings and techniques for the government of states, and for the government of individuals and smaller social units like families, workplaces, and schools. Foucault highlighted two key features of Machiavelli’s famous study which formed a counterpoint for the new theories of ‘government’. The first was that the book’s central problematic, the link between the Prince, his subjects and territory, was a ‘purely synthetic one..there is no fundamental, essential, natural and juridical connection between the prince and his principality’. This link was thus eternally fragile, vulnerable
Security and Government

to both external enemies and from within, from 'subjects who have no a priori reason to accept his rule'. Second, this implied that the objective of the exercise of power was 'to reinforce, strengthen and protect the principality, but with this last understood not to mean the objective ensemble of its subjects and territory, but rather the Prince’s relation with what he owns'. (Foucault, 1991c: 90)

The art of government was thus distinguished from the drama of possession, and implied both the 'government' of individuals and social institutions and the designation of new techniques and objects of power that would emerge within the problem of 'governing the state as a whole'. Between these realms was posed an essential continuity: the more discrete forms of governing were still 'internal to the state or society' and the task of the art of government was to establish them within a continuum which worked 'in both an upwards and a downwards direction.' The downwards line, which 'transmits to individual behaviour and the running of the family the same principles as the good government of the state', was at this time beginning to be called police.¹ The upwards line meant the application of principles of self- and familial government to the conduct of the state’s affairs; we can also locate it in the emergence of what Foucault elsewhere discussed as reason of state. Foucault cited three 17th century definitions, of which Botero’s was the most succinct: ‘A perfect knowledge of the means through which states form, strengthen themselves, endure, and grow.’ (1991c: 91; 1988: 75)

This implied the development of specific forms of knowledge whose object was the state itself, rather than the uncertain relation between the prince and his realm. In a formulation echoed powerfully in Bentham, and which would be central to the general economic function of security, Foucault argued that reason of state implied a rationality of government which could ensure that the state be infinitely extended in time:

The aim of such an art of governing is to reinforce the state itself...This idea is a very important one. It is bound up with a new historical outlook. Indeed, it implies that states are realities which must hold out for an indefinite length of historical time—and in a disputed geographical area. [This] presupposes the constitution of certain type of knowledge. Government is only possible if the strength of the state is known; it can thus be sustained. (1988: 76-77)

¹ Police could be characterised as the meeting point of raison d'état and discipline: as Colin Gordon explains, 'reason of state's problem of calculating detailed actions appropriate to an infinity of unforeseeable and contingent circumstances is met by the creation of an exhaustively detailed knowledge of the governed reality of the state itself, extending (at least in aspiration) to touch the existences of its individual members.' Also, foreshadowing political economy, police aims for prosperity which is 'the principle which identifies the state with its subjects': 'it emphasises that the real basis of the state's wealth and power lies in its population, in the strength and productivity of all and each.' (Gordon, 1991: 10)
Security and Government

An analogous development was the extension of the idea of *economy* and its introduction into a general political practice: the invention of ‘political economy’ as we now understand it. Here Foucault cited Rousseau, who sought to derive from economy (which to that point had signified ‘the wise government of the family for the common welfare of all’) a principle for the general organisation of society: ‘To govern a state will therefore mean...exercising towards all its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods.’ (1991c: 92) Foucault related this to a shift, in the work of Guillaume de La Perrière, from a focus on sovereignty as a rule over territory to the government of *things*, or ‘a sort of complex of men and things’ which would incorporate territory into a set of economic relations:

The things in which government is to be concerned with are in fact men, but men in their relations, their links, their imbrication with those other things which are wealth, resources, means of subsistence, the territory with its specific qualities, climate, irrigation, fertility etc.; men in their relation to customs, habits, ways of acting and thinking etc.; lastly, men in their relation to accidents and misfortunes such as famine, epidemics, death etc. (1991c: 93)

Foucault argued that in order to fully realise this objective the art of government had had, through a difficult and lengthy historical process, to substantially recast its ties to the model of sovereignty and its basis in the narrow economic model of the family, which ‘was unlikely to be able to respond adequately to the importance of territorial acquisitions and royal finance.’ Thus an important new object of politics emerged: population.

Statistics, the science that sought knowledge about the state in all its elements and sweep, now discovered that population had its own ‘regularities..rate of death and diseases, cycles of scarcity etc’; that with population came new objects of medicine, labour and wealth; and that population had analogous *economic effects* through its movements, customs and activities. The family was thus recast as ‘an element internal to population, and as a fundamental instrument in its government.’ We can see here the convergence with the phenomenon Foucault has elsewhere described, the linked development of the human sciences and the social technologies of discipline which enabled a more detailed and flexible production of subjectivity: ‘Discipline was never more important or more valorised than at the moment when it become important to manage a population.’ (1991c: 98-102)

Political economy, then, ‘arises out of the perception of new networks of continuous and multiple relations between population, territory and wealth’ and out of the development of new techniques of intervention which, I would argue, become by
Security and Government

the twentieth century a field encompassing the whole task of government—linking welfare, defence, economics, health, immigration, communications, science, education and law. Sovereignty is then rearticulated in the terms of Rousseau’s attempt, in The Social Contract, to divine ‘a general principle of government which allows room both for a juridical principle of sovereignty and for the elements through which an art of government can be defined and characterized.’ What forms is a triangle of rationalities linking sovereignty, discipline and government, which together is governmentality—a powerful ‘ensemble’

formed by the institutions, procedures, analyses and reflections, the calculations and tactics that allow the exercise of this very specific albeit complex form of power, which has as its target population, as its principle form of knowledge political economy, and as its essential technical means apparatuses of security. (Foucault, 1991c: 101-2)

Foucault’s Collège de France lecture on Security, which preceded the lecture on Governmentality discussed here, is not available in English translation, but brief sections are quoted in Colin Gordon’s introduction to the 1991 collection subtitled Studies in Governmentality. There Gordon emphasises the significance of security as a development in Foucault’s work, which he thought was ‘one of the most important subsequent extensions to the framework of analysis he uses in Discipline and Punish. Gordon argues that in this lecture Foucault treats security not merely as a self-evident object of political power, but ‘as a specific principle of political method and practice, distinct alike from those of law, sovereignty and discipline, and capable of various modes of combination with these other principles and practices within diverse governmental configurations.’ He goes onto argue that for Foucault security, from the 18th century on, ‘tends increasingly to become the dominant component of modern governmental rationality: we live today not so much in a Rechtsstaat or disciplinary society as in a society of security.’ (Gordon, 1991: 20)

A significant source for Foucault appears to be Jeremy Bentham, which justifies resuming this discussion of security and governmentality alongside that of Bentham’s Principles of Civil Life, which powerfully links the idea of security with reason of state, the ‘science of police’ and, most significantly, with the perpetuation of capitalism as a modern social form. This will be preceded by a discussion of Hobbes and Locke, whose work establishes security as a key signifier in the myth of the emergence of the modern state form (the Commonwealth) from the state of nature, and thus makes security indispensable to modern practices of liberalism and sovereignty. These would in turn feed into that triangular relation of governmentality which aimed for the general government of the state as a regime of prosperity.
If Foucault emphasised the intense problematisation of sovereignty within the emergence of an 'art of government', I believe that the work of Hobbes and Locke countered this problem exactly in the terms posed by Rousseau (of reconciling a juridical model of sovereignty with the new rationalities of 'government') and in so doing achieved a more powerful fusion of both. What they anticipated was the kind of triple articulation Foucault sought to highlight—between the juridical basis of the state and civil society expressed by sovereignty, the detailed tactics of individualisation represented by discipline, and the regulation of the economic phenomena of population. If we resist the tendency in Foucault’s lecture to draw such strict lines between legally codified and uncodified power (‘sovereignty’ and ‘government’), we might suggest that sovereignty now had discursive effects which extend to subjectivity and enhance governmentality’s more diffuse model of power. In particular Hobbes and Locke, through their narrative of the emergence of the modern political society, laid out the discursive limits and conditions for the citizen as a form of subjectivity and bound it to the state as an essential figure. Sovereignty became not merely a juridical basis for the state as a concept and set of institutions, but a rhetorical trope which persuades the ‘citizen’ of the state’s inevitability, necessity, and superiority. Security was a key figure in this trope—addressed to subjectivity as a promise of protection and adjudication, and to population as a trans-societal task of multiplying prosperity. All this reposed on a powerful political humanism, centred on the body, in which state and citizen find their identity and ontological ground—a circular movement which begins with the liberty and reason of men in their singularity, imagines the state as the common body politic of men in their collectivity, and returns as an enhanced promise of individual freedom within the now safer bounds of the state’s supreme rationality.

While it is clear that, of the two, Locke’s was a more powerful and contemporary version of liberalism (containing as it does a trenchant critique of absolute power, which can be compared to Hobbes’ ambiguous view of democracy and extensive defence of the rights of the sovereign) they both began from the same founding myth—the emergence of political society from the state of nature. This demands both a price, and brings with a greater reward: in his Second Treatise of Government Locke asked, if in the state of nature man is ‘absolute Lord of his own person and possessions, equal to the greatest, and subject to no Body, why will he part with his freedom?’ The short answer is security:

although in the state of nature he hath such a right, yet the enjoyment of it is very uncertain, and constantly exposed to the Invasion of others. For all being Kings
Security and Government

as much as he, every Man his Equal, and the greater part no strict Observers of Equity and Justice, the enjoyment of the property he has in this state is very unsafe, very unsecure. This makes him willing to quit a Condition, which, however free, is full of fears and continual dangers: And 'tis not without reason that he seeks out, and is willing to join in society with others who are already united, or have a mind to unite for the mutual preservation of their Lives, Liberties and Estates, which I call by the general name property. (Locke, 1960: 368)

For Locke the state of nature, which is defined by the lack of any overarching authority able to adjudicate disputes, as rapidly descends into a 'state of war' in which force is the only means of arbitration and in which there are no agreed and universal standards of justice. The great appeal of the political society is that 'every one of the Members hath quitted this natural power' and 'resigned it up into the hands of the Community'; thus they become 'one People, one Body Politick', which 'puts Men out of a state of nature into that of a Commonwealth...'. (Locke, 1960: 342-3)

Hobbes' description of this process in Leviathan, whilst virtually identical, was considerably more theatrical. For him the state of nature was by definition a state of war—because there is no single concept of right 'every man has a right to everything, even to one anothers body'; because there is no common power, 'there is no Law: where no Law, no Injustice. Force and Fraud are in warre the two Cardinall virtues...as long as this naturall Right of every man to every thing endureth, there can be no security to any man (how strong or wise soever he be) of living out the time which Nature ordinarily alloweth men to live.' The equality of men in the state of nature led only to a perpetual cycle of insecurity: '..where an invader hath no more to feare, than another man’s single power; if one plant, sow, build, or possess a convenient Seat, others may probably be expected to come prepared with forces united, to dispossesse, and deprive him, not only of the fruit of his labor, but also of his life, or liberty. And the Invader again is in the like danger of another.' (1985: 184-8) From this flowed the famous conclusion that

Whatsoever therefore is consequent to a time of Warre, where every man is Enemy to every man; the same is consequent to the time, wherein men live without other security, than what their own strength, and their own invention will furnish them withall. In such condition there is no place for Industry; because the fruit thereof is uncertain; and consequently no Culture of the Earth; no Navigation nor use of the commodities that may be imported by sea; no commodious Building; no instruments of moving and removing of things as require much force; no Knowledge of the face of the earth; no account of Time; no Arts; no
Letters; no Society; and which is worst of all, continuall feare, and danger of violent death; And the life of man, solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short. (1985: 186)

Aside from the infamous closing lines, this passage is highly important, providing a link from the myth of the state of nature to the fundamental promise and objectives of the state, which are not only to provide a means of protection for individuals but to enable a new kind of society to flourish. Here we can see security’s function at the threshold and fulcrum of our modernity—the birth of the Artificial Man, Leviathan, enables not merely the development of more efficient forms of governmental reason but new industrial and cultural possibilities in which the idea of a great and progressive civilisation—of the modern itself—can become real. In an echo of the continental theorists of reason of state, we hear the same themes of the strength and felicity of the state as a whole, the multiplication of its powers, allied to a founding myth of sovereignty as the higher unity of men in civil society. The Commonwealth is a ‘multitude united in one Person’; more than ‘Consent, or Concord’ but ‘a reall Unitie of them all’:

The only way to erect such a common power...is to conferre all their power and strength upon one man, or upon one Assembly of men, that may reduce all their Wills, by plurality of voices, into one Will: which is as much to say, to appoint one man, or Assembly of men, to beare their person; and every one to own, and acknowledge himselfe to be the Author of whatsoever he that so beareth their Person...and therein to submit their Wills, everyone to his Will, and their judgements, to his Judgement. (Hobbes, 1985: 227)

All their power and strength—here was the imaginary of not merely a new ‘productivity’ of power but an enormous quantitative revolution, expressed in the cover image of the book’s first edition in the British Museum: the crowned sovereign rising over his territories, head piercing the clouds, his body formed from the thousands of bodies subsumed within his own; the Mortall God to whom all are subject and of whom all Others are in awe. In this metaphor of the body politic was the problem of Machiavelli’s prince resolved: no longer a ‘synthetic’, vulnerable link between sovereign and subject but their absolute fusion and identity, in a chilling prophecy of Hegel’s merging of the subject with the unity of the One.2

2 Sovereignty secures the political rule of the One through the rules which regulate passage between the Sovereign’s acts and his role as the collective body politic of subjects. Hobbes emphasises that each man is Author of the Sovereign’s acts, which express his own will; he thus cannot complain about acts he himself has authored: ‘because to do Injury to oneselwe, is impossible.’ A more detailed mechanism is the rule of the majority, of which Locke writes: ‘For
Security and Government

The enormous political closure this achieves is demonstrated most powerfully in Hobbes’ introduction to *Leviathan*, in which the state is imagined as an immense natural machine, an ‘Artificial Man’ for whom to be torn apart is tantamount to annihilation:

For by Art is created that great LEVIATHAN called a COMMONWEALTH, or STATE which is but an Artificial Man in which the Soveraignty is an artificial Soul, as giving life and motion to the whole body; The Magistrates, and other officers of Judicature and Execution, artificial Joyns; Reward and Punishment (by which fastened to the seate of the soveraignty, every Joynt and member is moved to perform his duty) are the Nerves, that do they same in the Body Naturall; the Wealth and Riches of all the particular members, are the Strength; Salus Populi (the people’s safety) is Business; Counsellors, by whom all things needful for it to know are suggested unto it, are the Memory; Equity and Lawes, an artificial Reason and Will; Concord, Health; Sedition, Sickness; and Civill war, Death. (Hobbes, 1985: 81)

Here, in embryo, was the philosophical basis of the modern nationalisms whose darkest manifestations would be fascism, imperialism and genocide, and of the rhetorics and narratives of national identity which gave them signifying force. Here too was the basis for the state repression of critics and reformers (as seditious) and, most violently, for the elimination of minorities whose claims appear to threaten the state’s bodily integrity. Of course many nationalisms have been more benign, even a focus of identification for dispossessed or colonised peoples; yet what is common to all these experiences is an (unequal) exchange between security and difference, the imaginary of a greater collective power, or the need to conform with a demand for a single representative.

In cases such as the colonisation of Australia or the Americas the inability of indigenous peoples to conform with such a model of sovereignty was taken as a sign of backwardness and legitimated dispossession, as an image of security’s outside; while in various instances of decolonisation ‘freedom’ has been achieved only to yield to problems caused by the ethnic makeup of states or the abuse of power by the new elites. What becomes clear is that the constitution of sovereignty subsumes rather than

that which acts any Community, being only the consent of the individuals of it, and it being necessary to that which is one body to move one way; it is necessary the Body should move that way whither the greater force carries it...’. While Locke, in denying the sovereign any arbitrary exercise of power or ‘to destroy, enslave, or designedly to impoverish the subjects’, differs from Hobbes in the extent to which the sovereign can be immune from challenge or censure, they both retain a vision of the essential unity of state and subject and the necessary sacrifice of freedom for security. (Hobbes, 1985: 232; Locke, 1967: 350)
Security and Government

liberates (cultural, linguistic and political) differences, and that such unities would already be secured through the negative imagination of the Other. This economy is central to both this thought and the whole history of the West: the expansion, refinement and modernity of its civilisation. As the image of conflict is seemingly eliminated from the inside of the sovereign body, it is reconstituted as its essential and threatening outside, its very condition of possibility and thus its interior. Its function is one of self-definition, as Foucault wrote of madness for reason: 'the way in which a culture can determine in a massive, general form the difference that limits it.' (Foucault, 1973: xxiv)

This image of the Other was already present in Hobbes and Locke: first in the idea of the state of nature itself, as an essential realm of conflict where passions rule reason and insecurity is perpetual; second, in the division between reason and unreason, in which 'Children, Fools and Mad-men' cannot be the authors of their own or the sovereign’s actions, and thus not whole subjects; third, in the division between criminal and society, strictly established by the Law which conforms to reason and embodies the will of the people; and finally, in the division between savage and civilised. Hobbes wrote that whilst he did not believe that the state of war was always a general condition of life, the exception was 'the savage people in many places of America' who, ‘except the government of small Families, the concord of which dependeth on natural lust, have no government at all; and live at this day in that brutish manner..'. (Hobbes, 1985: 187-219; emphasis added)

Similarly Locke echoed that 'in many parts of America there was no Government at all' and, in an argument essential for the security-political economy relation evident in Bentham, developed an image of Indian backwardness on the basis of their imperfect use of labour. For Locke Labour (which was the ontological basis of property as the productive use of land) pivoted on an image of waste and impoverishment in the Indian’s failure to exploit the earth:

There cannot be a clearer demonstration of any thing, than several nations of the Americans are in this, who are rich in Land, and poor in all the Comforts of Life; whom Nature having furnished as liberally as any other people, with the materials of Plenty, i.e. a fruitful soil, apt to produce in abundance, what might serve for food, rayment, and delight; yet for want of improving it by labour, have

---

3 Hobbes argues that 'the names of Just, and Unjust, when they are attributed to men...signifie Conformity, or inconformity of manners, to Reason.' Similarly robbery and violence are 'Injuries to the Person of the Commonwealth' and that the men who so refuse to 'accommodate themselves to the rest' should 'be cast out of Society.' (1985: 206-9) Locke writes that 'in transgressing the law of nature, the Offender declares himselfe to live by another rule, than that of reason and common equity, which is that measure God has set to the actions of men, for their mutual security: and so he becomes dangerous to mankind, the tye, which is to secure them from injury and violence, being slighted and broken by him.' (1967: 290)
not one-hundredth part of the Conveniences we enjoy: And a King of a large and fruitful Territory there feeds, lodges, and is clad worse than a day Labourer in England. (Locke, 1967: 314-5)

For Locke a claim to property was only secured by land’s exploitation through labour: ‘As much Land as a man Tills, Plants, Improves, Cultivates, and can use the Product of, so much is his Property. He by his Labour does, as it were enclose the common.’ He further argued, in a crucial formulation, that the preservation of Property was itself the ‘chief end’ of ‘mens uniting into Commonwealths’, and was thus the prime object of security. Property included mens’ ‘lives, liberties and estates’; all such possessions found their origins in a man’s ‘property in his own person’ which is brought out of the state of nature through the ‘Labour of his body’. This was in turn secured via the Other, within the boundary between reason and unreason: ‘God gave the world to men in Common; but since he gave it them for their own benefit, and the greatest conveniences of life they were capable to draw from it, it cannot be supposed he meant it should always remain uncommon and uncultivated. He gave it to the use of the Industrious and Rational.’ (1967: 305-9; emphasis added)

Thus we can see, in embryo, the idea of subjectivity as realisation upon which Hegel would base a philosophy; what Locke also achieved was a new ontological condition for subjectivity in work. Subjectivity was now an economic category, subsumed within a movement of progress and overcoming which would be quintessentially modern. This was also true for his discussion of money (an invention which allowed men to enlarge upon their property and conceive the economic as an idea of the future) which again reposed on the backward Other of the non-economic Indian: ‘...in the beginning of the World was America, and more so than that is now: for no such thing as money was anywhere known.’ (1967: 319)

The temporal possibility for the economy was thus secured by a long chain of oppositions—between the commonwealth and state of nature, the criminal and society, the economic and non-economic, and the savage and civilised. As Pierre Clastres has argued this was to establish the modern within a founding ethnocentrism: within ‘the complementary conviction that history is a one way progression, that every society is condemned to enter into that history and pass through the stages which lead from savagery to civilisation.’ (1989: 190) Security was what would make this history possible, in all its promise and horror, having already achieved an indivisible sovereign in the metaphor of the body-politic, an essential link between sovereign and subject in security, a new ontological ground for subjectivity in work and for property in subjectivity. From here political economy—and modernity as an inexorable historical progression—became thinkable. Closely anticipating the phenomenon of
governmentality, security was emerging as a form of reason which aimed to liberate the economic as the goal of a general government of men.

SECURITY AND THE FUTURE: BENTHAM, LIBERALISM, GEOPOLITICS

Jeremy Bentham's *Principles Of The Civil Code* could be said to straddle this historical moment, within a context where the centrality of raison d'état was giving way to a form of liberalism in which the linkages between reason of state, the art of government and political economy were more problematic, yet no less necessary. The Cameralists' 'science of police' had already formulated a relation between totalising and individualising power which had as its objective a general prosperity—alongside the developments of mercantilism and political arithmetic, government as a system of 'economic sovereignty' was emerging. At this point, Gordon argues, 'the economy was a specific but not yet (as for liberalism) an autonomous form of rationality.'

Foucault sees Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations* as then marking out the point at which the Cameralists' notion of an equivalence between state and economy is placed under stress. Political economy becomes a knowledge which is 'lateral to' the art of governing but cannot itself constitute government: as a discourse which proclaims its objective knowledge of commercial processes, political economy 'inaugurates a new mode of objectification of governed reality, whose effect is to resituate governmental reason within a newly complicated, open and unstable politico-epistemic configuration.' (Gordon, 1991: 11-16; emphasis added)

As I will argue later in relation to more contemporary policy formations, this new strategic complexity led to a resuscitation of Cartesian approaches which would first acknowledge such instabilities yet attempt to control them through the certitude of method; and second, in a further ironic twist, would emphasise instability to buttress established practices of state. Instability and objectivity—in both a political and epistemological sense—would become dangerous twins in the political refusal to accept uncertainty. These dilemmas would also re-emerge in the crisis of Keynesianism and the rise of economic rationalism in the 1970s, and in a related crisis in foreign policy practice and the global political economy which was a focus for theorists like Keohane and Nye. Yet neither Keynesianism nor monetarism would constitute an absolute break from Smith, but were rather competing attempts at economic regulation within the complex space he had outlined.

Smith's 'invisible hand' marked a shift from reason of state in that it sought to place limits on governmental intervention in contrast to an earlier emphasis on its expansion, and conceived the economy as an autonomous realm with its own laws which worked, ostensibly, for the public good. *Laissez-faire* then, writes Foucault,
Security and Government

was an injunction 'not to impede the course of things, but to ensure the course of natural and necessary modes of regulation, to make regulations which permit natural regulation to operate.' (Gordon, 1991: 17) In twentieth century foreign economic policy we can then see the combination of two modes: a kind of soft mercantilism wherein governments use aid programs and diplomacy to promote trade and contracts for the corporations domiciled within their state, and a form of 'regulation of natural regulation' which takes as its focus infrastructure, labor and foreign investment law, cost structures and trade regimes which have a more general effect on business activity and profits. Nor should we forget that western governments, most notably the US, have used military intervention and sponsored coups in order to improve the business climate in third world states. Governmental rhetoric would then portray such policies, not as a narrow intervention on behalf of powerful private interests, but as in the 'national interest'; for the welfare of all, the good of the 'economy' as a whole.

Bentham's *Civil Code* appeared in the space Smith carved out, resuscitating security as a fundamental societal objective within the openness and uncertainty of this new political configuration. It began from the same premises as Hobbes and Locke, which posited a founding contractual relation between state and subject in the exchange of freedom for security: 'It is impossible to create rights, to impose obligations, to protect the person, life, reputation, property, subsistence, or liberty itself, but at the expense of liberty.' This was attenuated by the new, lassais-faire liberalism which demanded that any law must meet a dual test: that 'not only is there a specific reason in favour of this law, but also that this reason is more weighty than the general reason against any law.' Similarly liberty, as an ontological given and a general basis for subjectivity, reposed on the same system of exclusion: 'Do we not say that liberty should be taken away from fools, and wicked persons, because they abuse it?' (1837: 301)

Bentham began *The Civil Code* by asserting that the principle object of the legislator ought to be the 'happiness of the body politic.' This happiness consists of four objects—subsistence, abundance, equality, and security—of which security was the most important. Security guaranteed all the others, contained them, and as such designated acts and persons dangerous to them: 'actions hurtful to security, when prohibited by the laws, receive the character of crimes.' *Either security or crime*—it may be surprising to consider that within this brief, claustrophobic formula lay the basis of a whole system of order. Furthermore Bentham made the crucial and far-reaching argument that, as a guarantee of all the objects of government, security ensured their survival through time:

Among these objects of the law, security is the only one which necessarily *embraces the future*: subsistence, abundance, equality, may be regarded for a
moment only; but security implies extension in point of time, with respect to all the benefits to which it is applied. Security is therefore the principal object. (Bentham, 1873: 302; emphasis added)

In a prophetic convergence of enlightenment thought with economic liberalism, government now took on a *temporal* dimension: the future was now a thinkable space in political discourse, and a general progressive movement could be imagined as an essential condition of human society. Security itself, as a promise of continuing safety and abundance, was the principle which would make the future possible. In particular, Bentham argued, security protects Man’s *expectation* of the future:

> It is by means of this we are enabled to form a general plan of conduct; it is by means of this, that the successive moments which compose the duration of life are not like insulated and independent points, but become parts of a continuous whole. Expectation is a chain which unites our present and our future existence, and passes beyond ourselves to the generations which follow us. The sensibility of the individual is prolonged through all the links of this chain. The principle of security comprehends the maintenance of all these hopes... (1837: 308)

Above all, as expectation the future was an *economic* principle, linking the construction of subjectivity as interest and desire with the general increase in prosperity modern economics calls growth. In a similar way to Smith’s ‘invisible hand’, and in accordance with the new model of liberal governmentality as the regulation of nature, expectation became ‘a new principle of action’:

> The attractions of pleasure, the succession of wants, the active desire of adding to our happiness, will, under the protection of security, incessantly produce new efforts after new acquisitions. Wants and enjoyments, those *universal agents in society*, after having raised the first ears of corn, will by degrees erect the granaries of abundance, always increasing and always full. Desires extend themselves with the means of gratification; the horizon is enlarged in proportion as we advance... (1837: 304; emphasis added)

This in turn effected new modes of government which linked discipline with population, individualising with totalising power—a power which, seemingly without coercion, could produce individuals as subjects of their own desire while integrating them into a much broader system of regulation. Elsewhere Bentham contrasted ‘the doleful motive of punishment’ with the ‘gentle motive of reward’, the apparatus of law with ‘the gentle liberty of choice’, and argued that labour (itself a condition of
security and government
economic subjectivity in Locke) is 'so easy and so light when animated by hope...'.
(Bentham, 1873: 312)
This 'uncoerced', economic form of liberal individualism generated what Foucault has called 'the subject of interest', and introduced a contradiction into governmental reason: while it made individuals more accessible to power, it also distanced them from it; forming a rhetoric in which, as Bentham pointed out, security also guarantees 'political liberty' against 'the injustice of the members of the government.' This introduced what Foucault described as a 'dissonance of rationalities' between the juridical form of government implied by sovereignty and the more diffuse and accidental (i.e. allegedly natural) reconciliation of individual and societal interests in liberalism. Liberalism as an art of government began, he argues, when it could formulate the 'incompatibility between the non-totalisable multiplicity which characterises subjects of interest, and the totalising unity of the juridical sovereign.' This entailed, according to Gordon, a new practice of government which neither 'excis[es] the market from the field of sovereignty, [n]or downgrad[es] the economic sovereign into a mere functionary of political economy...What liberalism undertakes is the construction of a complex domain of governmentality, within which economic and juridical subjectivity can alike be situated as relative moments, partial aspects of a more englobing element.' (Gordon, 1991: 21-3; Bentham, 1873: 302) This domain Foucault locates in the concept of civil society, which he understands as 'an instrument or correlate of a technology of government' in which economic man is

the abstract, ideal, purely economic point which populates the real density, fullness and complexity of civil society; or alternatively, civil society is the concrete ensemble within which these abstract points, economic men, need to be positioned in order to be made adequately manageable. (cited in Gordon, 1991: 23)

This generated a political problem: to discover a form of government which, recognising that no sovereignty can fully comprehend the totality of the economy, or regulate every act which may have an economic effect, must still seek to. It was at the appearance of this problem that Foucault sited the junction of security, discipline and

---

4 Here we must resist liberalism's claim to have discovered principles for regulating a 'natural' and 'autonomous' economic field: while liberalism may have understood its complexity, the strategic difference between 'public' and 'private' economic decisions, and the need to refine a mode of state regulation which enables them, it is still a mode of regulation without which the economy cannot function. Casting aside the propaganda of economic rationalism we can instead understand the state as providing an enabling regulatory and juridical basis for economic transactions, corporate structures and capital raising, along with crucial material infrastructure such as roads, ports, communications and energy. Further, as Foucault's discussion of 'the subject of interest' makes clear, liberalism was seeking to produce an ideal economic subject, rather than discover a hidden and essential propensity in men.
Security and Government

population; a mix of rationalities which might more fully grasp this uncertain political space. The basic object of governmental rationality became to establish ‘modes of state intervention whose function is to assure the security of those natural phenomena, economic processes and the intrinsic phenomena of population...hence liberty is registered not only as a right of individuals legitimately to oppose the power, the abuses and usurpations of the sovereign, but also now as an indispensable element of governmental rationality itself.’ This perfectly describes the function of the subject of interest, whose ‘choice’ and desire for acquisition becomes at once an economic motor and a strategic handhold for power.5 Foucault argues that Bentham’s economic man, who seeks happiness and avoids pain, is an example par excellence of an applied rationality of security, ‘a theme for political inventiveness.’ (Gordon, 1991: 20)

With inventiveness came a drive for flexibility, mobility and vigilance: security, suggests Foucault, addresses itself to a series of possible and probable events; it calculates the comparative costs of actions and means; and does not absolutely prescribe between the permitted and forbidden, ‘but by the specification of an optimal mean within a tolerable bandwidth of variation.’ This last element may well be more utopian than real, the dream of a flexibility power simply has not had. A twentieth century survey might emphasise, rather, the great binary divisions with which states have sought to secure their identities and manipulate the hearts of their citizens—whether in the history of race, economics, or dying imperialisms, the defence of absolutes and the dream of purification has washed the earth in blood many times over. (Gordon, 1991: 20) Instead, what becomes overwhelming in security is vigilance. This is already apparent in The Civil Code, in which Bentham declared ‘Economy has...many enemies’:

Cunning and Injustice underhandedly conspire to appropriate its fruits; Insolence and Audacity plot to seize them by open force. Hence Security, always tottering, always threatened, never at rest, lives in the midst of snares. It requires in the legislator, vigilance continually sustained, and power always in action, to defend it against his constantly reviving crowd of adversaries. (Bentham, 1837: 307)

5 Within this idea of liberal subjectivity as a theme for political inventiveness, discipline combines the increasing visibility of ‘population’ with the privatisation of control—to factory owners, churches and schools—along with even more subtle mechanisms which work at the level of the soul, interpolating subjects as simultaneously desiring consumers, moral individuals and fearful citizens. (See Gordon, 1991: 26-29) In liberalism this requires a difficult management of liberty so that it neither frustrates economic freedom nor generates threats to societal order: Bentham glosses the problem by splitting liberty between rights and obligations: rights are not extended unless obligations to the state are met. Kant's essay What Is Enlightenment?, with its themes of political 'maturity', also addresses the same set of dilemmas. (Bentham, 1837: 301; Kant, 1784; see also Foucault's essay on Kant (1984a) and Dreyfus and Rabinow, 1986)
Security and Government

One might suggest that the new, open space of liberalism had engendered a new paranoia: power, always under threat, always at risk, must now be constantly in action; striving for the absolute—for perfect security, perfect economy, perfect happiness—it is seized with restlessness and fear. This is the theme of a new productivity of political power which simultaneously reaches into the heart of the citizen and multiplies its own spatial reach—it seems no accident that both Bentham and Smith write at the height of the European imperialisms, within which the discursive imagination of the twentieth century (global trade, geopolitics, war, and technological progress) was born.

In describing this productivity Foucault emphasises the simultaneous individualisation and totalisation of governmental power: discipline and desire addressed to individuals, bio-power addressed to populations, in a perpetual feedback and combination. To these, however, we must add geopolitics as the form of power which combined these rationalities with the vast lusts of modern imperialism. By the mid-twentieth century geopolitics had become the practice of security par excellence: a spatialising rationality of power which sought the control of territories and populations (as both economic resources and strategic possessions) within a perpetually dangerous and contested arena, through the interdependent production of domestic and transnational political space. Notwithstanding the fascist imperialisms of the 1930s, we could thus characterise geopolitics as a liberal philosophy of global intervention, which links increasingly global issues of economic management with domestic policy formations across the whole of government. The domestic and international become fused spaces through a whole series of interlinked processes: of domestic and foreign economic policy, transnational business and trade, or the raising of armies for imperial operations with images of fear and otherness which simultaneously secure and rigidify domestic identities. As global influence becomes conceivable, the inter-relation of political economy, nationalism and the Other become central to security as a vector and rationality of power, within a time that is firmly our own.

Thus in security vigilance, paranoia and absolutism coalesce: the postwar American national security state, with its ferocious anticommunism, its vast military deployments and its endeavour to build and strengthen a ‘global’ economy (at least outside the communist bloc), is perhaps the most powerful example. Australia shared these assumptions and sought close integration with the United States’ geopolitical strategy,

---

6 Foucault outlined bio-power in ‘The Right of Death and Power Over Life’, the final chapter of The History of Sexuality (Vol. 1). He characterises its emergence, from the seventeenth century, as a shift from the sovereign’s right to kill treasonous persons to ‘the calculated management of life’ focused around two poles: discipline and the body as machine, and the body of the species—all the opaque processes of public health and population. With it came a mutation in power, echoed in Bentham: ‘the growing importance assumed by the action of the norm, at the expense of the juridical system of the law...a power whose task is to take charge of life requires continuous corrective and regulatory mechanisms. It is no longer a matter of bringing death into play in the field of sovereignty, but of distributing the living in the domain of value and utility.’ (1987: 144)
Security and Government

particularly in Asia. The combination of such absolutism with the rigid demarcations of anticomunism was already visible in The Civil Code, in which a hostility to socialism was posited as an ineradicable principle of security as prosperity. Even though equality was listed as a goal of legislation, Bentham wrote, it must not be favoured ‘except in cases in which it does not injure security’:

...if property were overthrown with the direct intention of establishing equality of fortune, the evil would be irreparable: no more security, no more industry, no more abundance; society would relapse into the savage state from which it has arisen. (Bentham, 1837: 312)

These are strong words, which lie at the heart of the liberal philosophy of government. A reconciliation of security and equality can only be achieved gradually, and without coercion, through the natural processes of growth and prosperity.\(^7\) To do otherwise is to exchange ‘the gentle motive of reward’ for ‘the doleful motive of punishment’, and thus abandon the search for less coercive—and thus more effective—modes of subjectification; to ensure that the ‘prospects of benevolence and concord, which have seduced so many ardent minds..are only the chimeras of the imagination’. The passage, perhaps unsurprisingly, also repeated the Lockean formulation which posited economic progress on the movement away from a ‘savage’, non-economic Other.\(^8\) (1837: 307-12)

Thus by the beginning of the nineteenth century the political and ontological architecture of security was firmly established, and was being slowly refined. All its elements—sovereignty, the other, geopolitics, economic man—were in place, finding productive new articulations, and must be considered essential to the vast industrial, economic and technological changes that were gathering pace under the aegis of the modern. The work of Hegel, close in time to Bentham’s, refined such liberalism by developing a philosophy which self-consciously understood the future as an entry into the radically new temporal space of the modern. Taking up the idea of security

---

\(^7\) In an early version of the idea of trickle-down growth, Bentham argued that ‘in a nation which prospers by agriculture, manufactures and commerce, there is a continual progress towards equality. If the laws do not oppose it, if they do not maintain monopolies, if they do not restrain trade and its exchanges, if they do not permit entails, large properties will be seen, without effort, without revolutions, without shocks, to subdivide themselves little by little, and a much greater number of individuals will participate in the advantage of moderate fortunes.’ A further mechanism for equality was a levy on property after death or restrictions on its distribution. (Bentham, 1837: 312-3)

\(^8\) At the outset of his discussion of security, Bentham wrote that ‘this inestimable good is the distinctive mark of civilization: it is entirely the work of the laws...In order rightly to consider this great benefit of the Laws, it is only necessary to consider the condition of savages. They struggle without ceasing against famine, which sometimes cuts off in a few days whole nations; rivalry with respect to the means of subsistence, produces among them most cruel wars; and, like the most ferocious beasts, men pursue men, that they may feed on one another.’ (1837: 307-12)
maintaining economic subjectivity—and thus prosperity—infinity in time, Hegel would develop it into a general principle of human progress.

HEGEL: SECURITY AS REALISATION

Hegel drew upon and expanded the range of this thought by capturing a range of influential discursive currents flowing around the industrial revolution and the political and philosophical events of the European enlightenment. His work intervened, in a political sense, at the point where enlightenment rationalism and the liberal problem of government coincide: lifting liberal ideas of freedom and right into a philosophical universalism which—for our purposes—powerfully illuminates the ontological structure of modern nationalisms, the forms of subjectivity they engender, and the essential and negative role of the Other for their thought. In particular he developed a formal model for discourses which would attempt to reconcile liberal political economy with a strong image of the nation-state.

His influential contribution was to understand the uncertain liberal political space between state and economy as uniquely and self-consciously modern. The modern was both a radically new space and, paradoxically, one which drew upon the past if only to supersede it—what characterised modernity was the idea of the future, as Bentham anticipated, the acceleration of change and events, of time over space. In his preface to the Phenomenology of Spirit Hegel wrote that

it is not difficult to see that ours is a birth time and a transition to a new era. Spirit has broken with the world it has hitherto inhabited and imagined, and is of a mind to submerge it in the past, and in the labour of its own transformation...The frivolity and boredom which unsettle the established order, the vague foreboding of something unknown, these are the heralds of approaching change. The gradual crumbling that left unaltered the face of the whole is cut short by a sunburst which in one flash illuminates the features the new world. (Hegel, 1977: 6)

The persuasive power of this thinking cannot be underestimated: it underlies powerful contemporary ideas of technological and scientific change as advance, of economic change as development, of political rights and values as universal, and of a generalised movement of human progress and culmination which is driven by and unites them all. Hegel combined metaphors of organic growth (Spirit proceeded like the growth of a tree or a child) with a grand religiosity in which Spirit demanded
He argued that this idea of modernity as a break with the past created, along with new possibilities and horizons, uncertainty and loss—having sundered its foundations and ‘the immediacy of faith’, and having gone ‘beyond the satisfaction and security of the certainty that consciousness then had, of its reconciliation with the essential being’, Spirit had ‘lost its essential life.’ Philosophy’s task then was to recover ‘through its agency that lost sense of solid and essential being.’ (1977: 4)

This was echoed in Reinhart Koselleck’s argument that modernity is characterised by an increasing separation of the ‘space of experience’ from ‘the horizon of expectation’: ‘modernity is first understood as a new age from the time that expectations have distanced themselves from the space of all previous experience.’ This meant that older forms of traditional life (the peasant or the craftsman) are replaced by an experience of progress that lends expectation a ‘historically new quality, constantly subject to being overlaid with utopian conceptions.’ (cited in Habermas, 1993: 12)

Expectation begins to take over, and thus engenders an idea of the future which subjectivity will experience as desire, as lack, as an always postponed drive for fulfilment. This alone constitutes an enormously powerful technology of subjectivity for any system which can appropriate it: of economic subjectivity as individual consumption or corporate acquisition, or political subjectivity as a malleable yearning for the infinite.

As Hegel recognised, however, the increasing distance of expectation from experience generated uncertainty and instability: Koselleck describes it as a loss of political clarity, quoting de Tocqueville’s remark that ‘As the past ceases to illuminate the future, the mind moves forward in darkness.’ Gesturing towards Hegel’s attempt to limit this problem, Habermas points out that ‘expectation’ in this way served not only to open up utopia but ‘to close off the future as a source of disruption with the aid of teleological constructions of history.’ As if to reconcile liberalism with conservatism, Hegel sought to liberate the restless energies of modern subjectivity while controlling them, retaining a vision of stability and order in which progress takes the form, not of an irruption, but a slow and rational design. It was again security, refracted through the liberal problematic of Smith and Bentham, which would provide the framework for this difficult calibration. It would be in the harnessing and management of uncertainty that security and spirit would coincide: security manages change and peers into the cloudy future; History strives to illuminate its promise and strengthen the resolve of the present to move on. (Gordon, 1991: 31; Habermas, 1993: 12)
Hegel here developed a thematic of certitude earlier visible in Descartes, which has become central to modern statecraft. Cartesian thought posits less a world which is stable prior to its cognition, than one which begins as disordered—to obtain truth it was first necessary to postulate absolute doubt and uncertainty beyond the boundaries of the Subject’s own existence and cognition, then to move, via the correct method, to stable and universal truths. (Anscombe, 1966: 153) This enters our contemporary modernity as the foundation of both a dangerous empiricism by which policymakers (stable cognitive minds) feel that policy can be made to correspond with a verifiable and accessible external reality, and as the foundation of a continual projection of uncertainty as the discourse’s own condition of possibility. In the midst of a modernity whose imagination of the future paradoxically opens up a space of darkness and unpredictability, the Cartesian model has had a potent appeal as a formal and procedural solution. From the first encounter with Aboriginal populations in New South Wales, to the post-cold war attempts to construct a foreign and strategic policy fit for an era of ‘globalisation’, the drive to manage uncertainty—whilst also exacerbating images of it—has been a potent theme of Australian ‘governmental’ strategy, affecting the economic and political management of populations, spaces and identities.

Hegel enacted a philosophical system in which security and expectation would be paired, much as they were in Bentham, forming a principle which unites men’s present and future existence, passes them to the generations that follow, and merges all the moments of life into a continuous rational chain. Hegel’s account of subjectivity, which was central to his whole system, would be powerfully prefigured in Bentham’s comment that ‘the sensibility of the individual is prolonged through all the links of this chain.’ Hegel raised this movement into the culmination of the Idea, into a general temporal principle for subject, society and state—their lives, their exchanges, their rights, their goals. Taking up all the previous themes of security—sovereignty, the state of nature, familial government, and economic man—they would be integrated into a universal codification of order, progress and realisation. (Bentham, 1837: 308)

Just as subjectivity was a key achievement for Hobbes, Locke and Bentham—formed into a principle for citizenship, the body-politic, and economic man—it provided a central overarching principle for Hegel’s thought. Hegel replayed the levels of subjectivity present in their work—the individual as a subject of freedom and labour, rights and obligations, desire and acquisition, within the protective armature of a state

9 “Uncertainty” has become a visibly significant motif in Australia’s defence and foreign policy during the 1990s. It was a prominent theme in the 1994 Defence White Paper, while the Howard Government’s Foreign Policy White Paper—already framed by an overarching objective of security—speaks of globalisation bringing ‘in its wake challenges for political and economic management.’ (1997: v) Richard Leaver cautions that ‘it would be wrong...to think of post-war uncertainty as in some sense unusual, let alone necessarily disturbing...there are many issues about whose permanence and immediacy it is quite proper to remain agnostic.’ (1996: 177)
which is a kind of meta-subject—introducing them into a temporal movement which will constitute subjectivity itself and merge it with the restless labour of the age. Subjectivity will mirror and express the epoch—at once divided, uncertain and future-directed, the basis for a shimmering realisation of its own possibilities. As seductive as this has been for generations of theorists and politicians, my attempt will be to show how gravely limiting it has in fact been.

Hegel began *The Philosophy of Right* by asserting that the basis of right is *mind*, whose ‘precise place and point of origin is the will’. Yet at the outset the *will* was divided, both within itself and temporally: first as indeterminate, the uncontrolled freedom of impulse and desire, then determined; in total, he explained, the will ‘is the unity of both these moments’:

> It is particularity reflected into itself and so brought back to universality, i.e. it is individuality. It is the *self*-determination of the ego, which means that at one and the same time the ego posits itself as its own negative, i.e. as restricted and determinate, and yet remains by itself, i.e. in its own self-identity and universality. It determines itself and yet at the same time binds itself with itself.

> The ego determines itself insofar as it is the relating of negativity to itself. (1967: 23)

This was Hegel’s definition of free subjectivity: *self-determination*, the bizarre formula which allowed him to reconcile freedom with social law, and in turn, to argue that freedom could only experienced under the conditions of that law. Here the sacrifice of freedom for security which formed the basis of the Lockean social contract no longer applied: effaced in a rule which argued subjectivity began as incomplete, and could only be achieved within the evolution of a greater unity. This is clear in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, in which Spirit is posited as the movement of subjectivity’s full achievement. The Subject is divided between itself and an *Other*, which Hegel argues is merely a moment of its own self-knowledge. They must be reconciled:

> Subject...is the movement of positing itself, the mediation of its self-othering with itself. This substance is, as subject, pure, simple negativity, and it is for this very reason the bifurcation of the simple; it is the doubling which sets up opposition, and then the negation of this indifferent diversity and its antithesis...Only this *self-restoring sameness, of this reflection of otherness within itself*—not an original or immediate unity as such—is the True. It is the process of its own becoming... (1977: 10; emphasis added)
Elsewhere Hegel explained this process as one in which the will posits itself as an object, through 'the use of its own activity and some external means'; until it does so it is 'implicitly rational' but 'poured out in this way into the mould of immediacy, still lacks the form of rationality.' The will's activity 'consists in annulling the contradiction between subjectivity and objectivity and giving its aims an objective instead of a subjective character, while at the same time remaining by itself even in objectivity.' When it has done so, will passes from merely being free in itself and 'for an external observer' to free for-itself. This in turn liberates the temporal imagination: 'in itself the abstract reciprocal externality characteristic of nature is space, but for itself it is time.' (1967: 25-33)

This account of subjectivity, however abstract, was not far removed from the liberals' 'subject of interest' and their concern to discover less coercive ways of producing ethical, self-regulating individuals whose particular desires would nonetheless combine into the motor of an ideal socio-economic order. Hegel asserted that his 'science of right' was an attempt to grasp how subjective and contingent impulses 'should become the rational system of the will's volitions.' In a formulation that closely echoed Bentham and the more 'productive' objectives of discipline, Hegel argued that this was achieved through reflection:

When reflection is brought to bear on impulses, they are imaged, estimated, compared with one-another, with their means of satisfaction and their consequences, and with a sum of satisfaction (i.e. with happiness). In this way reflection invests this material with abstract universality and in this external manner purifies it from crudity and barbarity. This growth of the universality of thought is the absolute value in education. (1967: 29)

Elsewhere he wrote that 'the final purpose of education' was 'liberation and the struggle for a higher liberation still...the hard struggle against demeanor, against the immediacy of desire, against the empty subjectivity of feeling and the caprice of inclination.' (1967: 125) Thus Hegel's formal model for subjectivity was the achievement of full self-consciousness which began as bifurcated (between itself and its other, between subjective and objective will) and was then resolved into a higher unity through the overcoming of this 'negativity', the dissolution of the particular in the universal, the extinction of that originating difference. He described this principle as dialectic, which 'consists not simply in determination as a contrary and a restriction, but in producing and seizing upon the positive content and outcome of the determination, because it is this which makes it solely a development and an immanent progress...here it is mind in its freedom, the culmination of self-conscious reason, which gives itself actuality and engenders itself as an existing world.' (1967: 34-5)
The full, claustrophobic effect of this unity was described in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, where an unanswerable universalism was derived from the original division of the subject, and where—importantly—negativity was itself the motor of progress:

...although this negative appears at first as a disparity between the 'I' and its object, it is just as much the disparity of the substance with itself. Thus what seems to happen outside it, to be an activity directed against it, is really its own doing, and Substance shows itself to be essentially Subject. *When it has shown this completely, Spirit has made its existence identical with its essence;* it has itself for its object just as it is, and the abstract element of immediacy and of the separation of knowing and truth, is overcome. Being is then absolutely mediated...the moments of Spirit now spread out in that form of simplicity which knows its object as its true self. (1977: 21-22; emphasis added)

The political implications of this schema became visible in the *Philosophy of Right* and in the posthumously published *Lectures on the Philosophy of History*, which formed the starting point for Francis Fukuyama's 1989 essay *The End of History*?

For in the *Philosophy of Right* this culmination of subjectivity was made hostage to its immersion in the greater identity represented by the nation-state. The drive for self-consciousness, he argued, proceeds dialectically through a series of moments—the individual, the family, civil society—yet cannot be fully realised in any of them.10 Subjectivity was only realised in the form of *ethical life*, which was the State, 'the actuality of the ethical idea'. Not merely was the state the ultimate aim of rationality, but the *ground* for all the earlier phases: 'it exists immediately in custom, mediately in individual self-consciousness, knowledge and activity, while self-consciousness in virtue of its sentiment towards the state finds in the state, as its essence and the end and product of its activity, its substantive freedom.' (1967: 155)

The potentially dangerous division immanent in liberalism—between state and civil society—was here controlled by a system which, allowing for the diffusion of nodes and mechanisms of power conceived by the 'art of government', sought to seize subjectivity at its very centre, through its effacement in the greater identity of the One.

Let there be no mistake: membership of the state was not optional, but the individual's very condition of being:

---

10 Hegel argues that the 'ethical mind' evolved through a series of phases. Its 'natural or immediate phase' was the *family*, which passed into *civil society*, which was still merely an 'abstract' universality because its members were self-subsistent. Yet their association, which was 'brought about by their needs, by the legal system—the means to security of person and property—and by an external organisation for attaining their particular and common interests', was 'welded into unity in the *Constitution of the State* which is the end and actuality of both the substantial universal order and the public life devoted thereunto.' (1967: 110)
If the state is confused with civil society, and if its specific end is laid down as the security and protection of property and personal freedom, then the interest of individuals as such becomes the ultimate end of their association, and it follows that membership of the state is something optional. But the state’s relation to the individual is quite different from this. Since the state is mind objectified, it is only as one of its members that the individual himself has objectivity, genuine individuality, and an ethical life. Unification pure and simple is the true aim and content of the individual, and the individual’s destiny is the living of a universal life. (1967: 156)

The state was clearly not something separate from the people, a discrete and autonomous set of institutions which act on society in a wholly external way. Drawing on Hobbes’ image of the Leviathan as a general Will, and closely shadowing the emergence of population as a category, the state was a meta-subject, the sum and culmination of all the individuals and moments which preceded it. In this way Hegel intensified the logocentric closure of the system I have elaborated in Hobbes and Locke. He clarified and intensified the necessity of the other for security, for prosperity and for progress in general, incorporating it into a wholly restricted economy in which the Other was always subsumed within a return to the higher unity of the Same. In this sense security, economic prosperity and a central organising racism powerfully coalesce. This can be seen more clearly in the Lectures on the Philosophy of History, delivered in 1822, and in Francis Fukuyama’s 1992 reinterpretation of that work in the light of twentieth century economic and political developments. This text also further illuminates Hegel’s relationship to economic liberalism, and particularly how security, economics and progress have combined in twentieth century political discourse.

In these lectures Hegel sought to show the progress of Spirit through World History, which was ‘none other than the progress of the consciousness of Freedom’ that, in a movement much like Smith’s invisible hand or Bentham’s principle of utility, both transcended and was driven by the ‘passions’, ‘interests’, ‘self-seeking designs’ and ‘will’ of men. History proceeded through a series of stages, from Africa (which was merely on the ‘threshold of the world’s history’), to China (which, with its undeveloped states and insufficiently western forms of thought, was at the ‘childhood of History’) and finally Europe, which was at the most advanced stages of development. Bonaparte and the French Revolution, he felt, had put into practice the Idea of Freedom, which the Germans (like Kant) had only been able to theorise. ‘The History of the World,’ he wrote, ‘travels from East To West, for Europe is absolutely the end of History, Asia the beginning’. North America, with its republican constitution, political unity, ‘increase of industry and population’ and ‘civil order and
firm freedom", had an even more exalted place: it was ‘the land of the future...a land of desire for all those who are weary of the historical lumber-room of old Europe..It is for America to abandon the ground on which hitherto the History of the World has developed itself.’ (1990: 23-26, 104-5, 443, 86-7)

Yet what was palpably obvious was that this practical forward movement of Spirit turned on the opposition to—and negation of—a backward Other, much as it did in Hobbes, Locke and Bentham. Africa was still ‘enveloped in the dark mantle of night’, here wrote, it was ‘the Unhistorical, Undeveloped Spirit, still involved in the conditions of mere nature...it has no movement or development to exhibit’. In his description of North America the essentially ethnocidal nature of this enterprise, which reposed on the physical destruction of Indian societies and customs as a new civilisation took their place, became depressingly clear: ‘the original nation having vanished, or nearly so...[America] has the outlet of colonization constantly and widely open, and the multitudes are continually streaming into the plains of the Mississippi.’

In passages that took the implications of liberal political theory to their final, implicit conclusion, praise for the ‘subjective unity’ of the republican constitution, the ‘universal protection for property’ and the ‘endeavor of the individual after acquisition, commercial profit, and gain’ mingled with descriptions of the ‘mild and passionless disposition’, ‘want of spirit’, ‘crouching submissiveness’, and ‘inferiority in all respects’ of the ‘native Americans’. (1990: 91-99, 80-87)

The Other also provided the ontological ground for humanism, that great ethical substrate for the ‘rights of man’. The system in which ‘the principle of right, morality, and all ethical life’ was to liberate a ‘self-consciousness which apprehends itself through thinking as essentially human’ was itself utterly dependent on the negative image of those whom it could barely recognise as human: ‘The Negro, as already observed, exhibits the natural man in his completely wild and untamed state. We must lay aside all thought of reverence and morality—all that we call feeling—if we would rightly comprehend him; there is nothing harmonious with humanity to be found in this type of character.’ It is no surprise that Pierre Clastres was driven to the bitter conclusion that the ‘spirituality of ethnocide is the ethic of humanism.’ (Hegel, 1967: 30, 1990: 93; Clastres, 1988: 53)

---

11 The anthropologist Pierre Clastres, in his essay On Ethnocide, which attempted to theorise the destruction of the indigenous peoples of America after 1492, described ‘ethnocide’ as sharing with ‘genocide an identical vision of the Other’: ‘the Other is difference, certainly, but above all it is a bad difference. Both attitudes divide on the nature of the treatment which is to be reserved for this difference...The genocidal mind...wants purely and simply to deny difference; the others are exterminated because they are absolutely bad. Ethnocide, on the other hand, admits a relativity of evil in difference; the others are bad, but they can be improved, by obliging them to transform themselves to the point of total identification, if possible, with the model proposed to or imposed on them. Ethnocidal negation of the Other leads to an identification with self.’ (Clastres, 1988: 52)
Hegel returned to the linkage of liberal economics and the theme of 'government' in a section of the *Philosophy of Right* entitled, unsurprisingly, 'Police'. Hegel was well aware of the disturbing implications for social order represented by mass poverty, and suggested something approaching modern ideas of 'welfare' which as we know, have now become major technologies of security. Yet though he considered direct grants to the poor funded from taxes on the wealthy or endowments from public institutions, he rejected this option because it entailed no work and would thus 'violate the principle of civil society and the feeling of individual independence and self-respect in its individual members'—that is, the very basis of liberal subjectivity. He in turn rejected work because this would lead to an excess of production which lacked a market at home; thus, he argued, it 'becomes apparent that despite an excess of wealth civil society is not rich enough, i.e. its own resources are not sufficient enough to check excessive poverty and the creation of a penurious rabble.' (1967: 150)

The answer to this problem was, in short, imperialism: 'the inner dialectic of civil society thus drives it...to push beyond its own limits and seek markets, and so its necessary means of subsistence, in other lands which are deficient in the goods it has overproduced...'. This would be a common and potent historical theme, echoed in the imperialisms of the European powers, in the colonisation of North America, South Africa, and Australasia, and in the United States' push for control of the Pacific and trade with Japan and China in the mid-nineteenth century. Indeed Hegel argued that sea-borne communication afforded 'the means for the colonising activity—sporadic or systematic—to which the mature civil society is driven and by which it supplies to a part of its population a return to life on the family basis in a new land and so also supplies itself with a new demand and field for its industry.' (1967: 151-2)

At this point the relation between the art of government and political economy—as a network 'of continuous and multiple relations between population, territory and wealth'—came into its own. It was then that security made the leap from a principle for the production and management of the nation-state, to one which simultaneously directed the policies of states within an inter-national system. The historic gap had been bridged; the modern, in an important sense, could now become possible. Hegel's fable of this was remarkably similar to that which described the progress of Spirit; trade and colonisation would be essential to the liberation of modernity's restless energies, unbounded possibilities, and inevitable dangers:

The principle of family life is dependence on the soil, on land, *terra firma*. The natural element for industry, animating its outward movement, is the sea. Since the passion for gain involves risk, industry though bent on gain yet lifts itself above it; instead of remaining rooted to the soil and the limited circle of civil life with its pleasures and desires, it embraces the element of danger, flux, and
Security and Government
destruction. Further, the sea is the greatest means of communication, and trade
by sea creates commercial connexions between distant countries and so relations
involving contractual rights. At the same time, commerce of this kind is the most
potent instrument of culture, and through it trade acquires its significance in the
history of the world. (1967: 151)

If Hegel, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, was self-consciously writing at the
‘birth-time’ of the modern, in 1989 Francis Fukuyama took him up once more, as if to
close the circle. Following the fall of the Berlin Wall, he published an article which
asserted that ‘we may be witnessing the end of history as such...the end-point of
mankind’s ideological evolution and the universalisation of Western liberal democracy
as the final form of human government.’ Liberal democracy as an idea, he argued, had
triumphed over its powerful ideological competitors—communism, fascism and
authoritarianism; it was ‘free from the contradictions that characterised earlier forms of
social organisation and would therefore bring the historical dialectic to a close.’ (1989:
15)

Yet as if to re-emphasise Hegelianism’s imbrication with liberal political economy,
a crucial platform for his argument was that democracy had triumphed through its
pairing with economic liberalism, which was itself the fundamental universalising
force. The superior ‘rationality’ of global free market capitalism was the motor of a
natural and inevitable historical progress, unfolding through the ‘logic of modern
natural science’ which ‘establishes a uniform horizon of economic production
possibilities’ and ‘an increasing homogenisation of all human societies, regardless of
their historical origins or cultural inheritances.’ Western political theory’s dependence
on the image of a backward, non-economic other was here perfectly reproduced, within
the passage of the Other into the Same. While the Third World, due to the ‘relatively
late arrival of nationalism and industrialism’ would be still ‘stuck in history’, he
argued, it was the advanced democracies of the ‘post-historical’ world which will
provide an exemplary model of the future. (Fukuyama, 1992: xiv, 276)

Fukuyama thus trumpeted the same cultural convergences that Hegel had
anticipated—and which Pierre Clastres had denounced as ethnocidal. At the time his
thesis was very popular, and mirrored increasingly powerful discourses of economic
and cultural integration that underpin many new global structures and institutions, from
NAFTA, APEC and the European Union, to the World Bank and the IMF. Security
provides the architectonic guarantee for the evolution of these economic structures,
which in turn provide a promise of its enhancement for states and the subjects they
supposedly protect. This global articulation of security and economy—though
powerfully prefigured in 18th and 19th century imperialism—was really only possible
after the second world war, when the United States combined a dominance of military
security arrangements with the supremacy of its own currency, the strength of its own economy and the rules for global trade and money which it had instituted at Bretton Woods in 1944. American writers at the time, such as Henry Luce, portrayed the general benefit to mankind of this spread of markets and American values in spiritual terms, and it is this kind of triumphalism Fukuyama echoed. Yet the problem Hegel and other liberals had recognised—of seeking to both liberate and control the social energies modernity unleashed—was also central. This goes a long way to explaining why anticommunism was such a strong political force in the post-war era: confronting not merely a key ideological competitor and practical barrier to business activity, but—in the forms of marxism and socialism—an alternative path from the same enlightenment rationalism which liberalism made its ground. Security thus sought to liberate and accelerate flows of capital, trade and resources while controlling and limiting others—of people, technology, drugs and political ideologies. Within the strategic and military guarantee of prosperity, and in tracing a continual movement of power between the individual and the meta-subjects of state, population and economy, security would bring fear and desire, promise and threat, into an intense umbilical relation—within an experience which is still our own.

CONCLUSION:
SECURITY AND REFUSAL

This chapter has traced security’s emergence and evolution as both an architectonic and ever more flexible mode of ‘governmental’ power which stretches from the smallest individual to the vast spaces of geopolitics, with their massive articulations of resources, populations, economic flows and military deployments. In particular, what I have tried to do is draw out the practical linkages between the juridical basis of the state expressed in sovereignty and the apparently autonomous processes of political economy, showing how they in fact derive from the same ontological imaginary. Here, the enabling principle of both sovereignty and political economy was subjectivity, which over time fashioned economic subjects of desire and acquisition within the meta-subjectivities represented by the state, population and economy. True to Foucault’s account of the breathtakingly efficient modality which combined an individualising with a totalising power, security could regulate and control ever vaster arenas of commerce and strategic competition, whilst trusting that individuals would act in ways which enhanced the general system of prosperity.

On the one hand, however, this is to grant security too much power, effacing a historical context in which elites have faced serious competition and sought their ‘prosperity’ and order within a field of constant conflict. The imagery of crisis and its attendant rhetorics of fear and threat have then had both a real basis in elite anxieties
and served to mobilise and control populations. On the other hand, we need to confront the fact that security, in its efficiency and tactical flexibility, constitutes a mobile rationality of power that can seem suffocating. While I don't want to underestimate the difficulties in escaping it, it is not impossible. Unmasking security’s claims to naturalness and truth, and exposing its mythical historical contours, is a useful first step. What liberal forms of government assume, though, is that power is most effective when it is absorbed as truth, consented to and desired: as we have seen, security has played a significant role in the formation and management of this subjectivity, which nonetheless creates an important space for refusal. As Colin Gordon argues, ‘Foucault seems to think that the very possibility of an activity or way of governing can be conditional on the availability of a certain notion of its rationality, which may in turn need, in order to be operable, to be credible to the governed as well as the governing...the relation between government and the governed passes, to a perhaps ever-increasing extent, through the manner in which governed individuals are willing to exist as subjects.’ (1991: 48)

This throws weight onto the question of how security works as a technology of subjectivity, and particularly its dependence upon representation in doing so. It is to take up Foucault’s challenge, framed as a reversal of the liberal progressive movement of being we have seen in Hegel, not to discover who we are so much as to refuse who we are. Just as security enters subjectivity as both a totalising and individualising blackmail and promise, it is at these levels we too can intervene. We can critique the vast machinic frameworks of possibility represented by law, policy, economic regulation and diplomacy, while challenging the way these institutions deploy language to draw individual subjects into their consensual web. At the simultaneous levels of individual identity, social order and macroeconomic possibility, it would entail another kind of work on ‘ourselves’: a political refusal of the One, the imagination of an Other that never returns to the Same.
PART II

An Australian Genealogy

*For Australia there has been no single act of creation.*

Three
The Australian Subject

...here is the irony. If Australianness is elusive as a centre, an essence, a destiny, it is everywhere to be found as a refracting perspective, a melange, a quirk. The baffling circumstances that defeat the search for a centre may well prove to be the thing itself...

Nicholas Jose, Cultural Identity, 1985: 315.

