

Strategic and Defence Studies Centre

School of International, Political and Strategic Studies

Australian National University

**An Arrangement for All Seasons: the Contributions of the Five Power Defence
Arrangements to Australian Strategic Interests, 1971-2010**

A thesis submitted for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy of

The Australian National University

by

Michael John Henderson

June 2011



Strategic and Defence Studies Centre

School of International, Political and Strategic Studies

Australian National University

An investigation for All Nations: the Contributions of the Five Power Alliance

A thesis submitted to the Australian National University, 1971-1972

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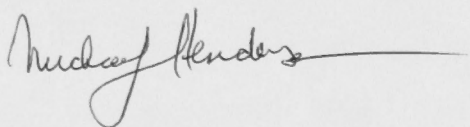
The Australian National University

by

Michael John Fenderson

June 1971

I, Michael John Henderson, hereby declare that except where acknowledged, this work is my own and has not been submitted for a higher degree at any other university or institution.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Michael Henderson", followed by a long horizontal flourish line.

Michael John Henderson

16 June 2011

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Omnia mutantur, nihil interit. Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book XV

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Abstract

Australia has been an active member of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) since 1971, yet there has been no extensive analysis to determine the contributions that FPDA membership has provided to Australia. This is surprising as the FPDA is the second oldest, and only other, multilateral defence organisation in the Asia Pacific after the 1951 Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States. This thesis aims to determine the specific ways in which the FPDA has contributed to Australian strategic interests between 1971 and 2010. In order to accomplish this, this study utilises the analytical framework of defence engagement, as this framework is most suited to recognising Australia’s distinct diplomatic and military commitments made under the aegis of the FPDA. To illustrate these contributions, this thesis looks at three distinct time periods in the history of the FPDA: its origins between 1947 and 1971; how the Arrangements fulfilled Australian expectations from 1971 to the late 1980s; and how the Arrangements surpassed Australian expectations from the late 1980s to 2010. In the chapters covering the existence of the Arrangements, the Australian commitment is divided into two sections for the purpose of analysis under the defence engagement framework: Australian defence diplomacy and Australian military commitment. The framework of defence engagement is applied to primary and secondary written sources on the Arrangements as well as interviews with key academics and policymakers involved in the FPDA.

This study found that the FPDA has been a creative and positive approach to Australia’s need to ensure its involvement in regional defence and to contribute to its defence relationships with key allies. Australia’s involvement in the FPDA between 1971 and 2010 has received positive support from within its region as well as from traditional allies. Through the Arrangements, Australia took an important role in the security of the Association of South East Asian Nations at a critical period in the organisation’s history. This role allowed Australia to make a significant regional contribution in the areas of Australian defence expertise, including operating offshore as part of a coalition. Participation also allowed Australia to contribute to its traditional and long-standing defence relationships with the United Kingdom and the United States. As a result, the FPDA has been an unspectacular and under-appreciated but cumulatively significant contribution to Australia’s shift in strategic focus to the Asia-Pacific.

Abbreviations

ADC	Air Defence Council
ADEX	Air Defence Exercise
ADOC	Air Defence Operations Centre
AMDA	Anglo-Malayan/Malaysian Defence Agreement
ANZAM	Australia, New Zealand and Malaya
ANZUK	Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom
ANZUS	Australia, New Zealand and the United States
ARF	ASEAN Regional Forum
ASEAN	Association of South East Asian Nations
CIADS	Commander, Integrated Air/Area Defence System
CSR	Commonwealth Strategic Reserve
EEZ	Exclusive Economic Zone
ESC	Exercise Scheduling Conference
FACC	FPDA Activities Coordinating Committee
FCC	FPDA Consultative Council
FDMM	FPDA Defence Ministers Meeting
FPDA	Five Power Defence Arrangements
IADS	Integrated Air/Area Defence System
JCC	Joint Consultative Council
NORAD	North American Air/Aerospace Defence Command
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAF	Royal Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
RNZAF	Royal New Zealand Air Force

Chapter One – Introduction

“The commonest error in politics is sticking to the carcass of dead policies.” - Lord Salisbury

Purpose of study

Australia's military involvement in South East Asia has been extensively covered in numerous books, studies and Australian official histories but Australian involvement in the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) has been neglected. The purpose of this study is to explore the influence of the FPDA on Australian diplomatic and strategic interests in South East Asia since 1971. Due to the importance of the Security Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the United States (ANZUS) to Australia, this study also includes the impact of the FPDA on Australia's interests with the United States. The FPDA was initially intended by its creators to be a temporary arrangement and yet the FPDA has survived for almost four decades. In looking at the impact of the FPDA on Australia's interests in South East Asia and with the United States, this study will provide a new understanding of the FPDA and the anticipated and unexpected contributions the Arrangements made to Australia between 1971 and 2010.

This study was undertaken because the influence of the FPDA on Australia's relations with South East Asia and the US had yet to be comprehensively explored. This neglect is surprising for several reasons. The first is that Australia has a history of committing its military forces to promote Australian strategic interests in a stable and secure South East Asia. Examples of such activity can be found in Australia's involvement in the Malaya Emergency (1948-60), Confrontation (1963-66), the Vietnam War (1962-72) and as an important member of the United Nations peacekeeping mission in Cambodia in the early 1990s. This is extensively documented in a number of books, academic articles and Australia's official histories of Australian

diplomatic, economic and military involvement in South East Asia, including Peter Edward's *Crises and Commitments* and the two volume series *Facing North*, published under the aegis of Australia's Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.¹

A second reason is that the geographic location of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia makes these three states of particular strategic interest to Australia. The importance of these three countries has been identified by a scholars and government Defence White Papers over the past forty years at least. Australia's 1972 *Australian Defence Review* also stressed that Australia would have a special interest in the security of Malaysia and Singapore based on geography.² Both countries lie next to important air and sea routes connecting Australia with its major allies and trading partners. The importance of South East Asia to Australian security has been repeated in Australian Defence White Papers from 1976 to the Defence White Paper 2009 *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*. The 2009 White Paper states that Australia has a "...deep stake in the security of South East Asia..." as the states in this region sit across Australia's northern approaches, "...through which any hostile force would have to operate in order to sustainably project force against Australia..."³ Considering the relevance of the Five Power Defence Arrangements to Australia's ongoing interest in a secure South East Asia, the lack of in-depth studies on the Arrangements is surprising and perhaps a cause for concern.

A third significant reason for looking more closely at the FPDA is that Canberra's commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore through the Arrangements might involve Australia in a destabilising conflict with other states in South East Asia. Australia's key role in the FPDA has been recognised by scholars from the beginning;

¹ Peter Edwards, with Gregory Pemberton. *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1966*. (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992) and David Goldsworthy (ed) *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia Volumes 1 and 2*. (Carleton South: Melbourne University Press, 2001)

² Department of Defence. *Australian Defence Review*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, March 1972) p 13

³ Department of Defence. *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*. Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009) p 42-43

TD Millar correctly assessed that geography and regional interests ensured Australia was always going to be the non-South East Asian member most closely concerned with the FPDA.⁴ In the event of an external threat towards, or attack on, Malaysia and Singapore, Australia's membership in the FPDA requires Canberra to decide the extent to which Australia would assist in the defence of its South East Asian allies. This raises a question not just around commitment but also around which state might pose a threat to Malaysia and Singapore. Again, looking at the history of the region, Indonesia's policy of Confrontation in the mid-1960s is the only case of a direct external threat to both states. However, Australia has consistently identified Indonesia as having a central role in the security of South East Asia and Australia from the late 1940s onwards.⁵ Is Australia's membership in the FPDA in direct contradiction to Australia's desire to maintain cordial relations with Indonesia? Beyond Malaysia and Singapore, Australia has a strong interest in the maintenance of maritime South East Asia as a stable, pro-Western region, yet Australia's defence relationship with Malaysia and Singapore through the FPDA was never extended to include any other South East Asia states. Such an arrangement might lead to claims of favouritism on Australia's part by those states not involved in the Arrangements. It is also possible to argue that Australia's membership in the Arrangements might inadvertently draw Australia into regional squabbles.

In addition, for much of the time they have been in force the Five Power Defence Arrangements have been susceptible to the charge of being anachronistic. They resemble the Anglo-Malaysia Defence Agreement (AMDA), which was created by Britain during Malaysia's colonial past, and appear designed to counter threats that no longer exist. During Australia's 'Forward Defence' period prior to the early 1970s, Australia actively countered communism by stationing military forces on the Malay peninsula alongside those of the United Kingdom (UK) and in South Vietnam in support of the US. The similarity of the FPDA to the Anglo-Malaysia Defence

⁴ TB Millar. "The Five-Power Defence Agreement and Southeast Asian Security." *Pacific Community* 3, no. 2 (1972): p 346

⁵ For examples, see J Ingleson, "South East Asia" in *Australia in World Affairs 1971-1975*. ed. WJ Hudson (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1980): 284-291, D Ball and H Wilson (ed) *Strange Neighbours: The Australia-Indonesia Relationship*. (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1991) and P Dibb "Indonesia: the key to South East Asia's security" *International Affairs* 77, no. 4 (2001) p 829-842

Agreement, which provided a security guarantee to Malaya and Singapore in the 1950s and 1960s, gives the Arrangements a distinctly colonial air. The UK, Australia and New Zealand were all involved in the Malayan Emergency between 1948 and 1960. From 1965 to 1967 the same three countries were subsequently involved in defending Malaysia and Singapore from Indonesia during Confrontation.

By 2010, the strategic paradigms for both the region and the globe had changed considerably. The Cold War ended and with it the competition between the USSR and China for leadership of the communist world. By 2010, the British and American military presence in South East Asia was much reduced from what it was at the end of the 1960s. Archipelagic South East Asia had also changed dramatically. Indonesia was no longer the concern it was during Confrontation, while Malaysia and Singapore had undergone considerable development economically and militarily. The Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) had slowly expanded since its beginnings in 1967 to include most of the states of South East Asia by 2010. New Zealand underwent a significant shift in its strategic policies, as evinced by its suspension from ANZUS over the nuclear issue with the US to Wellington's new focus on the island states of the Pacific. Finally, Australia's strategic policy had shifted by 1976 to a focus on seeking security *with* the states of South East Asia rather than seeking security *from* them.⁶ Nevertheless, under the aegis of the FPDA Australia, the UK and New Zealand are still involved in the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. Furthermore, Australian policymakers have considered the Arrangements important enough to survive four decades of budget cuts and public reviews within the Australian civil service.

The FPDA has survived for almost four decades and yet few questions have been asked regarding Australia's involvement in the Arrangements. After almost 40 years of existence, there is little in the literature that exposes Australia's strategic intentions in sustaining support for the Arrangements and how they have evolved over the years.

⁶ A point reinforced in P Dibb. *Review of Australia's defence capabilities: report to the minister of defence*. (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service 1986) p 3

What benefits has Australia received from its participation in the FPDA? Why did Australia get involved in the Arrangements and were there any alternatives? Was Australia able to influence the creation of the FPDA? How has Australia influenced the FPDA since its creation? Potential drawbacks to Australia's involvement also need to be assessed alongside the potential benefits. Is the FPDA an anachronism, considering the similarities between the Arrangements and the preceding Anglo-Malaysia Defence Agreement? Has Australia's participation in the Arrangements had a negative effect on Australia's relationship with Indonesia? Did the FPDA cause unnecessary tension in Australia's relationship with ASEAN, an organisation that has often publically asserted its neutrality? Also of importance are the effects of the FPDA on Australia's interests in the United States. Does the US view Australia's participation in the FPDA as beneficial or as increasing Australia's chances, and through the ANZUS link the US, of involvement in regional conflicts in South East Asia? All of these questions will be discussed in this study.

The Literature

Very little work has been done on the FPDA in general. Writing on the FPDA's relevance to Australia makes up a small subset of a not very extensive body of secondary literature. While writers on the FPDA have come from all five member states, little has been done on looking at the FPDA through a theoretical framework. In addition, the existing literature does not make extensive use of archival materials or interviews with key FPDA policymakers. Therefore, there is no extensive and available body of pre-existing studies on this topic to draw from.

This study has relied on three sets of sources: archival, secondary literature and interviews. An original intention of this study was to find more authoritative and comprehensive archival material on the origins of the FPDA concept. No such body of documents was unearthed, but other archival material was discovered that outlined Australia's policy expectations for the FPDA.

Archival material was sourced from Australian, British and American archives. The bulk of material available on the FPDA was found in the archives of the UK and Australia. This is understandable as the United Kingdom was the former colonial power in Malaysia, and Australia has taken a leading role in the FPDA since its creation. This study also utilises a small range of US archival sources made available through the internet and other researchers. While the United States is not a member of the FPDA, American views on the Arrangements would have been of significant interest to all five members and therefore must be considered. The New Zealand archives have not been explored as New Zealand has played a very minor role in the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

The main restriction on the use of archival sources has been their availability. The Australian, British and American archival systems follow similar 30-year declassification rules, and the restriction period may be extended for documents that may be deemed to have a negative impact on the security, governance or international relations of the state.⁷ As a result, files older than 30 years but deemed sensitive may remain unavailable. Access to archival material in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia is still more restrictive. Chandran Jeshurun, a noted researcher and writer on Malaysian foreign policy, noted in 2007 that Malaysia has no statute of limitations with regards to official sources.⁸ As of 2011, access to Malaysian, Singaporean and Indonesian archival sources on foreign affairs and defence remain closed to all except researchers within their respective governments.⁹

⁷ For an Australian example, see the Archives Act 1983, Section 33 (http://www.austlii.edu.au/au/legis/cth/consol_act/aa198398/s33.html) accessed 15 March 2010

⁸ Chandran Jeshurun. *Malaysia: Fifty Years of Diplomacy 1957-2007* (Singapore: Talisman Publishing, 2008) p164

⁹ An issue raised by other researchers. See CG Ang. *Southeast Asia and the Vietnam War*. (Abingdon: Routledge 2010) p 2-3

Secondary sources devoted to the FPDA are not extensive. There is one book by Chin Kin Wah that discusses the origins of the FPDA.¹⁰ There is an ‘official’ history of the FPDA written by a member of the Australian armed forces and published in 2001 on the 30th anniversary of the Arrangements.¹¹ The FPDA is mentioned in a limited number of books but rarely in a substantive way. The majority of secondary sources devoted to the Arrangements are predominantly articles in academic journals. These articles are predominantly written by Australian and Singaporean writers. A benefit of this small body of literature is that it facilitates a more ready understanding of the major themes surrounding the FPDA.

Interviews form the final source of material on the FPDA in this study. Interviews were used to gain clarity on FPDA goals and evolution, particularly in the period between 1980 and 2010, when the archives are closed. It is important to note that, despite the Arrangements’ existence over almost four decades, a researcher may have difficulty identifying individuals that have played significant roles in the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Within the Australian government there existed no standalone policy unit or senior official solely responsible for Australian participation in the FPDA.¹² As a result, there is no readily identifiable chain of Canberra-based individuals involved in FPDA policy between 1971 and 2010. The strongest chain, the Australian commanders of the Integrated Area Defence System in Butterworth Malaysia, primarily focussed on the operational aspects of the Arrangements, such as training and exercises and not on policy decisions. As a result, interviewees for this study were selected across a range of political, military, diplomatic and academic spheres, based on their direct involvement in, or policy knowledge of, the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Some of those interviewed were identified from the existing literature, while others were interviewed on the basis of recommendations from previous interviewees.

¹⁰ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The transformation of a security system 1957-1971*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983)

¹¹ A Crowe *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*. (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Konta Sdn Berhad, 2001)

¹² Brabin-Smith, Richard. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 30 July.

Methodology

This study is an analytical narrative that explores the nature of the FPDA. The primary focus of this study is on the contributions that the Five Power Defence Arrangements made to Australian strategic interests. At its broadest level, this study is a ‘theory-applying’ dissertation. This study does not attempt to develop a new theory regarding the FPDA but rather uses existing theoretical and analytical frameworks to illustrate its empirical findings. A closer examination of this thesis shows three distinct and reinforcing methodological approaches. The first is that this is a ‘literature-assessing’ dissertation. This study “summarises and evaluates existing theoretical and empirical literature” assessing whether the existing theories and approaches are both “persuasive and complete.”¹³ Taking stock of the existing FPDA literature is made easier by the fact that it is not extensive. The second approach is that of the ‘historical explanatory’ dissertation, in that it uses a theoretical framework to explain “the causes, pattern or consequences of historical cases.”¹⁴ This is assisted through the third approach, which is the ‘exploratory case study’. The purpose of an explanatory case study is to compare several theoretical frameworks with the actual course of events, and in doing so identifies the framework with the best explanatory powers.¹⁵ This is done in Chapter Three, which evaluates the explanatory abilities of a number of theoretical and analytical frameworks with regards to the FPDA.

This study also makes use of the methodology of ‘triangulation’ to validate the available data, particularly from secondary sources and interviews. Due to the aforementioned restrictions on the available data, this study has relied more heavily on other sources, such as interviews and primary documents. Triangulation involves the comparison of information obtained from different sources, in order to provide a guide

¹³ S Van Evera. *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) p 90

¹⁴ The framework can consist of “academically recognised theory, folk theory or ‘common sense’ deduction.” S Van Evera, *Guide to Methods for Students of Political Science* p 91

¹⁵ R Yin, *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. (Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1985) p 16

as to its accuracy.¹⁶ This comparison increases the reliability of the collected data and helps to disprove the shibboleths that may have accumulated over time in the research sources. In several cases, interviews for this study have provided information or concepts that have led to additional sources of information on the FPDA available in the public domain.

Thesis outline

Chapter One introduced the purpose of this study, which is to determine how Australia's membership in the Five Power Defence Arrangements has contributed to Australia's strategic interests. The chapter discussed the sources and their limitations, and the methodology used in this study.

Chapter Two discusses the existing impressions and assessments. This chapter begins by providing a chronological narrative of the drivers behind the creation of the Arrangements, expectations and functions of the FPDA, and issues around Australia's commitment. Next the chapter provides an overview of how the Arrangements have evolved since 1971. Following this section is the literature review. This section discusses what has been written on the FPDA between 1971 and 2010, pulls out major themes and highlights common conclusions. The material in Chapter Two shaped the primary lines of inquiry distinctive to this thesis and are discussed in full in Chapters Three to Six.

Chapter Three explores whether there is an overarching conceptual framework that effectively captures the contributions the FPDA has made to Australian security

¹⁶ EJ Webb. "Unconventionality, Triangulation and Inference" in NK Denzin *Sociological Methods: A Sourcebook*. (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Company, 1970) p 449-457

interests. This is necessary as the nature of the Arrangements is unclear in the FPDA literature. Writers refer to the FPDA as an “alliance”, as “collective defence” and as a “regional security organisation.” The chapter reviews the FPDA using three different frameworks: alliance theory, institutional theory, and defence diplomacy. The discussion shows that, while each individual framework is insufficient, the combination of all three frameworks does capture the full range of the FPDA’s most important contributions. This combination of frameworks is referred to as ‘defence engagement’ in this study.

Chapter Four looks at the background to Australia’s decision to become involved in the Arrangements. This chronological narrative starts in the late 1940s and ends in 1971. The first half of Chapter Four discusses Australia’s long standing interest in the security of Malaya, starting from the 1947 Australian strategic policy document *Appreciation of Australia’s Strategic Position*, and traces Australian involvement in ANZAM (Australia, New Zealand and Malaya area) and the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve through the Emergency to the end of Confrontation. The second half discusses Australia’s defence policy perspectives from the 1950s to Australia’s transition in the late 1960s away from Forward Defence. The reasons for the shift in Australia’s defence policy will be explored. During this period Australia’s policymakers saw a greater role for defence diplomacy, as can be seen in the 1968 and 1971 Strategic Basis papers. This focus on defence diplomacy arose from Australia’s view that regional security and stability could not be achieved by military power alone. Without the stability that allowed economic development to occur, military force alone was unable to counter insurgency. This approach greatly influenced Australia’s approach and commitment to the FPDA.

Chapter Five reviews how the Five Power Defence Arrangements functioned from 1971 to the late 1980s and the benefits the Arrangements provided to Australia. This chapter is divided into two main sections. The first section looks at the FPDA as a function of Australian diplomacy. This section discusses the diplomatic purpose of the FPDA with regards to Australia’s interests in the four other members of the FPDA,

the ASEAN region and the United States. The section second of the chapter explores the functions of the Arrangements outside of diplomacy. The Arrangements made an important contribution to mitigating the Sino-Soviet rivalry for influence within South East Asia. The FPDA also contributed to improving the military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore.

Chapter Six looks at how the FPDA adapted to changing circumstances and remained relevant from the late 1980s to 2010. Like Chapter Five, this chapter is divided into two main sections that focus on diplomacy and harder edged contributions respectively. The first section discusses the unexpected contributions made to Australia's diplomatic links with the other members of the FPDA, ASEAN and the United States. The second section discusses how the FPDA helped to indicate Australia's interests in ongoing access to the South China Sea and improve the capabilities of the Australian Defence Force.

Chapter Seven concludes this study. The chapter is divided into four sections. The first sums up how the diplomacy aspect of the FPDA served Australian strategic interests. The second section sums up how the 'harder edged' aspects of the Arrangements served Australian strategic interests. The third section discusses the implications of the research and suggests further areas of study. The fourth section looks at two possible futures for the Five Power Defence Arrangements. The first considers the future of the FPDA in the event Australia's strategic environment remains benign while the second considers the future of the FPDA in the event of a radical change in Australia's strategic environment.

Chapter Two – Impressions and Assessments

It is in the nature of things that those who save the world from certain destruction often don't get hugely rewarded because, since the certain destruction does not take place, people are uncertain how certain it may have been and are, therefore, somewhat tight when it comes to handing out anything more substantial than praise. – Terry Pratchett *The Last Hero*

This chapter will discuss the publically recorded impressions and assessments of the FPDA by academics, journalists and policymakers in order to provide a better understanding of the Arrangements, what brought them about and what has been written about them. The first two sections will provide an overview of the FPDA. The chapter will look first at the drivers behind the creation of the FPDA. Following this, the chapter will provide an overview of how the FPDA has evolved since 1971. The next section is the literature review. This will discuss what has been written previously on the Arrangements. Special focus will be placed on key themes within this body of literature that will be raised later in this study.

What are the Five Power Defence Arrangements?

Drivers behind the creation of the FPDA

The primary driver behind the creation of the FPDA was the British announcement in 1967 of the complete withdrawal of its military forces from South East Asia by the mid-1970s. The British withdrawal was not completely unexpected for Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore. The UK had undergone a number of economic and financial crises since 1964 and British defence papers and reviews since 1965 had

repeatedly discussed the possible shrinking of Britain's worldwide defence presence.¹ This withdrawal would fundamentally affect Britain's ability to fulfil its commitments under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement (AMDA), signed in 1957. Under AMDA, the UK committed itself to provide Malaysia with whatever defence assistance it required to defend Malaysian territory.² Furthermore, AMDA provided the political framework for the Commonwealth forces, including contributions from Australia and New Zealand, to remain in Malaya.³ These forces were known as the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. In 1963, AMDA was renegotiated to cover the new Federation of Malaysia, which now covered the Malay Peninsula, Malaysian territory on Borneo and the island of Singapore. The military and diplomatic contributions made by the UK, Australia and Singapore to the security of Malaysia and Singapore during Indonesia's Confrontation period from 1964 to 1966 were a practical expression of AMDA.

A series of regional and international events occurred between 1967 and 1971 that made the British withdrawal an increasingly pressing concern for Australia, Malaysia and Singapore. In 1968 the Philippines renewed its claim to the Malaysian territory of Sabah on Borneo. There were communal riots in Kuala Lumpur following Malaysian elections in 1969. Although the Malayan Emergency had officially concluded in 1960, Malaysia was still experiencing ongoing, predominantly Chinese-led, communist insurgency. Relations between Malaysia and Singapore remained acrimonious. Further afield, American efforts in Vietnam were not proving successful at ending the threat from communist Hanoi. By 1968, American President Johnson decided to reduce the American military presence in Vietnam, raising the possibility that the US might also withdraw from South East Asia. Australia had to decide whether its forces

¹ D Goldworthy. *Losing the Blanket: Australia and the End of Britain's Empire*. (South Carleton: Melbourne University Press, 2002) p 161

² British Archives: CAB 148/43: OPD (O) (65) 32: DRWP 'Southeast Asia and the Far East' 5/5/1965, para. 5, cited in PL Pham. *Ending 'East of Suez': The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore, 1964-1968*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p 28

³ Although the Australian and New Zealand forces were initially included as part of the British forces stationed in Malaya, in 1959 Australia and New Zealand signed documents formally associating themselves with AMDA. P Edwards. *Crises and Commitments: The Politics and Diplomacy of Australia's Involvement in Southeast Asian Conflicts 1948-1965*. (North Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1992) p 188

were to remain in Malaysia and Singapore. Malaysia and Singapore both wanted Australian forces to remain, and New Zealand wished to remain.⁴ Australia finally confirmed in 1969 that its forces would remain in Malaysia and Singapore after the British withdrawal. A key goal for Canberra however was to expunge any indication that Australia was taking on Britain's AMDA commitment to Malaysia and Singapore.

Despite the best efforts of the author, there is still some uncertainty as to which state first called for the creation of the Five Power Defence Arrangements. The two states mentioned in the literature are Malaysia and the UK. Chin states that in 1967 the UK suggested the participation of all five allies in a Commonwealth force as a solution to the defence gap left by its withdrawal.⁵ Malaysia, concerned about losing the British defence guarantee, called for a conference in 1967 where the five powers would clarify how the British withdrawal would affect AMDA and the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. According to Saravanamuttu, talks began in 1968 among all five powers for a new defence arrangement.⁶ The British were also concerned about how a complete withdrawal from South East Asia would be perceived world-wide. The British Foreign Office had warned in 1965 that Britain's 'pretensions' to world power status would be significantly damaged by the termination of AMDA without Malaysian approval.⁷ There were three significant meetings held by the five powers to negotiate the future commitment of the UK, Australia and New Zealand to a post-AMDA solution. These meetings were held in Malaysia in 1967, Australia in 1969 and the UK in 1971. At the conclusion of the meeting in the UK, all five powers released a joint communiqué that indicated the shape of their future commitment. This "Communiqué Issued at the Conclusion of the Five Power Ministerial Meeting on the

⁴ TB Millar. *Australia in Peace and War*. 2nd ed. (Singapore: Australian National University Press, 1991) p 153

⁵ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: The transformation of a security system 1957-1971*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p 138

⁶ J Saravanamuttu. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy: The First Fifty Years*. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2010) p 92

⁷ British Archives: CAB 148/43: OPD (O) (65) 32: DRWP 'Southeast Asia and the Far East' 5/5/1965, para. 6, cited in PL Pham. *Ending 'East of Suez'*. p 28

External Defence of Malaysia and Singapore, London, 15-16 April 1971" is the foundation document that created the Five Power Defence Arrangements.⁸

Issues regarding Australian commitment

Australia took an active role in the FPDA negotiations to ensure that the country was not inadvertently drawn into regional tensions or internal security matters. Conflicting territorial claims between Malaysia and the Philippines in Borneo were of particular concern, as were Malaysia's communal relations. In 1969, Australia clearly indicated that Australian troops in Malaysia and Singapore would not be used for internal security and were not directed against any other state in the region.⁹ When describing the remit of the Australian contribution, Prime Minister Gorton used the term 'Malaya' to indicate that any Australian guarantee would only cover the peninsula. Gorton bluntly stated that Australian forces would not be made available for the defence of East Malaysia.¹⁰ Gorton took this position after hearing about Malaysian covert operations against the Philippines as part of the two countries conflicting territorial claims over Sabah in East Malaysia.¹¹

Both Malaysia and Singapore were displeased about the Australian restrictions, but ultimately accepted that the new five power arrangements would not contain the same guarantees as AMDA. The Malaysians were publically upset by Gorton's use of the word 'Malaya'.¹² Malaysia saw East Malaysia as the area most likely to come under attack, and was upset by Australia's restriction of its commitment to the peninsula.¹³

⁸ Please see Appendix A of this study for the complete text of this communiqué. All references to this communiqué in this study are taken from New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs official publication *Five Power Defence Arrangements*. Publication no. 410 (Wellington: AR Shearer, Government Printer 1971)

⁹ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 164

¹⁰ TB Miller "The Five-Power Defence Agreement and Southeast Asian Security." *Pacific Community* 3, no. 2 (January 1972) p 345

¹¹ Chandran Jeshurun. *Malaysia: Fifty Years of Diplomacy 1957-2007*. (Singapore: Talisman Publishing, 2008) p 378

¹² Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 167

¹³ TB Miller "The Five-Power Defence Agreement and Southeast Asian Security" p 347

At the same time, both Malaysia and Singapore recognised the importance for an integrated air defence system to their countries, such as would be offered by the FPDA.¹⁴ In addition, the boundaries of the FPDA were never specified in the FPDA Communiqué.

The FPDA Stands Up

On 16 April 1971, the United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, Malaysia and Singapore issued a communiqué at the conclusion of the Five Power Ministerial Meeting on the External Defence of Malaysia and Singapore. This communiqué made three important statements that have had a lasting influence on the Arrangements. The first was that the defence of Malaysia and Singapore was indivisible. The second was “that in the event of any form of armed attack externally organised or supported or the threat of any such attack against Malaysia and Singapore” the members would immediately consult to decide what actions would be taken, either jointly or separately, against the threat.¹⁵ The third established an institutional framework, comprised of—in order of decreasing seniority—the Joint Consultative Council (JCC), the Air Defence Council (ADC) and the Integrated Air Defence System (IADS). The JCC was comprised of the Secretary General from Malaysia’s Ministry of Defence, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Defence in Singapore and the High Commissioners of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom. The JCC was intended to be provide a framework for regular consultation at a senior level.¹⁶ The purpose of the JCC was to look after financial and administrative arrangements, check progress of the FPDA and deal with issues that did not require Ministerial involvement. The JCC was also responsible for recommending any changes in the FPDA to the five member governments. The Council was not responsible for the

¹⁴ Chin Kin Wah. *The Five Power defence arrangements and AMDA: some observations on the nature of an evolving partnership*. Occasional Paper no 23. Singapore: Institute Of Southeast Asian Studies, July 1974 p 3

¹⁵ FPDA Communiqué, paragraph 5

¹⁶ FPDA Communiqué, paragraph 6(d)

direct administration or command of the national forces of FPDA members.¹⁷ The ADC provided direction to the Commander of IADS on matters involving organisation, training, development and operational readiness.¹⁸ The members of the JCC were also members of the ADC.

The only standing operational component of the FPDA is the Integrated Area Defence System based at Royal Malaysian Air Force Base Butterworth.¹⁹ As of 2010 there were around 50 permanent staff in IADS from all three services and all members states. IADS primary concern was the development of air defence capabilities. The head of IADS was a senior Australian air force officer, while the deputy officer duties have rotated between Malaysia and Singapore. The choice of Australia to head IADS was not difficult. Both Malaysia and Singapore openly opposed having a Malaysian or Singaporean in charge of IADS. New Zealand could not match the Australian defence contributions at Butterworth, while having the UK at the helm would have been seen as having colonial overtones.

IADS stood up on 1 September 1971 and the FPDA came into effect 1 November 1971. All five members intended the FPDA to be a transitional arrangement, lasting no more than five years.²⁰ During this time, Malaysia and Singapore were expected to develop their defence capabilities to the point where the FPDA ‘umbrella’ was no longer necessary. The FPDA was to assist in achieving this goal through a multilateral exercise and training program run out of IADS. The FPDA provided a legal framework for the continued presence of Australian, New Zealand and British (ANZUK) forces in Malaysia and Singapore. However, the five members did not consider these forces to be part of the FPDA.

¹⁷ A Crowe. *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*. (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Konta Sdn Berhad, 2001) p 13

¹⁸ FPDA Communiqué, paragraph 6 (b)

¹⁹ The original name for IADS was the Integrated Air Defence System. In 2000 IADS was renamed the Integrated Area Defence System to reflect the inclusion of land and naval components. Crowe p 51

²⁰ Chin Kin Wah. *The Five Power defence arrangements and AMDA*. p 15

Original functions of the FPDA

The framework of the Five Power Defence Arrangements in 1971 had three original functions: to provide for ongoing consultation between the members; to improve the military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore; and to provide a legal structure to maintain the much reduced ANZUK military forces in Malaysia and Singapore. As a way of demonstrating the future viability of the FPDA, all five powers carried out an extensive military exercise over the space of two months in 1970.²¹ In the first decade of the Arrangements existence, their most consistent function was training and exercising with Malaysia and Singapore. As time went on, there was a record of some progress. In 1977-78, the exercises were seen by all five powers as becoming more ambitious than before, with both increased participation and greater sharing of feedback among all members at meetings.²² At this point the ANZUK nations still played the part of “attackers” in training as political sensitivities still precluded Malaysian and Singaporean aircraft from exercising against one another.²³ Nevertheless, training and exercises under the FPDA helped both states to develop their armed forces and increase professionalism over the years. As Bristow indicates, operational command of FPDA exercises rotated between Malaysia and Singapore while responsibility for organisation revolved through all five members.²⁴ Moreover, the planning process for the exercises involved planners from all five members.²⁵

This did not mean that all five members contributed equally. Although the UK would be expected to be the most experienced and powerful contributor to the exercises,

²¹ J Saravanamuttu. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy: The First Fifty Years*. p 92

²² British Archives AIR 8/2801 British defence Liaison Staff (BDLS) :periodic reports: Zambia, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Ghana, Caribbean, Singapore and Cyprus 1978 May 01 – 1979 January 31 ID3/5/8 Pt 24 with maps, Defence Advisor Malaysia – Annual Report June 1977-June 1978 by Col WJCG Copinger Symes, Defence Advisory British High Commission, KL

²³ British Archives AIR 8/2801 British defence Liaison Staff (BDLS) :periodic reports: Zambia, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Ghana, Caribbean, Singapore and Cyprus 1978 May 01 – 1979 January 31 ID3/5/8 Pt 24 with maps, Defence Advisor Malaysia – Annual Report June 1977-June 1978 by Col WJCG Copinger Symes, Defence Advisory British High Commission, KL

²⁴ D Bristow “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: South East Asia’s Unknown Regional Security Organization” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 1, (April 2005) p 7

²⁵ D Bristow “South East Asia’s Unknown Regional Security Organization” p 7

British forces were absent from the program for many years. It was only in 1988 that the Royal Air Force participated in FPDA exercises after a gap of almost 15 years. The ongoing modernisation and development of the Malaysia and Singapore armed forces has meant that the exercise programs have become more complex over time, as the exercises have grown from single service training exercises to large, multi-service undertakings. In the early years of the Arrangements, Australia had two Mirage squadrons based at Butterworth, which was a considerably more advanced capability than the contributions of the Malaysian and Singaporean air forces. Improvements in the defence capabilities for Australia, Malaysia and Singapore were gradually reflected in FPDA training.

The evolution of the FPDA since 1971

Although participation in FPDA-run exercises between 1971 and 2010 has fluctuated, the Arrangements have survived and evolved. The pace of change was slow due to the FPDA's requirement for unanimity in the decision-making process and the initially low level of air capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore. Although changes to the FPDA's exercise, training and organisational structure occurred throughout the period 1971 to 2010, many of the changes were driven by key events, both international and within the framework of the FPDA. Most of these events occurred in the last few years of the decade and the first few years of the following decade: the late 1970s and early 1980s; the late 1980s and early 1990s; and the late 1990s and early 2000s. These time markers will provide a framework for this discussion of the evolution of the FPDA. The bulk of the information available comes from Crowe's book covering the first 30 years of FPDA history. This indicates the reliance many commentators on the FPDA must place on Crowe, whose work is the only public history of the Arrangements.

Consolidation: 1971 to the early 1980s

The period from 1971 to the early 1980s saw the slow consolidation of the FPDA. Developments during this time were constrained by the operational capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore. There was a deliberate effort made by all parties to avoid disputes in the FPDA councils. Nevertheless, there were regular meetings of some FPDA councils and the establishment of exercise and training programs, as well as the development of standardised operating procedures.