As Lieutenant James Cook, commander of His Majesty's Ship *Endeavour*, began his voyage to Tahiti in 1768, the modern political technology of security—linking sovereignty, societal order, economic prosperity and geopolitics—was rapidly coming into its own. Although the Dutch were already firmly established at Batavia, and the British themselves in India, the *Endeavour*’s voyage would initiate a far-reaching process in which a ‘geographic’ space incorporating Australasia and the broader South Pacific was transformed and incorporated into the ‘geopolitical’ space we associate with security. Although commissioned by the Royal Society for the purpose of observing the sun transit across the face of Venus on the 3rd of June 1769, the expedition was dispatched with a larger, secret imperial purpose: to sail south from Tahiti to latitude 40°S in search of the southern continent previously encountered by Dampier and Abel Tasman, and to claim it for the British Crown. The nature of the *Endeavour*’s encounter with New Holland confirms Cook’s narrow purpose: despite the presence of the botanist Joseph Banks and the naturalist Charles Solander, they landed only five times, the longest forced on them after the ship was holed on the Great Barrier Reef. With the meticulous care for which he had been chosen, Cook mapped the east coast—naming many of its bays, harbours, islands and observable land features and finally, on the 22 August 1770, after reaching the eponymous Possession island off Cape York, hoisted the Union Jack and formally proclaimed the sovereignty of King George III over the whole of the eastern coast from Point Hicks under the name ‘New South Wales’. The many encounters of the ship’s crew with Aboriginal tribes, some of whom displayed great hostility, did not discourage this founding act of dispossession, which effectively
gave birth to a new geopolitical space in the southern hemisphere and began the process of obliterating the very different space imagined and lived by a much older civilisation.1 His task thus completed, the Endeavour sailed onto Batavia. The ambiguity of Cook’s status as a founder—Paul Carter cites accusations of his ‘culpable indifference...his descriptions of the Australian coast were less than fulsome and, much worse, he never came back’—seems irrelevant given the discrete task he had been set. His aim, as the means of a much greater political technology, was first to establish that such a place existed, to map and claim it, and thus to bring it firmly within a European political horizon. The term discovery, with all its imperial overtones, has rightfully been rejected; but its reverse may be more useful. We can argue that, in a very crucial sense, this was a space that had been invented where none had existed before: a new space conceived within the cartographic and naval technologies of the time, whose possibilities would now be hostage to England’s political and economic vicissitudes. As Cook began the return voyage its contours remained shadowy, its potential uses as yet unknown. (Ward, 1987: 163; Williams, 1988: 141-56; Carter, 1987: 1)

This second part of the thesis continues to explore the themes raised in the previous chapters, tracing them now through their irruption into Australian political history. It analyses the construction of subjectivity, space and cultural life through the constitutive interactions between citizens, the Australian state and the larger world—interwoven by a leitmotiv that might be contained within the question, Who is Australia? Yet this study does not intend to provide a single, all-encompassing answer—instead, it aims at a genealogy of the question itself as a powerful genre of political discourse. In particular, it questions the terrible politics which has flowed from such a powerful and coercive construction of identity. By doing so, it demonstrates how the philosophical structure I outlined in ‘Security and Government’ provided the broad ontological underpinnings of the history to follow, with its obsessive search for security and certitude. The genealogy traces a reverse movement to that in the last chapter, from the geopolitical imagination already present as Australia is first colonised, to the gradual creation of an ‘Australian’ subjectivity (at once individual, collective and juridical) which might conform to the indivisible body-politic of Hobbes’ Leviathan. Of course, even as this process appeared to become more entrenched, after Federation or Gallipoli, it remained as much a political illusion deployed to strengthen the position of dominant societal forces and efface the social conflicts in which they were engaged. Indeed, the drive to

---

1 Many writers have noted that Cook also disregarded explicit instructions from the King to only take possession of the country ‘with the consent of the natives’. Glyndwr Williams makes the point that Cook had long since disregarded this section of the instructions, taking possession of New Zealand at Queen Charlotte Sound ‘without reference to the inhabitants—unless the handing to an old man present at the ceremony of an empty wine bottle once the toasts had been drunk can be taken as evidence of negotiation.’ (1988: 154) However it must be said that on Cook’s return to England the King showed no desire to renounce the new possession.
imagine a unified Australian identity remains a potent locus of political conflict to this day; an aporia which cannot, to the chagrin of some, ever be closed off.

A particularly strong theme is the development and refinement of a ‘strategic imagination’, which has been central to security’s extension from a relation between state and citizen to a principle for the actions of the body-politic itself in the world of nations. This imagination is primarily spatial, but not exclusively so, becoming powerfully linked with temporal discourses of racial superiority, political enlightenment, or cultural and economic progress. With the fundamental objectives of security—political sameness, economic prosperity, and societal order—in mind, strategy implies an attitude toward space which seeks to make it more flexible, manipulable and productive. As I have suggested with Cook’s voyage, the strategic imagination is not so much an entry into a pre-existing space as the production of a new one by a detailed political technology which seeks to make it meaningful as it orders and partitions it into the vehicle, effect and arena of an industrial, political and cultural economy. Through the mapping and traversal of this space by transport, its appropriation through sovereignty, its defence by acts and means of war, and its cultivation and exploitation by industry, agriculture and commerce, the strategic imagination thus seeks to engender economically and politically useful arrangements of bodies, communities and social institutions. In this sense its space is never static and unchanging, but itself has a history—changes in technology introduce changes in its extent and permeability, changes in political doctrine change its meaning, and in turn affect not only the economic and social possibilities of individuals but their psychic interiors. Its sites become written over with events, names, and narratives: assembled into a mythology which eventually becomes a nationalist (or shameful) history. Space becomes not merely an economic and political problem, but the anchor and contested site of our identity. Thus its representation is crucial: is this space threatening or safe, familiar or alien, productive or necessary? What are its flows and boundaries? And above all, what is our capacity for action within its geopolitical and psychic contours?

**Colonisation and the Strategic Imaginary**

It would be over seventeen years before Europeans visited the southern continent again, this time as the advance guard of a thoroughgoing colonisation. The fleet of eleven vessels, led by Captain Arthur Phillip’s *Sirius*, entered Botany Bay during the day and night of 19 January 1788 carrying 1030 people, 736 of them convicts. New South Wales was to be a gaol, and remained fundamentally so for over fifty years, within the strategic context of a larger imperial enterprise. The choice of Phillip, a naval officer, as the colony’s first governor suggests as much, as do the military origins of his seven
successors to 1821. In short security—in the forms it then took in the British polity—dictated the Pitt government's motives for the settlement, and provided an enabling philosophical rationale. The juridical illusion of sovereignty, seemingly made real by Cook's ceremony on Possession island in 1770, had made of it a space for the British general will; while the assumed backwardness, docility and sparseness of the continent's Aboriginal peoples, along with their juridical invisibility, conjured legitimacy for the colonisation. Similarly the British government's desire to rid their island of an entire criminal class, to cocoon their society behind an apartheid of sea and unfathomable distance, conformed to the liberal ontology of Hobbes, Locke and Bentham which posited a healthy Commonweal upon the virulent other of the criminal, which could seemingly be excised from the social body like a cancer. Whether it be in the figure of the non-economic savage or the morally debased, criminal poor, the Other was already a vast, enabling shadow across Australia's future. (Hughes, 1986: 2)

More conventionally geopolitical considerations were also significant and, in particular, were to influence later decisions to establish settlements and extend British sovereignty to Norfolk Island, Port Phillip Bay, Van Diemen's Land and the western coast of New Holland. The extent to which strategic arguments influenced the original decision to settle Botany Bay is a matter of considerable controversy, with historians like Blainey and Alan Frost arguing that they were in fact paramount, while others—such as Robert Hughes—arguing that 'New South Wales was too far out on the geopolitical periphery'. (1986: 66) Frost and Blainey argued that the decision to colonise Australia came as England—half bankrupted from war with France and seeking to increase its eastern trade after costly setbacks such as the loss of North America—sought to preclude French gains in India and the East while heading off any French alliance with Holland, who held the East Indies and were the key to strategic power there and around the Cape. A settlement in New South Wales appealed because it would deny the coast to any other European power, and be in reach of the highly strategic materials (pine for masts and flax for sailcloth) which were believed to exist in abundance on Norfolk Island. In addition, argued Frost,

---

2 Robert Hughes, in The Fatal Shore, makes of this a persuasive account of the social origins of transportation. He argues that within a context in which unemployment and poverty were growing, as the unforeseen effects of rapid industrialisation, a soaring birthrate and the growth of towns, 'the belief in a swelling wave of crime was one of the great social facts of Georgian England. It shaped the laws, and the colonisation of Australia was its partial result.' As one writer commented in 1854, this group 'constitutes a new estate, in utter estrangement from all the rest.' Hughes argues, however, that the existence of an organised criminal class was chimerical: 'Crime was still a cottage industry, the jumble of individual acts of desperation. The failure of language—the tyranny of moral generalisation over social inspection—fed the ruling class's belief that it was threatened from below.' (1986: 167, 21)
[Pitt and his advisers] had the more general aim of creating a port which in wartime would be self-sufficient in food and naval stores, one to which the nation’s shipping could retire to refresh and refit, and from which squadrons might sail to attack French, Dutch and Spanish bases and shipping. To these profound motives, that of the removal of the convicts from the realm was secondary—an accompaniment, but not a cause. (Frost, 1980: xv)

There seems little doubt that strategic arguments were a factor—and indeed, Das Voltas Bay in southwest Africa had earlier been preferred for its strategic location astride the sea-route to the Far East—yet what Hughes takes issue with is Frost and Blainey’s view that such considerations were paramount. Indeed Frost went further, seeking to make of it a tendentious argument about the meaning of Australia’s origins: ‘the rag and bone shop of Australia’s beginning’, he wrote, ‘was perhaps not so foul as we have for so long supposed.’ While tracing these early strategic perspectives is important for this study, I incline to Hughes’ view that they were of significantly lesser importance than the evacuation of the disease-ridden prison hulks moored on the Thames and the southern ports of England. The huge numbers sentenced to transportation (more than 160,000 over 80 years) and the vast administrative effort expended in maintaining the system stand against a bizarre argument that sees the strategic rationale as somehow making Australia’s origins less abject, and would shoe-horn the events into a teleological narrative which demands the civilisation must begin with proud and noble ideals. (Frost, 1980: 135; Hughes, 1986)

Nonetheless, strategic imperatives were present, and were a prophetic echo of later policy frameworks which seized upon the South Pacific, the East Indies and Asia as spaces essential to Australia’s security. After moving the fleet to Port Jackson, Phillip wrote to Lord Sydney that ‘We..had the satisfaction of finding the finest harbour in the world, in which a thousand sail of the line may ride with the most perfect security’—imagining perhaps the day when this harbour might be a strategic outpost for a British lake in the Pacific, and prefiguring a future in which the cove most adjacent to that they chose to settle, Woolloomooloo Bay, would become a key South Pacific port, sheltering the warships of Australia and her allies, most notably the United States. A few days earlier the fleet had encountered two vessels commanded by the French explorer La Pérouse, which stung Phillip into dispatching an expedition to colonise Norfolk Island, directing the Sirius’s second lieutenant Philip Gidley King to begin sowing crops and retting flax as soon as they were established there. However the strategic promise of Norfolk turned out to be a chimera: its pines, short-grained and lacking in resin, were no good for masts, and the production of sailcloth languished for want of trained flax-dressers and sufficient labour. After two decades as a cruel outpost of punishment, which rose to notorious heights of viciousnessness under King and his
successor Joseph Foveaux, it was abandoned in 1813. Yet even now the British strove to prevent claims by other European powers: they destroyed all vestiges of settlement and left behind a dozen dogs to turn into a hunting pack that might attack any visitor. (Hughes, 1986: 87, 120)

Strategic imperatives also influenced both the timing of later decisions to colonise other parts of the continent, and the sites chosen. Bass Strait was discovered in 1797-8, and the decisions to establish settlements at Port Phillip Bay and Van Diemen’s Land were motivated by a recognition of its strategic importance—the use of the passage took weeks off the voyage from Sydney to Portsmouth. In response to Mathew Flinders’ encounter with two French ships near the present site of Adelaide in 1802, New South Wales’ Governor King sent an appeal to London for a settlement at Port Phillip Bay. He had been alarmed when, after they put into Sydney, he was shown charts of the southern coast bearing French names—with the southern part of the mainland termed ‘Terre Napoleon’. Dismayed by the scandalous possibility of having to share the continent with Napoleon’s France, King sent an armed schooner to shadow Baudin as he returned south, and immediately moved to put a settlement on the Derwent river in Van Diemen’s Land. At the same time the British Government responded to King’s request by sending a mission—including 308 convicts—to colonise Port Phillip Bay, which landed in October 1803. However they found the site—chosen more for its strategic importance than its proximity to supplies of fresh water—so inhospitable that the outpost was abandoned after a few months, and moved to Hobart. In doing so the Port Phillip commander Collins ignored King’s request that they resettle on the north of Van Diemen’s Land or on King Island. A settlement was eventually placed at the mouth of the Tamar river in 1804, from where it was hoped strategic control of the strait could be asserted. (Hughes, 1986: 120-3: Day, 1996: 45-6)

The distant observer of this period is struck both by the aggressive colonial effort to name, control and utilise this new space, and its instability and intransigence: an ‘Australia’ swaying unsteadily on the threshold of its realisation. In succession Norfolk Island, Port Phillip Bay, and Melville Island (in the Arafura Sea near Darwin)—all coveted for their strategic location and importance—were colonised and abandoned. Whatever their emotional significance as sites of ambition, cruelty and abject failure, they would be now forever contained within the spatial and juridical realm of the British Crown. In 1826 the Crown extended claim to the whole of New Holland and Van Diemen’s Land, and further settlements were made at Westernport in Victoria and Albany on the west coast, and in 1829 on the Swan River (now Perth). Albany in particular promised control of the southern sea-route around Australia to China. By this time NSW Governor Macquarie had begun addressing his dispatches to London under the name ‘Australia’, after it had appeared on Flinders’ charts. This and the 1826 claim effectively extinguished the claims of any other European power to the continent,
building on the vast dispossession already taking place. While political federation was not to occur for another 75 years, a crucial enabling correspondence—between soil, sovereignty, and identity—had been achieved. (Day, 1996: 47)

A now familiar image of the Other was also appearing, raising both physical and psychological challenges to the sense of ‘self’ the new colonies were attempting to cultivate. In New South Wales, murderous conflict between whites and local tribes broke out soon after the initial settlement in 1788, and in September 1790 Phillip was himself speared through the shoulder during a confrontation. In response to the spearing of his gamekeeper by the famous warrior Pemulway in December, Phillip ordered the first punitive expedition of 40 marines, which was instructed to kill ten adult males and return with their heads to Sydney. The expedition failed, and Pemulway survived to conduct another ten years of guerilla warfare against the colony.

It was in this context of rising armed conflict that local tribes were being decimated by smallpox, brought to the colony as a jar of variolous material for inoculations. David Day has argued that there is ‘considerable circumstantial evidence to suggest that officers other than Phillip, or perhaps convicts and soldiers angered by Aboriginal attacks on their fellows, deliberately spread smallpox among the Aborigines.’ (1996: 61-5)

Conflict with Aborigines lay at the centre of both the swift, sweeping juridical claims to various parts of the continent, and the slower effort to render the land productive (and therefore meaningful) within a European politico-economic ontology. Aborigines were murdered at Port Phillip Bay by Lt. John Murray’s party which claimed the area for the British Crown in 1802, and armed confrontation—whether between organised groups of blacks and soldiers or police, or more haphazardly in countless instances of murder or revenge—would become a constant feature of colonial politics for the next hundred and thirty years, with devastating effect to the local cultures and populations. 3 Thus the colony’s first serious strategic threats, and its first attempts to assert a strategic control of space and economic resources, were made and encountered within the struggle for the nation’s very interior—in a simultaneously material, economic and ontological sense. Aboriginal peoples could never be allowed to

---

3 The interplay between the strategic imagination, Aboriginal resistance and European cultural identity was particularly visible in Van Diemen’s Land. There, as the white population increased and agriculture spread inland from the banks of the Derwent and Tamar rivers, persistent conflict saw Aboriginal populations reduced from 8000 to 1000 in the two decades after 1800. Conflict escalated in the third decade, reaching a peak between 1827-31, when large military-style operations were mounted to capture and remove Aborigines from their lands. In 1828 Governor Sir George Arthur established a line of military posts to defend those areas already cleared of blacks and forbade them from entering. When this failed, he declared martial law, giving soldiers, settlers and convicts license to shoot and kill Aborigines found within the area. This was followed by the offer of rewards for captured adults and children, and at one point Arthur organised a moving line of 2200 people, stretched out in sight of one another across the island, in a futile attempt to capture the Aboriginals still at large. (Day, 1996: 99-105) Similar tactics (named this time the “fence of legs”) would be used by the Indonesian military in the late 1970s to gain control of East Timor.
inhabit (or disrupt) that interior, either in the form of the juridical and psychological unity of the state, its hold on the soil or its economic progress. The prophetic psychological image of the Other—as sub-human and threatening to security, no less—was captured in colonial historian the Reverend John West’s account of the colonial attitude to the Aborigines of Van Diemen’s Land:

Passing from censure to hatred, they speak of them as improvident, importunate, and intrusive; as rapacious and mischievous; then as treacherous and blood-thirsty; finally as devils and beasts of prey. Their appearance is offensive, their proximity obstructive: their presence renders everything insecure. Thus the muskets of the soldier, and of the bandit, are equally useful; they clear the land of a detested incubus. (cited in Day, 1996: 101; emphasis added)

EARLY PACIFIC FEARS

As a juridical and physical boundary was established around Britain’s Australian possessions, the strategic imagination was also gradually turned outwards, fuelled by religious, economic and ethnocentric imperatives. The Pacific islands were the first focus of attention. As before, ‘Australian’ interest was also driven by (the often groundless) fears of competition from other European powers. In 1840 the NSW parliament and press lauded the British decision to formally annex New Zealand\(^4\), even as they protested at being asked to finance the growing colony there. Also in 1839 there was premonition of both Australia’s future involvement in British wars and a strategic involvement in Asia when NSW Governor Sir George Gipps urged the dispatch of three British ships, then at anchor in Sydney harbour, to China to protect the British Trade Superintendent. He argued that, in this case, Australia’s interests lay with Britain as the ‘power responsible for...Australia’s security’. (Thompson, 1980: 13)

Perhaps unsurprisingly France was seen as the primary threat to British-Australian interests in the Pacific at this time. The 1844 announcement of a French protectorate over Tahiti and the 1853 annexation of New Caledonia was bitterly resented by New South Wales, which viewed Tahiti, Fiji and the New Hebrides as being of great strategic importance due to the trade in sandalwood, beche-de-mer, pigs and later labour. After the annexation of New Caledonia The Sydney Morning Herald lamented that ‘the opportunity of colonizing that fine group had been lost’. Imperial rivalry

\(^4\) Roger Thompson cites the *Sydney Morning Herald, The Gazette* and the *Monitor* as journals which praised the colonisation of New Zealand while protesting the impost. Since 1832 NSW had paid the salary of the British Resident Commissioner, and calls for annexation were being made as early as 1830. Trade underpinned both the drive for annexation, and the ambivalence about its cost. In 1831 NZ-Australian commerce was worth £65,000, and by 1839 had ‘boomed’ to an annual value of £167,000. Yet its proportion of NSW’s total trade had fallen from a high of 8% in 1831 to only 5% in 1839. (1980: 13)
between Russia and Britain flowed into perceptions of insecurity, with an 1862 visit by a Russian naval contingent fuelling fears of a possible invasion. The construction of Fort Denison in Sydney Harbour in 1854 was publicly justified by the fear of Russian attack, although concerns over American and French activities in the South Pacific were probably uppermost. The first detailed analysis of Australia's strategic environment came in 1877 with the report by Sir William Jervois, a British military engineer who later became Governor of South Australia. While he discounted the possibility of major attack, he thought that danger came in the possibility of small scale naval raids from the French port of Saigon, or from Russian and American Pacific bases. Yet earlier others had argued that, as war could come to the colonies only as a result of the British connection, Australia should seek a neutral status similar to that Hanover had claimed between 1714 and 1857. (Millar, 1978: 57; Dupont, 1991: 2-3; Meaney, 1976: 15-16)

During the 1870s colonial concern about British influence in the South Pacific led to the assertion of an 'Australasian Monroe Doctrine' for the South Pacific. It was aimed, like its North American namesake, at the exclusion of other powers from the area. Betraying an early obsession with certitude, a theme which dominates Australia's modern history, colonial leaders would settle for little less than full sovereignty—annexation. According to Neville Meaney, 'by taking possession of the island groups which stretched in an arc from New Guinea in the North through the Solomons to the New Hebrides and, more distantly, Fiji and Samoa in the east they hoped to erect a natural barrier or 'rampart', as Hughes was later to call it, against potential enemies. (1976: 16)

In 1874 they succeeded in convincing Britain to annex the Fijian islands, and the next year requested the annexation of New Guinea, with New South Wales also requesting the annexation of the New Hebrides and the Solomon, Marshall, Ellice and Gilbert Islands. In 1883 the Queensland Premier, with the support of New South Wales, Victoria and South Australia, announced his government was taking possession of the eastern half of New Guinea, on the strength of reports that German newspapers were urging its seizure. The British again refused to support the claim. In a settlement of 1886 Germany gained the Bismarck archipelago and the north Solomons, while Britain claimed the southern Solomons and the Ellice and Gilbert groups further east. In return for contributing to the expense of New Guinea's administration the colonies were given a shared role, which was exercised by Queensland until Federation. Over the next fifteen years the colonies also urged British to force the French from New

5 Another proposal (rejected by Premier Sir James Martin) was that New South Wales itself should annex Fiji, to protect a trade worth as much as £150,000 in 1871 alone. As an example of the tenor of the 'Australasian Monroe Doctrine' thinking, The Age in 1869 argued that 'The manifest destiny of Australia, to employ an Americanism, is to colonise and subdue the islands of Melanesia...since England can rule India, why should not Victoria make the experiment of trying to govern Fiji?' (Thompson, 1980: 25)
Caledonia and the New Hebrides, to take over German Samoa and the Philippines. Victorian Premier Sir George Turner asked his agent-general to press upon the British the importance 'on strategical grounds [that] the Philippine Islands should be in possession of friendly power; also, in interest of trade, being on route China and Japan.' The colonies were thus reassured by the US annexation of both the Philippines and Hawaii in 1898, and of Tutuila in Samoa in 1899. The enormous violence the Americans deployed, killing some 20,000 Filipinos, appeared to make no difference to them. (Meaney, 1976: 17-22; McQueen, 1991: 13)

By the end of the century, then, a potent strategic theme in Australian history had been established: the south Pacific would perform the function of a secure passage to the Americas, a protective zone around the Australian north and east coasts, and an area of overwhelming Australasian cultural, economic and political influence. Strategic fears would reappear as the Japanese took control of the Philippines, the Solomon Islands and parts of New Guinea in 1941, and even more bizarrely during the late 1980s with scares about Soviet and Libyan influence in Vanuatu. (Ross, 1993) Presaging a time when Australia would be PNG's biggest aid donor and its corporations the largest investors, Australians opened up the Papuan inland, established the first missions and schools and, with the granting of independence in 1975, accelerated the incorporation of the area's myriad tribal peoples into a difficult (and in many ways deeply destructive) modernity. Overt paternalism receded in favour of a mutually reinforcing systemic determinism which asserted—to both 'Australian' and 'Papua New Guinean' subjects—that in this mode of socio-economic order lay the keys to the future. As they sought to meld ancient traditions and local allegiances into a national polity based on a Benthamite liberal ontology, Papua New Guineans would begin their own struggle with the aporias of security.6

FEDERATION, SECURITY AND THE OTHER

The aggressive assertion of Australian interest in the Pacific Islands, and its first (external) imperial acquisitions, saw Australian elites striving to influence a process in

---

6 The problems involved in marrying a liberal political ontology with capitalist forms of development were dangerously visible by the early 1990s. Particular flashpoints were disputes between indigenous landowners and mining companies. The most intense conflict came on Bougainville in 1989, where a group of locals closed down the Panguna copper mine with their attacks, and then fought a guerrilla war for secession with the PNG defence forces. This conflict, which in 1997 is still far from over, has seen the deaths of 10,000 Bougainvillians on all sides, bitterly divided the Island's peoples, and placed enormous stress on the national budget through loss of mine revenues and the cost of military operations. (Roberts, 1996) In 1997 it also played out into the most serious threat to PNG's democracy since independence, when the armed forces head General Singirok threatened to force Prime Minister Sir Julius Chan's resignation over his government's recruitment of foreign mercenaries for use on Bougainville. (See Domey, 1990; May and Spriggs, 1990; Spriggs and Denoon 1991; May, 1995)
which the Pacific and Asia were being spatially constructed in ever more complex ‘geopolitical’ terms. Added to shifting alignments and intensifying imperial competition, the process of modernisation was itself inducing anxiety: travel times fell rapidly as sail gave way to coal, and timber hulls to steel; the invention of the telegraph enabled faster communications; the increase in trade extended areas of interest and created new relationships; and the industrialisation of nations like Japan created new centres of power, military capabilities and claims to material progress and civilisational superiority which had hitherto been the preserve of the white nations of Europe. All of these developments and anxieties would find their way into the complex political currents flowing around Federation and into the Great War, and from there into a chain of events, policies and cultural memories extending well into the future.

The strategic gaze outwards—at a space at once opportune and alien—crucially involved the emergence of an anxious political self-consciousness, in the terms of a highly complex (and often ironic) play of self and other. This could be seen in a more assertive foreign policy with Britain, the emergence of republicanism and nationalism, and complex debates about national identity in relation to the Empire, the British cultural and racial inheritance, political obligations to London, and the racial homogeneity of the colonial community. At the same time the growth and industrialisation of the economy, along with the import of radical ideas and the crises of the 1890s, would lead to increasingly bitter class conflict. While the adoption of an Australian constitution and the establishment of a Federal Parliament in 1901 would fix and solidify this process of self-imagining—particularly in juridical terms—many of its other features would remain highly contested. And with Aboriginal populations having fallen from as many as one and a half million in 1788 to sixty thousand by 1888 and the violence of colonisation and removal still underway, a corrosive moral aporia was opening up in the very foundations of the Australian national identity—which would be framed, in part, to continue and intensify these processes.

7 Graham Berry, a Victorian politician and delegate to the 1881-83 colonial conferences, argued that it was at the time of New Guinea dispute that ‘the idea of federation took a real and substantial hold upon the people—that the colonies began to understand that in order to speak with a united voice, which would be heard in Downing Street, in regard to what were then called ‘our foreign relations’, it was necessary that we should have a central representative body.’ (Meaney, 1976: 30)

8 The figure of 60,000 is David Day’s estimate; of the Aboriginal population in 1788 he writes that estimates ‘vary from 300,000, which was the accepted figure for many years, to the more recent estimates of between 750,000 and 1,500,000. To suggest that, of this dramatic drop in population, only 20,000 were killed by Europeans seems to stretch credulity to its limits. A more reasonable, even conservative, ‘guesstimate’ would be a somewhat more than 50,000 Aborigines killed during 150 years of sporadic conflict. This is taking the low estimate of ten Aborigines killed in retaliation for every white casualty. Such a figure would approach that of Australians killed in the first world war.’ (1996: 130) Manning Clark (1981: 1) using estimates provided by F. Lancaster Jones in The Structure and Growth of Australia’s Aboriginal Population, cites a figure of 67,000 in 1888.
An early catalyst was the presence of Chinese immigrants who had been coming to the New South Wales and Victorian goldfields since the late 1840s, and by the later presence of Japanese immigrants and labourers from the Pacific Islands. The 1854 Eureka rebellion, perceived to have been fuelled by the presence of Americans with seditious republican values, had already alerted the colonial authorities to the threat to law and order from foreigners. Attention then focused on the Chinese, with the 1855 report into the rebellion warning of ‘an unpleasant possibility of the future, that a comparative handful of colonists could be buried in a countless throng of Chinamen.’ Despite restrictions in Victoria and South Australia, by 1857 their numbers had reached 35,000. Violent conflict in many goldfields (the most notorious being at Lambing Flat in 1860) was matched with increasing press and public hysteria. R. D. Lang’s views were particularly revealing: fearful of unlimited migration and miscegenation he warned that, left unchecked, it ‘could swamp the whole European community of these colonies’ and ‘obliterate every trace of British progress and civilisation.’ By 1888, all the colonies had enacted laws to prevent further Chinese immigration. Speaking before the bill presented to the New South Wales Parliament in 1888, Premier Henry Parkes justified the action on the ‘philosophical’ grounds that it was ‘our duty to preserve the type of the British nation, and that we ought not, for any consideration whatever, to admit any element that would detract from, or in any appreciable degree lower, that admirable type of nationality.’ (Day, 1996: 149; Meaney, 1985: 100)

Added to their status as immediate threats to the racial and cultural homogeneity of the colonial community, the Chinese were projected as presaging future strategic threats. These fears in turn played into the drive for federation, for which the search for national security was a fundamental imperative. Parkes, now commemorated on coins as the ‘father of federation’, begin his campaign for an Australian government with the 1889 report on Australia’s defence by British Major-General J. Bevan Edwards, which argued that an effective defence could only be ensured by ‘a federation of the military forces of the colonies’ and that, in the absence of political union, the colonies should pass a uniform defence act which would enable the use of each colony’s forces in any other. (Meaney, 1976: 28) In Parkes’ speeches it became clear he sought to found the new Australian political identity upon a symbiotic relation to an inferior, threatening and barbarous Other. In one he spoke of the threat posed by ‘the countless millions of inferior members of the human family who are within easy sail of these shores’, and at Wagga Wagga in April 1888 he warned of the menace of China, ‘a barbarous power, which is so rapidly creating armies and a formidable navy, that it is sufficient all events to awaken the intelligent attention of reflecting men.’ Perhaps there was irony in the logic which argued that although ‘in some respects they are a superior set of people, and we know they belong to a nation of old and deep rooted civilisation’, it was ‘our first duty, the duty of the working man and capitalist, the duty of the illiterate and the
most cultivated, the duty, in fact, of all classes to preserve in these colonies the British
type against all other nations...'. (9 April 1888, Collected in Meaney, 1985: 96-8)

There was a sinister elegance to Parkes’ rhetorical strategy, which sought to forge a
unity among his audience through the effacement of class differences, in confrontation
with the greater difference founded on race and culture. As a performance, the speech
used the simultaneously totalising and individualising strategy Foucault has noted, and
which I argue has been central to security as a mode and vector of power. In this case
Parkes sought to advance the realisation of a psychological and juridical totality—an
‘Australian’ state—by appealing to the most interior subjectivities of his listeners as
individuals with larger fears, identities and obligations: ‘I intend in the few words
which I shall address to you this afternoon...to direct your attention to your relations as
part of this great colony with the rest of the world...to assist you to realise the position
you occupy as citizens of a rapidly rising Empire (hear, hear).’ (SMH, 9 April 1888)

And if there were any doubts that these were strategic questions, they would be
erased by his speech to the 1891 National Convention to lay down the basis of the new
federal constitution:

I think it is more than likely, more than probable, that forms of aggression will
appear in these seas which are entirely new...We have evidence abundant on all
hands that the Chinese nation and other Asiatic nations...are awakening to all the
powers which their immense population gives them in the art of war, in the art of
acquisition, and all the other arts known to European civilisation, and it seems to
me...that if we suffer in this direction at any time...it will be stealthily, so far as
movements of this kind can be made stealthily, effecting a lodgement in some
thinly-peopled portion of the country, where it would take immense loss of life
and immense loss of wealth to dislodge the invader. (Collected in Meaney, 1985:
105)

This final comment elucidated a prophetic strategic paranoia that would echo through
Australian history, almost always with Asian invaders in mind, and voiced an anxiety
that the crucial correspondence between soil, sovereignty and identity—still in many
ways under question—might be threatened.9 Moreover the repetition of such fears—by

---

9 Day traces this theme as a complement to the white Australia policy, in concern about white
birth-rates during the 1890s, a drive for white immigration, and the post-WW1 push for
industrialisation beneath the catchcry of ‘Australia Unlimited’. For instance in 1925 the
Australian-made Preference League hired a train to tour NSW country towns promoting
Australian products, arguing that ‘the path to self-reliance is along the track of secondary
industries’, which promised ‘the shortest cut to national wealth and security.’ The geographer
Griffith Taylor was vilified when he maintained—against popular predictions of a possible
population of up to 500 million—that Australia’s soil and climate would not support more than 20
million by the end of the century. (1996: 220, 253) See also William J. Lines, Taming The Great
cultivating a sense of urgency and silencing dissent by equating it with sedition—helped legitimate the achievement of that correspondence through colonisation and dispossession. The statement also contained a view, persuasive in Australia until well after the second world war, that to decisively secure—and secure a claim to—the continent required its population and cultivation: that it become ‘productive’ in terms of a liberal economic ontology.

The importance of strategic questions to federation was underlined also when, among the four principles adopted by the 1891 Convention was the objective that ‘the military and naval defence of Australia shall be entrusted to federal forces under one command.’ The draft constitutions drawn up at the 1891 convention and amended at the 1897-8 convention included broad Commonwealth powers over ‘external affairs’, defence and ‘the relation of the Commonwealth with the islands of the Pacific’.10 Neville Meaney argues that whilst diplomacy and defence were not at the centre of controversies surrounding the Constitution, it is important not to underestimate their significance: ‘The issue of national security, unlike the problems of small versus large states and protection versus free trade, had been determined by a common experience and spoke to an assured consensus. There was thus little to discuss.’ (1976: 34)

But as true as it may have seemed, and as crucial as it no doubt was, this ‘common experience’ did not occur naturally, as the expression of some inevitable pre-existing unity. Rather it had to be imagined, spoken and entrenched, to be made the very vehicle—rather than the product—of that unity. Alfred Deakin’s speech to the Australian Natives Association in March 1898, when the Victorian Parliament was wavering, makes this startlingly clear:

Let us recognise that we live in an unstable era, and that if we fail in the hour of crisis we may never be able to recall our lost national opportunities. At no period during the first hundred years has the situation of the great Empire to which we belong been more serious. From the far east and the far west alike we behold menaces and contagion...Happily your voice is for immediate and absolute union. (Collected in Meaney, 1976: 34)

The invocation of an unproblematic ‘we’ in such texts activated both a political appeal and effaced a profound anxiety: about the security of both an Australian sense of self, and how the nation might develop as a form of political and economic order. Aware

---

10 Meaney comments that under ‘external affairs’ the Australian founding fathers claimed powers for which there were no precedents in imperial constitutional history, and that the Pacific clause was ‘a direct expression of the Australia’s anxiety for security in its own geographical sphere’ and ‘derived directly from the colonies diplomatic struggles with the British government in the 1870s and 1880s.’ (1976: 34)
there was no ‘assured consensus’ it assumes a subject that, in many crucial ways, had yet to come into being.

At this time visions of white Australian identity were divided between loyalties to Britain and the more aggressive republican stances of *The Bulletin* and other radical journals, and complicated by intensifying class conflict. Rhetorics of national and racial identity were less attempts to resolve such conflicts than exercises in mastery, not only of Whites over Asians, Islander or Aborigines, but of Capital over Labour, and white labour over coloured. Already in 1885 Henry Parkes, an avowed servant of the Crown, believed there were limits to patriotism: in a letter to the *Sydney Morning Herald* he opposed NSW Premier William Dalley’s decision to send 750 men to help restore British authority in the Sudan. The logic Parkes employed revealed both the emerging complexities in nationalist rhetorics, and their common ground. He made no quarrel with British motives, which were to ‘establish a government of purity and order out of elements or corruption and disorder, and then to retire from the soil of Egypt.’ Rather, he argued, white Australians had more urgent tasks:

I assert that there can be no greater folly than to foster a spurious spirit of military ardour in a country like ours, where every man is wanted to take his part, in some form or other, *in colonising work*...with the right hand we are expending our revenues to import able-bodied men to subjugate the soil, while with the left hand we propose to squander our revenues to deport men to subjugate Sir Edward Strickland’s ‘saracens’. (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 77; emphasis added)

It seems that in the ‘sad task’ of subjugation—whether of nature or the other—there were harsh choices to be made. But they were not to be made, whether in the Sudan, South Africa, or in the even more terrible wars to come; and Parkes’ words, however impoverished, would echo through the debates over Australia’s role in future conflicts. Later—and presaging the mythology built around the slaughter at Gallipoli—he argued that in the Sudan ‘our Australian heroes will have little chance of distinguishing themselves on the field of battle’, and he closed the letter by saying that ‘if a time should come when England shall be engaged in a great conflict with a Great Power, even then...our first duty will be to hold inviolate the part of the Empire where our lot is cast; and, this sacred trust secured, to give life and fortune freely, if we have them to spare, beyond our own shores.’ (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 78)

Already, as Parkes asserted the gathering unity of an Australian subject against Dalley’s compliant response to the tug on the crimson thread, there was both the
appearance of ambiguity and opening, and a swift move to shut it off. There would be a
time, Parkes suggested, when both could be reconciled—when the recalcitrant
Aboriginal nature of the continent had been subdued, and the civilisation had more
effectively secured its physical basis, its juridical unity and its ontological stability.
Edmund Barton, himself a firm proponent of an Australian federation, certainly
believed that that time had come sooner rather than later. As debate raged over the
question of committing colonial troops to the war against the Boers in 1899, Barton
argued for an expedition on the basis of an irreducible colonial immersion in the
imperial body-politic:

...we have arrived at a point when British territory has been invaded, when the
empire is at war...We are part of that empire...and for my part, as long as we are
a part of that empire, when our empire is at war with any other power
whatsoever, it becomes our turn to declare the motto, 'The empire, right or
wrong.' (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 117)

That this language was being deployed as a political 'double-bind'—which sought to
dissolve opposition through the blackmail that merged subject with meta-subject—was
unmistakable in his reply to Griffith's retort that he could agree if only 'the empire were
in danger, certainly!' Barton snapped back: 'Is it for any one citizen to decide? No it is
for the empire itself to decide, and the empire having decided that it is sufficiently in
danger...it is a decision, I think, which we should respect and follow...'. Perhaps
predictably his final appeal was to a shared embodiment—blood: 'the wisdom and the
intelligence of the Imperial Government and Parliament may be relied upon by those of
the same blood who belong to the same race.' (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 118)

Such tensions were in turn complicated by more radical strands of nationalism, in
which opposition to Britain was more uncompromising. The Bulletin of the mid-
1890s, for instance, favoured a united Australia with a republican government, the
abolition of titles, and attacked the brutalities of British rule in Ireland. For a time it
also—most alarmingly for liberals—advocated the abolition of private ownership of
land and a democracy based on universal suffrage and the direct election of Ministers

thread of kinship runs through us all...We know we represent a race...for the purpose of settling
colonies, which never had its equal on the face of the earth.' (cited in Clark, 1981: 32)

12 The Bulletin, established by J. F. Archibald in 1880, holds a special place in Australia's
political and cultural history—mouthpiece of a complex range of radical and nationalist views,
traversed by racism and anti-semitism, publisher of the stories and journalism of Henry Lawson,
and for many years a lively counterpoint to the official journalism of the Sydney Morning Herald,
the Age and Argus. Its masthead still exists, although in the 1990s it has been transformed into
a conservative journal of politics and business, published by Australian Consolidated Press,
owned by Kerry Packer, Australia's richest man. For discussions of its role and journalism see
The Australian Subject 1788-1918

by Parliament. An editorial from April 1895 contained an extraordinary attack on British imperial hubris which would be integral to imagining a very different nationalism to that of Parkes, Barton or Deakin:

The British character has many inestimable sides, and many that are odious. The side that has been turned to Australia is an incarnation of calculating selfishness. The modern John Bull regards the world as his oyster...he truckles to the strong and bullies the weak; sends Ambassadors to Russia and armies to Egypt; everywhere grasping all and giving nothing in return...His idea of an ally is somebody to squeeze; of an enemy, somebody who refuses to be squeezed...We owe him convicts, institutions, and some 400 millions sterling—as much as he can squeeze per cent. When Australians began to show resentment at being squeezed, except indirectly, he sheared off, and is now busy squeezing South Africa with the aid of his Christian principles and the MAXIM gun... (cited in Docker, 1991: 35)

Yet the crimson thread of kinship, while torn now from the political blackmail of imperial federation, would still remain powerful, and the racist appeal to blood identity a significant area of common ground. The Bulletin also wanted an ‘Australia for the Australians—the cheap Chinaman, the cheap nigger, and the cheap European pauper to be absolutely excluded,’ and anti-British attitudes were motivated often by fears that Australia might be forced to accept coloured immigrants from England’s ‘nigger empire’, which were opposed both because of concern about cheap labour and a deeper revulsion based on physical and cultural difference. (Docker, 1991: 34; McQueen, 1978: 36)

Also emerging, in the Bulletin and in the rhetoric of Labor leaders, were self-conscious borrowings from the European Enlightenment and their convergence with an Australian nationalism. As John Docker has demonstrated, the Bulletin’s view that the movement of history was bringing a new spirit of rationality and logic to culture fed and reposed upon an older racism in which the ‘Chinaman’ was ‘a barbarous, medieval sort of person’, frozen in his own culture’s middle ages. In a close paraphrase Docker suggests ‘that is why a forward-looking, liberal society like the Australian promises to be, a society that is progressive, democratic, secular, reasoning, has to exclude other races like the Chinese or Japanese.’ (1991: 40) In a similar vein the 1905 Federal Labor Conference voted for a resolution that urged ‘the cultivation of an

13 To balance the picture, Docker emphasised that Enlightenment sentiment also drove a fierce Bulletin opposition to capital punishment, its criticism of church conservatism and missionary zeal, its push for greater democracy—whether in the election of politicians, JP’s or judges—and its critique of British imperialism. (1991: 41-45)
Australian sentiment, based upon the maintenance of racial purity and the development in Australia of an enlightened and self-reliant community.'

Perhaps one of the clearest notes was sounded by Sir Charles Kingston—a conservative—on the occasion of the adoption of the final draft of the Constitution in March 1898. He declared it would be 'the most magnificent constitution into which the chosen representatives of a free and enlightened people have ever breathed the life of popular sentiment and national hope.' (Clark, 1981: 263, 155)

The broad ontological accord between Capital and Labour—around a vision of secular possibility, blood identity and racialised strategic fear—both masked and played into a bitter economic and political struggle with far-reaching historic effects. In this context historians have located the formation of the Australian Labor Party (ALP), the development of an early defence and foreign policy and the establishment of the institutions of the Commonwealth and the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission—with the continuing destruction of Aboriginal tribes and the gathering geopolitical storm in Europe as a dark backdrop.

The rapid development of the Australian economy in the last two decades of the 19th century, much of it with borrowed British capital, was accompanied by increasing worker unrest. In 1888 Parkes had repressed striking coalminers and wharfies at Newcastle with troops, while in August 1890 huge crowds turned out in Sydney and Melbourne to offer support for maritime workers striking in defence of their right to be represented by trade unions. Strikes had also broken out among shearsers, and in the mines at Broken Hill, Illawarra and Kalgoorlie. In Victoria the government swore in thousands of special constables and deployed mounted police to disperse gas workers; in Sydney troops and police were used to clear crowds attempting to prevent the loading of wool onto ships by volunteer labour. At the same time the credit squeeze of 1890 had brought great hardships: public works ceased and unemployment leapt to unprecedented levels. Shearers again struck across Queensland in 1891 against pastoralists' demands for freedom of contract. Parkes thought these upheavals—which came close to the capitalist nightmare of a general strike—had shaken 'the whole fabric of commercial industry'; as Manning Clark saw it, 'Bourgeois society was like a city feeling the first effects of an earth tremor and fearful that the tremor might erupt into a destructive quake.' (1981: 44-85)

Clark argues that the Constitution—and the series of federal institutions that accompanied it—were specifically designed to thwart the possibility of social

---

14 The conference also debated a resolution regarding the role of the state in the battle between Capital and Labour. The Queensland and Victorian delegates pressed for a socialist declaration, with one Victorian urging the conference to affirm that Labor would seek 'to obtain control of all the means of production, distribution and exchange.' However the moderates prevailed, with the second part of the resolution being the 'securing of the full results of their industry to all producers by the collective ownership of monopolies, and the extension of the industrial and economic functions of the state and municipality.' (Clark, 1981: 263)
revolution. The more nuanced liberal problematic of ‘government’ was crucial here. While the political allegiance of the middle classes through their ownership of property and their partnership in prosperity was assured, that of workers and their movement was not. While some conservatives felt they had no need to make any compromise with Labour, liberals like Deakin and Reid saw that acceding to limited labour demands could split the moderates from the radicals: ‘Liberalism in politics could rob labour of its revolutionary fervour, and rid the bourgeoisie of the charge that they were indifferent to the well-being of the masses. Though a free trader by conviction [Reid] was not opposed to the use of the state to protect the weak, and to effect conciliation in disputes between Capital and Labour.’ Likewise, Deakin ‘advocated the use of the state to ensure that the base of the social pyramid was not composed of men and women who had no ties to the existing social order.’ (Clark, 1981: 76-7)

These concerns underpinned the desire of the founding fathers for a constitution which, while allowing for popular election to the lower house would also ensure a conservative upper house and, by dividing power between the Federal government and several Colonial parliaments, would ‘prevent any radical change in the ownership or distribution of property by constitutional means’:

They were men who were looking for political institutions which could handle strikes, lockouts, industrial anarchy, commercial depression with more facility, indeed agility, than six or seven colonial governments or parliaments. They were looking for political institutions that would solve the dilemma of the bourgeoisie: how to reconcile a colonial political democracy, with its approximation to political equality, with the survival of the institutions of private property and of the profit incentive. They were men who were reaching for what their political teachers, Alexander Hamilton, Alexis de Tocqueville and John Stuart Mill, had fussed over during their lifetime—how to preserve what they understood by the liberty of the individual in a society with what de Tocqueville had harshly labelled as the ‘depraved taste’ of the masses for equality. (Clark, 1981: 67)

It was in this context that the liberal problematic of ‘government’—and thus of security—was developing, at a crucial period in the construction of a unified Australian sense of self and the effort to place firm imaginative and juridical limits around it. The drive to imagine an Australian body-politic here converged with the problem of

15 Political labour, for reasons both of personal belief and political strategy, was close to the liberal problematic. Not wishing to frighten off voters, moderate Labor men like Frank Cotton (Electoral Labor Leagues candidate for East Sydney in 1891) declared they were committed to ‘a slow process of evolution’ with the aim of ‘a juster distribution of wealth in the colony’ through labour legislation, political democracy, and a willingness ‘to leave wealth in the hands of people who made it’. (Clark, 1981: 78)
‘liberating’ a political and economic modernity while controlling its social energies—the radical forms of dissent which threatened both the existing and potential social order. In this, the search for less coercive forms of governmental reason by liberals like Deakin and Barton combined with a strategic imagination of geopolitical space which could bear on the most interior fears and desires of individuals and play into a more general management of the socio-economic totality. Thus the strategic fears and imperial ambitions that drove Federation cannot be divorced from the class conflict of the 1890s.

Although some in the Labour movement scoffed at invasion fears16, and could see that the constitution was weighted against them, others like Hughes or O’Sullivan were willing to accept it because it promised a defence guarantee and the means to consolidate a white Australia. (McQueen, 1978: 31) Factories Acts (passed by NSW in and Victoria in 1896) and a Conciliation and Arbitration Act (in NSW) were other key planks in moderating potentially explosive class conflict. While there was broad agreement between laborites, liberals and conservatives on the establishment of a Federal Conciliation and Arbitration Court, the actual passage of the Bill was drawn out and bitter. Radicals understood how the politics of federation—monopolised by the conservative colonial premiers and barely democratic—had been used to muzzle organised labour.17 Further, racism and strategic paranoia had been used to buy the acquiescence of some of their leaders. As Clark so ascerbically observed, for the ruling classes the new federal constitution would act as ‘a fortress both against the enemy without and the enemy within’. (1981: 240-256, 68)

The ghost of the long dead Hegel was present at the ceremony in Sydney’s Centennial Park to inaugurate an Australian Commonwealth on 1 January 1901. It’s slogan, coined by Parkes and displayed on a large banner draped across a car carrying his bust, was: ‘One People, One Destiny’. An Australian subject, contained within the protective juridical and strategic armature of the British Crown, had now been imagined as a totalising ‘governmental’ principle with an inexorable forward progress. The ceremony, attended by thousands and marked by a festival atmosphere, gave visible semiotic form to the new nation, which might otherwise have remained an abstract

---

16 Hank Morgan wrote in the Hummer (Wagga) of 19 March 1892 that the workers of Australia should not ‘take any heed of appeals to their patriotism. If an enemy should invade our shores, we have a brilliant chance. Let us say to the capitalists: “This is not our country at present; you own it nearly all in times of peace, so you can fight for it now—we won’t.” GO ON STRIKE BOYS! Make terms; it wouldn’t take long. Demand nationalisation of the land, coalmines, and all minerals, and machinery; the only compensation would be our assistance to fight for their retention.’ (cited in Clark, 1975: 496) Notwithstanding such views, the first planks of the Federal Labor Party included white Australia and a citizens army.

17 While the June 1899 referendums on the Constitution were ‘formalities’ in Victoria, South Australia and Victoria, in NSW the vote was 107,420 for and 82,741 against, and in Queensland it was particularly close: 38,488 Yes and 30,996 No. ‘In no colony,’ writes Clark, ‘did more than 46.63% of qualified voters cast a vote.’ Clark also cites a bitter editorial in the Tocsin of 10 January 1901 which attacked federation as ‘the high priest of Mammon...[It] had given new life to a patrician caste, to nobility and to royalty. Federation would foster militarism. Federation under the Crown was the price Australians paid for belonging to ‘a piebald empire’.’ (1981: 167, 183)
juridical idea. Perhaps ironically, it also displayed the limits to its new identity. A literal parade of signs through Sydney's streets—bushmen, shearsers, miners, imperial troops just returned from South Africa—showed 'Australians' who they now were. At Centennial Park they listened as an official read the Queen's proclamation and swore in the Earl of Hopetoun, an Englishman, as the first Governor-General. The Catholic Cardinal Moran was not present; nor were any representatives of the true owners of the land on which this performance took place. As if to underline the intensifying ontological correspondence of soil, sovereignty and identity, many remarked that it was 'the first time in the history of the world...that the boundaries of a nation-state had coincided with those of a whole continent.' (Ward, 1977: 12) A pivotal image of the Other was cemented into the foundations of the Australian identity with the passage of the Immigration Restriction Act later that year, and the 'dialectical' movement of overcoming symbolised in the continuing task of colonisation: the long war to seize the land from its original peoples. Deakin argued that in the securing of a White Australia 'the national manhood', the 'national character' and the 'national future' were at stake. Addressing another issue close to the labour movement's heart, the Pacific Islands Labourers Act was passed by Barton's government, banning the entry of black labourers after March 1904 and providing for their deportation after December 1906. (Clark, 1981: 177-180, 201)

In a premonition of another crucial element of the Australian identity—its blooding through sacrifice in war—the new Commonwealth took over the recruitment and dispatch of Australian troops for South Africa, and in February 1902 Barton farewelled the first federal contingent to sail from Circular Quay to fight the Boers. The occasion was not lost on him: for the first time it was Australia—rather than any one state or colony—that was going to war. Australia did not stand for militarism, he told the troops, but truth and justice. Once there, they encountered an enemy that fought with guerilla-style tactics, which the British countered with techniques that would reappear sixty years later in south Vietnam: massacring prisoners of war, burning villages and herding the survivors into concentration camps where they died at eighteen times the rate in New South Wales. 'Civilisation,' lamented Clark famously, 'was perhaps only a thin veneer over savagery'. (1981: 213, 196)

The Constitution specifically failed to recognise the continent's Aboriginal peoples, who by 1900 numbered only sixty thousand. This was perhaps unsurprising, given its origins in a thoroughly racist liberal ontology and, more specifically, in Benthamite utilitarianism, along with the general white belief that the Aborigines were dying away in the face of a more aggressive and superior form of civilisation. Section 127, later repealed, seemed to confirm this, providing for the exclusion of Aborigines from any

---

18 In total 16,632 Australians served in the British contingent, and took 1400 casualties including 518 deaths. (Bean, 1948: 12)
The Australian Subject 1788-1918

census of the population. Clarifying Section 41, the 1902 Commonwealth Electoral Act excluded Aborigines from voting in federal elections, as they had previously been excluded from voting at elections in the colonies. At the same time, in a precedent for which Australia has been praised, suffrage was granted by the masculine state to white women, not without some resistance from conservatives such Sir Edward Braddon. Labor leader Chris Watson argued that he did not want to see the ‘savages and slaves’ in the north and west of the country able to run the electorates covering their territories, and King O’Malley declared there was no scientific evidence to link the Aborigines with humanity. (La Nauze, 1972: 326; Clark, 1981: 217-8)

Thus under the terms of a profound juridical fiction, the continent’s indigenous peoples did-not exist, even as the states retained their power to make laws concerning them. Lacking status as citizens—for some even as humans—they bore the mark of negative subjects, even as their land, bodies and struggle were utterly bound up with the myriad historical processes that had made an allegedly ‘whole’ Australian subject possible. Objects of a power which would be used over, against and through them, but never by them: a complex and terrible in-visibility. Drawing out the Hegelian structure of the new national imaginary, I would suggest that indigenous peoples—among many others—were the ‘negative’ moment which the upward ‘Australian’ movement of Spirit would overcome, subsume and negate. An antipodean idea of self, of progress, of the future itself, here—as elsewhere throughout the New World—pivoted on ethnocide.

IDENTITY, GEOPOLITICS
AND ‘THE ANZAC TRADITION’

Parallelling the bitter parliamentary debates over the terms of the Conciliation and Arbitration Act and the efforts to cement the white Australia policy, were debates over an Australian foreign and defence policy, and the evolving geopolitical space in which the new nation would seek its ‘security’. While Australian foreign policy (and formal diplomatic representation) was still formally subordinated to London, and its naval

19 Hugh Collins (1985) makes a detailed argument that the historically dominant legal structures and political ideologies in Australia derive from a Benthamite utilitarianism, which privileges the rational calculation of majority interests over a differing enlightenment tradition of natural rights. In terms of the Constitution—which contains no reference to rights—this insight is profound; this state of affairs has, arguably, impeded crucial legal and political reforms in the area of human rights over the past three decades. As discourses of universal human rights or Aboriginal land rights have found their way into Australian politics, they have both troubled basic legal categories and foundered on them. It is notable that legal recognition for Aborigines in the Mabo decision centred not on rights but on land title, and its codification into legislation followed a thoroughly utilitarian trade-off of competing ‘interests’.

20 Reproducing the classic gender division between public and private Braddon declared that ‘women belonged in the home and not on the hustings.’ The Electoral Act decreed that no Aboriginal native of Australia, Asia, Africa or the Pacific islands should have their name placed on the electoral roll. This clause was repealed by referendum in 1967. (Clark, 1981: 217-8)
defence guaranteed by the Royal Navy, the Barton government took the view that they
could press the British on Australian ‘interests’ in the Pacific and carry out negotiations
with foreign powers; in short, the British should ‘make the Australasian view the basis
of imperial policy in the region.’ Australia sought to take over the administration of
British New Guinea and the Solomon Islands, and complained to Germany about
discrimination in the Marianas and Carolinas against the trading firm Burns Philp.
Under pressure from missionaries, settlers and traders in competition with the French
New Hebrides Company Australia also sought—and failed—to persuade Britain to
annex the islands. (Meaney, 1976: 91-107)

Early defence debates were strongly polarised. While some saw threats from
powers as diverse as Russia, Japan and France, others felt secure in the embrace of the
Royal Navy and resisted calls for higher levels of defence spending. The first defence
bill failed in deadlock, and in 1902 Parliament forced the government to cut back the
defence estimates, reducing Australian land forces from 29,550 to 25,000 by 1903.
The Defence Act was only passed in 1904 with a clause relating to overseas service
having been excised. Henry Bournes Higgins opposed the formation of an
expeditionary force, saying that: ‘We do not want our men to join in an opium war. We
do not want our men to be dragged into a war that may be against their conscience.’
Earlier he had criticised the dispatch of troops to South Africa, and in 1901 had warned—like the Tocsin of a few years earlier—against establishing ‘a military system
in grotesque imitation of the military system on the continent of Europe... We must
keep this country from the ghastly bane of militarism.’ In 1902 the Australian military
commander W. B. Hutton—in a prescient echo of future Australian policy—pressed
for a 30,000 strong garrison and a field force (which could be deployed overseas)
because the Indian Ocean, the Northern Pacific and the China Sea would become ‘the
probable scene of the future struggle for commercial supremacy.’ If so, Australia
would have not only to ‘defend her own soil’ but ‘take steps also to defend those vast
interests beyond her shores upon the maintainance of which her present existence and
her future prosperity must so largely depend.’ (Meaney, 1976: 43-68; 1985: 130-1)

Despite the reassurance of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance, signed in 1902, a steadily
industrialising Japan quickly became the locus of Australian strategic fears. With Japan
in mind the Labor leader J. C. Watson said in 1903 that ‘the feasibility of an invasion is

---

21 Problems had arisen over the creation of an imperial reserve and the circumstances under
which it might serve overseas (which the government had sought to ‘protect Australian interests
in the South Pacific’, and which the Labor party strongly opposed) and over the ‘undemocratic’
organisation of the army. Australian military commander Major-General Hutton supported the
imperial reserve idea arguing that Australia’s ‘common frontiers’ with Germany and Holland in
New Guinea, and France’s control of New Caledonia, placed it in ‘a perilous position’. If the South
Pacific Monroe Doctrine was to be realised the house would have to accept the proposals for
troops to serve overseas. At the 1902 Colonial Conference the British sought to have such a
force available to them in the event of European conflicts. Barton opposed them, asserting that
it sounded like ‘taxation without representation.’ (Meaney, 1976: 57-68)
such that we ought to make adequate provision to repel it', that Australian troop numbers were 'preposterously low' and that he was willing to vote £500,000 for the purchase of 100,000 rifles. Another member, T.T. Ewing, who in 1907 became Defence Minister, spoke in 1903 of the possibility that, having taken 'a few more steps up the ladder of civilization', the White Australia Policy might provoke Asian peoples to seek 'revenge'. He thought it inevitable that between 'the white and the yellow man there is racial hatred...They are destined to be enemies for all time.' While there was no imminent danger, the next generation would experience the 'greatest storm which the world has ever seen when the white man eventually in these latitudes faces the yellow man in deadly war'. (Collected in Meaney, 1976: 52)

Japan's crushing 1905 defeat of the Russian Navy in the Tsushima straits aroused even greater anxieties. Not wanting to seek increased defence expenditures nor raise the divisive issue of compulsory training, Deakin urged that harbour defences be attended to and suggested that Australia develop its own navy to protect its coasts and trade. Also, fearing invasion, he argued that it was 'the duty of able bodied men to fit themselves for defence work.' Fear of Japan had widespread parliamentary and public purchase, as shown by the establishment of the National Defence League and the Immigration League in 1905; such fears were not mollified by the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese alliance in August of that year. Race, strategy and the anxious claim of whites to the continent merged in the thoughts of Joseph Page, who argued 'Australia is now coveted by the overcrowded races of the east,' and that Japan was 'equal to any white race on sea or land, and a very few years may make the Chinese the same.' (Meaney, 1976: 124)

Others scoffed at invasion fears. Joseph Cook, now a conservative free trader, thought that 'the balance of power is so even among the nations that none of them could afford to send a marauding army' and that even Japan was fully occupied with nations closer to it. (Meaney, 1976: 52) And King O'Malley, the American-born Labor member from Tasmania, brought a sorely-needed wit to the issue:

Really I must confess that for thirty years I heard the same cry in the United States. 'We are going to have an invasion.' When I lived in Mexico, I heard the same cry that I hear now in Australia, 'Somebody is going to invade us. We cannot tell which nation it is, but surely some nation is coming.' Ever since I have been in Australia...I have heard the same cry of 'an invasion', but the only invasions that I ever read of are invasions of rabbits. (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 12)

The anxious linkage between the Australian identity, Aboriginal dispossession and fear of Asia was made clear in March 1913, as the foundation stone of Canberra—the new
national capital—was being laid. The problem, once again, was the security of the correspondence between sovereignty, soil and identity: the security of the national subject itself. While O’Malley spoke of his belief that ‘according to the divine plans and specifications, God commanded the English-speaking people to secure control of, and constitutionally govern, the earth in the interests of civilisation’, Billy Hughes added:

We were destined to have our own way from the beginning and America—two nations that have always had their way, for they killed everybody to get it. I declare to you that in no other way shall we be able to come to our own except by preparing to hold that which we have now...The people are incapable of nourishing abstract ideals. They must have a symbol. Here we have a symbol of nationality...The first historic event in the history of the Commonwealth we are engaged in today without the slightest trace of that race we have banished from the face of the earth.22 We must not be too proud lest we should, too, in time disappear. (Meaney, 1976: 241; emphasis added)

Prophetic concerns about maritime security were raised in a 1907 analysis by Director of Naval Forces Captain W.R. Creswell, which coincided with heightened concern about Japan and the efforts of the Australian government, against Admiralty wishes, to establish a separate Australian navy. He concluded that ‘uninterrupted sea communication is a sine qua non...Australia, whenever her coast routes are closed, must stop work.’ The isolation which may have protected Australia from attack was ‘rapidly diminishing’ with the development of coaling stations and the growth of foreign navies. He feared future collusion between Japan or China and a European power: ‘The very immensity of our lands opens up the chances of co-operation. German, Jap, and Chinese colonies could be carved out of the North and West of Australia...’ (cited in Dupont, 1991: 14)

Australian resentments about the British refusal to listen to its Pacific and Japanese concerns drove Deakin’s invitation for Roosevelt’s ‘Great White Fleet’ to visit Sydney harbour in 1908 on its Pacific voyage. The next year Deakin proposed a formal extension of the Monroe doctrine to the Pacific, which was again resisted by Britain. Anxieties persisted through the renewal of the Anglo-Japanese Alliance in 1911, and fed considerable friction in the early years of the decade, as the Admiralty sought to meet a German naval buildup in the North Sea by backing away from its Pacific

22 The traditional landowners of the Canberra region are the Ngunnawal people, who like the myriad other Aboriginal tribes of inland New South Wales fought police and squatters during the 19th century, endured dispossession and the insidious policies of assimilation. In the 1990s they initiated a native title claim over vacant crown lands in the ACT region and were also recognised—in one of the more perversely ironic political gestures of our times—with the name of a new suburb in the new residential district of Gungahlin.
commitments and entrusting the Far East to Japan. These ironies came to the fore during the Great War, when the presence of a German naval squadron in the Pacific saw Britain ask the Japanese navy to occupy the German North Pacific territories and patrol the waters of the Dutch East Indies. As well as having responsibility for Australian sealane security, the Japanese navy also provided escort for Anzacs to Gallipoli. (McQueen, 1991: 27) Having always been suspicious of Germany’s Pacific presence, the Australian government leapt at the chance to occupy its bases in New Guinea and phosphate-rich Nauru. In August 1914 Australian forces took Rabaul, and by 17 September had obtained a German surrender of all its possessions North and South of the equator. However these sweeping claims were bitter fruit for Australia which was forced to accept the award of a mandate to Japan over the German north Pacific territories at the Paris peace conference. (Meaney, 1976: 146-195, 225, 248; Dupont, 1991: 18)

The Great War would be a dark milestone in the imagination of a modern Australian identity. Indeed, others have gone further: in 1943 official historian Sir Ernest Scott asserted that it ‘is beyond dispute’ that ‘the war was the pivotal event in the history of Australia.’ (1943: 858) While it was certainly an enormous tragedy, we should not accept such claims at face value. A sense of proportion could be gained by considering that the number of Australians killed—almost sixty thousand—while still a horrifying total, was well below the loss of Aboriginal life since white settlement. Rather, we might suspect that the overdetermined narration of the war’s historical importance bears a politics of its own. Once again, this politics was underpinned by the drive to imagine—and utilise—a unified Australian subject, within a context which saw over three hundred thousand men thrust into the jaws of a ‘giant mincing machine’ amid a domestic background of bitter division and renewed class conflict, and in which powerful discourses of race and gender would also be deployed and further entrenched. As if by some bizarre, terrible magic, potent and far-reaching myths of Australian character, realisation and purpose would be spun from the war’s awful destruction.