In the first decade, the FPDA organisational structure saw very slow participation by Malaysia and Singapore as both states slowly upgraded their operational capabilities. The staffing of the FPDA organisational structure was undertaken primarily by Australia, the UK and New Zealand while Malaysia and Singapore modernised their armed forces. There was a particular difficulty with the staffing of IADS. In 1971, lack of capabilities in Malaysia and Singapore meant that Australia, New Zealand and the UK filled most key positions. There was only one senior Malaysian officer and no Singapore officer in the senior staff, but Malaysian and Singaporean staff looked after air plotter and clerical positions.²⁶ However, the late 1970s saw the FPDA acquire a better understanding of its operational capabilities. In 1976, the ADC approved the IADS air defence instructions, which put together the standard operating procedures of the FPDA in one document.²⁷ In 1977, the ADC approved the first overseas visit by five IADS officers to the UK. Crowe states that these trips became an important part of the IADS program as they allowed a firsthand view of the air defence capabilities of other states, as well as the opportunity for the participants to exchange views.²⁸

The FPDA exercise program absorbed most of the participants' attention during the first decade of the Arrangements. In 1972 the ADC set up an annual exercise program

²⁶ Crowe p 19

²⁷ Crowe p 16

²⁸ Crowe p 18

consisting of two major air defence exercises (ADEX) per year, involving the forces of all members, two minor ADEXs per year centred on Butterworth in Malaysia and Tengah air base in Singapore, and Exercise Kumpul, which was intended to be a series of no-notice exercises designed to test the readiness of those air defence units assigned to the FPDA.²⁹ The FPDA successfully completed this exercise program in the very first year of its operation.³⁰

FPDA exercises in the 1970s were intended to develop Malaysian and Singaporean air defence capabilities. The exercises were very simple— such as the defence of an airfield against attack— but were difficult for Malaysia and Singapore due to their limited capabilities. Among the identified limitations were: poor radar coverage in many parts of the peninsula, limited communications and a lack of standard operating procedures. The focus of the exercises was on basic skills rather than realism.³¹ In addition, some exercises were intended to expose and identify local limitations. Crowe states that the primary purpose of major ADEXs was to identify weaknesses in the air defence of Malaysia and Singapore, and early major ADEXs highlighted issues of poor radar coverage, unreliable communications and insufficient standard operating procedures.³² Despite the initially low level of local capabilities, both Malaysia and Singapore improved. In 1978 the ADC agreed to extend major ADEXs from two to four days in recognition of the improvements of Malaysian and Singaporean capabilities.³³ The stress was still on the concept of indivisibility. Also in 1978 the ADC stressed that it viewed the Commander of IADS as the representative of both the Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces “...in order to ensure that the ‘indivisibility’ of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore was maintained and that the other airspace users understood the concept...”³⁴

²⁹ Crowe p 16 Difference between major and minor ADEXs: major ADEXs involved the forces of all five members, whereas minor ADEXs alternated between Malaysia and Singapore “...allowing each country’s air force to develop its basic skills and operating procedures without the additional complexity of having to deploy forces to a different operating environment.” Crowe p 20

³⁰ Crowe p 19

³¹ Crowe p 20

³² Crowe p 21

³³ Crowe p 18

³⁴ Crowe p 18

The emphasis on exercises and training was evident in the stark difference between the meeting schedules of the JCC and the ADC between 1971 and 1981. The JCC met only four times in the 1970s, with annual meetings only taking place from 1981 onwards.³⁵ In comparison, the ADC met 34 times between 1971 and 1981.³⁶

A significant change was the withdrawal of the bulk of the Australian and British forces from Malaysia and Singapore by 1975. The Australian government, under Prime Minister Whitlam, made the decision to withdraw Australia's troops in January 1973. Australia's decision was followed a year later by the UK government's decision to also remove its forces from Singapore and Malaysia. The British argued that the failure of Australia to maintain a logistics support group in Singapore made the continued British presence 'impossible.'³⁷ By 1975, only New Zealand still retained its ANZUK forces in Singapore. The New Zealand forces remained under the framework of the FPDA but were placed under New Zealand command as New Zealand Forces Southeast Asia.³⁸

Development: Early 1980s to early 1990s

The 1980s was a period that saw the increased development of the FPDA. This was due to both improvements in the capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore as well as external issues. In 1979 the Soviet Union invaded Afghanistan and the Vietnamese fought a short conflict with China due to the Vietnamese invasion and occupation of Kampuchea in late 1978. Furthermore, the 1980s saw the increase of Soviet naval

³⁵ C Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever" *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1, (February 2007) p 82

³⁶ Crowe p 16

³⁷ A Benvenuti and D Martin Jones. "Engaging Southeast Asia? Labor's Regional Mythology and Australia's Military Withdrawal from Singapore and Malaysia 1972-1973" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 4 (Fall 2010) p 54

³⁸ Chin Kin Wah. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after" *The Pacific Review* 4, no. 3 (1991) p 196

activity in maritime South East Asia. As a reward for the Soviet support of Vietnam during the latter's conflict with China in 1979, Hanoi gave the Soviet Union a 25-year lease on the Cam Ranh naval and air base. Through their new Cam Ranh base, the Soviets were able to provide logistical support to their naval presence in South East Asia and gather intelligence on the movement of all shipping through the South China Sea.³⁹ In Australia, the invasion of Afghanistan was the catalyst for Prime Minister Fraser's decision to place more emphasis on the FPDA.⁴⁰

The FPDA framework evolved during the latter part of the 1980s. Few technical upgrades had been made to IADS since the start of the FPDA. The ADC identified a need to upgrade IADS computer systems and headquarters facilities and so in 1987, a modern Air Defence Operational Centre (ADOC) was established. Regular upgrades have been made to its command and control capabilities since 1994.⁴¹ An IADS Software Control Board was set up to ensure compatibility between the Air Defence Operational Centre and Malaysian and Singaporean Air Defence Ground Environments.⁴²

The late 1980s saw greater involvement at the political level in the member states. In 1988, all five defence ministers attended the FPDA Exercise Lima Bersatu. Crowe states that this was accomplished by extensive background consultation at the lower, non-political levels of the FPDA.⁴³ Of greatest importance was a 1989 initiative – proposed by Malaysia – to ensure that senior political and military meetings were locked into a definite schedule. The Malaysian initiative, supported by all the other FPDA members, was for a meeting of the FPDA defence ministers to be held every three years and for the FPDA Defence Chiefs Conference (FDCC), composed of the

³⁹ A 1982 US assessment of the Soviet presence considered the signals intelligence complex at Cam Ranh bay to be "...the [third] largest in the world outside the Soviet Union." AD Muraviev. *The Russian Pacific Fleet: From the Crimean War to Perestroika*. Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs no. 20. Canberra: Sea Power Centre Australia, Department of Defence, 2007, p 35

⁴⁰ P Ayres. *Malcolm Fraser: A Biography*. (Richmond: William Heinemann Australia, 1987) p 396-97

⁴¹ Thayer. "The Quiet Achiever" p 84

⁴² Crowe p 33

⁴³ Crowe p 35

chiefs of the member defence forces, to also meet every three years. According to Crowe, the reason for this increase in interest stemmed from a renewed desire in the membership to increase the value from their participation in the Arrangements.⁴⁴

FPDA training and exercises increased in complexity and expanded to include maritime and land exercises. In 1981 an annual land exercise and annual maritime exercise (STARFISH) were added to the schedule alongside the major and minor ADEXs.⁴⁵ The training schedule was also adjusted. Unlike the exercise schedule, FPDA training in the 1970s had been held on an ad hoc basis. With the new emphasis on the FPDA in the early 1980s, Air Defence Courses began to be scheduled on a regular basis.⁴⁶ Regular maritime surveillance training began in 1982 after the establishment of a detachment of Australia Orion P3 surveillance aircraft at Butterworth.⁴⁷ The increase in regular training and the complexity of the exercises was reflected in the creation of a new operational sector in IADS. Also in 1982 the FPDA established an Exercise Scheduling Conference to manage this expanded exercise and training program.⁴⁸ In order to accommodate the later growth in structured training, in 1987 the first Air Defence Operation Centre Systems Operators Course was formed.

Exercises developed further towards the end of the 1980s. Land exercises were also added to the FPDA exercise schedule. FPDA land exercises were the only FPDA exercises held outside of Malaysia and Singapore. Crowe argues that these exercises were not held in Malaysia and Singapore for two key reasons. The first was because Singapore did not have suitable land for large-scale exercises and Malaysia was not able to hold land exercises every year and the second was that, in the early years, it would have been hard for the FPDA to remain low-key with regular land exercises in

⁴⁴ Crowe p 36

⁴⁵ Crowe p 27

⁴⁶ Crowe p 34

⁴⁷ Crowe p 28

⁴⁸ Crowe p 27

Malaysia.⁴⁹ As discussed previously however, mutual distrust between Malaysia and Singapore also played a significant part in having any land exercises in Australia or New Zealand. Nevertheless, in 1987, Malaysia hosted its first land exercise (Exercise Kris Sakti) since the early 1970s and in 1989 Singapore hosted its land exercise (Exercise Lion Spirit). No explicit rationale has been uncovered for why both Malaysia and Singapore started to host land exercises, although it is plausible to attribute at least part of the answer to the more in-depth participation of both states in the Arrangements. The early 1980s saw the appointment of the first Malaysian officer to new Deputy Commander IADS position while a Singaporean officer filled the Senior Air Staff position, also for the first time.⁵⁰

A key change in 1987 was the return to Malaysian jurisdiction of the Royal Australian Air Force Base at Butterworth. Australia also changed from basing its RAAF Mirages at Butterworth to a rotating deployment. The departure of the Mirages spurred a debate within the FPDA as to whether a Malaysian or Singaporean should assume the role of the Commander IADS (CIADS). Australia stated it would not object if a consensus emerged that a CIADS should come from another member. In the event, no such consensus emerged.⁵¹ However, as Malaysian and Singaporean operational capabilities had improved, there was a shift in the focus of CIADS from improving local capabilities to leading an integrated headquarters and the ability to conduct joint operations across Malaysia and Singapore. The role of CIADS gradually transitioned from that of a relatively detached leader to one that assisted the Malaysian and Singaporean commanders and became more collective in character.⁵² The FPDA moved into the realm of equal members sharing information. In 1989, this improved level of discussion allowed IADS to hold its first Air Defence Seminar, which was designed as a forum for FPDA personnel to discuss FPDA and IADS issues.⁵³

⁴⁹ Crowe p 44-45

⁵⁰ Crowe p 27

⁵¹ Crowe p 30

⁵² Crowe p 31

⁵³ Crowe p 34

Another small change was the final withdrawal of New Zealand's contributions to the ANZUK forces from Singapore in 1989. The reason provided for this late withdrawal was that there was a lack of facilities in New Zealand in which to house the returning forces prior to this point.⁵⁴ By the end of the 1980s, the standing military forces attached to the FPDA were overwhelmingly Australian: a rotating squadron of RAAF Mirage fighters, a detachment of P3C Orion reconnaissance aircraft and an Australian infantry company and support personnel, all based at Butterworth.⁵⁵

Early 1990s to early 2000s

From the start of the 1990s all five powers began to operate together as equals within the FPDA. This was apparent in the increasing complexity of the FPDA exercise program. The IADS headquarters received additional upgrades to its communications and radar networks and the FPDA councils also changed during the 1990s. New training courses for FPDA IADS personnel were also introduced.

The military-political framework of the FPDA underwent significant changes in the 1990s, both in structure and regularity of meetings, due to the increased involvement of the FPDA defence ministers. From 1990 onwards, the FPDA Defence Ministers began to meet regularly.⁵⁶ At the 1990 FPDA Defence Ministers' Meeting, the ministers decided to maintain the Arrangements focus on the indivisible defence of Malaysia and Singapore by further developing the training and exercise program with a focus on joint and combined activities.⁵⁷ The 1994 FPDA Defence Ministers' Meeting made a number of important changes in response to the more equal capabilities of the five members. The ADC and the JCC were replaced by the FPDA Consultative Council (FCC), which aimed at increasing the efficiency of IADS and

⁵⁴ R. Ayson. "The Future of Australia-New Zealand Defence and Cooperation" *Australian Security in the 21st Century Seminar Series*, (Parliament House, Canberra, 2004)

⁵⁵ Chin Kin Wah "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after" p 196

⁵⁶ Thayer. "The Quiet Achiever" p82

⁵⁷ This combination of ADEX and Starfish became known as Exercise Flying Fish in 1997. Crowe p 39-41

raising the complexity of the exercises.⁵⁸ With the creation of the FCC, the Exercise Scheduling Conference became the FPDA Activities Coordinating Committee (FACC).⁵⁹ The 1997 Defence Ministers' Meeting decided that the FPDA Defence Chiefs' Conference should play a greater role in guiding FPDA exercise development, and that the FCC should promote greater interoperability among FPDA members and should consider greater cooperation in logistics.⁶⁰

This increased focus in the 1990s on joint and combined exercises was also evident in the increasing complexity of the FPDA exercises and their increased range. In 1991 there was a back-to-back ADEX and naval exercise (*Exercise Starfish*).⁶¹ Back-to-back exercises were a welcome evolution as this style of exercise allowed for more training time for the same deployment time. The participating forces did not have to spend valuable time travelling to and from their home states between exercises, as would be the case were the exercises scheduled months apart. Back-to-back exercises helped to improve staff capabilities as well as those of radar and air defence. These exercises required planning by staff from all five states.⁶² Furthermore, ground based radar was no longer sufficient in these exercises due to the members advances in air capabilities since 1971. As a result, air defence capable ships were now included in exercises to augment the radar coverage. This allowed the ADEX exercises to increase their operational radius beyond the Malay peninsula and into the South China Sea.⁶³

The next step saw the FPDA move from back-to-back exercises to combined exercises. In 1997, *Exercise Flying Fish* was the first FPDA exercise to combine a major ADEX and maritime *Exercise Starfish*. According to Crowe, *Exercise Flying Fish* was "the first truly joint and combined exercise conducted under the FPDA umbrella...." This exercise included 30 ships and 150 aircraft, including an air craft

⁵⁸ Crowe p 42

⁵⁹ Crowe p 42

⁶⁰ Crowe p 49

⁶¹ This combination of ADEX and Starfish became known as Exercise Flying Fish in 1997. Crowe p 39-41

⁶² Crowe p 41

⁶³ Crowe p 40

carrier, amphibious ships, submarines, F/A-18, F-16 and Tornado aircraft as well as land forces, with the aircraft carrier and the Tornado aircraft being contributed by the UK.⁶⁴ *Exercise Flying Fish* also demonstrated that all members had the political, diplomatic and military experience to make these exercises work.⁶⁵

Within the FPDA headquarters, there was a number of important changes to personnel and equipment. In the mid-1990s, IADS communications and computer systems were upgraded to match the growing capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore.⁶⁶ In 1997, the first FPDA Professional Forum was conducted in Singapore. This Professional Forum was to allow FPDA members to come together to discuss FPDA-related ideas. The late 1990s saw the introduction of new training courses for FPDA personnel. In 1999 two new courses were introduced for FPDA officers—the Battle Managers’ course and the Senior Commanders’ course— both of which were intended to prepare participants to command in a joint environment.⁶⁷ The most significant change to IADS was to the type of Australian officer that filled the position of Commander IADS. In the 1970s and 1980s the Australian officers in charge of IADS had been senior officers close to the end of their RAAF careers. The 1990s saw the CIADS position filled by a senior officer in the middle of his RAAF career. From 1995 onwards every Commander IADS has returned back to Australia to fill a more senior position,⁶⁸ a prominent example being Angus Houston, who went on to become Chief of the Australian Defence Force.

Early 2000s to 2010

The decade from the early 2000s to 2010 saw a number of notable changes as the FPDA member countries built upon the evolution of the 1990s and adjusted to the impact of the September 2001 terrorist attacks on the United States. The destruction

⁶⁴ Crowe p 47

⁶⁵ Crowe p 47

⁶⁶ Crowe p 43

⁶⁷ Crowe p 51

⁶⁸ Crowe p 43

caused by the Boxing Day Tsunami of 2004 to countries within South East Asia also widened the FPDA's focus to include humanitarian and disaster relief.

The 2000 Defence Ministers' Meeting agreed that the FPDA should move towards a more joint environment and a restructuring of IADS. Starting 2001-02 the FPDA Defence Chiefs' Conference (FDCC) was arranged to coincide with the annual Shangri-La Dialogue held by the International Institute for Strategic Studies in Singapore. The Fifth FPDA Defence Minister's meeting in 2003 agreed to expand the focus of the FPDA to improve members' abilities to counter asymmetric threats.⁶⁹ Exercises on non-conventional threats also expanded to include civilian agencies, such as the International Red Cross, Singapore Police and Malaysia's Maritime Enforcement Agency, as they addressed illegal fishing, anti-smuggling, anti-piracy and disaster relief contingencies.⁷⁰

By 2010, the Five Power Defence Arrangements had changed significantly from 1971. In 1971, the FPDA structure contained two councils, the Joint Consultative Council and Air Defence Council. As of 2010, the FPDA was organised into five main structures. In order of decreasing seniority, they were: the FPDA Defence Ministers' Meeting (FDMM); FPDA Defence Chiefs' Conference (FDCC); FPDA Consultative Council (FCC); FPDA Activities Coordination Council (FACC); and the FPDA Professional Forum.⁷¹ With regards to exercise and training, the FPDA had evolved from simple air defence exercises in 1971 to annual complex multilateral exercises involving operational air, maritime and land forces from all five members. Some examples of these exercises are: *Ex Suman Warrior* (command planning); *Ex Bersama Sheild* (maritime focus); and *Ex Bersama Lima* (air, land and maritime focus). *Ex*

⁶⁹ C. Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements Exercises and Their Contribution to Regional Security, 2004-2010" Paper for Conference on the Five Power Defence Arrangements at Forty, co-sponsored by the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore 2 March 2011.

⁷⁰ Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements Exercises" Singapore 2 March 2011.

⁷¹ Thayer. "The Quiet Achiever" p 82-84

Bersama Padu (command planning) is held every four years and *Ex Suman Protector* (air, land and maritime focus) is held every five years.⁷²

Literature review

This section will discuss the existing literature on the Five Power Defence Arrangements. As mentioned previously in Chapter One, the body of work on the Arrangements is small and predominantly comprised of journal articles. Nevertheless, key themes can be discerned.

Writers' approaches to the Five Power Defence Arrangements can be divided into three main groups. The first is the general overview group, in which writers have provided an overall history of the Arrangements. The literature in this group typically provides a combination of the following: a short history of the Arrangements; a quick overview of the FPDA organisational structure; some member benefits; and a concluding evaluation of the Arrangements contributions to the security of the members and the region of South East Asia. Excellent examples of this genre are by Thayer, Keating, Bristow, Chin, Rolfe and Emmers. The second group is comprised of works that have focused on a particular aspect of the Arrangements or a section of the FPDA's history. Philip Methven and Hashim bin Mohamed Amin discussed the possible role of the FPDA as a template for military cooperation among the states of South East Asia while KU Menon looked at the possibility of the FPDA expanding to include Brunei.⁷³ KW Chin has two important works that both focus on the beginnings of the Arrangements. His 1974 paper provides an excellent short account of the nature of the FPDA and its roots in the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Arrangement, while his

⁷² Thayer. "The Quiet Achiever" p 82-84

⁷³ see P Methven *The Five Power Defence Arrangements and Military Cooperation Among the ASEAN States* (1992); Hashim bin Mohamed Amin "Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Model for Co-operative Arrangements of Future Armies - An Assessment" in *The Future Battlefield* edited by JM Malik 1997 and KU Menon. "A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 1988

1983 book focuses on this period in greater depth.⁷⁴ The third group contains works that give the Arrangements a passing mention in discussions that ultimately focus on other issues. There are passing mentions to the FPDA in numerous books on South East Asian security. The majority of these works deal with a completely different topic and their mentions of the FPDA offer no substantive reference. However, some works do offer important commentary into the value or workings of the Arrangements. There are several examples in this category. Sheldon Simon raises the idea that organisations such as the FPDA have helped prevent divisions within ASEAN, in that ties between Malaysia and Singapore and the non-South East Asian members were preferable to a trilateral defence link between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia that could divide ASEAN into land and maritime-focussed subgroups.⁷⁵ Ron Huiskens states that the FPDA has made a positive contribution to Australia-Singapore relations due to the high value Singapore places on connections with states outside of South East Asia.⁷⁶ Desmond Ball devotes several pages to the FPDA as an example of Australia's defence cooperation with South East Asia that also provided a sense of deterrence due to the ambiguity of the commitment of FPDA membership.⁷⁷

Looking at the literature as a whole, the majority of the analysis views the Arrangements as having made a positive contribution primarily to bilateral military and diplomatic relations between Malaysia and Singapore. In the area of diplomacy, the FPDA has been viewed as providing an additional framework for discussions between Malaysia and Singapore, and their external defence partners. Gavin Keating and James Rolfe stress that the greatest member benefit of the Arrangements was its 'networking mechanism.'⁷⁸ Tim Huxley viewed the FPDA as providing an important

⁷⁴ see Chin Kin Wah two works *The Five Power defence arrangements and AMDA* and *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*.

⁷⁵ Sheldon W. Simon. "Regional Security Structures in Asia," in *East Asian Security in the Post-Cold War Era*, ed. Sheldon W. Simon (Armonk: M.E. Sharp Inc, 1993) p 22

⁷⁶ Ron Huiskens. "Australia-Singapore" in *Australia as an Asia Pacific Regional Power*. ed. B. Taylor (Oxon: Routledge 2007) p 146

⁷⁷ Desmond Ball and Pauline Kerr. *Presumptive Engagement: Australia's Asia-Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996) p 94-97

⁷⁸ JG Rolfe *Anachronistic past or positive future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements*. CSS Working Paper 4/95 Wellington: Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington 1995 p13 and G Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." *Australian Defence Force Journal* 170 (2006) p51

medium through which Australia could encourage defence cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore. When describing Australia's response to the security of the ASEAN states after the Vietnamese invasion of Cambodia in 1978 and the subsequent increase in Soviet military activity in South East Asia, Tim Huxley refers to the 'revitalisation' of the FPDA in the same breath as he mentions the increased Australian aid to South East Asia under the Australian defence cooperation program.⁷⁹ Paul Dibb's 1986 *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities* states the FPDA exists primarily as a political tool as opposed to having any military relevance.⁸⁰ Singapore writer KH Lim stressed that the FPDA provided 'political deterrence' which came from Malaysia and Singapore's access to extra-regional powers.⁸¹ Alan Ryan considers the FPDA to have provided Australia with "...a long record of military engagement and cooperation..." with Malaysia and Singapore, even though he does refer to the FPDA in a backhanded way as a post-colonial "hangover."⁸²

In assessments of Australia's military commitment under the Arrangements, the FPDA is viewed as having been both a forum for member discussion and a confidence building measure through its multilateral exercises and training.⁸³ Coral Bell argued that the FPDA had been "...diplomatically and defensively useful..." between 1971 and 1991 due to its exercise program and defence cooperation between the participating military services.⁸⁴ Desmond Ball states that the FPDA's usefulness in maintaining relations between Malaysia, Singapore and Australia despite tension in the bilateral relations make the Arrangements as politically important to Australia as they are militarily.⁸⁵ The ongoing participation in the FPDA and the Australian access to Butterworth has provided Australia with increased regional intelligence. Thayer

⁷⁹ Tim Huxley. 'Southeast Asia and Australia's Security.' *Asia Pacific Community* Winter 1984 pp 41, 51

⁸⁰ P Dibb. *Review of Australia's defence capabilities: report to the minister of defence*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service 1986) p 48

⁸¹ KH Lim. "FPDA's contribution to stability." *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter* February 1991 p 14

⁸² A Ryan. *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the 'New Age' Coalition Operations*. Study Paper no. 302. Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, January 2000 p 84-85

⁸³ WH Ang. "Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Singapore Perspective." *Pointer* 24, no. 2 (1998) (accessed online at www.mindef.gov.sg/safty/pointer/back/journals/1998/Vol24_2/3.htm 1 August 2005)

⁸⁴ C Bell. *Australia's Alliance Options: prospect and retrospect in a world of change*. Australian Foreign Policy Paper. (Canberra: Australian National University, 1991) p 50

⁸⁵ D Ball. "Blueprint for collective security." *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter* July 1991 p 25

argues that the FPDA base at Butterworth allowed for Australian surveillance flights over Australia's maritime approaches.⁸⁶

In its focus on military contributions, the literature evinces a strong belief that the FPDA was designed to allow Malaysia and Singapore to counter potential regional threats. It is therefore of some interest that there is no definitive view within the literature as to the threat the Arrangements were meant to counter. Indonesia is often mentioned as the primary regional threat, though not the only one. Tan supports this view, stating that the aim of the Arrangements was clearly to counter any contingencies from Indonesia as the FPDA was created soon after Confrontation.⁸⁷ Rolfe states that in the early 1970s, New Zealand supported the FPDA due to fears of an expansionist Vietnam in the wake of US withdrawal and a lingering uncertainty regarding Indonesian intentions in the region after Confrontation.⁸⁸ TB Millar states the FPDA was intended to improve Malaysian and Singaporean military capabilities so that the two states would be able to resist possible future antagonism from Indonesia or the Philippines.⁸⁹ This lack of consensus among commentators reinforces Joseph Camilleri's statement that, when it came to determining the threats the FPDA was intended to counter, the Arrangements were "riddled with ambiguity."⁹⁰

Writers in Malaysia and Singapore avoid identifying the regional threat. Abdullah states that the FPDA was "originally established to ensure the security of Malaysia and Singapore against outside threats..."⁹¹ Khoo How San states that Malaysia and Singapore, in the wake of Confrontation, considered the FPDA as a form of 'potential' deterrence, both psychological as well as physical, though he does not provide a name

⁸⁶ C Thayer "The Quiet Achiever" p 93

⁸⁷ ATH Tan. *Security Perspectives of the Malay Archipelago: security linkages in the second front in the war on terrorism*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2004) p 13

⁸⁸ J Rolfe. *Anachronistic Past or Positive Future* p 5

⁸⁹ TB Millar. "The Five Power Defence Agreement and Southeast Asian Security" p 346

⁹⁰ J Camilleri. *Regionalism in the New Asia-Pacific Order: The Political Economy of the Asia Pacific Region, Volume II*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar, 2003) p59

⁹¹ Y Abdullah. "FPDA Remains Relevant with Broadened Role to Reflect New Security Threats" *Asian Defence Journal* (July-August 2006) p 4

to a potential opponent.⁹² Bristow takes the view that the “unidentified enemy” is actually code for ‘Indonesia.’⁹³ The literature does not dwell on why Malaysian and Singaporean writers avoid identifying Indonesia, though one can draw a plausible conclusion that this is done to avoid creating regional tensions between all three ASEAN states. Based on this cross-section of the literature, one can see the strong view that the FPDA has been viewed as a way to assist Malaysia and Singapore from countering threats from other states in South East Asia as well as Indonesia. Considering this line of reasoning, there would be a reasonable expectation that non-FPDA states in South East Asia would have been against the Arrangements. However, this is not completely accurate.

Most writing on the FPDA asserts that the Arrangements have had a beneficial impact on the wider ASEAN region. Thayer, Keating, Rolfe and Bristow all argue that that the FPDA has contributed to the stability of South East Asia by inserting a level of continuity and moderation in the often fractious relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. Singapore and Malaysia have both expressed support for the FPDA between 1971 and 2010. Singapore has been most vocal in its support of the FPDA. This official support is reflected in the writings of Singapore scholars on the FPDA, such as Chin Kin Wah, Khoo How San, Lim Kwong Hoon and Ang Wee Han. Camilleri goes one step further, asserting that in the 1970s the FPDA successfully encouraged not only the creation of additional military links between Malaysia and Singapore but also bilateral military links between other ASEAN states, including Indonesia and the Philippines.⁹⁴ Bristow argues that the FPDA has both assisted and exceeded other regional multinational organisations’ contributions to regional security.⁹⁵

⁹² Khoo How San. “FPDA: If it Ain’t Broke...” *Pointer* 26 no. 4 (October-December 2000) p 111

⁹³ Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 12

⁹⁴ Camilleri. *Regionalism in the New Asia Pacific Order*, p 92

⁹⁵ Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 2

The FPDA has also been viewed as a very ‘flexible’ security organisation which writers say derives from a combination of the FPDA’s low profile and the low level of commitment required from its members. Carl Thayer has dubbed the FPDA the ‘quiet achiever’ while Damon Bristow refers to the Arrangements as “the unknown regional security organization.”⁹⁶ The view of the FPDA as ‘low profile’ is arguably reinforced by the small body of literature written by scholars that is specifically devoted to the Arrangements.

Many writers attribute the longevity and low profile of the FPDA to what they perceive as the low level of commitment required from the members of the Arrangements. This low level of commitment provided the members with the flexibility to belong to the FPDA without the need for significant adjustments to their foreign and defence policies. In 1974, Chin contended that this loose structure allowed the FPDA to accommodate the different interests and sensitivities of its members, particularly Malaysia and Singapore.⁹⁷ Australia withdrew its ground troops from Malaysia and Singapore by 1974, but Prime Minister Whitlam announced that this did not mean the withdrawal of Australian support from the FPDA.⁹⁸ The British Royal Air Force did not participate in FPDA exercises between 1973 and 1988.⁹⁹ Malaysia withdrew from the FPDA’s *Exercise Stardex* in 1998 due to financial constraints and tensions with Singapore, but resumed participation in *Stardex* in 1999.¹⁰⁰ This flexibility has also meant that the FPDA was able to operate without the participation of all the parties. Emmers views the FPDA as operating as “...a loose and subgroup structure focusing on a specific set of security issues of direct concern to its participants...[and the FPDA’s] activities can involve two or more of its five members, thus incorporating a flexible and in-built ‘FPDA minus x’ formula.”¹⁰¹ Chin

⁹⁶ Thayer. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever” and Bristow “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia’s Unknown Regional Security Organization.”

⁹⁷ Singapore was focused on island defence, whereas Malaysia had concerns about anti-guerrilla operations. Chin Kin Wah. *The Five Power defence arrangements and AMDA* p 6-7

⁹⁸ Chin Kin Wah. *The Five Power defence arrangements and AMDA* p 4

⁹⁹ Thayer. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever” p 86

¹⁰⁰ Khoo How San. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: If It Ain’t Broke...” p 113

¹⁰¹ R Emmers. *The Role of the Five Power Defence Arrangements in the Southeast Asia Security Architecture*. RSIS Working Paper No 195. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies 20 April 2010, p 2

perceptively argues that the Arrangements do not impose commitments that may be seen as unacceptable to a domestic electorate or regional neighbours.¹⁰² The same flexibility also allowed the Arrangements to adjust to changes in the members' operational capabilities as well as international and regional political changes. FPDA exercises have reflected these changes, incorporating air, sea and land components over the years as well as a post 9/11 focus on piracy and counter-terrorism.

Not all writers consider the Arrangements to be advantageous to regional security; there is a segment of the FPDA literature that views the Arrangements as being less of a benefit to Australian and regional strategic interests. Some writers have viewed the FPDA as largely inactive, particularly during the first two decades of its existence. Others state that Australia's participation in the FPDA has had a negative influence on Australia's relations with South East Asia. This second view stems from the aforementioned view that the purpose of the Arrangements was to act as a counter to Indonesia. These observations will now be examined in more detail.

A consistent view in much of the literature is that the FPDA underwent periods of significant inactivity between 1971 and 1991. KW Chin's 1991 article assessed the FPDA's first two decades of existence, noting that during this time no attempt had been made by the members at a ministerial level to collectively review the Arrangements, even though provisions for review were a part of the FPDA Communiqué. In addition, the FPDA exercise program had failed to develop to any great extent, the reason for which Chin attributed in part to bilateral defence sensitivities between Malaysia and Singapore that had spilled over into the FPDA. Chin's article quoted a Malaysian deputy defence force minister as referring to the FPDA prior to 1988 as 'dead wood'.¹⁰³ Some later commentators on the FPDA have leveraged this characterisation. Gavin Keating and Andrew Tan both reference Chin

¹⁰² Chin Kin Wah. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after" p 195

¹⁰³ KW Chin. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after" p 195

and use the expression 'dead wood' to describe the FPDA prior to 1988.¹⁰⁴ Menon states that the FPDA "...was largely moribund..." during this same time frame.¹⁰⁵ Allan Crowe touches on this theme in 2001, stating that some FPDA commentators recommended that the Arrangements be abandoned as they were no longer effective due to the withdrawal of most of the ANZUK military contribution to the Arrangements.¹⁰⁶ Ralph Emmers' 2010 article on the FPDA also argues that FPDA activities and participation was limited during the first two decades of the FPDA's existence. Although he does not use the term 'dead wood', Emmers' conclusions in 2010 are much the same as those of Chin in 1991. Emmers reinforces his argument using two key sources. The first is New Zealand academic James Rolfe, who stated that the FPDA Joint Consultative Council held only four meetings in the first decade of the Arrangements' existence and there were no high-level ministerial meetings.¹⁰⁷ The second is Singapore writer Ang Wee Han, who stated that the FPDA's activities and structure had remained limited in the 1970s and 1980s.¹⁰⁸

There is a small but important segment of the FPDA literature that views the Arrangements as at best obsolete and at worst damaging to Australia's regional interests. The argument in support of obsolescence states that the Arrangements are no longer necessary due to significant changes in South East Asia's strategic environment since 1971. This argument that the FPDA was an anachronism first appeared in 1981 and became more popular from 1990 onward, possibly as a result of the end of the Cold War. In 1981 Singapore Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam was quoted as saying that the FPDA was irrelevant and out of date due to the changes in the region

¹⁰⁴ G Keating "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." p 49 and ATH Tan "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008) p 290

¹⁰⁵ KU Menon. "A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 10 no. 3 (December 1988) p 307

¹⁰⁶ Crowe p 35

¹⁰⁷ J Rolfe, "Anachronistic Past or Positive Future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements", Working Paper, Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 1995 referenced in Emmers 2010 p 9

¹⁰⁸ Ang Wee Han. "Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Singapore Perspective." *Pointer* 24 no. 2 (April-June 1998) Internet edition

since 1971.¹⁰⁹ The view of the FPDA as ‘out of date’ also existed in some parts of the Australian government. The 1986 *Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities* stated that the Arrangements “...reflect the concerns of a previous era.”¹¹⁰ Ball indicates that, by the mid-1980s, the Australian Department of Defence and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade both strongly considered the FPDA to be obsolete.¹¹¹ *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia* dismissed the FPDA as an untried, “watered-down” replacement of the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement.¹¹² In 1999 Heron argued that the FPDA has “reached retirement stage” and should be dismantled due to the major regional developments that had occurred since 1971.¹¹³ Heron justifies this by citing that both Malaysian and Singaporean independent military capabilities had improved to near-Australian standards by 1999; he concludes therefore that the Arrangements had become obsolete as both states no longer required Australian assistance.¹¹⁴

A significant aspect of the argument that the FPDA had damaged Australian relations with South East Asia rested on the assumption that the primary role of the Arrangements was as a counter to Indonesia. Chalmers bluntly states that “...the FPDA has at times exacerbated relations with Indonesia, which sees it as a direct descendent of the alliance involved in the konfrontasi [Confrontation] of the 1960s.”¹¹⁵ To support his statement, Chalmers relies on Methven’s discussion of Indonesian concerns that Australia might attempt to become the dominant Western power in South East Asia after the end of the Cold War.¹¹⁶ In his 1990 article, Kusuma-

¹⁰⁹ P Lewis Young. “What future for the Five Power Defence Arrangements? A Personal View From Australia” *Asian Defence Journal* 10, 1981 p 39

¹¹⁰ P Dibb. *Review of Australia’s Defence Capabilities*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, March 1986) p 48

¹¹¹ D Ball and P Kerr. *Presumptive Engagement: Australia’s Asia-Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1996) p 95

¹¹² CM Turnbull. “Regionalism and Nationalism” in *The Cambridge History of Southeast Asia Volume Four: From World War II to the Present*. ed. Nicholas Tarling. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999) p 289

¹¹³ M Heron. “A Sub-Regional Security System for Southeast Asia.” *Australian Defence Force Journal* 135 (1999) p 21

¹¹⁴ Heron p 21

¹¹⁵ M Chalmers. *Confidence-Building in South-East Asia*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) p 29

¹¹⁶ P Methven. *The five power defence arrangements and military cooperation among the ASEAN states: incompatible models for security in Southeast Asia?* (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence

Atmadja assessed the FPDA as an impediment to closer Australia-ASEAN defence ties.¹¹⁷ In 1990, Dr Mochtar, Indonesian Foreign Minister from 1978-1988, saw the FPDA as being insurance against Indonesia returning to a more aggressive policy and called for the replacement of the FPDA with trilateral military ties between Indonesia, Singapore and Malaysia.¹¹⁸ Dr Mochtar said that a Malaysia-Singapore-Indonesia military cooperation agreement would see the end of suspicion and distrust between the three powers, with a new Three Power Defence Arrangement phased in over three years.¹¹⁹ Ball stated that “several prominent Indonesians” in the late 1980s and early 1990s had viewed the FPDA as being obsolete, divisive in terms of regionalism, and an impediment to the development of regional security cooperation.¹²⁰ Heron’s 1999 article stated that the FPDA contributed towards the preventing of the “growth of true multilateralism because of the historical norms associated with their respective foundations.”¹²¹ The only benefit that Heron saw in the FPDA was that of a model on which a new, inclusive South East Asian security arrangement could be based.¹²² Heron views the primary purpose of the Arrangements as being insurance against any renewed hostilities by Indonesia. The historical factors that created the FPDA curtailed the development of cooperative security postures in the region, directed as the Arrangements were against Indonesia.¹²³

Some writers have argued against this view. Phillip Methven disputes the idea that the FPDA has harmed Australian relations with Indonesia. He argues that while some Indonesian officials would like to see FPDA exercises ‘terminated,’ other Indonesians

92. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1992) p 126-134, as cited in Chalmers, *Confidence-Building in South-East Asia* p 29

¹¹⁷ M Kusuma-Atmadja. "Some Thoughts on ASEAN Security Co-operation: An Indonesian Perspective." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 12 no. 3 (1990).

¹¹⁸ M Richardson. "Shifts in the power balance." *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1991 p 37

¹¹⁹ Mochtar Kusuma-Atmadja. "ASEAN Security Cooperation: An Indonesian Perspective." p 170

¹²⁰ Ball does not give the names of the “several prominent Indonesians” who take a negative view of the FPDA. D Ball. "Blueprint for Collective Security" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter* July 1991 p 25

¹²¹ Heron p 19

¹²² Specifically, that South East Asia could use the FPDA “charter.” Heron p 23

¹²³ Heron p 21

see the value of the FPDA towards regional security.¹²⁴ Ric Casagrande concluded that, although the Arrangements did not include Indonesia, the FPDA had allowed Australia to continue its involvement in South East Asia, supporting Australian foreign policy goals of contributing to regional security.¹²⁵

Another debate in the literature is whether the existence of the FPDA prevented the formation of strong bilateral military relations between Malaysia and Singapore. Some writers argue that the FPDA did not prevent such developments. For example, Crowe saw it as unlikely that Malaysia and Singapore would have developed bilateral defence relations due to the ongoing tensions between the two states.¹²⁶ On the other hand, Heron argues that dismantling the FPDA would help regional powers such as Malaysia and Singapore to establish new links and work towards resolving their historical disputes.¹²⁷

There is no unanimous agreement amongst scholars as to how to classify the Arrangements. Different commentators disagree on whether the FPDA can be classified as an 'alliance.' In 1972, TB Millar argued that the FPDA was not a formal, public treaty and therefore should not be considered an alliance.¹²⁸ KW Chin agrees with Millar, stating that the use of the word 'Arrangements' indicates that the FPDA communiqué is not the equivalent of an alliance-style treaty.¹²⁹ Other writers disagree. Gavin Keating makes use of alliance theory to explain why the Arrangements have lasted beyond the initial expectations of the FPDA membership.¹³⁰ However, Keating does not provide an in-depth discussion of what makes the FPDA an alliance. Others, such as Segal, make passing reference to the FPDA as an 'alliance' again without

¹²⁴ P Methven. *The five power defence arrangements and military cooperation among the ASEAN states: incompatible models for security in Southeast Asia?* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1992) p 130-132

¹²⁵ R Casagrande. *The Five Power Defence Arrangements – Are They Still Relevant to Australia in the 90s?* Working Paper no 17. (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, September 1993) p11

¹²⁶ Crowe p 23-24

¹²⁷ Heron p 20

¹²⁸ TB Millar. "The Five Power Defence Agreement and Southeast Asian Security" p 343

¹²⁹ Chin Kin Wah. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after." p 194

¹³⁰ G Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity" p48-58.

stating clearly why the Arrangements deserve that classification.¹³¹ Ryan refers to the Arrangements as a “multilateral defence alliance.”¹³² Although he begins his article with a discussion on alliances in South East Asia, Menon refers to the FPDA as a “loose multilateral defence umbrella.”¹³³ Emmers argues that the FPDA is a “mini-lateral defence coalition” as the Arrangements operate “...as a loose and subgroup structure focusing on a specific set of security issues of direct concern to its participants.”¹³⁴ Thayer takes the view that the FPDA was a ‘consultative forum’ and not an alliance.¹³⁵ The 1989 Australian Ministerial Statement *Australia’s Regional Security* included the FPDA under the heading of ‘Politico-Military Capability’.¹³⁶ Although the literature demonstrates differing opinions, there is no active debate within the literature regarding the most appropriate classification of the FPDA.

There is some indication that the FPDA members encouraged this ambiguity. All the FPDA members also avoided referring to the FPDA as an alliance, stressing instead the consultative nature of the Arrangements in deference to Indonesian concerns and the Arrangements’ heavy reliance on cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore.¹³⁷ The idea that the FPDA has been deliberately understated so as to avoid upsetting Indonesia is one that will be explored further in this study.

In the FPDA literature, there is little discussion on the impact the FPDA has had on Australia’s relations with its three closest allies: the US, the UK and New Zealand. Instead, commentators have preferred to focus on the benefits that the UK and New

¹³¹ Segal states that the shift from AMDA to FPDA saw the anchor role of the alliance shift from the UK to Australia. While Segal was correct about the shift of responsibility to Australia, he provides no support for his assertion that the FPDA is actually an alliance. G Segal. *Rethinking the Pacific*. (Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1990) p 254

¹³² A Ryan. *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the ‘New Age’ Coalition Operations*. Study Paper no. 302. Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, January 2000 p 84

¹³³ KU Menon. “A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia” p 306

¹³⁴ R Emmers. “The Role of the Five Power Defence Arrangements in the Southeast Asian Security Architecture”

¹³⁵ Thayer. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever” p79

¹³⁶ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. *Australia’s Regional Security: ministerial statement by Gareth Evans, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Trade*. (Canberra: Management Information Processing, December 1989) p 18-19

¹³⁷ D Cheng. “Asia: Facing Interesting Times.” *Joint Force Quarterly* 55 (4th quarter 2009) p33

Zealand have received from their participation in the Arrangements. Damon Bristow and Gavin Keating state that the FPDA has provided a way for the British to operate militarily worldwide and engage in defence diplomacy in South East Asia.¹³⁸ Often mentioned is that the UK's membership provides British defence industries with the opportunity to demonstrate their products to potential South East Asian buyers.¹³⁹ By the late 1980s, the UK had regained its traditional role of Malaysia's principal arms supplier around the time that the UK renewed its participation in FPDA multilateral exercises.¹⁴⁰ The Arrangements have provided similar benefits to New Zealand. The FPDA has allowed the country to remain involved in regional affairs and its military to benefit from participation in the FPDA's multilateral exercises.¹⁴¹ Few writers discuss the US and its involvement with the Arrangements. Ralf Emmers states that the FPDA has benefitted the US as the Arrangements complement the American security network in the Asia-Pacific.¹⁴²

There is also little discussion among commentators regarding the impact that British and New Zealand membership in the FPDA has had on Australia's strategic ties with both countries. Gavin Keating stated that British participation in the FPDA would be of benefit to all members in the event of hostilities. He points out that the UK's permanent membership on the United Nations Security Council could be advantageous in the event of a threat to Malaysia and Singapore.¹⁴³ However, he

¹³⁸ Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 12-13 and Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." p 41

¹³⁹ Thayer, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." p 94, Chin Kin Wah, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after." p198 and ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008) p 293

¹⁴⁰ D Stuart and W Tow. *The Limits of Alliance*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) p 148

¹⁴¹ Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 13, Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." p 94, ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." p 293, and JG Rolfe. *Anachronistic past or positive future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements*. p 12-13

¹⁴² R Emmers. *The Role of the Five Power Defence Arrangements in the Southeast Asia Security Architecture*.

¹⁴³ G Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." p 51

provides no indication of how the UK would contribute militarily should such a threat occur.

Conclusion

The Five Power Defence Arrangements have been around for almost four decades and yet there has been little written on the Arrangements. From the existing literature, one can see that the FPDA has evolved during the time frame covered by this thesis, with both the consultative framework and the exercise and training program gaining in complexity. Moreover, Australia has been an active member in the Arrangements, through participation in training and exercises as well as the development of the IADS framework, and has maintained its military presence at Butterworth. Despite the significant changes in strategic circumstances between 1971 and 2010, both regionally and world-wide, the FPDA has endured.

Nevertheless, fundamental questions remain. Existing work on the Arrangements is far from being in agreement; in fact, the literature reveals an uncertainty regarding the fundamental purposes of the FPDA. There are differing answers to what many would assume to be basic questions about the Arrangements. What is the FPDA and what purpose do the Arrangements fulfil? Did the policymakers from Australia, New Zealand, the UK, Malaysia and Singapore have a particular adversary in mind during the negotiations that created the Arrangements? Were the Arrangements primarily intended to be a military alliance or to serve diplomatic purposes? Did Australia's membership in the FPDA have a positive or negative impact on Australian strategic interests? The following chapters will look to answer these questions, starting with a discussion regarding the most suitable analytical framework for viewing the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Chapter Three – Finding an analytical paradigm

“We’ll classify and label, find the answers out...” - *Zero Patience*

Greg Fry correctly observes that Australia has “for much of its history” promoted regional security arrangements as part of its armoury for the direct defence of Australia.¹ This observation is a particularly apt description of Australian defence policy after 1945. Australia’s membership in regional security arrangements fulfilled a number of Australian defence policy purposes. Australian defence policy was designed to enable Australia to be an effective ally of the US and the UK in the Asia-Pacific region through SEATO and ANZUS as well as looser arrangements such as ANZAM.² However, existing academic work has not engaged in an in-depth analysis that locates the Five Power Defence Arrangements within the spectrum of security arrangements.

Australia’s contributions under the FPDA framework fall into two distinct camps: the diplomatic and the military. As such, the FPDA requires an analytical paradigm that is capable of recognising and assessing both. The purpose of this chapter is to discuss if there is an overarching conceptual framework that does this effectively. In this discussion, the dual nature of the FPDA will be demonstrated by looking at the Arrangements through four intellectual frameworks: alliance theory; institutional theory; defence diplomacy; and defence engagement. It will be argued that the first three paradigms are unable to recognise the range of the contributions of the Arrangements, although each recognises certain aspects that the others do not. The analytical paradigm of ‘defence engagement’ is then put forward as the overarching conceptual framework used in this thesis, as this construct is able to assess the

¹ As quoted in G Cheeseman and M McKinley. *Australia’s Regional Security Policies 1970-1990: Some Critical Reflections* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990) p 5

² G Greenwood “Australian Foreign Policy in Action” in *Australia in World Affairs 1956-60*. (ed. G Greenwood and N Harper) (Sydney: FW Cheshire Pty Ltd 1963) p 64

FPDA's dual nature. This chapter argues that, while each individual paradigm is insufficient, a combination of all three, under the label of 'defence engagement' effectively captures the FPDA's diplomatic and military contributions.

Choice of theories

The application of theory to historical events must be undertaken with a judicious recognition of both its strengths and weaknesses. International relations theory does have a place in helping to make sense of a complex world.³ As per Keohane, international relations theory provides a guide for interpreting events and a knowledge of theory assists in recognising the basis of one's interpretation.⁴ However, theory does have its limits. By its very nature, theory attributes powerful explanatory value to a small number of contingent generalisations. By emphasising certain factors while downplaying others, a generalisation can limit a specific theory's ability to explain events.⁵

In this chapter, a key determinant in analysing the FPDA will be the extent to which a theory emphasises a 'hard' or 'soft' security edge. As discussed in Chapter Two, the FPDA literature reflects this split, as some writers focus on the Arrangements' aspects as a military or alliance commitment while others emphasise the FPDA's framework for diplomatic consultation. A hard security edge places a greater emphasis on the expectation or use of military capabilities. Alliance theory falls into this category. In the middle of the spectrum is institutional theory, which contains both 'hard' and 'soft' elements. Institutional theory falls into the mid range as it emphasises the binding of member states to mutually agreed-upon norms of behaviour. On the one hand, institutional theory focuses on encouraging predictability in the behaviour of institutional members. On the other, institutional theory posits the expectation of a

³ JJ Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. (New York: WW Norton & Co, 2001) p 8-9

⁴ R Keohane "Realism, neorealism and the study of world politics" in *Neorealism and its Critics* (R Keohane ed.) (New York: Columbia University Press 1986) p 2-4

⁵ JJ Mearsheimer. *The Tragedy of Great Power Politics*. p 11

cost should a member attempt to leave the institution. A soft security edge focuses instead on the use of the military to build capabilities and improve relationships, where military commitment does not include the active defence of a partner state. Defence diplomacy falls into this category.

Alliance theory

This section argues that alliance theory does not recognise that the central purpose of the FPDA was the management of the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral relationship. However, alliance theory does provide a viable explanation for other aspects of the Arrangements.

Alliances contain specific, enduring themes. An alliance is predominantly a military commitment.⁶ An alliance is a form of security cooperation, formal and informal, between states that contains a level of commitment and exchange of benefits between the alliance members.⁷ States form alliances for two main reasons. The first is for the state to increase both the probability of aid and a successful defence in the event of an attack.⁸ The second reason is to allow a state to better control the actions of an ally.⁹ The commitment indicates a reasonable expectation of military action by the alliance partners in the event of a threat or attack on an alliance member.¹⁰ The strength of this expectation rests heavily on the capacity of the ally's military resources and capabilities, based on its commitment under the alliance treaty.¹¹ It is also understood

⁶ TB Millar. *Contemporary Alliances*. (Canberra: Australian National University, 1981) p 4

⁷ Stephen Walt's definition of an alliance as "...a formal or informal relationship of security cooperation between two or more sovereign states. This definition assumes some level of commitment and exchange of benefits for both parties; severing the relationship or failing to honour the agreement would presumably cost something, even if it were compensated in other ways." SM Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1987) p 1

⁸ G Snyder. *Alliance Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) p 44

⁹ Snyder illustrates this by pointing to the idea that a secondary purpose of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization was to control Germany. G Snyder. *Alliance Politics* p 320

¹⁰ TB Millar. *Contemporary Alliances* p 4

¹¹ G Snyder. *Alliance Politics* p 167

that non-compliance with the terms of an alliance would carry some cost to the non-compliant state.

As a result, an alliance is not a static entity. All alliances have some form of “...complex interplay of identical, complementary and competing national interests...”¹² Bargaining between members is an integral aspect of an alliance. Alliances require some form of management, as all the alliance members will wish to shape the alliance to maximise their net benefits.¹³ Therefore, to accommodate this management, alliances typically involve some degree of institutionalisation.¹⁴ Stuart and Tow correctly identify that an ‘unconditional alliance’ in which one state guarantees the security of another without condition, exists only to indicate a relationship between an imperial power and a subject state.¹⁵ Alliances can also end for a number of reasons, such as the disappearance of the concern that produced the alliance, uncertainty among the members regarding the capability of the alliance to increase their security and their acquisition of other means to protect themselves.¹⁶

Looking at the criteria outlined above, the Five Power Defence Arrangements is not an alliance, although it does have certain alliance attributes. The primary reason is that alliance theory cannot readily accommodate the fact that the central purpose of the FPDA has been to allow the non-ASEAN members, led by Australia, to assist Malaysia and Singapore in managing their bilateral defence relationship. In 1971 Australia understood that the deterioration of the bilateral Malaysia and Singapore relationship “...beyond a certain point...” would render the ANZUK presence for

¹² D Stuart and W Tow. *The Limits of Alliance*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) p 4

¹³ G Snyder. *Alliance Politics* p 165

¹⁴ Less bureaucracy often indicates a more “ad hoc” alliance, as was the case for the Axis coalition of 1939-1945 whereas more complicated bureaucracies and decision making procedures, such as can be found in NATO, indicate a stronger alliance of extended duration. SM Walt. “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse.” *Survival* 39(1) 1997 p 157

¹⁵ D Stuart and W Tow. *The Limits of Alliance* p 4

¹⁶ Reasons for the end of an alliance include: changing perceptions of threats; declining credibility; domestic politics; diverging perceptions of threats; demographic and social trends; domestic competition; regime changes and ideological divisions. SM Walt. “Why Alliances Endure or Collapse.” p 158-162

common defence useless.¹⁷ An important and enduring FPDA objective was to encourage Malaysia and Singapore to view their security as indivisible and to encourage this perspective within the Malaysian and Singaporean defence establishments. However, between 1971 and 2010 Malaysia and Singapore have arguably not embraced the concept of their defence being indivisible. Malaysia has defined its national security predominantly in terms of the internal political, economic and social success of its ethnic Malay population.¹⁸ Singapore, on the other hand, has focused on the external, with its fellow FPDA member Malaysia as its (unnamed) primary security concern.¹⁹ The proposition that the FPDA is an alliance meant to restrain the behaviour of two allies is vitiated by the limited control that Australia, New Zealand and the UK had over Malaysia and Singapore between 1971 and 2010. The non-ASEAN members in the FPDA were unable to prevent serious flare-ups in the workings on the Arrangements over the years, such as Malaysia's cancellation of FPDA exercises in 1998 and Malaysia's ongoing resistance to Singaporean ground forces exercising on Malaysian territory.²⁰

A clear and agreed perception of a common threat was not a dominant factor in the creation of the FPDA. As discussed above, the perception of an external threat is a central consideration in the formation of alliances. States usually form an alliance in response to an external danger of mutual importance. Snyder argues that alliances are aimed at states outside their own membership.²¹ Liska too considers that alliances are primarily formed against something.²² States form alliances, in other words, to balance against an external threat or to bandwagon with that threat.²³ Walt's "balance of threat" theory persuasively argues that while the power of other states is an important

¹⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*, (ed. S Fr hling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 69 p 409

¹⁸ KS Nathan. "Malaysia" in *Asia Security Practice* (ed. M Alagappa) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p 515-525

¹⁹ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000) pp 44-50

²⁰ Although Malaysia stated that it would not participate in FPDA exercises in 1998 because of budget restraints, the country's defence minister admitted that tensions with Singapore, arising from the publication of Lee Kwan Yew's memoirs, had contributed to Malaysia's decision. C Thayer "Security Relations" in *Across the Causeway* ed. T Shiriashi, 163-174, Singapore: ISEAS, 2009 p 172

²¹ G Snyder. *Alliance Politics* p 4

²² G Liska. *Nations in Alliance*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1962) p 12

²³ SM Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. (Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1987) p 17-49

consideration in the decision to form an alliance, ultimately states form alliances based on perceived threats.²⁴ The creation and maintenance of the FPDA cannot be attributed to a significant external threat to all five members. That being said, alliance theory does provide some understanding of why the FPDA has survived beyond initial expectations.

Indonesia is the state most often considered as the external threat that motivated the creation and survival of the FPDA but the actions of Australia, Malaysia and Indonesia in the late 1960s and early 1970s do not support this interpretation. In 1967, senior Australian policymakers considered a five power arrangement as a possible way to discourage Indonesian aggression against Malaysia and Singapore.²⁵ However, at the same time these policymakers also recognised that over the short term Indonesia was not likely to be a threat to Malaysia and Singapore as Jakarta was too focussed on domestic matters.²⁶ Australia did not see Indonesia as so threatening to Australian interests in South East Asia that an alliance was required. Canberra policymakers aimed at contributing to conditions that would encourage domestic stability in Indonesia. A 1967 report by Australia's Joint Intelligence Committee, prepared during the negotiations to determine AMDA's replacement, observed that Indonesia looked to Australia as a source of aid and investment.²⁷ Huxley contends that the FPDA does serve as a potential counterweight in the event that Indonesia reverted to a more aggressive foreign policy.²⁸ Some commentators saw Indonesia as the FPDA's "principal unspoken referent" during the 1970s.²⁹ This goes against the fact that Malaysia and Australia had good working relationships with Indonesia during that time. After tripartite consultations with Singapore, Malaysia and Indonesia jointly

²⁴ SM Walt. *The Origins of Alliances*. Preface p x

²⁵ Minute by Defence Committee at meetings concluded on Friday 19 May 1967 No. 37/1967 Britain East of Suez in NAA: A7942/1 B50 PART 1 *Britain East of Suez*

²⁶ Minute by the Defence Committee at a meeting held on Thursday 7 December 1967 No. 79/1967 Australian Defence Policy – current considerations in relation to Malaysia / Singapore (Report by Defence Committee) in NAA: A7942/1 S188 *South East Asia future force requirements*

²⁷ Joint Intelligence Committee (Australia) International Developments up to 1977 and their implications for Australia Final November 1967, p 20 in NAA: A7942/1 194 PART I *International Developments up to 1977 and their implications for Australia – The threat to Australia and her Territories*

²⁸ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City* p 39

²⁹ Andrew TH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008) p 293

asserted in 1971 that the Straits of Malacca and Singapore belonged to Malaysia and Indonesia and were not international waters.³⁰ In addition, Malaysian foreign policy had begun to move strongly towards a neutral stance. In 1970 Malaysia sought endorsement for the country's proposal for the neutralisation of South East Asia at a conference of non-aligned states in Lusaka, a proposal that became an important part of Malaysian foreign policy.³¹ By 1973 Australia assessed that threats from Indonesia were unlikely to occur, either directly against Australia or against Australian interests in PNG.³² Australia's focus was more on using the FPDA to improve the military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore.³³ The creation of an alliance aimed at Indonesia would have run counter to Australian and Malaysian interests in maintaining a stable relationship with Jakarta. All the FPDA members would have been very wary of having Jakarta believe that Indonesia was the target of an alliance, particularly as the Indonesian leadership in 1971 was very different from that in 1965.

Moreover, there is no indication that Jakarta perceived the FPDA as an alliance against Indonesia. Rothstein states that "...alliances are usually met by counter-alliances, and the latter, if effective, may exacerbate the threat the original alliance was created to meet..."³⁴ Using Rothstein's statement, if Jakarta viewed the FPDA as an anti-Indonesian alliance then one could reasonably expect to find two responses in Australian archival and public records: that Jakarta had expressed alarm and hostility regarding the FPDA to Australia both publicly and privately; and that Indonesia had taken active steps to counter the FPDA, such as forming a counter-alliance. A survey of the available records indicates that neither of these responses came to pass. Publicly available Australian archival sources provide no indication that Indonesia had

³⁰ "Straits of Malacca and Singapore - Joint Statement", *Foreign Affairs Malaysia* 4 (1971):54 cited in J Saravanamuttu. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy, the First Fifty Years: alignment, neutralism, Islamism*. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2010) p 117-118

³¹ From the Lusaka Conference onwards, Malaysia was accepted as 'non-aligned' by other non-aligned states. Saravanamuttu *Malaysia's Foreign Policy* p 118-119

³² "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*. (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 14 p 460

³³ The 1973 Strategic Basis Paper states that in the initial stages of the FPDA Australia recognised there was an important element of thinking that viewed the Arrangements as a way to counter possible Indonesian pressure on Malaysia and Singapore until they had developed capabilities to deter Jakarta on their own. "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*. (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 36 p 473

³⁴ R Rothstein. *Alliances and Small Powers*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1968) p 48

expressed either alarm or hostility to Australia regarding the Arrangements, or that Indonesia had actively attempted to form a counter-alliance. Instead, the archives reveal the Australian assessment in 1973 was that Indonesia valued Australia's contributions to regional stability, defence links with major powers and involvement in western associations including the FPDA.³⁵ Moreover, Australia and Indonesia had a shared strategic concern for Malaysia's internal and external security and both saw the benefit of improving Malaysian and Singaporean military capabilities.³⁶ The only South East Asian state that initially indicated displeasure with the FPDA was the Philippines, due to a dispute between Kuala Lumpur and Manila over the status of Sabah on the island of Borneo. As a way to demonstrate to the Philippines that the FPDA was not an alliance aimed against Manila, Australia asked Indonesia to act as an intermediary in the Sabah dispute.³⁷ It is extremely unlikely that Canberra would have considered this approach if the Australian side considered Indonesia to be hostile towards the Arrangements. Australia had kept Indonesia informed about FPDA, which in the early days led to an assessment that Jakarta was "reasonably well disposed" towards the Arrangements.³⁸

In the public sphere, prominent Indonesians have occasionally indicated an ambivalence or annoyance regarding the FPDA, but these attitudes have never been followed up by any significant diplomatic pressure from Jakarta to disband the Arrangements. In one situation, an Indonesian proposal to turn the FPDA into an Indonesia-Malaysia-Singapore security arrangement was declined by Malaysia and Singapore, without any backlash from Jakarta.³⁹ In the early 1990s Indonesia did express concern that Australia would use the FPDA as a way of projecting military

³⁵ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 13 p 460

³⁶ Indonesia was particularly concerned about the long-term funding of subversive groups in South East Asia by Vietnam and China. "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 88 p 508

³⁷ Outward cablegram "SEATO and five power" dated 30 April 1971. NAA: A1838/346, 696/1/28 *Five Power arrangements – Philippines attitude to five power arrangements*

³⁸ Outward cablegram "Indonesia and the 5 Power Arrangements" dated 15 May 1972. NAA: A1209/58, 1971/9495 *The Five Power Defence Arrangements for Malaysia and Singapore, 1971 Policy*

³⁹ S Simon. "Regional Security Structures in Asia," in *East Asian Security in the Post Cold War Era*.(SW Simon, ed) (New York: ME Sharpe, 1993) p 22

power into South East Asia.⁴⁰ However, this was not followed up by public diplomatic pressure by Indonesia on Australia or Indonesia's fellow ASEAN members Malaysia and Singapore. Indonesia's views on the FPDA seem designed more to ensure that the members do not take Jakarta's acceptance of the Arrangements for granted. Indonesia's approach to the FPDA will be discussed in greater detail in Chapters Five and Six.

While the FPDA was not formed in relation to an external threat, alliance theory does present a plausible explanation for the survival of the Arrangements between 1971 and 2010. Policymakers and commentators have posited that the FPDA served as a ongoing, low-level and low-key Western presence that served as a stabilising influence in a region where stability has not been seen as guaranteed. By 1981 Australia had pushed to strengthen the FPDA in response to the Soviet presence in Vietnam and Soviet intelligence gathering flights that intruded into Malaysian airspace.⁴¹ By the end of the Cold War, commentators viewed the FPDA as lacking a "clearly defined external threat focus" and that the Arrangements only stayed in existence as a type of hazy insurance policy against unknown future threats.⁴²

The FPDA has also been seen as a way for Malaysia and Singapore to deal with ASEAN's inability to develop an overt security role.⁴³ China's 1992 claims over the South China Sea, and subsequent clashes with a number of ASEAN members, gave the Association particular difficulty. In 2006 Gavin Keating argued that the FPDA evolved and survived because it was not seen as a Cold War alliance and was a way for its members to cope with the strategic uncertainty of South East Asia.⁴⁴ Keating

⁴⁰ P Methven. *The five power defence arrangements and military cooperation among the ASEAN states: incompatible models for security in Southeast Asia?* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1992) p 126-134

⁴¹ P Lewis Young. "What future for the Five Power Defence Arrangements? - A personal view from Australia" *Asian Defence Journal* 10 (October 1981) p 38

⁴² Chin Kin Wah. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after." *The Pacific Review* 4, no. 3 (1991) p 197

⁴³ ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008) p 292

⁴⁴ G Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." p 49

adds that this evolution has turned the FPDA into an “order-oriented” architecture rather than one intended for collective defence.⁴⁵ The idea of the FPDA as an ‘insurance policy’ does help to explain why the Arrangements have survived while other—and always wider—regional security organisations have not. The Central Treaty Organization (CENTO) and the South East Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO) are two formal alliances that failed to survive due to a lack of shared political and defence objectives.⁴⁶ CENTO and SEATO were formed in the 1950s as part of the western response to communism, but an increasing lack of unanimity in key goals weakened them over time and both alliances were, for all intents and purposes, terminated in the late 1970s. In the case of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, the strategic situation in South East Asia remained an ongoing concern for Malaysia and Singapore due to a lack of confidence in the continued stability of their immediate region. ASEAN did not supply any regional defence architecture and there were concerns regarding the external influence of the Soviet Union and China.

Furthermore, the FPDA did not contain an active member with a high level of military capability and significant resources, that is, a great power. Great power membership usually constitutes an important part of multilateral alliances as smaller powers see great powers as providing some sense of security guarantee. Australia joined SEATO, along with signatory members New Zealand, Pakistan, Thailand, and the Philippines and associated protocol members South Vietnam and Laos, as a way to receive the benefits seen to flow from the fact that the US, the UK and France were also members.⁴⁷ Of the five members of the FPDA between 1971 and 2010, the UK has had the highest level of military capability and resources due to the size of the British economy and the strength and global reach of its armed forces. Even so, the other members of the FPDA did not see the UK as a global power after its withdrawal East of Suez in the late 1960s. Furthermore, the costs incurred by the British to defend Malaysia during Confrontation and the ramifications of the British withdrawal East of Suez due to economic reasons were widely known. In the face of any renewed

⁴⁵ G Keating. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity." p49

⁴⁶ W Tow. *Subregional Security Cooperation in the Third World*. p 2

⁴⁷ G Modelski (1960). "Australia and SEATO." *International Organization* 14, no. 3 (Summer 1960) p 432

Confrontation policy by Jakarta towards Malaysia and Singapore or the takeover of the Philippines by communist forces, British military power projection capacities would have been hard pressed to police sea lanes in South East Asia.⁴⁸ Britain's diplomatic links and in particular its permanent UN Security Council membership, would likely have counted for more in this situation and yet, as discussed above, the FPDA Communiqué contains no clause requiring its member states to notify the Security Council in response to any threat confronting Malaysia and Singapore.

In addition, a lack of regular participation by a member of the FPDA did not result in the other members imposing a penalty on the non-participant. British participation in the FPDA has been sporadic between 1971 and 2010. Between 1973 and 1988 the Royal Air Force failed to participate in any FPDA exercises.⁴⁹ Nevertheless, there is no evidence this lack of British participation in the FPDA generated a backlash from the rest of the membership. British participation in the Arrangements was minimal until after the Cold War. The first two decades of the FPDA's existence reflected a "benign neglect" from London. This situation only changed in the 1990s as the UK began to view the Arrangements as a cost-effective way for the British military to 'show the flag' at regular intervals throughout South East Asia.⁵⁰ The other four members did not view the low level of British participation as 'abandonment' as they made no real effort at encouraging renewed British participation.⁵¹ As we have seen, the reality was that no significant British participation was expected by the other parties, a fact that positioned Australia as the pivotal member .

All the FPDA members understood that the Arrangements were not a variation of AMDA and were ultimately comfortable with this state of affairs. Both Malaysia and Singapore recognised that the FPDA did not contain the same guarantees as AMDA,

⁴⁸ Stuart and Tow. *The Limits of Alliance* p 149

⁴⁹ Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: the Quiet Achiever" p 86

⁵⁰ Stuart and Tow. *The Limits of Alliance* p 149

⁵¹ A standard response to preventing an ally from abandoning an alliance is to act in ways to increase the perception of loyalty, such as renegotiating the alliance in the ally's favour or making public statements in support. This increases the value of the alliance and reduces the incentive to leave. G Snyder. *Alliance Politics*. p183-184

but was instead a loose multilateral association designed to be acceptable to Australia and New Zealand.⁵² The only formal commitment for Australia, New Zealand and the UK, was to consult in the event of an attack, or threatened attack, on Malaysia and Singapore. The FPDA did have a consultative architecture and the standing IADS military component for training and exercises, which gave the Arrangements a hard security component not found in ASEAN or the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).⁵³ The fact that the FPDA did not have an automatic trigger for military response meant that it was safe for the members to enjoy the extraneous benefits of the Arrangements, such as training, multilateral exercises and regional access.⁵⁴ In 1989 Kim Beazley, Australian Minister for Defence, stated that Malaysia and Singapore were able to participate in the FPDA despite their non-aligned status, because the Arrangements were a regional arrangement and not part of the “Western alliance.”⁵⁵

However the FPDA has significant alliance characteristics and as a result alliance theory does provide insight into key aspects of the Arrangements. Alliance theory highlights the extensive security cooperation under the aegis of the Arrangements. The Integrated Area Defence System in Butterworth is a prime example of this security cooperation. Since 1971 Australia has contributed a high level of operational content to the FPDA, indicating a strong level of Australian commitment.⁵⁶ Australia has provided personnel and equipment to IADS. Between 1971 and 2010, the role of Commander IADS has always been filled by a senior Australian military officer. Australia has deployed aircraft to Butterworth and organised multilateral training exercises of increasing complexity under the framework of the Arrangements. This commitment, in particular the continuous basing of Australian military equipment and personnel at Butterworth, is greater than one would expect to find in an arrangement strictly intended to moderate the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral defence relationship.

⁵² KW Chin. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: the Transformation of a Security System 1957-1991*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p 173

⁵³ Bristow, Unknown Regional, p 16

⁵⁴ ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." p 296

⁵⁵ M. Richardson. "Year of Uncertainty." *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter 1989 Annual Reference Edition* 15, no. 6/7 (December 1988 / January 1989) p 41

⁵⁶ White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

An alliance level of commitment can also be detected in Australia's efforts towards building the capabilities of the Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces to operate with one another and alongside the other members of the FPDA. An original Australia intention behind the FPDA was to help reduce the defence expenditure of Malaysia and Singapore, allowing both states to focus on economic development.⁵⁷ An alliance can help to influence some of its members through the provision or withholding of technology, particularly where defence-related technology transfers might change the balance of power between two rivals.⁵⁸ Australia has been a major source of cooperation in developing the military capabilities of these two South East Asian members. Through its program of training and exercises and its use of the Integrated Area Defence System, the FPDA spent the first decade of its existence improving the air defence capabilities of both Malaysia and Singapore.⁵⁹ Since the military capabilities of both Malaysia and Singapore improved, Malaysia and Singapore have received technology and training from outside the FPDA and since 1989 have established separate bilateral exercises with other ASEAN members.⁶⁰ Nevertheless, FPDA exercises led to a level of interoperability between its members, which Crowe correctly assesses as being unlikely in the absence of the Arrangements.⁶¹

To sum up, the FPDA is not an alliance but does have some important alliance characteristics. The primary focus on the Arrangements was on the Malaysia-Singapore defence relationship. Although Indonesia had been a concern in the mid 1960s, by 1971 the country was not viewed by Australia as a threat to Malaysia and Singapore. Furthermore, Jakarta did not see the FPDA as an alliance aimed against Indonesia. None of the FPDA members saw in the FPDA the same security guarantee as provided by AMDA. This being said, of the three non-South East Asian members, Australia has demonstrated the greatest commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore. Through almost four decades Australia has played a leading role in the

⁵⁷ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA: A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p1-2

⁵⁸ R Menon. *The End of Alliances*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2007 p 6-11

⁵⁹ Crowe. p 18-23

⁶⁰ A Acharya. *An Arms Race in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia?* Pacific Strategy Paper no. 8. (Singapore: ISEAS, 1994) p35

⁶¹ Crowe. p 3-24

FPDA, in the commitment of staff, equipment and military forces, the organisation of exercises and the involvement of senior government ministers. This 'hard edge' commitment will be raised again in the context of 'defence engagement'.

Institutional theory

This section looks at the FPDA through the framework of institutional theory. Occupying the mid-point in the spectrum of the paradigms discussed in this chapter, institutional theory emphasises a commitment to an agreed framework to encourage more predictable state behaviour. Institutions contribute to regulating members' behaviour and institutional theory focuses on the way that institutions affect the decision-making aspects of its members. However, institutional theory has less focus on harder edged military commitments than does alliance theory.

There is value at looking at the FPDA through institutional theory. The Arrangements have a management structure and an operational framework centred on IADS. Viewing the Arrangements through institutional theory can provide insight into FPDA activities. In viewing the FPDA through institutional theory, one discovers a pattern of institutional cooperation running throughout the history of the Arrangements. What becomes apparent however, is that the FPDA does not demonstrate the creation of strong norms of behaviour amongst its members, as the Arrangements rely on the willingness of Malaysia and Singapore to work together.⁶² As a result, institutional theory is insufficient in explaining all aspects of the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Institutional theory contains a number of major themes that are of use when examining the FPDA. Institutional theory purports to explain why states agree to

⁶² Andrew TH Tan (2008). "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." p 299

create a framework in which they can cooperate. Institutions are often created as a response to the breakdown of an existing international or regional order. The end of an old order provides the opportunity to create new rules and organisations.⁶³ The creation of new norms of behaviour is important for the maintenance of stability, particularly among states with a history of friction. Institutions look to constrain potentially antagonistic states by locking them into an agreed set of expectations and norms.⁶⁴ This commitment contributes to stability by altering conceptions of self-interest, reducing uncertainty and stabilising expectations.⁶⁵ The intended result of member states' institutionalised affiliation is the cultivation of normative and functional security commitments that become difficult to retract.⁶⁶ States have invested in institutions as part of their strategic policies, as shown from the creation of the European Union and NATO.⁶⁷ They remain involved in multilateral institutions because cost of avoiding or escaping from institutional commitments becomes greater over time, in terms of negative repercussions on a state's economic, strategic and political goals.⁶⁸

Institutional theory assumes that states are the principal actors in world politics and that their naturally self-interested behaviour is altered over time by their institutional commitments.⁶⁹ Institutions solidify their membership by both enforcing rules as well as "...facilitating the making and keeping of agreements through the provision of information and reductions in transaction costs..."⁷⁰ It is important, however, to recognise that, while institutions help to create cooperation, they cannot always

⁶³ GJ Ikenberry. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press 2001) p 50

⁶⁴ GJ Ikenberry. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* p 50

⁶⁵ R Keohane. "Rethinking Security" in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*. (M Alagappa ed) (Stanford: Stanford University Press 1998) p 53

⁶⁶ GJ Ikenberry. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* p 41

⁶⁷ J Baylis, "International and Global Security in the Post-Cold War Era" in *The Globalization of World Politics*. (ed. J Baylis and S Smith) (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001) p 308

⁶⁸ GJ Ikenberry. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars* p 41

⁶⁹ R Keohane. "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War" in *Neorealism and Neoliberalism*. (D. Baldwin ed) (New York: Columbia University Press 1993) p 271

⁷⁰ Keohane "Institutional Theory and the Realist Challenge after the Cold War" p 274

guarantee it.⁷¹ Still, as with alliance theory, failure to follow the norms of an institution would be expected to result in a cost to the non-participating state.

The FPDA was created as a way to mitigate the uncertainty caused by the British decision to withdraw East of Suez. The British military withdrawal from South East Asia in the late 1960s signified the end of the UK defence commitment to Malaysia and Singapore. This withdrawal provided an opportunity for all AMDA participants to negotiate a new and binding regional arrangement that provided an agreed-upon set of norms. Section 3 of the Five Power Defence Arrangements Communiqué stated that cooperation among all five members in the defence arrangements was based on the defence of Malaysia and Singapore being regarded as ‘indivisible’. The FPDA was an attempt to bind its members, but specifically Malaysia and Singapore, to a common norm. In addition, Australia, New Zealand, Singapore and Malaysia all had the original goal of preventing the UK from completely disengaging from South East Asia. Australia and New Zealand were concerned about their roles in the region should the British withdraw completely, Singapore was concerned with securing an adequate air defence cover and Malaysia did not welcome the complete loss of British protection.⁷² The Arrangements provided a framework for the continuation of residual British strategic influence in the region. Some analysts have argued that the role of institutions in Asian security is questionable as Asia does not have a region-wide multilateral security institution. ASEAN does cover the region but the Association only has an indirect security role.⁷³ ASEAN is often put forward as illustrating that Asia is less constrained by legal frameworks and more “consensus oriented”— a condition known as the “ASEAN Way.”⁷⁴

The FPDA does demonstrate a number of institutional factors when looked at through the lens of institutional theory. The most concrete institutional aspects of the

⁷¹ K Mingst. *Essentials of International Relations*. (New York: WW Norton & Company, 1999) p 69

⁷² Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p152

⁷³ A Acharya. "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order" in *Asian Security Order: Instrumental and Normative Features*. (ed. M Alagappa) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2003) p 210

⁷⁴ A Acharya. "Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order" p 211

Arrangements are its policy, planning and operational structures, many of which are based out of the Integrated Area Defence System at Butterworth. Since 1971 all five FPDA members have contributed staff to IADS and have participated in FPDA management organisations. The FPDA training and exercise program and the management structure has become more complex between 1971 and 2010 as Malaysian and Singaporean cooperation and capabilities improved. The 1970s saw the creation of the FPDA's standard operating procedures which were viewed as a key milestone in the development of effective exercises.⁷⁵ By 1978, the Air Defence Council of the FPDA expected the Commander IADS to represent both the Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces to reinforce the indivisibility of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore to all members.⁷⁶ As discussed in Chapter Two, the 1980s and 1990s saw significant organisational changes, along with upgrades to the FPDA exercises and training. In 2000, new courses were introduced to prepare officers to command in a joint environment.⁷⁷ IADS name had changed from Integrated Air Defence System to Integrated *Area* Defence System to indicate the organisation's wider interests. After 2001, FPDA members also agreed to incorporate scenarios and training to meet new security challenges, such as counter-terrorism and counter-piracy.⁷⁸ By 2010, the FPDA had evolved significantly. In keeping with institutional theory, the history of the FPDA demonstrates a pattern of institutionalised cooperation.⁷⁹

If the FPDA was a way of defining mutually agreed norms, one would expect to see evidence of consistent and strong member support. This support would be visible in members' statements in support of the Arrangements and in the impact that membership has had on their respective security policies. However, neither of these has really materialised for the past four decades of the Arrangements' existence. While the FPDA has experienced institutionalised cooperation at the operational level, this has not been met with the same uniformity at the level of the members' strategic

⁷⁵ Crowe p 16-18

⁷⁶ Crowe p 18

⁷⁷ Crowe p 51

⁷⁸ C Thayer (2007). "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." p 91

⁷⁹ Baylis, "International and Global Security in the Post-Cold War Era" p 307

policies. Indeed, Malaysia and Singapore have both remained “hyper-sensitive” to any suggestion of outside influence over their national policy decision and have stridently rejected any connotation that their control over their respective borders and national polices has been anything less than total.⁸⁰

In some cases, this ‘hyper-sensitivity’ has taken the form of overt political attacks on other FPDA members. Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir—whose leadership stretched from 1981 to 2003— adopted a number of strong foreign policy stances against developed Western democracies, favouring support for non-aligned and developing states. Malaysia targeted the UK with a ‘Buy British Last’ campaign in the early 1980s. Malaysia and Singapore have a long history of bilateral antagonism. Serious strains in the relationship, such as the political conflict between Singapore and Kuala Lumpur over the visit of the Israeli president to Singapore in 1986 and disagreements over the ownership of the Pedra Branca islet and lighthouse, have strained diplomatic relations between both states.⁸¹ In 1983 Kin Wah Chin stated that the FPDA had represented the “highest common denominator for defence collaboration” between Malaysia and Singapore possible after the British announcement to withdraw East of Suez.⁸² In 2004 Malaysian Defence Minister Najib Tun Razak stressed that, while FPDA cooperation on non-conventional threats in the Straits of Malacca was necessary, Malaysia would not tolerate a foreign military presence in the Straits or Malaysian waters except during exercises.⁸³ The ongoing sensitivity in Malaysia-Singapore relations has meant that Chin’s statement remains valid in 2010.

The emphasis of institutional theory on the strength of the binding process linking the membership of the FPDA is therefore problematic. It is true that the FPDA councils and committees operated under what John Ikenberry refers to as the specialist

⁸⁰ The “sanctity” of existing borders has always been very strong amongst the states of South East Asia, as raised in Acharya. “Regional Institutions and Asian Security Order” p 225

⁸¹ Tan. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance.” p 291

⁸² Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 178

⁸³ Bristow. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia’s Unknown Regional Security Organization” p 10

knowledge and expertise of its participants.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the terms ‘bind’ and ‘reinforce’ are too strong to describe the FPDA process. The FPDA had some impact on the strategic policies of all members, as can be seen from the fact that all of them have publicly reiterated their support for the Arrangements since their inception. As discussed regarding alliance theory above, the issues around non-participation in FPDA exercises do not result in any noticeable cost for the non-participating state.

As a result, institutional theory, like alliance theory, can provide limited insight into the framework of the FPDA. IADS does function as an institution. The FPDA’s most important norm, written in the founding FPDA Communiqué, was that the defence of Malaysia and Singapore was ‘indivisible’. The FPDA also continued British links to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore alongside Australia and New Zealand. This shared responsibility was important as it allowed the FPDA members to work together while still maintaining strategic policy freedom. However, there were no explicit costs for non-compliance. Australia never assumed a policing role in the FPDA. British participation in the Arrangements remained very low. Moreover, as former colonies, Malaysia and Singapore maintained a hyper-sensitivity to any suggested external influence over their individual foreign and defence policies. The expectation that the FPDA would increase the predictability of its members behaviour is not met. This requires a look at the third paradigm, defence diplomacy.