In an echo of the deployments to the Sudan and South Africa, the decision to commit Australian forces was explained by Australia’s ontological fusion with the British general will, and the obligation of men to enlist argued through the potent chain which—in perfect accord with Hobbes’ and Hegel’s fusion of state and subject—linked the abstract machinery of Empire with the very interior of the individual self. Like Barton—or twenty five years later, Sir Robert Menzies—Joseph Cook declared that ‘when the Empire is at war, so is Australia at war’; Prime Minister Fisher vowed to help defend the ‘mother country’ to ‘our last man and our last shilling’; and Hughes declared this was ‘a time when none shall be for the party, but all be for the state.’ Almost alone among the elite New South Wales Premier William Holman protested that Australians could ‘not be plunged into calamities merely at the bidding of some
irresponsible ruler—but as Clark so eloquently remarked, 'he was a voice shouting into a gale.' (Scott, 1943: 22-4; Clark, 1981: 374-5) For Sir Ernest Scott the expedition drew on a much deeper heritage, in which the juridical form of the state merged completely with its subjects' historical conditions of possibility:

Their entire endowment of soil, freedom, tradition, language, nurture and protection came to them as a heritage from the empire to which they belonged. A menace to that imperial integrity threatened their life; and they took up arms to bear their share, not in refurbishing some antique grudge, or chastising some historic enemy, or acquiring more territory, but in vindicating obligations which were theirs because they were those of the sovereignty under which they had acquired and maintained their national existence. (1943: vii; emphasis added)

To fully be a citizen within this discourse was to enter into a space of pain, fear and sacrifice which traced, at least in its form, an Hegelian movement of realisation at whose end both the individual—masculine, disciplined, courageous—and national subjects would reach their full maturity and take their place among the great of history. Invoking a complex image of birth, spiritual passage and transfiguration the Sydney Morning Herald described the war as 'a baptism', and in 1915, on the first anniversary of the landing at Gallipoli the Anglican Archbishop of Sydney declared that 'April 25 was the date on which Australia suddenly found herself lifted to a place among the peoples.' At the Hotel Cecil in London Hughes told Australian soldiers their deeds had won them 'a place in the Temple of the Immortals' and that they had 'inspired generations yet unborn with pride of race, courage, tenacity of purpose, endurance, and that casting out of fear without which men, though boasting themselves free, are but wretched slaves.' They had, he said, taught that through 'sacrifice alone can men or nations be saved.' (Clark, 1981: 380 and 1987: 16)

The price of such ontological realisation was high, and many who survived the trenches found they could not recognise their experience in its public meaning.23 Between the landing at Gallipoli in April and the end of the Dardanelles Campaign in December 7,818 Australians died, forty per cent of those who fought, and in the attacks on Lone Pine alone 800 were killed or wounded, four out of five who were involved. Turkish casualties were even greater. (Bean, 1948: 157; Clark, 1981: 424) During the British Offensive on the Somme in 1916 the Australians took 22,826 casualties in six weeks. After watching them trying to survive the German bombardment C. E. W. Bean wrote in his diary that the men 'are simply turned in there as into some ghastly giant

23 See Alistair Thompson (1988) for an account, based on extensive interviews with Great War veterans, which emphasises how their experiences and memories contradict the retrospective myths of the Anzac legend.
mincing machine.’ After the fighting the British poet John Masefield walked the battlefield: ‘There was a cat eating a man’s brain...they were shovelling parts of men into blankets.’ In April 1917 Britain’s General Haig sent the fourth Australian Division against the German line at Bullecourt, where they took ten thousand casualties. Despite being brought to tears by the destruction, the Australian Commander General Birdwood again wrote home for more men. Between July 1917 and the assault on Passchendaele in November the AIF in France took another 38,093 casualties, sixty per cent of their strength. By the war’s end 215,585 Australians had become victims of the fighting, 59,342 of them killed in action or later dying of wounds. Australia’s proportionate losses, sixty-five per cent of their total in the field, were the highest of any allied country. (Clark, 1987: 24-27; Scott, 1943: 874)

Even as casualties reached horrifying proportions the British and Australian commands, supported by Prime Minister Hughes, sought to throw more men into the cauldron. Splitting the Labour movement and exacerbating deep social divisions over the war, Hughes put two referenda before the people seeking a mandate to conscript enough men. Both times, in October 1916 and December 1917, he failed. His arguments that Australians ‘were only free as long as Australia remained part and parcel of the British empire’ failed to convince. Labor, the radicals and the Catholic Church consistently opposed conscription, though often for differing (and ironic) reasons. In 1916 the Labor Call argued that while Europeans were butchering each other in Europe, Asia ‘was waiting and grinning.’ White Australia was being undermined: the future brought a prospect of millions of Asians invading a war-weakened Australia. Earlier, in 1914, the Freeman’s Journal had worried that the Japanese Navy would seize Australia and New Zealand if war broke out in Europe. More telling were warnings that a pernicious militarism was being woven into the societal fabric: Labor warned against the Universal Service League as an effort to ‘Prussianise democracy’, and radicals pointed to the convergence of militarism and Capital in the profits to be made from increased production of iron and steel for armaments, and wool for the uniforms so many would proudly wear into the afterlife. (Clark, 1981: 371, 380)

24 The October 1916 result was Yes 1,087,332, No 1,151,881 (64,549 majority for No) and the December 1917 result Yes 568,670, No 718,465 (149,795 majority for No). After the first referendum Hughes and his followers were expelled from the Labor Party; he then formed a coalition government with Cook’s liberals under the rubric of the ‘National Party’. At the election of May 1917 the Nationalists won a decisive victory over Labor. Clark interpreted the result as a victory for the liberal mode of subjectivity, the patriotic ‘subject of interest’: ‘Once again,’ he wrote, ‘Australians had voted conservative—to be chained to their past, rather than take the way forward. [They] believed the Australian dream of getting on, of owning a block of land and a house, could be achieved in a capitalist society...’ Two days before the election the Australians had fought a second battle at Bullecourt, losing 7482 men. (Clark, 1987: 40, 77, 57)

25 Between 1914 and 1919 annual steel production rose from 130,000 to nearly a million tons, almost all of it by the already giant BHP. During the war it established the steelworks at Newcastle and began to integrate it with its Australia-wide network of mining, smelting and shipbuilding facilities. (Ward, 1977: 110)
There were many signs that the war could be a threat to Australia’s already flawed democracy. As the Trades Hall Council directed all unionists in December 1915 to ignore recruiting cards, the NSW police banned the sale of anti-war newspapers in the Sydney domain. Soldiers broke up anti-war meetings, and in response to a short anti-conscription strike in October 1916 Hughes ordered all government servants who struck to be prosecuted. Issues of the Socialist containing the Interstate Trade Union Congress’s manifesto on conscription were suppressed, and the song ‘I didn’t raise my son to be a soldier’ (sung at the beginning of Women’s Peace Army meetings) was outlawed. In Perth nine IWW members were tried and convicted of attempting to ‘raise discontent and disaffection among subjects of the King’, and in October 1916 twelve members of the IWW were arrested in connection with a series of Sydney fires, receiving gaol terms of between ten and fifteen years. A 1920 Royal Commission later found six had been wrongfully convicted. Under the War Precautions Act German residents—whom Ernest Scott called ‘the enemy within the gates’—were interned and many others deported, licences to publish German newspapers were revoked and the use of German in Churches prohibited. Their shares were seized by the public trustee and later credited to the reparations account, and many others lost their jobs. Also under the Act anti-war meetings were closed and their speakers arrested and fined. During the course of the huge NSW railways strike of 1917—which saw the loss of some two and a half million working days—the Hughes Government applied to the Industrial Commission for the de-registration of over twenty unions. Further evidence of Hughes culpability emerged in November 1920, when he was presented with a cheque for £25,000—raised from business interests in Australia and Britain—for his services to the Empire and Australia during the war and at Versailles. (Clark, 1987: 34-39, 53; Grimshaw et al, 1994: 213; Scott, 1943: 105, 689, 679; Fitzhardinge, 1979: 456)

Yet even as the war increased a whole series of dramatic divisions in Australian society, it was being appropriated for the task of manufacturing a monolithic Australian subject: the ‘Anzac tradition’ was being born. The slaughter at Gallipoli had shown the mettle of the Australian character, and blooded the young nation into an adulthood fit for the twentieth century. The Argus wrote that ‘It was there that our young and untried troops...quitted themselves as men,’ and Banjo Paterson, in his poem We’re all Australians now, declared:

The mettle that a race can show
Is proved with shot and steel,
And now we know what nations know
And feel what nations feel. (Day, 1996: 240)
This view was retrospectively reinforced, in 1948, by the official historian and founder of the Australian War Memorial C. E. W. Bean, who at the end of *Anzac to Amiens* argued that the real significance of the Australians’ sacrifice was to help materially in winning a prolongation of the security of the Victorian era for at least a part of the free world, including their own. But for Australia in particular they achieved something more. First they won her a recognised place among the nations; her seat on the League was given in direct acknowledgment of the part played by her forces. Second, though less commonly realised, was the bringing of a new confidence into Australia’s national undertakings. (Bean, 1948: 535)

His chapter, entitled ‘The Anzac Legend’, linked security, sovereignty and identity into a potent subjective and historical unity: ‘If the cause that led Australians to enlist can be reduced to a single principle, it is the principle of protecting their homes and their freedom by sustaining a system of law and order between nations.’ These words, activating the exchange between individualising and totalising power, linked the minutiae of domestic security to the immense clashes of geopolitics, sustaining a potent emotional appeal across a vast, abstract space of reason. The blackmail was overwhelming: while Bean admitted the war failed to achieve a lasting peace he argued that its prevention of a German victory was crucial to Australia’s own security: ‘If the struggle...had resulted in German victory, the first term in the peace treaty would have been the abolition of the British Navy; and for the Australian nation this meant either subservience to Germany or extinction at the hands of the Japanese.’ (Bean, 1948: 534; emphasis added)

He concluded by asserting a general ontology of human progress and freedom—and thus of a fully realised Australian subject—which hinged on sacrifice in war: ‘..only in conditions ensuring freedom of thought and communication can mankind progress...such freedom can be maintained only by the qualities which from Grecian times it has been won...the readiness at any time to die for freedom, if necessary, and the virility to struggle for it.’ In fact, with the vast tragedy of the war now a memory, eclipsed in scale by the horrors of World War 2 and the atom bomb,

26 Discipline, unsurprisingly, also was a source of pride for him. Just as Hughes praised the troops as ‘a glorious and inspiring sight...magnificent of physique’ and General Monash revelled in the complex preparations for the twelve thousand strong attack on Messines in 1917, Bean saw the AIF’s discipline as national characteristic which reinforced state and subject in a powerful feedback loop: ‘...it was discipline—firmly based on the national habit of facing facts and going straight for the objective—that was responsible for the astonishing success which first gave to other nations confidence in Australia, and to the Australian nation confidence in itself.’ (Bean, 1948: 538; Clark, 1979; see also White, 1981: 133-5)
we have passed through the test which until now, unfortunately, has necessarily been judged by mankind as the supreme one for men fit to be free; and *we have emerged from that test with the Anzac tradition*. In the Second World War that tradition has nobly served humanity. (1948: 539; emphasis added)

In the dark dreams of such men Australia was now realised, more fully a nation among nations, more fully a Subject that could enter into the progress and unity that would drive it onward, yet be somehow always beyond it. Its foundations and being were now more secure; as US President Woodrow Wilson was asserting *self-determination* as a new principle of human affairs, ‘Australia’ had achieved its own, through an ontology in which murder and pain and death took their piece and would not be denied.

**CONCLUSION:**

**THE ORIGINS OF THE FUTURE**

This chapter has sought to trace the course of a momentous event: the establishment—through the deployment of a complex historical technology of *security*—of a western civilisation and an overarching political, economic and juridical subject on a hitherto unknown continent in the southern ocean. With it came the construction of this space by an anxious cultural and strategic imagination marked by the overwhelming presence of the Other: a presence that enabled a political subjectivity in which the individual and collective might be fused into a potent psychological totality. From the Colony’s very beginnings as Aborigines were fought, dispossessed and murdered, to the fears of black and Asian immigration that underpinned Federation, to the demonisation of Germany and Japan through the Great War, a backward and threatening other was essential to the Hegelian path of realisation that the new civilisation sought to tread.

While the philosophical structure I outlined in chapter two provided the broad ontological underpinnings of this system, I have also sought to show how a series of bitter conflicts were played out over what otherwise appeared to be common ground. Intense class conflict was central to the politics of both Federation and the Great War and, for conservatives and liberals, rhetorics of race and strategies of industrial management were integral to the politics of security that so preoccupied them. Here sovereignty, racism and political sameness combined as the means and appeal of a technology which sought to contain, co-opt and weaken the labour movement. If the political limits of the Constitution, the disabling splits in the Labor Party and the deaths of tens of thousands of unionists on the battlefields of Europe were any guide, by 1918 these tactics had been a dramatic success. Worse, with the establishment of Anzac Day on the anniversary of the Gallipoli landing by the newly formed Returned Sailors and Soldiers Imperial League, a retrospective construction of the meaning of their deaths
would play into conservative hands. A special day of remembrance was obviously due
to them, and for Australians ever since it has become a potent symbol of unity and debt in
a nation apparently lacking unequivocal symbols of its own meaning.27 Yet as
controversy has been bled from their memory by the disciplinary rhetoric of respect, the
‘governmental’ chain linking sacrifice, nationalism and subjectivity has been
strengthened. To recall the dispute and bitterness surrounding the Diggers’ struggle is
not to disrespect them, but to rescue their experience from mythmaking and cynicism;
to think that they might deserve more than a circular, self-justifying narrative that does
little more than laud the necessity of their deaths.

Manning Clark concluded the fifth volume of his history with a reflection on the
public meaning of Gallipoli and Anzac, concluding bitterly that ‘Australia’s day of
glory had made her a prisoner of her past, rather than the architect of a new future for
humanity.’ (1981: 426) While echoing the way the carnage of the war would disturb
the West’s conviction of its own enlightenment, the statement also underlined the
significance of the war—and the war’s narration—for the future. The grafting of the
myth onto a day of remembrance guaranteed its annual repetition, as its significance
increased with each successive conflict and the lengthening roll of the dead. As the
retrospective constructions of the Official History show, such repetition ensured that
the events of the war—from all their confusion, dispute and abjection—became ossified
into a terrible weight of tradition. In turn future policies and representations, when
linked with the Anzac tradition, took on a heavy air of inevitability. Who could argue,
when it was the nation’s very being that was at stake?

Yet the very obsession with narrating the past as tradition betrays the instability of
the whole enterprise, the way the narrative effacement of social conflict can be
undermined by that conflict’s retelling, and thus allow the re-emergence of modes and
moments of subjectivity which don’t conform with the monolithic imaginary of the
unified body-politic. It is this anxiety that underpins later political attempts to link this
founding period with new manipulations of the collective subject. Almost eighty years
later, Paul Keating thought ‘the spirit of Anzac’ could be retained, but not stifle the
need for change; he thought that Australia’s founding identity, formed at Federation,
could be ‘reshaped’ into a form ‘consistent with the multicultural reality’ of 1990s
Australia and ‘the final passing of the vestiges of our colonial past’. His successor John
Howard, in a deliberate rebuke, maintained that Australians did not face a choice
between their history and their geography. As the centenary of Australian Federation

27 An example of such thinking—that the Australian identity was essentially weak, porous and
unformed—was Manning Clark’s remark in his 1979 address, The Quest for an Australian
Identity: ‘Apart from Anzac day there was no common experience.’ On the other hand we could
read it differently—as a mark of the occasion’s narrative power—and fear that in the myth of
transfiguration and national realisation lay the very meaning of such a ‘common experience’.
(Clark 1980: 12)
approaches in 2001 we may yet see new political conflicts over the shape of the events that surrounded it, driven by rhetoric painfully aware of the aporia that separates the future from the past, and the past from its meaning. (Keating 1995a: 279, 1992a: 4; Gordon and Walters, 1996: 1) Yet in 1948 Charles Bean thought the Anzac Tradition was very much alive, and that its meaning and purpose were clear: ‘it had nobly served humanity’ in the Second World War. It is to that ‘story’ we now turn.
Four
The Pacific War

Have those who think Australia remote from the world which hatches dangers and wars ever looked at the map?..So far from being removed from the busy hive of men we live almost within hail of its greatest populations. We have nailed ‘White Australia’ to the top of the mast. Yet we are but a tiny drop in a coloured ocean. We are five million of white people claiming to hold inviolate a great continent which would maintain a hundred million and we live almost within co-ee of a thousand millions of coloured people...It is well that we should remember this and comfort ourselves accordingly.

W. M. Hughes, 14 August 1916.
(Meaney, 1985: 236)

At the close of the Great War a powerful myth of Australian character and realisation had been achieved, at the price of tens of thousands of lives and unprecedented upheaval and division. In addition, ‘Australia’ had new international status—not as a ‘great power’, but as an internationally recognised subject whose claims on Pacific territory and international norms would demand, and find, a hearing. The Anzac Tradition was already at work: when his status was challenged by Woodrow Wilson at Versailles, Hughes replied that he spoke for sixty thousand dead.¹ Were they to see this moment they would learn they had endured the cold and filth of the trenches, the lice and poison gas, thrown their bodies before machine-gun fire and shrapnel until they were stopped, so that the old things could continue: a white Australia, a defensive buffer of Pacific territory, the crimson thread of kinship. The diggers’ sacrifices won Australia independent representation at the Peace Conference, and Hughes much influence within the British delegation. He chaired the British committee on reparations, backing the desire of Lloyd George and Clemenceau for a punishing bill, regardless of Germany’s ability to pay; he successfully fought Japan, with quiet support from Britain and the US, to keep a clause entrenching racial equality out of the League of Nations

¹ The exchange had taken place during the arguments over Australia’s desire to annex New Guinea and Samoa, which Wilson opposed. According to Fitzhardinge, Wilson had asked Hughes ‘whether he would set the five million people he represented against the twelve hundred million represented at the conference.’ (1979: 396)
charter. Yet Australia was now saddled with a further £350 million in war induced
debt, eighty-three per cent of its total in 1920, and would recover just £5 million from
the settlement. (Fitzhardinge, 1979: 396; Macintyre, 1986: 242)

With the historic fear of Japan in mind, Hughes had gone to Versailles with direct
orders from the Nationalist Cabinet to seek the permanent annexation of New Guinea,
New Britain and the other German Pacific colonies. At the conference he unrolled a
large map, declaring that the islands ‘encompassed Australia like fortresses’ and
contained potential coaling stations and submarine bases. He repeated the argument he
made in London that they were ‘necessary for our security, safety and freedom.’ In
New York in 1918 he had claimed that ‘in this we do not desire empire’, but a more
revealing opinion came from the chairman of Burns Philp—which had long coveted the
Islands’ copra plantations and trade potential—who declared that their ‘natural destiny’
was ‘that they should come under the control of Australia.’ Blocked by Wilson’s belief
in self-determination, Hughes failed to achieve annexation, but accepted the British
proposal for a ‘C-class mandate’ which gave Australia control of the South Pacific
territories under weak League supervision. By extending the Navigation Act Japanese
shipping could be excluded, while the mandate system prevented the Japanese from
building new fortifications in the North Pacific. The economic motives driving
Australian policy became clear in the case of Nauru, when Hughes negotiated a
compromise in which Australia administered a British mandate and the UK, New
Zealand and Australian Governments bought out the phosphate mining interests and
shared the ensuing bounty between them. Hughes’ treasurer W. A. Watt had told him
the phosphates were essential for the development of Australian productivity.

As well as an enhanced geopolitical purchase, the new Australian subjectivity was
gathering real ontological depth. On his return to Australia Hughes was mobbed by
crowds of diggers, and by 1919 the membership of the Returned Sailors and Soldiers
Imperial League had reached 150,000. A new conservative consensus was being
rapidly forged around a war-inspired nationalism: Keith Murdoch argued that only an
independent ‘Australianism’ could counter the ‘anti-Australian’ forces of Bolshevism
and Sinn-Feinism, while Hughes opened the 1919 federal election—which the
Nationalists won by a landslide—by questioning the loyalty of the ALP. ‘Let our
watchword be Australia,’ he intoned, ‘as our splendid boys have fought for it and
saved it, let us all live and work for it.’ On Empire Day in 1921 a crowd of a hundred
and fifty thousand gathered in Sydney to affirm their loyalty to the Union Jack and their
abhorrence of all those that would fly the ‘red flag’ instead. As Stuart Macintyre
argues, nationalism had ceased to be a force for change, but ‘was increasingly
identified with the status quo.’ In turn the formula which linked the sacrifice and valour
of the Anzacs to a claim for international status would be repeated, twenty years later,
The Pacific War 1918-1945

by Labor Prime Minister John Curtin at the outset of the Pacific War. (Macintyre, 1986: 181-91; Clark, 1987: 171; Hasluck, 1970: 55)

Yet for all its depth and force, its roots in an apparently immovable historical soil, the Australian subject was still an illusion—a product of political and cultural imagination. It's claim to unity and culmination papered over bitter religious, industrial and political conflicts that would only worsen as the nation drifted towards the great depression and the second world war. As class warfare intensified and governments wrestled with an increasingly complex and unforgiving international economy, politicians and business leaders would invoke images of collective identity as they also resorted to a language of division and accusation. Stripped of its pretence of inclusion, this was a language of battle and mastery—not of consensus. It had its own policing objectives. True to the ontology of security they had inherited from Bentham, Pitt and the founding fathers, men like Hughes, Bruce and Latham sought to excise unwelcome social currents from the body proper—as if to achieve an immense binary ordering of reality, between order and chaos, good and evil, democrat and communist, patriot and traitor, the living and the dead.

Surveying the two-and-a-half decades to 1945, one is struck by a paradox: a general strengthening of the ontological purchase of the Australian subject, through a period when its bodily integrity was shattered by unprecedented industrial upheaval and social animosity. The experience—and narration—of war with Japan fulfilled fears that had surged through the Australian identity since the 1890s, in turn elevating a shadowy image of the Other to the status of an ontological truth—an event with far-reaching cultural and strategic consequences. Similarly the war-led recovery in the economy, the constant political demands for patriotism in the face of a threatening and alien enemy, and the Labor government’s management of industrial conflict may have mitigated social resentments and divisions. Sovereignty—as both a locus of identity and an operative structure of political and juridical machinery—would be tested and further transformed. The pre-war consensus on the crimson thread of kinship would come under stress as early as the 1920s, and be irrevocably torn by the experience of the 1940s—even as the image of white Australia was strengthened by war with an Asian power. Significant new domestic and foreign policy machinery would be developed as Australian elites grappled with a radically new global politico-economic landscape, and the discursive architecture for Australia’s role in the Cold War was unwittingly set in place. As the crises of the 1920s and 30s made starkly clear, and Labor’s post-war diplomacy underlined, the ‘domestic’ management of industrial workforces and macroeconomic pressures—that is, ‘individuals’, ‘populations’ and economic flows—simultaneously became pressing ‘international’ questions. As the statements of men like foreign minister H. V. Evatt suggest, post-war enlightenment visions of Australian destiny—and thus a renewed path of realisation—would be utterly bound up with the
fierce new geopolitics of the time, and leavened by a seemingly universal politics of fear and dread. As much of the world lay in ruins, discipline, bio-power and subjectivity were taking on a new ‘global’ intensity.

SECURITY AND ITS ENEMIES

Hughes returned home in 1919, to a terrible influenza epidemic and massive industrial turmoil. In April two thousand men and women had clashed violently with armed police on the wharves in Perth. Thirty-three were injured, one man killed and another speared with a bayonet, while Western Australia Premier Hal Colbatch—who had assembled and armed the police with rifles and batons—was pelted with road metal and old iron. By the end of the year 6.3 million days had been lost in strikes and lockouts. The miners’ strike at Broken Hill lasted eighteen months, from May 1919 to November 1920, and a seamen’s strike forced the introduction of rationing in some areas. (Clark, 1987: 120; Macintyre, 1986: 183) Speaking in the House in September, to a motion that the Australian Parliament accept the Treaty of Versailles, Hughes would interpret the vast sacrifice of Australians in this new industrial context. Just as the diggers had given Australia ‘liberty’, ‘safety’ and ‘a name that will not die’, the path to salvation lay in political sameness and the productive compliance of liberal subjectivity:

Industrially, socially, politically, we cannot escape the consequences of the war. The whole world lies bleeding and exhausted from the frightful struggle. There is no way of salvation, save by the gospel of work. Those who endeavour to set class against class, or to destroy wealth, are counsellors of destruction. There is hope for this free Australia of ours only if we put aside our differences, strive to emulate the deeds of those who by their valour and sacrifice have given us liberty and safety, and resolve to be worthy of them and the cause for which they fought. (CPD, 10 September 1919: 12179)

This appeal to unity came as the class war in Australia took on an appearance of unrelenting permanence, and political leaders spoke more and more in terms that would partition reality into stark, irreconcilable polarities. Hughes himself had set a precedent during the conscription campaigns, when he cast an unholy alliance of Bolsheviks, socialists, the IWW, Sinn-Fein and Bishop Mannix against White Australia, liberty and

---

2 In 1945 Evatt, pushing for greater Australian and American co-operation during a speech in San Francisco, argued that ‘The destiny of our countries is bound up with the future Pacific order.’ (1945: 120)

3 The total days lost in 1919 exceeded the previous peak of 5 million in 1917—other turbulent years included 1914 with 1.1 million, 1916 with 1.7 million and 1920 with 1.9 million days lost. Intervening years fluctuated between 580,000 and 960,000 days lost. (Macintyre, 1986: 194)
The Pacific War 1918-1945

the Empire. In June 1920 the Chairman of the Collins House Group’s Zinc Corporation—then embroiled in the strike at Broken Hill—declared that ‘No-one can “settle” a dispute with an insane man who has got you by the throat.’ The company faced not a conflict over wages and conditions but ‘a social struggle which pervades the world’—that between the capitalist and the revolutionary socialist. (Clark, 1987: 68; Macintyre, 1986: 184, 194)

Reaction became national policy under the new Nationalist-Country Party Coalition of S. M. Bruce and Earle Page. By 1920 the economy was in recession by virtue of its dependence on export sales to a war-sapped Britain. While different sectors of capital were divided on the virtues of protection, they were united in their desire to drive down wages and increase the hours of work. In turn the system of conciliation and arbitration—which Manning Clark called one of the sacred Australian ‘tablets of the law’—came under tremendous stress. Reaction was also accompanied by grander visions of national development to match Australia’s new geopolitical subjectivity. Prior to the 1923 Imperial Conference Bruce began to outline his vision. Here the traditional anxieties about the correspondence between sovereignty, soil and identity became allied to the more ambitious spatial and transformative project of security: the economic management of populations, industries and subjects, the conquering of distance, the cultivation of new lands.

Defence he marked as the State’s first priority, to which end he intended to raise an Imperial naval defence scheme: ‘we can only defend this country,’ he argued, ‘if we are inside the empire.’ While the tug of the crimson thread remained strong, it was no longer so binding: ‘we cannot blindly submit to a policy which may involve us in war.’ This change had become visible in September 1922, when the Hughes government refused Lloyd George’s request for an Australian contingent to defend Constantinople from attack by the Turks. In addition to defence Bruce spoke of the need—if Australia was ‘to be a progressive country’—to accelerate the application of science to industry, secure uniform rail gauges, develop the Murray river valley, improve transport and communications, and resolve ‘the Northern Territory problem’. This last dilemma had haunted Australians for decades: ‘We have to hold this gateway into Australia from the

---

4 After first cabling that Australia would consider a contingent, Hughes refused to become associated with the action. He deplored the lack of consultation with the dominions prior to the British decision, and refused to have Australia associated with the ambitious projects of King Constantine’ or ‘be dragged behind the chariots of French ambitions and intrigues in the near East.’ He urged that the dispute be taken before the League of Nations and declared, ironically enough, that ‘The Australian people are sick of war. They regard war except in defence of vital interests as not only a blunder but a crime.’ (Collected in Meaney, 1975: 330-7)

5 The University of Melbourne’s Professor William Osborne—pivotal to efforts to establish the Council for Scientific Research (CSIR) in 1915—had argued, in an uncanny echo of the multivalent project of security, that the Great War itself had provoked ‘a mighty awakening in England as to the value of science in all its aspects of citizenship—the effects on production, on defence, on health and on morality. If we cannot be in the van of this great movement, let us not at least be found blundering in the rear.’ (Cited in Lines, 1991: 165)
north. We must attempt to populate it and try to develop it.’ This in turn would require
the development of Australia’s pastoral and mining industries, highlighting the way in
which dispossession—and the need to make the land productive within a liberal
economic ontology—was driven by an ongoing security obsession. (CPD, 1 March
1923: 81-83)

The great slogan became ‘Men, Money and Markets’, which in Bruce’s mind drew
the nation ever closer to the imperial bosom. While protection was a central plank,
Australia must look to England for markets for the vast surplus of agricultural
production, and for capital and white immigrants to help develop the nation’s industry
and interior. The umbilical cord of mutual history and the sacrifices of the war gave
Australians special claims: he pointed out that ‘we expect from the Motherland some
additional consideration for what we have done’, and in London later that year told a
business audience: ‘You brought us into existence. You have some responsibility for us
and you cannot shirk it.’ The idea that immigration was essential for Australia’s future
security and prosperity owed much to the vision of E. J. Brady, whose 1918 book
Australia Unlimited predicted the possibility of an eventual Australian population of up
to 500 million: ‘A sufficient population must be established in the Northern Territory,
in South Australia, and in Western Australia to ensure permanent, effective occupation,
and a realisation of the white Australia policy..’. Japan, as it was for Hughes at the
dedication of Canberra in 1913, was the unspoken shadow giving emotional form to
his words. (CPD, 1.3.23: 81-83; Clark, 1987: 217; Brady cited in Lines, 1991: 168)

During 1923 Victoria, New South Wales and Western Australia signed agreements
with the British and Commonwealth Governments to join the Imperial Land Settlement
scheme—Western Australia alone announced it would take seventy-five thousand
migrants. Upon arriving at their blocks—again allotted with no regard for their
indigenous ownership—they found none of the familiar comforts of civilisation, and
backbreaking work trying to bring the land into production. In June 1924 group
settlement in WA was suspended and a Royal Commission appointed—thirty-two per
cent of the immigrants and forty-two per cent of the white Australians had abandoned
their blocks. The scheme was a vast failure: by 1936 more than eighty per cent of all
State, Commonwealth and British settlement loans had been written off. Forty
thousand hectares of forest had been destroyed. (Clark, 1987: 225; Lines, 1991: 170)

Similar heartbreak ensued for many diggers who took to the land under postwar
soldier-settlement schemes. Many farms were undercapitalised, and those lucky enough
to produce decent crops saw their hard work founder on falling commodity prices
through the 1920s. By 1930 ten thousand had abandoned the land, with accumulated
losses of £23.5 million, and more were to leave in despair during the great depression.
In part the immigration schemes worked in British self-interest: they were accompanied
by vast new government borrowings from London and increasing levels of British
investment in both public and private capital. During the 1920s state and federal
governments borrowed enormous sums for settlement schemes and infrastructure such
as railways, roads, sewerage, electricity and communications. In return the earnings from
Australia's agricultural trade surplus financed repayments. While export markets had
diversified, the level of British loans and investments in Australia materially reinforced
the Imperial tie. Given the enormous level of borrowing—which reached £672 million
by 1927—and the dependence on commodity markets this phase of growth was built
on highly unstable foundations. The introduction of scientific management practices,
the development of mass markets by the new advertising firms and the advent of radio
and cinema entranced many with the promise of a new cultural and economic
modernity, even as its conditions—the industrial expansion of the Great War—and its
illusory stability demanded a more sober view. (Cochrane, 1980: 37-41; Macintyre,

Yet as British money and Bruce's faith in imperial defence added new strength to
the crimson thread of kinship, it was being questioned as a material and symbolic locus
Anstey claimed that Australia would one day face 'terrible retribution' as its debts to the
money men of London piled higher. Bruce's policy of borrowing for development, he
warned, was leading the nation into the abyss. (Clark, 1987: 245) In turn Federal
Labor Leader James Scullin—in debate with Bruce before the Prime Minister's
departure for London in August 1923—made an unprecedented attack on the imperial
assumptions of Australian foreign policy. The bipartisan patriotism that existed in 1914
was now a mirage: after chiding Bruce for travelling twelve thousand miles 'in search
of a foreign policy' Scullin questioned the conduct of the Great War by the Allied
governments. He railed against the 'marvellous hypocrisy of secret diplomacy' revealed
in the collection of documents, the *British White Book*, and 'the atrocious
conspiracy...to impose upon Australia Prussian militarism in the form of conscription.'
(CPD, 31.7.23: 1878)

He then defended the 1917 resolution of the Federal Labor conference which called
for peace by negotiation, in a formula remarkably similar to Wilson's fourteen points.
Yet in the eighteen months between the conference and the settlement—made allegedly
on the basis of those points—four million had been added to the dead and fifteen
million to 'the maimed, broken and maddened.' They died because of the secret treaties
'entered into before war was declared—treaties which were not made known even to
the British Cabinet':

Those treaties provided that the war must continue even after overtures came from
Germany and Austria, until Italy could be given Trentino, France Alsace-
Lorraine, Russia a warm port in the south, and Britain certain influence in
Mesopotamia. All that while the men of Australia were being told from recruiting platforms all over the country that they were to go across the seas to defend little bleeding Belgium, and that they were fighting for principles which would make the world safe for democracy...I believe that the Versailles Treaty which followed will go down in history as one of the worst huckstering, haggling, sordid pieces of bargaining ever made in the history of the world. (CPD, 31.7.23: 1879)

It was a devastating critique, and after it few things could remain the same. However slowly it would occur, the first shudderings of a tectonic shift of discursive ground were being felt. Yet Scullin also feared an earthquake: he wanted the 'silken ties of kinship' to endure and grow, merely to be free of the blackmail that offered a choice between leaving the Empire or being 'dragged at its heels in every European war...I warn the Prime Minister and other swashbuckling Imperialists that the Australian Democracy will stand by the silken ties of kinship which have endured for so long but will not consent to the cast-iron bonds of imperialism which such people attempt to place upon her.' (CPD, 31.7.23: 1879-80)

Speaking a few days before, Bruce shared Scullin's concerns about Empire unity and had his own anxieties about the lack of consultation which preceded Australia's entry into the conflagration. Yet he accepted the constitutional fact that Imperial membership involved being at war when Britain was; this dilemma he now sought to manage through the development of mechanisms in which the dominions might be consulted before Britain made its policy. Imperial integrity required new machinery: 'We have to try to maintain unity of the whole and complete autonomy of the different parts.' While Bruce now sought more discretion—following the Turkish crisis of 1922—over the deployment of Australian forces abroad, the crux for him was Australian defence, which was neither assured by the League of Nations or the Washington Agreement.6 Whereas Scullin suggested it would be possible for Australia to prepare for its own defence and advocated a greater faith in the League, Bruce argued only a naval force would provide security.7 The Imperial conference voted to allow the

---

6 The 1921 Washington naval conference saw three agreements: a four-power treaty between the British Empire, France, Japan and the USA, in which they agreed to respect each other's possessions in the Pacific Ocean and to consult on Pacific events for a period of ten years; a five-power treaty between these nations plus Italy, restricting the size of naval vessels above 10,000 tons to proportions: US 10, UK 10, Japan 6, France 3.5 and Italy 3.5. (While Japan resented the differential this effectively gave it naval superiority in the Western Pacific). Nor—in an effort to ensure the security of each in its own waters—were new bases, fortifications or military expansions to be undertaken outside areas adjacent to the USA, the Panama Canal Zone, Hawaii, British Dominions or west of Long, 110E (which exempted Singapore); and third a nine-power treaty—between Belgium, Britain, China, France, Italy, Japan, the Netherlands, Portugal and the USA—which attempted to preserve the independence of China, and the non-discriminatory open door on trade. (Millar, 1978: 98-99)

7 Bruce drew attention to the continent's twelve thousand miles of coastline where 'every one of our great capital cities' and 'our great manufacturing centres is located.' He asserted safety required at least one modern battleship, probably more, each of which cost from £7-10 million.
dominions to choose their own diplomatic staff and negotiate treaties, and Bruce appointed an Australian liaison officer, R. G. Casey, to the Foreign Office in London. Naval security would hinge on the promise of a British fleet base at Singapore. (CPD, 24.7.23: 1480-7, 31.7.23: 1882; Macintyre, 1986: 205)

As ever, Japan was the unspoken fear. In 1920 a conference of Australia’s most senior military officers had prepared a strategic appreciation which argued that Japan remained ‘the only potential and probable enemy.’ Even as they conceded their lack of knowledge as to Japan’s actual policies—this being ‘the proper study of the statesman’—they asserted Japan’s naval superiority could ‘delay almost vitally the arrival of help in Australia. So advantaged, it is probable she could land troops at almost any place desired on the Australian coast, continue to reinforce them, and supply them with fresh munitions.’ Australians should feel particularly vulnerable because the White Australia policy could ‘be made a casus belli apart from all other considerations’. They went on to argue that ‘successful defence against Japan’ was ‘an Imperial problem...the sea is our main line of defence,’ and recommended an annual expenditure of £12.5 million. The Council of Defence approved spending for 1920-21 of £8.25 million, almost twice that of 1913-14. (Meaney, 1985: 293-9, 348-51)

Ensuring the security of White Australia meant that the control of Aborigines remained a priority. Having achieved the general submission of the indigenous population through counter-insurgency in the previous century, this period saw a massive intensification of control through a disciplinary and coercive machinery applied to enforce their separation from the white society and genetic pool. Under the guise of ‘protection’ various provisions of state and commonwealth law prevented Aborigines from working for wages, or marrying or living with a non-Aboriginal without permission of the State. Others enabled the prosecution of non-Aboriginals cohabiting with Aborigines and of Aborigines found with firearms. It was during this period that the enforced removals of children from Aboriginal families began. It was nothing less than an attempt at genocide: Bruce urged South Australia to accept babies as ‘they would not know in later life that they had Aboriginal blood and would probably be absorbed into the white population and become useful citizens.’ Less controlled forms of violence also continued: in August 1928 a Northern Territory police party led by

Without that, defence would require 'a great fleet of submarines and destroyers, a tremendous air force and...a certain number of cruisers to guard trade routes...The financial burden involved in making such provision would arrest the whole of our development for years to come.' (CPD, 24.7.23: 1485; emphasis added)

A good account of twentieth century policy towards Aborigines is contained in the two volumes of C. D. Rowley, Aboriginal Policy and Practice, ANU Press, 1970-1. In Volume II he argues that during this period, ‘Governments with large ‘full-blood’ populations tried by means of segregation to limit further part-Aboriginal births. At the same time they came to formulate policies which involved the disappearance of part-Aborigines through miscegenation. Conveniently the ‘full-bloods’ seemed to be dying out; the part-Aborigines were to be placed in such situations that there would eventually be no traces of them.’ (1971: 4)
William Murray massacred as many as 100 men, women and children near Coniston in revenge for the killing of a white settler, but was exonerated by a Federal Board of Enquiry. At this time William Cooper, an elder from Echuca in Victoria, formed the Australian Aborigines League to fight for the franchise, parliamentary representation and land rights. (Clark, 1987: 158, 299, 427; Day, 1996: 266)

As these historic images of the Other were being solidified in Australia’s cultural lexicon, disciplinary machinery and strategic planning, another was being conjured from the deepening crisis in industrial and economic management. Previously a vague outline, this ‘enemy within’ was taking on a solid mythical form, in a premonition of its future presence at the very core of the Australian identity. Its name was Communism—and in its spectre conservatives found a threat to social order, morality, progress and the sacred institutions of property and entrepreneurial risk. Earlier Bruce had worried that ‘Bolsheviks’ might thwart efforts to force down wages to make Australian industry more internationally competitive. Again the liberal problematic of ‘government’ appeared: the radicals might utilise the freedoms of a democratic society and the resentment of workers to foment revolution. (Clark, 1987: 285) Yet in the angry mood of the time, his ‘businessmen’s government’ eschewed the co-optive liberal strategy which had previously sought to moderate class antagonisms.

In June 1925 Bruce tried to amend the Immigration Act, to create powers that would enable the deportation of industrial militants. His language—and the Bill’s whole conceptual framework—brought into play the totalising and individualising technology of subjectivity that was central to security as a modern vector of power. One clause enabled the deportation of any immigrant convicted of ‘an offence against the laws of the Commonwealth relating to trade and commerce or conciliation and arbitration’, particularly if the Minister felt their actions hindered the transport industry or were ‘injurious to the peace, order and good government of the Commonwealth.’ Another enabled the deportation of anyone who advocated the overthrow by force of ‘the established government of the Commonwealth’ or preached ‘the unlawful destruction of property’, and even extended to anyone who was ‘a member of or affiliated with’ an organisation with such goals. (CPD, 25.6.25: 460-1)

Bruce claimed they were merely emergency measures which could ‘only be applied in times of great industrial turmoil.’ Declaring that the ‘amendments are designed entirely to benefit the community as a whole’, he pitted a harmonious collective identity against a pernicious and alien otherness:

...among those coming into Australia are a number of persons of alien race and blood who, although we offer to them the opportunity to enjoy our citizenship, refuse to become Australians, do not recognise our ideals, and are not absorbed into our national life...they voice here false doctrines and ideas and refer to social
conditions in a language that is absolutely inapplicable to any that exist in Australia. Being thus prejudiced, they carry on a propaganda of a most insidious nature...it is absolutely dangerous to the national life of our country. (CPD, 25.6.25: 460)

Although Bruce's words were deliberately vague, he was clearly speaking of communism. The Bill was a brazen attempt to set tight juridical limits to subjectivity—as citizenship—and trigger the use of force against those deemed to exist outside its boundaries. They and their 'poisonous propaganda' could be excised from the social body, much as 160,000 convicts were removed from Britain and sent to Australia during its first hundred years. A month after the assent to the new Act George Pearce, Minister of State for Home and Territories, invoked its powers during a waterfront strike. In November two officials of the Seamens' Union were marked for deportation. Ironically enough, given the Government's rhetoric of citizenship and commonwealth security, the High Court ruled that the legislation was unconstitutional. Undeterred, Bruce fought the 1925 election on a law-and-order platform and sought 'to prove that Labor was tarred with the Communist brush.' He was rewarded with a majority of twenty-eight seats. (Clark, 1987: 242)

Angered by the High Court decision, at the opening of Parliament in January 1926 Bruce's Attorney General J. G. Latham introduced another bill—this time to amend the Crimes Act. It too provided for the deportation of seditious aliens or, if Australian-born, their imprisonment for up to two years. Proscribed were organisations which advocated the violent overthrow of any state or commonwealth government, the 'injury of property of the Commonwealth or of property used in trade or commerce with other countries or among the states'. Most alarming was a fantastically sweeping clause which provided—in the event of a proclamation of a 'serious industrial disturbance' by the Governor General—for the deportation or imprisonment for up to a year of anyone involved in a lock-out or strike 'in connexion with' the transport of goods or passengers in overseas or interstate trade or in 'the provision of any public service by the Commonwealth.' Labor's Matthew Charlton, after hearing this clause read, rightly protested that 'every trade union leader can be brought in under that section.' Latham, well aware of the unions' power to block the very lifelines of capital, trade and wealth, retorted that 'In Australia transport is vital; it is of fundamental importance to the well-being of the Commonwealth.' (CPD, 28.1.26: 467-8)

---

9 In order to get around the High Court decision Latham explained that: 'This Parliament has no authority to enact a general criminal law; it can deal only with matters submitted to it by the Constitution. Therefore the bill applies only to the protection of the established government, interstate and foreign trade and commerce, and the public services of the Commonwealth.' (CPD, 28.1.26: 467)
There was more to come. In June 1928 Bruce—in a measure named by unions ‘The Bludgeon Act’—sought to introduce compulsory arbitration as new strikes broke out on the Sydney and Melbourne waterfronts. As the strikes wore on he threatened union leaders with the Crimes Act. Anxious for still greater powers, in September the Government rushed through a new bill with punitive provisions enabling the licensing of transport workers. Scullin called the new law—nicknamed the ‘dog-collar Act’ after the demeaning system of daily pick-ups it sought to enforce—a ‘proclamation of industrial martial law’. Disputes escalated in response to the efforts to force down wages and strengthen the penal powers of the Arbitration Court. Between 1924 and 1927 the number of working days lost annually rose from 900,000 to 1.2 million, and reached a phenomenal 4.5 million in 1929. With the support of the Communist party a timberworkers strike—in protest at a new award which cut wages, increased the working week and the use of juvenile labour—spread to other sectors. It lasted ten months. In NSW coal-miners struck when threatened with dismissal if they refused a wage cut. At Rothbury in 1929 another unionist was murdered by police as they escorted strikebreakers to the pit. (Clark 1987: 286-7; Macintyre, 1986: 245-7)

For all the state violence and activism there was an air of desperation about the measures, as the liberal consensus was swept away and the labour movement responded with greater and greater militancy. Security—as an effective management of industrial populations, social order and economic prosperity—was beginning to look like a chimera. Rising unemployment was paralleled by a steady fall in commodity prices which, coupled with the vast loan obligations, put untenable pressure on the nation’s foreign reserves. Public works had been drastically scaled back and London financiers were recommending a wholesale assault on production costs. In 1929, as the destructive wave built and stood ready to break, Bruce proposed to remove the Commonwealth entirely from the realm of Conciliation and Arbitration, only retaining jurisdiction over the maritime industry and public service. Despite his hope that it might strengthen the hand of employers, the measure split his party and was defeated on the floor. Labor—now able to portray itself as the defender of living standards, sound finance and industrial peace—won the ensuing election. (Macintyre, 1986: 250; Clark, 1987: 315)

Yet Labor’s day in the sun was short-lived. With the economy already in grave trouble, the Wall Street Crash heralded a storm from which no society could hope to take shelter. Wheat and wool markets plunged by fifty per cent—export incomes fell thirty per cent between 1929 and 1930 alone. Multiplier effects surged through the

---

10 The coal strike too was drawn out and bitter, lasting a year. It was NSW Premier Thomas Bavin who directed police to ensure the mine at Rothbury continued production with non-union labour. He refused to pay the dole to any family which received money from the Scullin government’s £3 million Christmas fund for the unemployed, and in February refused to pay dole to miners involved in the lock-out. (Clark, 1987: 326-40)
economy causing job losses, business failures and a vast contraction in demand. Unemployment exploded to over thirty per cent by the middle of 1932. Between 1929 and 1930 GDP fell ten per cent, and by August 1930 short term debt had ballooned to £38 million, with long term overseas debt at £567 million. Reserves were pitifully low. (Macintyre, 1986: 253-4) Australia’s level of borrowing and its exposure to international commodity markets had made it particularly vulnerable, and as the crisis wore on it became bitterly clear that security—whether that of the daily welfare of individuals or the ‘economy’ as a whole—lay hostage to the whims of foreign bankers and the vicissitudes of global economic forces. In Australia the class conflict only deepened as British and domestic capital fought to stem its losses, while internationally the depression slid inexorably into global war.

In the ensuing years Australia’s political life became paralysed by a bitter struggle over the direction of economic policy. Here the Labor government confronted a conservative Commonwealth Bank board, a hostile Senate, and eventually its own organisation. While few resisted the massive raising of tariffs, the Senate blocked a new Transport Workers Bill which would have abolished licensing and reinstated union members, a Wheat Marketing Bill and the Reserve Bank Bill. The conservatives, led by Commonwealth bank governor Sir Robert Gibson and bolstered by the report of the Bank of London’s Sir Otto Niemeyer, argued for the full honouring of loans and the balancing of budgets—a programme accepted by the Premiers and formalised as the Melbourne Agreement. In January 1931 the Arbitration Court reduced all award wages by ten per cent. Other economists, fearing a threat to social order, pushed ‘a judicious mixture of deflation and reflation’ that might mitigate the severity of the depression. Professor L. F. Giblin told Scullin’s Treasurer Joe Lyons he feared ‘a bad smash with a chance of revolution and chaos’ if the Niemeyer medicine were applied too harshly. Lyons’ replacement E. G. Theodore drew up a plan to take Australia off the gold standard and begin an expansionary monetary policy which might stimulate production, but met Gibson’s fierce opposition. NSW Premier Jack Lang struck out by declaring his government would suspend interest payments to London. (Macintyre, 1986: 256-62)

The resulting confrontation would blow the ALP apart. The NSW branch, dominated by Lang, was expelled, and he himself was sacked by NSW Governor Sir Philip Game in May 1932. Lyons resigned to form a new coalition with other conservative Labor members, and took the new United Australia Party (UAP) to a crushing win at the December 1931 election. At the Premiers Conference in May that year further deflation had been agreed, which combined the conversion of existing loans with drastic cuts in public expenditure—twenty per cent across all programs and twelve-and-a-half per cent for pensions. By that time as few as half the workforce had full-time jobs and two-thirds of all breadwinners received an income smaller than the
basic wage. Unemployed families lived on half a basic wage—already pegged at their ‘minimum essential requirements’—made up largely of ration coupons. Unemployed men were forced into unpaid labour, and eviction riots became a regular feature of the next decade. Still the ontology of liberal subjectivity remained strong—the common slogan of unemployed demonstrators was: ‘We want work, not charity!’ (Macintyre, 1986: 270-80; Clark, 1987: 333)

As the Lyons government continued to implement the harsh deflationary medicine of the Premiers’ Plan and use the Crimes Act against communist activists, it sought a solution to the nation’s trade problems in the imperial tie. At the Imperial Economic Conference in Ottawa in 1932 the Government agreed to the lowering of tariffs on British goods (mainly capital goods)—the quid pro quo being an increased possibility of debt conversions in London and larger Commonwealth markets for Australian exports. This plus the fall in wages, imports and increased tariffs led in turn to growing import substitution and domestic manufacturing capacity—which did not prevent Australian manufacturers from protesting the bargains struck at the conference. (Cochrane, 1980: 48) However the resentment of other trading partners led to a loss of wool markets, and the 1936 policy of trade diversion (which penalised imports which sold better than similar British lines) particularly angered the US and Japan. Here Australian policies cleaved with the global tendency, during the depression, of the industrial powers to withdraw into restrictive trade and currency blocs. Such actions exacerbated geopolitical tensions and were a major element in the passions which led to the second world war. While the economy was technically in recovery by 1932, vast levels of unemployment and social misery continued for the rest of the decade. At Ottawa and in London the State’s managers had had to beg for new markets and the conversion of loans, while at home the new millions of poor remained at the mercy of the same wolves. While debt had obviously given British capital enormous leverage, more extended lines of class affinity—or ‘governmental’ strategy—were by no means clear, as the desperate conflicts over economic policy had shown. More and more, ‘security’ seemed to hinge on the caprice of a vast, opaque and systemic impersonality which mocked the Age’s Cartesian pretense at mastery.

11 In 1932 the Crimes Act was again amended to enable the de-registration of any newspaper, or the withdrawal of any broadcasting licence, from organs which advocated the overthrow of government by violent means, and to disqualify all members of ‘unlawful associations’ from voting! (Clark, 1987: 419) Communists would now join Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders as political non-subjects, boundary markers for an officially sanctioned ‘Australian’ subjectivity.

12 Bruce, now resident minister in London, was entrusted with the negotiations over loan conversions with the City of London, and also handled negotiations at Ottawa. Part of his task was to circumvent the efforts of the NSW Agent-General A. C. Willis to achieve a moratorium of repayments on behalf of Lang. (Clark, 1987: 399) Peter Cochrane also argues Bruce and the British bankers had common interests in keeping Labor from power: if Lyons could not deliver the conversions he had promised at the 1932 election, ‘most members of the Lyons cabinet believed the people would turn to the Labor Party and Lang’s repudiationism would gain widespread approval.’ (1980: 46)
THE 'RIDDLE OF THE SPHINX':
APPEASEMENT AND THE DRIFT TO WAR

The economic disasters of the 1930s were paralleled by a steady drift to war. In Australia this focused attention on Japan—provoking intense debates over defence and foreign policy, imperial constitutional machinery, the nature of the international order and how the state might intervene in and control it. Although by 1945 it appeared Australia had assisted in securing a more ideal arrangement of geopolitical and economic space, the period was marked by constant frustration and anxiety over the Australian subject’s geopolitical voice and status. This—allied with an intensification of the Other within the national identity—would become a major theme of the next decades.

As the Chiefs’ of Staff 1920 appreciation showed, Japan had early emerged as Australia’s foremost potential antagonist. Yet by the time Australians were fighting and dying on the Asian mainland, Papua New Guinea or their own borders, few would appreciate the systemic forces which drove Japan to colonisation—the very same desire for economic progress and security which Australian elites had marked out as their own. Ironically enough, it was Hughes who issued a prescient early warning, after his return from the 1921 Imperial Conference:

[J]apan] wants both room...and markets for her manufactured goods. And she wants these very badly indeed. America and Australia say to her millions “Ye cannot enter in”. Japan, then, is faced with the great problem which has bred wars since time began...[she] sees across a narrow strip of water 400 million Chinese gradually wakening to an appreciation of western methods, and she sees in China the natural market for her goods...But other countries want the market too, and so comes the demand for the “Open Door”...This is the problem of the Pacific—the modern riddle of the Sphinx, for which we must find an answer. (Cited in Wigmore, 1957: 1-2)

Prescient enough, if stubborn in its refusal to pose a solution to its own ‘riddle’, betraying the general western inflexibility which, by 1941, would bear as much responsibility for the outbreak of war as the millennial fascism of Japan’s military rulers. The causal chain in the drift to war is a complex one, and is further complicated by the desperate struggle for economic survival unleashed by the depression. Yet by the time western countries were seriously seeking to restrain Japanese militarism after the invasions of China, Korea and Indochina, the League-style sanctions on strategic materials appeared indistinguishable from economic self-interest.
While Japan was never far below the surface of strategic fears, during the 1920s many felt Japan was safely contained within the League, the Washington Agreements and the Kellogg pact. In 1930, at the League of Nations Scullin’s Attorney-General Frank Brennan spoke of Labor’s confidence in the League and the prospects for peace symbolised in the Washington treaties and the Kellogg Pact. He remarked that ‘peace and security’ were ‘good words’ but ‘have both been often employed for the perpetuation of much folly and not a little wrong.’ Showing how far debates on international relations had moved, Brennan enunciated a strong idealism in which he called for the final acceptance of a Disarmament Convention and offered Labor’s decisions to cut military spending and cease compulsory military training as evidence of Australia’s good faith. ‘The greatest victory in history,’ he declared, ‘will be the conquest of war...we reject the theory that preparedness for war is the best guarantee of peace: it may be a strong incentive to war.’ Not that idealism had spilled over into optimism—he made special pleading for Australia’s need to protect its fledgling manufacturing sector for ‘considerations of defence’, and felt that a window of opportunity to disarm was quickly passing, saying that ‘Security, it has been said, must precede disarmament, but it is also true that there can be no real security as long as the present scale of armaments constitutes a standing provocation to war. (Meaney, 1985: 378)

By 1934, when Japan had taken control of Manchuria, Jehol and Shanghai and withdrawn from the League and the Washington agreements, that moment had clearly passed. Even though construction of the base at Singapore began in 1931, Hughes argued in his 1935 book *Australia and War Today* that Australia could not be defended or the Royal Navy relied upon to ‘ensure her security’. That same year, Director of the Prime Minister’s Department Pacific branch E. L. Piesse agreed the Royal Navy would be inadequate and advocated greater defence preparations—particularly land and air forces—but remained calm about Japan’s intentions towards Australia. While it was likely Japan would ‘extend her Empire towards Australia’ that was ‘far short of saying that she plans to annex Australia. For that there is scarcely any evidence; and in our view of her needs it would seem most unlikely that she has any such plan.’ (Meaney, 1985: 400)

By 1935-36 Australia’s trade surplus with Japan funded over a third of Australia’s interest payments. This growth put strain on relations with Britain, whose manufacturers complained when in 1935 Japan passed the UK as Australia’s largest overseas supplier of textiles. The 1936 Trade Diversion policy could not have failed to annoy Japan, and was implemented at a time, according to C. A. Hawker, when ‘credit difficulties had filled the public mind of Japan with an almost feverish sense of the urgency of making overseas sales...such that they could brook no curb in markets where the size of their purchases appeared to give the commanding word.’ Likewise
Lionel Wigmore has argued that: ‘Australia had contributed to the fear on which Japan’s expansionists were able to play that she was being excluded from the world’s markets, and might be deprived of means of existence as an industrial nation.’ (1957: 5-6)

The Lyons government responded to Japanese imperialism in Manchuria with appeasement. According to T. B. Millar, it did so because they were ‘relieved that Japan had struck north-west rather than south. Subsequently the Lyons government assured a visiting Japanese mission that Japan had carte blanche in Manchuria.’ Britain too made little protest beyond supporting the US decision not to recognise Japanese sovereignty in Manchuria. In 1933, in response to Japan’s pressure for a treaty of commerce and navigation, Latham travelled to Japan where he tried to clarify the Ottawa agreement, assured the government of Australia’s desire for trade, and even suggested Australia would help Japan gain re-admission to the League of Nations. (Millar, 1978: 99-100)

In a similar vein Pearce, now Minister for External Affairs, complained in 1935 to US Consul-General in Sydney Jay Pierrepont Moffatt about US actions which were prejudicing Pacific security. These included America’s refusal to join the League, the insistence in the five-power treaty of parity in cruisers with Britain when the Empire’s needs were greater, and the Tydings-McDuffie Act of 1934 under which the US would withdraw from the Philippines within ten years. As Moffatt recounts, Pearce felt that

This had led Australia at large to feel that she could not count on American help in case of Japanese attack...The Government remained suspicious of her ultimate intentions, but with British naval strength below the safety point, and with American aid discounted, there was no policy open to her but other than trying to be friendly with Japan, to give her no excuse to adopt an aggressive policy vis-a-vis the Commonwealth, and to rejoice (irrespective of the moral aspect) every time Japan advanced more deeply into Manchukuo and North China. He hoped that her energies would be absorbed there for a generation...(Meaney, 1985: 397)

Diplomatic appeasement did not silence Australian fears about the likely extension of Japan’s campaign to secure raw materials and markets throughout Asia. Lyons proposed to the 1937 Imperial Conference a new ‘regional understanding and pact of non-aggression in the Pacific’ along the lines of the lapsed four-power treaty, but the idea was never realised. In July Japan invaded China in force—Australia supported League resolutions condemning Japan, and in November attended a conference in Brussels of the Nine-Power Treaty signatories. Japan did not go, and the conference issued a weak declaration merely urging China and Japan to suspend hostilities. Fear was also driving appeasement, with one Australian memorandum prepared for the 1937
Imperial Conference advocating improved British relations with Japan ‘to guard against the possibility of the British Commonwealth being faced simultaneously with the hostility of Germany, Italy and Japan.’ (Millar, 1978: 101)

When war broke out in Europe, the enduring fact of the imperial tie was underlined. It was his melancholy duty, Menzies told Australians on the 4th September 1939, ‘to inform you officially that in consequence of the persistence of Germany in her invasion of Poland, Great Britain has declared war upon her, and that as a result, Australia is also at war.’ Labor while reaffirming ‘its traditional horror of war’ stated that it would ‘do its utmost to maintain the integrity of the British Commonwealth.’ Menzies’ action derived from no personal revulsion at the Nazi regime.13 Both he and Lyons had supported appeasement of Germany, and after visiting Berlin in 1938 he wrote to Lyons of his fears that ‘Czechoslovakian President Edward Benes, egged on by France, will refuse to do the fair thing and trouble may ensue.’ (Meaney, 1985: 455, 438)

Strategic anxieties about the Pacific and Indian ocean areas immediately affected Australian decisions on its commitment to the war in Europe. Two RAN cruisers and five destroyers were placed under control of the Royal Navy, despite anxieties about Japan using the opportunity to launch attacks on Australian Pacific dependencies. Australia believed that Singapore would be at risk should Britain not reinforce, and the Netherlands East Indies (NEI) would be an attractive target for Japan should Germany invade Holland. These fears seemed confirmed when the Japanese Foreign Minister announced that Japan would be concerned by any European developments that affected the status of the NEI, provoking the US to issue a declaration that they would consider any alteration of the NEI’s status ‘by other than peaceful means’ to be prejudicial to the ‘stability, peace and security’ of the Pacific. The Japanese Foreign Ministry feared that Britain would occupy the NEI, with US support, while the US was concerned for its supplies of tin and rubber should Japan take over. In this light Germany’s invasion of Belgium, Luxembourg and the Netherlands on the 10th May made war with Japan seem inevitable. (Cited in Millar, 1978: 138; McQueen, 1991: 40)

By 1940 Australia had already decided to declare war on Japan should they invade the NEI, but in view of their uncertainty about the intentions of the USA, made no advance commitment to the Dutch. Australia had also allocated some of its expanding war production to New Zealand and the NEI. On 8 February 1941 Roosevelt told the

13 Menzies wrote to Bruce in London in September 1939 of his fears that ‘both Italy and Japan may very well decide to carve up Great and Greater Britain.’ Then speaking of the likelihood of war with Germany following the invasion of Poland, he speculated on the rationale that might be offered for its prosecution: ‘How is this war to be sustained? Not by the cry of ‘Protect Poland’ because, ex hypothesi, Poland will have been defeated; not by the cry of ‘Revenge Poland’, for nobody really cares a damn about Poland as such; not by the cry of ‘Down with the Nazi Government’ for it is really quite indefensible for us to be dictating to the German people what sort of Government they shall have. The cry then must be, in effect, ‘law and order and an end of terrorism in Europe’. (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 459)
British that the US would be unlikely to enter the war if Japan attacked only British or Dutch possessions, and that even if they did become involved they would only fight a ‘holding war’ in the Pacific while sending forces and materiel to the Atlantic theatre. US plans were to hold naval forces in reserve at Hawaii, rather than send them to defend Singapore, Malaya or the Philippines. Soon after the US transferred part of its Pacific fleet to the Atlantic. This move was made in consultation with Britain, but exacerbated Australian fears. Australian commitments to the Atlantic theatre were also dictated by British strategic interest. Three Australian divisions were deployed to the Middle East to reinforce the Mediterranean-Suez-Indian Ocean route, and to assist Britain maintain its control over Palestine, the Iranian oilfields and the northwest frontier of India. In the Pacific, Australia considered occupying French colonial territory to pre-empt Japan, and in September 1940 sent a cruiser to New Caledonia to facilitate the assumption of power by supporters of the Free French movement. Australian troops were reluctantly deployed to Malaya and Singapore in late 1940. (Millar, 1978: 137-140; McQueen, 1991: 44)

As 1941 wore on Japan—obsessed with access to oil supplies as a guarantee of its naval power—became antagonised by the US tactic of ‘using appeasement to mask slow strangulation’, backed by an oil embargo and restrictions on shipping which would limit its ability to import oil. Japan sought guarantees of access to supplies from the NEI, serving notice on the NEI administration in September 1940 that it would need three million tons of oil per year over the next five years, and concessions so it could remove its dependence on Stanvac and Royal-Dutch Shell. The attacks on Pearl Harbor, and later on Darwin and Broome, were designed to neutralise threats to the Japanese navy and provide ‘six months to secure the oil and refineries of the Netherlands East Indies.’ Japanese forces landed in Borneo on 21 January 1942 and in Sumatra on 15 February, only to find that workers at the Stanvac refinery in Palembang had burned the plant, sealed the wells and cut pipelines, setting back production by up to a year. (McQueen, 1991: 39-46)

THE PACIFIC WAR:
SECURITY, IDENTITY AND THE OTHER

The automatic declaration of war in 1939, the faith in the Royal Navy and the swift dispatch of forces to protect the lifelines of Imperial trade and capital, suggest that Australia’s immersion in the greater subjectivity of the Imperial body-politic was still an overwhelming fact. Once again, Australians had been sent to defend ‘peace and order’ in Europe, even as Menzies feared that ‘millions of French and British lives will be lost, and...the economic force which will be our ultimate weapon will tend to affect us as severely as it does Germany.’ As he had made clear in his correspondence to Lyons
earlier that year, the conflict was not a moral one: 'it is really quite indefensible for us to be dictating to the German people what sort of government they shall have.' (Meaney, 1985: 459) Labor supported the declaration of war, yet opposition leader John Curtin opposed the immediate dispatch of the AIF for Europe, with a major element of his concern being Australia's own defence, particularly if the Netherlands was invaded and a vacuum appeared in the East Indies. As ever, Japan was the shadow falling across such words. (Lloyd-Ross, 1977: 184)

Memories of the Great War and its effect on the labour movement also weighed on his mind. He was concerned by the possible impact of the new National Security Act—under which the Government was already deciding which meetings could be held—and in November 1939 he warned:

The paramount thing in this war is that, however the war ends, its termination must see in Australia a united, well-organised, clear-thinking labor movement, so that the trophies of victory won’t just be for non-workers...war might smash this party again—conscription would tear us apart as before—we may get our political opportunity and wedges will be driven in our ranks by every militant, every militarist, every politician, every opportunist. We—Australia—you—the party—me—the Movement—we’re all threatened. (Cited in Lloyd-Ross, 1977: 184)

Earlier that month he spoke of his concerns about the effects of the war on the class structure, both internationally and in Australia. Aware of the potential of war and nationalism to strengthen the hand of Capital, he outlined Labor’s vision of the post-war political and economic order, at least as it stood in 1939:

It is not the reshaping of maps and territories that is our concern. Our concern is for peace, security and safety, and economic order of the type that Labor believes is the foundation upon which peace is practicable...Our conception of national unity, which we regard as imperative in ensuring the maximum strength in time of war, does not imply that we condone profiteering and exploitation, or any violation of the civic liberties of the people...we must not allow the instruments of production and exchange to be used to build up economic power for a privileged class in our own country. (Cited in Lloyd-Ross, 1977: 186)

This discourse—with its rhetoric of unity, its concern for governmental reason and strength, and its belief in a war for freedom—is clearly recognisable as a vision of security, but it was one with important differences from that harboured by the conservatives. It will worth recalling later, when the government led by Curtin’s successor, Joseph Benedict Chifley, was in a position to influence the post-war
order—with the objective of realising just this vision of security. Then Australia would still struggle to assert its voice and autonomy in international affairs, whether in their diplomatic, economic or strategic dimensions. As they had in 1919, the ‘symbolic’ dimensions of identity affected its ability to speak, the nature of that speech, and the actions it drove and explained. In particular the ontological anchor of that identity—the fear and revulsion of Japan, intensified by the experience and language of war—helped to lay the basis for Australia’s entry into the Cold War. This discursive paving paralleled the nuclear annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which would be at once the closing atrocities of the Pacific war and the opening salvos of the one to follow.

A revealing account of what was at stake in 1939 has been provided by official historian (later Liberal Minister for Foreign Affairs and Governor-General) Sir Paul Hasluck. Opening the first of his two volumes, *The Government and the People*, he argued that as security had now become so crucial, national identity—rather than being some kind of cultural ephemera—was a paramount political consideration. The major significance of the war, he declared, was that ‘it made Australia face up to the double challenge of national survival’:

> the two great practical tests of economic and social responsibility and of national security, and the far more searching test of the strength of those spiritual forces which hold a people together as a nation, giving the nation a reason for its being, an identity and purpose...Its people had to come together as one people in one effort. It came to understand in more brutal terms what its claim to nationhood meant and to meet the stark and single issue of survival. (Hasluck, 1952: 1)

In 1939, he argued, ‘Australia’ stood on the edge of the conflict as a problematic unity. While nationalism had been ‘fervent’ in 1914, ‘nationhood was still the bold outline of an idea rather than a completed structure, a manifesto rather than a fact.’ Twenty-five years later, the depression had dramatically weakened the sense of ‘pride’ and ‘accomplishment’ achieved by the spirit of Anzac: the ideal of ‘mateship’ was dimmed by the new meaning given to the ‘class struggle’, while the punishing interest paid to London made Australians see ‘the overseas investor, usually a British investor, as unfriendly...’. Of particular concern was the new class-consciousness which, ‘when carried to the point of class antagonism, tends to undermine mutual trust, to set the claims of class above the claims of all the people, and thus to weaken the identity of common interests and purposes on which national loyalties are nurtured.’ (1952: 6-7)

Nationalism was above all a political technology, with implications both for the conduct of the war and a future societal order. In turn the way in which the war was conducted, experienced and narrated could affect the character of national unity. The anxiety was over class and national power, and over a task of administration which
The Pacific War 1918-1945

stretched from the vast mobilisation of national populations and resources to the inner beliefs of individuals—beliefs which now, aggravated by the ‘personal hardship and disappointment’ of the depression, were poisoned by ‘bitterness, resentment, and a cynical lack of enthusiasm.’ How was such a population to be roused? How could such a disparate array of interests and subjectivities—not to mention their leaders—be convinced of their responsibilities to ‘the precarious existence of a small nation in a world of power’? (1952: 5-6)

While there appeared to be a broad political consensus on the potential demands of war, Curtin’s suspicions showed that such anxieties had a strong basis in reality. With the stakes so high, the war would constitute a defining experience of security in which the limits and possibilities of the Australian subject would be clarified. Of particular moment would be the fate and nature of this wartime politics of identity—its links to older narratives like Anzac, its ability to formulate new problems and fields of action, and the nature of the order which would be its result. Would this order resemble the completed ideal of the Labor vision, or something more problematic again? What would be its conditions—historical, political, ontological, economic? In considering these questions, the way in which the events and experiences of the war were narrated, both retrospectively and as they were experienced, would be crucial.