Defence diplomacy

This section argues that, although not a theory, the paradigm of defence diplomacy does recognise many of contributions of the FPDA for Australia, such as demonstrating Australian interest in the security of South East Asia. The framework of defence diplomacy is a suitable proxy for a theoretical approach to investigate the Five Power Defence Arrangements. Defence diplomacy covers a wide range of

⁸⁴ GJ Ikenberry. *After Victory: Institutions, Strategic Restraint and the Rebuilding of Order After Major Wars*. p 67

activities, including: strategic dialogue; intelligence sharing; multilateral military contacts; the provision of training and the support of military exercises; contacts between military personnel and units; and the provision of military equipment and technical exchanges.⁸⁵ Significantly for the FPDA, defence diplomacy often occurs within security and alliance relationships, such as those found between former colonies and their colonising states.⁸⁶

The FPDA literature does not specifically discuss the Arrangements as an example of defence diplomacy. Publically available Australian defence white papers do not refer to the FPDA as defence diplomacy. Yet many commentators certainly intimate how the Arrangements' framework allows for successful defence engagement. For example, Mohan Malik has described the Arrangements as offering both diplomatic and military benefits for all members by facilitating bilateral and multilateral consultation, training, intelligence sharing and access to advanced military hardware.⁸⁷ Chin, Thayer, Bristow, Tan and Emmers all identify similar FPDA benefits. Others see diplomatic engagement as having contributed to the Arrangements longevity; Dibb, for example, has noted that the continued existence of the Five Power Defence Arrangements has been due to political and not military considerations.⁸⁸ One of the only acknowledgements of the FPDA as defence diplomacy is found in Singapore's 1990 publication *Defence of Singapore 1990*, where the Arrangements are counted as one of the channels used by Singapore to increase communication and interaction between the Singapore Armed Forces and other regional militaries.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ A. Cottey and A. Forster, *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*. Adelphi Paper 365. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004) p 7

⁸⁶ A. Cottey and A. Forster *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*. p 6

⁸⁷ JM Malik "Securing Australia: from alliances to agreements" *Australia's Security in the 21st Century*, (ed. JM Malik. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1999) p 78

⁸⁸ P Dibb. *Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service 1986) p 48

⁸⁹ Singapore Ministry of Defence. *Defence of Singapore 1990*. (Public Affairs Department, Ministry of Defence, November 1990) p9

The importance of defence diplomacy to the workings of the FPDA must not be ignored. The strength of diplomatic engagement in general is that it allows for flexibility within a framework of rules and expectations. The prevention of war and the promotion of negotiation are two main themes found in diplomacy. This study defines diplomacy as:

“...the conduct of international relations by negotiation rather than by force, propaganda, or recourse to law, and by other peaceful means (such as gathering information or engendering goodwill) which are either directly or indirectly designed to promote negotiation.”⁹⁰

Diplomacy works within a framework of laws and customs while remaining highly flexible.⁹¹ These key points influenced in turn the concept of defence diplomacy, which is “...the peacetime cooperative use of armed forces and related infrastructure (primarily defence ministries) as a tool of foreign and security policy...”⁹²

At the micro level, Brian White argues that an understanding of diplomacy can provide revealing insights into the behaviour of the actors themselves in the global system. From this perspective, diplomacy is more a policy instrument than a global process. All actors have goals to which their foreign policy is directed, and diplomacy provides one instrument that international actors use to implement their foreign policy. Diplomacy may thus be converted directly into what White refers to as “pure diplomacy,” or can be shaped to become a tool for communicating the use or threatened use of other instruments. This process is “mixed diplomacy.”⁹³

At the macro level of world politics, diplomacy refers to a process of communication that is central to the working of the global system.⁹⁴ Diplomacy in world politics

⁹⁰ GR Berridge. *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* p 1

⁹¹ GR Berridge. *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* p 1

⁹² Cottey and Forster. *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance* p 7

⁹³ B White. “Diplomacy” in *The Globalisation of World Politics 3rd Edition* (eds. John Baylis and Steve Smith) (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2001) p 388-389

⁹⁴ B White. “Diplomacy” p 388

refers to a communications process between international actors that seeks through negotiations to resolve conflict short of war. Diplomacy (together with war) represents the essence of politics. If conflict and cooperation are placed on a spectrum, diplomacy is found at the cooperation end “representing forms of interaction that focus on the resolution of conflict by dialogue and negotiation...”⁹⁵

The defence diplomacy paradigm is less prescriptive than the previously-discussed alliance theory and institutional theory. The practise of diplomacy facilitates the establishing of norms and guidelines that allow for more predictable state-to-state interaction. This echoes aspects of institutional theory but without institutionalism’s stress on the enforcement power of the states involved. In a diplomatic context, states are provided with an arena in which to build up credibility in their dealings with others. In the case of Australia, the FPDA allowed Canberra to demonstrate its interests in regional stability to Malaysia, Singapore, Indonesia and the US. Diplomacy also provides a way to tie states together, such as the Arrangements did in keeping the UK and New Zealand involved in South East Asia. Diplomacy has long provided a way for states, especially smaller, weaker polities, to establish tacit or formal rules of behaviour and expectations that can assist in the stabilisation of bilateral and multilateral relationships. Stabilising the bilateral Malaysia and Singapore relationship and keeping the British involved in South East Asia have been two key Australian strategic concerns since 1971.

Malaysia’s and Singapore’s hyper-sensitivity regarding their sovereignty can also be explained by defence diplomacy. Foreign policies in the European colonial empires were made in European capitals like London and not colonial ones like Kuala Lumpur. As a result, newly independent colonies in Southeast Asia that were highly aware of their newly-won independence after World War II took pains to prove that their foreign policies and diplomatic relations were in no way influenced by other states. Diplomatic activities were channelled towards the enhancement of security,

⁹⁵ B White. “Diplomacy” p 388

redefinition of security interests and the maintenance of a state's freedom of action. These sentiments were shared by all ASEAN states and were reflected in their emphasis on non-interference in the internal affairs of other states.⁹⁶

The FPDA was arguably the first set of defence links for Malaysia and Singapore that considered both to be equals and providers of their own security alongside the other members. Due to its proximity to South East Asia and the limitations of the other two ANZUK states, Australia was the most logical mediator between Malaysia and Singapore through the FPDA. This was a challenging but valuable opportunity for Australia. The usefulness of an embracing mediation strategy is, according to Kissinger, that "... if trusted by both sides he can soften the edge of controversy and provide a mechanism for adjustment on issues of prestige..."⁹⁷ This can be seen in the positioning of a senior Australian military officer in the role of Commander IADS since the start of the Arrangements. Australia's behaviour as an FPDA member state also provided evidence to both ASEAN and the US that Canberra remained interested in the stability and security of Southeast Asia rather than having withdrawn to a "Fortress Australia" defence posture.

The diplomatic context has useful explanatory power with regard to understanding the slow pace of change within the FPDA. Multilateral organisations that set a pre-determined deadline can speed up diplomatic efforts to accomplish set tasks before that deadline expires, as can happen with summit meetings.⁹⁸ However, for the FPDA the process of decision making and the need for ensuring policy consensus was often viewed as more important by the members than the time taken to reach a decision. The FPDA decision-making process has been viewed as unwieldy and time consuming.⁹⁹ The slow pace of change in the FPDA is due in large part to the Arrangements' need

⁹⁶ This emphasis that ASEAN places on non-interference is most apparent in ASEAN's Treaty of Amity and Cooperation, Article 2(c). Text of Treaty of Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia taken from official ASEAN website: www.asean.org/1217.htm

⁹⁷ Quoted in RP Barston. *Modern Diplomacy*. (London: Pearson Education 2006) p 234

⁹⁸ GR Berridge. *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice*. (Guildford: Prentice Hall, 1995) p 57

⁹⁹ Bristow "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization" p 10

for unanimity. The strength of unanimity was the stress that it placed on the equality of each member, which encouraged continued participation by all. Decisions made on the basis of a majority vote could potentially alienate those members in any out-voted minority, leading the minority to refuse to participate further.

Recognising this dynamic between Malaysia and Singapore, Australia needed to avoid assistance that would exacerbate this rivalry. The acquisition of weapons systems and technology transfers play an important part in diplomatic engagement.¹⁰⁰ In 1971 Singapore requested training assistance, outside of the FPDA framework, for some of its air and land forces including tanks, amphibious tanks and armoured personnel carriers. Canberra recognised that Singapore did have legitimate training problems due to limited space on the island but Australian policymakers also understood a need to be sensitive to the reactions of both Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁰¹ Moreover, under a bilateral relationship the supply of weapons and technology often resulted in diplomatic disputes because supply remained a form of leverage over the weaker partner.¹⁰² The FPDA provided a transparent framework in which the non-South East Asian members could provide multilateral training and exercises to Malaysia and Singapore together.

A number of the FPDA's contributions to Australia strategic policy have come about using its framework as a conduit for mediation. Mediation is an important aspect of the diplomatic tool box. It is often used when two participants are locked into public postures that do not allow unilateral revisions without the appearance of a loss of face, or when parties have a profound distrust of one another.¹⁰³ The goal of mediation is to promote, directly or indirectly, temporary or permanent solutions to inter-state issues

¹⁰⁰ Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 192

¹⁰¹ Malaysia and Indonesia were viewed as the two most likely arenas in which Singapore might use its land forces. Defence Committee Minute "Singapore's request for military training" dated 18 June 1971 in NAA: A7942/1 S190 *Military training assistance among the five powers – Singapore request to Australia*

¹⁰² Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 213

¹⁰³ Berridge. *Diplomacy: Theory and Practice* p 97

“...based on a conception of outcomes likely to receive joint or widespread acceptance by the parties in dispute...”¹⁰⁴

The FPDA was a “normalising” element in the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral defence relationship as it provided a milieu in which both sides could engage each other. Multilateral institutions often provide frameworks for diplomacy. These frameworks can allow states to collaborate while still providing a forum to display diplomatic independence.¹⁰⁵ Extreme hostility or abnormal relations between states require normalisation, which is “...a process involving the recognition of the need for and introduction of measures to reduce tension or friction; promote the improvement of relations; and isolate, contain or resolve, wholly or partly, major sources of dispute or tension”¹⁰⁶ Through the FPDA, measures could be adopted to reduce friction between both sides while requiring them to work as part of a larger team in order to accomplish strategic goals. These contributions to the defence relations and operational abilities of both Malaysia and Singapore are apparent when compared with ASEAN. ASEAN’s major weakness has been its emphasis on non-interference in the domestic politics of other member-states. This has inhibited ASEAN initiatives in the defence arena and led ASEAN members to adopt unilateral security measures to deal with their national security. Malaysia’s 1971 policy of defence self-reliance is a case in point, where self-reliance prevailed despite FPDA precedents and influences.¹⁰⁷ This weakness was clearly apparent when dealing with Malaysia and Singapore, where internal issues regarding insurgency and ethnicity could spill over and exacerbate bilateral relations. Both Malaysia and Singapore have remained highly sensitive regarding their diplomatic freedom in this regard; these sensitivities and their impact on their bilateral relations and the FPDA will be discussed further in Chapters Five and Six.

Defence diplomacy works on a number of different levels and provides a primarily political role for military cooperation. Ideally this cooperation acts as a symbol of

¹⁰⁴ Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 234

¹⁰⁵ Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 39

¹⁰⁶ Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 246

¹⁰⁷ Tow. *Subregional Security Cooperation in the Third World* p 39

broader strategic cooperation, mutual trust and joint commitments to overcome and manage differences between states.¹⁰⁸ Although the withdrawal of Australian forces from Malaysia and Singapore in 1975 was received with some concern by other FPDA members, Australia still maintained a RAAF presence in Butterworth as an indication of Australian commitment. In fact, military strength over the long term was not really essential to the FPDA's role in the region. A regional organisation might be ineffective in terms of military power but can provide a diplomatic framework for "...contact, discussion and lobbying which are essential for continued perceptions of independence, legitimacy and security well being by member states..."¹⁰⁹ The end of AMDA and the start of the Arrangements indicated a "new" stage of relations among its five members. From 1971 onwards all members were now theoretically equal and the former hierarchy of "security provider – security consumer" was less well defined.

The provision of training courses and educational programs is also part of defence diplomacy. FPDA courses have, according to the official history, covered command and control of air battles to courses aimed at preparing officers "to command in a joint environment."¹¹⁰ A British Ministry of Defence paper on Defence Diplomacy highlights training courses and programs as part of British defence diplomacy efforts.¹¹¹

Australia's role in the FPDA enhanced Australia's relevance to the security of ASEAN. The Arrangements also made the UK and New Zealand relevant to ASEAN security as well, through their relevance did wax and wane with their participation. They also linked the ANZUK forces together to Australia's benefit, even as Canberra was able to negate the appearance of being a sole security guarantor to peninsular Southeast Asia. The FPDA provided an additional channel for the continuity of defence relationships as well as a option through which to exert diplomatic pressure.

¹⁰⁸ Cottey and Forster *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance* p 15-16

¹⁰⁹ A point that Barston makes about the African Union. Barston *Modern Diplomacy* p 217

¹¹⁰ Crowe p 51

¹¹¹ Director General Corporate Communications. *Defence Diplomacy*. Ministry of Defence Policy Paper no 1. (London: UK Ministry of Defence 2000) p 4

As the FPDA was not a “first-tier” diplomatic link, both Malaysia and Singapore were free to exhibit or negotiate differences with one another and with the ANZUK powers through the Arrangements. Malaysia, for example, withdrew from the multilateral *Stardex* exercises in 1997 due to the Asian financial crisis and Kuala Lumpur’s displeasure over Singapore’s handling of the crisis. Yet these types of exercises also allowed for some continuity and did not always fall victim to bilateral splits between Malaysia and Singapore. That several bilateral exercises between Malaysia and Singapore were postponed in 1990 while FPDA exercises went ahead as planned is illustrative.¹¹² There was a great deal of diplomatic tension between London and Kuala Lumpur in the 1980s and 1990s but Malaysia’s policy of “Buy British Last” did not prevent both parties from participating in the FPDA.¹¹³

Defence engagement

However, with its alliance and institutional attributes, the FPDA requires a broader interpretive paradigm than can be offered by defence diplomacy alone. The Arrangements have a harder edge. This edge is primarily visible in Section 5 of the FPDA Communiqué, which called for the FPDA members to consult in the event of an external threat or attack on Malaysia and Singapore. Furthermore, during time covered in this study Australia has maintained its commitment to base military equipment and personnel in Malaysia. In order to explain the history and activities of the FPDA, it is necessary to incorporate the understanding of the Arrangements gained from alliance and institutional theory. At the same time, it is necessary to recognise that the Arrangements have always remained at the margins of its members defence policies.

¹¹² Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 12

¹¹³ Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 12

This study considers that the harder and softer aspects of the FPDA must be viewed through the broader paradigm of 'defence engagement', in order to have a better understanding of the Arrangements. Defence engagement is the framework that links defence diplomacy with those aspects of alliance and institutional theory that pertain to the FPDA. As a combination of these three paradigms, defence engagement is able to highlight the key contributions made by the FPDA to Australia's interests and helps to explain the longevity of the Arrangements.

Australia has demonstrated a strong level of continuing commitment to the FPDA since 1971. The FPDA Communiqué provided a framework for the basing of Australian forces in Malaysia. The Communiqué also allowed the members to consult in the event of external attack or threat of attack on Malaysia and Singapore. As an institution, the FPDA filled in the vacuum left by the end of AMDA. The FPDA Communiqué defined that the security of Malaysia and Singapore was 'indivisible,' and since 1971 the FPDA has worked on that approach. The FPDA has also kept the UK linked to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. The FPDA has also helped to build the operational capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore through defence diplomacy. This commitment has allowed Australia to play a significant role in the management of IADS and the multilateral training and exercising with Malaysia and Singapore.

The end goal for Australia and the other FPDA members has been to agree upon common security objectives and enhance security while maintaining the widest possible freedom of action. Again, member-states were especially interested in enhancing their security through defence links while ensuring that they did not limit their diplomatic options. A major point of leverage for minor powers, and one that often brought economic benefits, was to allow their territories to be used as bases for the forces of major powers.¹¹⁴ This was the case under AMDA, where ANZUK forces stationed in both Malaysia and Singapore made a significant contribution to

¹¹⁴ Barston. *Modern Diplomacy* p 192

employment and the economies of both states. Under the FPDA, the focus switched from providing direct employment to increasing local confidence in the stability of Malaysia and Singapore. Existing links through the Arrangements also meant that it would be easier to launch new initiatives without attracting possible negative attention or reactions from neighbouring states.

An important factor established as a ‘norm’ under the FPDA was that the Communiqué defined Malaysia and Singapore as a single entity in external defence terms. While compliance with this norm was at best half-hearted from Kuala Lumpur, both Malaysia and Singapore nonetheless agreed in a ‘de jure’ sense, that their defence under the Arrangements was ‘indivisible.’ This was important due to the impact on bilateral relations of internal ethnic and cultural fault lines of both states, as will be discussed in Chapter Four. The establishment of indivisibility was welcomed by Singapore because senior policymakers viewed Singapore’s history in World War II as evidence that Singapore could not be defended from within Singapore itself but required strategic depth.¹¹⁵ Malaysian policymakers were concerned about their country’s significant internal issues with communist insurgents and were apprehensive about what might happen should Singapore fail to remain stable.

Conclusion

Theory can be useful for interpreting events, but a theory’s explanatory powers can vary depending on the factors the theory emphasises. Finding the most appropriate analytical framework for the FPDA is a particular case in point. The literature around the Arrangements provides evidence of two distinct Australian commitments: military and diplomatic. Between 1971 and 2010, the FPDA has demonstrated the characteristics of an alliance, an institution and defence diplomacy. Australia has maintained its military presence in Malaysia under the FPDA, and yet the

¹¹⁵ Kwa Chong Guan. 2009. Interview with author. Singapore. 6 May.

Arrangements only show a commitment to consult in the event of an attack on Malaysia and Singapore. The most significant norm outlined in the FPDA Communiqué is that the defence of Malaysia and Singapore is “indivisible”; ensuring agreement to this norm has been the responsibility of IADS and reinforced by multilateral exercises and training. Yet it is also important to note that, as raised in Chapter Two, the FPDA has not been a central part of Australian defence policy but instead has consistently operated at its margins. The history of the Five Power Defence Arrangements reveals what looks to be fluctuating levels of ongoing commitment across a wide spectrum. As a result, a new paradigm must be considered.

Defence engagement is the most appropriate analytical framework for understanding the Arrangements as well as assessing their contribution to Australian strategic interests. Alliance theory, institutional theory and defence diplomacy are individually unable to effectively explain the wide but low-key impact of the FPDA. Chapter Four will look at the historical background to the FPDA and how the Arrangements were formed during a period of Australian strategic policy that saw defence engagement as a possible solution to the country’s need to contribute to the stability of South East Asia.

Chapter Four – Australia's decision to get involved 1946-1971

"The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too" - Eugene O'Neill, *Long Day's Journey into Night*

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the context behind Australia's decision to join the Five Power Defence Arrangements. It is not intended to be a comprehensive history of Australian involvement in South East Asia between 1946 and 1971. Rather, this chapter will draw from the history of Australia's involvement in the security of Malaysia and Singapore in order to answer three key questions. The questions are: why did Australia become involved in the security of Malaysia and Singapore; how did this commitment fit into Australia's broader strategic interests; and how did Australian experiences influence the country's decision to join the FPDA? The answers to these questions will provide greater understanding of why Australia chose to join the FPDA.

Australia's decision to join the FPDA and to take a leading role in the Arrangements grew out of the country's history of involvement in Malaysia and Singapore between 1946 and 1971. During this time, Australia supported an ongoing British presence in Malaya and Singapore. Canberra demonstrated its support through a small military commitment acting in a supporting role to the much larger British military presence. These commitments, and Australia's subordinate role to the UK, were formalised in two key security arrangements: ANZAM and AMDA. Australia's support of the British dovetailed with Canberra's larger defence policy goals for Australian security, expressed through the country's 'Forward Defence' policy. However, problems with Forward Defence, exacerbated by the announced withdrawal of the UK from South East Asia by 1971, forced a significant re-examination of Australia's approach to regional security. Australian negotiations towards a replacement for AMDA were undertaken before this backdrop of growing change and uncertainty in Australian defence policy between 1967 and 1971. Significant Australian strategic interests

required Canberra to maintain its involvement in Malaysia and Singapore. However, with the withdrawal of the UK and uncertainty regarding a long term US presence in the region, Australia did not want Malaysia and Singapore to assume it was taking over British responsibilities for their defence. Australian policymakers looked to the FPDA as a temporary solution that fitted these requirements.

Australian involvement in Malaya pre-FPDA

Australian involvement in the security of Malaya pre-FPDA was very much driven by history, geography and Commonwealth responsibilities. During this period, Australia's military contributions were always in support of larger British Commonwealth interests, whether they be the security of sea lanes or countering insurgency on the Malay peninsula. The spread of communism was the primary threat that Australia's contributions were meant to counter, as was the case for the wider Western alliance led by the US during the Cold War. Australia's military commitment to Malaya and Singapore was ultimately intended to ensure a continued British presence in the region in support of Australian strategic interests.

The importance of Malaya and Singapore to Australian security was brought home by the events of World War II. The fall of Singapore to Japan in 1942 resulted in the loss of one of the UK's most significant naval bases—critical for the projection of British naval power into the Pacific—as well as 85 000 Commonwealth forces taken prisoner, including 15 000 Australians.¹ The removal of Singapore allowed the Imperial Japanese forces to move into the Dutch East Indies and pose a direct threat to Australia.

¹ C Waters. "War, Decolonisation and Postwar Security" in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia Vol 1*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001) p 99-100

After World War II, Australia looked to the UK to reassume its role in the defence of Australia and took steps to encourage the British through demonstrations of Australian military support. Canberra policymakers in 1946 saw Australia as a part of the British Commonwealth and therefore responsible for contributing to Commonwealth security.² Part of Australia's contribution was to outline a region in which Australia would take responsibility for formulating and controlling strategic policy. The UK could not be responsible for the security of the entire Commonwealth due to the great distances between individual members. Instead, by 1947 Australia agreed that the defence of identified vital Commonwealth interests would be the responsibility of the member state geographically closest to that interest.³ Australian policymakers identified a need for the country to define its zone of strategic responsibility, create and control strategic policy related to these zones, and maintain security in the zone with British cooperation.

A key point that must not be overlooked is that Canberra originally intended Australia to act in cooperation with the United Kingdom strictly in a supporting role. The 1946 paper *An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia* stated that the basic defence of Australia lay in cooperation with the British Empire because defence demands were too great for the population and industry of Australia alone.⁴ This was echoed in 1947 with the observation that Australia had no choice but to rely on Commonwealth cooperation in Australian security matters as the country was unable to ensure its own security.⁵ There was also recognition that Australia's ability to operate alongside the UK and other Commonwealth security partners relied on interoperability in areas such as organisation, equipment and training.⁶ Australia was never intended to assume sole responsibility for its own defence, or to participate as an equal alongside the UK.

² "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1946" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 27 p 71

³ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 87 p 127

⁴ G Cheeseman and M McKinley. *Australia's Regional Security Policies 1970-1990: Some Critical Reflections* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990) p 6

⁵ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 80 p 125

⁶ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" Part V paragraph 11 p 134

Australian policymakers included Malaya and Singapore in Australia's zone of strategic responsibility based on a combination of Commonwealth and Australian concerns. The 1947 *Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia* paper defined Malaya and Singapore as being part of Australia's zone of strategic responsibility. In the event of a world war it was expected that, in the event that conflict cut off supplies from the Middle East, raw materials from Malaya would be used to supply the British Commonwealth.⁷ The geographic importance of the Malay peninsula to Australia was also noted in the paper. Singapore was considered key to the control of the sea and air approaches to Indonesia, and policymakers assessed that Australian forces based both in Singapore and in North Borneo would deny an enemy the opportunity to launch attacks on Australia.⁸ Furthermore, the Malay peninsula was significant to Australia's overseas communications and trade. Located at the heart of South East Asia, Malaya and Singapore were both essential links in Australia's air and sea routes to the Commonwealth, India, the Middle East, China and Japan.⁹

At the same time that policymakers identified Malaya as part of Australia's strategic interests, they also assessed that the greatest threat to the stability of Malaya and Singapore was communist penetration facilitated by the communal rivalries between ethnic Chinese and ethnic Malays in the area. Policymakers believed that the communal violence could provide a reason for Soviet or Chinese intervention.¹⁰ In the event of communist intervention, Australia believed that the large Chinese minority on the peninsula might act as a 'fifth column' by undermining the local colonial government and siding with communist forces.¹¹ The Malay Emergency, which officially lasted from 1948 to 1960 and saw Commonwealth forces in conflict with the predominantly ethnic Chinese communist insurgency on the peninsula, reinforced Australia's assessments. This study will now explore the reasons behind this

⁷ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 44 p 116

⁸ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 92 p 129

⁹ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 45 p 116. The Middle East was important to the British Commonwealth due to its oil resources and to Australia as another key link in the country's air and sea communications. (paragraph 39 p 115)

¹⁰ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 30 p 112

¹¹ "An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947" paragraph 30 p 112

communal instability, which was to have lasting effects on the stability of Malaya and Singapore.

Communal tensions drive instability

A quick review of the history of the ethnic Chinese population in South East Asia needs to be considered in order to understand the roots of the communal tension in Malaya and Singapore. The term ‘overseas Chinese’ was used for the ethnic Chinese population in South East Asia.¹² In 1909, to encourage the loyalty of overseas Chinese to China, the Qing Dynasty in Beijing extended Chinese citizenship to anyone born of a Chinese father, no matter where the person was born. Critically, this policy was maintained after the communists came to power in China in 1949.¹³ The concept of all ethnic Chinese being citizens of China greatly influenced how the Malay population in Malaya viewed those Chinese living in Malaya and Singapore. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Singapore in particular had become the base for China’s ‘forward policy’ aimed at developing relations with the overseas Chinese of South East Asia.¹⁴ The overseas Chinese were the main source of finance for the Chinese revolts leading up to the Chinese revolution of 1911.¹⁵ This reinforced the Malay impression that local Chinese patriotism was primarily towards China and not Malaya.

Driven by their status as outsiders, ethnic Chinese made up a significant percentage of the membership in local communist groups on the Malay Peninsula. The Malayan Communist Party was established in 1928 and had a predominantly Chinese

¹² M Stuart-Fox. *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia* (Crow's Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2003) p 124

¹³ Stuart-Fox. *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia*. p 124

¹⁴ Stuart-Fox. *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia* p 124

¹⁵ Yen Ching-Hwang. *The Chinese in Southeast Asia and beyond: socio-economic and political dimensions*. (Singapore: World Scientific Publishing, 2008) p 367

membership by 1948.¹⁶ World War II provided a boost to the communist cause and Chinese participation in communist groups in Malaya. The underground nature of the Malayan Communist Party proved useful with the arrival of the Japanese. After the British loss of Singapore and Malaya in World War II, only local communist groups were able to offer further resistance to Japan.¹⁷ The Japanese recognised this and took steps to counter communist resistance. The occupying Japanese forces had a policy of favouring the Malays over the Chinese, and used Malay police to support Japanese actions against the local communist groups.¹⁸ The Chinese in Malaya and Singapore suffered more than the Malays at the hands of the Japanese occupying forces between 1942 and 1945, and as a result the communist Malayan People's Anti-Japanese Army (MPAJA) was mostly made up of Chinese recruits.¹⁹ Communism gained greater respectability in South East Asia when the Soviet Union joined the Allies against Germany and Japan.²⁰

The end of World War II saw continued fighting across ethnic lines in Malaya. Indonesia's declaration of independence in 1945 inspired some Malays to renew the call for the creation of a 'Greater Malaya'.²¹ The MPAJA targeted Malays that had worked with the Japanese forces and carried out reprisals.²² The Malays also targeted Chinese communities due to their economic status in the colonies. By 1948 Chinese communities had become a secondary target—after the United Kingdom—of Malay nationalist movements by reason of their links with colonial economies, perceived wealth and their reluctance to be absorbed into the indigenous population.²³ Eventually, the Chinese community became the primary target of Malay nationalists.

¹⁶ I Pfennigwerth. *Tiger Territory: The Untold Story of the Royal Australian Navy in Southeast Asia from 1948 to 1971*. (Kenthurst: Rosenberg Publishing, 2008) p 40-41

¹⁷ R Thompson. *Defeating Communist Insurgency: Experiences from Malaya and Vietnam*. Studies in International Security: 10. (London: Chatto & Windus, 1966) p14

¹⁸ L Comber. *Malaya's Secret Police 1945-60: the Role of the Special Branch in the Malayan Emergency*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 2008) p 28

¹⁹ M Stuart-Fox, p 144

²⁰ Thompson. *Defeating Communist Insurgency*, p14

²¹ Andaya and Andaya. *A History of Malaysia* p 263

²² Andaya, Barbara Watson and Leonard Y. Andaya. *A History of Malaysia*. 2nd edition. (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001) p 262

²³ TW Buesst, Macmahon Ball and G. Packer. *Security Problems in the Pacific Region*. Institute of Pacific Relations and the Australian Institute of International Affairs. (Melbourne: Robertson & Mullens Limited, September 1948) p 37

Many Malays feared that the defeat of the British by the Malayan Communist Party forces would turn Malaya into an overseas dependency of China.²⁴ By 1949 the local population in Malaya was concerned that the communists might overthrow the local British administration with the same ease the Japanese had demonstrated in 1942.²⁵

For many Malays, the issue regarding the place of the Chinese was strongly tied to demographics. Malaya had the highest percentage of overseas Chinese of all the colonies and states of South East Asia. Ethnic Malays in Malaya looked at the overseas Chinese at unwanted migrants and a threat to Malay political dominance. As a result, Malays resisted the granting of automatic citizenship to Chinese living in Malaya. A 1946 British proposal for a Malayan Union met with strong Malay opposition as the proposal removed the sovereignty of the Malay sultans and provided equal citizenship to all those living within the boundaries of the proposed Union, regardless of ethnic identity.²⁶ After Malaya's independence in 1957 local Malays were automatically granted citizenship, whereas local Chinese had to apply.²⁷

The outsider status of Chinese communities in Malaya and Singapore drove the Australian perception of the Chinese as a possible threat to security on the peninsula. Australia's concerns about communal relations in Malaya broadened in the 1960s as the population of ethnic Chinese in Malay increased and gained political strength. The importance of the Chinese communities in Malaya and Singapore were first highlighted in *An Appreciation of the Strategical Position of Australia 1947*, prior to the start of the Malay Emergency and a decade before Malayan independence. The issue of communal relations between Chinese and Malays was next raised in Australia's 1964 Strategic Basis paper. The percentage of Malaysia's Chinese population was considered to have increased to the point where Australia assessed that, by 1974, the Chinese were expected challenge Malay political dominance in

²⁴ M Stuart-Fox p 138

²⁵ Comber. *Malaya's Secret Police 1945-60* p 64

²⁶ M Leifer *The Foreign Relations of the New States*. (Camberwell: Longman, 1974) p 47

²⁷ Stuart-Fox. *A Short History of China and Southeast Asia* p 145

Malaysia.²⁸ The increasing concern of Australian policymakers regarding this issue resulted in an in-depth discussion of the issue of communal relations in Malaysia and Singapore in the 1968 Strategic Basis paper.²⁹

Australian concerns regarding communal instability in Malaya went hand-in-hand with a belief that local insurgencies posed a greater, more immediate threat than global war to Western interests in South East Asia. By the early 1950s, Australia's focus had moved from a focus on global war to regional instability as the perceived threat of global war decreased and concerns about communist subversion in South East Asia increased. Policymakers expected that the Soviet Union aimed to continue the spread of communism by all means short of war, with the expectation that that Soviets would try to achieve their aims through subversion.³⁰ There was an expectation in Australia that the Soviets would intensify their support of subversive activity in Malaya.³¹ The fall of Malaya to a communist government was a very real concern for Australia. The 1953 Strategic Basis paper considered that the loss of Malaya to communism would permit communist forces to move into Indonesia, allowing a large part of Australia to come in range of enemy bombers.³² The Australian concern regarding the spread of communism through newly independent states can be seen as a belief in the 'domino effect' put forward by US President Eisenhower in 1954.³³ The Western concern was that the choice of government made by newly independent states could have a significant effect on the balance of power in the Cold War.³⁴

²⁸ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1964" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 18 p 317

²⁹ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraphs 80-83 p 356

³⁰ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 19b p 157

³¹ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" paragraph 19b p 157

³² "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1953" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 48 p 183

³³ The 'domino effect' expressed that the failure to contain communism would result in its spread, with states falling like a row of dominos. K Mingst. *Essentials of International Relations* p 50-51

³⁴ JL Gaddis. *The Cold War*. (London: Allen Lane, 2005) p 123

Between 1946 and 1971, Australia involved itself in the security of Malaysia and Singapore with a focus on maintaining the British presence that Canberra viewed as contributing to their stability. As part of this approach, Australia supported the creation of a permanent military force, comprised of Commonwealth troops, in Malaya and Singapore. In addition, Australia supported the UK through two security agreements focussed on the Malay peninsula: ANZAM and the Anglo-Malaysia Defence Agreement (AMDA). As a result of its support, Australia became involved in two significant conflicts that threatened the security of Malaya and Singapore: the Malay Emergency from 1948 to 1960 and Indonesia's Confrontation policy from 1963 to 1966.

The ANZAM arrangement was a significant first step in Commonwealth cooperation to maintain the security of Malaya and Singapore. Formed in 1948, ANZAM referred to Australia, New Zealand and the Malayan area, essentially covering "...Australia and New Zealand and territories in South East Asia where Britain has responsibilities..."³⁵ The ANZAM agreement was not one in which Australia, New Zealand and the UK were equal partners but did provide a clear set of expectations for all three states. Australia and New Zealand were responsible for their own defence in event of attack, while the UK took responsibility for the defence of Malaya and Singapore.³⁶ ANZAM was a significant gain for Australia as it provided Canberra policymakers with a say in British regional defence planning. The combined British, Australian and New Zealand Chiefs of Staff were responsible for the control of ANZAM operations.³⁷ Under ANZAM, Australia was responsible for the formulation of ANZAM regional defence planning and the defence of sea communications. Notably, in the event of a serious challenge to British power in Malaya, Australia would also participate in the defence of the peninsula.³⁸

³⁵ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" paragraph 5 p 154

³⁶ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" paragraph 6 p 154

³⁷ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" paragraph 9 p 155

³⁸ "A Suitable Basis for the Distribution of Strategic Responsibility and War Effort 1950" paragraphs 5-8 p 154-155

Although the British retained control over defence operations in Malaya, policymakers in Canberra saw a value in contributing to regional defence efforts. One of the priorities listed by the Defence Committee in 1952 was to ensure that Australian defence policy had the capacity to make “a major contribution to the defence of the ANZAM region.”³⁹ The ANZAM Chiefs of Staff Committee was important as it would later assume responsibility for the joint British-Australian-New Zealand military commitment based in Malaya and Singapore: the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve. The ANZAM agreement and its focus on the defence of Malaya by Commonwealth forces was the first step in the cooperation that would later evolve into the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Australian active involvement in maintaining the security of Malaysia began in 1948 with the start of what was to become known as the Malayan Emergency. The Malayan Emergency referred to the communist insurgency, led by the Malayan Communist Party, against British colonial rule in Malaya between 1948 and 1960. The intention of the insurgents was the formation of a communist state of Malaya. The Chinese-dominated Malayan People’s Anti-Japanese Army—which had resisted the Japanese during World War II—changed the organisation’s name to the Malayan People’s Anti-British Army.⁴⁰ Australia participated alongside the UK in countering the insurgency in Malaya. In 1948, in response to a British request, Australia sent a team of officers to advise on jungle warfare techniques, a transport squadron of Dakotas, and a small squadron of Lincoln bombers to Malaya. The bomber squadron furnished aerial support to British and Malayan ground forces.⁴¹

³⁹ J Grey. “The Royal Australian Navy in the Era of ‘Forward Defence’, 1955-75,” in *In Search of a Maritime Strategy: the maritime element in Australian defence planning since 1901*, edited by D. Stevens, 99-114. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence 139. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1997 p 102-3

⁴⁰ Comber. *Malaya’s Secret Police 1945-60: the Role of the Special Branch in the Malayan Emergency* p 14

⁴¹ J Grey. *A Military History of Australia*. 3rd ed. (Port Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p 208-9

ANZAM was complemented by the Anglo-Malaya Defence Agreement (AMDA) in 1957. Unlike ANZAM, where Australia took the lead in planning, under AMDA the British were clearly in charge, with Australia and New Zealand in supporting positions. Australia associated itself with AMDA through the British and not via a separate defence agreement with Malaya.⁴² Britain agreed to extend AMDA to cover the new state of Malaysia upon its creation in 1963. Under AMDA, Australia simultaneously provided security to Malaya and was a consumer of security from the UK.⁴³ The UK's role as the lynchpin in the unconditional defence of Malaya had a major impact on Australia's contribution to AMDA. Both Australia and New Zealand were able to 'hedge' their commitments to Malaya due to the fact that the UK was the 'anchor power' in Malaya's defence.⁴⁴

One of the most important outcomes for Australia of the multilateral involvement in the Malayan Emergency was the creation of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve (CSR). Australian policymakers wanted allied troops based in South East Asia. A key part of Australia's contribution in support of the British was the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve, based in Malaya and Singapore.⁴⁵ This standing military commitment of British, Australian and New Zealand forces was formed in 1955 under the ANZAM framework. The Australian contribution to CSR was a bomber squadron, two fighter squadrons for the air defence of the region, two destroyers or frigates and an infantry battalion, an artillery battery and supporting arms.⁴⁶ However, according to Millar the Australian contribution was a "modest fraction" of the British forces in Malaya and Singapore.⁴⁷

⁴² TB Millar. *Australia's Defence*. 2nd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969) p 58

⁴³ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore: the Transformation of a Security System 1957-1991*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983) p 1

⁴⁴ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 33

⁴⁵ The Commonwealth Strategic Reserve is also referred to as the Far East Strategic Reserve in Peter Edward's *Crises and Commitments* (Sydney: Allen and Unwin Pty Ltd, 1992) p 162-169, the official history of Australia's involvement in South East Asian conflicts between 1948 and 1975. The term 'Commonwealth Strategic Reserve' came from the terms of AMDA, which granted the UK permission to maintain a Commonwealth Strategic Reserve in Malaya. (M Leifer. *Dictionary of the Modern Politics of South-East Asia*. London: Routledge, 1995, p 77) For ease of reference, these two Reserves will be considered equivalent and the term 'Commonwealth Strategic Reserve' will be used throughout this study.