This narrative—in which a sense of insecurity and moral grievance would coalesce—hinged on an account of the war’s origins, its conduct, and the question of whether Australia in fact faced the threat of Japanese invasion. Much subsequent Australian policy—most significantly the ANZUS alliance—has drawn on this story, and its importance for the Australian identity and its deployment into a whole series of subsequent cultural, economic and strategic formations cannot be underestimated. Official wartime rhetoric often overlooked a measured assessment of Japanese actions (in terms of their strategic and economic objectives) in favour of demonising them, enforcing a perception that the West confronted a militaristic and alien civilisation with fundamentally different values. While Australians did have a real basis for much of their anxiety or revulsion—arising out of the fear of invasion in early 1942 and the experience of prisoners of war—this projection is not self-evident, and helped to legitimate the firebombings of Japanese cities and the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. One can also speculate upon how such projections fed the deeper cultural assumptions underlying later strategic assessments of Asian threat, and thus eased consciences over the consequent bloodshed. Thus this period raises significant questions in which narrative unity and moral certitude can no longer be assumed.

Japan’s invasion of Indochina in 1940, and its attack on Pearl Harbor and landings in Malaya in December 1941, were particularly disturbing to the Australian strategic imagination. Prior to that, a sense of security had hinged both on the promise of the British fleet base in Singapore and the continuity of French control in Indochina,
The Pacific War 1918-1945

Britain in Malaya, the US in the Philippines and the Netherlands in the Indonesian archipelago. Imperialism represented both political stability and the natural order of things, in which the brutalities meted out by colonial powers were of little moment. Thus the long-feared rise of an Asian power was as much a potent psychological shock as a geopolitical setback.

Australia’s constitutional immersion in the imperial body-politic, and its identification of security with the western imperial status quo, coalesced in the declaration of war with Japan on 9 December 1941. It was made, Curtin said, because ‘Japanese naval and air forces launched an unprovoked attack on British and United States territory’. Further reasons were, he added without irony, ‘because our vital interests are imperilled and because the rights of free people in the Pacific are assailed.’ (emphasis added) The psychological trauma became even more acute after the fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, with the accompanying loss of 18,000 troops as prisoners of war, and the consolidation of Japan’s hold on the NEI.14 It had long been a belief—confirmed in a strategic appreciation of 11 December 1941—that the capture of both territories would ‘enable the Japanese to invade Australia.’ As if to emphasise that crucial questions of identity hinged on the confrontation, Curtin declared that: ‘The fall of Singapore opens up the battle for Australia. On its issue depends not merely the fate of this Commonwealth but the frontier of the United States of America and, indeed, all of the Americas, and therefore in large measure the fate of the English-speaking world.’ (Wigmore, 1952: 382; Hasluck, 1970: 13, 71, 102)

In response 2,500 AIF were dispatched to Koepang (West Timor) and Ambon, including an Independent Company of 250, which was landed in Dili on the 17th December 1941 against the express wishes of the Portugese Government. The Japanese landed 1500 troops a month later. The Australians remained on the island for twelve months, carrying out guerilla style-raids on the Japanese with the crucial aid of local tribes. The consequences of the Australian presence were devastating. With their NEI perimeter breached at its very centre, a 20,000 strong Japanese occupation force fought ongoing Timorese and Portugese resistance for the next four years, carrying out terrible reprisals in areas where the Australians had been active. At least forty thousand Timorese died from the combined effects of Japanese violence, famine induced by crop destruction, and devastating allied bombing from bases near Darwin. In his book Timor: A People Betrayed, James Dunn speculates that had the Australians not landed the Japanese may have deployed only a token force, or none at all.15 This experience

---

14 A total of 130,000 allied prisoners of war were captured, among them 38,000 Britons, 67,000 Indians and 14,000 Malay and Chinese. During the campaign Australia lost 1,789 killed and 1,306 wounded. (Wigmore, 1957: 382)

15 Dunn writes: ‘First, because of the Salazar regime’s fascist inclinations, the colony would most certainly have escaped the more serious effects of the war had the allies not intruded. After all, Macau was never occupied. Second, by actively soliciting the support of both
The Pacific War 1918-1945

was to initiate a long history—felt most intensely again with the Indonesian invasion of 1975—in which the fate of the Timorese became hostage to an interpretation of how the tiny island was crucial to Australia’s security.\textsuperscript{16} After the Australian commandos left in January 1943, leaflets were dropped over the island saying: ‘We will never forget you.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 102; Dunn, 1983: 22)

Even two months before the fall of Singapore, as news from Malaya worsened and the Japanese expanded their perimeter east by capturing Rabaul, there were intense anxieties in Australia about invasion. American troops en-route to the Philippines during the Pearl Harbor attack were diverted to Australia and Curtin asked Churchill for the return of a division from the Middle East to reinforce either the NEI or the Australian mainland. At the end of December Curtin made his famous broadcast—which some have read as a ‘strategic turn’ to the USA—in which he appealed for a ‘solid and impregnable barrier of democracies’, including the Soviet Union, ‘against the three axis powers’:

...we refuse to accept the dictum that the Pacific struggle must be treated as a subordinate segment of the general conflict...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. We know the constant threat of invasion. We know the dangers of the dispersal of strength. But we know, too, that Australia can go but Britain can still hold on. (Cited in Hasluck, 1970: 39; emphasis added)

The anxiety in the statement was palpable, and at its heart was the claim for the fullest participation in the higher direction of the war. During this period the Australian government struggled to gain access to the highest allied councils, with a particular anxiety being the agreement reached between Churchill and Roosevelt that the European

\textsuperscript{16} An Australian Chiefs’ of Staff appreciation, dated 29 January 1942, stated that ‘Timor and Ambon guard the eastern approaches to Darwin, an important naval and air operating base, and the eastern terminal of the Malay barrier. With the encirclement of the Philippines, Ambon is now virtually in the front line, while the threat to Timor is no less direct though perhaps further removed in point of time.’ (Cited in Hasluck, 1970: 37)
and Atlantic theatres would be first priority, and that substantial resources would not be committed to the Pacific until Germany was defeated.\(^\text{17}\) (Hasluck, 1970: 44-53)

These concerns were also the theme of an extraordinary national broadcast by Curtin on Australia Day 1942, which drew on the whole panoply of national myths in an effort to rouse his people and assert Australia’s claim to international subjectivity:

The whole philosophy of the way of life for which we are fighting means that in wartime it is more important even than in peacetime that consultation as equals should mark the activities, firstly of those charged with the government of a democracy, and secondly those jointly representing the several democracies...Our men have shown the stuff of which we are made on many a death-charged battlefield...We, therefore, claim the right to bring to the collaborating council table the same fighting calibre, the same passionate determination which is our heritage from the past and our possession in the present. (Hasluck, 1970: 55)

Here Curtin, the man gaoled as a conscientious objector for five days in 1917, shamelessly invoked the terms of the Anzac Tradition—without a shudder of irony. In turn he introduced it into a mythic patchwork which might bind the present moment into a seamless narrative ideal:

The flame of freedom lit in this land by our first settlers, and kept aglow by the generations which followed, is not extinguishable by any enemy...I pay tribute to intrepid explorers, hardy pioneers, great citizens, statesmen, industrialists, men and women of the land, heroic warriors, and all those nation-building spirits whose works have come down to us. We dedicate ourselves to their noble aspirations. (Cited in Hasluck, 1970: 55)

He could not be accused of lacking a sense of occasion. On a day marking the anniversary of Phillip’s establishment of a British colony at Port Jackson in 1788, Curtin sought to draw together all the narrative threads of Australian identity and subjectivity, and bring them to bear with all the force of a noble and irrefutable

---

\(^\text{17}\) During December 1941 Australia sought the establishment of a combined Allied council to make strategic decisions about the Pacific war effort, but was forced to accept a division of command between a Pacific War Council in London—upon which New Zealand, Australia, the UK and the Netherlands were represented—and a Combined Chiefs of Staff Committee in Washington. Until General Douglas MacArthur was established in Australia as Supreme Commander of all forces in the south-west Pacific area, representations to the US were made through Britain. Similar anxieties, and Australia’s historic construction of Pacific strategic space, drove the resistance to British plans to divide the areas to Australia’s north and northwest into two separate commands. They were eventually unified as the South-West Pacific Area (SWPA) under Macarthur in March 1942. Curtin also obtained Australian representation on the British War Cabinet, later cabling Churchill to request that Australia be given prior warning of all policy developments, and time in which to formulate and submit its own views before decisions were taken. (Hasluck, 1970: 53; Homer, 1978: 60-1)
tradition—past, present and future welded into an organic unity, in which prior acts of work and colonisation might inspire others to secure the anxious linkage between soil, sovereignty and identity against its gravest ever danger. In turn their example would be the basis for a future vision of progress when the crisis was over. The speech was itself a significant landmark. With its emphasis on freedom, colonisation, citizenship and productivity, it was a potent culmination of the ‘political double-bind’, the linked images of individual, national and international subjectivity which had been central to the 150 year-old Australian politics of security. It marked a point when the war, via its integration into a larger mythic trajectory, might be able to reunify an atomised community: identity secured by a defining structure of otherness in which the Asian enemy threatened the anxious claim of British civilisation to the continent, while the land’s true owners—absent from the breathless list of ‘nation-building spirits’—functioned yet again as a silence at the heart of the idealist movement of ‘nationhood’.

Of note too was the appearance of a phrase which would become commonplace as a signifier of identity: the ‘way of life.’ Richard White suggests that, from the 1940s on, it replaced the idea of a racial or national type as the basis of the Australian identity. While this account may be too stark—Curtin’s address suggests that it was being combined with older ‘types’ rather than abolishing them—it may have been effective by imagining identity as a process rather than an achieved state, as a series of everyday practices that included the most humble persons and tasks, rather than restricting Australianness to a pantheon of unattainable myths. In turn individuals might be made more accessible to power, and their immersion in the collective identity more natural. In the language which spoke of ‘the way of life for which we are fighting’ the smallest daily activity—the preparation of a meal, a game of backyard cricket—could be linked with the terrible abstraction and responsibilities of a global war. (White, 1981: 158)

In using this language Curtin was aware of the vast challenges of administration posed by the need to re-orient industry to war production, control movements of capital and investment, direct and manage labour and build up the defence forces. Curtin defended the Economic Organisation Regulations—under which prices, interest rates and capital movements were controlled and profits limited to a four per cent return on capital—by arguing that they would ‘impart strength and stability to the economic structure’ and ‘establish a basis for attaining unity of effort’ which ‘demands a common belief that we are not only fighting for our existence as a nation but also for new ideals of community life worthy of the great struggle.’ Control of the industrial system was also intensified: absenteeism was outlawed and wages pegged to cost-of-living rises. Under these and other laws contained in the National Security Regulations government took vast new powers to prohibit the manufacture of goods, shift labour from industry to industry (or to the services), assume the use of property and force citizens to carry out any war-related task it directed. To facilitate the more efficient control of population
a national system of identity cards was established. And in early 1943, after months of debate, Curtin succeeded in introducing conscription for overseas service within the South West Pacific Area. In doing so he overcame the opposition of members like Calwell and Ward, but found an ally in the communist leadership of the Federated ironworkers. The *Australian Worker* declared the Bill contravened the policy of the labour movement and ‘violated a cardinal article of Australia’s..faith in the unforced heroism of her sons.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 116, 341)

In December 1941 Curtin urged the people to accept government direction without question. Again the language referred to a familiar ontology:

Having regard to the present necessity I say that, as the very integrity of this nation is at stake; as the security of its people is involved; as the whole future sovereignty as a territory for Australian people is an issue; there can be no subordinating of these paramount...considerations to the satisfying of individual or sectional grievances...I shall be accused of trespassing on the rights and privileges of the people of Australia. On the contrary...by conduct of this nature, their rights and liberties can best be secured to them. (Cited in Hasluck, 1970: 56)

Particularly crucial industries were transport and energy. In January 1942 Curtin brought a waterside strike to an end by telling workers he would revoke their exemptions from military service. ‘The men who are not in the fighting forces,’ he said, ‘and will not work are as much the enemies of this country as the enlisted legions of the enemy.’ The Government sought to control unrest in the coal industry by appealing to the Coal Employees Federation, and invoking regulations which penalised miners who refused to work against the advice of their union.18 Curtin sought to assure workers that Labor wanted ‘justice for the workers and victory in the war. The first, even if we get it now, would only be temporary if the other were not accomplished.’ Addressing wharf labourers in Fremantle he warned them, in the starkest terms possible: ‘We have to concentrate on the one supreme task which the enemy has imposed upon us. We have to defeat him or die.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 56-60)

Defeat him or die—it was phrased as a choice, but offered none. As Curtin had already sought to impress, Australia’s very survival hinged on the confrontation, and during 1942 the stark image of vulnerability it contained would be emblazoned on the collective imagination. The repetition of these fears endured long after any real moment of crisis had passed and eventually passed into popular memory—in the face of later

---

18 The Labor Government appeared to manage industrial relations more effectively than the Menzies and Fadden governments, but working days lost were still high (if far below the peaks of the early 1920s). In the six quarters between January 1942 and June 1943 there were 1,032 disputes with a loss of 939,433 days. Comparable figures for the six quarters March 1940-June 1941 were 592 disputes and 1,763,075 days lost. (Hasluck, 1971: 262)
The Pacific War 1918-1945

knowledge of Japan’s wartime intentions. The success of this image of danger depended first on establishing that Australia would die if it did not prevail, and second, on a narrative of the conditions under which it would eventually do so.

The period between the attack on Pearl Harbour and June 1942 was a genuinely frightening one. Japan’s intentions were unknown, and its successes alarmingly swift. At the fall of Singapore Australia lost one of its four AIF divisions—the equivalent of a loss of 100,000 men to the USA—and felt utterly unable to repel any concerted attack. It watched as Japan bombed Darwin, Wyndham and Broome, causing hundreds of casualties, took Rabaul, Lae and Salamanua in PNG, and consolidated control over Malaya, the Netherlands East Indies, the Philippines and the North Pacific Islands. In February 1942, immediately after the fall of Singapore, the Australian and New Zealand COS argued that Australasia was ‘in danger of attack..not so much from the aspect of economic exploitation as from a desire to deny these territories to us as bases for future Allied counter-offensive action.’ Possible lines of attack were from the NEI to northern Australia or down the west coast, or through PNG to eastern Australia. Such views fed later beliefs that the Japanese drive on Port Moresby—thwarted in the Coral Sea and on the Kokoda track—were preludes to an invasion of the mainland. (Hasluck, 1970: 71)

Yet while later strategic appreciations—whether of the British, the Australian Chiefs of Staff or Macarthur—tended to play down the danger of invasion in force, political leaders consistently placed this prospect before the public as an impending fact. In late February Curtin warned Australians their country was ‘in imminent peril’; a month later MacArthur’s first strategic appreciation suggested that a general invasion, beyond raids or an attempt to secure air bases, was unlikely. Neither Washington nor London ever saw invasion as probable—they thought Japan would seek to isolate Australia by occupying a chain of bases from PNG to Samoa. While the occupation of Darwin and raids on the coast were possible (to neutralise strategic threats and divert Allied forces), it was thought Russia would be the next major offensive if Japan’s position improved. While Curtin accepted such analysis, at the end of April he continued to assert that ‘an outright attack on Australia remains a constant and undiminished danger.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 162; Horner, 1982: 183)

Even after the naval battle in the Coral Sea—which seemed an indecisive engagement at the time, but was later interpreted as crucial to finally securing the Australian mainland—Curtin expressed fears about invasion:

If Japan should move in force against Australia and obtain a foothold, as threatened to occur last week with the Coral Sea action, it may be too late to send assistance. Possibly in the long run the territory might be recovered but the
country may have been ravished and the people largely decimated. (Hasluck, 1970: 164)

At the battle of the Coral Sea in May the Japanese were thwarted from a seaborne drive on Port Moresby (not Australia), losing one carrier and sustaining damage to another; the Allies lost a carrier, a destroyer and an oiler. Yet the battle of Midway Island (4-7 June) when Japan lost four carriers and a cruiser, was a more decisive blow to the Japanese Navy—it had lost the majority of its carrier fleet and would never recover. These two actions, and the arrival of twelve US divisions, had made a Japanese invasion of Australia impossible. Yet on the 17th June, in a radio broadcast appealing for subscriptions to the second liberty loan, Curtin again spoke of 'the menace that Japan presents at our very threshold...I say it flatly that Australia can be lost...Had the outcome of the Coral Sea battle been adverse who could give guarantees as to the consequences for Australia? That battle was crucial with fate.' (Hasluck, 1970: 168)

Out of such untruths myths are made. In this case, the Battle of the Coral Sea would be abstracted from the chaos of the war as a defining moment in Australian history—used by conservatives ever since as a legitimising narrative for Australian adherence to the ANZUS Alliance. Much of this centred on the Australian American Association’s sponsorship of the annual Coral Sea Week celebrations.19 Ironically, Evatt could have contributed: in a March 1945 speech he said that had 'the Japanese triumphed in the battle of the Coral Sea either Australia would have been heavily invaded, or at least the key islands commanding the southern Pacific sea and air routes would have been occupied by the enemy.' As Humphrey McQueen suggests, by repeating the fiction that the Japanese had been intent on taking Australia, and emphasising an event in which the RAN played little role, the battle became 'the ideal clash of arms through which to demonstrate how dependent Australia had to be on the US military.' (Evatt, 1945: 118; McQueen, 1991: 285-91)

To this narrative was added a series of emotional declarations about the fraternity between Australians and Americans in which mutual interest, shared values and cultural affinity converged. Yet the US decision to defend Australia was coldly strategic. In December 1941, soon after the attack on Pearl Harbor, General Marshall had asked Eisenhower (then a Brigadier on his staff) to recommend a course of action if the US was driven from the Philippines. Eisenhower replied that Australia was

19 This author was present at a Coral Sea Week dinner, organised by the Australian American Association, at the Sheraton Wentworth Hotel in Sydney in 1988. The importance of the battle for Australian security, and the great fraternity between Australia and the US, was emphasised by the guest of honour, US Vice-President Dan Quayle, visiting Australia for the Bicentennial celebrations which also included a port visit by the battleship USS Missouri. See McQueen (1991: 285-95) for an account of the Cold-War politics behind the celebrations.
the base nearest to the Philippines that we could hope to establish and maintain, and the necessary line of air communications would therefore follow along the islands intervening between that continent and the Philippines. If we were to use Australia as a base it was mandatory that we procure a line of communications leading to it. This meant that we must instantly move to save Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand and New Caledonia, and we had to make certain of the safety of Australia itself. (Cited in Watt, 1967: 68)

Having failed to take Port Moresby by sea, the Japanese sought to do so by land, launching an ultimately abortive drive across the Owen Stanley ranges in July 1942. They managed to drive the Australians to within 30 miles of the coast before withdrawing their starving and exhausted troops. An Australian counterattack, assisted by the US airforce and army units, then drove the remaining Japanese from the Papuan mainland—with the loss of 625 Australians killed and 1,055 wounded. This was the fabled four-month Kokoda campaign, which has since passed into mythology. In his history of the campaign, Blood and Iron, Lex McAulay argues that it 'has taken its place in Australian history alongside the landing at Gallipoli, the charge at Beersheba, and the siege of Tobruk...[It] marked a pivotal point in Australian awareness. It was that occasion when, for the first time, Australians were fighting for their own homeland without the protection of large and powerful friends.' (McAulay, 1991: 1)

The mythic significance of the Kokoda campaign—which occurred at the same time as Australians repelled a force attacking Milne Bay near Port Moresby, and the US Navy inflicted a grave defeat on the Japanese at Guadalcanal—turns on a combination of strategic perception and potent imagery. The first hinges on the way the campaign was interpreted, then and since, as narrowly thwarting a Japanese takeover of Port Moresby and then Australia. In September Curtin, in a national broadcast to open his campaign for austerity, argued that: 'Our fate is in the balance as I speak to you. The battle of the Solomons is not only vital in itself, but...represents a phase of the Japanese drive in which is wrapped up invasion of Australia.' If Port Moresby and Darwin fell Australia would be faced with 'a bloody struggle on our soil, a struggle in which we would be forced to fight grimly, city by city, village by village, until our fair land might become a blackened ruin.' If Curtin should have known Japan had no plans to invade Australia by this time—US communications intercepts had revealed this as early as April—later historians have been just as culpable. Even though he acknowledges that it was later known Japan never planned an invasion of Australia, McAulay's wording still suggests the Australians were protecting their 'homeland', while the military historian David Horner argued in 1996 that 'in retrospect it is clear' that the campaign 'was of
crucial importance to the security of Australia.\textsuperscript{20} This despite having written, over twenty years earlier, that ‘The Japanese High Command never really agreed to invade Australia.’ (McAulay, 1991: 2; Horner, 1996: 139-49 and 1978: 46)

Curtin’s colorful and alarming imagery, cutting through the fog of censorship which limited Australians’ knowledge of the war, would have seized the public imagination and enforced the significance of the later victory. In this Kokoda had something over Gallipoli, while sharing its images of bravery and hardship, the struggle to prevail against the great odds posed by not merely a fanatical enemy but the steep terrain, the heat and jungle, the difficulties in obtaining supplies and evacuating wounded. Historians like McAulay have also invoked older images of youth, courage and ingenuity in the unseen challenges of the Owen Stanley Ranges, crowning them with a stark and enduring image of the Other: ‘the great physical hardships to be endured in the cruel terrain and climate..the relentless mental strain of close combat in jungle..a merciless and barbaric enemy who had stepped from the Dark Ages, and who had to be exterminated rather than simply defeated.’ (1991: 413)

The campaign also gave Australia some moving images, among them Damien Parer’s film of a blinded digger being helped along the track by a mate.\textsuperscript{21} In this, one of the most repeated and enduring images of the Pacific War, Australians saw not merely a portrait of victory and heroism but of suffering and pain; its impact was not to encourage militarism, but rather a sense of vulnerability in the face of an implacable and alien enemy. In this way Kokoda, like Gallipoli, formed a crucial event in the progressive reinterpretation of the national identity.\textsuperscript{22} Kokoda appeared as evidence of direct Asian threat, fulfilling fears which had coursed through the Australian identity for decades—an identity in turn strengthened around the scene of its bloody confrontation and narrow defeat. What was left however was a residue of vulnerability, and a

\textsuperscript{20} Horner’s record here is rather odd. In the introduction to his edited volume The Battles that Shaped Australia—prefaced by journalist Paul Kelly as an uncritical lesson in the significance of war to ‘our history, our progress and our identity as a people’—he argues that the period between Pearl Harbor and the end of 1942 ‘marked a turning point in Australian history...for the first time, modern Australia faced the direct threat of invasion.’ An identical claim opens his 1996 book The War Cabinet. Yet in the 1994 volume he writes a thoughtful chapter debunking the myth that the Coral Sea battle saved Australia from invasion, referencing both Japan’s strategic decisions and the knowledge Australian leaders could have been assumed to have had available to them. He concludes that while it is unfair to accuse the Government of manufacturing a threat in February and March 1942, by the end of April communications intercepts had clearly revealed an invasion of Australia was ruled out. (1994: xiii, 161)

\textsuperscript{21} The image formed part of a sequence in Parer’s Academy Award winning film Kokoda Front Line. His work is discussed by Peter Luck in the historical popularisation (first a TV series and then a book) This Fabulous Century. (142)

\textsuperscript{22} In his essay Gallipoli to Petrov, Humphrey McQueen argues that ‘In place of the Anzac legend’ the Australian nation was born on the Kokoda track; or at least Kokoda formed ‘the focal point in a decade of rebirth.’ (McQueen, 1984: 4) It should be clear that my own narrative is less stark than this—his point however is that Kokoda formed a focal point for an ‘enormous upsurge of race patriotism’ and had a unifying potential which was lacking in the class war of the 1920s and the heartbreak of the depression. In this sense his argument is not far removed from that of Hasluck.
consequent strategic dependency. The binary structure of (vulnerable) identity versus threatening otherness thus took on enormous force—as historically true—which enabled it to be later emptied out and replaced with new actors and threat scenarios. Insecurity, as much as national pride, would be the event's enduring legacy.

Thus the debates over Japan's intentions and the significance of the campaign are of some moment. While acknowledging Japan had no invasion plans, David Horner argues that 'the security of Australia' depended 'on the battle for Port Moresby'—if it were captured the Japanese could strike at North Queensland, and if Fiji were also taken, the communications line between Australia and the US would be cut, hampering the buildup of forces for a counterattack. From there, he speculates the Japanese command may have changed its mind and landed in North Queensland. Thus he has it both ways—there were no intentions to invade Australia but it may still have been possible—preserving the link with Curtin's outrageous alarmism. While his scholarship is accurate, the speculation ignores the problems the Japanese faced in their attempts to take Port Moresby. The extension of supply lines and the lack of reinforcements was a major decision in the Japanese Army's success in ruling out an invasion of Australia itself in March. Whilst the Navy believed Australia could be held with five divisions, the Army argued that twelve divisions would be needed, as well as 1.5 million tons of shipping to transport the invasion force, and that providing effective air cover would be difficult. Nor were these plans backed by assessments of the direct economic interest that had motivated the takeovers of the NEI, China or Malaya. Australia did not appear in schemas of the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere except as an independent nation with which trade would be required for economic survival. By Midway in June Japan's Pacific fleet was crippled, and the US fleet expanding rapidly to give it overwhelming superiority. Yet Horner argued that the battles in August were crucial. In contrast, the official historian Gavin Long argues that 'after the Midway battle there was no danger of a large-scale Japanese offensive.' He suggests that while it required eleven Japanese divisions to attain all its objectives in 1941 and early 1942, by January 1943 'fifteen were proving not enough to hold them.' (1973: 215, 248)

As the tide of battle turned against the Japanese at the end of 1942, the minds of Australian leaders became focused on the post-war period. Here the question of Australia's international subjectivity would bear on anxieties about its future influence on Pacific affairs, the terms of peace and the post-war system of global military and economic order. These anxieties would influence both Australia's military deployments

---

23 In contrast, the official historian Gavin Long argues that 'after the Midway battle there was no danger of a large-scale Japanese offensive.' He suggests that while it required eleven Japanese divisions to attain all its objectives in 1941 and early 1942, by January 1943 'fifteen were proving not enough to hold them.' (1973: 215, 248)
and diplomacy to the end of 1945. During 1943 and 1944 Australian units fought on Wewak and New Britain, and relieved US forces on Bougainville and the Solomon Islands—forces then diverted to the main axis of the US drive against Japan across the north Pacific. In June 1945 the Australian Government made a formal request to the US Chiefs of Staff to associate Australian forces with ‘the forward movement against Japan under General Macarthur’, but met with firm US opposition. Australia’s submission argued that ‘from the aspect of prestige and participation in the Pacific peace settlement and control machinery, the government considers that it is of great importance for Australia to be associated with the drive to defeat Japan.’ (Roger Bell, 1977: 181)

Australia’s limitation to a South Pacific role was determined by its subordination to an American Commander, its strategic obsession with the area, and its post-war ambitions. Coral Bell argues that, having accepted Macarthur’s leadership in 1941, the Government lost ‘leverage on the strategic control of the Pacific war, and on the choice of role for Australian troops. That in turn meant loss of..control of campaigns in Bougainville and elsewhere, which..seems to have entailed many pointless deaths by battle and disease.’ She also quotes John Dedman, a member of the war cabinet, as saying that Evatt ‘kept reminding his colleagues that if Australia was to have a say in the peace negotiations, its troops must take the offensive in some major operation.’ (Bell, 1988: 26)

Australian post-war anxieties were also aroused by their exclusion from the Cairo Conferences of 1943, which included China, the US and Great Britain, and settled the terms for peace with Japan and discussed the disposal of the territories under its control. Evatt said in Parliament in October 1943 that ‘Australia has done her fair share in putting out the fire that was kindled in Europe’, and spoke of a proposal to call a conference of governments interested in the Southwest Pacific to consider defence, native welfare, post-war development, trade, air routes and communications. He also protested directly to Truman at Australia’s exclusion from the peace settlements with Germany and Italy, despite its ‘effective and at times decisive role in portions of the campaign against both Germany and Italy.’ The Chifley Government was concerned both about the precedent for Japan, and at the exclusion of small powers from the conferences at Yalta and Dunbarton Oaks which established the framework for the new UN organisation. By now it was clear the western powers were all self-consciously jockeying for position. Curtin had acknowledged this in 1944 when, wanting to involve British and Australian forces in moves on the Philippines and Borneo, he cabled Churchill asking for the dispatch of British naval forces to the Pacific. While MacArthur supported the request, Curtin betrayed more antipodean anxieties when he wrote of his concern ‘at the position that would arise in our Far Eastern Empire if any considerable American opinion were to hold that America fought a war on principle in the Far East and won it relatively unaided while the other allies including ourselves did.
very little towards recovering our lost property.' In a similar vein MacArthur opposed British command structure proposals associated with the force by telling General Marshall that 'any form of appeasement will be followed in due course by deterioration not only of British-American relationships, but of American prestige and commercial prospects throughout the Far East.' (Bell, 1977: 183; Millar, 1978: 153; Horner, 1982: 339)

Australia's response to Cairo was to meet with the NZ Government in January 1944 to discuss the post-war Pacific order. The text published at the end of the meeting, the ANZAC Agreement, asserted that as the two governments had 'vital interests' in the armistice they should share in its planning, and that 'as a matter of cardinal importance' they should be involved in the planning and establishment of the 'general international organisation' referred to in the 1943 Moscow declaration. The US was deeply annoyed by an article which asserted that the construction of bases did not 'afford any basis for territorial claims or rights of sovereignty or control after the conclusion of hostilities.' To remove any ambiguity, the text also declared that the 'ultimate disposal of enemy territories in the Pacific...should be affected only with [Australia and New Zealand's] agreement.' The attitudes to the Pacific islands in the Agreement seemed an odd mixture of imperialism, paternalism and idealism—there were clauses asserting the need to encourage missionary work, health and education, and 'material development including production, finance, communications and marketing'. While suggesting that trusteeship should be the most suitable form of control, the Agreement also recommended increasing native participation in decisionmaking with a view to eventual self-government. The Pacific was also seen as crucial to regional security, with a clause promoting 'within the framework of a general system of world security, a regional zone of defence...based on Australia and New Zealand stretching through the arc of islands north and northwest of Australia, to Western Samoa and the Cook Islands.' Greg Fry has commented that this proposal, strongly pushed by Evatt elsewhere, was a reappearance 'in all but name' of the Australasian Monroe Doctrine. (Watt, 1967: 74; Millar, 1978: 444-5; Fry, 1991: 3)

It might be described as a kind of modernist security-minded benevolence which asserted overwhelming Australasian interest and influence in the Pacific, would accept a US presence as ultimate security guarantee, and sought to promote economic 'development' and eventual decolonisation within those binding frameworks. Tensions over multilateralism aside, this policy appears broadly consonant with US postwar plans to reorganise the Asia-Pacific economies around Japan after 1947, and which the 1950 Colombo Plan was designed to initiate. Further efforts to influence post-war outcomes saw Australian troops participate in the Allied occupation of Japan, and General Blamey—after early US opposition—signed the surrender instrument on
behalf of Australia during the ceremony held on the *USS Missouri* in Tokyo Bay on 2 September 1945. (Horner, 1982: 413; Bell, 1977: 191)

Australian troops also took Japanese surrenders at Morotai in the Halmaheras, Dutch and British Borneo, Rabaul, Torokina and Wewak in New Guinea, and in Timor, Nauru and the Ocean Islands. (Millar, 1978: 159) The strong language of the ANZAC Agreement, though, worked against Australian efforts, with US naval commanders resisting the use of Australasian forces in the recapture of the Marshall and Caroline islands, both of which were coveted by the US Navy. (Watt, 1967: 77) Much was also made of Australian command of the British Commonwealth Occupation Force (BCOF) in Japan, and the appointment of W. McMahon Ball as the Commonwealth representative in the Allied Council for Japan. (Horner, 1982: 430)

The Chifley government also took this activism to the San Francisco conference which established the United Nations in 1945. Australia’s delegation—nominally led by Deputy PM Francis Forde but effectively by Evatt—was intensely prepared and lobbied for 38 amendments to the draft agreed upon by the great powers at Dunbarton Oaks in August 1944. The amendments were ‘idealistic’ on both security and economic questions, but nevertheless implied a subservience to dominant meanings of security. While Australia wanted ‘a pledge from all members to respect the territorial integrity and political independence of other members’ and a declaration that ‘justice and the rule of law shall be the principles guiding the action of the Security Council’, it also sought to see that the Security Council is in fact composed of ‘security’ powers i.e. powers which by their past military contribution to the cause of world security have proved able and willing to assume substantial security responsibilities, or which are willing, and by virtue of their geographical position in relation to regions of primary strategic importance are able to make a substantial contribution to the maintenance of international peace and security. (Watt, 1967: 83)

This implied that, whatever the projected role of the UN in resolving international disputes, realist military frameworks and territorial coverage would provide an ultimate security guarantee, and that the strategic control of space and its denial to ‘hostile’ powers was a necessary operation. While the Labor government tended to resist the demonisation of communism that came with the cold war, they seemed to defer to this more general strategic principle when they compromised their initial plans for the BCOF in Japan out of sensitivity to the US, which feared that offering a separate command to the British Commonwealth might provoke a similar request from the Soviet Union. The statement also reflected Evatt’s desire for the security council to be configured in a way that would allow Australia to participate—notwithstanding the
claims of the ‘Big Four’, Australia was, in his mind, clearly such a ‘security power’.
(Horner, 1982: 424; Bell, 1977: 185)

The conventional nature of Evatt’s thinking here stood in contrast to his prescient
desire to democratise, in however small a way, the voting and membership structures
of the new international organisation. Such results of Australian advocacy were
embodied in Article 73—which required colonial powers to report to the Secretary
General on the conditions of their territories—but Evatt’s efforts to have full
employment included as an obligation failed. While Australia also failed to prevent
permanent members of the security council having a veto power—the very power
which paralysed the organisation until the late 1980s—it was able to prevent great
powers using their veto to stifle discussion. The White Australia policy was protected,
much as it was by Hughes in 1919, by modifying Article 2 so that the UN could not
intervene with force over an issue within the domestic jurisdiction of a state. (Watt,
1967: 87-92) Although John Curtin was now dead, struck down by a lung illness in
July, the ambition he declared in 1941 had been achieved: ‘We shall hold this country
and keep it as a citadel for the British-speaking race and as a place where civilisation
will persist.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 635)

CONCLUSION:
WAR, JUSTICE AND SUBJECTIVITY

This chapter has sought to trace a second crucial period in the imagination of a unified
and progressive Australian subject—from its dark post-war achievement in the Anzac
tradition, through the failed vision of ‘Australia Unlimited’, the terrible division and
hardship of the depression, to its reconsolidation in the patriotic struggle against Japan
in the Pacific War. While previously conservatives had sought to deploy its force
against the labour movement, between 1942 and 1945 its consolidation would occur
under a Labor administration which sought to ameliorate social division in a common
cause, and proclaimed its dual objective as bringing justice to the workers and security
to the nation as a whole—a vision in which, as Curtin’s biographer Lloyd Ross has
pointed out, ‘social security and national security were indivisible.’ (1977: 386) As the
rhetoric and conduct of the war showed only too starkly, it was thus a vision in which
the ‘political double-bind’ was the fundamental operative principle. It would be
accompanied, however, by a potent new claim: that in the Labor vision, and in the
achievement of victory over Japan, security and justice would coalesce. Henceforth this
would be a crucial element of Labor’s ‘governmental’ rhetoric, revived by the
governments of Gough Whitlam, Bob Hawke and Paul Keating, and in the revised
platform developed in 1997 by the federal opposition of Kim Beazley.
Thus to the claims of one philosophical universal—security—were added those of another—justice. Together they provoke some disturbing questions, which undermine the promise of their idealist unity. Much of what Labor had sought to preserve—a white Australia, economic progress, the correspondence between soil, sovereignty and identity—had its roots in an older system of discourse with a deeply problematic history. The understandable anger at the treatment of the allied POWs, the narrations of Kokoda and Coral Sea, and the fraudulent repetition of invasion fears well into 1943 had entrenched a fear and revulsion of Japan with crucial future effects. In this way the ontological purchase of the Australian subject had been strengthened, but only through an intensification of the historic image of the Other that lay at its centre. Aborigines remained a silence in the story of progress and heroism that Curtin evoked in 1942, without status as citizens and still subject to a sinister machinery of slow annihilation. Yet some had even sought to defend the subject that dispossessed them, in the face of Army regulations restricting enlistment to those ‘substantially of European origin or descent’.24 (Day, 1996: 303)

Ignoring this continuing history, and the sufferings of those who had endured the full force of Japanese occupation, many Australians drew from the war a sense of unique moral injury. Although over seven thousand Australian POWs—a third of their number—had perished in the camps at Changi, Sandakan and on the Thai-Burma railway, it was by no means the worst experience or the most terrible atrocity of the war. Japan had made victims all through Asia, and on the Allied side Indians and Timorese had also surrendered thousands of lives in the defence of imperial territory. The murder of over four hundred thousand Japanese civilians, during the firebombings of Tokyo and the atomic destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, were cruel acts of terror with no strategic rationale—yet, told by their leaders the atrocities were necessary to bring about surrender, few in the West questioned the war’s shocking final acts.

Out of these fears and ambiguities Labor proposed to bring Australians into an order in which domestic reconstruction would merge with the international ‘creation of a permanent system of general security.’ Invoking a seductive vision of human enlightenment Curtin told Australians in 1943 that ‘the principles of the Atlantic Charter, on which the hopes for a new international order are based, are a pledge that national policies will be directed to the betterment of mankind.’ The next decades would

24 For example, 26 Aborigines from the Lake Tyres reserve in Victoria enlisted in July 1940, most to be discharged within a year. 50 entered the militia in Darwin, and historian Robert Hall identified 22 indigenous Australians enlisted in the second AIF by 1939. Though the army regulations were moderated in practice to allow for the ‘general suitability’ of the recruit, general opinion held that their enlistment would be unacceptable to the ‘normal Australian’ serviceman. William Cooper, who had lost a son in the Great War, had complained to the federal government about Aboriginal soldiers being ‘pushed back to the bush to resume the status of aboriginals.’ In 1939 Cooper urged Aborigines to boycott the war until they received status as citizens. The Aborigine, he argued, has ‘nothing to fight for but the privilege of defending the land which was taken from him by the white race without even compensation or kindness.’ (Day, 1996: 302-3)
fall far short of such ideals. In seeking to understand why, my analysis will consider the political and discursive conditions under which governments would seek to realise them. Domestically, Labor’s visions of social justice, full employment and economic prosperity would hinge on political and ideological struggles over the respective roles of public and private capital, while internationally Australia would seek to trade into a system ravaged by war and in which far more powerful actors were now laying down the rules. Similarly Evatt’s dreams of an international order based on law and justice were hostage to the same ‘Big Four’ whose armed strength Curtin hoped would ‘be used as a trust for all mankind.’ (Hasluck, 1970: 449) While an Australian subjectivity had been reworked and strengthened, its history and its ontological structure would leave a dark legacy; the thirty thousand lives it had sacrificed, in virtually every theatre of the war, would be of little assistance in the difficult task of asserting an independent voice in post-war diplomacy. Poised between the carnage of the first truly global war and the unknown promise of a new international order, security more than ever hinged on the bleak continuum linking the individual, national and geopolitical—a monstrous calculus of being, seemingly without escape.
By the end of 1945, after six years of a war which consumed more space, more technology and more human beings than any in history, eighty-five million were dead—twenty million combatants and sixty-five million civilians. They included some six million Jews brought from all over Europe to German extermination camps, five million more Gipsies, dissidents and homosexuals, and hundreds of thousands of victims of Japanese brutality and of Allied firebombing in the closing stages of the war against German and Japanese cities. Twenty-five million more were refugees. The Soviet Union alone lost as many as fifty million people. The conflict had seen the development of terrifying new weapons and techniques of warfare and, in a terrible evolution of the total organisation of resources and populations inherent in security, the obliteration of any distinction between combatant and civilian. Further, in the War’s sickening denouement, the United States had demonstrated a weapon which appeared to unlock the very laws of nature, and which Secretary of War Henry Stimson later feared would utterly transform the rules of the international system and destroy the Earth. (Snyder, 1962: 519-24; Ponting, 1995: 294; Alperovitz, 1995b: 430)

Taken as a whole, this historical moment seemed to hold together the irreconcilable: an experience of carnage, murder and fear played out on an unprecedented scale, and fantastic new dreams of human destiny and material progress. At San Francisco a new international organisation had been formed, promising co-operative efforts to ensure universal security, prosperity and welfare. A Universal Declaration of Human Rights had been made, and institutions established to eliminate poverty, ignorance and disease.
In the United States, publisher Henry Luce had already outlined his postwar vision of a ‘vital international economy’ and an ‘international moral order’ in which America would provide the capital, technical expertise and cultural model for a new global order based on freedom, justice and progress. In similar fashion, at the Japanese surrender ceremony on the USS Missouri MacArthur spoke of his hope that ‘a better world shall emerge out of the blood and carnage of the past, a world founded upon faith and understanding, a world dedicated to the dignity of man and the fulfilment of his most cherished wish—for freedom, tolerance and justice.’ (Luce, 1941: 61-5; Snyder, 1962: 513) In such visions, which many Australians shared, the War appeared as a trial, even a close call, but was also an enabling, ground-clearing event, which could not be allowed to sully their image of a future without contradictions.1 Rightly enough, many argued the Allies had saved humanity from enslavement and terror; yet looking back through another half-century, we may wonder if they were ever banished at all—simply given new names and forms, of which our own security was one.

Standing on the threshold of a new global order, the Australian subject breathed these contradictions like a harsh wind. While the destruction wrought in Europe, the USSR and Asia may have made Australia’s experiences seem trivial in comparison, this is to underestimate the vast cultural, political and economic transformations on whose edge it stood and in which it would be a major actor—less in terms of the volumes of capital, aid, or force it could deploy than the ideas, activism and paranoia it would bring to the process. As the final stages of the Pacific War and Evatt’s diplomacy in San Francisco had shown, this activism was already a marked feature of Australian statecraft and strategy. Speaking in March 1945 of the need for post-war US and Australian co-operation to realise the idealist vision of the Atlantic Charter, Evatt argued that ‘The destiny of our countries is bound up with the future Pacific Order.’ (1945: 120)

Labor’s own visions of security and justice hinged on how it could achieve both a reconstruction of Australian society and intervene in the new strategic, economic and cultural spaces being formed around the globe and particularly in its region. In these exceptionally mobile contexts Australian foreign and defence policy took on a new sweep and intensity, with Evatt continually seeking to assert ‘disproportionate’ influence as new hegemonic formations took shape. Over the next twenty years Australian policy became conscious of operating over larger fields of action and influence, and strategic appraisals became more detailed and encompassing, prefiguring the later development (and projection) of more detailed and mobile administrative and security formations into the region. Thus this period saw a vast expansion of the

---

1 An example was Evatt’s address to the Paris Peace Conference in July 1946. ‘By united efforts and common sacrifices,’ he told the delegates, ‘we have overthrown great tyrannies and won a new birth of liberty.’ (DFAT, 1993: 83)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

'strategic imagination'—which married new institutional techniques with new technologies of communication, surveillance, transport and warfare—to match that being extended by other powers.

As the political and economic landscape of the Pacific changed, difficult and morally profound problems for policy emerged. Old assumptions were challenged, while others were strengthened or transformed. The two most weighty issues were the reconstruction of Japan, and the challenge posed by the movements which now confronted the European powers attempting to return to their colonies after the Japanese withdrawal. Up to this point Australian governments had associated certitude and stability with the continuity of colonial power, and the post-war decades would see them attempting to recover this lost sense of security in difficult new contexts—which required adding the claims of new nationalism for justice to their calculations. The struggles in the Netherlands East Indies, Malaya and Indochina, and the way in which Japan was rebuilt and integrated into a new Asian economy, would have enormous and far-reaching effects which are still with us today. They include the future of Indonesia, a thirty-year war in Vietnam and the modern tragedy of Cambodia. Here fantastic and barely foreseeable levels of economic growth and prosperity, along with profound cultural changes, were paralleled by crises involving the death and dislocation of millions, with flow-on effects which transformed the global political economy. Australia would be deeply involved, over decades, in all these events.

Important principles had already been set out, by both the major global powers and the Labor governments of Curtin and Chifley. The Atlantic Charter, drafted by Roosevelt and Churchill in August 1942 and later signed by a further 29 states, committed the Allies to renounce territorial aggrandisement, to the principles of democracy and self-determination, to the achievement of fair trade and economic prosperity, and to economic and social security. The final principle projected, 'pending the establishment of a wider and general system of general security', the 'abandonment of the use of force' and a lightening of the 'crushing burden of armaments.' Labor consistently invoked the Charter as both an underpinning for its war aims and a blueprint for the future, with Evatt stating in 1943 that 'the declaration is universal in its scope and application'—its principles should underpin a post-war Pacific order which allowed for 'the legitimate aspirations of the peoples' and formed 'a basis for economic development which will provide improving standards for all the peoples of the Pacific.' (Snyder, 1962: 196-7; Evatt, 1945b: 114-5)

Yet within a few months of Japan's surrender many of the Charter's ideals had been abandoned. Preoccupied by its interests in Europe, the United States acquiesced in the British return to Malaya and Burma, the Netherlands' return to the East Indies, the French return to Indochina, and had itself retaken the Philippines and staked a claim to a chain of islands stretching from Hawaii to the east coast of Japan. The Soviets were
determined to control those nations it occupied. Cold War tensions were already in play with the US efforts to exclude the Soviet Union from Japan, in which the use of the two atomic bombs—just as the USSR entered the Pacific War—had been crucial. Similarly the Truman administration’s decision, against the advice of retiring Secretary of War Stimson, to further develop and refine the Bomb shattered forever the Charter’s final dream of a world without arms. Those who died, either in the terrible heat of the blast or later, in the slow agony of radiation poisoning, were the Cold War’s first victims, and occupied Japan was a crucial space in which its economic and strategic dimensions converged. Contrary to myth, during 1945 the US knew of Japanese efforts to surrender on terms which preserved the Emperor, that clarifying the surrender terms or Soviet entry into the war might bring it about, and that an important factor in Truman’s decision was the desire to brandish the terrifying new weapons at the USSR. Stimson wrote, ‘let our actions speak for words. The Russians will understand them better than anything else’, while Secretary of State Byrnes told Truman that ‘the atomic bomb might well put us in a position to dictate our own terms at the end of the war.’ The US wanted leverage against the Soviets in Europe, and to prevent them making territorial claims on China or having any effective role in the occupation of Japan. (Alperovitz, 1995: 15-35; Feis, 1966: 101; Schaller, 1985: 11-15)

This was a function of the United States’ broader strategic objectives: to build an integrated capitalist world economy subject to the rules of multilateralism—currency convertibility and free trade, investment and resource access—in which the US dollar would be the pre-eminent currency. American policy in Asia became directed toward the military and economic strengthening of a ‘Great Crescent’ from India to Japan, with Indonesia as its ‘southern anchor’, with Japan’s economic recovery underwritten by a trade and investment triangle between itself, the US and (a non-communist) Southeast Asia. In turn, under the influence of Cold War intellectuals like George Kennan the US abandoned many Japanese reforms in order to speed its economic recovery and integrate it into a global system of ‘containment’. Australia’s economic, foreign and strategic policies, and its possible forms of identity, would now evolve within these constraints. Yet whatever their weight and inertia, many dramatic choices were still available. (Borden, 1984: 4, Schaller, 1985: ix)

In this context the same questions of security, identity and ontology which have pre-occupied this study were still of great significance. By the war’s close the

---

2 Stimson was worried by the approach being taken by Truman’s Secretary of State James F. Byrnes, who wanted to travel to the coming meeting of foreign ministers (which discussed post-armistice Europe) with the Bomb in ‘his hip pocket’. Stimson wrote to Truman that the US should head off an arms race by ‘voluntarily’ inviting Russia ‘into the partnership on a basis of cooperation and trust’ with the eventual aim of achieving ‘an international arrangement respecting the control of this new force”—a force which he feared was ‘merely a first step in a new control by man over the forces of nature too revolutionary and dangerous to fit into the old concepts.’ (Alperovitz, 1995: 427-32)
Australian subject had realised an unprecedented ontological unity of which the founding fathers could only have dreamed, and which had seemed so distant only a few years earlier. Yet however complete this unity seemed, it would never be finalised—the question now was how it would be further used, deployed and transformed. The strategic imagination now took on a more forceful and sweeping character, integrating ‘national’ forms of identity into a ‘global’ movement of reason of which Americanism and economic integration were the hallmarks. Within this evolving structure, ‘communism’—at once a nameable ideology, political force, and endlessly mutable signifier of western anxiety, fear and disgust—would gain a rarefied rhetorical privilege and status. In an appalling exercise in reduction myriad movements and political forms would be fused, in the western mind, into a monolithic unity—a global image of the Other to match the new global movement of universalism. This theme would also transform Australia’s domestic politics, cripple the labour movement and obsess and dominate its defence and foreign policy.

LABOR, RECONSTRUCTION AND COLD WAR BEGINNINGS

Labor’s vision of post-war justice, played out in a context of international ruin and upheaval, and in which many historic cleavages in Australian society were merely papered over by wartime unity, would strike real difficulties. With Asian and European markets in chaos and its foreign reserves at a low ebb, the Government feared a renewed depression, and with it further political setbacks of the kind which had split its ranks during the 1930s. Memories of the depression—chief among them how the Australian economy had foundered on its overseas dependence—drove its fundamental commitment to full employment and its suspicion of banking capital, along with a conviction that the key to ‘security’ lay in effective macroeconomic management—in finding a combination in which the productivity and price of labour, the control of investment and consumption, and new techniques of state intervention into both the domestic economy and the evolution of the international system, could coalesce into the engine of a broadly based prosperity in which contradictions between private capital and public interest could be virtually eliminated. It was a vision, according to Carol Johnson, of ‘social harmony’, a ‘humanised capitalist society rather than a radical socialist one’—which sought to give systemic form to the unity of a collective subject. (Lee, 1995: 12; Johnson, 1989: 16) Given the sweep of such claims, much would be at stake. Could capitalism be humanised as they hoped, and the historic divisions between classes mitigated and resolved? Could the new international order be moulded into a medium for universal justice and prosperity?
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

The first efforts to establish an effective rationality of Government intervention came in 1944, with Curtin’s efforts to extend its enhanced wartime powers for a further five years by referendum, in order to smooth the transition to a peace-time economy. Portrayed by the opposition as a recipe for ‘industrial conscription’ and the ‘perpetuation of policies which have struck at the whole root of freedom in Australia’, the referendum failed. Undeterred, in 1945 the Government released its White Paper On Full Employment. This document marked a new ascendancy of Keynesian economic thought which would remain unchallenged until the early 1970s, and while sympathetic to moral concerns about social justice, made its fundamental arguments in the more abstract terms of economic management and efficiency. Its key arguments maintained that full employment could only be guaranteed by matching production with consumption expenditure, and that fluctuations could be countered by public capital spending. (Johnson, 1986: 41)

While claiming to produce benefits for all classes, the paper hid the way in which its vision of collaboration between government, business and unions would work as a mechanism for controlling Labour. While the Chifley Government substituted economic management for class warfare as a rationale for its refusal to encourage post-war increases in wages and conditions, it faced a period of industrial upheaval nearly as great as that faced by Hughes or Bruce. Five-and-a-half million days were lost between 1945 and 1947, including major strikes amongst metalworkers, at the BHP plant in Port Kembla, and rail and tramways workers in Victoria. During the 1949 Coal Strike—when the government gaoled union officials and sent troops to work open cut mines—Chifley accused the communists of orchestrating the dispute: ‘Either you forsake the law of the people,’ he told the miners, ‘which is the government creed, and return to the proper and lawful arbitration authority, or you ally yourselves with a world-wide movement that seeks to wreck the democratic way of life.’ While the idea that policy could harmonise opposed interests was central to Labor ideology, Chifley’s language conjured an image of otherness that would become a punishing rod for Labor’s own back.3 Instead we might suggest that, rather than harmonising competing needs for a greater general good Labor had, in the words of Carol Johnson, come ‘face to face with the real contradictions between capital and labour that exist in a capitalist economy’—and found that it could not resolve them. (Bolton, 1990: 60-2; Johnson, 1989: 28-35)

In many ways Labor’s vision of security—linking sovereignty, economy and population—was similar to those harbouried by previous governments, and confronted

---

3 Another rod proved to be the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), established by Chifley and Evatt in 1948, which spent the next fifty years compiling dossiers on leftists and other progressives. Elsewhere Labor also took up the anti-communist crusade: in Queensland the Hanlon Government used police against striking railwaymen, injuring many, and gaoled several union leaders. (Bolton, 1990: 69)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

many of the same historic problems. Like the ideals of ‘Australia Unlimited’ Labor wanted to develop Australia’s resources and industries, and populate its empty spaces both to increase its domestic market and make the still tenuous link between sovereignty, soil and identity more secure. Immigration Minister Arthur Calwell predicted that, within 25 years, there would be another challenge ‘to our right to hold this land’. In 1943 Curtin announced the goal of a population of 30 million which, while less ambitious than the earlier figure of over 100 million, would still be a vast expansion over the gloomy predictions of a peak of 7.5 million by 1973. The government promoted an increased birth rate, and sought the immigration of east European refugees, British settlers and southern Europeans. White Australia remained firmly in place: Asian refugees in Australia were deported, without exception—in protest at Labor’s rigidity the Philippines consulate in Sydney was closed and the national legislature in Manila considered expelling all Australians. Turning the moral complacencies of the Australian identity neatly on their head, the Manila Evening Chronicle argued the policies drew on ‘the natural sadism that springs from Australia’s penal origins.’ Curtin, maintaining Asians harboured an essential ‘antagonism to the white man’, had assured the 1943 Labor Conference that Australia would not look to Asia to build its population, while warning that Australian industries would strike problems finding Asian markets ‘while strenuously refusing them access to an empty Australia.’ (Bolton, 1990: 53-8; Day, 1996: 338, 341)

The problems inherent in Labor’s drive for security and justice were compounded at the interface between the domestic and international, where policies of race, development and economics merged with the constraints imposed by the international political economy, western strategic policy and the related dilemmas of decolonisation. The grand visions of international co-operation, universal values and general prosperity soon struck demoralising obstacles. Other problems lay in the very limits of Labor’s own thinking. Its vision of international economic justice, and an economically secure Australia within it, hinged on the possibility of being able to trade into a system which was growing steadily and in which full employment was an agreed objective. Yet the Government had failed to have a commitment to full employment included in the UN Charter, and delayed joining the International Monetary Fund (IMF) because the US resisted a full employment clause. Chifley convinced his party to join the IMF in 1947, declaring that: ‘I have been an ardent advocate of all international organisations because I believe that through them, we are engaging in a great human experiment, which is

---

4 Brian Penton made this prognosis in his 1943 book Advance Australia Where?, arguing that after 1973 this figure would again decline. (Day, 1996: 338)

5 For a detailed discussion of these arguments, made by an interdepartmental committee which reported in August 1942 and included the economists Copeland and Giblin, see David Lee’s excellent account of Australia’s postwar economic policy, Search For Security: The Political Economy of Australia’s Postwar Foreign and Defence Policy (1995: 10-12).
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

designed to prevent the catastrophes that result from wars and financial and economic depressions.’ However anxious about its loss of autonomy, Labor would stake its future on the development of a multilateral economic order. Yet by the end of the year, because of a massive dollar shortage caused by the US refusal to run trade deficits to speed European recovery, multilateralism was dying. Australians had been reminded once again of their precarious dependence on the international economy and on decisions over which they had little influence. There was also some naivete in Labor’s approach—however hard they had had to fight for Australian ‘interests’, they too easily spoke as if capitalism was a politically neutral form which, once deployed for the growth in employment and prosperity, could benefit all equally. As the crisis ground on through 1949 the Government found itself arguing that the US should reduce tariffs and ‘increase investment in backward areas, especially Asia.’ (Lee, 1995: 18-26, 67)

Likewise Labor struck enormous obstacles to its vision of international order as the US sought to remake Japan. There the Australians were locked out of occupation decisionmaking, which was monopolised firstly by Supreme Commander of the Allied Powers (SCAP) Douglas MacArthur and, after 1947, by cold-war conservatives in the US Department of State. Australian desires for sweeping political reform, welfare measures and the dissolution of the Zaibatsu—driven by fears of a future Japanese military resurgence—foundered on the US Government’s Cold War priorities. While MacArthur accepted the land reform proposed by Commonwealth representative W. Macmahon Ball, he largely ignored the four-power Allied Council for Japan (ACJ). Post-war Japanese Governments successfully resisted SCAP’s Zaibatsu reforms, and after 1947 the US Administration dismantled the anti-monopoly and reparations programs, and advocated the strengthening of the Japanese police and the establishment of a small defense force to resist ‘subversion.’ (Schaller, 1985: 122-40)

America’s objectives now were to rebuild Japan as a military and economic bulwark against Soviet ‘penetration’ of northeast Asia, even if it meant retarding Japanese democratisation. In 1948 SCAP began encouraging the Japanese government to arrest

---

6 Lee writes that Australia ‘was worried that a depression overseas would cause a decline in Australia’s export income at a time when domestic policies were keeping wages and prices steady. The resulting balance of payments deficit might force Australia to follow a deflationary policy at home because the IMF would prevent the Australians controlling the deficit through exchange controls. And if the Australians had to depreciate the pound more than ten per cent, they would need to concurrence of the fund that a ‘fundamental disequilibrium’ had occurred.’ (1995: 20)

7 The land reform too had important anti-communist objectives. According to Michael Schaller, ‘more than one-third of farmland changed hands, which affected 30 per cent of all Japanese. Not only did the program accomplish many of its economic goals, but it also created a mass of small landowners loyal to the conservative parties who first opposed the reform. As MacArthur anticipated, Japan avoided the types of rural insurgencies that engulfed China and Southeast Asia during the following decade.’ (1985: 43)

8 In April 1947 Evatt cabled New Zealand External Affairs Minister Fraser admitting Ball had informed him ‘that political control is gradually going back to reactionary groups.’ In order to counter the way in which ‘major decisions’ were being ‘made piecemeal’ without the input of other

166
unionists and strip workers of their right to organise—reacting to criticism from Ball’s successor on the ACJ, Sir Alvary Gasgoine, MacArthur accused the Commonwealth of ‘siding with the Kremlin’ and ‘betraying’ the US. Yet presumably anxious to preserve relations with the US, which it was endeavouring to draw into a Pacific security pact, the Chifley government declined to directly confront them over Japan. Ball resigned from the ACJ in 1947 in protest at Evatt’s refusal to support him against MacArthur, who had been using the Soviet delegate as an excuse to obstruct the whole council. In May 1948 Chifley signalled Australia’s accord with the new American industrial strategy in Japan, and signed a new agreement allowing trade between Japan and the sterling area countries. Australia reaped ten per cent, some £6 million, of the total share to June 1949. At the same time no protest was made about the wholesale attacks on the Left and Unions which accompanied the new US policy. (Schaller, 1985: 136; DFAT, 1995: 417-8, 543; Rosencrance, 1962: 123)

In addition the Labor Government became increasingly concerned by American and British anticommunism, the growing hostility between the superpowers and the abrogation of the dreams of collective security under the United Nations for an older—and with atomic weapons, increasingly dangerous—balance-of-power model. At Yalta Roosevelt had hoped that collective security might ‘spell the end of the system of unilateral action, the exclusive alliances, the spheres of influence, the balances of power, and all the other expedients which have been tried for centuries’, but the dream was fading fast. In 1947 the Truman doctrine was declared, and in August the Australian Legation in Moscow suggested that ‘the next four to six months will determine the final success or failure of attempts to secure Russian co-operation in solving world problems.’ It suggested America’s obsession with Security could ‘have serious effects’ on ‘Australian interests in Asia and the Pacific’ and that because the US saw communist hares behind every Asiatic bush...there is some danger that the United States may regard genuine and legitimate aspirations in Asia towards self-government as necessarily Soviet inspired or controlled, and try therefore to restrict or suppress nationalist movements. This could have the opposite effect to that desired i.e. to make Nationalists see in Russia their only hope of salvation, and to lead them to regard United States and supporting powers as antipathetic and ignorant. (DFAT, 1995: 413-5)

powers Evatt wanted a Commonwealth Conference to discuss a peace treaty with Japan (held in Canberra in August 1947). John Burton revealed the depth of Australian concern about the terms of a peace treaty when he wrote that ‘reports...indicating that the UK Ambassador, MacArthur and the Japs have all agreed that there must be a substantial Jap force immediately after the peace settlement to prevent infiltration from Korea and elsewhere, are extremely disturbing.’ (DFAT, 1995: 518, 524)
A more prescient account of future events in Vietnam, or Sukarno’s Indonesia, could not have been made; from this point, feeling its own ‘interests’ were being damaged by the US obsession, the Government strove for a more independent course in Southeast Asia, especially Indonesia.

Labor’s approach to Indonesia was mixture of morality and pragmatism—sympathy for the nationalists combined with concerns about security and the promise of economic gain. Three months after the declaration of independence on 17 August 1945, W. McMahon Ball was sent to Batavia to investigate the situation and assess the calibre of the nationalist movement and its leaders. Ball wrote that Australia had to prevent the NEI becoming ‘a focus of conflict between East and West. And from that focus the infection may spread with menacing speed to many other countries in South-East Asia.’ Yet it was only after the Netherlands’ July 1947 ‘police actions’—in which a hundred thousand troops were thrown against Republican forces in Java and Sumatra—that Australia helped sponsor a Security Council resolution calling for a cease-fire and negotiations. Burton justified Labor’s intervention by saying that ‘only by retaining initiative in this respect can Australian economic and security interests be promoted.’ (DFAT, 1994: 106)

Yet after a resolution was finally passed and a cease-fire in place, Australia—through its representation on the Security’s Council’s ‘good offices’ committee on behalf of the Indonesian Republic—acted strongly to seek a settlement fair to the nationalists, to control Dutch infringements and assert Indonesian interests in the UN, against the consistent opposition of the Europeans, Canada and the USA. Even after the second Dutch ‘police action’ of December 1948 the US frustrated Australia’s efforts to support the republicans, both in the UN and by refusing to withdraw Dutch reconstruction aid. By this time concerns about security were gaining the upper hand—in April 1948 the DEA had argued that the ‘fundamental considerations underlying Australian policy...are that there should be order and stability throughout Indonesia and that oil and other Indonesian products should as soon as possible become available to relieve current world shortages.’ After the uprising by the newly formed Indonesian Communist Party (PKI) in August at Madiun in central Java—quickly crushed by the nationalist government of Sukarno and Hatta—Australian policy became driven by concerns that a delay in decolonisation would strengthen the PKI against the pro-

---

9 For a detailed account of this period, and Australia’s role in it, see Margaret George, *Australia and the Indonesian Revolution* (1980), and the two volumes of documents compiled by the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, *Diplomasi* (DFAT, 1994) and *The Renville Agreement* (DFAT, 1996). Margaret George has accused the Chifley Government—by listening to US advice not to take the dispute to the UN and waiting for ten days to do so—of being ‘indecisive’ and ‘procrastinating’ and unwittingly allowing ‘the Dutch to achieve the objectives of their military operations’. (DFAT, 1995: 296; George, 1986: 84)
Western republicans. Similarly the Government was relieved when West New Guinea (WNG) was left out of the new Indonesian Republic finally negotiated in 1949. Thus two potent themes for future Australian policy—hostility to communism and the fate of West New Guinea—were established even before the new Indonesian nation was brought into being. (DFAT, 1995: 135; George, 1980: 125, 149)

Labor was also strong, at least initially, in resisting the ossification of Europe into two hostile blocs. Labor opposed the formation of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) in opposition to the USSR, and criticised western policies which supported reactionary governments (like the junta in Greece) merely for their anticommunism. Evatt’s departmental secretary John Burton warned that such policies ‘will be interpreted as another move to encircle Russia and will bring about just the set of circumstances that the proposal purports to avoid. In other words, this will be the signal to go ahead in including other countries in the Russian security zone...If this is US and UK thought, any responsible Soviet government must, in the interest of its own security, immediately take all possible steps to prevent the military encirclement which is being backed by economic encirclement.’ (Lee, 1995: 87)

Likewise Labor resisted such tendencies in defence policy, while otherwise clearing some crucial areas of common discursive ground. As early as 1946 the UK had pressed for an integrated Commonwealth defence plan, directed against the Soviet Union, in which the Middle East might be a crucial area. Labor sought a compromise in which its defence planning began with collective security under the UN, then regional defence within the Commonwealth, and finally local defence, and refused to commit Australians to serving outside the southwest Pacific or to designate the USSR as enemy. Labor thought it would be responsible for defence planning in the Pacific, and further hoped Australia could gain permanent admission to the policy machinery of both the United States and Britain. Betraying a conventionally Cartesian obsession with political and spatial certitude, such representation would also be a long term—but frustrated—objective of the Menzies Governments. (Lee, 1995: 76-8)

Labor’s defence policy was a direct rebuke to the Australian Chiefs of Staff, whose 1947 strategic appreciation was preoccupied with Russia and recommended a vote of £90 million a year. This document also contained some prescient discursive themes which would eventually drive and obsess Australian policy. It showed anxiety about the consequence of growing third world nationalism: uncertainties had been created by

---

10 On 15 September Evatt spoke of the ‘serious menace of communist extremist groups’, and in a series of cables following the Madiun uprising Australian representative Tom Critchley argued that, to prevent a ‘swing [of] mass support to the insurgent communists’, Australia must work with the US to keep the Dutch out of the dispute, pressure them to resume negotiations and facilitate shipments of trucks and jeeps from Bangkok to the Republicans through the port of Tuban. Following the failure of the uprising Critchley argued that unless the Dutch lifted the economic blockade on central Java and resumed negotiations ‘the internal position of the Republic may be expected to get steadily worse.’ (DFAT, 1995: 296-312)
independence in Burma and the division of India, by the civil war in China, and by the Indonesian nationalist movement which created 'a security problem as well as an economic problem.' In a formulation that would echo through Australian policy to the present day, it argued Indonesia was 'of great strategic importance. It is most desirable that this region should be administered by strong and stable governments with whom Australia could establish friendly relations, since the only route by which an aggressor weak in sea power could approach Australia is through this region.' (DFAT, 1995: 292) An appreciation by the Joint Intelligence Committee, submitted in March 1947, also betrayed an early version of the thinking that would later coalesce into the 'domino theory':

The real danger to Southeast Asia, and therefore to Australia will arise from the Far East if Russia should combine with China. Under these circumstances China could be well placed, and indeed might be prompted on her own account to embark on operations in Indochina, Burma, Siam, Malaya or elsewhere in the region. In such an event she would derive substantial assistance from the large groups of overseas Chinese who honeycomb these countries. (DFAT, 1995: 280)

Similar thinking would emerge in a 'Political Appreciation' written by Burton in September 1948. Many of its themes, whilst seen at the time as 'almost heretical challenges to strategic orthodoxy', would closely prefigure the strategic axioms of the next twenty years. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 16, 54) In contrast to Defence Department views which argued for Australian participation in global planning against the Soviet Union, with a focus on the Middle Eastern theatre, Burton too raised the spectre of China. Citing the Chinese majority in Malaya—where the British had declared a state of emergency in June—and the large Chinese populations in other areas of Southeast Asia, he suggested:

Any open conflict between north and South China, or any involvement in a broader global conflict, will lead to increased interest in South East Asia. A communist dominated China, which could result from the present confused political situation in China...would certainly aim at acquiring the use of the resources of South East Asia, not by military action, as was the case with Japan, but by internal action, using Chinese populations and the already organised political groupings of secret societies. (Lee, 1995: 97)

Whilst Burton argued for closer defence attention to Southeast Asia, he also outlined a range of non-military measures to secure western interests and block Chinese and/or communist subversion. These—including the development of Australian trading,
diplomatic and business links with the region and the provision of technical, financial and educational aid—prefigured the Colombo Plan initiated by Liberal Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender in 1950. While significant differences between Labor and the Defence Department remained, an important watershed had been breached—Asia had been designated a prime area of strategic interest, and communism an emerging threat; military commitments to Malaya, Korea and Vietnam could now follow. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 54-55; Lee, 1995: 97)

The Malayan crisis was an important test of Labor’s attitude to colonialism and the gathering Cold War. The British portrayed the uprisings as directed by the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) at the Kremlin’s behest. As one of the largest earners of US dollars in the Sterling Area—at a time when there was a global shortage serious enough to threaten western economic recovery—Malaya was of enormous strategic importance to the UK. Australian business also held interests worth £6 million in 21 of the 86 tin mining enterprises, and £2 million in gold and rubber. Malaya also had a key strategic location: the 1947 strategic appreciation had emphasised Singapore as a focal point of communications in the area, and an essential link in sea and air routes between Australia and Southeast Asia, the Middle East and Japan. Australian diplomats at the High Commission in Singapore argued that the uprisings were a prelude to Malaya becoming a ‘Chinese Communist republic’ and that a communist success would strengthen the communist parties in Indonesia and Burma, ‘place control of our outer zone of defence in Chinese hands’ and ‘prevent any effective use by us of Indonesia as a strategic barrier between us and the populous countries of the Asian mainland.’ In contrast, Chifley regarded the conflict as an anti-colonial revolt. The High Commission defended the violent British response, saying that a ‘totalitarian threat’ could only be met by ‘totalitarian countermeasures.’ In response to pressures to provide military aid Labor in July and August 1948 sent 500 weapons and 160,000 rounds of ammunition to Singapore, while ruling out the dispatch of troops. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 33-49; DFAT, 1995: 295)

Evatt however had been more receptive to the High Commission’s arguments, and later moved closer to US and British positions on Europe, supporting the formation of NATO at the Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference of October 1948. According to David Lee, ‘Evatt was surprisingly supportive of the British case.11 He talked of the necessity, in some cases, of abandoning ‘just’ conclusions, arrived at after

---

11 British Foreign Minister Ernest Bevin argued that, in contrast to the USSR, the West supported elections in liberated countries. In Germany the Soviets had attempted to centralise the state, strip the East of its capital assets and command reparations from current production. Western political and economic imperatives, by contrast, required the reconstruction of the West German economy and the promotion of a decentralised, federal system. Soviet influence in Greece was seen as a strategic problem, portending Soviet control of the Dardanelles, Greece and Turkey. (Lee, 1995: 93)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

consideration of individual problems in isolation, because of the ‘overriding claims of expediency.’ (1995: 91-3) On the other hand he and his Prime Minister refused to see in the shifting sands of Asia a general conspiracy: in 1949 Chifley refused to send troops to reinforce Hong Kong should the Communists take China, instead urging the British to negotiate with the communists, recognise their government and resume trade, and press for the return of Taiwan to the mainland. Labor however declined to recognise the regime itself, primarily for electoral reasons. (Lee, 1995: 104) In Parliament Evatt argued that nationalist movements were not all acting in unison, that ‘the majority of nationalists in South East Asia are not Communists; there is plenty of evidence that they resent being identified with Communism.’. The West ‘should not be dogmatic in relation to the future of China...[if] we give the Chinese communists any ground for thinking that they can never expect international co-operation from the West in future, that very declaration might lead them to adopt an extreme course and to sever all their traditional contacts with the democracies.’ (CPD, 21.6.49: 1221-3)

Thus as the Cold War was rapidly spiralling out of the control of any one ‘idealistic’ small power, Labor’s efforts amounted to a series of ambiguous interventions.12 After early efforts to mediate between the US and the Soviet Union, and to moderate Western paranoia, Evatt had given NATO Labor’s blessing. Principled and prescient action on Indonesia, and welcome scepticism about the links between communism and Southeast Asian nationalism, were countered by the export of arms to Malaya and domino-like anxieties about the Chinese. In Japan the problems became more complex: while the fears that drove Evatt’s efforts in 1946 and 1949 to lure the US into a NATO-style pact in the Pacific may have been overstated, and tempered Australian criticism of the occupation, they were exacerbated by the Americans—whose actions in halting the purge of militarists and rebuilding Japanese industrial capacity raised once again the spectre of a militarily powerful Japan. As Labor watched the dying fall of a world system based on justice and collective security, Evatt’s faith in the possibilities of the UN system might have been tempered by the warnings of his first Prime Minister. In 1938, in a formulation that would perfectly sum up NATO as a vehicle of so-called ‘collective security’, Curtin had said:

As an ideal collective security is admirable. But as a practical policy in a world based upon imperialism it is...a highly dangerous idea which can be seized upon

12 A revealing 1949 State Department assessment of Australian foreign policy illustrates this dilemma. The document disapprovingly noted Australia’s policy on Japan and Indonesia, its ‘very independent line in UN affairs’, Evatt’s role during the Berlin crisis, and his ‘reserved attitude toward the Atlantic Pact’—policies which serve ‘to weaken the democratic front’. It was also critical of Labor’s view of China, and the ‘view that the principal threat to its security comes from Japan rather than from Russia.’ Tellingly, however, the evaluation understood the limits to Australian opposition: ‘Australia is anxious to see the U.S. military position in the Western Pacific strengthened and in matters involving Australian security cannot afford to oppose major U.S. policy toward Japan.’ (Collected in Meaney, 1985: 552-4)
to excuse the very forces it is intended to defeat. When governments are co-operating in the economic field on an anti-imperialist basis, collective security will become a very practical method of dealing with aggression... The workers do not control the governments of the world. Until they do, it would be suicidal for the workers of Australia to join in supporting pacts, treaties, understandings or obligations of any sort which would involve them in war against the workers of any other nation at the dictate of capitalist governments. (Hasluck, 1952: 88)

Multilateralism may have been portrayed by the US as a general good, but its aims were clearly to preserve (while diversifying) imperial economic patterns—now secured less by direct sovereign control than economic integration and indirect forms of political influence. By 1947 the reconstruction of both Europe and Asia became inseparable from the formation of an economic bloc that could resist the Soviet Union and counter the growth of domestic socialist forces. Most tellingly, the halting of Japanese reparations by SCAP involved a deliberate effort to postpone Asian industrialisation and integrate the region into a traditionally imperial pattern in which Japanese manufactures would be exchanged for Asian raw materials. In turn the Japanese could pay for American imports and western corporations could exploit opportunities for resource extraction and agricultural industry. (Borden, 1984: 103-42)

Burton’s views on Southeast Asian economic development as an antidote to communism, while drawing on social democratic ideology, would be subsumed into this neo-colonial strategic system—in which ‘development’ was subordinated to the international corporate interests that it had been designed to promote and strengthen. While Labor understood the strategic consequences of the international order the US was creating, it lacked a critique of the neo-imperial economics that was its essential twin. Having obscured the complexity, the greed, and the political calculation of this period beneath a language of enlightenment and universalism—even as it gamely struggled with them—in the next three decades Labor would find such totalising categories put to more effective use by its political enemies.

OTHER AND SAME:
AUSTRALIA’S COLD WAR IN ASIA

At the December 1949 federal elections Labor was swept from office. Although it retained a slim majority in the Senate, the LCP won the House of Representatives by a staggering twenty-seven seats, beginning a conservative dominance of government that would last until 1972. In a campaign that could have been directed by Jeremy Bentham, the parties led by Menzies and Arthur Fadden conjured alarmist visions of ‘socialist regimentation’, and promised to reduce taxes, eliminate petrol rationing and ban the
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

Communist Party of Australia (CPA). While Chifley had been trying to protect Australia’s scarce stock of US dollars, voters were frightened with the spectre of communism and seduced with visions of the good life. Fadden even claimed in Queensland that the ‘platform of the Labor party’ was ‘paving the way for a communist regime...conditions are ideal for the Communists to take over in a situation in which no constitutional means would remain to prevent them from putting their program of anarchy into effect.’ Similarly the American Charge d’Affaires had written to Washington in 1948 of ‘the strength of communism in the present Labor Government’ and accusing Burton of being a ‘fellow traveler’. A powerful new calculus of Being was under construction, stranding the individual and collective subjects between the fear of a communist other and the desire for an untrammelled prosperity. Out of this would be built the Australian ‘way of life’, and a crude, destructive experience of subjectivity. (Bolton, 1990: 75-7; CPD, 9.5.50: 2273; Meaney, 1985: 544-5)

Within five years the fundamental elements of a vast new discursive formation would be in place, centering on the LCP Government’s attempts to ban the CPA during 1950 and 1951, the initiation of the Colombo Plan and the deployment of forces to Korea in 1950, the signing of the ANZUS and Japanese peace treaties in 1951, and the establishment of the South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) in 1954. From there Australians could be sent to fight ‘communism’ in Malaya and Vietnam, according to a ‘forward defence’ doctrine which extended Australia’s frontiers—and thus the very borders of a vulnerable collective subject—to mainland Southeast Asia. What became central to Government discourse was the interpenetration of the domestic and international, in which the stability of Australian images of security and identity were made to hinge on the stability of an evolving ‘order’ to its north. What Manning Clark had said of the founding fathers was true also of this time: there was a constant and repeated incitement of ‘the enemy without and the enemy within.’ (1981: 68)

That anticommunism was central to a policing of identity was clear when Menzies introduced the Communist Party Dissolution Bill to Parliament in April 1950. Framed ‘to outlaw and dissolve’ the CPA and ‘to pursue it into new and associated forms’, Menzies defended it in a language which made its ground in the same images of security and subjectivity I have traced from Hobbes through Bentham, and which replayed their deployment into an Australian constitutional structure. First, the Bill claimed to derive from the Constitution’s defence powers because, ‘in a most special and important sense, [it] is a law relating to the safety and defence of Australia. It is designed to...give the Government power to deal with the King’s enemies in this country...a self-defending attack on treason and fifth-columnism wherever they can be found.’ (CPD, 27.4.50: 1995)

In turn this enemy was linked with the global threat Australia’s strategic planners were already preparing to fight. Menzies conceded that if communism was merely
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

‘militant unionism, opposed to arbitration but determined to alter the law by lawful means’ the Bill would not be justified. However as it was ‘an international conspiracy against the democracies, organised in a prelude to war and operating as a fifth-column in advance of hostilities’ we must ‘fight [it] wherever we find [it], leaving no immunity and no sanctuary at all.’ Menzies made the same argument in a radio broadcast in September at which he announced the establishment of a national service scheme and a Citizens Military Force of fifty thousand in which recruits would be liable for service anywhere in the world. In March 1951 he told Australians to prepare for a new global war in three years, to be specifically fought against the legions of ‘International Communism’. His objective was clearly to produce a heightened atmosphere of fear and crisis that would strengthen the Government’s authority, make the population more credulous, and destroy the enemies of his party and his class. Yet the High Court ruled the Communist Party Dissolution Bill unconstitutional on the grounds that Australia was not in a state of war, and it was further rejected in a referendum held in September 1951 (if by a slim margin of fifty-three thousand votes out of 4.7 million).\(^{13}\) Crippled by the growing strength of the anticommunist ‘movement’ in its ranks, the ALP did not vote against the Bill in the Senate. However Evatt acted as counsel for the CPA and unions in the High Court, and campaigning heroically for a No vote at the 1951 referendum. (CPD, 27.4.50: 1995; Meaney, 1985: 597)

The whole discursive matrix of this vision of domestic and international order was set out in a statement made by Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender to the Australian Parliament in March 1951. While he would only remain in the Ministry for eighteen months, Spender’s role in the Colombo Plan, the negotiation of ANZUS treaty and in formulating strategic priorities would establish a structural and conceptual blueprint for Australian defence and foreign policy for the next two decades. Here the disciplinary ambition of the political project Australia was engaged in became starkly visible. The stakes were nothing less than the nation’s future, the forward movement of idealism which gave the Australian subject its form and destiny: ‘Geographically Australia is next door to Asia,’ Spender said in January 1950, ‘and our destiny as a nation is irrevocably conditioned by what takes place in Asia. Our future to an ever increasing degree depends upon the political stability of our Asian neighbours.’ Thus the achievement of security, of subjectivity, the whole movement of reason which would now express and complete Australia’s being, was anchored in the truth of a space here named ‘Asia’. ‘No nation’, he declared, ‘can escape its geography. That is an axiom which should be written deep into the mind of every Australian.’ (Meaney, 1985: 557) Yet if land had been held out as the fundamental anchor of identity, as its

\(^{13}\) The High Court ruled by a majority of six to one—the only dissenting judge was Chief Justice Latham, who as a Bruce Government Minister had attempted to use the Crimes Act to do what Menzies now sought to under the Defence powers. (Bolton, 1990: 81)
basic empirical fact, it was only through an act of deception. What was precisely at issue here was space itself—space and the whole network of bodies, meanings and economic flows that gave it form and life. Space was not an axiom, but was itself under construction and in dispute. ‘Asia’ became not a neutral index of the real but a highly-charged semiotic entity, at once passive and turbulent, which was liable to intervention yet loomed over Australia like a vast, threatening sea. As Labor leader Arthur Calwell was to recognise when Menzies committed two combat battalions to Vietnam in 1965, it was a logic in which ‘the very map of Asia becomes a kind of conspiracy of geography against Australia’. (Spender, 1969: 195; Meaney, 1985: 557, 681)

Creating the illusion of a single rhetorical unity, the speech turned on a series of inter-related operations: a projection of geo-strategic uncertainty, of immediate insecurity and vulnerability, and a detailed partitioning of sameness and difference according to a necessarily mobile set of boundaries. Whilst many years ago, he argued, Australians could feel isolated from threat, now its security ‘has become an immediate and vital issue because changes since the war have resulted in a shifting of potential aggression from the European to the Asian area, and our traditional British Commonwealth and United States of America friends have not yet completed their adjustments to the new situation.’ Sameness was initially projected in the importance of western alliance and commonality: Australian security was dependent upon the ‘strength and influence’ of Britain, with whose ‘interests and safety’ we must ‘be vitally concerned’. Australia therefore had an ‘interest in the maintenance of peace and security in Europe.’ Second was the ‘common tradition, heritage and way of life’ shared with the United States which, by virtue of its status as ‘the greatest Pacific power’ required that Australia ‘carry out [its] Pacific policies as far as possible in co-operation with it.’ (Meaney, 1985: 557-8) The effect of this was to smooth over the deep differences—of interest, sensibility and means—between the western powers, to narrow the scope for independent decisionmaking and tie Australia more closely to the strategic imperatives and outlook of the United States.

Next came the imagination of otherness and threat. At the pinnacle was the Soviet Union, whose ‘foreign policy is essentially global in character’, whose ‘ultimate objective is world communism’ and whose ‘immediate purpose is to work towards its ultimate objective by Communist infiltration in all democratic countries’ by means such ‘as ‘peace offensives’, propaganda and industrial dislocation.’ And setting out the great binary opposition, the enabling relation of self and other, he stated that whilst Europe had been ‘the main focus of the conflict between democracy and communism’, the same situation was ‘now developing throughout Asia and the Pacific.’ The Communist takeover in China had ‘fundamentally changed the whole picture in Asia’, and would give fresh heart to ‘the efforts of international communism to control and direct the new
spirit of nationalism in these countries.' While conceding that there was 'still doubt and uncertainty about the way China is likely to act', he quickly closed it off:

But even without actually invading neighbour states, or engaging in open intimidation of them, China, either in order to secure markets and raw materials, or as part of communist aims, without much expenditure of resources, could foment dissatisfaction in other countries. The Chinese have a ready-made instrument in the form of the many millions of Chinese scattered throughout all countries of South-East Asia. (Meaney, 1985: 558-9)

This formulation would reach far into the future: in Indonesia it would legitimate the killings of Chinese during the great slaughter of 1965-66, and appear again in the period leading up to, and immediately following, the Indonesian invasion of East Timor. Already in Malaya it was being used against the guerillas of the Malayan Communist Party and as a slur upon Malaya's Chinese communities. Spender again followed this with a partial (and short lived) opening. He said first that 'we do not accept the inevitability of a clash between the democratic and communist way of life' and hoped 'that the Chinese Communists would look for the sympathetic help of the Western democracies in the work of uniting and rehabilitating their country.' Yet China had already blocked this avenue: '...the Communists' behaviour 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 neighbour states.' (Meaney, 1985: 560)

As later US actions in Vietnam, Korea, and many other third world states would show, 'principles of international law' were to become a highly flexible matter of interpretation. And to assert them in favour of South Vietnam's Bao Dai government, scarcely independent and only a few months old, was deeply misleading. French colonial power—in conflict with Ho Chi Minh in the north and represented by a surrogate in the south—was still in place, if looking vulnerable. To make the test of peaceful coexistence with China its support of the DRV, was to deny to Ho with one hand what was being offered to China with the other. This, of course, was a function of the emotional significance already being placed upon Vietnam. The key to this was the 'domino theory' which, whilst not formally enunciated by Eisenhower until 1954, had already appeared—a National Security Council (NSC) document endorsed by Truman in 1949 argued that

it is now clear that Southeast Asia is the target of a co-ordinated offensive directed by the Kremlin... motivated in part by a desire to gain control of
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

Southeast Asia’s resources and communication lines, and deny them to us... The extension of Communist authority in China represents a grievous political defeat for us; if Southeast Asia is also swept by communism we shall have suffered a major political rout the repercussions of which will be felt throughout the rest of the world, especially in the Middle East and in a then critically exposed Australia. (cited in Pemberton, 1987: 12)

Spender echoed this thinking, expanding it into a detailed causal chain centred on the preservation of western power in Vietnam:

[Vietnam] is the great present danger point in the South-East Asian area...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. The establishment of Communist control over Vietnam—and over Laos and Cambodia, which could scarcely be expected to offer much resistance—would bring Thailand next in line as a target of Communist pressure...In many respects Thailand is the most stable political entity in the whole of South-East Asia, and it is in Australia’s general interest that it remain stable. (Meaney, 1985: 560)

This investment in stability was also clearly behind the promotion of the Colombo Plan, and moderated Australian attitudes to the Japanese peace treaty. Spender commented that while Australia was concerned to prevent a ‘resurgence of Japanese militarism...it is difficult to escape the conclusion that Japan will have to be allowed to become self-supporting by industrial production and trade. Whether we like it or not, there is little doubt that much of Asia at its present stage of development stands in need of many goods that Japan only is at present in a position to supply.’ And in his discussion (presaging both ANZUS and SEATO) of the need for a ‘Pacific Pact’ for common defence, he remarked that it should also have ‘positive aims—the promotion of democratic political institutions, higher living standards, and increased cultural and commercial ties.’ The Plan, for a program of economic and technical assistance to non-communist Asian nations, was first raised by Spender at the Commonwealth Prime Minister’s Conference in Colombo in January 1950, and formally established at London in September. Australia pledged £30.25 million over six years, and by 1952 the US, Cambodia, South Vietnam, Burma and Nepal had joined the original signatories. Spender argued the plan would ‘stabilise government and create conditions of economic life and living standards under which the ideological attractions which communism attracts will lose their force.’ (Meaney, 1985: 564; Pemberton, 1987: 14)
Thus western governments were putting into place a series of strategies directed to a vast disciplinary project—that of securing, across the region, a certain kind of interdependent economic, political and cultural order. The scale, and enormous transformative power, of this project was not lost on western leaders. Speaking of the Colombo Plan Spender later remarked:

Politically Southeast Asia had lagged far behind the movements which had characterised the civilisation of Europe. Centuries of history had excluded this vast part of Asia from the liberal influence of European thought and political ideas...south and Southeast Asia had to face the immense task of creating a new economic structure. The natural wealth had to be tapped by the introduction of modern methods or the improvement of old ones. Almost entire populations had to be taught new methods of work and production, indeed new ways of thinking... (Spender, 1969: 199)

Difference, then, became more carefully delineated. Absolute otherness was reserved for movements named 'communist'; for them was designated confrontation, containment and elimination. For the different kind of otherness represented by Asian adherence to pre-modern political, cultural and economic forms, was reserved a strategy of transformation, a movement of integration and sameness. In their practical operation these coercive and 'transformative' strategies were closely co-ordinated and mutually reinforcing. In this way 'security' and 'development'—two potent philosophical universals—became the catchcries of an Hegelian geopolitics which sought to produce a movement from Other to Same, in the achievement of an essentially nineteenth century civilisational ideal. Similarly the claim that ancient societies had to shed their backward traditions and learn entirely 'new ways of thinking' betrayed the operation of the 'political double-bind', the easy conviction that spaces, populations and subjects could be simultaneously directed, managed and transformed into the substance of a new societal order. (Meaney, 1985: 564-5)

The LCP Government moved quickly to back its rhetoric with force. In 1950 a squadron of Dakota aircraft, and another of Lincoln bombers, were sent to Malaya for use to ‘saturate jungle targets’. Two thousand Owen guns were also dispatched. Breaching the limits set by Chifley, in 1955 Menzies announced Australia would deploy an infantry battalion, two fighter and one bomber and airfield construction squadrons, plus a naval force of two destroyers and an aircraft carrier, to a new Commonwealth Strategic Reserve available for service anywhere on the Asian mainland. Menzies argued that if communism overran Southeast Asia, Australia’s existence as a free country would be at risk. Evatt, now opposition leader, opposed the use of Australian troops in the Emergency, instead advocating negotiations, a faster
move to self-government and the improvement of working conditions in plantations. His opposition was prescient: the draft directive of the force stipulated a role ‘in operations against the communist terrorists.’ (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 101, 163-8; Lee, 1995: 131-6)

Even a relatively uncontroversial deployment—of forces to Korea under United Nations authority to resist the North Korean invasion of June 1950—was twisted into a retrospective justification for the domino theory and the conspiracy of international communism.14 In his radio broadcasts of September 1950 Menzies chose to interpret the North Korean attack as ‘a new technique of world aggression’:

The communists undermine or over-run some European or Asiatic country. They set up a puppet government. They then...inspire their new puppet or satellite to make an attack under circumstances which impose the greatest military difficulty...The purpose of this strategy...is to disperse the democratic forces, to weaken the democratic reputation and authority, to maintain nervous tension, to force up costs and prices in democratic countries, and to create, in the minds of people like ourselves, a feeling that as any of us may be attacked we had better keep all our forces at home. (O’Neill, 1981: 102)

Without humour or irony, he then pleaded: ‘These are not heated fancies on my part. Men of authority all round the world know they are a true picture of this new and deadliest and subtest form of aggression the world has seen.’ We might wonder at his sense of history, but his fevered logic also contradicted more considered accounts of the war’s origins. While the North Korean offensive was clearly naked aggression, South Korean leader Syngman Rhee had also repeatedly threatened to reunify Korea by force. Official historian Robert O’Neill has carefully weighed the actions of both the USSR and China, and concluded that neither was responsible for initiating the attack. Even where other accounts had suggested Kim Il Sung sought prior Soviet and Chinese approval the initiative and timing came clearly from his government. (1981: 12-20)

As well as seeing the invasion as evidence of a great power conspiracy, Menzies’ words also aimed to reinforce the rigid binary model of identity central to the Cold War. In a way that presaged the later American doctrine of ‘credibility’ it made every act and manifestation of communism a test of and threat to ‘democracy’—which had the effect of entrenching democracy’s power as a philosophical universal, and shrouding its specificity in a fear-tinged metaphysical smoke. Moreover Australia could scarcely claim to have been defending democracy in South Korea. In September 1950, after a

---

14 Australia supplied two infantry battalions, part of the First Commonwealth Division, two destroyers, an aircraft carrier and a fighter squadron. The decision was made very quickly, in July by Spender in Menzies’ absence, in order to make the announcement ahead of the UK. Actual deployment took many more months. (O’Neill, 1981: 462)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

visit to Korea, the head of the Australian mission in Tokyo Colonel Hodgson reported that there were over ten thousand political prisoners, and that the civilian population was ‘terrified’ of a police force which attacked them with ‘the utmost ruthlessness.’ Similarly Rhee, whom he called an ‘unpredictable stubborn reactionary’, held dangerous ambitions of using the war to reunify the nation under his control. (O’Neill, 1981: 115)

Such a model of identity, and the attribution of the conflict to the domino theory, received a boost with the entry of China into the war in November 1950 after the UN forces had counterattacked north of the 48th parallel to within fifty miles of the Chinese border. Australia supported US plans to attack into North Korea and supported a UN resolution providing MacArthur with authority to do so, naively believing the attack would not provoke the USSR or China to intervene. When China retaliated with a massive offensive in November, the UN forces were driven out of Pyongyang and eventually out of Seoul. Truman resolved to counter the Chinese assault, and even considered the use of atomic weapons. While the US Joint Chiefs recommended a UN withdrawal from Korea followed by a ‘limited’ war against China, Truman decided to attempt to hold the line in Korea, and authorised MacArthur to reinforce with US forces in Japan. The British, concerned that any war with China could not be contained, urged the US to recognise the People’s Republic and cede Formosa (Taiwan) back to the mainland. While the US was attempting to have the UN brand the Chinese as ‘aggressors’, the British were concerned this would bring the Soviets into the war, and proposed a negotiated settlement that would see Chinese forces leave and the holding of elections for a unified Korea. By January 1951 the US, more confident of its military position, pressed ahead with the General Assembly resolution, which Australia wholeheartedly supported. (O’Neill, 1981: 116-22)

What is significant about these events is how they were subsequently interpreted. Spender argued the Chinese attack was not ‘aggression for limited purposes’ but ‘aggression open and notorious.’ By portraying China as an ‘aggressor’, the Australians became determined to see its action as further evidence of deliberate expansionism and of a general conspiracy, rather than a discreet defence of its north-

15 Hodgson also commented that ‘When the Korean affair is liquidated from the military point of view, there will be not only the problem of reconstruction and rehabilitation of industry, and the resettlement of the refugees, but a clean up of government and governmental methods will be necessary to ensure that the United Nations is, in fact, building up and supporting a democratic state. Every observer with long experience of Korean affairs holds the opinion that we have at present in Korea a reactionary government closely associated with unscrupulous landlords and bolstered by a vicious police force.’ (O’Neill, 1981: 115) Such a ‘clean up’ was never to occur.

16 Truman’s revelation at a press conference of 29 November 1950 that he had delegated authority to MacArthur to use the Bomb aroused enormous concern in Britain, who feared it would be destroyed by Soviet retaliation. Atlee immediately arranged a visit to Washington to see Truman, where he sought an assurance that the US would consult the UK before using the weapon—an assurance the Pentagon immediately watered down. (O’Neill, 1981: 144-5)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

eastern flank.\textsuperscript{17} A more critical interpretation might view the UN push north of the 38th parallel as being as outrageous as the North Korean invasion of the south. Indeed Chifley had said that if \textit{UN} forces crossed the 38th parallel ‘they will become aggressors.’ Rather than seeing how western actions could contribute to escalation, the Americans and Australians chose to view the second stage of the war as direct evidence of the domino theory. As Menzies was to say in 1955, the threat to Australia came from an ‘expansionist and aggressive communist China, as demonstrated first by the conflict in Korea, then by that in Indochina.’. Once the UN forces had consolidated their position south of the 38th parallel, MacArthur pressed Truman to allow him to counterattack into North Korea with troops and bombers, but was rebuffed. In March 1951 the administration interpreted a buildup of Chinese forces in Manchuria and of Soviet submarines north-east of Japan as presaging a massive drive down the Korean peninsula co-ordinated with a naval encirclement of Japan. In response Truman authorised the transfer of atomic bombs to military control for use against Chinese or Soviet targets. While the British opposed re-crossing the 38th parallel, Australia was in favour, hoping the US could then negotiate the unification of Korea from ‘a position of strength.’ Truman replaced MacArthur in April and the war ground into a stalemate. (O’Neill, 1981: 143, 123; Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 169; Lee, 1995: 116) Thus having twisted events to fit a fanciful conspiracy—which would in turn affect future judgements about Malaysia, Laos and Vietnam—Australian diplomacy had also encouraged the US in actions which held the danger of terrifying escalation and greatly prolonged the war and its associated suffering.

\textit{‘Sovereignty’ and ‘Subversion’
between Confrontation and Vietnam}

Where the Australian Labor Party had responded to the early challenges of decolonisation with some sensitive (if problematic) diplomacy, the LCP now saw only turmoil, threat and uncertainty—uncertainty they immediately sought to tame with both the ultimate in material force and the most rigid ontological categories. In turn, through treaty arrangements such as ANZUS and SEATO, the formation of Malaysia and considerable artifice in South Vietnam, they sought to bind such ontologies into an

\textsuperscript{17} The British Government, aware of Chinese anxieties, attempted to provide assurances that the conflict would remain limited to Korea—but they were not made until after the US Eighth Army’s offensive had begun. Later in November Spender made a public statement assuring the Chinese that United Nations aims did not extend to any infringement of their security. If the Chinese only had limited objectives, he said, it would be possible to negotiate a demilitarised zone between the two forces. Yet he could not resist the temptation to talk tough: If China’s aims were not limited, he said, they could not expect that their bases in Manchuria would remain immune from attack indefinitely. Yet US Secretary of State Acheson had no interest in a cease fire or demilitarised zone—given the US intransigence and the speculation about the Bomb, Spender’s comments could have only inflamed the situation. (O’Neill, 1981: 140, 147)
unassailable juridical form that would also facilitate further intervention. In short, ambiguity and doubt could not be countenanced or tolerated—generating a quest for certitude which drove the West’s determination to see the Viet Minh as a Soviet/Chinese puppet; to accelerate the establishment of the Malaysian federation even as it antagonised neighbours like the Philippines and Indonesia; that drove its hostility toward ‘neutralist’ leaders like Sukarno and Nehru, and ‘neutralism’ in general; and spurred the desire to retain western control over events and the associated evolution of new political, cultural and economic forms. That Asian leaders quite accurately charged the West with neo-colonialism mattered less than its deep seated anxiety that a historic white hegemony might be in decline. Thus while there was a determination to enforce the identity-markers that polarised life between democracy and communism, they overlay stubborn older forms of (racial and civilisational) identity that were closely tied to crucial political and economic interests.

For Australia, the Indonesian takeover of Dutch West New Guinea (WNG) was a particular source of anxiety, feeding into a triangular structure of military deployments and fears which joined the fates of Malaysia, Indonesia and South Vietnam into a volatile indice of Australia’s future security. Channelled together in this way, they would see Australians fighting Indonesians in north Borneo, affect both Australian and US decisions to deploy large ground forces to South Vietnam, see Australia supporting US intervention in the Sumatra rebellion of 1958, and play into Australian diplomacy following the so-called ‘coup’ in Indonesia in October 1965. Permeating all these decisions were deep anxieties about the future of British power in Southeast Asia and the commitment of the United States, not only to the area, but to Australia’s own security. This matrix of assumptions was most tellingly visible in the explanation for Australia’s Vietnam commitments given by Ambassador to the United States Howard Beale. He said:

There was another thing too, which had to do with our relationship with the United States and our right or expectation to receive assistance from her in the event of serious difficulty overtaking us in our part of the world. Australians live in a potentially dangerous area; we are a western outpost hard by Asia in revolution, and we need allies. The British upon whom we had relied through all our formative years were gone or going. We had the ANZUS Treaty with the United States, but this treaty, like others, was written in general terms with clauses which only bound each party ‘to consult and act’ according to its constitutional process. Treaties are not legally enforceable documents... (Pemberton, 1987: 162; emphasis added)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

A western outpost hard by Asia in revolution...it seemed that little of substance had changed since Billy Hughes had worried, during the Great War, that the Australian people 'were but a tiny drop in a coloured ocean.' (Meaney, 1985: 236) The nineteenth century images that underpinned the modern Australian identity were still strong—as the crimson thread of kinship began to fray, the LCP Government sought a new white protector.

It thought it had found one when the ANZUS Agreement was signed in 1951, linking the two Anzac nations with the United States in a mutual defence treaty. (Australia had resisted the inclusion of the Philippines, Japan and Indonesia, whom the US wanted to prevent the appearance of a 'white man’s pact'.) It contained provisions for 'mutual aid' to assist the three parties to 'develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack' and, ironically enough, obligations on the parties 'to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means'. Article IV, described by US negotiator John Foster Dulles as 'the meat of the treaty', stated that '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 stated that an ‘armed attack’ on any party would be ‘deemed to include an armed attack on 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.’ (Pemberton, 1987: 27; Meaney, 1985: 587)

While Article IV provided a trigger for an automatic response (not necessarily military), it also gave great sweep to the territories and facilities it would potentially cover—including the US controlled Pacific island groups, Australian and New Zealand island dependencies such as New Guinea, and military facilities, vessels and troops forward deployed into Southeast Asia. After resisting such a pact for nearly ten years, the US agreed to it to draw Australia into signing the lenient Japanese Peace Treaty, while also seeing in Australia's commitment to Korea a sign that they might be persuaded to involve themselves more heavily in Southeast Asia in future. Yet the US also sought to limit its own obligations: Dulles emphasised that 'it does not commit any nation to action in any part of the world. In other words, the United States can discharge its obligations by action against the common enemy in any way and in any

---

18 A copy of the Japanese Peace Treaty is contained in R. N. Rosecrance, *Australian Diplomacy and Japan 1945-51*, MUP 1962: 251. The security provisions of the treaty pledged Japan to 'settle its international disputes by peaceful means' and 'to refrain from the threat or use of force against the territorial integrity or political independence of any state', but recognised that 'Japan as a sovereign nation possesses the inherent right of individual or collective self-defense' and 'may voluntarily enter into collective security arrangements.' Spender commented that 'We have yet to be satisfied that freedom is now in full flower in Japan; that militarism has been completely eradicated; that the evils of huge monopolies have been utterly destroyed; and that the roots of the police state have been wholly torn from their soil.' (1962: 235)
area that it sees fit.’ To this day the terms of the ANZUS treaty have never been specifically invoked; yet it was effective in drawing Australia more closely to US positions in Asia and facilitated an increased strategic and economic integration. It formed an alliance framework to cover the integration of Australian and US defence machinery and the establishment of US facilities on Australian soil, and to justify Australian commitments to Vietnam. It also emboldened the Menzies cabinet to take a hardline position against Indonesia during its ‘confrontation’ of Malaysia, believing that the US would intervene to protect Australian forces in Borneo if the conflict escalated. (Meaney, 1985: 586; Lee, 1997)

Furthermore, it symbolised the way in which the Menzies ‘development’ strategy for Australia would involve large amounts of new American investment, draw Australia more closely into the US economy and into the Asian economic bloc centred on Japan, and in turn help strengthen the US-dominated regional security framework.19 Building on the historic discourse which viewed Australia’s economic development as an essential buttress against a threatening Asia, the Government argued in defence of its request for a $US250 million World Bank loan (to build new industrial, transport and communications infrastructure) that ‘potential security advantages..would accrue to the US from having an industrially stronger ally on the southern rim of Southeast Asia.’ The US accepted this argument and supported the World Bank decision to grant an initial $US100 million; by 1962 total borrowings were $US418 million. Dean Acheson commented that US interests ‘would be served by the large-scale development which Australia is now undertaking.’ Earlier, in 1949, the State Department’s Policy Planning Staff had urged the NSC to focus more closely on Australia in its Southeast Asian containment strategy: ‘We have here a “white” and “western” government which because of its geography and recent policy seems to have identified itself with the Asian states’—implying that if Australia could be coaxed into giving more weight to western views its interest in Asia might play into a strong commitment to the area. (Pemberton, 1987: 20, 62) Of course dispossession had long been the obverse face of development, its enabling shadow, and thus the Australian movement of progress was functionally integrated with a global structure of reason which would have a similar effect on Asia’s peasants and indigenous peoples.

19 Signs of Australia-US economic integration included a double taxation agreement signed in 1952, and a treaty of friendship, commerce and navigation in 1955. In 1950 there was a total $US200 million US private investment in Australia, rising to $US742 million by 1959, concentrated in manufacturing, non-ferrous metals and oil refining. By the end of the 1960s it had risen to $US2360 million, making it the fifth largest recipient of US direct overseas investment. Moreover Australia’s efforts to increase its trade into Asia dovetailed with US plans, which envisaged Australia acting as another ‘Asian’ country trading raw materials for Japanese manufactures. Also Australia’s supplies of coal, iron ore, copper, lead, zinc and uranium made it, according to the NSC, ‘potentially a significant supplementary source of industrial and defense supply for free Asia.’ (Pemberton, 1987: 8-9, 64-66, 330)

185
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

Mirroring this strategy were the construction of supra-national networks of sovereignty which might simultaneously enable greater western intervention, and efface its scandal. As leaders like Sukarno denounced western interference in Asia as neocolonial and imperialist, the images of political sovereignty and subjectivity dating from Hobbes were called upon to fashion an unassailable image of general will linking Asian and Western powers in a common project and identity. If the Colombo Plan acted as a bedrock economico-political strategy of this type, the Southeast Asian Treaty Organisation (SEATO) was intended to combine a mechanism for co-ordinated military planning and deployments with an incontestable juridical form. Although it never quite worked as intended, it remained a crucial and effective mechanism.\textsuperscript{20} Such concerns over sovereignty—which disavowed its nonetheless well-understood nature as a problematic and constructed category—were also at work in the diplomacy over West New Guinea, Malaysia and South Vietnam.

South Vietnam in particular became a space in which the construction of an apparently stable ‘sovereignty’—which would in turn enable a clearer designation of the ‘aggression’ and ‘subversion’ of such an imagined political community—was sought through an elaborate combination of diplomacy, performance and political manipulation. Following the French defeat at the hands of Viet Minh forces at Dien Bien Phu, the Menzies Government sought observer status at the Geneva Conference on Indochina, and found itself disturbed by the outcomes.\textsuperscript{21} The Geneva accords, signed in July 1954, provided for the military partition of Vietnam at the 17th parallel, a ceasefire throughout Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia, and free elections in 1956 for a reunified Vietnam. They also proscribed the stationing of foreign military bases or forces in the respective zones. The 17th parallel was to specifically form a military demarcation line, not a political or territorial boundary. The DRV (North Vietnam) clearly hoped the 1956 elections would lead to a reunified Vietnam under their control,

\textsuperscript{20} Until 1960 the Government continually emphasised the role of SEATO as a regional framework for security. The organisation developed a headquarters in Bangkok and a network of military and political committees. In 1956 Australia provided £2 million in military aid to SEATO countries, and in 1958 announced £1 million more to Thailand, South Vietnam, Pakistan and the Philippines. In 1962 Barwick announced a further £3 million over the next three years. The aid was mainly provided in the form of communications equipment and technical training in Australia to military and civilian personnel. Edwards comments that SEATO ‘was unable to attract any new members of even significantly to reduce the hostility of neutral Asian countries, such as India or Indonesia. Nor was Australia able to use SEATO councils and committees to achieve its longstanding goal of privileged insight into the military plans of the United States.’ By 1961 SEATO had been declared moribund because of the reluctance of France and the UK to support US diplomacy in Asia. (Pemberton, 1987: 109; Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 185)

\textsuperscript{21} While concerned that anticommunism should prevail in Indochina, prior to the Conference the Australian government resisted US efforts to have they and other Commonwealth nations join US plans for direct military intervention in support of the French. Australia was concerned both with offending the US, but also with provoking an open conflict with China and alienating Asian opinion. Significantly, Casey also took the view that only non-communist Vietnamese could defeat the Viet Minh, provided the French granted them something like full independence. Such qualms would not prevail in later years. (Pemberton, 1987: 44)
while the US and Bao Dai governments were deeply unhappy with the Accords and refused to endorse them. The US was particularly unhappy with conceding territory to communist control, but hoped that at least the two zones could be turned into separate states such as in Germany and Korea. US policy thus became concerned to strengthen the South Vietnamese regime under the new Catholic Prime Minister (soon President) Ngo Dinh Diem, to assist him to eliminate his political enemies, and to block the elections provided for under the accords. Australia took a similar view, for whilst envisaging partition prior to the conference, had not expected the provision for elections and reunification. Menzies, alarmed, said the accords had not removed ‘the menace of aggressive Communism’ and that ‘Our own security in Australia depends upon converting a temporary halt into a permanent one.’ Labor’s Arthur Calwell was even less restrained: he argued that communism had been brought 350 miles closer to Australia, and that the cease-fire was an attempt to save Europe by sacrificing Southeast Asia.22 If a Southeast Asian defence pact were achieved, its headquarters should be in Darwin. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 146-9)

Diem could not have been a more unlikely candidate for a Vietnamese popular hero—carefully chosen and imported by the United States to replace the French-sponsored emperor Bao Dai, his regime was buttressed with vast amounts of US and military aid; American officials under the command of Edward Lansdale supervised the construction of his intelligence agencies, police and armed forces (ARVN); and US advisors were present in the regime’s bureaucracy and closely supervised military planning and operations against the Viet Minh.23 By the early 1960s his regime had an unparalleled reputation for corruption, nepotism and repression and was both deeply hated in Vietnam and seen as an obstacle by the West. He was assassinated, with the explicit connivance of the US Embassy, in November 1963. (Sheehan, 1990: 371)

Yet in the intervening years Diem was widely hailed as a champion. He visited Australia in September 1957, at the close of a massive two year program of repression directed against the Viet Minh which saw the killing and torture of tens of thousands and the imprisonment, without charge or trial, of another fifty to a hundred thousand. The Australian government was unconcerned that this program entailed the gross abuse of the most basic human and civil rights, or that its impact on the guerilla organisation provoked the National Liberation Front (NLF) to resume its military struggle and call on support from northern Vietnamese—thus beginning an escalation of the civil war

22 In March 1953, during a visit by French Minister for Indochina Jean Letourneau—at which the Government announced £250,000 in economic aid under the Colombo Plan—Evatt told him that the security of Southeast Asia and Australia depended on the defence of Indochina. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 114)

23 Between 1955 and 1961 the United States gave the Republic of Vietnam $US1.7 billion in economic assistance. Much of this was in the form of the Commercial Import Program, which according to Peter Edwards, ‘virtually underwrote the operations of the Saigon Government.’ (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 245)
which would rapidly spiral out of control and eventually see the deployment of Australian and US ground forces in 1965. In May Diem had visited the US where he had been hailed by Eisenhower as a ‘miracle man’, and in Australia his visits to Canberra, Sydney and Melbourne were marked by twenty-one gun salutes and military guards of honour. He was made one of the highest imperial honours—a Knight Grand Cross of the Order of St Michael and St George. (Sheehan, 1990: 188; Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 195-201)

A telling photograph taken during his visit captures its elaborate and calculated theatre. Diem stands on the tarmac at Canberra airport, walking from a Qantas aircraft. He wears Vietnamese traditional dress; behind him stands Menzies, wearing tails, and to his right the Governor-General Sir William Slim in military uniform, his chest blazing with medals. Around them, in full military regalia, are an escort from the Australian and South Vietnamese armed services. Carefully assembled here, and no doubt at many other points in his visit, were all the signs of sovereignty, identity and cultural authenticity that were being invoked to produce the legitimacy of his regime and the western order in South Vietnam—with a sleek technological display of mobility and modernity looming in the background. In turn Diem’s legitimacy was linked to those figures (Menzies, Slim and the Army leadership) which personified the Australian subject and the project of its security—a security which had already been paired with the survival of the South Vietnamese state. The Sydney Morning Herald said Diem was ‘one of the most remarkable men in the new Asia ...uncorruptible and patriotic... authoritarian in approach but liberal in principle.’ The Age, just as incredibly, argued he was ‘not a morally equivocal figure, like Chiang Kai-Shek or Syngman Rhee’. Evatt joined the chorus, saying at a parliamentary luncheon that peace and democracy had been achieved in Vietnam. Such an effective semiotic performance of sovereignty was paralleled by other actions. In 1959 the Australian diplomatic mission in Saigon was elevated into an embassy—Australia now regarded the 17th parallel as a political boundary. In June 1962, the special report of the International Control Commission (ICC), in ‘a diplomatic victory for Saigon and Washington’, confirmed this view. The report was thus the culmination of a long series of verbal, visual and material performances of ‘sovereignty’ aimed at buttressing the legitimacy of the RVN regime and entrenching the partition of Vietnam. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 195-201, 245)

SEATO sought to build on such efforts, in turn integrating ‘states’ like South Vietnam into a vast sovereignty-effect, a kind of super-subject that could combine the status, resources and power of its constituent meta-subjects into an incontrovertible material and juridical force. The treaty was negotiated with astonishing speed—after only three days of substantive negotiations in Manila—and signed only 49 days after the final declarations of the Geneva Conference, on 8 September 1954. It came into
force at the beginning of February 1955.\textsuperscript{24} In signing it, Australia sought reassurance: that the US could be drawn into Southeast Asia more deeply; that Britain would remained committed to the security of the whole Southeast Asian region, not merely to Malaya; that France’s military strength might be retained as a factor in the regional balance after its colonial role had ended; and that these major western powers could be co-ordinated with Australia, New Zealand and as many Asian countries as possible in a collective defence system. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 154)

Australia also wanted the treaty to have military ‘teeth’—which implied something like the NATO formula wherein an attack on one party was declared an attack on all, rather than the ANZUS formula wherein each party ‘would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.’ What they had in mind was a provision that would allow the US President to act immediately, without consulting Congress. Dulles however resisted this formula, with the eventual agreement being more along ANZUS lines. Australia also met strong opposition when, in the hope of gaining access to US thinking, it sought clauses providing for joint military planning. The Manila Treaty was signed by Australia, New Zealand, the US, Britain, France, Pakistan, the Philippines and Thailand, and was effective over ‘the general area of Southeast Asia, including also the entire territories of the Asian parties, and the general area of the Southwest Pacific’ south of 21 degrees north. Its key article (Article IV) included a provision for ‘subversion’:

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...is threatened in any way other than by armed attack 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. (Cited in Meaney, 1985: 612-13)

This section was extremely broad and ambiguous, leaving governments great scope to interpret events as threatening across a wide variety of situations and a wide geographical area. This was of great significance for the Indochinese states, which while prohibited under the Geneva accords from entering into military alliances, were designated under a ‘Protocol’ to the Manila Treaty as being territories to which articles III and IV were applicable. Thus the three areas were not formal parties to the Treaty

\textsuperscript{24} The ALP, under Evatt, was generally supportive of the treaty. Evatt criticised Australia’s greater obligations as opposed to the US, and proposed an important amendment which would have required the Government to seek parliamentary approval before committing forces under the treaty. It was defeated on party lines. Labor Senate leader N. E. McKenna also suggested that Dutch New Guinea be added to the treaty area. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 158)
organisation, but were ‘unanimously...designated’ by the parties as being within its scope.

Just at the US was trying to produce the illusion of a unified body-politic in South Vietnam, SEATO was an attempt to give juridical form to an even vaster aggregation of sovereignty which, in combination with the detailed administrative techniques deployed through military and economic aid programs, could transform the subjectivity of individuals while policing an identity which both derived from, and exceeded, the meta-subjectivities of its member nations. It was the vision of security presaged in Hobbes writ large: a super-Leviathan whose aims, purposes and project would be One and which would be arrayed against a single monolithic Other, who might appear at any place in the vulnerable flesh of this new political body.25 Hence the significance of ‘subversion’ to the treaty—its injunction to its members to ‘counter subversive activities directed from without against their territorial integrity and political stability’—combined with an apparatus that could now portray western intervention as a protective reflex coming from the very interior of the political body.

Many however, were not fooled. Sukarno denounced the pact as neo-colonialism, and instead sponsored his own conference of Afro-Asian nations (a precursor to the Non-Aligned Movement) held in Bandung in 1955. Australia received no invitation to the conference, and the US was particularly angered as it gave Chou En Lai the international platform he had been denied by China’s exclusion from the United Nations and challenged the global network of security alliances SEATO was designed to augment. (McQueen, 1991: 68) Mrs Pandit said sarcastically that SEATO was a ‘South-East Asian alliance minus south-East Asia’, and Nehru himself argued the American proposals for the organisation ‘came near to assuming protection or declaring a kind of Monroe Doctrine unilaterally over the countries of South-East Asia.’26 (Harper, 1962: 175) In response the western powers became concerned that SEATO should perpetuate and extend the stark ontological divide between democracy and communism. Thus neutralism—with its connotations of independence, decolonisation and opposition to foreign military bases—was a scandal. Casey declared that

Australia will respect the decision of any country to follow a policy of neutrality. We feel, however, that we have the right to expect neutral countries to follow a

25 As George Kennan argued in 1946, ‘World communism is like a malignant parasite that feeds only on diseased tissue.’ (Cited in Campbell, 1992: 28)

26 Norman Harper concluded that ‘even at the diplomatic level, SEATO did not become the medium for consultation with non-member states. Official circles in Vietnam and Laos, Burma and Indonesia, Malaya and India were reluctant to be associated with it. Increasing Communist pressure on Tibet and Laos and the growing concern in New Delhi at Chinese border claims produced no major change of attitude...’. Of SEATO’s Asian members, ‘Thailand, Pakistan and the Philippines had all attended the Bandung Conference, and while exercising a moderating influence on a number of issues, adhered to the final declaration of principles adopted by the Conference.’ (Harper, 1962: 175)
policy of genuine neutrality...They should not criticise or work against SEATO and other democratic countries, while pulling their punches when dealing with the communists...They should not allow international communism to use the umbrella of neutrality to protect domestic communist subversion. (Harper, 1962: 178-181)

Similarly, the SEATO Annual Report of March 1957 had charged communist countries with exploiting neutralism: ‘They have attempted to identify the widespread desire of peoples for national independence and integrity with the policy of neutralism. They have also supported neutralist claims that membership with other free nations in regional collective defence organisations is incompatible with national independence. In so doing, the Communists hope, by keeping up the outmoded cries of ‘imperialism’ and ‘colonialism’, to weaken the present friendly ties between Asian and other free countries and among Asian nations themselves, and so to increase their own influence and to mask the enlargement of their own empire’. (Harper, 1962: 181)

It was typical of the Orwellian character of such claims that SEATO itself was an attempt to solidify such an ‘imperial’ system, in a world in which its overt form was no longer tolerated. Realising this, the United Kingdom decided to decolonise its possessions in Malaya, Singapore and north Borneo in a way that would ensure its interests were preserved. It began by signing the Anglo-Malayan Defence Agreement in 1956 which ensured that British forces (including the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve) could remain after the British had wound up their administration. Then in May 1961, Malayan leader Tunku Abdul Rahman proposed the federation of Malaya, Singapore, Sabah, North Borneo and Brunei into the new state of ‘Malaysia’ (an idea Pemberton asserts ‘was almost certainly of British inspiration’). The UK wanted to preserve access to its £600 million investments in oil, tin and rubber—which were by 1963 the greatest source of US dollars in the Sterling Area—and the highly strategic port of Singapore.27 A federation would help the smaller territories resist pressure from China and Indonesia, and the inclusion of north Borneo mollify the Malays who feared the influence of the Chinese majority in Singapore. Australian External Affairs Minister Garfield Barwick told Cabinet that Malaysia ‘was the only hope of a bastion against China’ and anticipated new commercial opportunities in an integrated Malaysian economy.28 The establishment of the new state, he said ‘would contribute to the

27 The United Kingdom had assured the loyalty of Singapore in an intelligence operation worthy of the CIA at its meddling best. Prior to decolonisation the Singapore Special Branch arrested leading communists in the People’s Action Party, and MI6 developed close relations with future President Lee Kuan Yew to promote his political fortunes. (Toohey and Pinwill, 1990: 68)

28 By the mid-1960s there were 85 Australian companies with investments in the territories, having grown from $US5.8 million in 1948-9 to $US32.8 million in 1964-5. The greatest presence was in tin. (Pemberton, 1987: 167)
stability of the region...it deserves support as a major act of orderly decolonisation.’ Similarly US President John F. Kennedy said it was ‘the best hope for security for that very vital part of the world.’ (Pemberton, 1987: 166-169; emphases added)

After the British violently suppressed the December 1962 rebellion in Brunei with the help of two Australian Hercules aircraft, Indonesia declared its policy of ‘Confrontation’ against the new federation. Sukarno denounced it as ‘an attempt to save the rubber, tin and oil of the area for the imperialists.’ Already alarmed by the growth of the Indonesian Communist Party (PKI), and having spent ten years attempting (and failing) to prevent Indonesia from absorbing West New Guinea, these events provoked renewed anxieties in Australia—which flowed into the eventual deployment of troops to Vietnam and the clear support for the Indonesian military against Sukarno after October 1965. Australia had deployed much of its overseas forces in Malaya under its formal ‘forward defence’ doctrine and saw Singapore as a strategic port. The Defence Committee’s 1962 Strategic Basis document, in enunciating forward defence, argued that ‘while Southeast Asia is held, defence in depth is provided for Australia.’ It laid out an alarming scenario in which the decline of British strength and commitment, the divisions within SEATO, and the precarious Indonesian balance between the Army and PKI raised the spectre of ‘the full threat of a communist Asia and a communist Indonesia.’ (Pemberton, 1987: 167; Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 246)

While the US and Australia initially sought to defuse tensions with diplomacy, and Sukarno argued Sabah and north Borneo should be independent or at least consulted via a plebiscite, the UK pushed for a fast decolonisation. After the British persuaded the Tunku in July 1963 to sign a document providing for the establishment of Malaysia in August—whatever the outcome of negotiations with Indonesia and the Philippines—Sukarno demanded the removal of British bases from the region. At the same time Menzies asserted his leaning towards a more pro-British position. After the British Embassy and the offices of Shell in Jakarta were burnt down, and the assets of all British companies expropriated, Australia moved to support Britain militarily (while avoiding a total break in relations with Sukarno). In 1963 two naval vessels began patrols in Borneo and a battalion was diverted from the Strategic Reserve for operations against the MCP on the Thai border, which released British troops for Borneo. By February 1965 Australians were in Borneo (a regular battalion and an SAS squadron), and minesweepers had fought Indonesian patrol boats off Singapore. Between March and July, thirty Indonesians were killed by the Australians. While a complete break with Indonesia was averted, David Lee has since argued that ‘a policy which turned out

29 During the crisis Australian elite opinion was divided. Barwick had been pressing the British to involve Indonesia and the Philippines in discussions on the Borneo territories, while Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Keith Shann felt that Indonesia ‘had a strong enough case against Malaysia, because of Malayan and British errors, to discredit the new state internationally,’ and wondered if ‘it were not too late for second thoughts about Malaysia.’ (Lee, 1997)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

to have no serious consequences for Australia could easily have turned into a tragic blunder’—only the (unforeseeable) destruction of the PKI and the removal of Sukarno had averted an escalation in which long-term Indonesian intervention in Borneo could have only been countered, warned Jakarta Ambassador Keith Shann, ‘by an attack on Indonesia itself.’ (Pemberton, 1987: 246; Lee, 1997)

Here, the attempt to construct a seamless new body-politic amid the turmoil of decolonisation had again been challenged, and countered with a potentially disastrous deployment of military force. As Malaysia was consolidated after the Indonesian ‘coup’ of October 1965, the military efforts to solidify the fragile sovereignty of South Vietnam escalated. Australia insisted on seeing the problems together—Country Party leader McEwan wrote to Harold Wilson that Confrontation and Vietnam were ‘coming to form a common pattern and a common threat.’ Only the introduction of conscription, which was to provoke far-reaching political upheavals in Australia, had made it possible to both deploy forces to Borneo and ground forces to Vietnam. Australian military commitments to Vietnam began in 1962, with the arrival in Saigon in August of thirty advisors for the new Australian Army Training Team (AATV). Half had experience in the jungles of Malaya. That year a squadron of Sabre jet fighters was also loaned to Thailand to fight their communists. In September Cabinet approved Defence Budget proposals of nearly $650 million over the next three years—by 1968 Australian defence expenditures would peak at a level of 4.6% of GNP, from a low of 2.6% in 1962. These commitments coincided with a rapid escalation of US involvement—in February 1962 the US Military Assistance Advisory Group (MAAG) in Vietnam was replaced with the Military Assistance Command Vietnam (MACV) under General Harkins; by the end of the year eleven thousand US personnel would be in South Vietnam. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 242-248)

The Vietnam War

The Defence Review increased defence expenditures from the 1962-63 figure of £212 million (in 1962-3) to £280 million by 1966-7 and £300 million annually for the rest of the decade. Army numbers were targeted at 28,000 by 1967 and 33,000 as soon as possible thereafter. In January 1964 Cabinet allocated £250,000 of its SEATO defence aid to the ‘strategic hamlet’ program, which Barwick had seen when visiting South Vietnam in 1962. After this visit Barwick told Cabinet that ‘we should regard Vietnam as our present frontier.’ As the war continued to escalate, and the position of a succession of military regimes grew weaker, French President De Gaulle floated proposals for the ‘neutralisation’ of Indochina. In March 1964 Barwick told the Parliament that ‘neutralisation’ was ‘a course of despair’ requiring the removal of all western bases and conventional forces from the region. Betraying a ridiculous
Cartesian hubris, he argued the West needed to retain the option of ‘controlled and 
graded resistance’; if conventional forces were removed and guarantees of neutrality 
were to fail, the West would face ‘the grave choices associated with recourse to nuclear 
weapons’. While the SEATO Council meeting of mid-April saw strong divisions over 
the correct course of action to take, in June the Cabinet approved a doubling in the size 
of the AATV to sixty—with approval for its members to accompany ARVN units into 
battle—along with six RAAF Caribou and crews. The AATV was eventually increased 
to a hundred. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 271-300)

August 1964 saw the passage through the US Senate of the Gulf of Tonkin 
resolution, which freed the US Administration to escalate the war without recourse to 
Congress. The LCP Government affirmed its support for the US; in Parliament ALP 
leader Calwell called for UN intervention and a reconvention of the Geneva 
Conference, and questioned the lack of clear and public treaties to cover the deployment 
of Australian troops overseas. He argued the conflict was essentially a civil war, and 
that the Vietcong (sic) drew ‘its basic strength from the support it receives within South 
Vietnam itself’. Gough Whitlam, however, supported the government and the US 
Navy’s actions in the Gulf of Tonkin and, referring to the retaliatory bombing raids 
Johnson had ordered, said that military action was necessary to enable the US and the 
RVN to negotiate from a position of strength! Jim Cairns, while happy for the US to 
retain a ‘sea and air cordon’ around Southeast Asia, opposed US intervention because it 
would only make the ‘national revolutionary movement’ more oppressive. No speaker 
avocated the withdrawal of western forces or aid; the overriding theme was a 
questioning of the legal basis of the western commitments. Now Minister for External 
Affairs, Hasluck admitted that the RVN had not requested Australian help under the 
SEATO protocol, but asserted that the Australian commitment ‘flowed from’ the 
general obligations assumed under the Manila Treaty. Thus while western commitments 
did not directly invoke SEATO (due to the divisions among its members) the 
deployments still drew on the discursive and juridical illusions embodied in the treaty. 
(Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 313-4)

On 2 March 1965 thirty-five hundred US Marines landed in Danang and the carpet 
bombing of North Vietnam (‘Operation Rolling Thunder’) began. On 2 April the 
meeting of the US National Security Council approved two more Marine battalions, an 
air squadron and eighteen to twenty thousand more support troops, with the Marines 
authorised to conduct counter-insurgency operations outside their bases. The meeting 
also decided that the deployment of forces from Korea, Australia and New Zealand 
should be urgently sought.30 On 5 April the Defence Committee concluded that

---

30 In December 1964 Johnson wrote to Menzies requesting 200 more advisors and shipping, 
and flagged the need for combat forces. Menzies replied that all instructors were needed in 
Australia (because of conscription), but that Australia would send military representatives to US-
Australian staff talks on the deployment of ground forces. The Australian COS had decided that
Australia should offer a combat battalion because it was in Australia’s strategic interests to have a strong American military presence in Southeast Asia, and on the 7th April the Cabinet’s FAD Committee met. Hasluck, supported by McMahon, suggested waiting until Johnson’s major speech at Johns Hopkins University and for the outcome of recent peace initiatives. McEwen, Menzies and Defence Minister Paltridge argued Australia should commit the battalion in support of the US, who had intervened in Vietnam partly because they ‘knew the security of Australia would be stake if South Vietnam fell.’ After three weeks of convoluted diplomacy aimed at soliciting a ‘request’ from the RVN government, Menzies made the announcement in Parliament on the evening of the 28th April, while both Whitlam and Calwell were absent. His statement included the famous claim that the communist takeover of South Vietnam ‘must be seen as part of a thrust by Communist China between the Indian and Pacific Oceans’. (Pemberton, 1987: 272; Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 364-71) However fanciful, this drew on a series of historic images of threat from Asia and, in the interval which separated Pacific War posters of Japanese arrows thrusting towards Australia and Fadden’s 1949 image of ‘red spearpoints’ bearing downward yet again, traced an easy mutation of yellow peril into a lurid shade of red. It was a monumental deceit, which nonetheless found its mark in a credulous population. A year later Harold Holt, riding on the euphoria of Johnson’s visit to Australia, would win an unprecedented electoral majority on the strength of the war in Vietnam.