⁴⁶ Gray. *A Military History of Australia* p 219

⁴⁷ TB Millar. *Australia's Defence*. 2nd ed. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1969) p 57

The CSR had two purposes during the Cold War. The first purpose of the CSR was to meet external threats to Malaya.⁴⁸ The CSR would be used in defence operations in the event of aggression against sea communications of the Malaya region.⁴⁹ The second purpose of the CSR was to participate in operations against communist insurgent forces.⁵⁰ The CSR actively contributed towards countering insurgency during the Malayan Emergency and low-level incursions by Indonesian forces during Confrontation. There were restrictions, however, on how the CSR could be used. A key restriction, agreed to by the UK, Australia and New Zealand, was that the CSR was not to be used to put down civil disturbances in Malaya or Singapore.⁵¹ Another was the CSR could be used for Commonwealth and international objectives, but the Australian government denied that the Reserve could be used anywhere in South East Asia.⁵² Once the British had committed the bulk of the forces under the CSR, Australia wanted the CSR to remain in Malaya.

From the late 1940s onwards, South East Asia began to take on a greater level of importance in the minds of Australia defence policy makers in Canberra. By 1956, Australia saw South East Asia as the country's first line of defence in the event of a regional or global conflict. As long as Malaya remained aligned with the Western powers, no major threat to Australia would develop.⁵³ The stationing of military forces in South East Asia was a key concern for Australia. In the event of the fall of Thailand to communism, Malaya would become the next line of defence.⁵⁴ Canberra policymakers believed that the time factor required to deploy forces to meet an attack would be a critical factor in the defence of Malaya.⁵⁵ The Anglo-Malaya Defence Agreement between the UK and Malaya, created upon the latter's independence in 1957, formalised the right of the Commonwealth Strategic Reserve to remain in

⁴⁸ J Grey. *A Military History of Australia*. 3rd ed. (Port Melbourne: Cambridge UP, 2008) 221

⁴⁹ Grey "The Royal Australian Navy in the Era of Forward Defence" p106

⁵⁰ Grey. *A Military History of Australia* p221

⁵¹ Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 58

⁵² A Watt. *Australian Defence Policy 1951-63: Major international aspects*. (Canberra: Australian National University, 1964) p56-57

⁵³ "The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1956" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*. (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 12 p 206

⁵⁴ "The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1956" paragraph 24b p 209

⁵⁵ "The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1956" paragraph 24a p 209

Malaya. Initially the Australian and New Zealand forces of the CSR were included under the aegis of the British forces in AMDA. Australia and New Zealand officially associated themselves with AMDA in 1959 to formalise the presence in Malaya of their respective CSR components.⁵⁶

The period from 1962 to 1968 was in many ways a watershed in Australia's approach to the security of Malaysia and Singapore due to three key events. The first key event was Indonesia's policy of Confrontation against Malaysia. Australian diplomacy was put to the test as the country tried to avoid alienating Indonesia while indicating support for Malaysia. The second event was the surprise expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965. The separation of Malaysia into a predominantly Chinese state and a closely mixed Malay-Chinese state would require Australia to take a new approach to helping maintain the security of both. The third event was that the UK, which had been experiencing increasing economic problems since the late 1950s, finally declared that it was withdrawing its military commitment from South East Asia.

Indonesia's size and geographic position north of Australia guaranteed the country a significant place in Australian strategic policy. In the mid 1950s, Indonesia was deemed to be a threat to Australia if a hostile communist power gained access to bases on Indonesian territory. Policymakers posited that if Indonesia provided air bases to communist Chinese forces, Chinese bombers would then be in a position to threaten targets around Australia.⁵⁷ However, in 1963 Indonesia reacted sharply against the creation of Malaysia from Malaya, British territories on Borneo, and Singapore. By 1964, Australia's assessment of Indonesia had changed. While Australia remained concerned regarding Indonesia's ability to resist communist pressure for access to bases, Indonesia itself was now recognised as being more able to interfere directly in Australian interests. Under the Confrontation policy, Indonesia demanded the removal of Commonwealth bases from Malaysia.⁵⁸ Furthermore, Indonesia shared a land border with the Australian-administered colony of Papua/New Guinea and with the

⁵⁶ Edwards. *Crises and Commitments* p 264

⁵⁷ SB 1956 "The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1956: Appendix 1 to Annex " in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraphs 4-5 p 237-238

⁵⁸ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1964" paragraph 39 p 222

provinces of East Malaysia. There was concern in Australia that, should Australian-Indonesian relations deteriorate severely, Indonesia would resort to a similar style of military action in Papua/New Guinea as Jakarta was undertaking in Borneo.⁵⁹ During the period of Confrontation, Australia made deliberate efforts to avoid military clashes between Australia and Indonesian forces. Initially, Australia took the view that the UK had to take the primary role in countering Indonesia and focused on improving the relationship with Indonesia.⁶⁰ After the 1964 Indonesian incursions into East Malaysia and peninsula Malaysia, Australia agreed that further Indonesian aggression would warrant a military response by Malaysia's allies against Indonesia. However, Canberra wanted to avoid direct attacks on Indonesia as policymakers felt this would give the Indonesian Communist Party more leverage in domestic Indonesian politics. Australia looked to the US to apply pressure on Indonesia but the US viewed the state of Indonesian domestic politics much in the same way as Australia. Engaged as they were in Vietnam, the US regarded Indonesia as crucial to the region and did not want them to slide towards Soviet Union.⁶¹

The expulsion of Singapore from Malaysia in 1965 forced Australia to take a new approach to their common security. As discussed earlier in this chapter, there were serious communal tensions between Malays and Chinese in Malaya that had been exacerbated by the Malayan Emergency. These tensions had remained after the 1963 formation of Malaysia. The addition of Singapore to Malaya had significantly increased the percentage of Chinese citizens in the new state and Lee Kwan Yew's Singapore-based People's Action Party considered that it had a legitimate right to participate in politics at a national level. However, the Malay-dominated government in Kuala Lumpur supported the continuation of a Malay-dominated political system and did not welcome being challenged by the People's Action Party for leadership of Malaysia in the 1964 elections.⁶² Many Malays viewed Singapore's call for a multi-racial Malaysia as a Chinese attempt to extend their dominance from the economic to

⁵⁹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1964" paragraph 42 p 323

⁶⁰ D Goldsworthy *Losing the Blanket: Australia and the end of Britain's Empire*. (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2002) p 150

⁶¹ Edwards. *Crises and Commitments* p 259

⁶² PL Pham. *Ending 'East of Suez': The British Decision to Withdraw from Malaysia and Singapore 1964-1968*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010) p 43

the political sphere.⁶³ Faced with the possibility of communal violence, the Malaysian government convinced Singapore that the only way to avoid bloodshed was separation. As Leifer correctly observes, the separation of Malaysia and Singapore—undertaken at a time when both were threatened by Indonesia—indicated the high level of communal animosity in Malaysia at the time.⁶⁴

The separation of Malaysia and Singapore could not help but affect Australia's approach to contributing to the security of both states. Communal tensions between Malays and Chinese had previously been acted out at a domestic level. The separation into a Chinese-controlled Singapore and a Malay-controlled Malaysia suddenly moved these existing tensions into the realm of foreign diplomacy. The dominant policy goal for Singapore was the preservation of the island country as an independent state and the sense of being a small predominantly Chinese state surrounded by Malay states increased this sense of vulnerability.⁶⁵ In Malaysia, where the Malays maintained a slight majority over the Chinese in 1965, the chief domestic political concern was to ensure the continued political dominance of the Malays.⁶⁶ The need to address communal tensions, both between Malaysia and Singapore and within Malaysia itself, was a significant factor in Australia's approach to the Five Power Defence Arrangements, as will be discussed in the next section.

The third issue for Australia was the recognition that the United Kingdom could no longer afford to maintain a significant military presence in South East Asia. The Australian government had begun to notice in the mid-1950s that the UK might not stay in South East Asia over the long term. There was uncertainty in Australia that the British would retain their base in Singapore as the UK started to view overseas bases

⁶³ M Leifer. *The Foreign Relations of the New States*. (Camberwell: Longman, 1974) p 66

⁶⁴ Leifer. *The Foreign Relations of the New States* p 66

⁶⁵ Tan Tai Yong. "Singapore: Civil-Military Relations" in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia* (ed. M Alagappa) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2001) p 280

⁶⁶ KS Nathan. "Malaysia" in *Asian Security Practice: Material and Ideational Influences*. (ed. M Alagappa) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998) p 516

as possibly obsolete in the face of nuclear missile technology.⁶⁷ The 1962 Strategic Basis stated that the continued presence of the UK's military resources in South East Asia might diminish over the long term.⁶⁸ As time passed, it became clearer to Australia that a British withdrawal was only a matter of time. The 1965 British defence review undertaken by the newly elected Labor government looked at possible areas where cuts could be made to Britain's defence budget. The greatest savings were seen in disbanding British forces in East and Southeast Asia after a successful conclusion to Indonesia's Confrontation policy.⁶⁹ Furthermore, between 1964 and 1968, Britain experienced three economic crises and the outcome of each crisis was an further withdrawal from British defence commitments.⁷⁰ Finally in 1968 the British announced that they would be withdrawing their forces from South East Asia.

The withdrawal of Britain 'East of Suez' came at a critical time for Australian interests in Malaysia and Singapore. Australia still considered communal relations to be the main source of tension within Malaysia.⁷¹ However, there was recognition that the expulsion of Singapore had not reduced tensions on the peninsula. By 1968 there was less concern that Malaysia might be taken over by a communist government dominated by ethnic Chinese. Instead, Australian was concerned that the deterioration of communal tensions in Malaysia would result in a long and disruptive power struggle that would involve Indonesia and Singapore.⁷² For the first time, Australia directly recognised that the communal balance within Malaysia was a 'basic, national interest' of Australia.⁷³ Policymakers took the approach that the maintenance of the internal security and political stability of Malaysia would supply the conditions for the country's economic growth, and that this growth would ultimately help reduce communal tension.⁷⁴ As if to underscore this point, there was serious communal

⁶⁷ Goldsworthy *Losing the Blanket* p 159

⁶⁸ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1962" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 44 p 289

⁶⁹ Pham. *Ending 'East of Suez'* p 28

⁷⁰ Goldsworthy p 161

⁷¹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*.(ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 80 p 356

⁷² "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 82 p 356

⁷³ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 83 p 356-7

⁷⁴ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 83 p 356-7

rioting in Malaysia during the country's 1969 election. Australian Prime Minister John Gorton protested Britain's 1968 decision to hasten its withdrawal from South East Asia, stating that the British presence in South East Asia was of greater importance than the British presence in Europe.⁷⁵

The period from 1963 to 1971 was an important time in the history of Australian involvement in Malaysia and Singapore. Australian support for the creation of the new state of Malaysia had almost led to open conflict with Indonesia. Underlying communal issues between Malays and Chinese were brought to a state-to-state level with the creation of an independent Singapore. During the same time, the UK had indicated that it could no longer afford to maintain a military presence in South East Asia. Australia's major partner could no longer be relied upon to effectively underwrite the security of Malaysia with the assistance of Australia and New Zealand. These issues contributed to the Australian recognition that the country had to change the defence policy perspectives it had held since the end of World War II. The next section will explore how Australia's commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore fit into these broader strategic perspectives with regards to the Forward Defence policy.

Australian strategic perspectives

The history of Australian involvement in Malaya is a significant part of the larger story of Australia's strategic perspectives between 1946 and 1971. The Australian presence in Malaya and Singapore alongside its much larger ally the UK formed part of Australia's policy of Forward Defence. As part of Forward Defence Australia committed military forces to assist the UK in Malaya and the US in Vietnam. By the mid-1960s, Forward Defence was losing its appeal for Canberra as a solution to Australia's strategic concerns. The country was supporting British and American strategic interests in South East Asia, but often at the cost of upsetting its

⁷⁵ TB Millar. *Australia in Peace and War* p 152

neighbouring states. Australia began to move away from its Forward Defence policy when the UK and then the US gave notice in the late 1960s that they would pull out of South East Asia. However, Australia could not follow suit as Malaysia and Singapore remained particular concerns to Australian policymakers. Australia needed to find a replacement to AMDA that allowed Australia to contribute to regional stability without being drawn into local conflicts. Between 1968 and 1971, Australia looked to defence engagement as a way for Australia to contribute to the security of Malaysia and Singapore. Defence engagement would indicate Australia's confidence in both states. This confidence would help to create stability, which would allow Malaysia and Singapore to build successful economies.

Forward Defence: rise and fall

In the 1950s, Australian policymakers believed that Australia was unable to defend itself unaided. Australian strategic policy was heavily influenced by the belief that the country's economy could not fund its defence needs.⁷⁶ In particular, Canberra took the view that communist governments were better able to create and maintain large standing militaries for longer periods than capitalist governments. The Western democracies had to base their defence on strong national economies.⁷⁷ The 1953 Strategic Basis paper stressed that, by maintaining a large military, the Soviet Union and its allies would force the West into spending excessive amounts to counter the threat. These defence costs would destabilise the Western economies, leading to upheaval and a possible "bloodless victory" for communism.⁷⁸ At the same time, Canberra also saw that the Soviet Union was providing support to subversive movements world-wide.⁷⁹ The People's Republic of China was also a concern for Australia. Australia viewed that China, with Soviet support, was capable of furthering the spread of communism through South East Asia.⁸⁰

⁷⁶ TB Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 56

⁷⁷ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1953" paragraph 15 p 177

⁷⁸ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1953" paragraph 15 p 177

⁷⁹ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1953" paragraph 6 p 175

⁸⁰ "A Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1953" paragraph 14 p 176

The Australian response to these security concerns was the 'Forward Defence' policy. Forward Defence was comprised of two key goals. The first was for Australia to develop close foreign and defence relationships with the UK and the US in South East Asia. Ideally, these defence relationships would include Australian membership in regional security arrangements. Through these regional security arrangements, powers that Australia deemed to be potentially threatening were "excluded, neutralised or controlled."⁸¹ The second was to ensure that any actual or potential threat was engaged as far away as possible from the Australian mainland.⁸² Through Forward Defence, Australia expected to maintain the country's presence in South East Asia alongside the UK and the US. Australia's policies were aimed at building up goodwill towards Australia in London and Washington and sustaining an active security presence in South East Asia.⁸³

The Forward Defence policy had a positive effect on Australia defence expenditures. Australia's reliance on London and Washington in the 1950s and 1960s allowed Canberra to save money on its defence expenditures. Absolute expenditure on defence by Australia did not increase for nine years after 1954, even though Australia was faced with the Malayan insurgency, Indonesia and West New Guinea, issues in South Vietnam, war in Laos and Sino-American tensions over Taiwan.⁸⁴ Australia's refusal to spend more on its defence indicated the extent that Canberra relied on both the US and the UK to defend Australia.⁸⁵

⁸¹ G Cheeseman & M McKinley. *Australia's Regional Security Policies 1970-1990: Some Critical Reflections* (Canberra: Peace Research Centre, Research School of Pacific Studies, Australian National University, 1990) p5

⁸² Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 40

⁸³ H Albinski. "Australia and the United States" *In Pursuit of National Interests: Australian Foreign Policy in the 1990s*. (ed F. Mediansky) (Sydney: Pergamon, 1988) p 147

⁸⁴ Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 56

⁸⁵ According to Gary Woodard, it was Menzies' international prominence and the closeness of the political and intelligence relations between Canberra, Washington and London that allowed Australia to have "defence on the cheap, which was important for [Australia's] national development." As an example, Woodard mentions that in 1955 Menzies promised Eisenhower that Australia would raise two Australian troop divisions for overseas deployment. This never came about and yet Menzies was not reminded of his promise. G Woodard *Asian Alternatives: Australia's Vietnam Decision and Lessons on going to war* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2004) p 4-5

Under the Forward Defence policy, Australia became an active member in defence arrangements with both the UK and the US. Australia's actions under ANZAM and AMDA have already been discussed in first half of this chapter. Australia's two other main security agreements were not focussed on the Malay peninsula. The Australia, New Zealand and United States Security Treaty (ANZUS) was formed in 1951. Australia pushed for the creation of the ANZUS treaty as a way to guarantee Australian and New Zealand security after the US decided to normalise relations with Japan.⁸⁶ The South East Asia Treaty Organisation (SEATO) created in 1954, was a much wider alliance, and one which included both the US and the UK as members alongside Australia. SEATO was very much viewed in Australia as a way of dealing with the 'strategic gap' in Australia's regional defences.⁸⁷ ANZAM provided a framework for defence planning between Australia and the UK in Malaya while ANZUS covered Australian territory. SEATO completed Australia's network of security ties because the organisation put an American presence between Indochina and Australia's northern neighbours.⁸⁸ SEATO was viewed by Australia as "...the most effective means of achieving, to the greatest degree possible, the long-standing aim of co-ordination with United States defence planning in this area [South East Asia]..."⁸⁹ The participation of both the UK and the US created a link between the UK and ANZUS and extended the American defence commitment beyond ANZUS.⁹⁰

Another driver was the Australian recognition that the Americans required assistance from their allies to maintain stability. During the Cold War, Australia was part of the "San Francisco system" of regional security. The San Francisco system was

⁸⁶ The normalising of relations between Japan and the occupying powers would allow the Japanese to rearm and defend itself from communist China. Australia was concerned that allowing the Japanese to rearm might create a security problem for Australia in the long term. P Gifford, "The Cold War Across Asia" in *Facing North: A century of Australian Engagement with Asia Vol 1 1901 to the 1970s* (ed. D Goldsworthy)(Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001) p186- 187

⁸⁷ L Buszynski. *SEATO: The Failure of an Alliance Strategy*.(Singapore: Singapore University Press, 1983) p 34

⁸⁸ Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 56

⁸⁹ "The Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1956" paragraph 34 p 228

⁹⁰ A Vandenbosch and MB Vandenbosch. *Australia Faces Southeast Asia: The Emergence of a Foreign Policy*. (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1967) p 142

predominantly comprised of bilateral alliances between the US and a number of states in the Asia-Pacific region, such as Japan, South Korea, Thailand and The Philippines. South East Asia was seen by the US as a region lacking strong security institutions, military capabilities and shared operational abilities. As a result, Washington took a “hub and spoke” approach to defence links, with the hub being the US.

Australian policymakers initially looked to SEATO to provide a guarantee that would improve the economic strength of the Organization’s more newly independent members. Australia had taken a similar approach under the Colombo Plan in 1954. Using the Colombo Plan, Australian Minister for External Affairs Percy Spender intended to negate the appeal of communism by increasing economic prosperity in those states targeted for assistance by the plan’s supporters.⁹¹ Australian Foreign Minister RG Casey wanted SEATO to incorporate both military and economic provisions. Casey believed that the Western members of SEATO would help its less developed members by guaranteeing a suitable return on their resource exports, no matter the world market price. This proposal was unsuccessful as it effectively fell outside of alliance concerns.⁹² It is interesting to note, however, the Australian attempt to utilise a security arrangement to assist in increasing the economic stability of its membership. This approach will appear again in the reasoning behind the creation of the FPDA.

However, from Australia’s perspective, SEATO did suffer from a number of weaknesses. Malaya did not seek SEATO membership in 1957 when the country received its independence, and Malaysia and Singapore also did not join during Confrontation. Malaya did not join SEATO for two key reasons. First, SEATO did not provide any extra advantage to Malaya as the country already had a British defence guarantee under AMDA; and second, SEATO itself was unpopular within Malaya and with Indonesia and India, Malaya’s two most important non-communist Asian relationships.⁹³ Although the British were members of SEATO, the UK would not

⁹¹ Millar. *Australia’s Defence* p 44

⁹² Buszynski. *SEATO* p 35

⁹³ J Saravanamuttu. *Malaysia’s Foreign Policy, the First Fifty Years: alignment, neutralism, Islamism*. (Singapore: ISEAS Publishing, 2010) p 51

commit additional forces to the organisation. The UK saw their activities and support of AMDA as fulfilling Britain's SEATO obligations.⁹⁴ The United States expressed that SEATO was not the South East Asian equivalent of NATO. SEATO did not contain an automatic guarantee of a military response in the event of an attack on a SEATO member and this caused the Organisation to be regarded as 'toothless' in some Australian circles.⁹⁵ In addition, the US refused to set up a combined SEATO membership force or station troops in South East Asia.⁹⁶ This lack of a SEATO command structure and dedicated forces would continue to remain a concern for Australia into the 1960s.⁹⁷ These shortcomings reinforced Australia's view that none of the major SEATO partners saw the SEATO treaty area as vital to their respective national defence.⁹⁸ The primary concern for UK, France and the US was the strategic situation in Europe and the northern hemisphere, not South East Asia.

The period from the early 1960s to the early 1970s saw the slow undermining of Forward Defence by factors beyond Australian control. The first issue for Australia was the recognition that the UK could no longer afford to maintain its world-wide capabilities due to its economic weakness. By the late 1950s, the huge contraction in British post-war power along with the start of the UK's attempts to create links with the European Economic Community initiated concerns in Canberra that the UK would at some point be unable or unwilling to guarantee Australian security.⁹⁹ By the 1960s, Australia recognised that the gradual decline in the UK's international power would inevitably affect the British presence in South East Asia. London's desire to join the European Community, combined with strains in the British economy, led to a greater British focus on Europe. There was recognition that the resolution of Confrontation

⁹⁴ Saravanamuttu. *Malaysia's Foreign Policy* p 49

⁹⁵ Edwards. *Crises and Commitments* p 156-157

⁹⁶ Millar. *Australia's Defence* p 52

⁹⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1964" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*. (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 50a p 325

⁹⁸ TB Millar "Australian Defence: 1975-1965" in *Australia in World Affairs 1961-1965*. (Melbourne: Cheshire Publishing 1968) p 270

⁹⁹ G Greenwood "Australian Foreign Policy in Action" in *Australia in World Affairs 1956-60*. (ed. G Greenwood and N Harper) (Sydney: FW Cheshire Pty Ltd 1963) p57

was decided by events in Jakarta more than the presence of British, Australian and New Zealand forces in Malaysia and Singapore.¹⁰⁰

In addition, Forward Defence tied Australia to British and American policies in South East Asia. This became a serious concern for Australia because its two key allies took different policy approaches. The Australian need to balance support for both the US and the UK was especially apparent when faced with the way each ally approached the threat of communism. The British approach was to commit its forces solely to the defence of its colonial territories, whereas the US focussed on the entire SEATO area.¹⁰¹ Moreover, Australia's allies expected demonstrable Australian support in the region. The US made it very clear that Australia was unlikely to receive defence assistance if it did not match American strategy.¹⁰² Australia needed to avoid the appearance of favouring one ally over the other. The Forward Defence policy was fatally weakened from two key actions. The first was the 1967 British announcement that the country would withdraw its military forces from South East Asia by the mid-1970s.¹⁰³ The second was the 1969 Guam Doctrine, under which the US indicated that the countries of South East Asia were now primarily responsible for providing the manpower and for their own defence.¹⁰⁴ The Guam Doctrine looked very much like the next step in a US withdrawal from South East Asia, coming as it did after US President Johnson's 1968 decision to open peace negotiations with North Vietnam and President Nixon's "Vietnamisation" program which would slowly withdraw American forces from South Vietnam.

¹⁰⁰ D Lee & M Dee (2001). "Southeast Asian Conflicts" *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia*. Vol 1 (ed D. Goldsworthy). (Melbourne, Melbourne University Press, 2001) p 306

¹⁰¹ D Goldsworthy. *Losing the Blanket: Australia and the end of Britain's Empire* (Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2008), p 140

¹⁰² D Goldsworthy. *Losing the Blanket* p 140

¹⁰³ In January 1968, the British government specified that 1971 would be the year that British troops would be withdrawn from South East Asia. D.M. Maclean. *ANZIM to ANZUK - An Historical Outline of ANZAM*. Historical Monograph no. 96. Canberra: Department of Defence, April 1992, p 32

¹⁰⁴ D Lee and M Dee. "Southeast Asian Conflicts" in *Facing North* p 298

The movement from Forward Defence to a policy in which the basing of Australian troops abroad became the exception rather than the rule has been covered in detail elsewhere and is beyond the scope of this study.¹⁰⁵ White argues that the Australian government's 1972 policy discussion paper confirmed that Australia's defence policy had to change and put forward ideas regarding the country's need for defence self-reliance that found expression for the first time in the 1976 White Paper *Australian Defence*.¹⁰⁶ Nevertheless, during the period between the UK's announcement that it would withdraw from South East Asia and Australia's 1972 *Australian Defence Review* paper, Australian policymakers were faced with the task of negotiating a replacement to AMDA. It was during this time that the concept of defence engagement came to the fore. Although brief, the idea of Australia engaging with South East Asia through defence engagement did leave its mark in the 1968 and 1971 Strategic Basis papers and was a key theme in Australia's approach to the formation of the FPDA.

The Interregnum of Defence Engagement

Between 1967 and 1971, Australian policymakers recognised that Australia had to maintain a demonstrable commitment to Malaysia and Singapore without assuming the British role. The 1968 Strategic Basis paper reasserted Australia's interest in the security of its sea and air lines of communications, which linked the country to its defence allies and major trading partners. According to the paper, Australia had a permanent interest in the Sea Lanes of Communication and the strategic approaches across both the Pacific and Indian Oceans for reasons of free passage of trade and defence support from allies.¹⁰⁷ As these lines of communication passed through South

¹⁰⁵ Examples of this coverage include Paul Dibb "The Self-Reliant Defence of Australia: The History of an Idea" in *History as Policy: Framing the Debate on the Future of Australia's Defence Policy*. Canberra Paper on Strategy and Defence No 167. Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2007; Alan Dupont, *Australia's Threat Perceptions: A Search for Security*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence 82. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1991.

¹⁰⁶ Hugh White, "Four Decades of the Defence of Australia: Reflections on Australian Defence Policy over the Past 40 Years" in *History as Policy: Framing the Debate on the Future of Australia's Defence Policy*. Canberra Paper on Strategy and Defence No 167. Canberra: ANU E-Press, 2007 p 165-166

¹⁰⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 36 p 348

East Asia, there was an interest in Canberra to ensure that “substantial powers potentially hostile to Australia” did not penetrate or influence the region in a way that might threaten Australian interests.¹⁰⁸ Australia needed to remain engaged with Malaysia and Singapore in order to prevent a power vacuum from forming in the wake of the British withdrawal. This required some level of Australian military presence on the peninsula. In addition, Australia recognised that it was necessary to provide confidence to Malaysia and Singapore, as well as Indonesia, in order to encourage their economic growth. Australia wanted to ensure the maintenance by Australia’s neighbours in South East Asia of their political, economic and military independence and “of their willingness to maintain friendly and co-operative relations with Australia.”¹⁰⁹ However, Canberra policymakers also recognised the need for Australia to avoid being pulled into regional disputes, as had almost been the case during Confrontation. Defence engagement allowed Australia to engage with Malaysia and Singapore and contribute to their security while reducing the chance of the country becoming inadvertently drawn into regional disputes.

The 1968 Strategic Basis paper also stressed the continuing need to maintain a Western presence in Malaysia and Singapore to Australian security. Australian defence policy makers were worried about the possibility of a “power vacuum” in the wake of the British withdrawal from the region. In the 1968 Strategic Basis, there was a concern that the USSR might try to exercise power in South East Asia.¹¹⁰ There was a belief within Australia that a power vacuum could destabilise South East Asia. A power vacuum was thought to give China the opportunity to extend its influence significantly, an act that would be hard for the US and its allies to counter.¹¹¹ The rapidly growing populations of South East Asia and uncertain economic development could “facilitate” the influence and power of unfriendly states closer to Australia.¹¹² The impact of a surge in communist influence on Indonesia was of great concern. Communist influence on Indonesia was of particular concern to Australia due to the

¹⁰⁸ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*, (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 10 p 397

¹⁰⁹ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 10 p 397

¹¹⁰ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968” paragraph 37 p 348

¹¹¹ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968” paragraph 61 p 352

¹¹² “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968” paragraph 43 p 349

country's size, weakness and potential for instability as well as power.¹¹³

Confrontation had demonstrated to Australia how quickly its bilateral relations with Indonesia could change for the worse.

Australian concerns regarding Malaysia and Singapore were driven in a large part by the prickly state of communal tensions within Malaysia as well as between Malaysia and Singapore. The bilateral relationship between the two states had remained strained since Singapore's ejection from Malaysia in 1965. By 1968 the Australian government had recognised that the danger to Australian interests in Malaysia arose from a breakdown in communal relations and a resumption of large scale Communist Chinese challenge to the Malay dominated government.¹¹⁴ This was underlined by the 1969 federal election riots in Malaysia between ethnic Chinese and Malays. The ethnic component fuelling the rivalry between Malaysia and Singapore was also being played out within Malaysia itself, which demonstrated that the stability of the country could not be taken for granted. By 1971 the Chinese minority comprised approximately 37 per cent of the total population of peninsula Malaysia and were predominant in commerce.¹¹⁵ The Malays predominated in the spheres of national politics and defence and they viewed themselves as indigenous inhabitants of Malaysia.¹¹⁶ China was still funding the Chinese-dominated communist insurgency in Malaysia. These issues had the potential to seriously destabilise Malaysia from within. Any Australian attempt to stabilise Malaysia and Singapore had to address the problems of communal distrust at the highest levels of both societies.

Australia also had an interest in maintaining a positive relationship with Indonesia. In the 1964 Strategic Basis paper, policymakers viewed Indonesia's goal as regional hegemony, the expelling of the British from South East Asia and a policy of Confrontation.¹¹⁷ However, in the 1968 and 1971 Strategic Basis papers, Australia's

¹¹³ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 44 p 349

¹¹⁴ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 82 p356

¹¹⁵ Watt. "South East Asia in the 1970s" p 47-48

¹¹⁶ Watt. "South East Asia in the 1970s" p 48

¹¹⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1964" paragraph 19 p 317

views on Indonesia's foreign and domestic policies and economic prospects had changed significantly. Indonesia had indicated to Australia in 1968 that it was not interested in joining military pacts or tying itself to a particular world bloc.¹¹⁸ Thus, although Indonesia would not join SEATO, neither would the country side with the Communist Bloc. Nevertheless, there was recognition in Canberra that Indonesia's "subdued role" in the region might not continue indefinitely and that Jakarta's military capabilities could improve.¹¹⁹ In particular, the failure of Jakarta to improve the lives of Indonesians with successful economic and administrative policies would likely lead to a resurgence of domestic instability within Indonesia and a potential revival of communist subversion.¹²⁰ Canberra saw that "a stable, cohesive and economically developing Indonesia" that had close relations with Australia would benefit Australian defence and security.¹²¹ The new Suharto government, like many governments in South East Asia, was expected to consolidate domestic legitimacy through economic development. An Indonesian failure to improve its domestic situation was seen as leading to a likely loss of support for Suharto and a potential resurgence of support for communism and separatism.¹²² A weak government in Jakarta would then either resort to increased nationalist rhetoric to increase its support or could encourage other states within and outside of South East Asia to interfere in Indonesian affairs.¹²³ However, a confident and unified Indonesia would be a major stabiliser in South East Asia as well as provide more protection for Australia. Policy makers in Canberra saw that this would be more likely to come about with Indonesia developing "within an orderly and disciplined international framework."¹²⁴ By 1971, Canberra took the view that any drastic change in Indonesia's intentions towards Australia would be readily apparent long before Jakarta possessed the military capabilities to act.¹²⁵

¹¹⁸ Communicated to Australian Minister for External Affairs Paul Hasluck during a visit to Indonesia in 1968—Indonesia's decision was in line with the country's 1966 Consultative Council resolution. LM Cumpston, *History of Australian Foreign Policy 1901-1991 Vol 2* (Canberra: Union Offset Co, 1995) p 346

¹¹⁹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 95 p 358

¹²⁰ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 90 p 357

¹²¹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 76 p 411

¹²² "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraphs 89-90 p 357

¹²³ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraphs 92-93 p 358

¹²⁴ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 97 p 359

¹²⁵ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 78 p 411

Australia also had to maintain its alliance links with the US and the UK. The 1962 Strategic Basis paper took the view that, without Australian support for both SEATO and ANZUS, it would become harder to “encourage the United States to retain an effective military presence in South East Asia and to assist in our [Australia’s] security in time of need.”¹²⁶ Despite all of the aforementioned weaknesses, SEATO’s continued importance rested on the fact that in South East Asia all states relied on the US holding the balance of power as they could not contain China even through a combined effort.¹²⁷ According to the 1968 Strategic Basis paper, it was important that SEATO be maintained while the threat from North Vietnam and China existed.¹²⁸

Australia was concerned regarding the potential of a destabilising communist influence in Malaysia and Singapore after the withdrawal of British troops. As discussed earlier, Australia had looked to ANZAM, AMDA and in particular SEATO’s focus on countering communism, to close the South East Asian ‘strategic gap’ in Australia’s defences.¹²⁹ The withdrawal of the UK from Malaysia was seen as opening up a power vacuum in the region. This concern was not unwarranted based on the actions of the Soviet Union after Britain’s announced withdrawal. After the UK indicated that it would pull its forces back to Europe, the Soviet Union made an offer to lease the Gan military airfield in the Maldives.¹³⁰

Australia and the UK considered a variety of possible solutions to the British withdrawal ‘East of Suez’ but none of them proved successful. Moving British bases from Malaysia to Australia was suggested. However, the UK looked to ameliorate its economic issues by withdrawing its forces from the Asia Pacific area. Relocating British forces to Australia would not reduce Britain’s defence expenditures and raised

¹²⁶ cited in G Cheeseman, & M McKinley. *Australia’s Regional Security Policies 1970-1990: Some Critical Reflections*, 1990 p6

¹²⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 75 p 355

¹²⁸ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 76 p 355

¹²⁹ Buszynski. *SEATO* p 35

¹³⁰ This offer was rejected by the Maldives government. RJ Hanks. *The Unnoticed Challenge: Soviet Maritime Strategy and the Global Choke Points*. (Washington DC: Institute for Foreign Policy Analysis, August 1980) p 32

the additional concern that Australia might have to pay for the British presence.¹³¹ Moreover, the existence of the British nuclear deterrent in submarines and ships stationed at British bases in Australia would have upset the region. There was also recognition amongst Australian policymakers that the stability of Malaysia and Singapore would not be solved by the movement of British bases from the region. The creation of British bases in Australia would not allow for the large-scale support of the Malaysian government in the event of a breakdown in communal relations.¹³²

Australia also floated the possibility of a quadripartite security arrangement between itself, the UK, the US and New Zealand. However, Goldsworthy states that this proposal was rejected by both the US and the UK. The US was not interested in extending its involvement in South East Asia while the British did not want to place themselves in a situation where they would have to face their three allies, all of whom were disappointed by the UK withdrawal from South East Asia.¹³³

The Western-oriented states of South East Asia also took steps to deal with inter-state tensions and the destabilising effects of foreign influence in the region. In 1967 Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia, the Philippines and Singapore agreed to form the Association of South East Asian Nations (ASEAN) as a way of decreasing tensions between the member states.¹³⁴ In 1968 Tun Dr Ismail Abdul Rahman, a senior Malaysian politician, put forward a proposal for the neutralisation of South East Asia, with this neutralisation to be guaranteed by all the major powers on both sides of the Cold War.¹³⁵ By November 1971, Malaysia had encouraged its fellow ASEAN members to sign the Kuala Lumpur Declaration declaring South East Asia as a 'zone of peace, freedom and neutrality' (ZOPFAN). The Declaration stated that "...the neutralisation of South East Asia [was] a desirable objective and that [the ASEAN

¹³¹ This cost was seen as being extremely expensive for Australia. Goldsworthy. *Losing the Blanket* p 164

¹³² "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" paragraph 82 p 356

¹³³ Goldsworthy. *Losing the Blanket* p 165

¹³⁴ A number of these tensions arose from territorial disputes after decolonisation. J Henderson. *Reassessing ASEAN*. Adelphi Paper 328. Oxford: Oxford University Press, May 1999 p 15

¹³⁵ Saravanamuttu. *Malaysian Foreign Policy* p 91

members] should explore ways and means of bringing about its realization...”¹³⁶ After the Declaration, the Malaysian government undertook a campaign in South East Asia and among the major powers to gain support for the ZOPFAN proposal. However, the proposal failed to find significant support from other ASEAN states or the major powers. The US bases in the Philippines and Thailand helped the American war against North Vietnam while the Non-Aligned Movement would not support the proposal so long as foreign bases remained in the South East Asia.¹³⁷ Australian policymakers recognised that, in the short term, the Malaysian government understood that its chances were slim of receiving Chinese or Soviet support for ZOPFAN.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the Malaysian government wanted the proposed Five Power Defence Arrangements to remain “inconspicuous” so that Malaysia and Singapore could move towards non-alignment in the future.¹³⁹ However, Australia did not view ASEAN or the ZOPFAN initiative as having the strength to keep out communist influence. Australia did not see ASEAN as an organisation with any military character to it, but recognised it as having the potential to encourage its members to support a regional South East Asian identity and independence from external powers.¹⁴⁰

Australian concerns for Singapore were based on a combination of concerns regarding the island state’s geographic location, Chinese demographic and economic viability. There were fears in Australia that Singapore’s location between Malaysia and Indonesia would foster an isolationist ‘siege mentality’ within the island state. Regional commentators identified that it was vital to ensure that Singapore had the opportunity to work in cooperation with Malay neighbours through regional organisations. If the Malay states took a hostile approach to Singapore, there was a fear that the island state might become actively hostile to Indonesia and Malaysia and seek support from either China or the Soviet Union.¹⁴¹ Australia and the UK were

¹³⁶ Text taken from *Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality Declaration*, Malaysia, 27 November 1971, found on ASEAN’s official website: www.asean.org/1215.htm

¹³⁷ Chandran Jeshurun. *Malaysia: Fifty Years of Diplomacy 1957-2007*. (Singapore: Talisman Publishing, 2008) p 123

¹³⁸ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 63 p 408

¹³⁹ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 64 p 408

¹⁴⁰ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 157 p 426

¹⁴¹ Watt “South East Asia in the 1970s” p 51

concerned about the impact of the British withdrawal on the economic viability of Singapore. The withdrawal of Commonwealth forces from Singapore was expected to seriously damage the state's economy. Singapore had no natural resources and a large population to support. The country had developed as a trading centre, but half its population was under the age of 21 and employment prospects for its two million citizens were of great concern to policymakers.¹⁴² British forces stationed in Singapore directly employed 50,000 people and affected the livelihood of 150,000. The loss of these troops would remove a significant source of revenue and employment from Singapore, with potentially destabilising results. If Singapore were to be isolated between Malaysia and Indonesia, it was expected that the island would experience high unemployment with no guarantee of improvement.¹⁴³ Due to the planned closure of the British bases and the loss of local employment, in 1968 Singapore planned to repatriate between 40,000-50,000 Malaysians who would have been put out of work by the closing of the British base in Singapore. Malaysia, in response, threatened to repatriate around 60,000 Singaporeans employed in Malaysia. Only a meeting between Tun Razak of Malaysia and Dr Goh from Singapore averted this mutual expulsion.¹⁴⁴

Australia considered that a continued Australian presence would help to build international and domestic confidence in Malaysia and Singapore. A 1968 report took the position that Australia should continue to maintain contributions for all services in Malaysia and Singapore notwithstanding the latest British decisions, and contingent on Malaysia and Singapore wanting Australia forces to remain.¹⁴⁵ An Australian presence was also considered useful in bringing Malaysia and Singapore closer together in defence relations.¹⁴⁶ Continued Australian defence engagement in Malaysia and Singapore was also seen as helping to counter any possible renewed

¹⁴² Watt "South East Asia in the 1970s" p 50

¹⁴³ Watt "South East Asia in the 1970s" p 47-48

¹⁴⁴ KW Chin. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 147-8

¹⁴⁵ Minute by the Defence Committee, Tuesday 23 Jan 1968 "Implications for Australia of the British Defence Decisions: January 1968" NAA:A7942, D120 *Australian Defence Policy – implications of withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore 1967-1968* p6

¹⁴⁶ Minute by the Defence Committee, Tuesday 23 Jan 1968 "Implications for Australia of the British Defence Decisions: January 1968" NAA:A7942, D120 *Australian Defence Policy – implications of withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore 1967-1968* p5

communist insurgency. With the British withdrawal, the Australian presence could be insurance against an outburst of fresh insurgency in Malaysia.¹⁴⁷ Policymakers considered it necessary for Australia to be available to help the Malaysian and Singaporean forces in counter-insurgency operations. The continued presence of Australian forces in Malaysia and Singapore were viewed as providing some insurance against a renewed insurgency.¹⁴⁸ There was also recognition in Australia that Malaysia and Singapore also had to take greater responsibility in building up their own levels of preparedness.¹⁴⁹

A form of multilateral defence engagement also provided a greater sense of transparency in Australian dealings with Malaysia and Singapore. Australia recognised that Australian training assistance had to be training that addressed the needs of both Malaysia and Singapore and that did not create alarm in neighbouring states. At a Defence Committee meeting in April 1971, Australia's policy was to offer training and other assistance that improved the capabilities of both Malaysia and Singapore. This was sparked by a Singapore request that Australia provide tank training, which Committee recognised would be likely to upset Malaysia and Indonesia.¹⁵⁰

In addition, Australia saw itself as being a very good security partner for ASEAN. The 1971 Strategic Basis paper characterised Australia as an independent, highly developed, non-imperialist state with direct interest in the security of South East Asia; Canberra believed these qualities would give Australia a "special position" and by

¹⁴⁷ Minute by the Defence Committee, Tuesday 23 Jan 1968 "Implications for Australia of the British Defence Decisions: January 1968" NAA: A7942, D120 *Australian Defence Policy – implications of withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore 1967-1968* p 5

¹⁴⁸ Minute by the Defence Committee, Tuesday 23 Jan 1968 "Implications for Australia of the British Defence Decisions: January 1968" NAA: A7942, D120 *Australian Defence Policy – implications of withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore 1967-1968* p 7

¹⁴⁹ Minute by the Defence Committee, Tuesday 23 Jan 1968 "Implications for Australia of the British Defence Decisions: January 1968" NAA: A7942, D120 *Australian Defence Policy – implications of withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore 1967-1968* p 6

¹⁵⁰ Department of Defence Working Paper, Agendum 1/1971 "Five Power Ministerial Meeting London - April 1971 - Unresolved Matters including Real Estate. 28 April 1971" NAA: A7942/1 F58 Part 2: *Five Power Ministerial Meeting London - April 1971 - unresolved matters including real estate*

extension influence “somewhat disproportionate to its power.”¹⁵¹ To that end, Australia needed to develop closer relationships with the ASEAN states. In this way, Australia could show ASEAN in general and Indonesia in particular that their strategic interests were compatible with Australia’s, and to demonstrate that Australia was ready to support these shared interests.¹⁵²

However, while Australia recognised that it had to remain involved in the security of Malaysia and Singapore, Canberra ensured that its commitment was not going to inadvertently draw the country into regional squabbles. An ongoing territorial dispute between Malaysia and the Philippines over part of East Malaysian territory on Borneo would have influenced the Australian approach. Australia initially insisted that the FPDA only covered peninsula Malaysia and Singapore, and any security guarantees under the Arrangements did not apply to East Malaysia. The Malaysians did not find this acceptable and tried to use Australia’s desire to remain in Malaysia as a bargaining chip. During negotiations, Malaysia’s Tunku Razak had stated that, in order to maintain a presence in Malaysia, Australia would have to expect some involvement in inter-regional disputes.¹⁵³ However, Australian Prime Minister Gorton publically stated that the FPDA was primarily to deal with externally supported communist subversion and assist in the defence of the whole Malay peninsula—including Singapore.¹⁵⁴ The Arrangements would not cover Sarawak and Sabah. The argument regarding whether the FPDA’s remit did or did not cover East Malaysia was eventually settled through the wording of the FPDA Communiqué. Paragraph 5 of the Communiqué stated that, prior to any military commitment, the FPDA members would consult in the event of a possible or actual threat to Malaysia and Singapore. As Chin Kin Wah correctly points out, this ‘commitment to consult’ meant that all members could individually define what constituted a threat to Malaysia and Singapore, providing increased member control over possible responses.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵¹ “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 14 p 398

¹⁵² “Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971” paragraph 85 p 413

¹⁵³ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*. p 162

¹⁵⁴ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*. p 164

¹⁵⁵ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore*. p 176

Conclusion

Australian participation in the FPDA was a logical continuation of the country's commitment to the security of the Malay peninsula between 1946 and 1971. The withdrawal of the UK from South East Asia did not change Australian strategic interests in the region. Malaysia and Singapore remained important to Australian defence due to their geographical location. The communal rivalry between Malaysia and Singapore and within Malaysia itself still had the potential to destabilise both countries and, by extension, ASEAN. This would make it easier for hostile powers to extend their influence and operations within an area of vital interest to Australian security.