A week later Calwell replied to Menzies. In one of the most remarkable speeches ever made in the Federal Parliament, he denounced the deployment as unwise, untimely, and politically and morally wrong. It was based, he said, on a flawed analysis of Vietnamese society, the nature of the struggle, and the strategic situation in Southeast Asia. Just as Menzies argued the force was needed for Australia’s security, Calwell ironically asserted it would damage that security. Thus while a basic ontology of political strategy and being was agreed, the two men were totally at odds regarding its form and achievement. To call the struggle that of democracy against foreign aggression, he continued, was wrong; destroying the whole sovereignty-effect attached to the RVN, Calwell pointed out the south Vietnamese had suffered nine military juntas since the murder of Diem, half of whom the US had supported and half they had opposed: ‘The Government of South Vietnam does not base itself on popular support. Yet this is the government at whose request, and in whose support, we are to commit a

---

ground troops were necessary to seize back the initiative; DEA questioned the political situation in Saigon and the consequences of over-commitment. At the talks (held 1 April 1965 in Honolulu) the leader of the Australian delegation, Air Chief Marshal Scherger, told the US that Australia would respond positively to any US request—ignoring the Defence Committee which emphasised that his role in the talks was ‘purely exploratory and on a “no commitment” basis’. The brief wanted him to gather more information on US plans, and to consider the many problems that could arise, particularly where western forces were intervening in a civil war in which ‘they will have great difficulty distinguishing friend from foe’. (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 358)
battalion of fighting men. And we are told we are doing this in the name of the free and independent Government and People of South Vietnam. I do not believe it...'. The majority of south Vietnamese, uncommitted to either side, ‘watch uncomprehendingly the ebb and flow of this frightful war around them, and as each day threatens some new horror, they become even more uncomprehending. And because this is so, our policy of creating a democratic anti-communist South Vietnam has failed.’ (Meaney, 1985: 680-6) He went on to argue that the obsession with the domino theory had generated an obsessive and dangerous militarism:

It blinds and obscures the real nature of the problem of communist expansion. It lends support and encouragement to those who would see the problem in purely military terms, and whose policies would, if ever adopted, lead to disaster...Pre-occupied by the fear of a military Munich, we have suffered a score of moral Dunkirks...Pre-occupied with fear of communist revolution, we have supported and sought to support those who would prevent any sort of revolution, even when inevitable; even when most needful. (Meaney, 1985: 686)

Seeing also the enormously divisive potential of the decision, and for the conscription of reinforcements as Australia sank deeper into the quagmire, he concluded with an appeal for the ‘dispute to be settled through the councils of the United Nations,’ and with a profound warning to all the war’s opponents:

This course we have agreed to take today is fraught with difficulty. I cannot promise you that easy popularity can be bought in times like these...When the drums beat and the trumpets sound, the voice of reason and right can be heard in the land only with difficulty. But if we are to have the courage of our convictions, then we must do our best to make that voice heard. I offer you the probability that you will be traduced, that your motives will be misrepresented, that your patriotism will be impugned, that your courage will be called into question. But I offer you the sure and certain knowledge that you will be vindicated... (Meaney, 1985: 686)

The goal of a democratic south Vietnam had failed; escalation threatened a world-destroying war; and the defence policy which generated the decision was based on a damaging series of strategic fallacies. Furthermore, in stating the need for social revolution in Asia, and the determination of the western powers to frustrate it, he recognised an economic fact of the post-war order whose basic truth had eluded
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

mainstream Labor, and would quickly be forgotten.\footnote{Jim Cairns and Whitlam also spoke against the commitment. Whitlam struck an ambiguous note, supporting Calwell but affirming his support for the United States as a global actor: ‘America’s motives in Vietnam are above dispute.’ He argued the LCP Government was diverting scarce resources from Malaysia, Indonesia and New Guinea, where Australia’s security interests were greater. He also asserted that Australia was wrong in not acting formally under SEATO: ‘The Government’s sin is to have acted militarily without preparing the ground diplomatically.’ (Edwards, 1997: 35) ALP opposition was formalised with a policy statement in May. It opposed conscription and the dispatch of troops, and undertook to withdraw them ‘without delay’. It said the Australian government should seek to broker a new cease-fire and negotiations and recognise the NLF as a ‘party principal’. It should also ‘support the Geneva accords for the withdrawal of all foreign forces.’ (Meaney, 1985: 686)} It was an utterly damning critique, but one that would go unheeded, as he knew: ‘...when the great weight of western opinion calls for a pause, Australia says there must be no pause for reflection, no pause for reconsideration.’ In August the size of the force was raised from 800 to a battalion group of 1050, and in March 1966 to a Task Force of 4500. At the end of July President Johnson affirmed the US was now deeply committed to the war, and would deploy forty-four battalions (fifty thousand troops), increasing total US forces to a hundred and twenty-five thousand. The US presence in Vietnam would reach a peak of some five hundred and sixty thousand troops in 1968. Johnson visited Australia in October 1966, but Australia’s commitment was not increased again (and for the last time) until October 1967 when troop numbers were increased to eight thousand. Australia’s support may have seemed militarily insignificant but, as Pemberton argues, was of enormous political weight—it assisted the US Administration to counter its domestic and Congressional critics, and its ‘support as a fellow SEATO member was also crucial...because America’s obligations under the Manila treaty constituted an important element of the juridical basis of the Tonkin Gulf Resolution and ultimately for direct US involvement.’ On a smaller scale it was also militarily important: Australian Special Forces officers worked in the CIA’s ‘Pheonix Program’ which, through the capture of 28,000 and the killing of another 20,000, decimated the NLF clandestine government in the years after 1968; similarly US Colonel David Hackworth praised the Australians’ counterinsurgency skills and sent his own officers to train with them. (Pemberton, 1987: 308; Hackworth, 1989: 494-5)

The war Australia gave unstinting diplomatic support to, and which Holt’s Minister for the Army Malcom Fraser would decades later maintain was a just cause, would drag on until April 1975 and claim as many as four million Vietnamese lives, fifty-eight thousand Americans, and 500 Australians. South Vietnam was turned into a vast military and social laboratory, in which horrific new weapons were tested and deployed, populated areas designated free-fire zones and subjected to incessant bombing, strafing and napalm, and the environmental and genetic order poisoned for generations by the use of defoliants. Millions of refugees were created, while at least twenty-five thousand peasants were killed every year and another fifty thousand seriously wounded. Hundreds of thousands more were killed in combat, during the
bombing of the north or assassinated by both sides. A hundred and fifty thousand Cambodians were also killed by B52s as the war expanded into Cambodia in 1973. (Karnow, 1983: 11; Sheehan, 1990: 687; Kiernan, 1985: xii) The conflict that Government leaders asserted lay on Australia’s frontiers was a cruel and brutal display of techno-scientific murder, a terrible apogee to the systemic chain which married the most rigid ontology of being with the Cartesian hubris that spaces, populations and resources could be easily moulded, controlled and exploited. Confronted by its failure—which was visible as early as 1962 and most conclusively after the Tet Offensive of 1968—the machine simply ground on, destroying everything in its path. In short, the war was a moral disaster of major order, rivalling the Holocaust in its marriage of industrial modernity with an amoral rationality that systematically demonised, and de-humanised, its victims.32

As such, and as a conflict which had for so long been represented as crucial to the security of the nation’s very being, we could expect it to hollow out a corrosive space of aporia within the progressive myth of Australian subjectivity. This was in part reflected in the social upheavals occasioned by the growth of the antiwar movement in Australia, yet there has never been the depth of moral reassessment provoked by the later recognition of Aboriginal dispossession and genocide. However, in this context Calwell’s address was a crucial event—presaging a growing body of discourse which decisively challenged the whole structure of identity and geopolitical truth that the LCP had been inciting and deepening for fifteen years. However powerful it was to remain, especially in international policy, this version of subjectivity could never now be universal, and never absolutely hegemonic outside the boundaries of a small elite. The drums would beat and the trumpets sound again, but many were no longer hearing the call.

THE INDONESIAN KILLINGS

If Vietnam was an event felt later in global economic upheaval and far-reaching transformations in Australian society, the enormous turmoil in Indonesia after 1 October 1965 would have equally profound—and disturbing—consequences. More than any other, Sukarno’s downfall and the destruction of the PKI helped determine the coming shape of the Southeast Asian economic and geopolitical order, shaped the future direction of Australian foreign policy, and in turn played into a politics which

32 For a more systematic version of this argument, which analyses the Vietnam war as producing a crisis in an American (and later global) metanarrative of western progress and rationality, and which played out into attempts to renarrate the American identity and develop more effective and nuanced strategies of geopolitical power, see my MA thesis, 'Someday This War's Gonna End': Vietnam Stories At The End Of History, University of Technology, Sydney, 1994. Fraser’s comments were provoked by the publication of Robert McNamara’s self-critical memoir, In Retrospect, in 1995 (See The Sydney Morning Herald of 15/4/95).
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

sought to reinterpret and strengthen the linked Australian structure of subjectivity, security and identity. Once again, it was the interpretation of events—rather than their illusory 'essential' quality—which was most important here. Affirming the centrality of the Indonesian New Order to Australian international policy, by 1992 Paul Keating was arguing that Australia and Indonesia had 'joined destinies'. Thus the political vicissitudes of Indonesia were drawn into a vision of security which saw a re-interpretation of the Australian movement of culmination, within the greater achievement of a stable geopolitical ideal. It would be no different for the governments of Holt, McMahon, Whitlam, Fraser or Hawke. Soeharto’s New Order regime would be the beneficiary of its overdetermined importance to Australia’s security and prosperity, and be the conduit for the stubborn endurance of rigid cold war ontologies in Australian policy, beneath the surface of otherwise substantial change.

Since at least 1941 Indonesia had been seen as a space essential to Australia’s security, which drove the war-time decisions to occupy Portugese Timor, confront the Japanese in Borneo and join the British reoccupation of Java. After 1945 Labor had responded, with one eye on economic and security considerations, to the challenges of decolonisation; yet an important precedent had been set with the obvious relief at the quick suppression of the PKI’s rebellion at Madiun in 1948. During the 1950s the west’s rigid ontological framework made Sukarno’s neutralism an object of intense suspicion, which was only deepened by his raucous campaign to take over WNG, his friendship with China and acceptance of aid from the Soviet Union, and the growing size of the PKI. In 1958 the Australian Government secretly supported CIA assistance to rebels in Sumatra with the use of airfields, navy logistic and medical support, and the use of the Christmas Island base by US submarines.33 Yet the US had a parallel strategy of providing large sums of aid and training to the Indonesian army and police, with the hope either of drawing Sukarno closer to the West or bolstering forces which could eventually confront the PKI, which by 1955 had the fourth largest national vote and in 1957 won regional elections in central Java.34 Sukarno’s visit to Moscow in

---

33 In October 1957 the CIA Chief Allen Dulles told the ANZUS Council meeting that the US would only countenance the breakup of Indonesia as a last resort to keep US oil interests in Sumatra out of PKI hands. During the rebellion the US provided arms, ammunition, funds and some personnel to assist the rebels; aircraft flown by CIA pilots dropped supplies to the rebels and bombed government positions; and the seventh fleet was moved closer to Singapore in support. The rebellion failed, and in May US claims to have no involvement were exposed when a CIA pilot was shot down over Ambon. (McQueen, 1991: 69)

34 The US aid program began in 1950 with a grant of $US5 million to the police. $8 million was supplied to the army in 1952, but caused the fall of the government after it was revealed the aid required close alignment with the West. In 1954 the US Office of Public Safety (OPS) began training police—by 1964 it had trained the Chief of Police, nearly every other high ranking police officer and all senior members of the police paramilitary unit. A parallel program for military personnel began in 1955, and in 1958 the US agreed to equip up to twenty battalions with light arms. By 1959 US military assistance was worth $US7 million, which increased to $US15 million as naval and air force components were added. Early in 1959 the NSC argued that the aid had ‘bolstered the determination of non- and anti-Communist elements in Indonesia to counter...
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

1956—where he obtained $US100 million in credits to buy arms from Eastern Europe—sent further shivers up western spines. In 1958 Indonesia bought $15 million of Soviet arms and a further $US400 million in credits was granted in 1961. (McQueen, 1991: 68-9; Pemberton, 1987: 72-6)

Australia’s opposition to the WNG takeover foundered on this US strategy, which aimed to neither alienate Sukarno nor the armed forces, and to quickly resolve an issue which prevented the divisions between the PKI, the Army and Muslims from sharpening into a deeper (and more useful) antagonism. In 1950 Spender had argued against the takeover on the dual basis that the area was strategically vital to Australia and that its people had a natural cultural affinity with the Papuans, rather than Asians. Uncertainty about the future role of communism in Indonesia deepened such fears. By 1961 the US, using those same fears, sought to persuade Australia to accept the takeover as a \textit{fait accompli}. The NSC’s Robert Komer, in a classically racist formulation, argued the US needed ‘to sell [Australia] on the proposition that a pro-bloc (if not communist) Indonesia is an infinitely greater threat to them (and us) than Indo possession of a few thousand square miles of cannibal land.’ In contrast Spender’s argument that ‘it hardly seems consistent with modern ideas that a million people who have not yet reached a stage of political consciousness and maturity should be transferred from one nation’s sovereignty to another without their will having been ascertained’ appeared a shining example of humanitarian virtue. A more pragmatic Barwick persuaded the Government to accept the Bunker settlement of 1962 under which control reverted to Indonesia in 1963, with provision for a plebiscite by 1969. (\textit{CNIA}, 1950: 592-3; Pemberton, 1987: 70-106)

As Confrontation escalated, antagonisms between Sukarno and the West deepened. In March 1963 the Soviet defence minister visited Jakarta, followed by Chinese officials a month later. In June a new agreement on profit shares was reached with US oil companies Caltex and Stanvac—only two weeks before they were to be expelled. After the British embassy was sacked in September US arms shipments were cancelled and $US50 million in IMF drawing rights revoked; but crucial aid for the army’s civic action program was continued, as was training for army officers and the police mobile brigades. On 17 August 1964 Sukarno warned of a coming ‘year of dangerous living’, and in January 1965 the Foreign Minister Subandrio announced the formation of a ‘Peking-Jakarta axis’. As Sukarno’s health became more uncertain, the PKI was now the largest communist party outside the Soviet Union—although it still had only a small and symbolic presence in the Cabinet. Visible symbols of US power, particularly United States Information Service (USIS) offices, came under attack. In February workers seized Goodyear rubber plantations, which were then expropriated by the

communist influence’. By 1965 4000 officers had trained in the US, half the Indonesian officer corps and one third the general staff. (McQueen, 1991: 70; Pemberton, 1987: 77)
Government, and in March USIS withdrew.35 By the end of April Sukarno had signed a decree ordering the confiscation of all foreign-owned enterprises, including all US assets and oil interests. (Pemberton, 1987: 182, 245) Given Indonesia’s strategic and economic importance to both Australia and the United States, and Britain’s interest in Malaysia, a series of developments calculated to arouse Western fears could not have been better assembled. The ‘last domino’ seemed in danger of falling.

On the night of 30 September 1965 six of the army’s most senior Generals were murdered, including armed forces head Achmad Jani. Defence Minister Nasution escaped, but his daughter was killed. The murders were the work of elements of Sukarno’s Palace regiment, led by Lt. Col. Untung; neither Sukarno nor the PKI was directly involved or previously informed. Their motives appeared to be resentment against the generals for their corruption, their close links with the United States, and their covert resistance to Sukarno’s policies. Both Kostrad Commander Soeharto (intriguingly left off the killing list)36 and Nasution—who seized the initiative by directing operations to capture the conspirators—saw the opportunity to decisively move against the PKI. The party was blamed for the coup, which was said to be directed against Sukarno’s authority; in November PKI leader Aidit was killed and in March 1966 the party formally banned. In late October a campaign of archipelago-wide massacres began, directed by the Army and carried out mainly by soldiers and Muslim and Catholic youth. ‘Very soon,’ wrote Humphrey McQueen, ‘there were too many corpses to bury. So many bodies were thrown into streams that they formed log-jams, turned the waters red and polluted the drinking supply. Orphaned children crowded railway stations begging for food.’ (1990: 29)

By March 1966, when the level of killing declined, between half- and one million people were dead, most of them communists, leftists and Chinese. In November the Soeharto group asked the US for assistance: communications gear and small arms were delivered as ‘medicines’. CIA operatives compiled a list of five thousand PKI cadres which were passed onto Army headquarters. At the end of October Green cabled

---

35 As 1965 continued US policy toward Indonesia went into what Brands has called ‘deep freeze’. By September US embassy staff had been reduced from hundreds to dozens. US companies helped bankroll anti-communist forces, with Caltex paying its royalties to Permina and Pertamin controlled by Suharto’s close friend, General Ibnu Sutowo. CIA funds reached the Suharto group through payoffs from aircraft sales. The arrival of Marshall Green as US Ambassador in mid-year signalled a more activist US approach, although connections with armed forces leaders were kept low key. (McQueen, 1991: 73)

36 In May 1998 further information about Soeharto’s role emerged. A close friend of Soeharto, Colonel Abdul Latief, told journalist Patrick Walters from Jakarta’s Cipinang prison that he had known of the Untung strike in advance, had told Soeharto of its planning weeks before and, in particular, had told him on September 30 that it would take place that night. Soeharto declined to warn Army Chief Jani or Defence Minister Nasution that they were in danger. Latief was close to Soeharto from their days together in Central Java’s Diponegoro division in 1950s—but was sentenced to death in 1972 and spent 11 years in solitary confinement because of his knowledge. The interview took place a few days after Soeharto’s resignation as President, Latief saying Soeharto ‘should be tried for what has happened to me.’ (Walters, 1998: 1)
Secretary of State Dean Rusk that the army was resisting Sukarno’s belated efforts to stop the slaughter, and Rusk cabled back that the ‘campaign against PKI’ must continue as ‘the army are only force capable of creating order in Indonesia’. A week later Green wrote that ‘we have made it clear the Embassy and USG generally sympathetic with and admiring of what Army doing.’ In December he reported that between one hundred and two hundred thousand people had been killed in northern Sumatra and central and eastern Java alone. (Kolko, 1988: 180-3; McQueen, 1991: 75)

The Australian government also looked on the killings with admiration and relief, and the embassy in Jakarta watched events closely and sought to influence their course. Declassified files reveal that it was aware of the level and scale of the killings, and took heart from the Army’s determination to systematically crush the PKI. On 20 October Shann cabled Canberra that ‘The Army, as of today, is refreshingly determined to do over the PKI’. Another cable spoke of the ‘brutality of [the Army’s] methods now clearly revealed, and probably absorbed by the population as a whole...We will never know how many people have lost their lives. We think it is a lot.’ In Canberra Public Information Officer Richard Woolcott (later Ambassador to Indonesia and department head) provided Radio Australia (RA) with ‘regular daily guidance’ for their reporting into the Indonesian archipelago. Often at the behest of Shann, he warned RA not to use Radio Malaysia material, not to refer to army leaders as ‘rightist’ or ‘anti-communist’, to be ‘on guard against giving information to the Indonesian people that would be withheld by the Army-controlled information media’, and to highlight reports that ‘tend to discredit the PKI and show its involvement in the losing cause of the 30th September movement’ or that ‘provide evidence of the involvement of communist China in the movement.’

Prime Minister Harold Holt was quoted as saying in July 1966 that ‘with 500,000 to one million communist sympathisers knocked off, I think it is safe to say a reorientation has taken place’, while in February 1967 the new Labor leader Gough Whitlam wrote that ‘If the coup of 18 months ago had succeeded, as it nearly did, we would have had a country of 100 million dominated by communists on our border. We can only imagine the additional and crippling sums we would now be spending on defence. Yet our aid to Indonesia and abroad generally is trifling and ineffective.’ Thus there was acute awareness of, and bipartisan support for, the radical transformations

37 See a report ‘Radio Australia—handling of the Indonesian situation’ of 18/10/65, and the exchange of cables between Shann, department head Gordon Jockel and Woolcott. The summary said that RA had been told ‘it should bear in mind that it would be one of the only authoritative sources from which the Indonesian people would be obtaining information about their own country.’ Daily phone calls were made to RA and meetings between Departmental officials and RA journalists were also held. Shann in particular stressed that ‘under no circumstances, should we hint that Sukarno is implicated. The Americans have done this. Sukarno and Subandrio are howling for their blood. The Army is in a political dilemma. If they too blatantly seize control, Sukarno will claim Untung’s talk of a generals coup was correct. We can only make the Army’s task more difficult by inaccurate statements and wishful speculation.’ (AA 1838/280 - 3034/2/1/8 PT 3; emphasis added)

As the killings continued into 1966, the US pressed the generals for the removal of Sukarno and changes in other policy areas. Soeharto sought aid for the economy, while the US demanded a ‘sympathetic posture on the Vietnam war, an end to aggression against Malaysia [and] protection of U.S. oil firms.’ Achievement of all these goals was delayed—moves against Sukarno in particular had to be made slowly. On 11 March 1966, in what Harold Crouch has called a ‘disguised coup’, Soeharto obtained formal authority to restore order and dissolve the PKI; in August an agreement with Malaysia was signed; in February 1967 the Indonesian People’s Assembly (MPRS) made Soeharto Acting President and passed a new foreign investment law; and in October relations with China were freezed. (Kolko, 1988: 180-3; Crouch, 1988: 179)

With the PKI destroyed, Sukarno removed and Confrontation ended, a whole raft of threats to Australian visions of security, prosperity and order had been removed—at a truly terrifying human cost. While Peter Edwards argued the events ‘undermined much of the rationale for the Vietnam commitment’, the LCP’s psychological investment in the RVN was too deep to reverse course. Nevertheless by the end of the decade, with the Vietnam war heading towards stalemate, US forces being drawn down and the war’s geopolitical verities under challenge, there was a sense that the certitude the Australian Government craved had largely been achieved. Having been wagered on the most rigid, antagonistic ontology, with the elimination of the PKI security could finally complete its own circle, return to its claustrophobic truth. In the death-clogged rivers of Java security found its meaning, its comfort, and its promised prosperity—which were ours also. Security had become a vast Orwellian perversion, with its own perfect gulag.

CONCLUSION:
THE APORIAS OF STABILITY

This chapter has traced a new achievement in the story of the Australian subject—less now of its growth than its refinement, narrowing and solidification. Drawing on the historic fears of Asia, a modern pattern of class war and the stubborn imagination of identity upon the threatening strangeness of the Other, it reduced Australian security and being to a fear-soaked core in which only the most rigid and coercive relation with
difference was possible. In short, it sought a consolidation of the Same, amid a time when new democratic, nationalist and anti-capitalist forces and aspirations strove for recognition. The ‘way of life’, which Spender had declared ‘uppermost’ in the determination of Australian foreign policy, was now simply assumed, even if it was itself just another policing of difference, another reduction of variety, dissent and resistance to a single vision of existence—for which the quarter-acre block, the white picket fence and the Holden car stand as slightly surreal cartoons. As always, Australia’s first peoples were excluded from this seductive index of Australia’s being, and their children still being removed from Aboriginal homes in the hope they could be remoulded, their identities erased and their links with kin and land irrevocably severed. Around Maralinga their lands were fenced off for the testing of British atomic weapons—that overblown signifier of modern power and rationality—and became poisoned wastelands from which nature was banished. Similarly in remote areas all over the continent their lands were developed, without recourse or compensation, by transnational resource capital as the basis of an easy prosperity, which liberals since Smith had been proclaiming as the highest aspiration of modern human society.

Thus the extension of the ‘political double bind’ to a vast disciplinary formation which merged individuals with the immense spaces and flows of geopolitics, was paralleled by the passage of the ‘Australian’ story of progress into a ‘global’ movement of reason that would be the glittering face of the new post-colonial imperial order. Here the most coercive and amoral core of realism was married to idealism’s worst vice—philosophical universalism—thus helping to efface the worst injustices which lay at the era’s historical core. In this way former US Ambassador to Vietnam General Maxwell Taylor could say in 1972 that Indonesia’s ‘relative freedom from an internal communist threat is attributable, to a large degree, to what we’ve accomplished in South Vietnam.’ The entry of substantial US ground forces after 1965, he maintained, emboldened the generals ‘to run the risk of eliminating President Sukarno and destroying the Indonesian communists.’ Likewise on returning from his Asian tour in 1967 Holt told Australians they should look beyond the horrors of the Vietnam war ‘to a prosperous and secure future in Asia’. Others have more recently argued that US intervention in Vietnam provided a ‘shield’ for the rest of Southeast Asia to develop, free from communist influence. Under the light of its carefree, prosperous sun Australia was simultaneously experiencing some of its darkest hours—and profiting from them. Yet even as a comforting new ‘stability’ was being established over the ashes of the PKI

38 David Jenkins argued in a 1995 retrospective that ‘It is also possible to argue that the US-led intervention in Vietnam bought time for the rest of Southeast Asia, paving the way for the increased stability and prosperity we see today; that stability is clearly beneficial to Australia.’ (SMH, 29/4/95: 23). A few days earlier Greg Sheridan had argued that ‘the American commitment in Vietnam did win for the rest of Southeast Asia the time to develop economically and socially so that it could resist the later challenges of communist insurgency.’ (The Australian, 19/4/95)
Cold War, Pacific Order 1945-1969

and the establishment of new regional organisations like ASEAN and the five-power defence arrangements (FPDA), the ground was irreversibly shifting. At elite levels geopolitical truths were under challenge—by seeking 'detente' with China the US broke apart the monolithic image of international communism, while Nixon's proclamation of the Guam Doctrine in 1969 (which ruled out future US military intervention in Southeast Asia) was paralleled by External Affairs Minister Gordon Freeth's comments that Australia 'need not panic whenever a Russian appears.' A year before John Gorton had ordered a complete review of Australia's defence strategy. (Chomsky and Herman, 1979: 217; Edwards, 1997: 145; CNIA, Sept. 1969: 525-7)

The social upheavals were even more sweeping. Along with the rise of a broad-based movement to oppose conscription and the war in Vietnam, were a whole series of new claims and struggles—of women, indigenous peoples, the third world. The social transformations of what Coral Bell has called 'a slum of a decade' would act as a catalyst for new forms of dissent which challenged long-standing structures of power, identity and thinking. Already their effects were being felt in the mainstream—Labor had removed the White Australia plank from its platform in 1965, while Holt also disavowed it during a visit to Asia in 1967. That same year, Aborigines and Torres Strait Islanders were formally recognised as citizens following the success of an historic referendum. (Ardnt et al, 1989: 7; Meaney, 1985: 705; Edwards, 1997: 145) In the hope that new communities, identities and modes of life might be recognised and heard, the public unity of subject and being was increasingly being questioned. In time elites would recognise the threats this posed, and seek new rhetorics, tactics and modes of disciplinary power to counter them. The next decades would be permeated by this confrontation. Yet something had undoubtedly changed, in ways which have largely made my own speech possible: beneath the great movement of culmination a reality of struggle, dissent and counter-truth had been revealed—discourses breaking apart with the inexorable momentum of tectonic plates.
Six
After Guam, New Order(s)

All Australians must realise how damaging and dangerous a reputation Australia's present policies produce. We are a European nation on the fringe of the most populous and deprived coloured nations in the world. What the world sees about Australia is that we have an Aboriginal population with the highest infant mortality rate on earth, that we have eagerly supported the most unpopular war in modern times on the ground that Asia should be a battleground for our freedom, that we fail to oppose the sale of arms to South Africa, that the whole world believes that our immigration policy is based on colour and that we run one of the world's last colonies.

(cited in Freudenberg, 1977: 200)

Anyone hearing these words could have been forgiven for thinking a revolution in progress, given their dramatic challenge to longstanding modes of Australian identity, policy and belief—made only more ironic by the uncanny echo of Hughes' 1916 declaration that 'we live almost within co-ee of a thousand millions of coloured people', framed now in an apparent disavowal of everything Hughes had believed and feared. Whitlam made the statement on his second visit to Papua New Guinea as leader of the Federal Opposition, where he was pressing his case for the early decolonisation of a territory Australians had long seen as absolutely essential to their security. In doing so, as his biographer Graham Freudenberg argues, he was 'going against some of the deepest and often the darkest instincts of Australians...striking at their most cherished beliefs, linking them with two world wars, and some of their deepest fears and most cherished memories.' The obsession with New Guinea had been one of the most enduring themes in Australian diplomacy, from the earliest attempts at annexation in the 1880s, to Hughes' appearance at Versailles as the living voice of sixty thousand dead, to the Kokoda track in 1942 and the failed efforts to keep West New Guinea out of Indonesian hands. In 1961 Hasluck as Minister for Territories had maintained that PNG would not be ready for independence for at least twenty years, perhaps not even fifty. Now Whitlam was proposing self-government immediately on the election of Labor, and independence by 1976. (Freudenberg, 1977: 189-191)
Yet as radical as this seemed, the idea of PNG as a bulwark of Australian security would remain central to Australian policy, as the vast subsequent flows of military and economic aid would attest—what Whitlam was suggesting was that Australia’s security could be preserved with PNG as an independent state.¹ As Sir John Guise was to say as the Australian flag was lowered at the independence ceremony in 1975, ‘It is important that the people of Papua New Guinea and the rest of the world realise the spirit in which we are lowering the flag of our colonies. We are lowering it but not tearing it down.’ (Griffin, 1980: 347) Of equal moment for Whitlam was the symbolism involved in letting go—that Australia should begin to act in ways which appeared rational and just, at one with the general historic tide. Whitlam believed that decolonisation was needed to strengthen the Australian identity, which he felt had to be modernised and renewed. The kind of formula Curtin had worried over—which linked national with international subjectivity, narrative cohesion with diplomatic influence, and political symbolism with credibility—had resurfaced once again.

Not that the statement came out of nowhere, having its roots in a series of broader political, cultural and discursive shifts—provoked by the failure of US strategy in Vietnam, the rise of third world militancy and dissent in the West, and a corresponding re-evaluation of US foreign policy. Indeed the strategic implications of Whitlam’s New Guinea proposals—which saw the indigenisation of the Pacific Islands Regiment under Australian tutelage and with Australian aid—were more or less consistent with the dramatic shift in the strategic imagination marked by US President Nixon’s statement to reporters on the island of Guam in July 1969. There, introducing a concept later formalised as the ‘Nixon’ or ‘Guam Doctrine’, he announced that while the US would continue to stand by its treaty commitments (such as SEATO or ANZUS) it would increasingly expect Asian nations to assume responsibility for their own defence and security. The speech marked a new US reluctance to make extended military interventions in the third world: although these were not ruled out, economic and military aid would now be the preferred mechanism. Nixon remarked that ‘the objective of any US administration would be to avoid another war like Vietnam any place in the world.’² (O’Neill, 1980: 21-22; Kolko, 1988: 208)


² These remarks about Vietnam however were deeply disingenuous, as the Administration (whilst slowly drawing down the level of US forces) would continue large scale operations in Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos (including enormous levels of bombing) in an endeavour to force the communists to negotiate an outcome that would leave the RVN regime intact. Nor did it prevent US intervention in Chile in 1972, the sponsoring of proxy wars in Nicaragua, El Salvador, Cambodia and Afghanistan or the invasions of Panama or Grenada. As Gabriel Kolko has commented, the Administration’s initial intention [in the Guam doctrine] ‘never fully adjusted to the new economic and political structural context in which decisions had to be made, or the heritage of interests and attitudes that were inherent to American imperialism.’ (Kolko, 1988: 208)
In 1971 Nixon’s ‘Vietnamisation’ of the war was already underway, and within twelve months a new ‘detente’ with China would also have been initiated. Whitlam himself travelled to China with Dr Stephen Fitzgerald and a small ALP delegation in June 1971, only weeks before Nixon’s National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger made a secret visit to Peking to smooth the way for a Presidential visit in 1972. In Australia the first shudderings of an earthquake had been heard in August 1969, when LCP Minister for External Affairs Gordon Freeth told Parliament that ‘Australia has to be watchful, but need not panic whenever a Russian appears...Reason for concern arises when the scale or methods or objective of the promotion [of Soviet influence] are calculated to jeopardise our direct national interests or to endanger the general security and stability in the region.’ (Hudson ed. 1980: 173; Freudenberg, 1977: 208-9; Freeth, 1969a: 414).

The stark oppositions which had underpinned Australian foreign policy for thirty years were unravelling, but not without a storm of protest from conservatives, nor without the preservation of an underlying discursive and structural continuity. While early press reaction was favourable, the DLP quickly marshalled a counterattack. Senator Gair, without irony, called it ‘a radical shift to the left’, while the left of the ALP accused the government of ‘ganging up’ with the USSR on China. The leader of the Country party complained to Gorton about not being consulted about a ‘major change in policy’. Freeth lost his seat at the 1969 elections, during which the DLP and the League of Rights had campaigned against him on the issue. The Soviet Embassy on the other hand welcomed the ‘growing realism and independence of Australian foreign policy’ which, as Coral Bell dryly remarked, proved to be ‘a damaging endorsement.’ (1988: 97-8)

While the Soviets were still viewed with suspicion, Freeth had abandoned the rigidly binarized view of them, in response to obvious US moves toward detente. This marked the beginnings of a shift in the discursive structure of Australian security thinking, in which a link between strategic policy and national identity was no longer formed around a single axis of confrontation. Instead, the interplay between identity, otherness and fear—while remaining—would be structured by a series of more nuanced cleavages which nonetheless owed much to the geopolitical models of the preceding thirty years. While ‘communist subversion and insurgency’ was still threatening, he argued that ‘these problems have to approached without over-simplified thinking. We have to distinguish between subversion and legitimate dissent, between rebellion and necessary change.’ Nevertheless Freeth hoped that the US would continue to play a role in Southeast Asia. While he accepted that there should be ‘no more Vietnams’, this required helping ‘other countries threatened by subversion’ to ‘develop sufficient strength themselves to prevent aggression reaching the proportions which it reached in Vietnam.’ In an echo of Spender and Colombo, this meant not only
military strength but ‘decent standards of living, efficient and honest administration, harmonious relations with neighbours, and the easing of communal tensions within a country.’ Citing Australia’s defence co-operation programs, Freeth looked forward to building ‘an appropriate international framework of co-operation for security and development.’ The Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) with Malaysia, Singapore, the UK and New Zealand, which took effect in November 1971 and under which Australian forces remained on the Asian mainland, were crucial here. (Freeth, 1969a: 413-5; Bell, 1988: 96-7)

Thus Australia was already moving to establish a new regional order which might deal with the anxieties which had drawn them into Vietnam—that US commitment to Southeast Asia (and Australia’s own security) would wane, and in turn be compounded by the British withdrawal from its historic security role ‘East of Suez’. The FPDA would lock the UK into the defence of Malaysia and Singapore and eventually, through the Integrated Air Defence System (IADS), offer a security umbrella to the broader Southeast Asian region. Military aid and training would strengthen regional forces, reinforce their pro-western orientation, and help with the confrontation of internal dissent and ‘instability’. (O’Neill, 1980: 14) Anxieties about the US role were partly assuaged by the recognition of a more benign strategic environment (notwithstanding the persisting fears of China), the sense of shared commitment achieved in Vietnam, and the growing significance of the US defense installations at Pine Gap, Nurrungar and Northwest Cape to American naval and nuclear strategy. (Ball, 1979: 42) Thus while ‘forward defence’ had receded as a doctrine, along with the cruder versions of the domino theory, policy had largely reverted to a pre-1962 status quo.3

CONSOLIDATING THE NEW ORDER

Of enormous significance here were the changes in Indonesia since October 1965. As Soeharto slowly consolidated his power, a rash of Ministerial visits and exchanges were combined with a vast expansion of Australian aid to the new regime—with the aim of cementing Indonesia’s integration into the new international economic and strategic spaces which for many would become synonyms of ‘stability’ and ‘progress’. Obviously the ending of Confrontation in August 1966, the formation of ASEAN (among whose objectives was to strengthen ‘the economic and social stability of the region’) and of the Asian Development Bank underlined the dramatic regional

---

3 This modifies a broadly-held view, expressed for example by Desmond Ball, that the decline of 'forward defence' and the Guam doctrine provoked a 'period of radical transformation in the basic elements of Australia's national security policy'. (1979: 2; emphasis added) While defence policy may have undergone sharp changes, what I will emphasise is that our broader security policy—taking in defence, foreign policy and economic diplomacy—did not, especially in regard to the nature of the regional order that was defined as 'secure' and the underlying discursive frameworks which aimed to keep it that way.
transformations wrought by the PKI’s destruction. (CNIA, 1967: 327) Australia’s role, both in protecting the New Order’s position in Indonesia, and in securing the broader regional order it had enabled, would be absolutely crucial. Kathryn Young, an analyst with the US Research Analysis Corporation, wrote in 1970 that the development of a co-operative relationship between Australia and the New Order would be critical to the maintenance of Asian ‘stability’ after Vietnam—within an ‘ambiguous strategic environment’ marked by the Nixon Doctrine, the British withdrawal East of Suez, ‘the general unpredictability of the outcome of the Vietnam conflict on the region’ and ‘other interacting uncertainties created by the as-yet-undetermined US, Soviet and Chinese weights in the Asian power balance.’ The alternative was stark: if ‘relations were to seriously deteriorate the prospects for stability in the wider Southeast Asian area would become quite bleak.’ (1970: 32)

In this scenario serious conflicts of interest (and emotional attachment) would develop for Thailand, Singapore and Malaysia—who had deep cultural, language and religious ties with Indonesia but military, trade and political ties to Australia—along with possible great power involvement as tensions escalated. Whatever the growing warmth in relations between Australia and the Soeharto regime, sensitivities over the PNG-West Irian border and the deep differences in ‘modes of thinking, value systems, economies and forms of political organisation’ left the relationship vulnerable to upheaval and misunderstanding. In short, she argued, the relationship rested on an unsettling paradox: ‘the usual factors making for a sense of “community”, or even sympathetic mutual relations, between two nations are objectively absent in this case... Yet in spite of this objective dissimilarity a recognised and increasingly understood relationship has begun to develop between the two nations.’ (Young, 1970: 29) This was a trope that would appear again and again in the decades to come: an identity marker which was far from stable, incited within many different contexts and political moves. As I will seek to show, for all its apparent coding of ‘difference’ into foreign policy its political import would tend to a destructive consolidation of the Same.

Thus added to the longstanding anti-communism of Australian elites and the massive relief with which they had greeted Soeharto’s destruction of the PKI, was a potent blackmail which portrayed the relationship as a stabilising factor of ‘global’ significance, in a newly ambiguous and uncertain world. In particular, it would be used with frightening effectiveness by the New Order regime to thwart the influence of a highly critical public opinion on Australian foreign policy. However before 1974 such tensions were less visible—instead Australian actions, which aimed for a swift consolidation of the political gains made by Soeharto, were in implicit accord with this discourse. External Affairs Minister Hasluck visited Jakarta in August 1966, only a few months after the killings had subsided, returned in January 1967 to open the new Australian Embassy, and again in January 1968, just prior to Soeharto’s appointment
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

as President. Indonesia’s Finance Minister Dr Frans Seda visited Australia in October 1967, followed by Foreign Minister Adam Malik in December for Holt’s funeral. Malik returned in April 1968, and Prime Minister Gorton visited Jakarta in June. Gordon Freeth followed him in April 1969. (Young, 1970: 15-16) During this period Australia’s policy toward Indonesia had three major prongs: to secure Indonesia’s consent to the reconfiguration of defence and security arrangements in the region, particularly Australia’s role in the FPDA; to promote the rehabilitation of the economy along capitalist lines, its opening to foreign investors and its integration with international economic structures; and to indicate strong political support for the regime.

Added to the covert support Australia had shown the Generals in eliminating their political enemies during the turmoil of October and November 1965, was aid and diplomacy which sought to help the Army revive the economy—crucial both to alleviate widespread misery and to consolidate their political gains, which Australian officials feared ‘could be eroded by economic discontent.’ Australia immediately began a program of bilateral aid and also participated in the international consortium, the Inter-Governmental Group on Indonesia (IGGI), formed in 1967 after earlier IMF missions gave the new regime their approval. The major donors were Japan and the USA, though Australia provided A$5.2 million of the US$200 million first annual grant. The Australian Government provided A$500,000 emergency aid in 1966, with a further A$200,000 in February 1967. In 1967-8 bilateral aid was A$6.9 million, the amount doubling to A$12.7 million in 1968-9, making Indonesia Australia’s largest aid recipient outside Papua New Guinea. By 1969-70 Indonesia was Australia’s largest aid recipient, with A$16.8 million—thirty-one per cent of total bilateral aid. In 1970 aid was further increased with an undertaking of $A53.8 million over three years. At the conclusion of his visit to Indonesia in June 1972 Prime Minister McMahon announced a further three year aid program for Indonesia (to June 1976) of A$69 million, an increase of A$16 million over the previous three years. (Crouch, 1988: 320; CNIA, 1967: 76, 1968: 105, 1970: 441, 1972: 291)

Soeharto himself was also the beneficiary of the same kind of pomp and theatre which had earlier been extended to Southeast Asian leaders such as Diem. In February 1972 he visited Australia accompanied by a veritable parade of the New Order’s key

---

4 This quote appears in a briefing paper written for the Australian delegation to a December 1965 meeting of the western powers in London on the Indonesian situation. Major agenda items were economic aid, Confrontation and the evolving political situation. Elsewhere the paper argued that ‘the Army’s primary objective’ is ‘to prevent the economic situation deteriorating to the point where it causes a political reaction against Army control.’ It noted Australia had been approached by the Army for rice and medicines, with suggestions that aid be supplied indirectly, perhaps through Malaysia. The paper argued the chief problems the meeting should consider were: '(i) whether the supply to Indonesia of aid by Necolim [imperialist] countries could seriously harm the position of the Generals; (ii) if so, whether western aid could be concealed; (iii) how aid can be arranged so as to be of political assistance to the Army; (iv) what we can ask in return.' (AA CRS 1830/280 3034/2/1/8 Pt 2 "Quadripartite discussions on Indonesia: Brief for Australian delegation").
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

political and economic ministers. The party was accorded a full ceremonial welcome at Fairbairn airforce base by the Governor General (Sir Paul Hasluck), Prime Minister McMahon and a ceremonial guard of cadets from the Royal Military College Duntroon, along with a twenty-one gun salute. In Canberra Soeharto held talks with the Prime Minister, opened the new Indonesian embassy building and, in a symbolic gesture of solidarity with Australia’s veterans, laid a wreath at the Australian War Memorial. In paying his respects at one of the most sacred sites of the national identity, this last gesture was also symbolic of the way in which, over the next twenty years, the security of the New Order regime would become synonymous with the security of the Australian ‘way of life’ itself. (CNIA, 1972: 17)

The ceremonies were yet another elaborate performance of sovereignty which aimed to crown the repressive consolidation of Soeharto’s rule. In March 1966 he had obtained sweeping powers from Sukarno to ‘restore security and order’, which he immediately used to dissolve the PKI; he was appointed Acting President by the Peoples’ Consultative Assembly (MPRS) in March 1967, and President a year later. In May 1967 Sukarno was stripped of all official titles, and he was placed under house arrest until his death in June 1970. Meanwhile Soeharto had purged the armed forces, bureaucracy and political parties of leftists and Sukarnoists, and in 1971, only a few months before his visit to Australia, his close ally General Ali Moertopo\(^5\) engineered a crushing electoral victory for the Army’s new parliamentary vehicle Golkar. (Crouch, 1988: 178-220; Schwarz, 1994: 32)

Australian political leaders were neither disturbed by the vast slaughter which had underpinned Soeharto’s rise to power, or by the blatant fraud of the 1971 elections. Indeed they responded, as one, with an extraordinary personal endorsement of his leadership. At the state luncheon held for Soeharto at Parliament House, McMahon expressed frank gratitude for his personal role following the events of October 1, 1965. He gave thanks for Soeharto’s decision to enter the army, and for his role as Kostrad (Strategic Reserve) commander on the night of the killings, saying:

> I believe...that Providence intervened and placed you in a decisive position and one in which you were able to exercise your power and influence on the future in a way that no other person in the history of Indonesia has been able to do. And, Sir, because of those two actions...you [were able] to make the decision that

---

\(^5\) Moertopo headed a ‘special operations’ group, Opsus, which was later charged with managing the subversion campaign in East Timor in 1974-5. Civil servants were obliged to vote for Golkar, district leaders and village heads given ‘quotas’ of Golkar votes to fill and development funds promised to regions which voted overwhelmingly for Golkar. The internal security command Kopkamtib made hundreds of arrests, while hundreds of thousands more remained in detention. According the Adam Schwarz, the former Kopkamtib head Gen. Sumitro said that ‘If you had left it to Golkar in 1971, without any interference from ABRI [the armed forces] the muslim parties would have won.’ (Crouch, 1988: 223; Schwarz, 1994: 32)

212
saved Indonesia and I think has brought peace, order and goodwill to your own country. \(\text{(CNIA, 1972: 35-6)}\)

The Country Party leader Doug Anthony was even more frank, saying that Soeharto was welcomed not only as a head of state, ‘but in his own right as a man who has skilfully and patiently guided his country back from an abyss of political chaos and economic disaster’:

It is important to recall that night of September 1965, when many of his friends and colleagues were brutally murdered...With bravery, with patience and with skill he restored the apparatus of state security. Some pressed him to hurry with the dismemberment of what is now known as the Old Order. Others wanted it to be fully restored. He followed neither course. But when, in February 1966, it seemed that Indonesia might retrace its steps, he acted with sensitive respect for the past, but with determination that the past was past, and that Indonesia’s destiny lay in a new direction. \(\text{(CNIA, 1972: 39)}\)

This was a direct reference to Sukarno’s last ditch (but potentially successful) attempts to reassert his authority in January and February 1966 at the expense of the Army leaders. Sukarno made speeches defending the PKI, sought to limit the authority of Army leaders in domestic affairs, ordered the release of 200,000 thousand PKI detainees, and announced a new Cabinet from which anti-communists like Nasution were sacked and in which Ministers the Army wanted removed—such as Omar Dhani (Air Force) and Dr Subandrio (foreign affairs)—were retained. These setbacks were only thwarted by the Order of 11 March, obtained in an atmosphere in which Sukarno feared Subandrio and himself might otherwise be arrested or killed. \(\text{(Crouch, 1988: 158-78)}\) From Anthony’s comments it seems clear the Holt government had watched these events with bated breath, fearful that the New Order might be swept away at the very moment it seemed most likely to take power.

Gough Whitlam was also at the luncheon—he praised Soeharto, recalling a meeting in August 1966 at which he ‘was immediately struck by the determination and the decorum of the General, the future President.’ His speech also presaged later accounts of Indonesia’s strategic importance to Australia: the need for Australia’s maritime trade and aircraft movements to use Indonesian waters and airspace, and the resource and security interests that made seabed agreements a priority. And following Anthony’s comments about the importance of trade and investment partnership—symbolised by the formation of the Australia-Indonesia Business Council and the establishment of thirty Australian enterprises in Indonesia—Whitlam also urged ‘Australians of skill or wealth to help promote the development of Indonesia.’ \(\text{(CNIA, 1972: 31-9)}\)
Thus on the eve of Labor's election to Government in 1972, a series of complex political and discursive currents were in play. Longstanding forms of identity, policy and belief were under challenge, both from radical opponents of the Vietnam war and the post-war thrust of western imperialism, and—differently—from conservative attempts to retain hegemonic manoeuvre amid a more turbulent economic and geopolitical context. While the LCP government had been slow to respond, particularly with regard to China, it was also clear a new conservative consensus and a new regional order were successfully being shaped—in ways which preserved the same interests which had driven the Cold War and strengthened its underlying discursive and political architecture. Here the public incitement of fear which had characterised the Menzies era was giving way to the long-term objective of managing 'stability'. Thus the Defence Committee's 1971 opinion that Australia faced no immediate or obvious threat was no longer radical—a deeper continuity with Spender's (Hegelian) vision of security and development existed in the same politics of coercion and transformation that would underpin the new regional order. As McMahon said of Indonesia, 'security and stability [go] hand in hand with economic improvement and development. Australia's programmes of assistance w[ill] help strengthen the capacity of the administration, the networks of communications and transportation, and the security of the neighbouring countries.' (Dupont, 1991: 69; CNTA, 1972: 31)

Meanwhile, drawing in part on the impetus and vision provided by the anti-war, womens and indigenous peoples movements, Whitlam was promising further sweeping change. However his disturbing response to Soeharto suggested it might also have its limits, and the next three decades of Australian foreign policy hinged on the way this tension played out. In short, Labor's election saw the nation straddling an abyss: between the promise of a declaration that the fundamental structures of Australian identity, policy and subjectivity should irreversibly change—along with the larger geopolitical order they had sustained—or the preservation of a regional order and a basic ontological continuity for which 'stability' would now be the catchcry.

**SECURITY, JUSTICE AND IDENTITY:**
**THE WHITLAM TRAGEDY**

The Whitlam government's vision of the future, outlined during the election campaign of 1972 and swiftly implemented once it took power, would share much with that of its great Labor antecedents, the Curtin and Chifley governments. In the broad outlines of its domestic and international policies, it promised the same reconciliation of security and justice—at home and abroad—which could be found in Curtin's wartime speeches and Evatt's energetic postwar diplomacy. In this it married a potent evolution of the 'political double-bind'—which promised the simultaneous achievement of social and
national security—with a new extension of universal justice and principle into both the affairs of the nation and its broader geopolitical arena. As Whitlam declared in his policy speech at the Blacktown Civic Centre in November 1972, ‘We have a new chance for our nation. We can recreate this nation. We have a new chance for our region. We can recreate this region.’ (Freudenberg, 1977: 230) The Labor vision thus involved a dramatic re-imagination of the national identity, at least rhetorically, which departed from both the verities associated with the previous thirty years of conservative rule and many held dear by 1940s Labor—particularly in regard to Aboriginal peoples and the historic fears of Asia. But if the Chifley government had struck major difficulties in confronting the evolving structures of the postwar international order, in 1972 Labor took office in a context in which they were now almost irreversibly entrenched, and in which Australia was closely allied with the very power most aggressively seeking to preserve them. To these obstacles were added the limitations of the Governments’ own thinking. In assessing its record, particularly in the light of Whitlam’s own retrospective and more recent attempts to identify a ‘Labor tradition’ in foreign policy, some key questions emerge.6 Beneath its dramatic rhetorical re-imagination, were the fundamental ontological structures of the Australian identity really changed? How different was the politics of security that sought to safeguard and realise it, and was it consistent with its other claim—to justice? While I will argue that the Whitlam Government failed to achieve a new relationship of self and other for the Australian subject—and in particular, that they failed to achieve a consistently ethical one—they introduced an instability into the dominant structures of Australian identity, truth and community which is still with us.

'AUSTRALIA': A NEW ONTOLOGY?

To conservatives still grappling with the implications of detente, the end of the White Australia policy, the decolonisation of PNG or the irritation of the Aboriginal tent embassy, much of what Whitlam espoused must have seemed shocking.7 In its first

6 See Whitlam's account of his Government's policymaking, The Whitlam Government (Penguin: Ringwood, 1985), and David Lee and Christopher Waters ed. From Evatt to Evans: The Labor Tradition in Foreign Policy (Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997) Among its contributors Gareth Evans maintained an unproblematic continuity stretching from Evatt to himself, while Evatt's former department head John Burton argued both that Chifley and Evatt failed to entrench a Labor 'tradition', and that contemporary Labor governments have failed to renew it.

7 The 'tent embassy' was set up outside Parliament House in 1972 in protest at McMahon's Australia Day address which ruled out land rights for Aborigines, and was forcibly removed by Federal Police five months later. David Day suggests 'it represented a direct challenge to the legitimacy of two centuries of British occupation of the continent. Although the main focus was on land rights, the more fundamental question of sovereignty was raised by the very pitching of the self-styled embassy.' It followed earlier Aboriginal campaigns such as the Gurindji's attempt to reclaim traditional lands on Wave Hill station in 1967, and Justice Blackburn's rejection of the Yirrkala claim to lands under mining lease to Nabalco. (Day, 1997: 422; Bolton, 1990: 195-6)
months the new Government withdrew Australia’s remaining forces from Vietnam, recognised the Peoples Republic of China and freed gaolèd conscientious objectors. It opened moves to legislate land rights for Aborigines, to establish a universal health system, raise pensions, abolish tuition fees for tertiary education, and re-opened the case for equal pay in the Conciliation and Arbitration Commission. It cancelled wheat exports to Rhodesia, closed down its information office in Sydney, and banned racially selected sporting teams from visiting Australia. More radical moves included the restoration of a passport to the journalist Wilfred Burchett, which symbolised the rejection of what Whitlam in his policy speech had called the ‘eighteen years of bombing, butchering and global blundering’ in Indochina. (Whitlam, 1985: 19-22; Freudenberg, 1977: 234)

After two decades of personal equivocation on the Vietnam war, Whitlam had now firmly set his face against it, and it would be one of the most strident notes in the Government’s new foreign policy. Along with the decisions on conscription and Aborigines, it boldly proclaimed the beginning of new era—and a new meaning for the Australian nation. At the Blacktown Civic Centre Whitlam declared the necessity of the new path: ‘We cannot afford to limp along with men whose attitudes are rooted in the slogans of the 1950s—the slogans of fear and hate. If we made such a mistake, we would make Australia a backwater in our region and a back number in history. The Australian Labor Party—vindicated as we have been on all the great issues of the past—stands ready to take Australia forward to her rightful, proud, secure and independent place in the future of our region.’ (Freudenberg, 1977: 230) What was clear here, and in countless other statements, was that policies would be framed to simultaneously strengthen Australia’s diplomacy, cohesion and identity—in short, its security—in a constant feedback loop. Even the responsibility to right the historic injustices against the land’s owners was cast in these terms:

Australia’s real test as far as the rest of the world, and particularly our own region, is concerned is the role we create for our own aborigines...Australia’s treatment of her aboriginal people will be the thing upon which the rest of the world will judge Australia and Australians—not just now, but in the greater perspective of history. The world will little note, not long remember, Australia’s part in the Vietnam intervention. (Freudenberg, 1977: 234)

In many ways what he said was true and necessary, but what needs to be questioned here is its part in a larger ontological enterprise. If the dispossession and attempted genocide of Aborigines was an aporia within the very core of the Australian identity, Whitlam’s rhetoric here suggested it could not only be easily closed over, but that it could be then appropriated to the task of manufacturing a new ontology, a new
imagination of being to which the past offered no resistance and no rebuke. The new ontology which promised both a ‘recreated’ nation and a ‘recreated’ region was also a process of forgetting, only compounded by the aside that consigned Australia’s part in the Vietnam war to the dustbin of history.

Clearly the idea that any event—even those as grave as the Indochina war or the dispossession of Aborigines—might resist the easy reconstruction of identity was anathema to Whitlam. Instead what appeared to be at work was an enlightenment idealism in which all possible contradictions could be smoothed over and resolved. It was a distinctively Whitlamesque vision which presaged the neo-Hegelian end-of-history thesis that Fukuyama would later declare, at whose end would stand a glittering new being—a just, progressive, and prosperous ‘Australia’ that was a source of no shame. As the policy speech declared:

The decision we will make for our country on 2 December is a choice between the past and the future...There are moments in history when the whole fate and future of nations can be decided by a single decision. For Australia, this is such a time. It’s time for a new team, a new programme, a new drive for equality of opportunities; its time to create new opportunities for Australians, time for a new vision of what we can achieve in this generation for our nation and the region in which we live. (Freudenberg, 1977: 229)

No-one would begrudge a political leader, particularly at the beginning of an election campaign, the right to outline a new vision and new policies, and to dress it all in some kind of rhetorical grandeur. However when seen for what it was—the re-construction of a single, totalising image of identity which might banish all past and future contradictions—it should provoke some searching questions. What conflicts and differences could it efface, and what broader cultural possibilities might it close off? What was the politics of its images of self and other, and how different was it to that which had underpinned the policy of previous years?

In contrast to the rhetoric of an absolute break with the past, and more revealing for the contours of the general ontology he was constructing, Whitlam’s general foreign policy goals were more conservative. Striking a pose somewhere between the verities of power politics realism and the neo-Kantian dreams of liberal internationalism, he maintained that

a nation’s foreign policy depends on striking a wise, proper and prudent balance between commitment and power. Labor will have four commitments commensurate to our power and resources. First to our own national security; second to a secure, united and friendly Papua New Guinea; third to achieve closer
relations with our nearest and largest neighbour, Indonesia; fourth to promote the peace and prosperity of our neighbourhood. (Freudenberg, 1977: 235)

Many will notice the same indexes of national power, and political ‘prudence’, which had marked Hans Morgenthau’s political realism, and which seemed to sit oddly with Whitlam’s reputation as an internationalist—here power-politics formed the underpinning to a rhetorical idealism. What I would also emphasise is that its general framework, linking the two primary goals of security and prosperity, was still Bentham’s—suggesting an underlying continuity with not only the past thirty years of conservative rule but with the general Australian project of liberalism begun by Deakin and Reid. Of note too was the stated importance of Indonesia, as integral to not only Australia’s own security but Whitlam’s vision of a ‘recreated’ Asia.

This was most comprehensively underlined when Whitlam made his first visit to Jakarta as Prime Minister, in February 1973, only two months after being sworn in. Whitlam used the occasion to outline his government’s approach to foreign policy, which aimed for ‘a more independent Australian stance in international affairs firmly based on national identity, social justice, human rights and peaceful regional co-operation, and not open to suggestions of racism.’ During this address to the state banquet held in his honour Whitlam supported ASEAN’s proposal for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in Southeast Asia which might preclude great power competition; yet also indicated support for expanded defence co-operation with Indonesia in the training of forces, the construction of technical facilities and the supply of equipment. (AFAR, 1973: 92-7) He also, and again without irony, declared his admiration for Soeharto’s achievements:

This region...is entering a new and more hopeful era. There are three principal reasons for my optimism. The first is the cease-fire in Vietnam, which has brought to an end 20 years of bloodshed, suffering and turmoil. The second...is in the progress Indonesia herself has made—under your guidance, Mr President—to achieve peace and development, and to restore fully the principles of harmony and justice, democracy and freedom embodied in your Constitution of 1945. A just and prosperous Indonesia is an essential condition of a just and prosperous Southeast Asia. We in Australia have looked to you to set an example to our neighbourhood of progress and social transformation. (AFAR, 1973: 97)

Given what was known of Soeharto’s rise to power, the fraud of the 1971 elections, and the fifty-five thousand\(^8\) political prisoners still languishing in camps and gaols

---

\(^8\) This figure is an Amnesty International estimate for the minimum number still held in 1974—though they also commented there were ‘probably as many as 100,000’ prisoners still in
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

across the archipelago, this is a truly astonishing statement. I am sure I am not the only person to have read it two or three times, in utter disbelief. That words such as peace, justice, democracy and progress could be plausibly used in this context strains credibility, and tears asunder the already tenuous principle linking language with reality in a way even Orwell might have found shocking.

Yet at the time they probably passed as an unproblematic description of the changes Soeharto had forced, and which Australian elites found so comforting. Furthermore the formulation was absolutely germane to Whitlam’s co-ordinated vision of security, identity and diplomacy of which ‘justice’ (as a possibility of general teleological achievement) was the crowning jewel. Soeharto’s Indonesia would be essential to the new ontology Whitlam was in the process of constructing—after all, the region could only be ‘recreated’ in the context provided by the destruction of the PKI. Later in 1973 he underlined this to the Australian Institute of International Affairs, saying that

The importance of Indonesia to Australia is indisputable. We need, however, to see the development of our relations with Indonesia in a broader South-East Asian regional context...our standing in other regional countries is not irrelevant to the importance which Indonesia will attach to Australia...as our destiny is inseparable from Indonesia, so Indonesia cannot separate her own destiny from those of her immediate neighbours to the north in ASEAN. (AFAR, 1973: 33)

Again the kind of blackmail Kathryn Young had outlined was at work, and would become an axiom in policymaking towards the New Order. Indonesia, it said, was crucial to our relations with the whole region—to fail here was to fail everywhere.

Whitlam quickly moved to back such rhetoric with action—affirming his commitment to the three year aid program announced by McMahon, ratifying the seabed agreement between the two states, and concluding an agreement on the border between PNG and West New Guinea (now called Irian Jaya). This underlined Whitlam’s conviction that Dutch control of WNG was an anachronism, regardless of the brutal and undemocratic way Soeharto’s government had engineered the so-called UN ‘Act of Free Choice’ in 1969—again orchestrated by Soeharto’s key to the 1971 elections General Ali Moertopo. The voting process involved 1025 specially chosen community leaders to represent 700,000 Papuans, and was riddled with intimidation and threats. Moertopo personally threatened to shoot those who voted against Indonesia ‘on the spot’. In the years from 1962 the Indonesian military fought uprisings from the new Free Papua Movement (OPM), and had systematically imprisoned, killed and

---

1) Harold Crouch suggests that, while it is difficult (given the overlapping pattern of releases and new arrests) to calculate accurate figures held at any one time, he suggests that the number held hovered between 200,000-300,000 between 1966 and 1969, and that a total of 540,000 may have been held during the period. (Crouch, 1978: 225-6)
tortured the more politically active. Despite the highly critical report of the UN observer mission, the General Assembly voted to accept the plebiscite as a genuine demonstration of the West Papuans’ wish to integrate with Indonesia. The legacy would be an ongoing guerilla war, bloody counter-insurgency operations and the movement of a vast number of refugees into PNG. After the vote *The Sydney Morning Herald* editorialised prophetically that ‘we are helping to prepare the ground for a Papuan irredentist movement and laying up grave trouble in store for New Guinea and consequently for ourselves. Where else in today’s world would the dictum be accepted that a people was too primitive ever to be free?’ (*AFAR*, 1973: 30, 43, 90, 101; Osborne, 1985: 46-7)

Whitlam also stepped up military aid to the New Order, which had been resumed in October 1967. It included an operational squadron of sixteen Sabre jet fighters, which made up a major component of the three year program of technical assistance and defence aid totalling $A20 million announced by McMahon in June 1972. Military aid also included work by Australian Army surveyors who mapped Kalimantan in 1970 and the whole of Sumatra during 1971 and 1972—although portrayed as a ‘foreign aid’ project ‘to allow planning to proceed for hydro-electric schemes, irrigation projects, trans-migration schemes and other national objectives’, it no doubt assisted the Indonesian government’s internal security objectives. Indonesian army officers were also among regional allies who trained in counterinsurgency and jungle warfare techniques at Canungra and in 1974 joint naval exercises were also held off the east coast of Australia. The close strategic and political ties no doubt helped the rapid expansion in trade and investment—between 1972 and 1974 trade with Indonesia rose fourfold, from A$21 million to A$97 million, and by 1974 there were fifty Australian corporations with Indonesian investments. (*CNIA*, 1972: 226-272, 1974: 51, 653) As Greg Pemberton has pointed out, such a continuation of military aid to repressive governments continued support for ‘coercive approaches to the region’s problems’ despite the doctrine of forward defence having been formally abandoned. (1997: 158)

---

9 Eighty-four states voted for integration, and thirty abstained. Australia, along with the US, France and Holland, had actively lobbied third world states for Indonesia. Estimated Papuan deaths from 1963-69 range from journalist Peter Hastings’ figure of 3000, to former Governor Eliza Bonay’s 1981 claim of 30,000. Ironically the ALP platform contained support for a fair act of self-determination. (Osborne, 1985)

10 In 1967 officers of the Indonesian Airforce Command and Staff College (SESKAU) toured various Australian military installations and bases. A return visit by members of the Royal Australian Airforce Staff College was made soon after. In June 1968 the Commander of the Indonesian airforce visited Australia to seek assistance in establishing a workshop for the maintenance of Indonesian aircraft. A tangible outcome of this visit for the subsequent purchase by Indonesia of Australian military aircraft. In 1969 an Indonesian naval mission from the Navy Staff and Command College (SESKOAL) visited Australia, building on other forms of co-operation between the two navies in hydrographic and oceanographic surveys. In September 1969 Australia began to instruct and train Indonesian air force personnel under a ‘mutual-technical co-operation program; plans for the training of Indonesian army personnel were also explored at this time. (Young, 1970: 20)
As disturbing as they already were, the full meaning of Whitlam’s Indonesia policies would not be revealed until the invasion of East Timor in December 1975, three weeks after his Government was dismissed; meanwhile the political and alliance relationship with the United States also displayed the tensions between continuity and change which marked his tenure. Whitlam was an admirer of the US, and had often softened his criticism of the Vietnam war by emphasising his opposition was aimed at helping end ‘America’s agony’; similarly he affirmed support for ANZUS and the continuation of US facilities on Australian soil.11 As his memoir explains, he was also aware of how the evolution of the strategic imaginary (which paired perennial cold war tensions with rapid advances in communications, space and military technologies) had bound the two states more closely, even as the Vietnam War drew to a close: ‘The US is important to Australia as it is the most powerful and vital nation on earth. Australia is important to the US as it occupies a crucial position on the earth’s surface and in relation to the heavens above and the waters beneath.’ (1985: 30) Yet virtually upon taking office the Government was faced with a dramatic increase in tension with its closest ally.

In December 1972 the Nixon Administration reacted angrily to Labor criticism of the ‘Christmas bombings’ of Hanoi and Haiphong which included a letter from Whitlam to Nixon, and a black ban on all US shipping by maritime unions.12 Cairns described it a ‘brutal, indiscriminate slaughter’ and Clyde Cameron an ‘act of virtual genocide.’ Marshall Green (now Assistant Secretary for Far Eastern Affairs) warned that the bans might provoke ‘retaliatory action’ from US unions and ‘affect Australia-US relations on a broad range of subjects.’ In a meeting with US Ambassador Rice, Whitlam said that if the US tried to place further pressure on the Government, the US facilities ‘would become a matter of contention here.’ (Meaney, 1980: 183, 1985: 737) While much of the ALP was suspicious of the US facilities, Whitlam held few concerns about the satellite ground stations at Pine Gap and Nurrungar, and his Defence Minister Barnard had affirmed the Government’s intention to preserve the intense secrecy surrounding their functions. However the US naval communications station at North West Cape, essential for communications with nuclear-armed Polaris submarines in the Indian and Western Pacific Oceans (and thus a primary Soviet nuclear target), was the

---

11 See Whitlam’s address to Parliament in May 1973, and to the Australian Institute of Political Science Summer School, in which he attempted to nuance the tension between continuity and change: ‘On 2 December the nation changed its government, but did not and could not by that act change the essential foundations of its foreign policy. Australia’s national interests did not change. Australia’s international obligations [which included SEATO] did not change. Australia’s alliances and friendships did not change. Nevertheless the change is real and deep because what has altered is the perception and interpretation of those interests, obligations and friendships by the elected government.’ (AFAR, 1973: 30)

occasion for more controversy. Whitlam had already announced his intention to revise the agreement signed by Garfield Barwick in 1963, which ceded total control to the US. In 1973 the Government was further angered by the base’s use to transmit a general nuclear alert to US forces during the Yom Kippur war. Whitlam remarked that it showed how the bases could be used to begin a third world war without Australia’s knowledge. After negotiations the base was described as a ‘joint facility’ and arrangements made to employ more Australians and provide the RAN with access to its facilities. However, little of substance had changed—Australia failed to achieve scrutiny of messages passed through the station, and in 1978 the Fraser Government found out from the press that the US was planning to build a new ground station there. (Ball, 1980: 20, 52-7; Meaney, 1980: 192)

Similarly Whitlam supported American plans for the new Omega station in Victoria, which would function as a global all-weather very low frequency transmitter for US aircraft, ships and submarines, and was crucial to underwater communications with US ballistic missile submarines. Whitlam sought to bypass hostile ALP opinion by referring the issue to the cross-party Foreign and Affairs and Defence Committee, which endorsed the project. In contrast, the Government consistently opposed US plans to expand the air and naval base at Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. In conjunction with Labor’s (unrealised) desire for a zone of peace, freedom and neutrality in the Indian Ocean, this amounted to a challenge to the whole strategy of deterrence which underpinned US naval doctrine. However, not wanting to side with the USSR or undermine ANZUS, its opposition was muted and protest almost inaudible when Congress eventually voted funds for the base in July 1975. (Ball, 1980: 91; Meaney, 1980: 194-202)

Whitlam’s goodwill towards the United States did his government few favours, if the hysterical reaction from elements of the US intelligence community is any guide. They were disturbed by the criticism of the Hanoi-Haiphong bombings, Attorney-General Lionel Murphy’s raid on the Melbourne premises of ASIO and, most significantly, by public questions about the role and function of the bases—especially the CIA’s (then secret) control of Pine Gap. In early November 1975 the head of the CIA’s East Asia Division Ted Shackley approached the ASIO station in Washington (with what he later implied was encouragement from Kissinger himself) and listed US concerns, which ASIO duly telexed to its headquarters in Melbourne. The message said that, in the wake of several CIA officers having had their covers blown, the bilateral intelligence relationship was now at risk, and explicitly recommended the message be kept secret. Whitlam was immediately shown the telegram by ASIO acting head Frank Mahoney—his response was that Shackley’s approach to ASIO implied ‘an understanding that the Australian organisation had [prior] obligations of loyalty to the CIA itself...its implications were sinister. Here was a foreign intelligence service telling
[ASIO] to keep information from the Australian Government.’ (Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 97)

This cable, and the sequence of events leading up to it, has led John Pilger to suggest there was a fully formed US conspiracy to have Whitlam removed from office, given that the date on which the Pine Gap agreement expired was 10 December. Pilger maintains the CIA (quite fancifully) believed Whitlam was going to announce the cancellation of the Pine Gap agreement on December 9, and that an election would have to be called by November 11 if the Coalition was to be elected that year. Pilger cites former CIA deputy director Ray Cline as revealing the CIA passed information to opposition politicians ‘who would have been pressuring the Governor-General’ (while denying this amounted to ‘a political operation’), and former agent Victor Marchetti who claimed the CIA had in fact aimed ‘to get rid of a government they did not like and that was not co-operative…its a Chile, but [in] a much more sophisticated and subtle form.’ Brian Toohey does not claim a general conspiracy, but both maintain that Sir John Kerr was briefed on the contents of the ASIO cable on November 9—a claim the Governor-General has denied. Whether it influenced his decision to sack the Government two days later is a secret he has taken to his grave. What is uncontested is CIA Director William Colby’s assertion in his memoir that Australia and its ‘left-wing and possibly antagonistic government’ was one of the three greatest crises the CIA faced at the time. (Pilger, 1989: 217; Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 98; Pemberton, 1997: 140)

However paranoid the CIA may have seemed, its actions formed a small part of the United States’ attempts to find responses to its gravest foreign policy crisis in the postwar era. Not only was it dealing with a looming defeat in Vietnam, but the inflationary stimulus of the war’s expenditures had flowed into the global economy with devastating effect.13 By 1975 the Bretton Woods system was a memory—Nixon having in 1973 suspended the US dollar’s convertibility into gold and made a sharp devaluation in an attempt to arrest a growing trade deficit and the vast haemorrhage of US gold stocks. The OPEC countries’ response to the inflationary pressures (and to the American support for Israel during the Yom Kippur war) was first a complete oil embargo and then a vast price hike from $1.26 to $9.40 a barrel in 1974 (the price would eventually reach $24 by 1979). The corresponding effect on the US oil import bill was in the order of US$21 billion over three years. This setback was crowned in May 1974 with the call by a group of 77 third-world states for a New International Economic Order (NIEO) which would raise and stabilise raw materials prices, see the waiver of debt and increases in development aid and, most alarmingly, allow them to

13 Anthony Campagna has calculated that US direct spending on the war was $173.2 billion, fuelling inflation increases from 1.2% in 1964 to 5.4% in 1969. He argues the OPEC increases were primarily driven by resentment that global inflation was ‘erod[ing] the purchasing power of their oil revenues’. (1991: 83, 118)
nationalise foreign assets in tune with their own laws. (Kolko, 1988: 230; Denoon, 1979: 4; Olsen, 1981: 10)

This challenge, which followed Mexico and Venezuela’s attempts to revive commodity associations along the lines of OPEC and the election of the socialist Allende in Chile, drove US efforts to find new political and economic mechanisms to thwart demands which one US liberal described as an attempt to ‘reorganis[e] the character of world economic relations’ which, if achieved, ‘would be as fundamental a change in structure as occurred with the establishment of the Bretton Woods system or the shift from mercantilism to liberal trade in the nineteenth century.’ The Chilean coup was one possible response—others came in the form of denying trade preferences to countries joining commodity associations, and aggressive resources diplomacy which mixed efforts to play off suppliers against each other, foot-dragging on North-South dialogue and pressure on third world states wishing continued access to international capital markets. (Denoon, 1979: 5-18; Kolko, 1988: 231)

Disgusted by the CIA’s role in Chile, Whitlam had withdrawn ASIS officers and, speaking in the UN General Assembly in September 1974, made veiled criticisms of the US by denouncing the attempt by certain states ‘to bring about political or economic change in another through unconstitutional, clandestine, or corrupt methods’—words that would come to haunt him as Indonesia’s subversion campaign in Portugese Timor gathered pace over the next year. He had established policies to secure ‘greater Australian and government control and supervision of the use of our national resources’, endorsed greater co-operation between countries producing raw materials, yet was lukewarm about the more profound changes envisaged in the NIEO. He assured the UN that ‘we in Australia accept our responsibility to reassure countries which depend upon our resources that they shall have steady, secure access to those resources at fair prices...Australia is not in the business of resources blackmail.’ (Barrett, 1995: 177-182)

At the same time the Government’s ability to manage the economy (in a way consistent with its declared social programme) was being sorely tested by the transformations in the world economy wrought by Vietnam and the oil shocks. It confronted for the first time the phenomenon of stagflation—growing inflation and stagnating growth—which had previously been thought impossible. In turn the Keynesian consensus which had underpinned the world economic order since 1945 came under challenge. In Australia inflation had already reached seven per cent by 1971, and hit thirteen per cent by December 1973 in response to international pressure on food prices. A thirty-one per cent growth in adult male wages in 1974 saw inflation top sixteen per cent. While unemployment remained low and growth steady in comparison with most other western economies (at least until 1975), Whitlam’s belief—expressed in the John Curtin memorial lecture of 1961—that socialists no
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

longer had ‘to ration scarcity but plan abundance’ had been shattered. His response was to begin a deflationary policy (with some important caveats) which nonetheless marked the beginnings of the Chicago School’s supremacy in economic thought—one which quickly became orthodoxy in domestic management and through the 1980s increasingly influenced elite attitudes to the international economy and Asia-Pacific development. (Hughes, 1980: 59-65; Whitlam, 1985: 184)

Cultural historian Lindsay Barrett has suggested that these events—within the broader context of Vietnam and the abandonment of Bretton Woods—destroyed the modernist project of ‘Whitlamism’ which had hinged on the ability of governments to plan and spend amid unproblematic growth and easy Keynesian interventions. Now economists were saying growth merely fuelled inflation and hitherto unacceptable levels of unemployment had to be sustained to keep it in check. In particular he suggests the Hayden budget of July 1975—which dramatically reduced the deficit in accord with monetarist ‘inflationary expectations’ thinking—was ‘a much neglected watershed in Australian social, political and cultural history’ which ‘signalled that the era of certainty was over.’ (Hughes, 1980: 115-7; Barrett, 1995: 243) The problem, however, was that an acknowledgment of uncertainty (such as Hayden made in his budget speech) did not shake the Cartesian certitudes of Australia’s politicians and managers—instead it was replaced with a metaphysical faith in market economics and ever more systematic attempts to find effective forms of governmentality to control the new environment. Ironically, it would be the Labor governments of Hawke and Keating which most effectively did so—forcing changes in industrial and work culture, dramatic economic restructuring and the development of subtle new techniques of diplomacy. Even as ‘uncertainty’ became endemic with the end of the Cold War and the unpredictabilities of globalisation, *security* and *prosperity* would require that it be tamed and controlled—however illusory the resulting effect.

*Security* and the Invasion of East Timor

While this crisis was building through 1974 and 1975, amid escalating political turmoil for the Whitlam Government, it simultaneously faced one of the most profound and far-reaching foreign policy dilemmas in recent Australian history. It would be a major test of Whitlam’s declared idealism, and come to dominate the relationship with Indonesia. In April 1974, following the coup in Lisbon which deposed the fascist Caetano regime, Portugal announced the imminent decolonisation of its overseas colonies. The interest of both Indonesia and Australia was immediately aroused. Indonesia—which was still trying to consolidate its control in Irian Jaya and had fought rebellions in Aceh, South Sumatra, the Moluccas and West Java—was already paranoid about national unity, and faced a potential new state in the centre of its archipelago; Australia had long seen
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

Timor as crucial to its security, making its first deployments of the Pacific war there in 1942. The new twist was that while the geographical area—only 400 km northwest of Darwin—was seen as crucial to Australia’s security, the relationship with the New Order was seen as doubly so.

Thus Australia faced two options. In the first, it could take a strong, visible role in Timor’s decolonisation process leading to the birth of a new state—an approach which many Timorese leaders expected and may have involved tensions, or at least some involved and difficult diplomacy, with Indonesia. Alternatively, it could trust the New Order regime to define and act upon Australia’s security interests in this area (which many had begun to see as synonymous with the indivisible power of the Indonesian state throughout the archipelago) whatever the human cost. In this analysis, integration with Indonesia was the preferred outcome. Australian policy eventually took the second course. Thus the world saw a remarkably disingenuous Australian policy, which combined active concern behind the scenes with a publicly low-key approach which continually played down Australia’s interest and role while giving legitimacy to Indonesia’s.

By the end of May three new political organisations had been formed—the Timorese Democratic Union (UDT), the Timorese Social Democratic Association (ASDT, later Fretilin) and the Timorese Popular Democratic Association (Apodeti). UDT initially favoured a gradual transition to independence over fifteen years, ASDT a similar (if slightly quicker) process over eight to ten years, while Apodeti favoured integration with Indonesia. Australia moved quickly to assess the situation, sending a departmental fact-finding mission in mid-year. Yet already the issue appeared to have been prejudged. A member of the team, former Australian Consul James Dunn, has since written they were aware senior Indonesian generals were taking a close interest, and that it was clear ‘the Prime Minister and some key advisers were less than enthusiastic about the possibility of future independence for East Timor.’ He says that the mission was ‘under instructions not to push the idea that Australia had any interest in the proposition that the colony might become independent or would in any way underwrite it.’ (Dunn, 1983: 58-9, 134-8)

In July ASDT international representative Jose Ramos Horta visited Australia, hot on the heels of the fact-finding mission, to be a given a cool reception by the Government and the Department of Foreign Affairs. Horta met neither Whitlam, Foreign Minister Don Willesee or the Departmental Secretary Alan Renouf. In spite of this Renouf was later to claim that the policy decided in advance of Whitlam’s visit to Indonesia in September, and approved by Willesee, was self-determination. This position was included in the brief provided to Whitlam—however, tellingly enough, it was not discussed with Whitlam beforehand, nor with the Cabinet or parliamentary caucus. The upshot was that during his talks with Soeharto in Central Java, in
Renouf’s words, ‘Whitlam changed the policy.’ (Dunn, 1983: 66, 85; Renouf, 1979: 442)

The precise details of Whitlam’s comments to Soeharto have never been revealed, but the departmental briefing to journalists afterwards stated that:

Mr Whitlam is understood to have indicated Australia felt an independent Timor would be an unviable state and a potential threat to the stability of the area. He is also thought to have made clear that the people of the colony should have the ultimate decision on their future. (Viviani, 1976: 199)

It was simple, colourless bureaucratese, but its significance was world-shaking. Fairfax journalist Peter Hastings was one of few to see its import: ‘despite the rider about self determination processes...the Prime Minister seems virtually to be saying that the tidiest solution to Portugese Timor is to incorporate it within Indonesia, if means acceptable to international and Australian public opinion can be found.’ (SMH, 16.9.74)

The report of the talks deeply angered the pro-independence Timorese, who had automatically assumed Whitlam would support them. As Dunn was to say of his talks with them in June:

Australia’s experience with decolonisation in Papua New Guinea, its excellent relations with Indonesia, and the Whitlam government’s vigorous support for the principle of self-determination in international forums all seemed to our hosts to make Australia an ideal source of moral and material support...above all, they seemed to take it for granted that Australia would now play a role in supporting whatever they chose to do. Some of the Timorese openly declared that Australia owed it to them because of their sacrifices on our behalf during World War Two. (Dunn, 1983: 139)

Already it seemed the correspondence between security and justice—so crucial to Whitlam’s rhetoric of identity—was under stress, even while being reminded of the great sacrifice of the Timorese in defence of Australia’s security during the Pacific War. Yet if Timorese and Australians had been in partnership during 1942 in defence of Australian security, it was again security—or at least an interpretation of it, for Australia, Indonesia or the region—which sealed East Timor’s fate through 1974 and 1975.

In arguing this it is necessary to break down some of the shibboleths which have since grown up in defence of Australian policy—in particular the arguments that Indonesia was so essential to Australia’s security and well-being that relations could not
be risked over a matter of principle; that there was no way at any time of deterring them from a takeover; that Portugal acted irresponsibly in its decolonisation; and that the political evolution of Timor itself threatened Indonesian (and broader regional) ‘stability’. In contrast, I will argue Indonesia could not and would not have invaded East Timor if Australia had strongly and consistently objected (and that Soeharto’s delay in invading until Whitlam’s government was dismissed is evidence of it); that Indonesia’s highly developed campaign of meddling and subversion were more significant than any mis-judgements of the Portugese; and that charges an independent East Timor would become a stage for left-wing or external subversion were elaborate fictions, which the major Timorese parties themselves went to great lengths to dispel.

As Renouf’s arguments suggest, support for self-determination was an available option from the very beginning—yet after the Wonosobo talks the department meekly fell in behind the Prime Minister: ‘The policy approved by Whitlam and Willesee in turn thus came to be that Australia’s primary concern was self-determination in East Timor but that voluntary union with Indonesia through an internationally acceptable act of self-determination would best serve the objectives of decolonisation and regional stability. This policy was clearly explained to Indonesia.’ (Renouf, 1979: 444) Emboldened by Australia’s response, Indonesia’s subversion operation Operasi Komodo was begun in October 1974. It combined diplomacy pursued by Moertopo, Soeharto, and figures from Moertopo’s Centre for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS); falsified reports in Army newspapers and the Antara news agency, and spying and intelligence work coordinated by BAKIN chief Yoga Sugama; and military planning co-ordinated by Brigadier Benny Murdani. Overall planning was co-ordinated by KOPKAMTIB head Admiral Sudomo who was close to Soeharto. Radio broadcasts attacking Fretilin and UDT were begun from West Timor, while Indonesian officials began cultivating Apodeti (and some UDT) leaders. By November The National Times’ Andrew Clark wrote of ‘an upsurge of ‘reds under the bed’ stories...a dressed-up scenario of Chinese Communist infiltration into Portugese Timor would pose a huge security threat which could not be allowed to continue.’ Clark cited the army newspaper Berita Yudha as claiming four Chinese generals had travelled to Timor via Canberra—which, while absolute fiction, had chilling implications for the future behaviour of Indonesian forces given the killings of Chinese after 1965 and the frozen state of Indonesia-PRC relations. (NT, 11.11.74)

Late in 1974 the Portugese, having been swayed by the Operasi Komodo diplomacy, began to backtrack on independence and abandoned the proposed referendum. The Australian Department of Foreign Affairs, fearing that Jakarta was planning a military operation, warned Indonesia that ‘Australia would not condone force’. Renouf claims that at these talks he also argued
that an independent East Timor should not necessarily concern Indonesia. By mutual co-operation and with the help of the UN and other ASEAN countries, Indonesia and Australia could ensure that East Timor freely chose integration with Indonesia or, if she chose independence, could ensure a stable and friendly East Timor. These arguments did not convince the Indonesians. (Renouf, 1979: 445)

However his efforts were undermined by the wording of the argument (which still held out integration as the preferred solution), by Whitlam’s statements at Wonosobo, and by the actions of the Australian Ambassador to Portugal, F. W. Cooper, who had given encouragement to Moertopo in meetings with him in Lisbon. (1981: 197)

In January Fretilin and UDT, encouraged by Portuguese officers disturbed by Indonesia’s ever more visible interference, formed a coalition for independence which marginalised the pro-Indonesia party Apodeti. In February the Australian press reported that Indonesia had held military exercises as a prelude to an invasion. Peter Hastings wrote that ‘There are mounting and unwelcome indications—evidenced by increased foreign press awareness, in letters one receives from interested observers and by inevitable leaks in Jakarta itself—that the Indonesian government is seriously considering taking out Portuguese Timor in a military operation in the not too distant future.’ (SMH, 21.2.75) While these fears continued through February, the outcry probably forestalled an early invasion—instead Soeharto authorised Moertopo to press Portugal harder. And, beginning a pattern that would become all too common in Indonesian diplomacy towards Australia, the regime responded to the leaks with blackmail. The Melbourne Age reported that Indonesian officials were angered by ‘an anti-Indonesian conspiracy by the left-wing of the Australian Labor Party, certain defence and intelligence officials, senior figures in the opposition parties including the shadow foreign minister (Mr Peacock) and some Australian journalists.’ (The Age, 1.3.75) One general raised the spectre of a downgrading of defence relations, saying that Indonesia was ambivalent about scheduled joint exercises. Whitlam’s response was to write to Soeharto, in a letter carried by Australia’s new Ambassador to Indonesia Richard Woolcott, warning against the use of force. Willesee was believed to have also made this warning to Adam Malik, adding that ‘the primary consideration was self-determination.’ (SMH, 1.3.75 and 3.3.75; Viviani, 1976: 210)

---

14 James Dunn strongly asserts that that the Australian government, through its intelligence capabilities, was in possession of all the facts about Operasi Komodo and Indonesia’s February invasion preparations; yet Whitlam deliberately sought to suppress discussion of the issue within the Government. As the crisis deepened, ‘the circulation of classified cables concerning the question, and, in particular, the distribution of certain highly classified and sensitive intelligence reports concerning Operasi Komodo activities, was further restricted. Thus, day-to-day handling of the Timor question became confined to a small coterie of officials in the Department of Foreign Affairs, in the Joint Intelligence Organisation, and in the Embassy in Jakarta.’ (Dunn, 1983: 149)
By mid-year, some two months prior to the civil war between UDT and Fretilin, East Timor's future was on a knife edge. An Indonesian invasion had already been deterred and Portugal seemed determined to lay the ground for eventual independence. Yet Indonesia was pressing on, both with Moertopo's campaign of diplomacy and subversion and backroom military preparations. They did so with confidence that the western powers and other ASEAN states had no substantial objections—and Australia, as Indonesia's closest neighbour and the single most significant source of foreign opinion, must bear a great deal of responsibility for what followed. In Townsville in April Whitlam had again met Soeharto where, according to Renouf, he 'obtained an assurance that Indonesia would not use force in East Timor. He stressed that there should be no departure from an internationally acceptable act of self-determination, although he continued to believe that the best result of the plebiscite would be the incorporation into Indonesia.' Despite Renouf's contention that the alternative proposal (for self-determination as a client state of Indonesia) was again submitted—and rejected—in separate officials talks, Whitlam's discussions had effectively buried any hope of an alternative being put to Indonesia as strongly held Australian policy. According to a confidential foreign affairs summary Ali Moertopo, in particular, had taken Whitlam's statement as a 'green light' for absorption of the territory. (Renouf, 1979: 445; Dunn, 1983: 151)

Thus Australia had effectively condoned Moertopo's efforts at integration by stealth, and despite opposing force had never declared any public willingness to bring the Indonesians and Timorese together to discuss the very fears which allegedly motivated Indonesia's campaign. In February opposition spokesman Andrew Peacock had revealed his receipt of a telegram from the UDT-Fretilin coalition which declared they were 'prepared to start talks Australian Indonesian government for co-operation towards peace stability SEA [Southeast Asia].' (sic) Peacock appealed for the Whitlam government to 'bring the parties together for discussion' and informed the Department of Foreign Affairs about the cable, yet no action was taken. The cable, which was read into Hansard, also reminded the Government that it 'had great responsibility maintenance peace this geographical area...thus to prevent any conflict real will Timorese people must be respected.' (sic) (CPD, 25.2.75: 641)

No longer could Indonesia plausibly claim that internal developments in East Timor threatened its own (or broader regional) 'stability' while it refused to engage in a dialogue with the Timorese leadership. The Timorese appeared to have concluded that if Indonesia was to be deterred from intervention, Indonesia and Australia would have to be treated as parties principal along with Portugal. In fact, Indonesia's destabilisation and Australia's complicit diplomacy had meant that this was already the case—the difficulty was to draw them into a different role. The Timorese had recognised that 'security' and 'stability', as they were then being framed and constituted by the two
governments, were the driving conceptual and practical issues that would determine their future.

Yet all the Government could do was deepen its duplicity. In reply Science Minister (later Defence Minister and Ambassador to Indonesia) Bill Morrison would only say that Australia does not ‘seek any special position in Portugese Timor’ and—most damagingly—continued to assert the legitimacy of Indonesia’s interest: ‘We do understand Indonesia’s substantial interest in the future of the territory. Is this so remarkably odd when Indonesia and Portugal have half of the island of Timor and the island of Timor itself is part of the geographical entity of the Indonesian Archipelago?’ (CPD-HR, 25.2.75: 644-5) Insult was added to injury in Whitlam’s reply to the Labor chairman of an Australian parliamentary delegation to East Timor, Arthur Gietzelt, who had urged him to reappoint Australia’s consul in Dili and told him ‘the overwhelming majority of East Timorese aspire to independence’. Whitlam wrote that:

I myself hesitate to accept at face value the claims of the political personalities who have emerged in the first year of political activity in Timor. Most appear to represent a small elite class... It may be that this group may be able to win the allegiance of the people of the territory, but their claims are as yet untested. (Cited in Dunn, 1983: 154)

Whitlam had never met any of the Timorese he so blithely dismissed, and had deliberately avoided meeting Jose Ramos Horta on two occasions. It underlined the Government’s refusal to seriously consider the issue on the basis of what was happening in Timor itself, which would have led them to both the moral and pragmatic conclusion that the Timorese wanted independence and thus would strongly resist Indonesia’s subversion and any invasion. Immense loss of life could be expected from a prolonged counterinsurgency operation, and any dispassionate analysis of Indonesian military culture (taking into account the 1965-66 massacres, and the mass imprisonment and ill-treatment of political suspects) should have created intense foreboding. Whitlam went on to argue that the division of the island was no more than an historical accident and ‘four hundred years of Portugese domination may have distorted the image the Timorese have of themselves, and perhaps obscured for them their ethnic kinship with the people of Indonesia.’ He continued to assert Australia was not ‘a party principal’ and that the situation must be considered ‘against the fundamental importance to us of a long term co-operative relationship with Indonesia.’ (Dunn, 1983: 156)

Here was the crucial formula, that linked Australian security with Indonesia’s, however brutally and unfairly it was achieved—and in which the peace and security of the Timorese themselves was of little moment. Yet if Australia had, in contrast, strongly and publicly asserted its preference for self-determination and its intention to
promote a dialogue between Indonesia and the Timorese on security issues, Moertopo’s plans might well have been thwarted and western governments lulled from their slumber. In particular the United States, now aware their interests in Australia might also be at stake, would have been forced to moderate Indonesian behaviour. In the absence of this, the Timorese themselves tried to engage the Indonesians, only to be caught deeper in the *Operasi Komodo* web. In May Fretilin leaders Alarico Fernandes and Jose Ramos Horta met with Moertopo and Yusuf Wanandi from CSIS, telling them Fretilin understood Indonesia’s concerns and that ‘an independent East Timor would not harbour PKI remnants nor would it support separatist groups in Indonesia.’ (Horta, 1987: 66)

In early August UDT leaders Joao Carrascalao and Domingues Oliveira also met with Moertopo, disturbed by Soeharto’s public comments in July (echoing Whitlam) that an independent East Timor was not possible because alone it lacked economic viability. While Moertopo argued that Fretilin was now a communist movement and that its left wing would attempt to take power on the 15th August, they said that Fretilin’s radicalism was limited to a small group and posed no threat to Indonesia. Moertopo refused to listen, saying that Indonesia would not allow East Timor to fall under communist influence. Indonesia would ‘close its eyes’ to any move by the anti-communist parties to correct the situation. Fearing the extinction of all their hopes for freedom, the two UDT leaders decided to stage a coup against Fretilin in the hope it would forestall Indonesian intervention. (Dunn, 1983: 119) It quickly degenerated into civil war, which provided Indonesia with more opportunities to argue it should take over to ‘restore order.’ When Fretilin prevailed and drove the UDT remnants across the border into West Timor, the stage was set for a full scale Indonesian invasion—which was nonetheless delayed for another two and a half months.

The dreadful irony is supplied by the lengths the Timorese were prepared to go to assuage Indonesia. On one hand, having failed to convince Moertopo of Fretilin’s good intentions, the UDT leaders had tried to remove Fretilin from the process by force; on the other, Horta had earlier approached Carrascalao and the Portugese Governor with a secret plan to expel each party’s most radical wings—Fretilin’s left and UDT’s right. Horta’s exasperated account, years later, despaired at how all our assurances of friendship, co-operation, membership of ASEAN, a foreign policy that was tantamount to Finlandisation of East Timor—all fell on deaf

---

15 Alan Renouf claims such a proposal was made by the Australians in a letter to Soeharto in March. However it was overshadowed by Whitlam’s behaviour at the April talks in Townsville. The proposal was that Australia, Indonesia, and Portugal should co-operate to see that East Timor duly became independent through self-determination but would, in effect, be a client state of Indonesia; the proposal would be implemented by a joint aid package, by Portugal’s good offices and by UN approval. The proposal seemed to have a reasonable chance, as the Fretilin
ears. In retrospect, I cannot see what assurances and concessions we could have offered to buy our own survival. (Ramos-Horta, 1987: 66)

From this time Australia’s actions, as Indonesia began covert military intervention from West Timor and prepared a full-scale invasion, were absolutely unconscionable—given its detailed knowledge of Indonesian duplicity.

The Department of Foreign Affairs, for instance, had a very acute understanding of the civil war’s origins. In a submission for the Minister which was also cabled to the Jakarta mission, they argued that ‘delicate sources...suggest that UDT acted with at least some foreknowledge of the State Intelligence Co-ordinating Body (BAKIN),’ and speculated the action had the appearance of a ‘stage-managed’ scene designed to form a pretext for intervention. Other officials recommended that Whitlam send a message to Soeharto reaffirming Australian opposition to the use of force and reminding the President of his verbal undertaking to Whitlam in April. (Walsh and Munster, 1982: 77; Dunn, 1983: 188) In response Richard Woolcott, in an extraordinary cable to Alan Renouf in Canberra, objected strongly:

As I stressed in Canberra last month we are dealing with a settled Indonesian policy to incorporate Timor...Indonesia is simply not prepared to accept the risks they see to them in an independent Timor and I do not believe we will be able to change their minds on this. We have in fact tried to do so. What Indonesia now looks to from Australia is some understanding of their attitude and possible action to assist public understanding in Australia rather than action on our part which could contribute to criticism of Indonesia. (Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 177-8)

This very long message graphically portrayed the matrix of inherited and developing attitudes that would guide Australian policy on East Timor for the next two decades, and sought to intervene in Australian policymaking at a crucial time. Pressure within Indonesia for military intervention was rising, yet Soeharto himself was exhibiting caution. Woolcott unwittingly underlined how influential Australia could have been in deterring Indonesian aggression:

Australia has been singled out by the Indonesians in their planning discussions as the country (along with China) that will be most vocal in the event of Indonesian
intervention in East Timor. They know that reaction in Australia—unlike other
ASEAN countries and New Zealand—will probably be their main problem.
(Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 178-9)

Yet rather than take this clear opportunity to press a change of course, he recommended
that ‘From here I would suggest that our policies should be based on disengaging
ourselves as far as possible from the Timor question; getting Australians presently there
out of Timor; leave events to take their course; and if and when Indonesia does
intervene act in a way which would be designed to minimise the public impact in
Australia and show privately understanding to Indonesia of their problems.’ (Toohey
and Wilkinson, 1987: 179)

He concluded with his by now infamous comment, since widely quoted, which
focused on the broken seabed border between Indonesia and Australia, believed to
contain enormous oil and gas potential:

We are all aware of the Australian defence interest in the Portugese Timor
situation [they had been arguing for self-determination to preserve public support
for the bilateral defence relationship] but I wonder whether the Department has
ascertained the interest of the Minister or Department of Minerals and Energy in
the Timor situation. It would seem to me that [they] might well have an interest in
closing the present gap in the agreed sea border and this could be much more
readily negotiated with Indonesia by closing the present gap than with Portugal or
independent Portugese Timor. I know I am recommending a pragmatic rather
than a principled stand but this is what national interest and foreign policy is all
about... (Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 179-80)

The cables appeared to have a strong effect on Whitlam who, in statements to
Parliament on 26 and 28 August, ruled out Australian diplomatic intervention. He
remarked that Timor was ‘in many ways a part of the Indonesian world’, that Australia
understood ‘Indonesia’s concern that the territory should not become a source of
instability on Indonesia’s border’ and, citing the appeal by Portugal to the UN
Secretary General for ‘international intervention to effect a ceasefire’, said ‘The
Indonesian Government, which over the past year has expressed repeatedly its intention not to intervene in East Timor, may thus be turned to as the only force capable of restoring calm in the territory.' Moertopo must have been thrilled—Australia had followed the Operasi Komodo script to the letter, and was now implicitly in support of Indonesia. Whitlam had even withdrawn his injunction against the use of force, having sent Soeharto a private message saying that 'nothing he said earlier should be interpreted as a veto on Indonesian action in the changed circumstances.' (CPD, 26.8.75: 493, 509, 28.8.75: 688; McDonald, 1981: 207)

As five Australian and New Zealand journalists were murdered by Indonesian forces crossing in operations from West Timor on 16 October, the Government concealed its knowledge (gained in a briefing from Indonesian intelligence officials three days before the attack, and confirmed within 24 hours by signals intercepts) on the basis that to have done so would reveal Australia’s intelligence capabilities. Apart from a public statement by Senator Willesee on the 30th October, the Government was to make no further statements on the issue before its dismissal on 11th November. At this late hour Willesee finally offered an Australian venue for talks between Indonesia and Fretilin and stated that Australia ‘viewed with concern widespread reports that Indonesia is involved in military intervention in Portugese Timor’. Yet Woolcott, before delivering the text to the Indonesian government, deleted the paragraph critical of Indonesian intervention because it would have exacerbated ‘already difficult relations’. (SMH, 24.8.98; Viviani, 1976: 219-20)

In desperation at their international isolation Fretilin made a unilateral declaration of independence on the 29th of November. Xavier Do Amaral, when sworn in as the new President, said: ‘We have had to fight alone against UDT in Dili and against Indonesia at the border. We direct our appeal for peace to Indonesia but we will live by the slogan: independence or death.’ The same slogan was still being shouted by young protesters twenty years later. On the fifth of December Adam Malik visited the Jakarta embassies of eight key nations (including Australia) saying they ‘should not be

---

17 James Dunn insists the Australian government had foreknowledge of the attack, having been forewarned by a senior Australian official before he left for Timor with an ACFOA mission on October 13. This has since been confirmed by Hamish McDonald, who revealed in a Sydney Morning Herald investigation that ‘Indonesian intelligence officials gave the Australian Embassy in Jakarta a detailed briefing on plans for the Balibo attack.’ Nevertheless, the Government sought neither to warn Australians in Timor, to warn Indonesia against the attack itself, or at the very least to seek assurances that journalists and aid workers they encountered would be provided safety. No warning was given to the managements of Channel 7 or 9, nor was the Jakarta embassy told that Australian journalists were in the attack zone. (SMH, 24.8.98; Dunn, 1983: 241)

18 Two weeks after the Dili massacre in November 1991 an item appeared in the Melbourne Herald-Sun quoting former Whitlam minister John Wheeldon alleging that Australian officials were secretly urging the Indonesians to take over in the weeks before the invasion. Wheeldon, who was backed by Clyde Cameron, claimed he had been told of this by both Australian Foreign Affairs officials and by the Austrian foreign minister, who alleged Adam Malik had made the same claim to him. (Herald-Sun, 27.11.91)
surprised at any steps Indonesia should take.' The invasion would begin within 48 hours. Cartoonist Bruce Petty summed up Australia’s role, and Timor’s long coming years of horror, when he drew a convoy of tanks labelled ‘1966 massacre of PKI’ headed in the direction of a sign saying ‘East Timor’. In the foreground was an Australian diplomat hiding under his desk. *(The Age, 1.12.75; Dunn, 1983: 273-277; SMH, 6.12.75; The Australian, 5.12.75)*

The Indonesian invasion of East Timor was thus the final act in the Whitlam tragedy, one largely of his own making. Enjoying unrivalled authority in international policymaking, he had ignored policy set by his own Department of Foreign Affairs, and ignored several crucial opportunities to stop the Indonesians in their tracks. In particular, had he stood firm in November 1974 the essential cordiality of the bilateral relationship could have been preserved, along with Timor’s ability to shape its future. While later interventions would have generated a deeper rift, they would still have saved the relationship from the pernicious long-term effects of the Timor decisions. Instead he, Morrison and key bureaucratic players like Woolcott encouraged and legitimated an interpretation of the situation which drew on the same murderous fantasies which had given birth to the New Order and underpinned the hegemonic images of Australian identity and security through thirty years of conservative rule. Despite Whitlam’s disavowal of the ‘racist’ anti-communism of Dulles, Menzies and Spender, and his swift recognition of China, Vietnam and Kampuchea, what was revealed here was an essential continuity with the past—the rhetorical abandonment of racism and a new sensitivity to Asian cultures and aspirations was a mere gloss over a power-politics *structure* which had already been violently achieved.

Worse, the decisions on Timor were deeply interlaced with the linked images of security, identity and culmination which gave form to a newly totalised image of the Australian subject. Indonesia, and the favour of the New Order regime, had now been designated essential to the security of Australia’s very *being* and the realisation of its larger project. These were the conditions under which Whitlam’s vision of a ‘recreated’ region and ‘recreated’ Australia would coalesce. As much as we might assert the enormous contradictions involved, Whitlam spoke as if an anti-racist idealism and a cynical *realpolitik* formed an unproblematic unity—and a stable ontological foundation for a new Australian identity. It was an ontology too which assumed the crimes committed against Aboriginal peoples or during the Indochina war could simply be swept away by a new declaration of faith. However seductive this was—and however backed by genuinely progressive initiatives in the area of land rights and Aboriginal policy—it occluded a deeper historical understanding and a deeper need for pause.

19 However, in a way that presaged the anguished debates after the High Court’s *Mabo* decision in 1992, Minerals and Energy Minister Rex Connor oversaw a change in the ALP platform which removed traditional owners’ right of veto over mining in cases where the ‘national interest’ was deemed greater. *(Barrett, 1995: 204)* This clause was included in land rights legislation (to be
Having ignored the moral lessons of Vietnam, ‘forward defence’ could be abandoned while a proxy army, maintained and directed by Soeharto’s New Order regime, was trusted to protect Australia’s ‘security’ throughout the Indonesian archipelago. Thus the safety, aspirations and freedom of the Timorese were to be sacrificed so that Australia could remain secure, and so that a century-old structure of identity could be preserved, along with its essentially violent relation to the Other. This was the meaning of Whitlam’s judgement that a small neighbouring territory, with fundamentally indigenous traditions and forms of life, was too backward to ever constitute a ‘viable state’ and would thus by definition become a threatening conduit for left-wing subversion.\(^{20}\) If this formula seems far-fetched, it was still being incited by Richard Woolcott twenty years later, when he argued that ‘sentimental notions of self-determination for the East Timorese or Bougainvilleans..threaten our national security.’ (*The Australian*, 22.4.95) In this impoverished view, difference and uncertainty were to be dealt with in much the same way they had been for thirty years. Security’s bloody trail was to drag on.

**FRASER AND HAWKE:**
**THE SECOND COLD WAR**

The invasion of Dili, East Timor’s capital, began in the early hours of 7 December 1975, ironically enough the anniversary of the Japanese raid on Pearl Harbour. By virtue of its excellent signals intelligence and its exchange agreements with the USA, the Australian Government was aware of it as it happened. In August Woolcott had revealed he had been promised ‘at least two hours notice’ of the operation; by December 3 the CIA was telling the US Administration Soeharto had approved ‘the idea of full scale intervention’ but that they were unlikely to move until President Ford and Secretary Kissinger had left Jakarta on December 6. Despite the Army’s belief it could quickly wipe out Fretilin resistance the CIA wrote that Fretilin had been ‘building up defences near the capital and moving supplies and weapons to the interior to wage guerilla war against an Indonesian occupation.’ (Toohey and Wilkinson, 166-7)

At around 2 a.m. the Navy began bombarding positions to Dili’s east and west, and Kopassandha [Special Forces] paratroopers were dropped just before dawn in the

\(^{20}\) Peter Hastings provided a convincing refutation of Whitlam’s views when he argued in September 1974 that, ‘despite Timor’s lack of political development and its lack of political institutions, why is it any less viable than Nauru, the Solomons, Tonga and Western Samoa? Its 600,000 people, its coffee, vegetables, beef cattle, tourist possibilities and very probably onshore and offshore oil reserves make it potentially more viable than most Pacific island states.’ (*SMH*, 16.9.74)
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

waterfront area. Some of the paratroopers were dropped short and fell into the sea, where they drowned under the weight of their equipment, while a body of Kostrad [Strategic Reserve] paratroopers were dropped directly on top of (rather than behind) Fretelin forces withdrawing from Dili. They took many casualties, and then came under fire from their own marines driving inland from the harbour. Those who survived, according to Hamish McDonald, then ‘rampaged through the town, killing and looting at random.’ Over the next week the Indonesians engaged in what James Dunn has called an ‘orgy of killing’—hundreds of Chinese were murdered, along with hundreds more Timorese including supporters of Apodeti. Whole families were murdered in their homes, and numerous mass public executions held. A group of 150, including 20 women, were shot before a crowd at the harbour, where their bodies fell from the jetty into the water. One of these women was Isabel Lobato, wife of Fretelin’s military commander Nicolau. Some 2000 Timorese were killed during those few days—the Bishop was to say later the paratroops had drifted from the heavens like ‘angels’ and then behaved like ‘devils’. (Dunn, 1983: 282-5; McDonald, 1981: 212)

Worse, over the next few weeks the Army ransacked peoples’ homes and shipped the proceeds to Java, while the female relatives of Fretelin members (and members of Timorese womens and student organisations) were imprisoned for months where they were tortured and repeatedly raped. Before year’s end the Indonesians, finding their forces pinned down outside Dili, mounted two further invasions—on 10 December paratroops were landed at Baucau to secure the airfield, and over Christmas and Boxing Day 15,000 reinforcements were brought in. By April there were 35,000 troops in east Timor. When the towns of Liquica and Maubara were captured the Indonesians murdered nearly the whole of their Chinese populations; when Aileu was captured in February its entire population was liquidated, save children under four, who were trucked to Dili and later placed in a Jakarta orphanage under the care of a foundation owned by Soeharto’s wife Tien. By May the Indonesians still controlled only Dili and a few major towns—the countryside was Fretelin’s, who now had responsibility for some 500,000 people, many of them refugees who had fled the invaders’ appalling brutalities. (Dunn, 1983: 283-6; Budiardjo and Liong, 1984: 23)

In public the new Fraser caretaker Government condemned the invasion, but was already acting duplicitously. In the UN General Assembly Australia sought, with Indonesia, to avoid the adoption of a draft (sponsored by Guyana, Sierra Leone, Trinidad, Cuba and Senegal) which ‘strongly deplore[d]’ the Indonesian invasion and called for the complete and immediate withdrawal of all its forces. Australia tried (with India, Iran, Saudi Arabia and other ASEAN states) to delete direct references to Indonesia’s military intervention, and while it eventually voted for the Guyana draft, abstained on votes for the paragraphs referring to Indonesia. (SSCFAD, 1983: 96; Clark, 1980: 148) While Australia supported the Security Council’s action in sending a
representative to Timor, it refused UN envoy Winspeare Guicciardi’s request for an aircraft so he could reach Fretilin-held areas. This followed a meeting between Adam Malik and new Australian Foreign Minister Andrew Peacock on 20 January, at which he remarked that ‘differences of attitude...should be seen in the context of the long-term importance to both countries and the region as a whole of close and co-operative relations between Australia and Indonesia.’ (Dunn, 1993: 342; AFAR, 1976: 42-4)

Prime Minister Fraser visited Indonesia in October 1976, just after Federal Police seized a radio transmitter near Darwin being used to communicate with Fretilin. Fraser’s official communiqué following the talks stated that ‘the important thing now was to look to the future, and to alleviate as far as possible the human suffering which had come with the fighting.’ After he left Indonesia Lt-Gen Sudharmono, an advisor to Soeharto, told journalists that ‘although Indonesia saw Australia as agreeing with the steps Indonesia was taking in relation to East Timor, nonetheless Australia had other domestic interests of its own.’ Fraser was said to have been angered by the statement that Australia’s policy was two-faced—however it has been confirmed by former Indonesian Foreign Minister Dr Mochtar Kusumaatmadja, who told the author that while ‘secretly both the US and Australia were applauding what Indonesia did, publicly they were outraged.’ In the UN General Assembly sessions of 1976 and 1977 Australia abstained on the East Timor motion. By January 1978 it had formally provided de facto recognition to the annexation, and in 1979 this was made de jure. Shortly after, negotiations over the Timor Gap oil and gas reserves began. At no point did Australia protest about the tremendous abuses carried out by the Indonesians—these accommodating moves were made while Indonesian authority in Timor was weak and bitter fighting was taking place. In June 1976 two thousand people were massacred at a refugee settlement near the border at Lakmaras, while in February former UDT leader Lopes Da Cruz had told the Indonesian press 50,000 people had already died in the war. By the end of 1976 the Indonesian Catholic Church was estimating as many as 100,000 may have perished. (Dunn, 1993: 342-5, 274; AFAR, 1978: 46, 1979: 305)

AN 'ACTIVE AND ENLIGHTENED REALISM'

The philosophy advanced by the Fraser Government to explain its foreign policy was proclaimed in 1976 as ‘an active and enlightened realism’. Perhaps it was framed in an attempt to resolve the contradictions posed by its policies on East Timor, or to cloak a baseline realpolitik in a liberal gloss; in neither case was it an honest description of the structural challenges the Government was seeking to manage. Perhaps the Government hoped its acceptance of a fait accompli in East Timor could be explained by Fraser’s

21 Interview with Author, Jakarta, 21 November 1996.
argument that foreign policy must be based on assessments that are ‘free from self-deception, self-delusion. We must be prepared to accept the world as it is, and not as we would like it to be.’ It was classic Morgenthau, justifying a refusal to moralise by appeal to an epistemic realism—obscuring the ways Australian policy constantly sought to intervene in, shape and cheer on the very realities it claimed to be so stubborn. (AFAR, 1976: 300, 1981: 242)

It was not as if the Fraser Government was unaware of the principles at stake in East Timor—in 1979 and 1980 it repeatedly stated its strident opposition to the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia and the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. Even though he admitted in 1979 that ‘Pol Pot’s regime horrified the world’ Fraser said that ‘Vietnam’s invasion of Kampuchea cannot be condoned’ and called for an immediate withdrawal. ‘The Australian Government,’ he intoned, ‘cannot accept the use of force for the settlement of disputes, whatever their cause.’ At the end of the year, when receiving the Soviet Ambassador at Nareen, Fraser rejected his explanation for the invasion of Afghanistan. At stake, he told the Ambassador, was the principle that ‘The Australian Government and people could not accept that there should be military interference by one power in the affairs of a neighbouring state. It was morally wrong and totally contrary to the accepted norms of international society. In this particular case it could only have a destabilising effect on an area which already had its fair share of problems.’ (AFAR, 1979: 96)

Transposed to the case of East Timor, his statement could not have been more apt. Yet by this time the Government could only say that ‘although it remains critical of the means by which integration was brought about it would be unrealistic to continue to refuse to recognise..that East Timor is a part of Indonesia.’ (AFAR, 1978: 47) Perhaps words like ‘hypocrisy’ are overused, but it barely begins to capture the appalling double-standards advanced in this case. Worse, opposition to the Soviets and Vietnam would become a rallying cry for Fraser’s vision of international reality. By 1980, with the Soviets in Afghanistan and having naval and air forces in Vietnam, Fraser’s claims of renewed communist threat seemed plausible—without considering both Khmer Rouge and Chinese attacks on Vietnam being a possible factor in Soviet deployments there. In turn he claimed they presaged new direct threats to Australia’s own security. The Afghanistan situation, he said, was ‘the most dangerous international crisis since World War II’ and had substantially changed ‘for the worse the strategic order underpinning Australia’s security.’ He further emphasised its connection with the

---

22 It must be acknowledged the Government expressed consistent opposition to Apartheid, even to the extent of supporting an investment ban, accepted large numbers of Vietnamese refugees and increased levels of foreign aid—measures consistent with a liberal foreign policy. However foreign aid was also justified in terms of political realism: ‘extreme and widening discrepancies in the wealth of nations cannot..provide a tenable basis for a stable international community.’ (AFAR, 1978: 459)
Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia, suggesting that '...both events are related within some larger strategic purpose...each carries implications for the other. Certainly the leaders of the ASEAN countries perceive linkages and are deeply concerned.' (Bell, 1988: 135; AFAR, 16-24)

This extraordinarily imprecise statement was pure speculation, and in its talk of linkage drew on the same logic which had underpinned the domino theory—possibly second nature to a former Army Minister (1966-71) who would still claim in 1995 that the Vietnam war had been an honourable cause. It further lacked any independent understanding of what may have motivated Vietnam's response—namely the attacks by Khmer Rouge forces on its territory between 1975 and 1979—nor took into account the genocide it had halted. Obviously Vietnam's early withdrawal should have been sought, but from here Australian policy merely chimed in with a cynical US strategy which prolonged a settlement for over a decade. Nor could the Soviet Union's brutal invasion of Afghanistan be condoned, yet the hypocrisy of Australia's response was underlined by Fraser's long list of retaliatory measures, which included a refusal to supply wheat embargoed by the USA, the suspension of Soviet cruise ship operations, a suspension of diplomatic relations and bilateral scientific and cultural co-operation, and the infamous attempts to force Australia's Olympic team to boycott the Moscow games. (AFAR, 1980: 24; SMH, 15.4.95; Pilger, 1989: 401)

In contrast Indonesia's invasion of East Timor had been rewarded with increased levels of development and military aid, along with active support in the United Nations.23 At the 1982 UN General Assembly both Gough Whitlam (as a private petitioner) and the Australian Ambassador argued East Timor should be removed from the UN agenda permanently. This, after a famine which had killed almost a hundred thousand people in 1978 and 1979, and the failure of a massive military operation in 1981 (Operation Security) which disrupted planting, saw thousands of Timorese forced to march ahead of Indonesian forces and the massacre of hundreds at the village of Lacluta in September. By now it was clear the Government’s opposition to the USSR and Vietnam was driven less by principle than by an overheated perception of the new strategic situation—which also drew on older modes of identity and foreign policy practice. In 1980 Fraser announced increases to Australia's defence budget, and increased operations—including air and naval patrols and joint exercises—in the Indian

23 Development aid was increased to $86 million over three years, from the previous three year total of $69 million, perhaps in response to the Pertamina crisis. The three year military aid program of $20 million announced by Whitlam in 1975 was also continued—it included patrol boats, field radios and officer training (including combat skills) in Australia. Ten Nomad 'Searchmaster' aircraft were donated, along with the use of RAAF aircraft for the aerial mapping of Irian Jaya, itself the focus of a war of counterinsurgency. The Nomads were provided ostensibly for maritime surveillance, but ALP parliamentarian Ken Fry argued they were being used in East Timor to search for guerillas. Twelve Bell 'Sioux' helicopters were also donated from 1977 along with training for Indonesian pilots and mechanics. (AFAR, 1976: 129, 213, 1979: 229, 236; Budiardjo and Lione, 1984: 30)
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

Ocean area, along with the upgrade of ports and airfields in Western Australia. Further increases included the Army Reserve from twenty-two to thirty thousand, the purchase of 75 tactical fighter aircraft (eventually the F/A18 Hornet), naval weapons upgrades, and expanded defence co-operation within the ASEAN region. American B-52 aircraft on surveillance flights in the Indian Ocean were allowed to transit through the RAAF base in Darwin, and Indian Ocean home-port facilities for US vessels offered. Fraser had earlier reversed the Whitlam Government’s opposition to the re-development of Diego Garcia—which may have been encouraged by US pressures in 1976 for Australia to cease its public opposition to Indonesia so that transit rights for US submarines through the archipelago would not be in jeopardy. (AFAR, 1982: 737-44, 1980: 26; Dunn, 1983: 322-46)

On Cambodia, the Fraser Government’s policy quickly began to mimic that of the Reagan Administration. Australia tacitly endorsed a US strategy which saw China, Thailand and Britain giving military support and sanctuary to the Khmer Rouge, while they and the ASEAN countries ensured the UN seat remained with the Royalist Coalition (effectively controlled by the Khmer Rouge). This action prevented any of the UN’s humanitarian machinery being activated inside Cambodia. Like the US and other Western nations Australia supplied aid to Cambodian refugees in Thailand, much of which in turn fed Khmer Rouge fighters.24 As Australia joined with ASEAN in loudly proclaiming that Vietnam should withdraw, the US combined a continuing aid and investment embargo (on both countries) with a cynical policy aimed at ‘bleeding Vietnam white on the battlefield of Cambodia.’ (Pilger, 1989: 448) The policy also provided a reassuringly stark model of identity, with the reversion to comforting images of western alliance and commonality with the United States and a continuation, by proxy, of war against Vietnamese communism.25 In 1982 Tony Street echoed Reagan Administration rhetoric that the USSR now ‘combines both an expansionist ideology and military power on an unprecedented scale’ and praised the Administration’s effort to increase US military power. Street also praised the USA’s new ‘regional level assertiveness’ in El Salvador, saying that ‘The Australian Government fully understands the Administration’s wish to cut off sources of disturbance and revolution there.’ (AFAR, 1982: 240-1)

24 A 1982 press release from Foreign Minister Tony Street boasted that Australia had supplied $23 million to the relief operation on the Thai-Cambodia border. The same document also spoke of the shipment of 862 tonnes of rice to Phnom Penh by Australia to deal with imminent food shortages. (AFAR, 1982: 484)

25 Admittedly the continuing flood of refugees from South Vietnam and their reports of ill-treatment in prisons and re-education camps hardly endeared Vietnam’s Stalinist Government to the international community—yet the complex of problems in Indochina required not a slavish dedication to US foreign policy but a far more independent and creative diplomacy, of the kind the ALP brought to the issue through the second half of the 1980s.
As 'enlightened realism' justified the Government’s decisions to support US strategic power and seek its deeper involvement in Asia and the Indian Ocean, so it framed the Government’s approach to a newly assertive and vocal third world bloc. From its very first foreign policy statements it acknowledged the gravity of the calls for a NIEO and the formation of the United Nations Council on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) against the wishes of northern states like the US. However despite liberal rhetoric which spoke of how ‘the appalling problems of poverty, hunger and disease are...an affront to human dignity’ the Government’s major concern, said Fraser, was with how they ‘constantly threaten discord and conflict between nations.’ In the 1976 Roy Milne Lecture he was more explicit, saying flatly that ‘fostering the illusion that redistribution of the world’s existing wealth will resolve all problems serves no one’s interest. Redistribution has its place in the world’s economic agenda—but much more important is soundly based international economic growth, and most fundamental of all, the pursuit by developing countries of domestic policies which foster enterprise and initiative.’ When addressing the Indonesian Parliament later that year, he repeated the lecture, saying bluntly: ‘We believe that the essential elements of the present economic system continue to hold the greatest hope for economic progress.’ (AFAR, 1976: 302, 479, 536)

The only concession Australia sought to make, which unsurprisingly cleaved with the Government’s monetarist interpretation of the national interest, was to push for greater liberalisation of developed country markets, especially for agricultural products and commodities. Yet despite saying in the UN, as Andrew Peacock did, that ‘Australia supports efforts which will lead to the establishment of an effective international system of food security’, the Government gave no support to broader third world demands—for consistently higher prices for commodity exports, debt restructuring, or the right to nationalise foreign-owned assets. Instead the monetarist plank which offered higher volumes of trade over increased prices, and resisted deeper changes which might enable faster industrialisation or increased public sector investment and welfare, would become the basis of IMF structural adjustment programs which effectively buried the third world hopes of the 1970s. (AFAR, 1976: 483)

Hawke: The End of Certainty II

When the Hawke Labor Government took power in 1983 it was in a context of global recession, resurgent economic liberalism, a dangerous and unprecedented level of cold war confrontation and a hyper-aggressive United States. It inherited a foreign policy which was building Australia’s defence capabilities, and cheering on the USA’s new assertiveness and its brutal geopolitics in Indochina and Central America. War was still raging in East Timor, and ASEAN had formed into a cohesive political bloc which
protected its members from criticism of their 'internal affairs', rigidly enforced outward solidarity and was putting up a (seemingly) united front against Vietnam. These contexts, with their implications for both international policy and domestic economic and cultural management, provided real challenges to Labor which—at least in theory—was committed to employment growth, public welfare and a liberal foreign policy. The ALP platform, for example, expressed opposition to uranium mining and support for an act of self-determination in East Timor, and provided for the suspension of defence co-operation with Indonesia until it was carried out. The party was committed to Aboriginal land rights, multiculturalism and a non-discriminatory immigration policy. Similarly its relations with the US—following the shadowplay of 1975 and the revelation of the CIA’s role during the Christopher Boyce trial in 1977—were marked by a heritage of mutual suspicion.

Domestically Hawke’s first two terms saw a bewildering array of policy and structural changes—including a formal ‘Accord’ with trade unions which delivered consistent falls in real wages through the next decade, the floating of the Australian dollar on international money markets, a dramatic reduction in industry protection, and a sustained attack on federal budget deficits which saw surpluses being achieved by the mid-1990s. By that time centralised wage indexation under the Accord was beginning to yield to a push for wage bargaining at the enterprise level, paving the way for a systematic attack on workers rights by the conservative Howard Government after 1996.26

The ‘reforms’ quickly took on the character, at least in elite rhetoric, of embodying a systematic vision for a new Australian prosperity amid the ascendency of monetarism and increasingly ‘globalising’ patterns of trade in goods, services, capital and labour. Free market economists and senior government ministers began to espouse an integrated approach which linked domestic economic management and reform (along with substantial cultural and attitudinal changes) with new priorities for diplomacy and regional economic integration—in short, a new combination of ‘the political double-bind’ and the strategic imagination.

Much of this thinking was collected in the 1989 report *Australia and the Northeast Asian Ascendancy* written by Hawke’s former advisor Ross Garnaut, although its detailed themes had been flagged by Foreign Minister Bill Hayden as early as October 1983. Such thinking influenced Hawke and Keating’s energetic promotion of the Asia-

---

26 Many government corporations (including the Commonwealth Bank and Qantas) were fully or partially privatised, while telecommunications was opened up to new players. Some welfare benefits were cut, social security more closely ‘targeted’ through tighter eligibility restrictions, and partial fees for tertiary education were introduced. Such deflationary and ‘market oriented’ reforms were countered with increased public commitments such as the national health scheme Medicare, and the expansion of the post-school education system. More radical policies—such as a goods and services tax, a national identity card, and the full sale of Telecom—were defeated within the party.
Pacific Economic Co-operation trade liberalisation forum (APEC), the development of education policy, and new rhetorics of national identity. By 1984 Hayden was arguing ‘Australia’s long-term future is as a Eurasian country’, while Hawke spoke of seeking to ‘enmesh’ Australia in Asia. Journalist Paul Kelly argued in 1992 that it is ‘the rise of a massive and prosperous middle class in the Asia/Pacific which will trade, travel and live in Australia that is the ultimate guarantor of a new identity.’ He further contended that the raft of policy and cultural changes during the 1980s saw the ‘irresistible demolition’ of the five pillars of the ‘Australian settlement’ which had governed national life since Federation—white Australia, industry protection, wage arbitration, state paternalism, and imperial benevolence. (AFAR, 1983, 580-8, 1984: 10; Kelly, 1992: 2-4)

Much of this rhetoric was overheated, and by the time the full dimensions of the Asian currency crisis had emerged in 1998, could be placed under serious question. Such claims to a progressive new national direction, and to a radical break with the past, need to be placed under close and critical scrutiny. The poverty of Kelly’s analysis can be already seen in the invisibility of millions in Asia who struggled at subsistence levels (even within economies growing at fantastic rates), and in his refusal to acknowledge how Aboriginal dispossession formed a crucial sixth plank of the ‘settlement.’ Similarly Ross Garnaut neglected to acknowledge how repression and authoritarianism had often underpinned the ‘social cohesion and political stability’ which drove Northeast Asian growth. (Garnaut, 1989: 9)

While boosters of Labor’s reforms emphasise their courage and vision, they could also be portrayed as an accommodation to the imperatives of late-twentieth century capitalism and corporate power. Within Australia Labor prevailed over a dramatic transfer of wealth from poor to rich, while internationally they accepted the hegemony of liberal ideas and western economic domination which exacerbated the same trends. The third-world challenge to the international economic order now seemed a memory; Labor merely echoed the axioms of the World Bank/IMF Group in urging the need for greater liberalisation of global trade and investment, with emphasis on commodities markets. They assumed that increasing ‘interdependence’—visible both in increased trade levels and multiple-site offshore production strategies—would produce equal benefits for all nations, and all members of those nations. They further endorsed a pressure shadowing the trade push—to liberalise foreign investment and taxation rules, for many nations still crucial to the generation of domestic capital—while ignoring labor rights and environmental protection. In short, Labor would not

---

27 For instance in a speech to the Australia-Indonesia Business Conference in 1987 Hayden praised Indonesia’s recent economic reforms, which included reductions in tariff levels, improved customs procedures and the ‘liberalisation of investment-joint venture guidelines.’ (AFAR, 1987: 486)
recognise that the world economy was fundamentally characterised by unequal power relationships, both between and within states. What remained was an optimistic neol­

eralism and the mantra-like repetition of Australia's recognition of Asia's 'new dynamism'. Even when the miracle faltered so badly in 1997-8, few were willing to re-
evaluate their core beliefs.