The shape of Australian engagement through the FPDA was influenced by the flux in Australian defence policy caused by the withdrawal of the bulk of the British military presence from Malaysia and Singapore and the US military presence from South Vietnam. Australia needed to demonstrate its commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore while at the same time avoiding any indication that this commitment was either underwritten by Australia or automatic in the event of a threat. The FPDA would provide both continuity of presence and a level of transparency. The continued presence of Australian, British and New Zealand forces in Malaysia and Singapore under the FPDA framework provided a concrete indication of the importance Australia placed on regional security while at the same time continued the British military commitment, albeit greatly reduced, to Australia's strategic interests. The success of Australia's experiment with defence engagement through the FPDA—this combination of defence diplomacy and military commitment—will be explored in Chapters Five and Six.

Chapter Five – How the FPDA functioned: 1971 to the late 1980s

Either you're part of the problem or you're part of the solution or you're just part of the landscape. *Ronin*

This chapter discusses Australia's participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements between 1971 and the late 1980s and how they fulfilled the original intentions of Australian policymakers. The chapter determines these expectations using key archival documents found in the Australian, American and British archives. This chapter will also make use of the same sources to discuss the expectations of the Arrangements held by its FPDA members, ASEAN and the United States. A key document used in this section—found in the Australian National Archives—is a defence Committee Paper titled “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972. The significance of this Defence Committee paper is that it is one of the only documents that outlines Australian expectations from the FPDA at the time of the beginning of the Arrangements, and it has not been utilised in previous works on the FPDA. As such, this section will draw extensively upon this Review.

In order to better demonstrate the FPDA's contributions through defence engagement, Chapters Five and Six are each divided into two main sections that reflect the key themes encompassed by this analytical framework. The first section, ‘Diplomatic Commitment,’ will look at the FPDA through the lens of defence diplomacy. The second section, ‘Military Commitment,’ will move beyond the sphere of defence diplomacy and examine how the FPDA's military presence and capabilities fulfilled Australian expectations.

Diplomatic Commitment

Malaysia-Singapore

Australia used the Five Power Defence Arrangements as a confidence building measure for Malaysia and Singapore. The 1972 Review stated that the purpose of the FPDA was "... to contribute to confidence in Malaysia and Singapore, inter alia by providing the local Chinese with some assurance..."¹ The measure was targeted at both the bilateral defence relationship between Malaysia and Singapore as well as the domestic concerns of the ethnic Chinese population in both states. As discussed in Chapter Four, Australia was concerned that the British withdrawal would result in Malaysia and Singapore turning to China or the Soviet Union to guarantee their security. In particular, after the many years spent countering the communist insurgency in Malaysia, Australia did not want the withdrawal of the UK to lead to a breakdown in communal relations in Malaysia that would see a resumption of the communist insurgency movement.² The presence of the FPDA was intended to help lessen any fears of abandonment by the West. This section will explore how the FPDA contributed to confidence in a stable Malaysia - Singapore defence relationship by providing a framework for bilateral defence cooperation as well as demonstrable external security links with non-South East Asian states.

As raised in Chapter Four, Australian thinking behind the FPDA included a strand which posited that the Arrangements would demonstrate confidence in the stability of Malaysia and Singapore and that this indication of confidence would assist both states in developing their national economies. The 1972 Review stated that the Arrangements may have given confidence in Malaysia and Singapore to outsiders, such as investors from Japan and Hong Kong, and thereby assisted in creating a situation beneficial to economic growth by damping down internal tensions.³ As

¹ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA: A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 4

² "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1968" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945* (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 81 p 356

³ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 5

discussed in Chapter Four, the UK was very aware of the great economic hole that would be left in the budgets of Malaysia and particularly Singapore with the withdrawal of British forces East of Suez. This recognition, and the need to ameliorate the economic impact of the British withdrawal on Malaysia and Singapore, is reflected in the 1972 Review's claim that the Arrangements really date from 1968 rather than 1 November 1971. According to the Review, ongoing negotiations among all five powers demonstrated to potential investors that both Malaysia and Singapore were not being abandoned by Britain to an uncertain future.⁴ The economic growth and development of Malaysia and Singapore between 1971 and 2010 is evident. However, this section will not address the impact of the FPDA on the economic growth of Malaysia and Singapore as the role of the Arrangements cannot be isolated from the large number of factors that spurred this economic success. This section will focus instead on how the existence of the FPDA contributed to Malaysian and Singaporean confidence in their own security by fostering bilateral defence cooperation.

One of Australia's primary intentions was for the Five Power Defence Arrangements to "...provide a framework for the pursuit of the admittedly difficult objective of facilitating defence cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore..."⁵ The FPDA successfully fulfilled this through the creation of IADS and its various councils as well as the Arrangements' training and exercise programs. Through IADS, Australia the UK and New Zealand worked to develop defence cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore. This was necessary as there were serious communal issues in Malaysia and Singapore that were mirrored in their armed forces. This section will discuss these issues and the contributions the FPDA made to mitigate their potential for destabilisation of the bilateral relationship. The FPDA also assisted in improving the military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore, but this will be discussed in the 'Military Commitment' section of this chapter.

⁴ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p5

⁵ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p2

There was a need to encourage the Malaysian and Singaporean defence forces to operate together as the communal issues that affected Malaysia and Singapore's political systems—as discussed in Chapter Four—also affected their respective militaries. In Malaysia, the government in looked to the civil service and the military to provide avenues for advancement for Malays. The armed forces proved to be an important plank in this approach. Chinese Malaysians were dominant in the country's economic sphere. Tim Huxley stated that the Malaysian military provided a way for Malays to escape from poverty and to reaffirm the political power and dominance of Malays in Malaysia. Their dominance in the armed forces gave Malays confidence that they had a key role in a stable Malaysian society, which reduced the potential for Malays to vent their frustrations on non-Malays. It is for this reason that conscription was not considered an option in Malaysia. While the Malaysian military would have benefited from recruits from a broader socio-economic base, the prospect of increasing the proportion of non-Malays in the armed forces was viewed in Kuala Lumpur as an undesirable side effect.⁶

The composition of Singapore's armed forces was also influenced by communal politics. Viewing itself as a small state surrounded by Malays, Singapore's leaders initially looked to the Israeli defence model of conscription and long-term compulsory reservist service as an example to follow. Israeli advisors helped lay the foundations for the Singapore military until they were phased out by 1974.⁷ Despite Singapore's stress on compulsory service, from the 1960s to the 1980s, ethnic Malay citizens of Singapore faced discriminatory policies that made participation in the Singapore armed forces very difficult. While all male Chinese citizens were subject to conscription, Malay conscripts and volunteers were reluctantly accepted. The impact of exclusion from the armed forces could also have a significant impact on broader career prospects due to connections between the Singapore Armed Forces and

⁶ T Huxley. *The ASEAN States' Defence Policies 1975-81: Military Responses to IndoChina*. (Working Paper 88, The Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, October 1984) p 38

⁷ Tan Tai Yong. "Singapore: Civil-Military Relations" in *Coercion and Governance: The Declining Political Role of the Military in Asia*. (edited by M Alagappa.) (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 200) p 280

Singapore's political and business elites.⁸ This changed due to demographic pressure and by the 1990s Malay officers were given positions of greater responsibility.⁹ However, the overwhelming majority of the Singapore Armed Forces remained Chinese.

Strong attitudes in Malaysia and Singapore worked against the FPDA Communiqué's emphasis on the 'indivisibility' of Malaysia-Singapore defence. General Jaafar Onn, a senior Malaysian general, stated to both Australia and the UK in 1972 that he could not see any situation in which Malaysia would ask for Singapore's help on Malaysian soil.¹⁰ A significant driving force behind Malaysia's reluctance was undoubtedly the aforementioned policy of emphasising the central role of ethnic Malays in the defence of Malaysia. There was no place in Kuala Lumpur's worldview for a significant contribution to Malaysia's security by ethnic Chinese Singaporean forces. A further insight into the reluctance of Malaysia and Singapore to train together or share defence intelligence can be gathered from a 1978 report by the British Defence Advisor at the British High Commission in Kuala Lumpur. According to the report, the Malaysians held the view that Singapore was bound to become communist once Lew Kwan Yew was no longer in control, while Singapore took the view that Malaysia's internal insurgency issues were undermining the Malaysian government more than they actually were.¹¹ This mutual lack of confidence in one another's governments meant that a certain amount of resistance to the concept of the two states' 'indivisible' defence was inevitable.

⁸ For greater details on the links between military service and Singapore's political and business sectors, please see Tan Tai Yong. "Singapore: Civil-Military Relations"

⁹ C Thayer, "Security Relations" in T Shiraishi (ed). *Across the Causeway: A multi-dimensional study of Malaysia-Singapore relations*. (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2009) p 168-169

¹⁰ Inward cablegram from Australian High Commission KL dated 26 February 1972 "Singapore – Malaysia relations – IADS", NAA: A1209/58 1971/9495 *The Five Power Defence Arrangements for Malaysia and Singapore, 1971 policy*

¹¹ Defence Advisor Malaysia – Annual Report June 1977-June 1978 by Col WJCG Copinger Symes, Defence Advisory British High Commission, KL, The National Archives (UK) AIR 8/2801 *British defence Liaison Staff (BDLS) :periodic reports: Zambia, Nigeria, India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Ghana, Caribbean, Singapore and Cyprus 1978 May 01 – 1979 January 31 ID3/5/8 Pt 24 with maps,*

Nevertheless, Australian policymakers viewed the FPDA as having accomplished some early successes. The aforementioned Defence Committee review paper on the Arrangements argued that the FPDA had successfully produced three early examples of defence cooperation. The first and most significant example was the creation of the FPDA's Integrated Air Defence System.¹² The second and third were: Singapore's access to Malaysia's Kuantan-based air weapons facility; and Malaysia's retention of its naval base at Woodlands in Singapore. Australian policymakers argued that Malaysia and Singapore's continuing access to one another's territory for defence purposes were unlikely to have occurred without the existence of the FPDA.¹³ However, it is the creation of IADS that provided a long term consultative framework for all five members.

The existence of IADS allowed for the creation and institutionalisation of both official and secondary channels of communication between the Malaysian and Singaporean defence forces. Crowe correctly argues that a process for regular consultation was institutionalised during the first decade of the FPDA's existence.¹⁴ Of the two official councils, the Joint Consultative Council only met four times between 1971 and 1981 but the Air Defence Council met 34 times during the same period.¹⁵ The ADC was arguably the more significant of the two councils in the first decade of the FPDA's existence, as the ADC directed the Commander IADS on matters involving organisation, training, development and operational readiness. The diplomatic aspect of this role of the FPDA can be seen in the membership of the Joint Consultative Council and Air Defence Council. As discussed earlier, members of the JCC were also members of the Air Defence Council. While the Malaysian and Singaporean representatives came from their respective Ministries of Defence, the Australian,

¹² Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 5

¹³ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 5

¹⁴ A Crowe. *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*. (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Konta Sdn Berhad, 2001) p 23

¹⁵ C Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever" *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1 (February 2007) p 82; Crowe p 16

British and New Zealand representatives on the councils were the High Commissioners posted to the region.¹⁶

From the start of the Arrangements, two concurrent approaches were made to ensure that both Malaysia and Singapore participated. The first was that all members of the FPDA were considered equal under the Arrangements and had clearly defined roles in the FPDA framework. In 1971 an ADC meeting saw the members agree to alternate Council chairmanship between Malaysia and Singapore, with each serving six months of the year. Crowe correctly argues that this demonstrated that the ANZUK states recognised that Malaysia and Singapore were in charge of their defence requirements, as well as equal contributors.¹⁷ The Commander IADS (CIADS)—provided by Australia—had an early role as a representative of both the Malaysia and Singapore armed forces. In 1978, the ADC looked to the CIADS to represent both Malaysian and Singaporean armed forces “...in order to ensure that the ‘indivisibility’ of the defence of Malaysia and Singapore was maintained and that the other airspace users understood the concept...”¹⁸ This approach also demonstrated that the three most significant participants in the FPDA were Malaysia, Singapore and Australia.

The second approach was the stress on the need for unanimity in the FPDA decision-making process. The need for unanimity was enforced by the FPDA framework from the very beginning. At the 1971 ADC a proposal was put forward for a major joint flying exercise in 1972, subject to the approval of the exercise concept by the member governments of the FPDA.¹⁹ At the second ADC meeting in 1972, all members approved the FPDA public relations guidelines, which stated that the FPDA activities should remain low key in order to avoid speculation as to future FPDA activities.²⁰ The need for unanimity remained strong into the 1980s. In 1981 the CIADS proposed reunion of all previous commanders and staff of IADS headquarters to mark the 10th

¹⁶ Crowe p 13

¹⁷ Crowe p 14-15

¹⁸ Crowe p 18

¹⁹ Crowe p 14

²⁰ Crowe p 15

anniversary of the FPDA. This proposal was rejected by ADC on the grounds of avoiding publicity.²¹

The FPDA members made the need for unanimity work successfully by employing an agreed-upon system of raising and negotiating proposals outside of the official councils. This helped to reduce the chance of serious disagreements arising during FPDA council meetings. Considerable work was done prior to first meeting of ADC in 1971 to ensure beforehand that only those proposals with unanimous agreement would be placed in front of the ADC. The ADC worked on consensus building to avoid controversy and where issues 'would be explored, and resolved, out of session'.²² The establishment of regular meetings prior to the official ADC meetings allowed the members to discuss issues and avoid disagreement at official levels. Crowe saw this as eventually becoming part of the Councils' modus operandi as well as its weakness.²³ By the late 1980s, the FPDA had successfully provided an ongoing framework for the maintenance of Malaysia-Singapore defence relations. The 1990s onwards however, saw the appearance of a debate between scholars that the Arrangements had prevented Malaysia and Singapore from developing bilateral military relations with one another. This debate will be examined more closely in Chapter Six.

The FPDA also provided confidence to Malaysia and Singapore by maintaining extra-regional powers in their defence. The maintenance of defence links with Western powers was an important part of both Malaysian and Singaporean defence strategy. The key difference for the FPDA was that the Arrangements were compatible with the defence approaches and concerns of both states.

The FPDA supported Singapore's defence diplomacy goals of encouraging the Western powers to maintain their presence in South East Asia. In his seminal work on

²¹ Crowe p 18

²² Crowe p 14

²³ Crowe p 14

Singapore's foreign policy, Michael Liefer discussed how Singapore has dealt with its geographic size and location between Malaysia and Singapore by seeking "...to cultivate regional ties beyond its immediate locale...".²⁴ Singapore has primarily looked to the US as a stabilising power in South East Asia.²⁵ However, direct alliance ties between Singapore and the US were not possible due to the support provided by ASEAN to the Malaysian proposal in the early 1970s for a neutral and non-aligned South East Asia.²⁶ The FPDA provided Singapore with an extra-regional defence link that was acceptable to both Malaysia and ASEAN. In addition, the non-aligned movement of states that Singapore had courted in the early years after its independence accepted the presence of British military forces on Singapore.²⁷ This was in stark contrast to Singapore's defence links with Israel in the late 1960s and early 1970s; Singapore downplayed these links so as to avoid upsetting Malaysia and Indonesia.²⁸ In 1987, then Minister of Defence Kim Beazley spoke of how Brigadier General Lee of Singapore saw the FPDA as beneficial to South East Asia because of the indirect linkage it provided between the region and Australia's allies.²⁹

Malaysia shared Singapore's goal of maintaining Western defence ties but at the same time did not want to make these external ties obvious. Malaysia had been very reluctant to lose the British defence guarantee under AMDA. The loss of the guarantee meant that Malaysia would need to devote resources to its own defence. Although a member of the non-aligned movement and the initiator of the ZOPFAN policy, Malaysia wished to maintain its defence relations with extra-regional powers. Malaysia's focus on neutrality was driven in part by American setbacks in Vietnam and the UK's announced withdrawal of its forces from the region.³⁰ This was due to Malaysia's concern regarding communism in the region in the 1970s. Although

²⁴ M Liefer. *Singapore's Foreign Policy: Coping with vulnerability*. (London: Routledge, 2000)p 153

²⁵ Liefer. *Singapore's Foreign Policy* p 130

²⁶ Liefer. *Singapore's Foreign Policy* p 58

²⁷ Liefer. *Singapore's Foreign Policy* p 61

²⁸ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City: the Armed Forces of Singapore*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000) p 197

²⁹ Kim Beazley speech to the Asia Society Washington, "Australia and the Asia Pacific region: a strategy of self-reliance and alliance" 30 June 1988 in *Compendium of Speeches by the Hon Kim C. Beazley, MP Minister for Defence 1985-1989* (Canberra: Directorate of Departmental Publications)

³⁰ D.S. Ranjit Singh. "Malaysia and Regional Security" in *Malaysia's Defence and Security since 1957*, ed. A.R. Baginda, 93-114. (Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Strategic Research Centre, 2009) p 98

Malaysia normalised its diplomatic relations with the People's Republic of China in 1974, Vietnamese unification under a Hanoi-based government helped to maintain communism as a central concern of the Malaysian government.³¹ The FPDA provided a defence connection between Malaysia and the Western powers that still allowed the country to maintain its non-aligned stance. In 1973, both Australia and the US understood that Malaysia was publically reluctant but privately eager to accept Australian and American military efforts in the region.³² Australia saw the FPDA as a way to increase Malaysian confidence separate to the Arrangements' intention of fostering defence cooperation between Malaysia and Singapore. In 1972, a review of the FPDA stated that an Australian objective for the FPDA was that the Arrangements provide Malaysia with reassurance against possible external attack or an externally-promoted insurgency.³³ Part of this reassurance came from the connection that Malaysia saw between itself and the western powers through the FPDA.

Sources from the early 1970s reveal that Malaysia and Singapore did consider the FPDA to have value. Australia assessed that the existence of the FPDA had had an influence on Malaysia's defence purchases. The 1972 Review identified two situations where the FPDA framework was able to exert some influence over Malaysian and Singaporean defence policy decisions. The Singaporean government limited the Soviet naval visits to Singapore and the Malaysians did not allocate significant new defence spending to upgrade the Malaysian air force.³⁴ The 1972 Review stated that the presence of the FPDA allowed the Malaysian government to put off purchasing large and expensive weapon platforms that were unrelated to Malaysia's insurgent threat at that time.³⁵ The presence of the Arrangements also served Australian interests by providing an additional incentive for Malaysia and

³¹ KS Balakrishnan. "Malaysia's Defence Policy, Military Modernisation and National Security" in *Malaysia's Defence and Security since 1957*, edited by A.R. Baginda, 115-141. Kuala Lumpur: Malaysian Strategic Research Centre, 2009 p 123

³² US Archives File POL AUSTL-US Memorandum of Conversation dated August 3 1973, Office of the Vice President of the US, Subject: Meeting with Mr Gough Whitlam, PM of Australia

³³ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 1-2

³⁴ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 4

³⁵ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 11

Singapore to avoid any serious deterioration in their relations.³⁶ Australian and British archival records do not indicate any later benefits in the time period for which records are available. However, after the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and the Sino-Vietnamese conflict in 1978-1979, all members of the FPDA agreed to place new emphasis on the FPDA and its exercise and training program. The survival of the Arrangements beyond initial expectations indicates that the Arrangements continued to maintain a role in Malaysia's and Singapore's strategic policies.

ASEAN

The FPDA demonstrated to ASEAN that Australia was engaged in contributing to the security of South East Asia during a period when Australian defence policies were moving from Forward Defence to a Defence of Australia approach. The Arrangements were intended "...to provide a useful basis for [Australian] diplomatic and strategic presence in the area [of Malaysia, Singapore and South East Asia]..."³⁷ This was important as ASEAN considered neutrality in the early 1970s and Australia did not want to be excluded from South East Asian defence considerations. Through the FPDA, Australia could demonstrate to ASEAN that they had shared interests in regional security. In the 1970s and 1980s, the FPDA acted as a stabilising influence at the heart of ASEAN when the Association was unable to develop the internal, defence related linkages required to moderate the Malaysia-Singapore relationship.

Australia had an ongoing interest in a stable and secure South East Asia and recognised the importance of ASEAN in achieving this. The 1976 Defence White Paper indicated that a secure and stable South East Asia was in Australia's strategic interests. Regional stability would reduce the chances of South East Asia becoming a conduit for the projection of military power against Australia by others or a broad

³⁶ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 10

³⁷ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 1-2

threat directed against Australia itself.³⁸ Just over a decade later, Australia's perspective had not change. Australia's 1987 Defence White Paper *The Defence of Australia* stressed the importance to Australian security of maintaining a beneficial strategic environment in Australia's region of strategic interest, which includes South East Asia.³⁹ By 1987 ASEAN was seen as a pro-Western association that helped stabilise the region by helping to develop a broader understanding and consensus of regional strategic interests across its member states.⁴⁰

ASEAN had not initially been intended to counter extra-regional military threats and the Association recognised that it was not the best vehicle for doing so. The Association of South East Asian Nations was established on 8 August 1967 in Bangkok, less than two years after the height of Indonesia's Confrontation policy against Malaysia and Singapore.⁴¹ A key goal of the Association was regional reconciliation.⁴² Both Indonesia and Thailand took the view that reconciliation between Indonesia, Malaysia and Singapore would have a better chance of succeeding if it were "buffered" by an institutional framework.⁴³ This framework also buffered other disputes between ASEAN members, such as the fractious relationship between Singapore and Malaysia and the overlapping claims by the Philippines and Malaysia to the Malaysian ownership of Sabah on Borneo.⁴⁴ However, the withdrawal of the United States from Vietnam in the early 1970s was a concern for the ASEAN states. After the unification of Vietnam under the government in Hanoi, the ASEAN states worried that the victory of the communist north would exacerbate their own internal communist insurgency problems.⁴⁵ This contributed towards the ASEAN desire to

³⁸ Department of Defence. *Australian defence*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, November 1976)

³⁹ Department of Defence. *The Defence of Australia, 1987*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, March 1987) p 12-13

⁴⁰ Department of Defence. *The Defence of Australia, 1987* p 14

⁴¹ The founding members of ASEAN in 1967 were: Singapore, Malaysia, Thailand, Indonesia and the Philippines. After the end of the Cold War, ASEAN's membership grew as the remaining states of South East Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia, Laos and Myanmar) joined the Association in the 1990s.

⁴² M Leifer. *ASEAN and the Security of South East Asia*. (London: Routledge 1989) p 17

⁴³ see Leifer. *ASEAN and the Security of South East Asia* p 17 and A Collins. *Security and South East Asia*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003) p 128

⁴⁴ Collins. *Security and South East Asia* p 128

⁴⁵ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945*. (ed. S Fröhling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 86 p 508

reduce extra-regional influences but the Association's individual members still wished to maintain defence links with the Western powers—particularly the US.

While Canberra recognised that ASEAN's most significant defence ties were with the US, there was a desire by Australian policymakers to ensure that ASEAN held a positive view of Australia. Australia did not overemphasise its importance to ASEAN in the 1970s. Australia recognised that the ASEAN countries would view it as being of only marginal importance in assuring the security of the region, but that ASEAN would continue to value Australia's stability and friendship, as well as Australia's security links with the US, as part of their strategic support.⁴⁶ Australia fostered defence relations between Australia and ASEAN in order to help develop a sense of association between ASEAN and the wider Western community and therefore limit the influence of the Soviet Union, China and other communist powers.⁴⁷ Canberra understood that ASEAN's policy against intervention in the region by external powers dovetailed with Australia's own strategic objectives.⁴⁸ ASEAN wanted a stable balance of power among principal states in the Asia Pacific that would not disadvantage the Association.⁴⁹ The FPDA also contributed to ASEAN's interest in maintaining defence links with Western powers external to the region. In the early 1970s, China was viewed as a concern by ASEAN. The replacement of the Republic of China by the People's Republic of China in the United Nations in 1971 was seen by ASEAN and others as a forecast of a new strength in Chinese influence, particularly towards South East Asia.⁵⁰

The Five Power Defence Arrangements were a concrete demonstration that Australia maintained a commitment to the security of South East Asia. In 1971, Australia had canvassed the remaining ASEAN members regarding the FPDA and the Arrangements were not "opposed or resented" by Indonesia, Thailand or the

⁴⁶ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" paragraph 93 p 509

⁴⁷ "Australian Strategic Analysis and Defence Policy 1976" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945* (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraph 174 p 580

⁴⁸ "Australian Strategic Analysis and Defence Policy 1976" paragraph 154 p 577

⁴⁹ J Haacke. *ASEAN's Diplomatic & Security Culture* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) p 75

⁵⁰ Leifer. *ASEAN and the Security of South East Asia*. p 56

Philippines.⁵¹ The Whitlam government's 1975 paper *Australian Defence: Major Decisions Since 1972* lists Australia's commitment to the FPDA as an example of Australia's continued concern for the security and defence of South East Asia.⁵² The FPDA was a framework through which Australia could demonstrate its commitment to ASEAN to the US. Both Australia and US viewed ASEAN as an ideological buffer to communist Indochina and recognised that a weak, fragmented Association invited intrusions.⁵³ The Australian approach was reinforced in the 1980s. The Dibb Report endorsed Canberra's objective to create a sense that the countries of the region and Australia had shared strategic interests.⁵⁴ By 1987, Australian policymakers were reinforcing the point that Australia and ASEAN were both responsible for the defence of South East Asia. In a 1987 Minister for Defence Kim Beazley emphasised that Australia's defence posture until 1971 reflected the colonial nature both of the region and of Australia itself, effectively drawing a parallel between ASEAN and Australia. He further indicated that the defence policies of Australia and the region had evolved along very similar lines since 1971 due to shared perceptions of the importance of regional security.⁵⁵

Australian policymakers stressed the 'common ground' between Australian and ASEAN strategic interests in order to ensure that Australia and the Western powers maintained a role in ASEAN security. ASEAN's Zone of Peace, Freedom and Neutrality (ZOPFAN) policy was of great concern to Australia for just this reason. A 1973 Australian assessment considered that the neutralisation of South East Asia might place limits on American interest and ability to assist pro-Western states in the region while simultaneously strengthening communist involvement in South East

⁵¹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 68 p 409

⁵² Department of Defence. *Australian defence: Major Decisions Since December 1972*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1975) p 2

⁵³ H Albinski. *The Australian-American Security Relationship: A regional and international perspective*. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press 1982) p 58

⁵⁴ P Dibb. *Review of Australia's defence capabilities: report to the Minister of Defence*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1986) p 48

⁵⁵ Kim Beazley speech to Alumni International Singapore, "Australian perspectives on regional security issues" 19 November 1987 in *Compendium of Speeches by the Hon Kim C. Beazley, MP Minister for Defence 1985-1989*, (Canberra: Directorate of Departmental Publications)

Asia.⁵⁶ The Australian concern was that, under the ZOPFAN policy, the ASEAN states might adopt a common approach to all outside powers, including Australia, on matters of importance to Australian strategic policy. Canberra worried that under a ZOPFAN initiative, ASEAN might conceivably restrict extra-regional access to South East Asia, which would affect Australia's access to the northern sea lanes that connected Australia to its trading and defence partners worldwide and restrict the ability of Australian air force to move through the region.⁵⁷ The neutralisation of ASEAN could also have a serious impact on Australian relations with Indonesia. A pan-ASEAN neutralisation proposal could oblige Indonesia to treat Australia no more favourably than China or the Soviet Union.⁵⁸ Such a proposal would in effect prevent Australia from engaging with ASEAN and taking an active role in their mutual security. The neutralisation proposal would also make it more difficult for Australia or ASEAN to call upon the US for defence assistance if the strategic situation changed for the worse.

The individual ASEAN members saw defence links with Western powers as a more reliable form of defence security than neutralisation. Thus, while ASEAN collectively proposed policies such as ZOPFAN and the Treaty for Amity and Cooperation in Southeast Asia (TAC)—signed by all members in 1976—individual ASEAN states looked for ways to keep external powers like the US, the UK and Australia involved in their defence. There were a couple of strong reasons for this approach. The removal of extra-regional powers was seen by smaller ASEAN members as a possible route for larger members, such as Vietnam and Indonesia, to dominate the region.⁵⁹ In addition, several of the ASEAN states were also dealing with domestic insurgencies that received support from the communist powers and did not want to remove the option of receiving assistance from the Western powers. However, the collective ASEAN

⁵⁶ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" in *A History of Australian Strategic Policy since 1945* (ed. S Frühling) (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service 2009) paragraphs 61–62 p 475–476

⁵⁷ In the early 1970s roughly 60 per cent of Australia's total trade, amounting to 30 per cent of the value of total trade, passed through Indonesia and Papua sea lanes. "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" paragraph 62 p 476

⁵⁸ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" paragraph 60 p 475

⁵⁹ B Singh. *ASEAN the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no 138, Canberra: Australian National University 2000 p 33

approach to decision-making through extensive consultation and consensus—a process known as ‘The ASEAN Way’—sometimes was at odds with the decisions made by individual ASEAN members. Many of the ASEAN states viewed neutralisation primarily as a Malaysian way for the region to accommodate China,⁶⁰ but agreed to support the proposal as a way of showing regional unity. Privately however, the ASEAN states other than Malaysia viewed ZOPFAN as a long term goal and did not want removal of foreign military presence to occur until the end of externally supported subversion.⁶¹

The dichotomy between the collective ASEAN approach and that of its individual members was understood in Canberra. There was recognition in Australia that ASEAN in the 1970s was trying to maintain security ties with the western powers while at the same time keeping those ties in the background. Australia recognised that ASEAN members also appeared to want to ensure that their neutralisation policies would not bar support from their Western allies.⁶² ASEAN’s role in South East Asia from the start was to stabilise the region and provide a framework within which members could resolve issues. According to Haake, ASEAN followed three paths to accomplish this. The first was a formalisation of the ASEAN way as regional code of conduct; the second was the ASEAN members’ willingness to enter into broader and deeper cooperation with one another; and the third was ASEAN’s support for, and reliance on, security and defence links with external Western powers such as the United States.⁶³

ASEAN’s reliance on external defence links with Western states as a way of providing security sprang from the Association’s decision to *not* work towards becoming some form of security community. Part of this was because it was understood within ASEAN that the use of violence to resolve issues between members

⁶⁰Thailand and the Philippines still had to deal with domestic communist insurgency movements, while Singapore was loathe to replace a US presence with local power. See Leifer. *ASEAN and the Security of South East Asia* p 58-59

⁶¹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" paragraph 34 p 457

⁶² "Australian Strategic Analysis and Defence Policy 1976" paragraph 154 p 577

⁶³ J Haacke, *ASEAN's Diplomatic & Security Culture* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) p 65

was possible.⁶⁴ Another aspect was the Association's desire to avoid being viewed as an overt security arrangement. The Association's membership recognised that any adoption of an "explicit security function" could result in external views of the ASEAN as a SEATO-type alliance.⁶⁵ This was of particular concern to ASEAN during the Cold War. If regional, non-member states such as communist Indo-China viewed ASEAN as a revised version of SEATO, this would likely result in the concomitant formation of a security alliance headed by Vietnam, effectively splitting the region in two as was the case in Cold-War Europe. The ASEAN states looked primarily to the US for defence support but very much wanted any defence ties to remain in the background.⁶⁶

The FPDA helped to maintain Australian involvement in the security of South East Asia and maintain a positive view of Australia by ASEAN. For ASEAN, the FPDA was another defence link with the Western powers, but a very low-key one. The FPDA also contributed to the stabilising of the Malaysia-Singapore defence relationship, something that ASEAN was unable to do due to its eschewing of a defence and security component.

Indonesia

The FPDA helped to contribute positively to Australia's relationship with Indonesia. Both Indonesia and Australia were concerned about the stability and security of Malaysia and Singapore. Australia also wanted to provide security to Indonesia to allow the country to focus on its internal issues rather than external defence. Australia took the view that Indonesia's economic progress would be the main determinant of

⁶⁴ Collins suggests as examples: conflicts between Myanmar and Thailand over drug trafficking, ethnic minorities straddling the Thai-Myanmar border in conflict with the Myanmar military, and Singapore's defence strategy being predicated on invading Malaysia. The latter is particularly relevant for this thesis. Collins, *Security and South East Asia* p 132

⁶⁵ Collins. *Security and South East Asia* p 128

⁶⁶ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" paragraph 96 p 509

the country's regional outlook from 1971 to the early 1980s.⁶⁷ Australian policymakers clearly recognised that Australia had to demonstrate that it was "...a sympathetic and helpful neighbour with interests compatible with those of Indonesia..."⁶⁸ The FPDA functioned as a way for Australia to demonstrate that it shared security interests and concerns with Indonesia.

In the 1970s Indonesia was very concerned about the prospects for Malaysia's long term stability and the potential impact of an unstable Malaysia on the region. In 1975, Australian policymakers recognised that Indonesia was concerned about Malaysia's potential for large scale instability and the effect of this instability on Singapore and Indonesia.⁶⁹ Australian policymakers viewed stability in Malaysia as important to Indonesia, and this provided an additional reason for Canberra to remain involved in the security of the Malay Peninsula. Canberra viewed any interference by China in Malaysian affairs, such as long standing Chinese support for Malaysian insurgents, as threatening the stability of Singapore and Indonesia as well. According to the 1975 Strategic Basis paper, "Australian policy should seek to sharpen Chinese appreciation of the prospects for major, uncontrollable instability in Malaysia involving the entire sub-region in bitter conflict, and offering no realistic prospect of a Chinese-dominated left wing regime...Australia should encourage China to pursue a strict policy of non-interference in Malaysian internal affairs."⁷⁰ Australia viewed Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia as having similar security issues. After the end of the Vietnam War, the view in Canberra was that the domestic politics in Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia were highly likely to spill over into their regional relations. The 1975 Strategic Basis paper indicated that major political disaffection in each state and political control in all three was dependent on "sectional advantage and coercion"⁷¹ which would manifest itself in religious or ethnic differences.

⁶⁷ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 79 p 411

⁶⁸ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 85 p 413

⁶⁹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" paragraph 89 p 508

⁷⁰ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" paragraphs 189-191 p 525

⁷¹ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1975" paragraph 89 p 508

Jakarta considered Malaysia and Singapore to be important to Indonesia's security due to a combination of historical experience and geographic proximity. The Fall of Singapore to Imperial Japan in 1942 allowed for the subsequent invasion and occupation of the Dutch East Indies. A strong Singapore was therefore very important to Indonesian policymakers. In Indonesian defence thinking, Singapore was a "stepping stone" for threats to Indonesia, with former Indonesian defence Minister Benny Murdani on record that Singapore is the key to Indonesian defence as Singapore to Jakarta is only two hours by plane.⁷² According to Kwa Chong Guan, Indonesia has long been supportive of policies that support a strong and resilient Singaporean state.⁷³ This view is reinforced by the strong defence ties between Singapore and Indonesia that developed once Singaporean capabilities had improved. In the 1970s and 1980s, Singapore was predominantly focussed on building and developing the land, air and maritime operational capabilities of the Singapore Armed Forces.⁷⁴ From the late 1980s onwards, Singapore's defence relationship with Indonesia widened which helped to reduce mutual suspicions, increase Singapore's links with Indonesia's military elite, provide training areas for the Singapore Armed Forces and work together on low-level maritime threats.⁷⁵ In comparison, the Malaysia-Indonesia relationship was constrained by a number of issues. Some issues were cultural. The Javanese segment of Indonesia's population, which has considerable political power, regarded themselves as superior to the Malays by virtue of being more culturally sophisticated.⁷⁶ Other issues arose from conflicting territorial claims. Although cordial in the 1970s, the 1980s saw bilateral relations deteriorate as Indonesia and Malaysia disputed ownership over Ligitan and Sipadan, two islands in the Celebes Sea. This dispute, and Malaysia's occupying of the islands in 1982, contributed to poor relations between both states from the early 1980s to 2002.⁷⁷

⁷² Kwa Chong Guan. 2009. Interview by author. Singapore. 6 May.

⁷³ Kwa Chong Guan. 2009. Interview by author. Singapore. 6 May.

⁷⁴ JN Mak. *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1975-1992*. (Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no. 103, Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1993) p 100

⁷⁵ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City* p 213

⁷⁶ N Ganesan. *Bilateral Tensions in Post-Cold War ASEAN*. (Pacific Strategic Papers no. 9. Singapore: ISEAS, 1999) p30

⁷⁷ In 2002 the International Court of Justice awarded the island to Malaysia. J Saravanamuttu *Malaysia's Foreign Policy* p 280

Although Malaysia and Indonesia have some cultural and ethnic affinity, the power of the idea of some form of 'ethnic Malay brotherhood' uniting Malaysia and Indonesia under the banner of an extended Malay community should not be over-emphasised. Each state has taken a very different approach to its ethnic Malay community. In Malaysia, the term 'Malay' is defined in the state's constitution.⁷⁸ While Malaysia has worked to emphasise the concept of a distinct Malay community, Indonesia has for long periods shown resistance to the concept. During the rule of the ethnically Javanese Suharto in Indonesia (1966-1998) the Malays took on a subordinate role to the more politically powerful and wealthy Javanese, and identifying oneself as 'Malay' rather than Indonesian took on the connotation of disloyalty.⁷⁹

The FPDA has maintained an overall positive effect on bilateral defence relations between Australia and Indonesia due to the mutually perceived benefit by the Arrangements to regional security. Indonesia, while occasionally ambivalent, had accepted the FPDA as part of the regional architecture, essentially from the outset. In 1968 Indonesia was receptive to the continuing presence of Australian and New Zealand military forces in Malaysia and Singapore, as Indonesia supported contributions to regional security against communist influence.⁸⁰ Indonesian support for the FPDA was also understandable when considering that the Arrangements were a framework to work within Malaysia's and Singapore's shared communal distrust. Indonesia shared similar ethnic issues with Malaysia and Singapore, particularly regarding ethnic Chinese in Indonesia and their disproportionate role in the Indonesian economy.⁸¹ Australia also recognised that Indonesian acceptance of the FPDA was due to Indonesia's assumption of a leading role in the region. Indonesians saw

⁷⁸ A Milner. *The Malays*. (Chichester: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008) p 2

⁷⁹ Post Suharto Indonesia saw a more positive approach to Malay communities in the country. Milner *The Malays* p 174-176

⁸⁰ Chin Kin Wah. *The Defence of Malaysia and Singapore* p 149

⁸¹ While the Chinese population of Indonesia during the Suharto period was only around 3 per cent of the country's total, as in Malaysia Sino-Indonesians held a disproportionate role in the economic life of the country. For details on Jakarta's moves to assimilate Sino-Indonesians, please see Collins. *Security and South East Asia*. p 50-51

themselves as more important to South East Asia and Australia than Malaysia and Singapore, due to their location, size and resources.⁸²

The FPDA was a framework through which Australia could demonstrate its commitment to regional security to Indonesia. This was arguably in the minds of Australian policymakers when the Australian contribution to the ANZUK forces was withdrawn in 1974 but the Royal Australian Air Force fighter contribution was maintained at Butterworth. Canberra policymakers recognised that a complete Australian withdrawal from Malaysia and Singapore would be seen as indifference or incapacity regarding regional security matters in which Indonesia expected Australia to take an active interest.⁸³

This is not to say that a concern regarding future Indonesian regional policy approaches did not factor in Australian considerations. In the 1973 Strategic Basis paper Australian policy makers recognised that Malaysia and Singapore were developing capabilities that would allow them to resist Indonesian pressure better than in the past.⁸⁴ Nevertheless, the available British and Australian archival records reveal very little extensive concern regarding Indonesian intentions towards Malaysia and Singapore.

Although Indonesia indicated quiet support for the FPDA, Australia, Malaysia and Singapore understood that this support had its limits. One significant limit was the Indonesian refusal to support the expansion of the FPDA to include other regional states. In his 1988 article, Menon indicated that both the UK and Malaysia were supportive of Brunei joining the FPDA as a way to provide additional security to the oil-rich state and former British colony.⁸⁵ Brunei had undertaken a number of

⁸² SB 1971 "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1971" paragraph 85 p 413

⁸³ "Australian Strategic Analysis and Defence Policy 1976" paragraph 176 p 581

⁸⁴ "Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" paragraph 36 p 473

⁸⁵ KU Menon. "A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia?" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 10, no. 3 (December 1988) p 308-9

bilateral military exercises with Australia, the UK, Malaysia and Singapore in the 1970s and 1980s.⁸⁶ Although there was no public offer of FPDA membership made to Brunei, the UK indicated in 1988 that the member states would welcome any decision from Brunei to join.⁸⁷ However, Brunei decided not to request FPDA membership. Brunei's decision not to join the Arrangements has been publically attributed to Indonesian disapproval regarding such a decision, citing various reasons. Some reports stated that Indonesia's preference for an indigenous security agreement prevented Brunei from joining the FPDA.⁸⁸ According to Brunei officials, some elements of the Indonesian military viewed the FPDA as a symptom of the continuing mistrust of Indonesia by its neighbours and wanted the Arrangements to be superseded by multilateral security arrangements centred on ASEAN members.⁸⁹ This is not to say that Indonesia opposed any Bruneian cooperation with individual FPDA member states on defence matters. There were no objections from Jakarta regarding a 1992 Malaysia and Brunei agreement to increase cooperation in defence and which also allowed Brunei's air force to train in Malaysian airspace over the South China Sea.⁹⁰ Membership in the FPDA was definitely a different matter. The decision by Brunei not to request membership was widely viewed as an indication that Brunei was sensitive about doing anything that might be viewed by Indonesia as provocative.⁹¹

In the early post-Cold War years, some Indonesians also publically expressed the opinion that the FPDA was no longer necessary. In 1992, Ali Atlas, the Indonesian foreign minister, said that Indonesia saw the FPDA as anachronistic rather than a threat to Indonesian interests and that Indonesia would prefer that the Arrangements

⁸⁶ KU Menon. "A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia?" p 313-15

⁸⁷ Sir Geoffrey Howe, British Secretary of State in the *Borneo Bulletin*, 16 April 1988. Quoted in KU Menon. "A Six-Power Defence Arrangement in Southeast Asia?" p 309

⁸⁸ M Richardson. "Currency Crisis in Income Funds, Indonesia Questions Five-Power Pact" IHT 1992 p 16

⁸⁹ M Richardson. "New Relevance for the PDA" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1993, p 37

⁹⁰ M Richardson "New relevance for the PDA" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1993 p 38

⁹¹ M Richardson. "New Relevance for the PDA" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1993 p 37

be replaced by a wider security network involving the states of South East Asia.⁹² There were Indonesians who shared the belief that the FPDA was a demonstration of a negative view of Indonesia that arose out of Confrontation and was no longer applicable in the early 1990s.⁹³ However, it is important to note that, while Indonesian attitudes towards the FPDA were not consistently favourable, neither were they strongly hostile. Indonesia did not view the Arrangements as a threat and the FPDA was not a stumbling block in Australian-Indonesian relations.

The United Kingdom

The FPDA helped Australia to avoid the appearance of assuming the role of security guarantor to Malaysia and Singapore by keeping the British linked to their defence. Continued British participation was crucial to Australian interests, particularly in the early years of the FPDA. For example, the continued British presence in Malaysia and Singapore under the FPDA framework gave the Arrangements more significance in the eyes of regional states. In addition, British participation in the FPDA provided Australia with an additional source of information on the state of bilateral defence relations between Malaysia and Singapore.

The British presence contributed to regional views that the Arrangements played a more significant part in regional security than would have been the case without UK membership. In 1972, Lee Kwan Yew indicated to the British that he had little faith in Australian defence guarantees and expressed his appreciation of the continued British presence.⁹⁴ Indonesia too welcomed continued British participation in the security of Malaysia and Singapore due to Jakarta's concerns about the continuing communist

⁹² M Richardson. "Currency Crisis in Income Funds, Indonesia Questions Five-Power Pact." *International Herald Tribune* October 31 1992 p 16

⁹³ A retired Indonesian military commander stated that the FPDA indicated a continuing mistrust of Indonesia by the country's smaller neighbours. M Richardson. "Currency Crisis in Income Funds, Indonesia Questions Five-Power Pact" p 16

⁹⁴ Untitled paper on the effect of a change of govt in Australia on the FPDA dated 13 April 1972, The National Archives (UK): FCO 24/1302, *Future of Five Power Defence arrangements 1972 Jan 01-1972 Dec 31* FW 10/28 PART A

insurgency in Malaysia. During UK-Indonesia bilateral talks in 1971, the Indonesians criticised the size of the British ground forces left in Singapore and Malaysia with the coming end of AMDA. The British replied that all three ANZUK states could quickly reinforce their forces in the area and that units from all three British services would visit and train in the area regularly. This response was seen as reassuring to the Indonesians.⁹⁵

British participation in the Arrangements also raised the possibility that Malaysia and Singapore might be covered by the British nuclear umbrella. In 1978 the British government declared that the UK would only use nuclear weapons for national defence or defence of a state to which the UK had a security commitment.⁹⁶ It is important to note that the British never explicitly declared that its FPDA membership qualified as a security commitment to Malaysia and Singapore. Nor have Malaysia, Singapore or the other states of South East Asia made statements alluding to any inclusion of the Malay peninsula under the British nuclear guarantee.

The continuing British involvement also linked the defence of South East Asia to a wider Cold War defence network. The considerable reduction in the UK's world-wide defence presence after 1971 added to the significance of the Arrangements to the British. By 1972, British policymakers understood that the UK had to maintain a presence in South East Asia in order to maintain its contributions to counter possible communist threats to Western allies world-wide. The British presence in Singapore was a crucial link that made it possible for the UK to carry out potential defence commitments under the Bagdad Pact, options to counter Soviet naval expansion in the

⁹⁵ Notes of Jakarta meeting between HM Ambassador, WI Combs and Mr DP Aiers of the FCO and Major General Yoga Sugomo (Chief of Intelligence HANKAM, Head of the Strategic Intelligence Centre and Asst Intelligence in KOPKAMTIB) and accompanied by intel staff officers from all services HQs. These notes were written by WI Combs in the British Embassy Djakarta to DP Aiers, SWPacific Dept, FCO London, dated 18 May 1971 The National Archives (UK): FCO 24/1121, *Attitude of Indonesia towards new Five Power Defence arrangements in South-West Pacific area 1971 Jan 01-1971 Dec 31 FWD 10/12*

⁹⁶ J Stocker. *The United Kingdom and Nuclear Deterrence*. Adelphi Paper 386. (Abingdon: Routledge, 2007) p 55

Indian Ocean and the reinforcement of Malaysia and Singapore.⁹⁷ Australian policymakers also recognised the importance of the British presence for Australia. The ANZUK “institution”, situated under the FPDA framework, were viewed a possible way for the UK to both project its presence and gather intelligence in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean, two areas of particular concern for Australia.⁹⁸ The FPDA provided the context for British involvement in Malaysia and Singapore and its acceptance helped to provide a reason for British involvement in the wider region. Malaysian and Singaporean acceptance of the FPDA provided a “strong argument” for the retention of the British network of communications and facilities in the Indian Ocean. Malaysian support was viewed as necessary by the UK, as Malaysia’s non-aligned status helped to provide a degree of acceptance of Britain’s presence in Asia and allow London to avoid accusations of colonialism.⁹⁹

The British also served as a separate source of information for Australia on issues between Malaysia and Singapore. In 1972 the British Defence Attaché briefed his Australian and New Zealand counterparts regarding confirmation of British beliefs in Malaysian suspicions of Singapore’s military intentions and the inhibitions these suspicions imposed on the FPDA.¹⁰⁰ The British Attaché had been briefed by the Singapore Defence Attaché in Kuala Lumpur on Malaysian suspicions regarding Singapore’s new weapons purchases, which included Skyhawk jets, tanks, surface to air missiles and amphibious armoured personnel carriers. The British Defence Attaché briefed his counterparts orally and stressed that they not reveal to Singapore that the British had passed on this conversation.¹⁰¹ Having the UK as a member gave Australia

⁹⁷ Letter from RM Tesh MoD to Mr Hickman SW Pacific Dept FCO on the Future of the FPDA dated 19 April 1972, The National Archives (UK): FCO 24/1302 *Future of Five Power Defence arrangements 1972 Jan 01-1972 Dec 31 FW 10/28 PART A*

⁹⁸ Defence Committee Paper “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p7-8

⁹⁹ Letter from RM Tesh MoD to Mr Hickman SW Pacific Dept FCO on the Future of the FPDA dated 19 April 1972, The National Archives (UK): FCO 24/1302 *Future of Five Power Defence arrangements 1972 Jan 01-1972 Dec 31 FW 10/28 PART A*

¹⁰⁰ Letter from JB Johnston BHC KL to HE Sir Sam Falle BHC Singapore dated 16 May 1972 re: attached note by Johnston’s DA on a recent conversation between the DA and the new Singapore DA in KL – cc’d to UK HC in Canberra, Wellington, FCO and MoD, The National Archives (UK):

¹⁰¹ Letter from JB Johnston BHC KL to HE Sir Sam Falle BHC Singapore dated 16 May 1972 re: attached note by Johnston’s DA on a recent conversation between the DA and the new Singapore DA in KL – cc’d to UK HC in Canberra, Wellington, FCO and MoD, The National Archives (UK):

an additional source of information on the often rocky Malaysia-Singapore bilateral relationship. The multilateral nature of the FPDA allowed Australia to gain a better understanding of Malaysian and Singaporean issues.

The UK's participation in the FPDA decreased significantly after the withdrawal of the British contribution to the ANZUK forces in 1975. While still contributing to IADS staffing, the UK did not participate significantly in the FPDA exercise program until 1988. Nevertheless, it was in the initial years of the FPDA that British participation was most important and the nature of the FPDA commitment was flexible enough to allow for decreased participation after 1975. Continued membership in the Arrangements was not dependent on continued participation.¹⁰² For Australian purposes, the FPDA was effective in that it tied the British to the security of Malaysia and Singapore alongside Australia and New Zealand.

The United States

Australian participation in the FPDA made a small but important contribution to Australia's defence and security relationship with the United States. During the Cold War, the United States was concerned about the security of South East Asia and the spread of communist influence in the region. The 1969 Nixon Doctrine stated that the US would honour its treaty commitments to its allies and provide guarantee against nuclear attack but its allies would take "...primary responsibility [for] providing the manpower for [their own] defence..."¹⁰³ For its part, Canberra recognised that Australian military capability could help supplement the defence of the ASEAN states, and that these capabilities were reinforced by Australia's close defence links

¹⁰² How San Khoo argues that the FPDA is a set of arrangements that allows two or more members to participate in the defence of Malaysia and Singapore. As a result, the absence of a member was not viewed by the others as a lack of commitment. HS Khoo. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: If it ain't broke." *Pointer* 26, no. 4 (2000) p 110

¹⁰³ D Lee, M Dee(2001). "Southeast Asian Conflicts" in *Facing North: A Century of Australian Engagement with Asia Vol 1*. (ed D. Goldsworthy). Melbourne: Melbourne University Press, 2001) p 298

with the US.¹⁰⁴ The Arrangements were another way for Canberra to actively encourage these close defence links by actively contributing to the security of South East Asia and supporting US strategic interests. Australia committed to US security interests in South East Asia by promoting and supporting ASEAN, stability and regionalism.¹⁰⁵ The FPDA also indicated to the US that Australia was interested in South East Asia during a time when Australia looked to be moving towards a continental defence. Australia's forward deployed air and naval units demonstrated to Washington that Australia had not pursued a completely "continental" defence doctrine.¹⁰⁶

During the Cold War, US strategic concerns for South East Asia were focussed on the threat to the sea lanes of communication through the region. South East Asia was seen as an important link in military and commercial shipping and communications stretching from the Middle East through the Indian Ocean and South East Asia up to US allies in North Asia. In 1971, the US began intensive construction of a naval and air force base on the British territory of Diego Garcia in the Indian Ocean. American had very specific interests in Malaysia and Singapore in the 1970s. Malaysia was seen as important due to its geographic position next to the Malacca Strait and as an Indian Ocean littoral state.¹⁰⁷ The US saw Singapore, which was the third-largest port in the world in 1975, as a vital communication and transport link between Northeast and South Asia.¹⁰⁸ There was a concern that the control of Singapore's important naval and air facilities by a hostile power would greatly affect commercial and military activities in Southeast Asia, especially those of the US.¹⁰⁹ Malaysia was seen as a

¹⁰⁴ Strategic Basis of Australian Defence Policy 1973" paragraph 30 p 472

¹⁰⁵ H Albinski *ANZUS, the United States and Pacific Security*. Asian Agenda Report no. 17. (Lanham: University Press of America, 1987) p 19

¹⁰⁶ H Albinski. *The Australian-American Security Relationship*. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982) p 125

¹⁰⁷ *U.S. Policy Interests in the Asian Pacific Area*, Confidential, Report, October 31 1975, 387 pp. Philippines, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PH00827 p 42

¹⁰⁸ *U.S. Policy Interests in the Asian Pacific Area*, Confidential, Report, October 31 1975, 387 pp. Philippines, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PH00827 p 42

¹⁰⁹ *U.S. Policy Interests in the Asian Pacific Area*, Confidential, Report, October 31 1975, 387 pp. Philippines, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PH00827 p 43

potential path through which communist insurgency could move from Thailand to Singapore.¹¹⁰

The US saw the Soviets as the source of the greatest threat to South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. The Soviets were viewed as pursuing expansionist policies in the Indian Ocean and relying on increased use of sea lanes between the Indian Ocean and South East Asia to accomplish this.¹¹¹ The 1978-1979 invasions of Kampuchea and Afghanistan— by the Vietnamese and the Soviet Union respectively—once again emphasised that South East Asia linked the Persian Gulf and Indian Ocean with American allies in North East Asia.¹¹² By the start of the 1980s, the Americans were concerned that the Vietnam-Kampuchea struggle would destabilise the region by reviving local communist insurgencies in the Philippines, Thailand and Indonesia.¹¹³

The US expected Australia and New Zealand to contribute to the security of Malaysia and Singapore due to the importance of both states to US communications and naval traffic. Australia and New Zealand were expected to help preserve the framework of defence cooperation with Malaysia-Singapore, including retaining access to major naval and air infrastructure in Singapore, and in so doing denying these facilities to the USSR.¹¹⁴ In 1971 the US wanted the UK and Australia to maintain naval base facilities in Singapore that could facilitate US support of its new presence on Diego Garcia.¹¹⁵ Washington also looked to Australia to show leadership in South East Asia and to contribute to regional defence and intelligence exchanges. This approach was

¹¹⁰ *U.S. Policy Interests in the Asian Pacific Area*, Confidential, Report, October 31 1975, 387 pp. Philippines, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PH00827 p 42

¹¹¹ *U.S. Policy Interests in the Asian Pacific Area*, Confidential, Report, October 31 1975, 387 pp. Philippines, US Digital National Security Archives Item no. PH00827 p 42

¹¹² SW Simon, "Explaining American Security Interests in South East Asia" in *International Security in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Region* (ed TB Millar). (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983) p 20

¹¹³ Simon. "Explaining American Security Interests in South East Asia" p 28

¹¹⁴ *U.S./Australian Relations: Policy for the Official Working Visit to the United States of Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, April 17, 1986* [Heavily Excised] Secret, National Security Decision Directive, NSDD 229, May 28 1986, 4 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR01566

¹¹⁵ *Report on NSSM 110 Follow-on (Proposals for a U.S. Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean for FY 1972)* [Includes Report] Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 110 Related, June 16 1971, 33 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00686

maintained by the US through to the end of the Cold War. In 1986 the US viewed Australia's armed forces as having a role in the stabilisation of South East Asia protection of the Straits of Malacca and Singapore, two key sea lanes connecting the Pacific and Indian Oceans.¹¹⁶ As Albinski asserts, Australian involvement in Malaysia and Singapore was supported by the US as Australia's contribution to sea lane protection, which helped fulfil Australian responsibilities under the Radford-Collins agreement.¹¹⁷

The US did not view the FPDA as a strong security guarantee for Malaysia and Singapore but nevertheless did have some initial expectations regarding Australia's involvement. Like the FPDA members themselves, Washington did not see the FPDA as a permanent arrangement.¹¹⁸ Nevertheless, the US did have a minimum requirement for the FPDA. The Arrangements were expected to assist Malaysia and Singapore maintain stability in their bilateral relations and provide additional security against potential aggressors.¹¹⁹ US also hoped to continue to use the mooring and logistics facilities in Singapore retained for use by the ANZUK forces under the FPDA framework.¹²⁰ In 1978 Australian personnel based at Singapore serviced US reconnaissance and transport aircraft passing through Singapore from Pacific to Indian Ocean.¹²¹ Australia's actions in providing surveillance, access to ports and Australian facilities to the United States contributed to maintaining a visible US presence in South East Asia.

¹¹⁶ *U.S./Australian Relations: Policy for the Official Working Visit to the United States of Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke, April 17, 1986* [Heavily Excised]Secret, National Security Decision Directive, NSDD 229, May 28 1986, 4 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR01566

¹¹⁷ HS Albinski. *The Australian-American Security Relationship*. (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1982) p 125

¹¹⁸ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]*Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹¹⁹ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]*Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹²⁰ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]*Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹²¹ J Camilleri. *The Australia New Zealand US Alliance: Regional Security in the Nuclear Age*. (Boulder: Westview Press 1987) p 80

Australia's central role in the FPDA allowed Canberra to demonstrate its active contribution to the Australia-US defence relationship by supporting US security concerns in South East Asia. Through the Arrangements, Australia was able to keep the British involved in the security of Malaysia and Singapore. The US viewed the Arrangements as Australia's successful attempt to keep the UK involved in South East Asia. The UK decision to remain was viewed by the US and Australia as more important than the size of the British military presence.¹²² UK membership allowed Australia to call on British support for FPDA initiatives. In response to the communist invasions of Afghanistan and Cambodia in 1978-79, Prime Minister Fraser renewed Australian interest and emphasis in the FPDA. Under this renewed interest, Fraser encouraged the UK to increase its participation in the FPDA; this met with approval from British Prime Minister Thatcher.¹²³ Through the FPDA, Australia also contributed to stabilising the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral defence relationship, as discussed earlier in this chapter. The FPDA also contributed to Australia's ability to gather intelligence on Soviet maritime activities in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. This will be discussed further on in this chapter.

The FPDA also helped to reduce the influence of the Soviet Union and China in Malaysia and Singapore during the critical period of the early 1970s, in the period of possible uncertainty following the British withdrawal. The 1970s and 1980s were a period when South East Asia was particularly subject to Sino-Soviet rivalry. The Soviet-supported state of North Vietnam defeated South Vietnam in 1975 and, once reunited, Vietnam went on to invade Kampuchea, a Chinese ally, in 1978. The impact of the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea spurred conflicting claims over maritime zones among the states of South East Asia. Through the FPDA Australia was to indicate its interest in continued peaceful cooperation between

¹²² US Archives File POL AUSTL-US Memorandum of Conversation dated July 16 1970 Department of State, Subject: The US in South East Asia (attendees: Secretary of State William Rogers, Gough Whitlam, leader of Australian opposition)

¹²³ P Ayres *Malcolm Fraser: A Biography*. (Richmond: William Heinemann Australia, 1987) p 397

Malaysia and Singapore.¹²⁴ In 1972 Australia asserted that, as the replacement of AMDA by the FPDA provided ‘continuity’ of Commonwealth presence, the FPDA had ‘probably’ helped to ensure that Malaysia and Singapore did not turn to ‘more extreme’ options to ensure their security.¹²⁵ Although the ‘extreme options’ remained undefined in the Review, the dynamic of the Cold War points towards the possible turning to either China or the Soviet Union by one or both states. The FPDA did contribute towards reducing the opportunity for Sino-Soviet competition for influence from becoming an additional irritant in the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral relationship. With the defeat of South Vietnam by the North in 1975, there were fears both in Australia and within ASEAN that a newly reunited Vietnam, with its experienced military and support from Moscow, would seek to destabilise ASEAN. The presence of the FPDA helped to reduce the influence of the Sino-Soviet rivalry in Malaysia and Singapore. Both the Soviet Union and China indicated their quiet support for the presence of the Arrangements. China and the Soviet Union both viewed the FPDA as a way to limit their rival’s influence. Chou En-lai of China had, in discussions with Tan Sri Raja Mohar of Malaysia in 1972, indicated that China had no objection to the FPDA because it helped to limit Russian influence in the region. Moscow had also reassured Kuala Lumpur that the USSR viewed Malaysia as genuinely neutral and had no issues with the FPDA. Malaysia understood the reason for this lack of issue to be similar to China’s, that is, that the FPDA helped limit Beijing’s influence in the region.¹²⁶

The US has supported the Australian presence and activities in Malaysia and Singapore under the FPDA and has shown concern whenever Australia looked like it might reduce its commitment. This was seen in two significant situations: Prime Minister Whitlam’s decision to withdraw Australia’s ANZUK forces in the mid-1970s

¹²⁴ Defence Committee Paper “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK*

¹²⁵ Though the Committee did acknowledge that finding demonstrable proof of this was hard. Defence Committee Paper “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p4

¹²⁶ Inward cable 3629 from Australian High Commission Malaysia dated 13.12.72 re five power and Rowland’s final talk with Tun Razak on 13 Dec in NAA: A1838/369, 696/1/23 PART 4, *Five power arrangements – Malaysia’s attitude to the five power arrangements*

and Prime Minister Hawke's decision to withdraw the permanent detachment of RAAF fighters and Butterworth in the late 1980s and replace them with a rotating deployment of fighters. The United States indicated significant concern that the Whitlam government would withdraw from Australia's overseas obligations. On 22 December 1972, Prime Minister Whitlam confirmed his government's intentions to reduce Australia's military contribution under the FPDA while also stating that Australia would stand by its overseas obligations.¹²⁷ Nevertheless, the US government undertook through internal studies and bilateral meetings to encourage the Australia presence in Malaysia and Singapore. The US was not entirely confident that Whitlam understood that Australian interests required a healthy US-Australia defence relationship. In 1973, a significant US objective for a meeting between Prime Minister Whitlam and President Richard Nixon was to stress that the US saw Australia's continued participation in the FPDA as important.¹²⁸ By 1974, President Nixon directed the US government to examine the impact of Whitlam's Labor government on US policy objectives towards Australia in the political-security area, including the prospects for increasing divergence between Australian and US policy in Asia and how best to reduce the potential for damage to their relations.¹²⁹ There were polite suggestions made by the US regarding Australia's need to remain engaged with South East Asia. In a 1974 meeting with President Nixon stressed that Sukarno had come very close to being successful in remaining in control of Indonesia in 1965-1966 and the pressure that would've placed on Australia.¹³⁰

The US indicated the same level of concern in the late 1980s when Washington believed Australia was pulling away from the FPDA. The 1986 Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities stated that the Arrangements "...reflect the concerns of a

¹²⁷ A Benvenuti and M Jones. "Engaging South East Asia? Labor's Regional Mythology and Australia's Military Withdrawal from Singapore and Malaysia 1972-1973" *Journal of Cold War Studies* 12, no. 4, (Fall 2010) p 48

¹²⁸ US Archives File POL – 7 Whitlam Visit (2) Memorandum for the President from the Secretary of State (William Rogers) Subject: your meeting with PM Whitlam July 30 1973

¹²⁹ *U.S. Policy toward Australia*, Secret, National Security Study Memorandum, NSSM 204, July 1 1974, 2 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR01266

¹³⁰ *President's Meeting with Australian Prime Minister Whitlam [Attached to Cover Memorandum Dated October 7, 1974]* Secret, Memorandum of Conversation, October 5 1974, 9pp. Kissinger Transcripts, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. KT01350

previous era...” and had political rather than military relevance.¹³¹ This was met with concern from the US. After the release of the Review, Washington sought assurances from Canberra that Australia was not going to abandon the FPDA.¹³² The Australian decision to replace the permanent RAAF detachment with rotating deployments was also met with dismay by the Americans. Prime Minister Hawke was required to reassure the US that withdrawing the permanent air force presence at Butterworth did not mean Australia was walking away from the FPDA.¹³³ While the Arrangements were not a central part of the San Francisco system of alliances in the Asia-Pacific, the US expected that Australia maintain its FPDA commitments.

The archival sources do not indicate the degree and nature of possible support the US was willing to provide to Australia in the event of a serious threat to the security of Malaysia and Singapore by an outside power. In 1971 Washington understood that Australia would look to allied support in the event of a crisis in maritime South East Asia that was beyond Australia’s capacity to handle.¹³⁴ The US viewed the FPDA as the most prominent example of Australia and New Zealand security role in South East Asia and surmised that Australia’s continued participation depended upon positive Australia-Indonesia relations, the absence of communal strife in Malaysia and Australia’s continuing (but unconfirmed) expectation that the US would “in extremis” support Australia’s in Malaysia and Singapore.¹³⁵ However, it was US policy to not be involved with the FPDA or indicate any US commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore.¹³⁶ Prior to the creation of the FPDA, Washington had informed Australia that the US did not interpret its ANZUS commitment as

¹³¹ P Dibb. *Review of Australia's defence capabilities: report to the minister of defence*. (Canberra, Australian Government Publishing Service 1986) p 48

¹³² Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

¹³³ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

¹³⁴ US Archives File POL 1 AUSTL-US No A-32 Department of State Airgram “Australia – Annual US Policy Assessment” date: February 8 1971

¹³⁵ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹³⁶ *Report on NSSM 110 Follow-on (Proposals for a U.S. Naval Presence in the Indian Ocean for FY 1972) [Includes Report]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 110 Related, June 16 1971, 33 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00686

extending to Australian and New Zealand forces in Malaysia and Singapore.¹³⁷ The driving force behind the US approach was a belief that any increased US involvement with the creation of the FPDA could lead to a complete British withdrawal from the region and the American subsidizing of Australia and New Zealand defence, which would be counter to the Nixon Doctrine.¹³⁸ Nevertheless, the US did not completely rule out American assistance to Australia in Malaysia and Singapore. In 1967 Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Samuel Berger informed Australian Ambassador Waller that US would maintain close consultations with Australia concerning commitments made to Malaysia Singapore and any Australian deployments outside the Malay peninsula, such as East Malaysia. In the event of a threat to Australian forces in Malaysia-Singapore, both the US and the Australian governments would jointly and carefully consider what the response would be.¹³⁹ In this approach, there is at least a tacit US recognition from the start of the Arrangements that they might be called on to provide support for Australia in Malaysia and Singapore and this was not ruled out.

Military Commitment

In the realm of harder edge military contribution, Australia intended the FPDA to provide a tangible display of collective Western interest in Malaysia and Singapore. The FPDA framework provided the basis for an extended Australian, British and New Zealand military presence in Malaysia and Singapore. This military presence proved to be invaluable to Australia in two significant ways. The first was that the FPDA helped to contribute to Australian intelligence gathering activities targeting the Soviet presence in maritime South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. This allowed Australia to

¹³⁷ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹³⁸ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

¹³⁹ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

contribute to its own strategic interests as well as those of the United States. The second was the improvement of Malaysian and Singaporean joint defence capabilities. This was not an easy task due to the mutual distrust between the two states, as discussed earlier in this chapter.

Extra-regional powers

In the 1980s the Soviet Union was perceived by Australia as considering South East Asia as a low risk way to bolster the view of the Soviet Union as a global power.¹⁴⁰ The Soviet base at Vietnam's Cam Ranh Bay gave the Soviet Navy a regional base of operations. This enabled the Soviet Union to support their naval operations in the Indian Ocean as well as counter the American presence at Subic Bay in the Philippines.¹⁴¹ Vietnam also played a part in Sino-Soviet rivalry. Vietnam and the Soviet Union signed a mutual security agreement in 1978, shortly before Vietnam invaded Chinese-supported Kampuchea. During Sino-Vietnamese war in 1979, the Soviet Union sent naval forces from its Far East bases into the South China Sea.¹⁴² Cam Ranh Bay provided a base for the Soviet Union to operate on China's maritime flank.

During the 1970s and 1980s the Soviet navy was particularly active in maritime South East Asia. In addition to the instability caused by local communist groups and states, there was an increase in Soviet activity in South East Asia. The Soviet Navy was beginning to make its presence felt in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. Most ASEAN states had negative reaction when USSR requested port calls by Soviet Pacific Fleet in 1979 and in 1980 a Soviet aircraft carrier group sailed into the Gulf of

¹⁴⁰ P Dobb, "The Interests of the Soviet Union in the Region: Implications for Regional Security" in *International Security in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Region* (ed TB Millar) (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983) p 52

¹⁴¹ EJ Marolda. "Wall of steel: sea power and the Cold War in Asia". *Maritime Power in the 20th Century: The Australian Experience*. (ed D. Stevens) (Sydney, Allen & Unwin, 1998) p 182

¹⁴² EJ Marolda. "Wall of steel: sea power and the Cold War in Asia" p 182

Siam.¹⁴³ The activities of the powerful Soviet navy into South East Asia and Soviet fishing fleets in South East Asia and the South Pacific in the 1970s and 1980s were of particular concern to Australia.¹⁴⁴ A 1982 US assessment considered the Soviet signals intelligence complex at Cam Ranh Bay in Vietnam to be one of the largest in the world outside the Soviet Union.¹⁴⁵ The US was concerned that that Soviet ships operating from bases in Vietnam might be able to deter US intervention in support of Western-friendly ASEAN governments against communist-backed insurgencies.¹⁴⁶ Control of South East Asia would threaten Western interests in Japan, Korea and Australia. During the Cold War, the US viewed ASEAN as an important player due to South East Asia's strategic location on sea lanes of communication between Japan and its energy suppliers in the Middle East.¹⁴⁷

Australia's membership in the FPDA provided Australia with the opportunity to gather intelligence on Soviet naval activities in South East Asia and the Indian Ocean. Australia, alongside the UK and New Zealand, had been cooperating with the US to monitor Russian naval activity in the Indian Ocean since 1971, and Australia independently undertaking responsibility for the air and naval surveillance of north-eastern sector of the Indian Ocean.¹⁴⁸ Australia's ability to fly in and out of Malaysia through the FPDA framework contributed to Australia's ability to collect intelligence on Soviet naval movements from at least 1971 until the end of the Cold War. The Royal Australian Air Force initially began flying maritime patrol aircraft out of

¹⁴³ P Dibb, "The Interests of the Soviet Union in the Region: Implications for Regional Security" in *International Security in the Southeast Asian and Southwest Pacific Region* (ed TB Millar) (St Lucia: University of Queensland Press, 1983) p 60

¹⁴⁴ For further details on Soviet fishing activities and concerns, see Robert Ayson. *Activities of the Soviet Fishing Fleet: Implications for Australia*. Working Paper 170. Australian National University October 1988

¹⁴⁵ AD Muraviev. *The Russian Pacific Fleet: From the Crimean War to Perestroika*. Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs no. 20. Canberra: Sea Power Centre Australia, Department of Defence, 2007, p 35

¹⁴⁶ SW Simon, "Explaining American Security Interests in South East Asia" p 28

¹⁴⁷ J Camilleri. *The Australia New Zealand US Alliance: Regional Security in the Nuclear Age*. (Boulder: Westview Press 1987) p 41

¹⁴⁸ *NSSM 127 Study: Australian [sic] and New Zealand [Includes Study]* Secret, Cover Memorandum, NSSM 127 Related, August 24 1971, 90 pp. Presidential Directives, Part II, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. PR00728

Butterworth on an ad hoc basis in 1974.¹⁴⁹ The ability for Australia to operate out of Malaysia and Singapore was recognised at the highest levels. In 1976, US President Gerald Ford indicated to Prime Minister Malcolm Fraser that the US wanted to maintain close cooperation with Australia on surveillance flights by Lockheed P-3 Orion maritime surveillance aircraft over the Indian Ocean and assist Singapore with surveillance flights as well.¹⁵⁰ In 1980, Australian and Malaysia governments agreed that Orion surveillance aircraft flying out of Butterworth should monitor Soviet and other naval activity in the South China Sea and the Bay of Bengal.¹⁵¹ A detachment of Australian P3 Orion surveillance aircraft was established at Butterworth in 1982. These aircraft had a dual purpose. The first was that Australia provided training in maritime surveillance to Malaysia and Singapore under the FPDA framework.¹⁵² The second purpose was surveillance of Soviet naval activity in the region. The planes at Butterworth patrolled the South China Sea and eastern Indian Ocean where Soviet ships based in Vietnam operated.¹⁵³ Australia has maintained its intelligence gathering operations off the Malay peninsula through Operation Gateway, which commenced in 1981. Operation Gateway was an intelligence gathering operation with the objective of conducting maritime surveillance patrols of the Northern Indian Ocean and the South China Sea. P-3 Orion maritime patrol aircraft were permitted to fly out of Butterworth in Malaysia. During the Cold War, these flights helped to gather intelligence on Soviet ship movements in South East Asia.¹⁵⁴ Without the FPDA and the access the Arrangements provided to the Malay peninsula and the history of Australian involvement in the region, it was highly unlikely that Kuala Lumpur would have allowed Australia to operate Operation Gateway out of Malaysia.¹⁵⁵

¹⁴⁹ This ad hoc situation changed in 1982 to a permanent commitment of RAAF P-3 Orion aircraft and crews at Butterworth. A.Crowe. *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*. (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Konta Sdn Berhad, 2001) p 28

¹⁵⁰ *Discussion with Malcolm Fraser and Gerald Ford*, Secret, Memorandum of Conversation, July 27 1976, 9 pp. Kissinger Transcripts, US Digital National Security Archives, Item no. KT01997

¹⁵¹ J Camilleri. *The Australia New Zealand US Alliance: Regional Security in the Nuclear Age*. (Boulder: Westview Press 1987) p 80

¹⁵² Crowe p 28

¹⁵³ Dibb, "The Interests of the Soviet Union in the Region: Implications for Regional Security" p 60

¹⁵⁴ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

¹⁵⁵ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

Australia's intelligence gathering was recognised by the US as contributing to American interests in the region. The Vietnamese invasion of Kampuchea renewed Australian interest in the FPDA.¹⁵⁶ This renewed interest was made manifest through increased surveillance flights and exercising with friendly forces in and around the region.¹⁵⁷ By 1981 the air and naval focus of the Arrangements was viewed as a very useful addition, alongside the US bases in the Philippines, to the establishment of a Soviet naval base at Cam Ranh Bay and a Soviet air base at Da Nang in Vietnam.¹⁵⁸ In addition, Australian surveillance flight operations were 'routinely' coordinated with the US Navy and this added to the signals intelligence capabilities of Australia and New Zealand.¹⁵⁹ Through the FPDA, Australia could provide additional support to its own intelligence capabilities as well as those of its allies.