Likewise there was substantial continuity in strategic policy. Strong support for ANZUS was an axiom of Hawke's policy, and been an early point of friction within the party. In 1985, when ANZUS co-operation was faltering, Hawke stated he would not want to be Prime Minister 'if central elements of the alliance, such as port access for nuclear ships and Australia's hosting of the joint facilities, were repudiated.' (The Australian, 7.3.85: 1) Not that this translated into the slavish devotion to US foreign policy that characterised the Fraser years. The Government distanced itself from the Reagan Administration's support for the Nicaraguan Contras and brutal regimes in Honduras and El Salvador, pressed hard for the negotiation of a comprehensive test ban treaty, criticised the space-based Strategic Defence Initiative and supported the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone. However Australia used its influence in the South Pacific Forum to preserve transit rights for nuclear armed vessels—crucial to the Pentagon's aggressive naval strategy—and its disarmament initiatives were conducted partly to pre-empt pressure from a rapidly growing anti-war movement, which saw huge Palm Sunday marches and the formation of the Nuclear Disarmament Party (who contested the 1984 federal elections). As he explained in his memoirs, Hayden's fears were that if 'we [did not] move quickly to establish our ascendancy on peace and disarmament issues' they would face pressures from the Left to close the US bases, rescind ship visits and withdraw from ANZUS. (AFAR, 1986: 894; Hayden, 1996: 392)

Of greater moment was Labor's break with US policy on Cambodia. Here, in an initiative suggested by Hawke, Hayden pursued an active diplomacy with Vietnam, the Khmer Rouge-Royalist Coalition and the ASEAN countries in pursuit of common

---

28 A glaring example of this naivety was Hayden's statement, in the United Nations in 1986, in support of the Baker Plan for third-world debt management (which provided for bridging loans in exchange for harsh economic reforms) and 'the general approach of the IMF to adjustment and conditionality.' He noted 'it should be handled with care' and that 'democratic institutions...should not be undermined by the process. The economic benefits of conditionality have to be balanced against their potential for causing social distress and dislocation.' These were worthy caveats, but were undermined by the general support for a process which would systematically impoverish indebted states for decades to come—over funds borrowed and embezzled by corrupt elites in pursuit of economic models and living standards the West had long held out as a beacon. (AFAR, 1986: 895; George, 1988: 190-3, 229-263)

29 The Government allowed the US navy access to Australian ports without questioning the vessels' nuclear status, engaged in regular joint exercises, pursued equipment purchases and continued the Fraser Government's policy of allowing B52s to transit through Darwin. It consistently justified the US military installations at Pine Gap, Nurrungar and North-west Cape on the basis of their contribution to 'deterrence' through their early warning capability, and placed pressure on New Zealand to rescind their ban on nuclear-armed and powered vessels. (AFAR, 1983-87)
ground which might lead to a settlement. In doing so Hayden clashed with Thailand and Singapore, and directly undermined declared US policy. On the other hand, Indonesia supported Australian initiatives strongly within ASEAN and pursued parallel diplomatic efforts. American officials attempted to undermine Australia’s diplomacy in Asian capitals, and Secretary of State George Shultz tried to dissuade Hayden in 1983 from pursuing it. (Hayden, 1996: 382)

In contrast with Fraser, Hayden was sanguine about the strategic implications of the Vietnamese invasion, saying that while Australia opposed it in principle, he understood why the Vietnamese had intervened and could not withdraw while there was a chance the Khmer Rouge could return to power. On the other hand, Hawke resisted fully implementing the ALP’s platform which called for the resumption of direct aid to Vietnam. In response to Labor’s (cautious) independence of mind The Australian declared in 1985 that it was ‘not the conduct of a worthwhile ally’ and that Australian foreign policy was ‘sliding into chaos.’ Unfortunately the worth of the initiative was marred by the cynicism with which Hawke conceived it, playing off one part of the ALP platform against another he was determined to abrogate. In his memoir Hayden argues he suspected that ‘Hawke had encouraged the Indochina initiative as a red herring to distract the party, especially the Left, from the vexatious and difficult to manage issue of East Timor.’ (The Australian, 11.3.85: 1, 12.3.85; Hastings, 1984b; Hayden, 1996: 382)

In 1984 Hawke publicly affirmed his government’s de jure recognition of Indonesian sovereignty over East Timor, and Hayden worked hard at the ALP’s 1984 national conference to have the platform re-written. With the New Order government reassured, negotiations over the Timor Gap could resume. While this capitulation preserved the friendly tenor of relations, at least until 1986, tensions remained. In September 1983 Hayden made a public statement of concern about indications of a renewed military offensive in East Timor, but no stronger action was taken. Hayden would have been aware of the replacement in June of General Yusuf as ABRI commander by Benny Murdani, and of Murdani’s cancellation of the cease fire (and secret negotiations with Fretilin) which had been in place since March. Hayden would also have been aware that the ICRC had suspended relief operations because of new restrictions on its activities and, through intelligence sources, that Murdani had taken a

30 In 1984 Indonesia’s armed forces chief General Murdani spent five days in Hanoi at a joint seminar on Cambodia run by Jakarta’s CSIS and Vietnam’s Institute of International Relations. It was the first conference held between an ASEAN state and Vietnam on the issue, and there Murdani angered ASEAN partners by declaring that neither he nor ABRI believed Vietnam to be a threat to its neighbours. Foreign Minister Dr Mochtar Kusumaatmadja also visited Hanoi in an attempt to build bridges between Vietnam and ASEAN. Indonesia’s attitudes were motivated by fellow-feeling with the Vietnamese as a nation conceived in anti-colonial struggle and by a common hostility to China. (Hastings, 1984c; The Australian, 8.3.85: 1)

31 While US pressure to prevent a resumption of bilateral aid to Vietnam worked, Labor did provide $7.8 million between 1984 and 1986 through UN programs. (AFAR, 1985: 757)
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

top-level military delegation to Timor for planning meetings. Later the Australian government would defend its East Timor policy by arguing it was supplying humanitarian and development aid for East Timor—including through the ICRC—and that preservation of its political relationship with the New Order enabled it to take up human rights concerns. Hayden must have been aware the new military offensive made a mockery of this logic. Amnesty International reported that the offensive initiated a new wave of repression, including hundreds of arrests, disappearances, summary executions and the massacre of two hundred at the village of Kraras in August. (Budiardjo and Liong, 1984: 48; AFAR, 1983: 518; Amnesty International, 1985: 18, 52)

While Indonesia’s media blackout and closed-door policy kept East Timor off the front pages, another crisis was brewing on the Papua New Guinea/Irian Jaya border. Following an abortive uprising by the Free Papua Movement (OPM) in and around the capital Jayapura in early 1984, Indonesian reprisals and security operations provoked a flood of refugees to cross into PNG. By the end of the year eleven thousand West Papuans were living in hastily erected camps near the border. PNG policy, influenced by Indonesian pressure, was to repatriate them as quickly as possible. While Indonesia provided 22,000 kina to feed the refugees, after this ran out in June the PNG Government allowed supplies to dry up in an attempt to make camp life as unappealing as possible. It had refused to allow the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to become involved, as this would have internationalised the issue and provided the ‘border crossers’ with formal status as refugees. As a result famine struck, killing over ninety people by August 1984. Only now were the UNHCR and ICRC asked for assistance. (Harris and Brown, 1985: 1-44)

As early as 1970, when PNG was experiencing a smaller refugee problem, Kathryn Young had emphasised how the border had the potential to destabilise relations between two key Southeast Asian states in the post-Guam era. (1970: 24) This was echoed by Harris and Brown, who argued that ‘the Irian Jaya crisis has the potential to exercise a very destabilising effect on a region of considerable political, strategic and economic importance to Australia.’ The refugee influx was accompanied by severe tensions between PNG and Indonesia, which culminated in the deportation of Indonesia’s defence attache in April in protest at repeated incursions. Loathe to buy into these tensions, the Australian Government consistently maintained the refugees were a bilateral matter for Indonesia and PNG to resolve. Nor did they try to alter PNG’s declared intentions to repatriate them to Indonesia or strongly encourage them to involve the UNHCR. Only after the deaths by starvation did Australia push for UN involvement and provide $600,000 in relief funds. Thus Australia (along with Indonesia, which failed to respond to a second PNG request for aid) must bear some
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995


The Australian Government would have been aware of Indonesia’s repeated incursions, and that if a larger intervention was made that it would have to provide military support to PNG—as recommended in the 1983 Strategic Basis and confirmed by a senior Australian officer in 1989. In such an event the whole structure of ‘stability’ Australia had sought with the Indonesian New Order would have been destroyed. However it chose to manage the danger by supporting a new bilateral treaty between PNG and Indonesia and encouraging PNG plans to police the OPM.32 The 1983 Strategic Basis argued ‘Australian policy should encourage Papua New Guinea wherever possible to suppress anti-Indonesian activity by Irian Jaya dissidents’, and journalist Brian Toohey revealed in 1989 that the Australian SAS joint exercise with PNG, ‘Night Falcon’, included scenarios in which OPM guerillas were captured and interrogated by PNGDF units. In addition to the SAS training, Australia provided $500,000 to map the PNG border area and promised an army engineering contingent and four Iroquois helicopters for use there. Upon delivery, the helicopters were diverted to the war on Bougainville. (Toohey and Wilkinson, 1987: 258; Toohey, 1990: 7; SMH, 7.11.85; McLellan, 1990: 5)

Thus having turned a blind eye to the Indonesian killings between 1965 and 1969, and accepted a fait accompli in East Timor, Australian policy now faced a situation in which any pretence to principle in its relations with Indonesia was continually thrown back in its face. While Hayden was arguing that a working relationship enabled Australia to make positive human interventions, Benny Murdani had begun a new military offensive in East Timor—over Australian protests—which equalled previous campaigns in their ferocity. Similarly he initiated the Petrus campaign, endorsed by Soeharto, which saw the summary killings of over five thousand alleged criminals between 1983 and 1986. In 1984 Murdani ordered troops to fire on Muslim protesters in the Tanjung Priok area of Jakarta, killing fifty, which was followed by a series of arrests and trials. In 1989, provoked by protests during visits by the Pope and the US Ambassador to East Timor, Murdani warned a meeting of community leaders to abandon their dreams of freedom: ‘There is no such thing as an [East Timor] nation, there is only an Indonesian nation...If you try to make your own state and the

32 In 1994 a recently retired Defence Department strategic planner, Dr Stewart Woodman, was still arguing that ‘Clearly it is a priority for Australia to impress upon PNG the need for an effective presence in the border area, even amid other pressing domestic priorities. This could be best achieved through continued training support, especially in long-range reconnaissance and patrol, the provision of communications equipment, and enhancement of the PNGDF’s logistic support and transport capabilities...In circumstances where PNG forces were acting more systematically against the OPM...Australia might need to consider deploying additional surveillance and support assets, but not combat units.’ (Thompson ed., 1994: 34)
movement is strong...it will be crushed by ABRI. don’t start imagining things, don’t start dreaming.’ (Amnesty International, 1994: 64; *Inside Indonesia*, June 1990: 14)

Australia did little in protest, and faced growing New Order pressure over Government, media and community ‘interference’ in its ‘internal affairs’. Of particular sensitivity were Radio Australia reports of events in East Timor—ironic given its role in assistance to the Generals in 1965. Even an Australian vote in the February 1985 UN Commission on Human Rights (UNCHR) in favour of a recommendation which urged continued surveillance of the human rights situation in East Timor (albeit only for a year) came under strong criticism in the Indonesian press. (*AFAR*, 1985: 241) When asked in the Senate about the sentencing of General Dharsono—a former Secretary-General of ASEAN who had criticised the Tanjung Priok killings in a ‘white paper’ published by a group of dissident officers—to ten years gaol for subversion, Gareth Evans refused to criticise the use of the anti-subversion law or the killings themselves, saying only that ‘Lt-Gen. Dharsono has been tried and convicted under due process of Indonesian law’. (*AFAR*, 1986: 422; *SMH*, 2.11.85)

On the other hand, the economic payoffs for Australia’s quiet diplomacy, while slow, were progressing well. By 1987 Indonesia was Australia’s eighteenth largest export market, with Australia enjoying a handsome trade surplus of $200 million in 1986-7.\(^33\) The slow pace of this progress had little to do with political tensions (though they were never far from Australian minds) and more with limited complementarity between the two economies and an undeveloped foreign investment culture in Australia. This did not prevent a hundred Australian enterprises having investments in Indonesia, making Australian corporations Indonesia’s ninth-largest foreign investor in 1987. Government Ministers also looked forward to the development of the Timor Gap and joint fisheries and gold and coal mining investments. (*AFAR*, 1987: 485, 1986: 154)

Yet perhaps testament to the Regime’s frustration with the robust criticisms they were suffering in Australian public life, the New Order government chose the publication by *The Sydney Morning Herald* in 1986 of an article critical of Soeharto family businesses as an opportunity to strike back. Defence co-operation and high-level government-to-government contact was unilaterally suspended, talks on the Timor Gap postponed, journalists expelled and a planeload of tourists deported. No matter that successive Australian governments had stood alone in providing *de jure* recognition of Indonesia’s brutal incorporation of East Timor, and had defied the great weight of public opinion in doing so. It seemed that the price of having made Indonesia so critical to Australian security and being was increasing dramatically. Ironically while seeking to

\(^{33}\) The $790 million of two-way trade between Australia and Indonesia in 1984-5, for instance, was well behind the figures for Australia’s largest Asian trading partners China ($1.4 billion), Korea ($1.6 billion), Singapore ($1.7 billion) and Japan ($14.8 billion). Australian direct investment figures of $70 million contrasted with those in Singapore of $235 million. (*AFAR*, 1986: 791)
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

restore relations as quickly as possible, Australian officials found themselves, for the first time, downplaying the significance of the relationship—with Hawke saying its importance had been ‘exaggerated’ and foreign affairs official John Holloway arguing for ‘greater pragmatism and reduced expectations’. (AFAR, 1986: 421, 790) With one of its bricks so easily kicked away, the whole structure and promise of certitude sought so anxiously since 1969 was beginning to seem like an illusion.

AFTER THE COLD WAR:
THE POLITICS OF (UN)CERTAINTY

Policymakers seemed genuinely shocked that a relationship they had elevated to a guarantee of certitude amid the change of the post-Guam period could be damaged so easily. In speech after speech they returned to the trope, already visible in 1969, which anguished over the disjunction between the ‘common interests’ shared by the two countries and the objective dissimilarity in culture, politics and historical experience. From the New Order’s side, it served as a warning against the too-zealous promotion of ‘western’ democratic values; from Australia’s, as an attempt to manage the same contradictions by acknowledging ‘differences’ yet emphasising the need for cooperation. Yet the rhetoric was hardly a call for the respect of difference—in any ethical sense—deriving it is did from an overdetermined drive for sameness on both sides. Deleuze and Guattari make a revealing point here, when they discuss how the globalisation of capitalism generates elite expectations of greater cultural and political homogenisation (the end-of-history thesis). Yet they emphasise that capitalism is in fact isomorphic with a range of political forms—homogenisation is not its inevitable outcome, whatever its partial tendencies to it in the generation of common forms of bourgeois desire. (1987: 436) In the case of Australia and the Indonesian New Order, the drive to accelerate the isomorphy of capital demanded a political accommodation which was expressed in a language of sameness and common destiny. On each side this generated ironic expectations of homogenisation—that each government and society would internalise the other’s values—which were inevitably disappointed. Heterogeneity was then rudely encountered in the confrontation between ‘democratic’ and ‘totalitarian’ political cultures. In 1986, common assumptions shared by the two countries elites foundered on the disbelief of Australia’s public culture; when Soeharto was toppled by his people in 1998, the same irony would work in the opposite direction.

The failure of ‘sovereignty’ as a meaningful sign of representation was palpable here, and it would only come under more pressure. As the Cold War ended and the Soviet Union dissolved into a federation of independent states, more questions were asked about the long reign of Soeharto and the inevitability of Indonesia’s boundaries.
Launching a campaign for dialogue over East Timor on behalf of resistance leader Xanana Gusmao, The Australian Council for Overseas Aid (ACFOA) argued that the time for a just resolution of the issue had come. The geopolitical environment which surrounded Indonesia’s 1975 invasion was gone, along with any rationale for its continued occupation. Likewise the UN was now a more significant force in world affairs, especially in the area of conflict resolution and peacekeeping. (Scott, Feith and Walsh, 1991) Indonesia’s response was the massacre of hundreds of independence demonstrators (many of them children) at the Santa Cruz cemetery in Dili in November 1991, and an intensified campaign of torture and intimidation in urban areas; Australia’s was to press for a return to the pre-1986 status quo and to trust Soeharto to maintain ‘stability’ in Indonesia.

This approach appeared to bear fruit in 1989, when new Foreign Minister Gareth Evans, with Indonesian counterpart Alatas, signed the Timor Gap Zone of Co-operation Agreement aboard a Garudajet flying to Jakarta. The tensions of 1986 now seemed a memory, as Evans boasted the agreement—effectively a combined act of theft from the Timorese—would add much needed ‘ballast’ to the relationship and ‘illustrates eloquently how differences between the two systems can be overcome for our mutual benefit.’ Yet it only deepened the basic contradictions which had led to the rift of 1986. Australia had worsened the compromise of its own declared values, and provided Indonesia with both a potential economic windfall and renewed recognition of ‘the sovereign reality’ of its annexation, in defiance of Australian public opinion. Portugal, still recognised by the UN as the legitimate administering power in East Timor, vowed to prosecute Australia in the International Court of Justice. Evans retorted that there was ‘no binding [international] legal obligation not to recognise the acquisition of territory acquired by force.’ (Scott, Feith and Walsh, 1991: 11; Evans and Grant, 1995: 200; Walsh, 1990: 14)

It was symptomatic of a powerful tendency at this time—for Australian elites to seek predictable, Cartesian frameworks with which to manage a whole series of new challenges and uncertainties. The end of the cold war was removing the visible landmarks which had guided policymakers for decades; the strategic environment was changing; the question of the ‘succession’ in Indonesia was looming.34 Within Australia, Aboriginal claims were gaining prominence in sober contrast to the populist

---

34 A revealing speech on this question was made by Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Phillip Flood in 1990. He asked ‘will progress be hindered by political or social tensions?’ and bluntly stated the Australian Government’s concern that ‘the succession, whenever it occurs, be managed smoothly.’ Yet his underlying assumptions were deeply flawed—that racial and social tensions could be easily managed, that the Indonesian government was doing so, and that the New Order structure could and should maintain an essential continuity beyond Soeharto. While Flood believed that ‘elements’ of liberal democracy would increasingly be put into practice he held to a faith that ‘the institutional framework of the New Order is able to adapt to accommodate the political aspirations of various groups in a growing economy.’ When Soeharto was finally forced to resign in April 1998, none of these conditions would be in existence. (The Monthly Record, April 1990: 209)
celebrations of the Bicentenary, and ‘multiculturalism’ moving further into the mainstream of domestic life—where it aroused considerable anxiety among some. A whole framework of political, cultural and ontological certitude was unravelling. As Gareth Evans later wrote:

When I became Foreign Minister in 1988..it was not very long before I had to confront the reality that the set of verities that had fixed the shape of the post-war world as we had known it, and within which we had defined and pursued our national interests, was rapidly crumbling. Trying to make sense of this avalanche of change, and not be overwhelmed by it, I found myself asking some very basic questions. Where did Australia now fit? How should we be reacting to the myriad of events and choices crowding in on us? (Lee and Waters ed. 1997: 17)

Yet the drive for Cartesian solutions only stifled innovation. In 1989, Evans released the report Australia’s Regional Security, which betrayed a faith that space and politics could be clearly mapped and interpreted, and that on the basis of this interpretation it was possible to construct a coherent and systematic approach to policy which could harmonise all its instruments, clearly identify and rank Australia’s ‘interests’ and control the environment in which it would intervene. (Fry ed. 1991: 170)

The Statement was not a total account of foreign policy, in the way Evans’ book Australia’s Foreign Relations or the Howard Government’s 1997 White Paper would be, but it did form a notable precedent in its attempts to systematise problematic ‘realities’ and lay out a predictable blueprint for state action. It revealed a quest for effective, flexible new modes of governmentality which might work on some of the globe’s most intractable forces. In short, it marked a new intensification of the strategic imagination—in ways which were, unfortunately, hardly new. At its core was a conventional neo-realism which assumed that ‘the possession of military power will always be of major importance in international affairs’ and that Australia must ‘develop policy responses accordingly.’ Based on a view that the Government’s 1987 defence white paper—which developed a regional strategy of ‘defence-in-depth’ based on substantial long-range strike capabilities—had ‘liberated’ Australian foreign policy, the

35 Graeme Cheeseman has written extensively about the policy debates leading up to and following the 1987 defence white paper, and expressed grave reservations about the kind of defence strategy it implied. He worried that it was insufficiently independent of the United States, particularly in the areas of logistical support and technology; that it relied on expensive high-tech solutions which Australia could not sustain and were inappropriate to the real threats it faced; that the increase in capabilities had the potential to increase regional insecurity; and that plans for an increase in defence exports and co-operation exacerbated regional conflict and were inconsistent with Australian values. (Cheeseman, 1993) Of note too is the origin of the phrase ‘defence-in-depth’, which appeared in the 1962 Strategic Basis as an argument for forward defence: ‘While Southeast Asia is held, defence in depth is provided for Australia.’ (Edwards and Pemberton, 1992: 246)
Statement bragged that ‘Australia’s military capabilities are, and are perceived to be, formidable in regional terms.’ This in turn contributed to the ‘strategic stability’ of the Pacific and Southeast Asia and provided ‘the foundation for our capacity to contribute to a positive security environment through the exercise of what might be described as military diplomacy, or politico-military capability’. Thus Australia’s military capability enhanced the nation’s international status and, in combination with defence cooperation programs, ‘strengthens our ability to exercise leverage across many fields.’ (Lee and Waters ed. 1997: 16; Fry ed. 1991: 187-8)

The Statement was notable for laying out the broad outlines of Australian defence policy for the next ten years, and for articulating a vision of its seamless integration with broad areas of domestic and foreign policy—a vision in which military force and diplomacy could be an effective intervention into the future shape of the regional political, strategic and economic order. Superficially, Evans may have been right to argue its distinction from the Menzies-era ‘forward defence’ doctrine, but this was to obscure both the permanent escalation in Australian airforce and naval deployments into the region, the projected growth in defence cooperation, and the endeavour—identical in its sweep and ambition with that of the 1950s and 60s—to use military capability to influence change within the region.36

By 1994, when the Keating Government issued a new Defence White Paper, such ambitions would be bluntly stated:

Australia’s future security—like our economic prosperity—is linked inextricably to the security and prosperity of Asia and the Pacific. Australia’s strategic engagement with the region is an integral element of our national effort to make our place in the region. Our defence relationships underpin the development of closer links in other fields. Our ability to defend ourselves and contribute to regional security does much to ensure that we are respected and helps us engage in the region by giving confidence that we can manage uncertainty and assure our security. (DoD, 1994: 3; emphasis added)

A familiar Benthamite language was visible here, as was a frank statement of the desire to control and manage uncertainty. Yet discernible also, two years after Paul Keating became Prime Minister, was a view of how defence policy was contributing to a transformation of Australian identity within an optimistic vision of economic and

36 For instance, Australian deployments of P3C Orions over the South China Sea from Butterworth assisted the USA in surveillance of Soviet naval movements from Cam Ranh Bay; a western strategic presence also enabled the isolation of the communist New Peoples Army in the Philippines, which the 1987 White Paper said threatened ‘the long term prospects for reforming Governments and also raises the possibility that unwelcome external powers could become involved.’ Likewise the gift of Nomad aircraft and patrol boats to Indonesia helped ABRI to seal off Fretilin from sources of outside support. (DoD, 1987: 14-16)
cultural progress—for Australia, the region and globally. Drawing on concepts from Indonesian security doctrine, the 1993 Strategic Review had made a similar argument—that the Australian Defence Force (ADF), by ‘contributing to regional resilience and security’ could ‘protect key trade and commercial interests, and thus our national way of life’. Such a ‘strategy of active regional involvement’ required ‘that all aspects of national policy be brought to bear with greater coherence.’ (Ball and Kerr, 1996: 121; emphasis added)

The full import of this drive for policy coherence and certainty, and its part in a larger ontological enterprise, would become most clear in the speeches and policy of Paul Keating. Taking his cues from the ‘governmental’ visions of Curtin and Whitlam, Keating sought to re-vision the Australian identity in a way which, while recognising pressures for change, preserved an essential continuity with the past. Turning around a repetition of three main themes—‘Mabo’, ‘The Republic’, and ‘Asia’—it again invoked the ‘political double-bind’ in a vision of the future which might finally reconcile security, justice and progress. Amid dramatic new cultural, economic and geopolitical uncertainties, it was yet another ambitious attempt to re-imagine, define and limit the Australian subject.

In some ways the gesture was quite radical. Keating’s ‘Redfern Park Speech’ was a historic landmark in the official recognition of the crimes committed against Aboriginal people during colonisation, and of a remaining series of debts to be discharged. He seized particularly on the High Court’s Mabo decision as an opportunity to legislate a limited form of Native Title in permanent recognition of prior Aboriginal settlement of the continent. If, as I have argued, a deep-seated version of the Australian identity was constituted in the decades-long struggle for the Nation’s very interior—in a simultaneously physical, economic and ontological sense—the disturbance represented by Mabo and Labor’s vocal support for it was quite profound. Similarly his public support for multiculturalism (following the dangerous public debates over immigration initiated by the Coalition parties in 1988) was a frank challenge to the silent matrix of attitudes which had underpinned the White Australia policy and which, despite three decades of public disavowal, still remained strong. The depth of the challenge represented by these two rhetorical stances was demonstrated by the Howard Government’s aggressive repudiation of Native Title (backed by the National Farmers Federation and conservative State and Territory Governments) and by the rise in support for Pauline Hanson’s One Nation.

Yet on the other hand, each of these moves possessed utility for the most significant element of the vision: ‘Asia’. It was a vision which went beyond pragmatic calculations of economic interest—important as they were—to the projection of a new national destiny in close partnership with Asia in ways which would both force and require significant cultural and attitudinal changes within Australia. Thus Aboriginal
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

‘reconciliation’ and growing cultural diversity would enhance Australia’s reputation for tolerance and encourage acceptance from a region with enduring memories of the White Australia policy; likewise Republicanism would make Australia more politically coherent to Asians; and structural economic reform would serve as an example of the kind of neo-liberal changes the Government sought in the regional political economy. Men like Keating and Evans would later take pride in three main developments in the drive to realise Australia’s ‘destiny’ within a more cohesive ‘Asia-Pacific Community’: the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC) trade forum, the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF) security dialogues, and the passing of Cold War tensions in Indochina with the Paris agreements on Cambodia. Unsurprisingly, New Order Indonesia would be seen as crucial to them all.

This became clear soon after Keating became Prime Minister in early 1992. Like Whitlam twenty years before, he chose his first meeting with Soeharto as an opportunity to outline his vision of change for both Australia and the region, and sought Soeharto’s co-operation in realising it. The anguished trope repeated since 1986 was at the forefront, with Keating saying at the banquet held in his honour that ‘at a time of rapid economic and strategic change, Indonesia and Australia have more in common than our different histories and cultures suggest.’ Here a common destiny—‘to participate fully in the rapid economic growth of the Asia-Pacific region’—required more than a rich endowment of natural resources. For Indonesia it required ‘national resilience’, and for Australia something he portrayed as its mirror image:

We know that to reach our full potential we must work co-operatively, combine our talents and energy, harness our human and material strength, and make Australia more truly one nation...In the 1990s I believe you will see Australia face these realities as never before. I think you will see us pursue our goals as never before—with an unparalleled sense of purpose and efficiency. (Keating, 1992a: 2)

A more frank statement of the liberal ontology, and of the economic bottom-line for Keating’s vision of the new Australian identity, would be hard to find. This he reinforced by outlining the changes he saw necessary for Australians to ‘positively engage with the region in which we live’—‘in the 1990s I believe the Australian identity is being reshaped in a way which is consistent with the multicultural reality of our society, and the final passing of the vestiges of our colonial past.’ (1992a: 4)

It was an extraordinary claim, which showed little understanding of how his embrace of Soeharto may have been intimately connected with Australia’s ‘colonial past’. A clue was visible in his assertion that Australia and Indonesia shared ‘fundamental interests in the stability and security of our region’ and, as he said the
following day, that Australia had benefited from Soeharto’s achievement in ‘establishing political stability and economic progress in Indonesia.’ In asserting Australia’s common stake in ‘national resilience’—the doctrine which had legitimated the Army’s oppressive control of Indonesian life for twenty-five years—Keating betrayed how the two states shared common ontological assumptions and political technologies. These he would try to deepen through arguments about a common neoliberal future and through increasing defence co-operation (which would increasingly double as a diplomatic and political channel to the New Order). In this vision of essential sameness, played out in a ‘shared future’, Keating saw a reconciliation of otherwise substantial differences: ‘We are different—culturally, historically, politically—but we can handle the difference...The Asia-Pacific, as well as Indonesia, can achieve unity in diversity.’ (1992b: 5; emphasis added)

The stakes involved in this enterprise were made clear by the occasion which shadowed his visit—the Santa Cruz massacre in East Timor, which had taken place only four months before and formed the greatest challenge to the bilateral relationship since the original invasion in 1975. As many as four hundred people may have died in the killings, which were secretly videotaped and subsequently broadcast around the globe. Australian-based journalists and aid workers witnessed the massacre, and a Malaysian-New Zealand student resident in Australia, Kamal Bamadhaj, was one of its first victims. Gareth Evans, at an APEC meeting in Seoul with Indonesia’s Ali Alatas, commented that ‘Everyone feels a little sick in the stomach about the news’, while Prime Minister Hawke said the killings were ‘an appalling tragedy’ and demanded that the perpetrators be punished. A few days later, in an unprecedented development, he urged the Indonesians to negotiate a settlement with the East Timorese, including the resistance, although he ruled out UN involvement. He also said that Indonesia’s policies had failed to win the ‘hearts and minds’ of the East Timorese, and that his planned February 1992 visit to Indonesia hinged on the results of the government’s investigation. Other sections of the ALP were pressing for the suspension of the defence co-operation program and a sweeping review of the bilateral relationship should Indonesia’s response to the killings be inadequate.37 (Parkinson, 1991a, 1991b, 1991c; Metherall, 1991a, 1991b; Austin, 1991)

In each of his speeches Keating devoted only one line to the ‘tragic events’ in Dili, and publicly stated that the Government’s response to the massacre—a military-dominated commission of enquiry which blamed the demonstrators for provoking the troops, and the replacement of the regional and provincial military commanders (in the latter case, with a far more hardline figure)—was ‘credible’. Hawke’s uncharacteristic

---

37 In an attempt to head off caucus pressure for greater sanctions, Evans agreed to visit Indonesia to deliver a protest. When there, he found himself unable to secure a meeting with Soeharto and encountered strong resistance to Australian proposals for a consulate in Dili or a substantial reduction of the military presence. (Parkinson, 1991c)
call for an inclusive dialogue on East Timor’s future was ignored. While Keating also
privately appealed for the criminal trials of independence protesters to be abandoned, he
was rebuffed. This was not to stand in the way of rebuilding a relationship he later
described as Australia’s most important: ‘If we fail to get this relationship right, and
nurture and develop it, the whole web of our foreign relations is incomplete.’ Eighteen
months later he underscored the compromise when, on a visit to the United States, he
urged congressmen and the Clinton Administration to tone down their criticism of
China and Indonesia so that momentum on APEC would not falter. (Keating, 1992b: 8;
Schwarz, 1992: 9; Ryan ed. 1995: 201; SMH, 15.9.95)

The crowning gesture came in December 1995, shortly before he lost office, when
he announced the conclusion of the Agreement on Maintaining Security (AMS) which
he had personally negotiated with Soeharto, in secret, for the previous eighteen
months. The Agreement provided for substantial future increases in defence co-
operation—by then already at an all-time high—and for possible joint deployments with
ABRI in the event of ‘adverse challenges’ to either nation’s security. When questioned
by the ABC’s Kerry O’Brien about the wisdom of involving Australia so closely with a
force that had such a poor human rights record, Keating replied:

We are not going to hock the entire Indonesian relationship on Timor. A Prime
Minister’s duty, his first duty, is to the security of his country. (SMH, 16.12.95)

This was the crux of the rhetoric of sameness and common destiny—an Agreement
negotiated against the initial advice of his defence and foreign ministers, without
consultation with the broader cabinet, party or community, and which was frankly
premised on the refusal to risk relations with Indonesia—and by implication, the whole
ontological project of the Australian subjectivity—by recognising the legitimate claims
of the Timorese.38 Once again, and rarely so baldly, their future and well-being had
been bartered against Australia’s own security. When speaking of Australia’s
engagement with Asia in 1992 Keating had assured his audience that ‘Australia’s
democratic institutions and traditions are non-negotiable’—yet in this case they had
been blatantly negotiated away. Instead Australians had to be satisfied with assurances
that the AMS was ‘about providing for Australia’s future and creating greater certainty
about that future.’ As foreshadowed in Australia’s Regional Security and in the 1987
Defence White Paper, it was the logical extension of a judgement that Soeharto’s

38 See Hartcher (1996a and 1996b), who argued that both Gareth Evans and Robert Ray were
unenthusiastic about the idea, forcing Keating to assume carriage of negotiations personally,
while keeping them informed of progress and consulting them about possible wording. One point
that Hartcher makes is that the Australians were happy to accept the wording ‘adverse
challenges’ as a trigger for action, even while maintaining Australia would never become involved
internally. ‘It also occurred to them that—one day—it might be in Australia’s interests to have
the scope to assist Indonesia in dealing with internal strife.’
After Guam, New Order(s) 1969-1995

regime had been the ‘most beneficial strategic development to affect Australia and its region in thirty years’, and which sought to provide certainty through the post-Cold war period by promoting ‘the commonality of shared strategic interests between Australia and the countries of Southeast Asia and the Southwest Pacific.’ (Ryan, 1995: 190-201, emphasis added; Canberra Press Conference, 14.12.95; DoD, 1987: 6)

What this produced was a disturbing convergence of elite attitudes which ignored both the growing popular dissatisfaction in Indonesia with Soeharto, and, when taken as a measure of Australia’s new maturity and Asia-Pacific identity, only increased the distance elites were stretching between the ‘new’ strategic, economic and ontological architecture and fundamental democratic aspirations in both societies. Opponents of the AMS rightly questioned the boost it gave to Soeharto at a time when his rule was coming under increasing challenge, and in the capabilities Australia’s defence co-operation program—which outstripped that of any other nation—gave to ABRI units such as the Kopassus special forces which had been at the forefront of repressive operations in East Timor, Irian Jaya and Aceh. While Australian officials emphasised training was provided only for external defence, they failed to consider its use by a force configured primarily for internal security. Indeed a former Australian Army attache in Jakarta confirmed to the author that training could and was being utilised against opponents of the regime.39 Officers like Aminullah Ibrahim (Chairman of the ABRI faction in the Indonesian Parliament) may have hoped the AMS would improve the image of the Indonesian Army in Australia—instead it only underlined the irreconcilable divergence in values between both nations’ elites and their publics, while binding them into obligations they had never condoned. (Jakarta Post, 16.12.95: 2) Such ‘differences’ could not so easily be ‘handled’ or bridged.

CONCLUSION: ON THE EDGE
OF THE ‘ASIA-PACIFIC COMMUNITY’

1995 is no doubt an artificial point at which to break this narrative off, but in many ways it offers a useful moment for pause—a moment marked simultaneously by enormous change, transformation, and the unbridled confidence of Australian elites that they still held the keys to the future. Security and prosperity were guaranteed by the growing neo-liberal transformation of regional economies amid stunning levels of growth, by an aggressive trade strategy centred on the region, and by a growing

39 Interview with Robert Lowry, Australian Defence Studies Centre, 26 February 1997. Lowry is a respected scholar of the Indonesian military and regional security issues. He is the author of Australia-Indonesia Security Co-operation: For Better Or Worse?, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre ANU, 1996 and The Armed Forces of Indonesia, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997. Lowry’s points here directly contradicted assurances the Author was given during a November 1996 meeting with Australian Military Attache to Indonesia, Brigadier Ernie Chamberlain, that Australia provided no training which could be used for internal operations.
political acceptance built around strategic policy, military diplomacy and a thoroughly compromised embrace of a dying New Order regime. Even Gareth Evans was moved to predict the imminent realisation of Fukuyama’s neo-Hegelian ‘end of history’ in Asia—citing moves by the Chinese and Vietnamese toward market economies, the ‘democratisation’ of Taiwan and South Korea, and the growing acceptance amongst regional leaders of APEC. (Evans, 1990) Uncertainty wore many faces through this period—a blackmail of danger and opportunity, genuine geopolitical and ontological challenges, and a state which Government believed itself still capable of mapping and controlling.

Yet viewed from only a short distance in time, the confidence was clearly misplaced. A new Australian Government was shortly to be elected and, while continuing the broad thrust of defence and foreign policy as Labor had established it, made determined (and successful) efforts to repudiate its larger visions of Australian identity. In 1997 and 1998 the dreams of endless growth and prosperity, and of Asian economies turning into a global economic engine, were destroyed by the worst economic crisis in fifty years. In Indonesia, worst hit by the terrible fall in currency values and the dramatic flight of capital, the unthinkable happened—Soeharto’s fortunes plummeted with the rupiah until he was finally forced to resign on 21 May 1998, amid nation-wide rioting and upheaval which killed hundreds in only a few days.

Nonetheless the power of the metaphysics which foretold a transformed Australian identity in concert with the realisation of a new ‘Asia-Pacific community’ cannot be underestimated—it remained strong, and would still be the prism through which the crisis was understood and tackled (at least in elite circles).40 Likewise it continued to inform powerful concepts of nation-building and identity within Australia. The problematic legacy of 1990s Labor lies in its claim, like the governments of Whitlam and Curtin before it, to reconcile security with justice—in a way which went beyond an idealist synthesis of domestic and international policy to a reconciliation of some of the darkest features of the Australian historical experience. If there are doubts that these weren’t all interlinked questions absolutely crucial to the survival—and renewal—of a unitary Australian subjectivity, they should be erased by Keating’s remarkable Redfern Park Speech in December 1992 to launch the International Year for the World’s Indigenous People, only thirteen months after the Dili Massacre:

---

40 For instance The Australian’s international editor Paul Kelly wrote in July 1998 that the Asian crisis ‘will either make or break the idea of an Asia-Pacific community, whose creation has been the central objective of Australian policy for a decade.’ Similarly Paul Keating argued in March that ‘The whole direction in which the Asia-Pacific has been moving—towards economic and political openness, towards a sense of Pacific community—is at risk. It is a perilous moment and there are real questions in my mind as to whether we and our institutions can meet it successfully.’ (The Australian, 29 July 1998; Paul Keating, ‘Australia and the Asian crisis’, Speech at the University of NSW, 25 March 1998, http://www.keating.org.au/newspeech.html)
This will be a year of great significance for Australia. It comes at a time when we have committed ourselves to succeeding in the test which so far we have always failed... a fundamental test of our social goals and our national will: our ability to say to ourselves and the rest of the world that Australia is a first-rate social democracy, that we are what we should be—truly the land of the fair go and the better chance. There is no more basic test of how seriously we mean these things. It is a test of our self-knowledge. (Ryan, 1996: 227-8; emphasis added)

They were eloquent, courageous, historic words—but when judged against the barefaced and calculated indifference to the Timorese, so horribly ironic. Consider another part of the same speech, which argued that the starting point in bringing justice to Australia’s indigenous people must be an ‘act of recognition’ of the systematic crimes committed against them: ‘With some noble exceptions, we failed to make the most basic human response and enter into their hearts and minds. We failed to ask, how would I feel if this were done to me? As a consequence, we failed to see that what we were doing degraded all of us.’ (Ryan ed. 1996: 228) In vain may we wait for the day when an Australian Prime Minister makes the same gesture of recognition to Soeharto’s many victims. Perhaps they were just (unwittingly) cynical words, written for a man unaware of their irony, but they mark a larger failure of discourse—the failure of a sweeping formation of thought and being which is still hegemonic.

Its failure lies in its approach to the profound challenge of this moment—symbolised by the irreversible force of the Mabo decision—and in its attempt to close out one aporia in the Australian identity while leaving others to fester; indeed, in its belief that such aporias can be ultimately closed out at all. At a time which called for a recognition of difference (on the Other’s terms and in ways which forced profound transformations of Self) Keating’s speech betrayed a continued quest for totality, for unity, for one Australian nation with one destiny and one path to realising it. While his praise for Mabo indicated a partial recognition of the need to destabilise identity, along with its historic legacy, the reflex was toward the older certainty of being and the spiritual integrity of the body-politic. This is the subtext of his call, in the Redfern Park Speech, for ‘the deepening of Australian social democracy to include indigenous Australians’:

Where Aboriginal Australians have been included in the life of Australia they have made remarkable contributions. Economic contributions, particularly in the pastoral and agricultural industry. They are there in the frontier and exploration history of Australia. They are there in the wars. In sport, to an extraordinary degree. In literature and art and music. In all of these things they have shaped our knowledge of this continent and of ourselves. They have shaped our identity.
They are there in the Australian legend. We should never forget—they have helped build this nation. (Ryan ed. 1996: 230)

_They have shaped our identity...they have helped build this nation_—yes, in ways he hardly allows. What could be more basic historical facts, than that they have helped build ‘this nation’ by being dispossessed, by dying and disappearing, by suffering ethnocide, by their exclusion from every act of law and sovereignty and foundation? In the same breath that acknowledges the raw fact of these crimes their challenge to ‘The Australian legend’ is wilfully forgotten; instead Keating seeks to assimilate indigenous Australians into a new mythology of ‘the Australian social democracy’ in which their only value is to nation-building and production—the very forces which threatened their extinction. Worse, their value is constructed in ways which reinforce liberal economics as an index of being and destiny, as if we are too stupid or mean-hearted to recognise the intrinsic grandeur, integrity and difference of their unique cultures. In short, Keating’s speech refused to acknowledge how this experience burns an unbridgeable gap between the economics of the liberal ontology and its moral claims to justice and enlightenment. Some events, some wounds in the spirit of the body-politic, cannot be healed.

This was a symptomatic of a discourse which, however remarkable the changes it advocated, still felt the need to link up with mythical points of origin and lines of tradition—such as Federation, the Pacific war and the development work of the pioneers. This perhaps allowed 1990s Labor to reconcile its compromises with its idealism—to call for a continued faith in the ANZUS Alliance and a US strategic and economic engagement in Asia, to dispatch a naval force to the Persian Gulf following Saddam Hussein’s invasion of Kuwait and to support the Bush Administration’s appallingly violent solution to the impasse; and to seize on Soeharto’s New Order as a Whitlamesque key to a (thirty years new) Australian identity. Even their most laudable foreign policy enterprise, the final achievement of a negotiated resolution of the war in Cambodia, in the face of resistance from the US, China and some ASEAN states, involved depressing compromises.41 At the February 1993 session of the UN Commission on Human Rights in Geneva Australian officials, at Evans’ direction, helped scuttle a vote which would have provided for the appointment of a special rapporteur with wide powers to investigate and monitor human rights in Cambodia after UN forces left later that year. UN officials argued this contravened the spirit of the Paris Accords—but given the violence and instability which have marked Cambodian

---

41 Critics have also focussed on the failure to disarm the Khmer Rouge, the effects of the huge UN contingent (costing US$2 billion) on the stability of the Cambodian economy and the growth in prostitution, and on the poorly planned and corrupt pattern of development initiated by the return of western loans, aid and investment to Cambodia. (See Lindsay Murdoch, ‘The Spoils of Peace’, _The Good Weekend_, May 15 1993: 41)
politics ever since, the rapporteur’s appointment would have been a prescient move. Australian officials told the UN that Canberra’s instructions warned: ‘Don’t provoke ASEAN [which feared the precedent of a country-specific monitor] on this’. (Murdoch, 1993a: 8) Such weak-kneed compromise, and the continuing deafness to the plight of the East Timorese, underlined the ultimate tragedy of the period. Whatever glimpses there were of an ethical future in talk of ‘good international citizenship’, the broad structure of stability and future prosperity remained that which had been established over the blood-turned soil of Indonesia between 1966 and 1969.

Yet in the Cambodian solution, however problematic and flawed, were the seeds of a genuinely new vision of global community. This was further pursued into Evans’ 1993 ‘blue book’ *Co-operating For Peace*,42 which sought to envision a ‘co-operative security’ based on enhancing the UN’s role in ‘the prevention and resolution of all kinds of deadly conflict’ in ways which emphasise ‘reassurance rather than deterrence’ and do not ‘advance military solutions over non-military ones.’ (Evans and Grant, 1995: 102) In a later article, *Co-operative Security and Intrastate Conflict*, Evans acknowledged that security should be ‘as much about the protection of individuals as it is about the defense of the territorial integrity of states. “Human Security”, thus understood, is at least as much prejudiced by major intrastate conflict as it is by interstate conflict.’ (Evans, 1994: 9) Yet moves to involve the UN in a far-reaching dialogue on East Timor—surely the most pressing ‘intrastate conflict’ at Australia’s shores—were not made, short of Evans’ bizarre acknowledgment, late in Keating’s term, that while the Timorese right to self-determination had never been expressed, this should occur within the framework of Indonesian sovereignty. (George, 1996: 15) This was perhaps 1990s Labor’s most intriguing legacy—in texts like these, we had glimpsed worlds they refused to give us.

---

42 Numerous writers, while supporting the broad thrust of Evans’ enterprise in *Co-operating for Peace*, have expressed doubts about its success—in particular, its ability to detach itself from an underlying power-politics framework or to properly respond to the pressing ‘security’ issues faced by the millions left out of the ‘globalisation fairytale’. See the contributions to Cheeseman and Bruce ed. *Discourses of Danger and Dread Frontiers*, 1996, and Jim George, ‘Australia’s Global Perspectives in the 1990s: A Case of Old Realist Wine in New Neo-Liberal Bottles?’, in Leaver and Cox ed. *Middling, Meddling, Muddling: Issues in Australian Foreign Policy*, Sydney: Allen and Unwin, 1997.
PART III

Concluding Essay

It seems to me that the real political task in a society such as ours is to criticise the working of institutions which appear to be both neutral and independent—to criticise them in such a manner that the political violence which has always exercised itself obscurely through them will be unmasked, so that we can fight them.

Michel Foucault, 1974: 171.
Conclusion
After Security

*Man is not the lord of beings. He is the shepherd of Being.*

**Martin Heidegger, Letter on Humanism, 1969: 221.**

My most immediate feeling is despair—confronting this history, the history of this ontology, an ontology of Australian security and being which, whatever its dramatic historical permutations, has rested on a single, persistent, violent drive for sameness. Through the original fears of the British Crown as they faced an imagined ‘criminal class’ in their midst, to the war of the pioneers against the backward, unproductive Aboriginal, to the culmination of an Australian subject in the blood sacrifice of the Great War, this murderous fantasy of identity has systematically effaced the (cultural and industrial) conflict at its heart and made its lifeblood the fear and extinction of difference. Worse, as the wartime fears of Japan were morphed into a sweeping strategic and ideological confrontation of (Asian) communism, culminating in the Vietnam War and the liquidation of the PKI, this ontology took a virtual stranglehold on reality. Thus as the folly and brutality of the Indochina war became evident, and patterns of Australian identity were changed with the abrogation of White Australia, moves towards Aboriginal justice and an ‘engagement’ with Asia, the general structures of this ontology would be preserved. The tragedies of East Timor and Cambodia, among many, are testament to its terrible perseverance.

Yet it is important to remember that this history, in its entirety, has been shadowed by opposition and dissent—from British liberals opposed to transportation, whites disturbed by the dispossession and murder of Aborigines, working class opposition to Federation and the militarism of the Great War, to the modern peace, human rights and democracy movements. Tragically, they have often failed, but they have also prevented terrible policies becoming worse again. On one hand, their failures have been the spur to this study, and require its findings to be critically explored further. (Thus my concern to understand security’s hold on subjectivity and its successful subversion of democracy.) On another, the very existence of this counter-tradition is a major source
Conclusion

of hope and possibility. Allied with a continuing project of innovation and rethinking, it might mitigate this despair and provide valuable clues to a vision of life after security.

But what might come after security? Security? A different kind of security, detached from its moorings in the nation-state and the fearful imagination of totality? Or something else again?

I cannot provide a conclusive answer, and some will be appalled by the very question. But perhaps, at least on my part, refusing to provide definitive answers—in the form of easily mapped and solved Cartesian problems—is part of the solution. This is to argue that one of the keys lies in developing the kind of ‘thinking spaces’ Jim George (1989: 273) and others have long called for—spaces in which the very foundations of thought and action can be understood and called into question, can be laid open for debate, rather than existing below the threshold of understanding like an impermeable ground. Where that space of thinking and debate remains permanently open, and in which the discursive constitution of problems themselves, prior to their ‘solution’, is simultaneously up for grabs. To open up such a space of thinking, to lay out the history and contingency of this ‘ground’ we have called security, has been a fundamental objective of this study. Thus my concern, beginning in chapter two, to understand security in terms of the construction and narration of its ontological certainties, the limits of its modes of subjectivity, and the meanings it has applied to reality. Having tracked the diverse linkages of this chain, we can begin to pry them apart.

Yet the question remains—what comes after security? A few provisional answers can already be made.

First I would argue that Security does not come after security. I fear it is no longer salvageable—except perhaps as a vernacular figure—but no longer as a hegemonic concept or a credible statement of universal human need. Its perversion has been too final, its ossification into a metaphysical canopy for the worst manifestations of liberal modernity too damaging. This is where I break with nearly everyone—realists, liberals, and critical thinkers like R. B. J. Walker, James der Derian, J. Ann Tickner and the Secure Australia Project. Obviously at a more concrete level security describes real needs and legitimate concerns, but these have other names which retain the virtue of specificity: human, land and women’s rights, self-determination, environmental protection, conflict prevention and resolution, the right to adequate food, housing and services, the right to control one’s own economic destiny, freedom from assault and violence and exploitation, and so on. While some of these terms have their own metaphysical baggage, my point is that we should speak of such needs and priorities in their specificity—in the detailed structural and political contexts in which they arise and must be fought out. To subsume them within a new rubric of ‘human security’, for instance, contains new dangers—it risks doubling the forgetting that the discursive
Conclusion

apparatus of national and international security has utilised; it risks diverting the need to
conduct policy and economic management critically, responsibly and accountably, into
a new debate-suppressing metaphysical claim; and it risks unwittingly buttressing the
claims of elite national security discourses to the real, by closing off an interrogation of
how security itself frames and limits the problems it pretends to solve. We need to push
back further, into what William Connolly (1995: 1) calls ‘the ontopolitical’, to question
the very being security claims to preserve.

This requires first a critical questioning of security’s ontological certitudes, along
with their philosophical structure and political conditions. This task has been the central
focus of this study. Second, it requires efforts to consider whether such ontologies can
be rethought or abandoned and, if so, how? What might come in their place? Focus
here has fallen on the question of agency—new possibilities for subjectivity in relation
to larger social forces and formations—and on ethics—imagining new ethical relations
between individuals, between individuals and institutions, between states and
communities, and between humans and ecosystems. This is obviously a vast project,
whose pre-occupations are visible across the gamut of post-marxism, environmental
philosophy, critical theory and post-structuralism, and reflected in many contemporary
political debates and struggles. More directly it is the focus of much of Foucault’s
work, the feminist writings on ethics and difference of Rosalyn Diprose and Moira
Gatens, books like Lyotard’s The Differend, William Connolly’s The Ethos of
Pluralisation and Toby Miller’s The Well-Tempered Self, and Jim George’s 1995 essay
Realist ‘Ethics’, International Relations and Post-Modernism. I can only began to
outline its possibilities here.

This is where I think Heidegger’s intriguing phrase—‘Man is not the lord of
beings, but the shepherd of Being’—suggests some initial signposts. While I would
resist the way, in the Letter on Humanism, he resolves the issue—by asserting a
reconciliation of man with the ‘truth’ of Being—we should not underestimate its
dramatic departure from metaphysics. Directed against the ‘unconditioned self-
assertion’ of Descartes and Hegel, it offers a vision of being which is not possessed by
humans, which does not culminate in ‘subjectivity’, and which is not limited to the
hubris of the animal rationale. It suggests Being exists outside and beyond the
obcessive self-knowing, self-making capacities of modern subjects (whether they are
individuals or nations); that Being is humble, elusive even; that humans should take up
a position of ‘guardianship’ for a being which they do not solely own or control—a
care for Being. Thus being is ‘being-in-the-world’, in which the world ‘does not at all
signify beings or any realm of beings but the openness of Being.’ (Heidegger, 1969:
221-226)

What is most crucial in the Letter on Humanism is the way, firstly, in which Being
is thought as openness, rather than completion and finality; second, the way the link
Conclusion

between nationalism and (Hegelian) subjectivity is criticised; and third, the way in which Heidegger is willing to permanently lay being—and thus metaphysics and ontology—open to question. He urges that ‘thinking...risk a shock that could for the first time cause perplexity concerning the *humanitas* of *homo humanus* and its basis. In this way it could open a reflection...that thinks not only about man but also about the nature of man, not only about his nature but even more primordially about the dimension in which the essence of man, determined by Being itself, is at home.’ This, he argues, does not lead to a defence of the inhuman but ‘opens other vistas’ for the human. (1969: 227) Half a century after the *Letter on Humanism* was first published, many of these vistas have been opened, and the work must continue. Already it offers valuable clues to the kind of critical humanism (or ethical anti-humanism) needed to rethink a security which styles itself as both the mechanism and telos of a chain which links nation, identity and being in global opposition to otherness, uncertainty and difference.

I use Being here to refer to both the individual’s experience of existence, and that of the larger structures of community (such as nations and civilisations) which elites have tried to imagine within stable forms of identity. Here we confront the basic power and cunning of the political technology I have called *security*—its ability to organise particular experiences of personal subjectivity in tight conjunction with larger, totalising forms of (national or civilisational) subjectivity. This is what Foucault has called the ‘political double-bind’—a ‘tricky combination in the same political structures of individualisation techniques and totalisation procedures.’ It was, he thought, a particularly insidious form of power, and one particularly hard to thwart or resist. Yet challenge it we must—he urged people to forget the injunction (so central to a politics of identity) to ‘discover who we are’, and instead to ‘refuse who we are...the political, ethical, social, philosophical problem of our days is not to try and liberate the individual from the state, and from the state’s institutions, but to liberate us both from the state and from the type of individualisation which is linked to the state. We have to promote new forms of subjectivity through refusal of this type of individuality which has been imposed on us for several centuries.’ (Rabinow, 1984: 22)

In Australia’s case this experience of ‘individuality’ and collective identity has been with us for a little over two centuries—yet, as I sought to show in chapters two and three, it drew on deep roots in western culture and British imperial history. Given this continuity, its solid basis in Australia’s domestic political culture, and its dramatic effects on the surrounding region, I am under no illusions that it can be quickly swept away. In short, its power lies not only in its historical ability to define Australian identity but in what it shares with a general structure and experience of modernity. On the other hand, there are numerous tendencies in global politics and culture which directly challenge its operation: the dissident forces which have successfully challenged
Conclusion

authoritarianism, abuse and exploitation in co-operation with supporters from across the borders of nation, culture and experience. Together, often against enormous odds, they have toppled dictators—most recently and spectacularly Indonesia’s Soeharto—and continue to confront the highly organised and systemic forces which would naturalise the destruction of human dignity and endanger the natural inheritance of the planet. If such creative movements are to be acknowledged and allowed to flourish, if a vision of life after security is to be imagined and lived, a careful unmasking of security’s key concepts and mechanisms must be carried out. From there a more creative and daring work of thought must begin, which seeks to imagine new forms of subjectivity which escape security, which might generate new—more just and ethical—forms of economic and political life.

*Genealogy*, a genealogical writing of the kind I have tried here, is a crucial first step. In answer to the challenge that genealogy is merely critique, that it provides few signposts to the future, I would argue that it is itself an intervention—a work of hope. William Connolly seems to agree. He argues Foucault’s genealogies open us up to the play of possibility in the present...they incite critical responses to unnecessary violences and injuries surreptitiously imposed upon life by the insistence that prevailing forms are natural, rational, universal or necessary. The idea is to deploy genealogy to loosen up sedimented forms and to cultivate a care for life already there in protean form—to incite energies on behalf of extending diversity...Foucauldian genealogy is an essential component in an ethico-political orientation that asserts that the fundaments of being are mobile... (1995: 34)

The danger is that whatever the ‘protean’ energies of the dissident and idealistic movements currently in play, they might be recaptured by new variants of the totalising political technology they implicitly contest. Francis Fukuyama has provided the model for one of the most common: the neo-Hegelian triumph of liberal democracy and economic thought, which again conceals its effects behind a universalism of which *security* is still a part. Thus my additional preoccupation in this study has been to demonstrate how a third move is launched from the ‘political double-bind’—the extension of a totalising political imagination into a *geopolitical* one, which in turn is projected back into the very interior of the self. A ‘strategic imagination’ which provides meaning and solidity to space, organises its control and capacities, its human and economic flows, and which, through the rhetorical incitement of security and danger and global possibility, can shape and limit the psychic interiors of individuals. Australia has experienced its whole history within the operation of this technology.

Thus the monotonous pairing of *security* with *prosperity*. Here freedom is first exchanged for security—the state offering its protection and sovereignty its promise of
identity—and later, in a way clear in Bentham and Hegel, a strong image of the state can be married to an acquisitive, productive and self-ish mode of economic subjectivity. Having made individuals relinquish to the state so much autonomy, prosperity is mobilised as a totalising appeal to human desire. In turn ‘sovereignty’ provides both a mode of representation and—in the form of international policy—of action in the vast spaces of geopolitics. Security and prosperity become naturalised in the idea of the national interest—a key idea which must be placed under permanent question. Because it links constructions of sameness, self-interest and economic self-ishness with modes of group thinking and international policymaking, it is a particularly effective, and dangerous, mechanism. The idea of the national interest, which so many still invoke as a founding category, is alone one of the greatest obstacles to a vision of life after security. Through it elite interests can be naturalised as those of all, and conflict, inequality and powerplay masked by the illusion of the common good. Morality can be subsumed beneath ‘prudence’, and ethics smothered by a power which refuses to speak its own name. Yet this vision is not without a universalist gloss, projecting as it does an osmosis between the self-interested seeking of ‘national interests’ and the achievement of international progress and order—security and prosperity, blackmail and promise, this is ‘who we are’. Dare we be otherwise?

Yet it is not enough to conduct this debate within the terms of either a liberal-realist conflict or a liberal-realist synthesis—both derive from the same model of identity and both assume the essentially unproblematic, if debatable, status of national interests. We need to question the unity and representative power of ‘sovereignty’, and question its ability to supply a meaningful framework for international policy or the workings of the international system. We also need to question the detailed incitement of desire, obedience and fear which integrates individuals with such totalising representations of state. My hunch is that pushing beyond security involves the development of tactics which can work at all these levels—which empower individuals to recognise the larger social, cultural and economic implications of the everyday forms of desire, subjection and discipline they encounter, to challenge and rewrite them, and which in turn contributes to efforts to transform the larger structures of being, exchange and power which sustain (and have been sustained by) these forms. Toby Miller has already hinted at such a project, saying that we need to push beyond the discourse of citizenship because it ‘is a doctrine of equivalence that denies difference’ and ‘is not usable for producing selves that are otherwise outside convention.’ This, he says, ‘is to assert the existence of agency. It assumes that people can organize their own emancipation from definition and enclosure, in search of selves that are not transactions with the deeply secreted truth, but rather rejections or appropriations of surface categories.’ (Miller, 1993: 221-4)
Conclusion

Drawing on his work, and that of the thinkers I cited earlier, my initial suggestion is for a new ethics—dynamic, open and self-critical, the basis for more work rather than renewed certainty—whose fundamental task is to problematise the unity of nation and self, and turn it outward to a different economy.

Such an ethics might cultivate and acknowledge an intertwined series of needs and transformations:

- to connect self with other, in a way which recognises their interdependence and develops genuinely ethical principles for their interconnection;

- to connect human with animal, environment and ecosystem in a similarly ethical relation, as an alternative to modernist dreams of Cartesian mastery and exploitation;

- to develop a permanent ethos of responsibility towards difference, and in the exercise of the power and capacities of the self in their military, economic and cultural dimensions. This requires that we resist the appeal to desire and subjection which security has utilised to thwart such a sense of responsibility;

- to develop ways of thinking and acting which resist the reflex to control and master uncertainty, which too often expresses a drive to refuse what is unfamiliar and challenging in it and can, as Connolly says, actually exacerbate fragmentation and contingency. Instead uncertainty must be searched for what in it calls for the unthought, for new connections not old forms; and finally

- for a permanent critique of totalities and universals which, while rejecting what is metaphysical about them, and the egoistic drive for sameness they too often express, retains the trace of what is ethical and empowering in them. While security may be of little use here, ideas of justice, emancipation, community, tolerance and harmony need to be preserved and rethought.

William Connolly calls this ‘an ethos of critical responsiveness’, an ‘ethics of engagement’ with the other on—as far as possible—its own terms. Likewise Moira Gatens argues for dialogue with the Other that might allow space for the unknown and unfamiliar, for a ‘debate and engagement with the other’s law and the other’s ethics’—an encounter which involves a transformation of the self rather than the other. For Connolly, this would generate a new mode of being which affirms an ‘indebtedness to what it is not while reconfiguring dogmatic interpretations of what it is.’ If this can be found, ‘a new respect might emerge for drives by the other to break out of injurious
definitions, even as these drives destabilise and denaturalise the identity of established constituencies.' This is a vision of ‘the political’ reshaped to ‘honor the politics of disturbance, the politics of enactment, and the politics of movements across state lines.’ In short, as I suggested in chapter two, it is a vision of the Other which never returns to the Same. (Connolly, 1995: xviii; Gatens, 1996: 27)

No doubt some remain incredulous. They might ask, what would you do instead? Is there anything more than critique at work here? How does this translate into policy? Contained within such questions is a political and epistemological realism, which further demands to know: ‘What is your orientation to reality, if its not an enlightened realism that does its best to express our values in a competitive and imperfect world? How does this amount to a viable platform for intervention?’

I have many ideas for policy, even policy which might introduce substantive changes within ‘established’ political constraints. Similarly, throughout this study I have sought to suggest alternative decisions, and to recover the history of debate and conflict which surrounded those that were taken. Yet this is not merely a policy manual—that presupposes too much. To accede to this demand is to leave unquestioned those frameworks—the national interest’, ‘the way of life’, ‘prosperity’—which precede policy and relieve decisionmakers of so many choices. At the outset, and in thinking alternative policy paths, these underlying structures need be placed under permanent critical suspicion. This leads to a questioning of ‘reality’ itself, to a form of history which uncovers its contested and problematic nature, reveals the motives of those who speak it, and speculates that dramatically different political, economic and cultural possibilities might be available. Such an approach would reveal a very different ‘art of the possible.’

I would also suggest that an ‘ethic of engagement’ has profound and immediate implications for policy. Translated into policy, and particularly international policy, such an ethic would go far to dethrone coercive definitions of the national interest and its callous disregard for the suffering of the other. This achieved, statements like Richard Woolcott’s—that ‘sentimental’ notions of self-determination for the Timorese or Bougainvilleans threaten our security—become impossible. Because it is exactly sentiment that has to be put into action here; thus recognising our indebtedness to the other, a sense of debt for the wartime suffering of the Timorese might lead us to support their right to self-determination, and the genuine transformation of the political and ontological forms which currently suppress it. In Bougainville’s case it would lead to a genuinely democratic vote on the island’s future which does not, as political leaders have so often done in the past, automatically preclude independence or substantial autonomy. It would lead to a regional economic order in which the claims of workers, women, environmental sustainability and domestic welfare take priority over swift profits. It would likewise lead to a recognition of Aboriginal claims and history, and to
the struggles of indigenous people everywhere—an ethic of engagement pursued not in search of redemption but in the permanent discharge of historic responsibility.

This ethic demands the empowerment of communities against a sovereignty which claims their allegiance but rejects their participation, and the coding of empowerment into the fabric of aid and diplomacy. Could we give aid selflessly, and ensure local groups determine its priority and management? Could we support the evolution of a more just international economic order, without resorting to an impoverished (and often erroneous) calculus of self-interest? Could the self-affirming dreams of neo-liberal ideology be punctured, however briefly, by the voices of the dispossessed? As the thirty year edifice of the Indonesian New Order found, they are ignored at everyone’s peril. Yet however true, that should not be our first reflex—rather a simple human response to fellow tragedy, turmoil and hope. Happily we see such responses all around us—they must be built on and nurtured. The upheavals of the Asian political and economic crisis, which have so dramatically exposed the bankruptcy of the repressive development models foisted on Asian peoples, have only made such moves more urgent and necessary. Few greater opportunities for ethical cross-border engagements have ever been so obvious.

Possibilities even hide in the core of the liberal tradition I have found so suspect. In this sense we can oppose the most radical promises of liberalism—democracy, agency and emancipation—to its most repressive manifestations in the drive for the Same. In Australia’s sense, a politics of radical democracy has roots in our political traditions, as long as they are detached from the apparatuses of capture which blunted them—the fear of the other and the enabling sacrifice of the Anzac tradition. Examples abound, from the struggle against fascism in World War II (forgotten in its mutation into a global war against otherness), the support of trade unions for Indonesia’s independence in 1947, the global empathy of civil societies as they cheer the struggle of others for freedom, to the peoples movement for reconciliation which refuses both aggressive new assertions of self and ‘just’ rhetorics of totalisation.

I am referring here particularly to Paul Keating’s idea that ‘reconciliation’ could be appropriated to a renewed enterprise of nationbuilding and identity—here the Labor record presents us with a peculiar challenge. Beyond making ‘national interest’ the basis of their international policies, they have promised a reconciliation of it with a spirited pursuit of higher ideals—the promise, familiar since Curtin, that security could be reconciled with justice. Furthermore, they argued it drew on deep-seated Australian traditions and values. Gareth Evans maintained that the idealism in Australia’s foreign policy derived from its convict experiences and its record of immigration which saw ‘a significant proportion’ of the population made up of ‘those fleeing persecution or seeking a better life.’ As a result, ‘at least part of the national psyche is profoundly committed to notions of reform or improvement. And being the size and weight we are,
it is in Australia's national interest that the world should be governed by principles of justice, equality, talent and achievement, rather than status and power.’ (Evans and Grant, 1995: 42)

Thus paired with security, justice becomes at its worst merely a strengthened, idealised form of the political double-bind which, while suggesting new openings and transformations, only serves to strengthen a destructive ontology of being. Regrettably, this is the only way we can reconcile the Whitlam government’s rhetoric with its support for the Soeharto regime. Yet there is much—as a statement of principle—to admire in Evans’ words, however flawed their implementation during his term as Foreign Minister. Their import has already been recognised in the ALP’s new foreign policy platform, which advocates self-determination for East Timor and reintegrates human rights and democracy as central values in international policy. At the same time, there is a continued faith in the market as an unproblematic agent of international peace and development, and a conventional power-politics approach to security co-operation with the region. (ALP, 1998a) Thus it would seem prudent to doubt such totalising claims to justice while retaining a commitment to its ethical promise. However valuable and necessary a principle, justice too needs to be thought in its specificity. We are left with an idea and practice of justice which is more contingent, more suspicious, more alert to the concrete forms of reality in which it might be achieved—and which it must continue to contest and examine. Above all, it is alert to the unthought and unimagined that lies outside the currently hegemonic space of discourse. Justice here is not reconciled with security but suggests paths beyond it.

The idea of a world based on ‘justice, equality, talent and achievement’ is worth fighting for, and the idea that the desire for it has roots in Australia’s past is worth retaining. What it suggests is a form of identity which is more mobile and provisional, which recognises diversity and difference, and whose ethic of responsibility is spurred by its origins in past injustices rather than imperial hubris. Evans’ words give us a bridge from the past to the future, in stark contrast with a past and future so many still hold out as ideal. We live at a time when the ethnocentric belief in progress, free-markets and power-politics—the ontological trinity of a modern antipodean politics of security—has never seemed so destructive or so bankrupt. In such a context, the opportunities for change have rarely been more profound. We have only our selves to lose, and others to find.
Bibliography


______ (1995b), The decision to use the atomic bomb and the architecture of an American myth, New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

Benedict Anderson and Ruth McVey (1971), A Preliminary Analysis Of The October 1, 1965, Coup In Indonesia, Ithaca: Cornell University Modern Indonesia Project.


Bibliography


Bibliography


______ (1994) Someday This War's Gonna End: Vietnam Stories At The End Of History, (MA thesis), University of Technology Sydney.


______ and Edward Herman (1979), The Washington Connection and Third World Fascism, Montreal: Black Rose Books.


276
Bibliography


Bibliography


Alexander Downer (1998a), 'Australia's Future in the Asia-Pacific: Co-operation, Economic Reform and Liberalisation' (Speech to the Conference The Asian Crisis—Economic Analysis and Market Intelligence), University of Melbourne, 8 May.

_______ (1998b), 'Australia and Asia—After the Crisis', Speech to the Asia Research Centre, Perth, 6 August.


Bibliography

______ and Bruce Grant (1995), Australia’s Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.
Herbert Vere Evatt (1945), ‘Charter Address at the University of California’, Current Notes On International Affairs, Department of External Affairs (Australia), Volume 16: 118-130.
______ (1945b), Foreign Policy of Australia: Speeches, Angus and Robertson, Sydney.
Michel Foucault (1972), The Archaeology of Knowledge, New York: Pantheon Books.
Bibliography


Bibliography


_______ (1998), *Australian Foreign Policy and the Westphalian Model: Confronting the Future with the Legacy of the Past*, (Paper delivered to the International Studies Association Conference, Minnesota).


Bibliography


______ (1984b), ‘Thach’s visit will clear the air’, *The Sydney Morning Herald*, 5 March.


282
Bibliography


______ (1997c), *Wik Statement—Address to the Nation*, ABC Television, 30 November.


Bibliography


Bibliography

Cold War, Sydney: Allen and Unwin and Canberra: Department of International Relations, Australian National University: 176-194.


______ and Christopher Waters ed. (1997), Evatt to Evans: The Labor Tradition in Australian Foreign Policy, Sydney: Allen and Unwin and Canberra: Department of International Relations, Australian National University.


John Locke (1667), Two Treatises Of Government, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (1689).


Bob Lowry (1993), Indonesian Defence Policy and the Indonesian Armed Forces, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Canberra: Australian National University.


Stuart Macintyre (1986), 1901-1942 The Succeeding Age (The Oxford History of Australia Volume 4), Melbourne: Oxford University Press.

Bibliography


Mark Metherall (1991a), 'PM deplores killings', *The Age*, 14 November.

_______ (1991b), 'PM urges Indonesia to talk', *The Age*, 15 November.


286
Bibliography


______ ed. (1977), The Defence Of Australia: Fundamental New Aspects, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, Canberra.


______ (1991c), ‘Hawke to be tougher on Indonesia’, The Australian, 26 November.


Alan Renouf (1979), The Frightened Country, Melbourne: Macmillan.


287
Bibliography


____ (1993), *An American New World Order?*, Working Paper 1993/7, Department of International Relations (RSPAS), Australian National University, Canberra.


288
Bibliography


Pat Walsh (1990), 'Timor Gap: Oil Poured on Bloodied waters', *Arena*, Melbourne, No. 90.

Bibliography

Alan Watt (1964), Australian Defence Policy 1951-63: Major International Aspects, Department of International Relations, Canberra: Australian National University.
Lionel Wigmore (1957), The Japanese Thrust (Official History: Australia in the War of 1939-45 Series I Vol. IV), Canberra: The Australian War Memorial.