Australia's withdrawal of its contribution to the ANZUK forces by 1975 did create some concern among its FPDA allies as well as Indonesia and the US but did not significantly damage confidence in the FPDA. The 1972 Review indicated that the Australian force was never intended to remain unchanged in composition or remain permanently based in Malaysia and Singapore, and that the size of the Australian forces themselves demonstrated Australia's expectation that they would probably not become involved in significant military operations.¹⁶⁰ Australia had identified in 1972 that Malaysia and Singapore had obtained some reassurance from the FPDA and the presence of the ANZUK forces, though Malaysia is somewhat less reassured than Singapore as about 80 per cent of the ANZUK force and its HQ is located in Singapore.¹⁶¹ The paper points out that the fact that Malaysia is less reassured does go against one of Australia's objectives behind the Arrangements, which was to provide

¹⁵⁶ Smith, Hugh. "Defence Policy" in *Independence and Alliance: Australia in World Affairs 1976-80* (ed. PJ Boyce and JR Angel, JR) (Sydney: George Allen & Unwin, 1983) p 49

¹⁵⁷ D Sherwood. *The Navy and National Security: The Peacetime Dimension*. (Canberra, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU, 1994) p 51

¹⁵⁸ PL Young, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements—A Review" *Asian Defence Journal* May 1997 p 5

¹⁵⁹ A Burnett. *The A-New Zealand-US Triangle*. (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre Australian National University, 1988) p 119

¹⁶⁰ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 2-3

¹⁶¹ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 4

reassurance to Malaysia in particular.¹⁶² Although the ANZUK forces were withdrawn, Australia maintained its air force contribution to the FPDA. Australia retained two squadrons of Royal Australian Air Force Mirage fighter jets at Butterworth, along with an Australian infantry company to protect the squadrons from attacks by Communist Party of Malaysia insurgents.¹⁶³ The two squadrons remained at Butterworth until replaced by rotating deployments of RAAF fighters in 1986.

Australian intelligence gathering in the Indian Ocean was not completely reliant on its membership in the FPDA. Australian policymakers recognised in the early 1970s that a lack of access to facilities in South East Asia would not hamper their surveillance capability in the Indian Ocean because Australia could use just as easily access this area using facilities on the Australian mainland and the Cocos and Christmas islands.¹⁶⁴ The contribution of the Arrangements was that they provided Australia with the capacity to be militarily operational on the Malaysian peninsula, thanks to the access to Butterworth.¹⁶⁵

Exercises and training

The FPDA contributed towards building the capabilities of both Malaysia and Singapore in joint defence. The improvement of Malaysian and Singaporean capabilities under the FPDA umbrella was a slow process. Part of this was due to the low level aerial capabilities possessed by both the Malaysian and Singaporean defence forces in the early 1970s. A further reason was the need for the FPDA to create standard operating procedures for all members that emphasised both interoperability and the indivisibility of peninsular defence. The improvement of capabilities and the

¹⁶² Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 4

¹⁶³ Huxley, "South East Asia and Australia's Security" 1974 p 40

¹⁶⁴ Report by Joint Planning Committee at Meeting on 18 August 1972 JSD no 47/1972, Report no. 22/1972, JPC Sec Note no. 6/1972, "Defence Implications for Australia of the Neutralisation of South East Asia", NAA: A7942/1 S192 *Neutralisation of South East Asia and implications for Australia*

¹⁶⁵ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

creation of standardised operating procedures was further impeded because Malaysia and Singapore were slow to embrace the concept of the indivisibility of their defence as a result of mutual distrust.

The 1972 Review stated that the FPDA was intended to “...to provide a basis from which [Australia] could act to help upgrade the capabilities of Malaysian and Singaporean forces by [Australia’s] participating with them in training programmes and combined exercises...”¹⁶⁶ The FPDA was intended to act as a channel through which Australia could contribute to Malaysia and Singapore’s operational capabilities to their own defence. There was recognition on the part of policymakers in Canberra that the Australian military required the experience of operating in the South East Asian environment, participating in exercises with regional armed forces and for Australia to demonstrate a high standard of military proficiency.¹⁶⁷ The Arrangements have allowed Australia to conduct and participate in exercises in “a region of interest” that it would normally not be able to access.¹⁶⁸

Developing the operational capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore took place slowly for a couple of reasons. The first was the initial low level of capabilities and equipment of both sides in the 1970s. In 1970, Singapore was unable to provide a ship for *Exercise Bersatu Padu* and in 1971 Malaysia and Singapore were unable to fill operational positions in IADS headquarters.¹⁶⁹ In the first decade, constraints imposed by poor communications, poor radar coverage and a lack of standard operating procedures made the creation of exercises very difficult.¹⁷⁰ An annual report by the British Defence Attaché in Malaysia in 1977 stated that the UK did not consider that

¹⁶⁶ Defence Committee Paper “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 1-2

¹⁶⁷ R O’Neill. “Diplomacy and Defence” in *Agenda for the eighties: contexts of Australian choices in foreign and defence policy*. (ed C Bell) (Canberra: Australian National University Press, 1980) p 60

¹⁶⁸ A Bergin “The Five Power Defence Arrangements.” In *Asia Pacific’s security dilemma: Multilateral relations amidst political, social and economic changes*, (ed Anthony Baginda) (Kuala Lumpur: ASEAN Academic Press, 1998) p 80

¹⁶⁹ Crowe p 37

¹⁷⁰ Crowe p 20

Malay officers had the necessary skills for counter-insurgency, although they ‘excelled’ in ceremonial duties.¹⁷¹

Another significant issue was the fractious bilateral relationship between Malaysia and Singapore. Although the FPDA Communiqué publicly defined the defence of Malaysia and Singapore as ‘indivisible,’ privately not all of the signatories agreed. Australia understood from the beginning just how difficult it would be to get Malaysia and Singapore to work together, as per this statement from 1972:

It is to be recognised, nevertheless, that neither country [ie Malaysia or Singapore] really believes in the concept of the “indivisibility” of Malaysian and Singaporean defence; that each tends to see two Four Power arrangements (itself plus the ANZUK countries) rather than a single Five Power system; and that each would prefer – indeed has worked or is working towards – a situation in which the external powers tacitly, if not explicitly, become selectively and preferentially committed to itself at the expense of the other.¹⁷²

The multilateral exercises needed to accommodate Malaysian and Singaporean sensitivities. From the outset Malaysia expressed to IADS that exercises should not have Singapore in an attack role against Malaysia or vice versa as this was politically unacceptable to Malaysia and would create serious problems in IADS.¹⁷³ Having an Australian as Commander IADS was necessary to ensure the functioning of the FPDA. In 1977, the British Foreign Office mooted the possibility of having a

¹⁷¹ Annual report from the UK Defence Advisor Malaysia June 76-June 77 dated July 1977 by Col WJCG Copinger-Symes – distributed to British defence staff in Australia, NZ, Singapore, Thailand, Indonesia, HK, FCO, MoD – it states that the report has been read and approved by the High Commissioner. The National Archives (UK) DEFE 71/139 *British Defence Liaison Staff: periodic reports; USA, Cyprus, Ghana, Kenya, Malaysia 1977 Jan 01 - 1977 Dec 31*

¹⁷² Defence Committee Paper “Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements” dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 5

¹⁷³ Outward cablegram to Australia High Commissions in Singapore and Kuala Lumpur dated 28 February 1972 “IADS” NAA: A1209/58 1971/9495 *The Five Power Defence Arrangements for Malaysia and Singapore, 1971 policy*

Malaysian or Singaporean head of IADS, only to have it unequivocally rejected by the British High Commission in Malaysia. The British High Commission stated that the idea indicated...

...a disregard of reality bordering on the incredible. Except when they are jollied into it by the IADS, the Malaysian and Singaporean air forces have nothing to do with each other. [The British defence attaché] cannot believe that either Government [ie of Singapore or Malaysia] would accept a Commander of the IADS from the other, but if this happened the result would be a complete collapse of the System within about six months.¹⁷⁴

The British were also very aware of how both Malaysia and Singapore viewed opportunities to train or garner equipment and benefits from the ANZUK powers as an almost zero-sum gain, despite the “indivisibility” of their defence. British policymakers recognised in 1972 that the stationing of air and naval forces in Singapore would make the island state look like the pre-Singapore independence British naval base. The British saw the colonial elements of this policy as likely to upset both Malaysia and Singapore and, even worse, require the UK to provide reinforcements and possible additional commitments and military technology to Malaysia.¹⁷⁵

Australian policymakers also intended the existence of the FPDA to influence both Malaysia and Singapore against purchasing weapons systems that they could not afford. The FPDA was intended to supplement the forces of Malaysia and Singapore so that both states would not feel the need to spend money on expensive, modern

¹⁷⁴ Letter dated 24 June 1977 from Sir Eric Norris, British High Commission KL to DF Murray, Foreign & Commonwealth Office London in The National Archives (UK), FCO 46/1441 “Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA): Air Defence Council, exercises involving the RAF and Integrated Air Defence System (IADS)” 1977 Jan 01 - 1977 Dec 31 DPG 73/2

¹⁷⁵ FCO letter “Future of the FPDA” dated 19 April 1972 in The National Archives (UK) FCO 24/1302, FW 10/28 PART A

weaponry.¹⁷⁶ The FPDA had mixed success in this regard. The 1972 Review considered that the FPDA has had minimal influence on the naval policies of Malaysia and Singapore. For Malaysia, the ANZUK forces might have some effect discouraging Malaysia from future force build ups. Singapore was seen as unlikely to obtain the naval capabilities of the ANZUK force even if it were withdrawn, but its presence negates the need for Singapore to look to another country, such as the Soviet Union, to replace it.¹⁷⁷ The FPDA was determined to have had no effect on Malaysia and Singapore's thoughts regarding the development of their respective armies.¹⁷⁸

The FPDA exercise and training program was successful despite these issues. This can be seen from the evolution of the exercise program between 1971 and the late 1980s. In the first decade the focus of the exercises was on basic skills development due to the low level of skills of the Malaysian and Singaporean air forces.¹⁷⁹ Australian and British personnel However, by 1981 FPDA activities included major and minor air exercises, an annual naval exercise—called *Stardex*—and an annual land exercise.¹⁸⁰ By the late 1980s the situation had changed considerably. Most of the British, Australian and New Zealand forces were gone from Malaysia and Singapore. However, IADS had received a significant upgrade in computer and communications systems and the training program was formalised through a new Air Defence Operations Centre.¹⁸¹

¹⁷⁶ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p1-2

¹⁷⁷ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 6

¹⁷⁸ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 6

¹⁷⁹ Crowe p 20

¹⁸⁰ Crowe p 27

¹⁸¹ Crowe p 34

Conclusion

Between 1971 and the late 1980s, the FPDA successfully met the original expectations of Australian policymakers in both the diplomatic and military spheres of defence engagement. On a diplomatic level, the Arrangements successfully provided Australia with an additional framework for defence engagement with its key regional allies Malaysia and Singapore as well as the United Kingdom and the United States. Through this framework, Australia successfully provided a sense of continuity in its interest in the stability and security of South East Asia, while also indicating that its activities had the support of key extra-regional allies as well as Malaysia and Singapore. On a military level, Australia's commitment of defence force equipment and personnel to the FPDA helped to improve the interoperability of the Malaysian and Singaporean defence forces, in particular their navies and air forces. The FPDA also provided Australia with the opportunity to operate in South East Asia during the Cold War, allowing the country to gather intelligence both for itself and to contribute to the wider Western action against communism. What now remains to be discussed is whether the original expectations of Australian policymakers still held true as new strategic paradigms evolved out of the end of the Cold War, or if the Arrangements were able to adjust to meet new challenges and new Australian requirements. These factors will be discussed in Chapter Six.

Chapter Six – Remaining relevant in changing times: the late 1980s to 2010

When thou hast done, thou hast not done, For I have more. - John Donne

Chapter Five analysed how the Five Power Defence Arrangements had met initial Australian expectations in the first two decades of their existence. This chapter will shift the focus from meeting expectations to exceeding them. The FPDA has made contributions to Australian strategic interests that were not anticipated by those policymakers who negotiated the Arrangements between 1967 and 1971. This was unexpected as regional and global politics had evolved since the FPDA was created. Malaysian and Singaporean defence capabilities had improved significantly since the early 1970s. The end of the Cold War removed the US-USSR rivalry from South East Asia and ASEAN expanded its membership to include all the remaining states of the region by 2000. Based on these changes, one can argue that the FPDA would no longer be required and Australia would lose a small but important connection with South East Asia. However, this did not happen. Instead, the FPDA has made unexpected contributions across several areas of interest to Australian strategic policy makers between the late 1980s and 2010. The FPDA continued to make a positive contribution to Australia's defence relations with its allies, to the point where states in the region look upon the Arrangements as a source of confidence. The Arrangements have allowed Australia to involve other states in Australia's strategic objectives and strengthen its relations with allies to better counter potential and emerging threats. Australia's central role in the FPDA between 1971 and the late 1980s began to pay dividends between the late 1980s and 2010, helping to strengthen Australian links with the region and key allies while improving the capabilities of the Australian Defence Force.

Diplomatic Commitment

Malaysia-Singapore

Originally anticipated to be of short duration, the Five Power Defence Arrangements have remained a consistent and lasting defence link between Malaysia and Singapore. The Arrangements have undergone significant upgrades between the late 1980s and 2010, which were supported by all five members. The Arrangements have been an important additional avenue for the engagement of Malaysia and Singapore on collective security issues. This has been of particular importance as Malaysia and Singapore have failed to create significant bilateral defence ties during the time period covered by this study.

The FPDA evolved and expanded between the late 1980s and 2010 to become an important avenue for discussion of Malaysia-Singapore collective security issues. This is evident from the increased meeting activity at higher government levels among all five members and the increased complexity of the FPDA framework. As discussed in Chapter Five, under the 1971 FPDA Communiqué the Arrangements consisted of a Joint Consultative Council, an Air Defence Council, and IADS. The Joint Consultative Council was the most senior and the least active of the three. By the late 1980s, this had begun to change. In 1988, the member defence ministers decided that the defence chiefs of the member states would meet ever two years and the defence ministers would meet every three years.¹ The first FPDA Defence Ministers' Meeting (FDMM) was held in 1990 in Kuala Lumpur and was the beginning of regular meetings by the FPDA defence ministers. One focus of that meeting was improving the exercise program with more focus on joint exercises.² This was expressed in the back-to-back air and naval exercises that took place in 1991.

¹ A Crowe. *The 5 Power Defence Arrangements*. (Kuala Lumpur: Percetakan Konta Sdn Berhad, 2001) p 36

² Crowe p 39

The FPDA structure underwent further changes in the mid-1990s. At the 1994 FDMM, the participants agreed to revise the decision-making structure of the FPDA to maintain the effectiveness of the Arrangements, improve the decision-making process and better co-ordinate activities held under the FPDA.³ This resulted in a significant change to the FPDA organisational structure, as the Joint Consultative Council and the Air Defence Council were replaced by the FPDA Consultative Council (FCC). The purpose of the FCC was to increase the efficiency of IADS and to expand the scope and increase the sophistication of the exercises.⁴ The FCC is the third main structure in the FPDA and consists of biannual meetings in which the chair rotates between Malaysia and Singapore. FCC meetings are co-chaired by the Secretary General for Defence Malaysia and the Permanent Secretary for Defence Singapore, with the High Commissioners and Defence Advisors of the UK, Australia and New Zealand also in attendance. The FCC is responsible for policy, planning and budget. The FPDA Defence Chiefs Conference (FDCC) is the next senior body under the FDMM, meets annually with the Commander IADS (CIADS) and is responsible for the FPDA's military activities. The FDCC provides advice to the FDMM and, since 2002, meetings of the FDCC coincide with the annual Shangri-La Dialogue held in Singapore.⁵ The biannual FPDA Activities Coordination Council (FACC) is composed of defence force representatives from IADS and all member states. The FACC is responsible for implementing decision of the FCC and reporting back on a regular basis, and is also responsible for the FPDA Working Groups.⁶ The final piece of the FPDA structure is the FPDA Professional Forum. An annual seminar that first appeared in 1997, the FPDA Professional Forum is hosted alternately by Malaysia and Singapore and co-hosted by one of the three remaining members. Its participants are primarily drawn from the middle officer ranks of its members.⁷

³ Hashim bin Mohammed Amin, "Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Model for Co-Operative Arrangements of Future Armies - An Assessment," in *The Future Battlefield*, (ed JM Malik) (Geelong: Deakin University Press, 1997) p 273

⁴ Crowe p 42

⁵ C Thayer "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1 (February 2007) p 84

⁶ These working groups address issues and shortcomings around day to day FPDA activities, such as logistics, communications and policies. Michael Crossman "Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA)." Canberra: Department of Defence ASEAN Division, 15 October 2003

⁷ C Thayer "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1 (February 2007) p 84

The new FPDA structures were not immune to friction between Malaysia and Singapore but did provide an additional avenue through which to address problems between the two states. In one example, the Asian Financial Crisis in 1997-98 precipitated a period of tension between Malaysia and Singapore. During the Crisis, Malaysia rejected Singapore's offer of financial assistance for its struggling economy and decided to significantly increase the price for supplying water to Singapore over the long-term.⁸ Increasing tensions between the two states resulted in the cancellation of FPDA exercises in 1998 and Malaysia's revocation of the right of the Singapore Air Force to use Malaysian airspace.⁹ The cancellation of the FPDA exercises did raise concerns in Australia regarding long-term prospects for the Arrangements. While the FPDA members were not able to prevent the cancellation of the 1998 exercises, the CIADS, Air Vice Marshal Houston, took a significant role in developing a paper on the future direction of the Arrangements. Under the framework available to CIADS Houston, a new policy paper on the future of the FPDA—known as Version 10—was developed. The framework allowed for extensive consultation as well as individual and collective briefings at senior government levels. Version 10 had the broad agreement of all members.¹⁰ Version 10 was a response to an emphasis among the members that there was a need “to widen the scope of operational activities to become more combined and joint.”¹¹ Among the approaches considered were that all major FPDA exercises from 2002 would be joint and involve navy, army and air force elements, while the exercises themselves would be less structured and more flexible.¹² The paper also indicated that an important consideration in the development of the FPDA was to maintain the Arrangements' sensitivity to Malaysian, Singaporean and regional concerns and that IADS' focus on air defence made a substantial contribution

⁸ Ooi Keat Gin “Politics Divided: Malaysia-Singapore Relations” In *Across the Causeway* (ed T Shiraishi) (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2009) p 46

⁹ ATH Tan “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance.” *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008) p 291

¹⁰ Houston, Air Chief Marshal Angus. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 7 August.

¹¹ Executive Summary “The future of the FPDA Operational Arrangements” Version 10 paragraph 1, part of Michael Crossman “Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA).” Canberra: Department of Defence ASEAN Division, 15 October 2003

¹² Executive Summary “The future of the FPDA Operational Arrangements” Version 10 paragraph 7

to the FPDA deterrent posture.¹³ FPDA exercises developed in complexity after the release of Version 10, as will be seen later in this chapter. The unanimous support for Version 10 thus indicates that Malaysia and Singapore still wished the FPDA to continue despite their bilateral differences. Commentators have correctly viewed the FPDA as a networking mechanism between the Malaysia and Singapore militaries and that the Arrangements provide a “shared sense of strategic purpose” through the multilateral exercises and the political and military discussions undertaken through the FPDA framework.¹⁴

The networking mechanism provided by the Arrangements has been all the more important as Malaysia and Singapore have failed to develop meaningful bilateral defence links outside of the FPDA. Malaysian and Singaporean mutual suspicion has helped to ensure that no bilateral defence framework of any substance was formed between the two countries during the time of this study. Outside of the FPDA, the Malaysian and Singaporean militaries rarely worked with one another and those bilateral defence links that did exist were often adversely affected or terminated by political disagreements. Between 1971 and 2010, the three bilateral defence links that did exist between Malaysia and Singapore were: the Singapore-Malaysia Defence Forum; the *Semangat Bersatu* army exercise; and the *Malapura* naval exercise.¹⁵ The Singapore-Malaysia Defence Forum was created in 1995 but lapsed after its second meeting in 1996.¹⁶ The *Malapura* naval exercise was first conducted in 1984 and *Semangat Bersatu* army exercise was first conducted in 1989. These were as annual exercises, although there were years when they were not held.¹⁷ In 1999, thirty-four

¹³ Executive Summary “The future of the FPDA Operational Arrangements” Version 10 paragraph 4

¹⁴ Thayer “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever” p 93 and D Bristow. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: South East Asia’s unknown regional security organisation”, *Contemporary South East Asia* 27, no 1 (April 2005) p 11

¹⁵ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City: the Armed Forces of Singapore*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 2000) p 213

¹⁶ C Thayer. *Security Relations. Across the Causeway*. (ed T Shiraishi) (Singapore: Institute of South East Asian Studies, 2009) p 170

¹⁷ First conducted in 1989, the 16th bilateral *Exercise Semangat Bersatu* occurred from 16-25 June 2010, indicating that five joint exercises did not occur in the 21 year history of *Semangat Bersatu*. (http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news_and_events/nr/2010/jun/25jun10_nr.html accessed 19 June 2010) With regards to naval exercises, the 22 February-March 4 2010 saw the 20th *Ex Malapura* since the bilateral exercises were created in 1984. This indicates that there were 6 years in which the exercises were not held.

years after the split between Malaysia and Singapore, the most substantial recorded bilateral contact between both armed forces was a golf game between teams of Malaysian and Singaporean senior officers.¹⁸ By 2000, Huxley noted that, from time to time Malaysia and Singapore would raise the idea of creating additional bilateral defence links only to see these proposals fail due to the underlying distrust between both countries.¹⁹

The evidence of the previous paragraphs vitiates the argument—advanced by Heron and raised in Chapter Two—that the existence of the FPDA had somehow prevented Malaysia and Singapore from developing substantial bilateral defence links.²⁰ This is not the case. Bilateral defence relationships between neighbouring states can be generated under an overarching multilateral framework.²¹ Australia and the US have a strong bilateral defence link under the ANZUS umbrella. However, there is doubt as to whether Malaysia and Singapore, if left to their own devices, would have developed any significant bilateral defence ties with each other. In 1972, Australian policymakers correctly took the position that Malaysia and Singapore were very unlikely to create their own bilateral defence cooperation links in the absence of the FPDA.²² Almost thirty years later, Crowe argues that ongoing tensions between the two states made it unlike that Malaysia and Singapore could have developed strong bilateral defence relations.²³ For Malaysia and Singapore to forge meaningful defence ties would have required that both states shed the entrenched suspicions that saw them identify one another as possible threats to their own security. As they have been reluctant to do this, Malaysia and Singapore's bilateral defence links with one another outside the FPDA relationship have remained weak. The FPDA was the primary

(http://www.mindef.gov.sg/imindef/news_and_events/nr/2010/feb/22feb10_nr.html accessed 19 July 2010)

¹⁸ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City* p 213

¹⁹ T Huxley. *Defending the Lion City* p 213

²⁰ M Heron. "A Sub-Regional Security System for Southeast Asia." *Australian Defence Force Journal* 135 (1999) p 20

²¹ The creation of NORAD by Canada and the United States occurred in the 1950s despite the existing NATO framework, while Australia and New Zealand forged closer defence ties outside of the ANZUS treaty.

²² Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p 5

²³ Crowe p 23-24

framework for defence engagement between Malaysia and Singapore during the period of this study.

ASEAN

The FPDA provided some unexpected benefits in Australia's relationship with ASEAN. The Arrangements became a consistent and lasting demonstration of Australia's active interest in the security of South East Asia. The continued existence of the FPDA was welcomed in part because ASEAN failed to come up with a truly effective regional security arrangement between the late 1980s and 2010. During the 1990s, the FPDA was mooted by some commentators as a possible template for an ASEAN security arrangements after the end of the Cold War. An additional and unexpected role for the Arrangements was that they helped ASEAN to softly counter Indonesia's belief that it was the natural leader of ASEAN.

Although ASEAN began to involve itself more openly in security-related affairs after the end of the Cold War, the Association failed to develop anything similar to the FPDA's long-term, multilateral military cooperation and defence engagement. ASEAN members had a stated desire to deepen and broaden defence cooperation with one another.²⁴ In the 1990s and 2000s, ASEAN created or supported a number of new security-related treaties, charters and organisations, including the Council for Security Cooperation in the Asia-Pacific (1993), the ASEAN Regional Forum (1994), the Declaration of ASEAN Concord II (2003), the adoption of a ASEAN Security Plan of Action (2004) and a Political Security Blueprint (2009). Some of this was undoubtedly due to the fact that the ASEAN economies, and their defence spending, began to grow rapidly from the late 1980s onwards. Prior to that point, most ASEAN states aside from Singapore had little financial or operational capability to undertake conventional war roles. Even the invasion of Cambodia by Vietnam had less effect

²⁴ J Haacke. *ASEAN's Diplomatic & Security Culture* (London: RoutledgeCurzon, 2003) p 65

than expected in driving the ASEAN states to develop conventional war-fighting capabilities.²⁵ In addition, most ASEAN states in the 1970s and 1980s were more focussed on domestic insurgencies and less on broader regional security issues. Most of the militaries of ASEAN had been focussed more on small unit operations related to counter-insurgency rather than traditional outward threats.²⁶ Another driver behind ASEAN's security interests was the end of the order imposed by the Cold War, combined with the need for states to manage their maritime economic zones granted under the United Nations Law of the Sea, created a dilemma for ASEAN defence officials. On one hand, the ASEAN states had to devote economic and military resources to patrol and defend their large maritime economic zones while on the other they needed to upgrade their defence capabilities to counter long-term external threats.²⁷ The end of the Cold War created doubts in the ASEAN states as to whether the US would retain its significant military presence in South East Asia in light of the withdrawal of Russian forces from the region. As a result, during the 1990s the ASEAN states embarked on arms-modernisation programs in order to help fill any power void left in South East Asia by Russian and US force reductions and the increasing influence of China.²⁸

This strong interest by ASEAN in regional security, and some members' economic growth providing newly available financial resources for defence, did not translate into the commitment of member defence forces and personnel to a multilateral ASEAN defence arrangement. ASEAN states maintained a distrust of their fellow members despite their shared membership in the Association. A review by Ganesan in 1999 revealed that, 32 years after the creation of ASEAN, all five founding members

²⁵ see Tim Huxley. *The ASEAN States' Defence Policies, 1975-81: Military Responses to IndoChina?* (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1984)

²⁶ The most significant potential threat over the long-term for ASEAN has been the growth of Chinese military power. JN Mak. *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1975-1992*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no 103 1993 p 13

²⁷ J.N. Mak. *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1975-1992* p 170

²⁸ B Singh. "The Challenge of the Security Environment in Southeast Asia in the Post-Cold War Era." *Australian Journal of International Affairs* 47, no. 2 (October 1993) p 268. The drive to improve capabilities lead some commentators to propose that the ASEAN states were engaging in a regional arms race. For more details on how South East Asia's domestic and external factors help to drive new weapons purchases, see A Acharya. *An Arms Race in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia? Prospects for Control*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 1994)

still had ongoing bilateral tensions arising from disagreements over land borders and maritime economic zones.²⁹ The growth of ASEAN in the 1990s to encompass the remaining South East Asia states made an ASEAN strategic policy consensus even more remote. In the 1990s ASEAN granted membership to Vietnam (1995), Laos and Myanmar (1997) and Cambodia (1999), thereby bringing the remaining non-member South East Asian states at that time under its umbrella. However, the new members added to an already varied pool of security concerns. As J Henderson correctly asserts, ASEAN's expansion to include all 10 South East Asian states meant that the diversity of political systems and strategic interests posed a threat to the overall cohesion of the Association.³⁰ For example, Vietnam's primary strategic concern was China while Cambodia was worried most about Thailand.³¹ The increased economic development and modernisation of most ASEAN economies from the late 1980s onwards—despite a temporary slump during the Asian Financial Crisis of 1997-1998—saw increases in defence budgets for most member states. The quality of the purchases by the South East Asia states, which included new equipment that enhanced air and naval power and projection, raised concerns in some areas about an arms race in the region.³² Unlike the European Union, ASEAN's limited internal cohesion meant that the strategic policies of ASEAN members paid closer attention to their neighbours than to common external threats. A last reason is that there is very little tradition of military cooperation among the ASEAN states.³³ Even within the ASEAN secretariat, as of 2010 there were no specific staff allocated to conflict prevention, peace building or peace and security in general; the only permanent organisation dealing with these issues is in the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF).³⁴

²⁹ For a full discussion, see N Ganesan. *Bilateral Tensions in Post-Cold War Asia*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 1999)

³⁰ J Henderson. *Reassessing ASEAN*. Adelphi Paper 328. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999) p 34

³¹ For greater discussion on the divergent and often contradictory strategic policies of the ASEAN states, see R Daley and CD Neher *South East Asia in the New International Era* (5th ed). (Philadelphia: Westview Press, 2010), as well as "Continental South East Asia" in M Alagappa *Asian Security Practice*. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1998)

³² A Collins. *Security and South East Asia: Domestic, Regional and Global Issues*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2003). p 95-97

³³ P Dibb. *The prospects for Southeast Asia's security* Working Paper no. 347. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, June 2000, p 7

³⁴ R Tavares. *Regional Security: The capacity of international organizations*. (London: Routledge, 2010), p 93

ASEAN did attempt to create security-focussed organisations after the Cold War but, as of 2010, these organisations have proved themselves more adept at dealing with large, overarching security issues than with fostering multilateral defence engagement and cooperation along the lines of the FPDA. The ARF, formed in 1994, avoided the problem of rival organisations by including all states within the Asia-Pacific region. Australia was an early supporter of this ASEAN initiative and by 1996 Australia was one of the most active participants and sponsors in ARF in both Track 1 and Track 2 dialogues on security.³⁵ The ARF did have a security role but, as Leifer correctly identifies, the Forum contained no “robust provision” to deal with the use of force and conflict resolution.³⁶ Although the ARF enmeshed the Association into the security architecture for the Asia-Pacific, the ARF was not a collective security organisation as there was no significant movement towards multilateral defence cooperation.³⁷ Furthermore, the creation of the ARF did not improve ASEAN’s security concerns with larger powers such as China. There was and remains a concern that ASEAN confronting China as a group over Chinese claims in the South China Sea would antagonise rather than dissuade Beijing.³⁸ ASEAN also instituted an ASEAN Defence Ministers Meeting (ADMM) in 2006. According to official ASEAN sources, the annual ADMM was instituted to allow the defence ministers from the ASEAN states to meet and discuss defence-related issues and concerns.³⁹ Nevertheless, some writers consider that the ARF risks undermining regional security because the organisation does not address the roots of strategic problems, such as China’s ‘zero-sum’ use of power politics to achieve its regional aims.⁴⁰

Despite the issues that ASEAN has had coming to grips with security concerns, there are some acknowledged successes. The ASEAN South East Asia Nuclear Weapon

³⁵ D Ball and P Kerr. *Presumptive Engagement: Australia's Asia-Pacific Security Policy in the 1990s*. (Canberra: Allen & Unwin, 1996) p 30

³⁶ M Leifer. *The ASEAN Regional Forum*. Adelphi Paper 302 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, July 1996) p 3

³⁷ Leifer. *The ASEAN Regional Forum*. p 53

³⁸ MJ Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. Adelphi Paper 298. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p 42

³⁹ From <http://www.aseansec.org/18816.htm> accessed 25 March 2011

⁴⁰ R Lim. “The ASEAN Regional Forum: building on sand” *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 20, no. 2 (August 1998) p 115

Free Zone (SEANWFZ) proposal had a more fortunate history. The SEANWFZ proposal prohibited signatories from manufacturing, testing or storing nuclear weapons belonging to themselves or others on ASEAN member territories.⁴¹ When first proposed during the Cold War, SEANWFZ was not supported by ASEAN states that hosted US military bases or that saw the US as the only effective counter to the Soviet presence in the region.⁴² After the Cold War, later scholarship reveals that the ASEAN states changed their approach to SEANWFZ, with all members signing the treaty in 1995.⁴³ ASEAN also took a central role in the resolution of the Cambodian conflict through the 1980s and early 1990s. The Association has also been credited with keeping territorial disputes and other residual tensions between members in check and ASEAN members have not engaged one another in armed confrontation since the founding of the Association.⁴⁴ Nevertheless, these successes do not indicate an abiding level of trust among the ASEAN states. As Saravanamuttu has pointed out, the fact that the ASEAN states prefer to refer conflicting territorial claims to the International Court of Justice rather than utilise the TAC may indicate that the treaty is closer to a non-aggression pact instead of a legal-political dispute resolution structure.⁴⁵ The ASEAN states' reasoning behind their support of SEANWFZ reinforces the idea that the ASEAN states remain conscious that threats may emanate from within the region. Natalegawa posits in his conclusions that all the ASEAN states perceived Indonesia as the principal supporter of SEANWFZ, and that this "Indonesia factor" played a part in their individual decisions to express diplomatic support for the treaty. He identifies Singapore, Thailand and Brunei as maintaining reservations about SEANFWZ despite not directly expressing their opposition to the treaty. These reservations stem from the belief that SEANWFZ had the potential to

⁴¹ Treaty on the Southeast Asia Nuclear Weapon Free Zone, Article 3 (1) and (2). Text for SEANWFZ Treaty (also known as the *Bangkok Treaty*) taken from the Nuclear Threat Initiative webpage: www.nti.org/e_research/official_docs/inventory/pdfs/aptbang.pdf

⁴² B Singh. *ASEAN the South East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free-Zone*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no 138, Canberra: Australian National University 2000 p 33-34

⁴³ For an in-depth discussion of how the SEANWFZ proposal gained support among the ASEAN states, see M Natalegawa. *The Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Proposal: Retrospect and Prospect*. PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1993.

⁴⁴ J Dosch. *PMC, ARF and CSCAP: Foundations for a Security Architecture in the Asia-Pacific?* Working Paper no. 307. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, June 1997, p 3

⁴⁵ Overlapping territorial claims between Malaysia and Singapore and Malaysia and Indonesia are two examples provided by Saravanamuttu of internal ASEAN territorial disputes referred to the International Court of Justice instead of being resolved within the Association. J Saravanamuttu. "ASEAN: A Rejoinder" *Security Dialogue* 25, no.4 (1994) p 470

damage US engagement in South East Asia; for Singapore in particular, the scepticism regarding SEANWFZ was due to the country's on-going concerns regarding the long-term intentions of its neighbours.⁴⁶

As a result, although ASEAN has undertaken security-related initiatives, the Association still considers its members' defence links with external powers to be very important for regional security. In 2003 ASEAN's key defence relationships were considered to be the Five Power Defence Arrangements and the bilateral Thailand-US and Philippine-US alliances.⁴⁷ The ASEAN states have actively courted continued US defence links with the region. Since 1990 the US has negotiated a series of access agreements with South East Asia partners regarding port calls, logistics, repair facilities and training ranges.⁴⁸ The ARF and the FPDA were intended to address very different security issues. Crowe correctly asserts that FPDA was designed to defend Malaysia and Singapore while ARF was intended to promote an open approach to political and security issues throughout South East Asia.⁴⁹ Australia's significant role in the FPDA, as well as the important contribution of a Air Vice Marshal to head IADS, added to Australia's participation in regional security, especially as no IADS equivalents existed in other Asian security arrangements.⁵⁰

In a related point, the 1990s did see a number of commentators suggest the FPDA 'model' as a possible template for a region-wide security arrangement—as discussed in Chapter Two—but this idea was not adopted by ASEAN. Some of the initial attraction to the FPDA model came from the view that the Arrangements had a track record in successfully limiting instability and conflict from ethnic, religious and national rivalries, all of which were concerns in post-Cold War South East Asia.⁵¹

⁴⁶ M Natalegawa. *The Southeast Asian Nuclear Weapon Free Proposal: Retrospect and Prospect*. PhD thesis, Australian National University, 1993, p 381-383

⁴⁷ Haacke. *ASEAN's Diplomatic & Security Culture* p 65

⁴⁸ East Asian Strategy Report 1998. *The United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region*. (Department of Defence: Office of International Security Affairs, November 1998) p 12

⁴⁹ Crowe p 38

⁵⁰ D Cheng. "Asia: Facing Interesting Times." *Joint Force Quarterly* 55 (4th quarter 2009) p 33

⁵¹ M Richardson "New relevance for the PDA" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1993 p 37

Heron argued that, while the FPDA is 'obsolete' due to significant improvements in Malaysian and Singaporean defence capabilities, the Arrangements' consultative framework could provide a model for a South East Asian security System.⁵² Hashim bin Mohamed Asim considered that the ASEAN states could adopt the FPDA's loose structure as it facilitated bilateral and multilateral ties among ASEAN states with established or nascent bilateral defence relationships, without tying a state to a dedicated course of action.⁵³ Ultimately, the FPDA model was not adopted by ASEAN or the wider Asia-Pacific. No public reason can be identified but one can see the validity in Crowe's previously-stated contention that the FPDA's ultimate purpose was to facilitate the defence of Malaysia and Singapore and was not suitable for other, broader, security tasks.⁵⁴

The existence of the FPDA has also allowed ASEAN to avoid the creation of separate multilateral defence arrangements that do not incorporate all the Association's members. The prime concern in this case was Indonesia. Indonesia has long had the size and population to dominate in any ASEAN security arrangement. Since the start of ASEAN, Indonesia has remained the largest, most populous member in the Association and Jakarta considers these attributes to place Indonesia in a leadership role. Other members did not agree and looked to the involvement of friendly external powers to balance Indonesia's influence in regional defence. As described by Richardson, the existence of the FPDA helped Malaysia and Singapore to successfully decline a security arrangement with Indonesia. In 1990 Indonesia proposed that the Arrangements be replaced by a defence agreement between Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia. This was a concern for ASEAN. Malaysia and Singapore recognised that a three-way defence agreement could be dominated by Indonesia. In addition, a defence agreement between the three states would effectively divide the ASEAN membership into land and maritime subgroups.⁵⁵ To counter Mochtar's proposal without offending Jakarta, Malaysia stated that the existing, close bilateral defence cooperation between

⁵² MW Heron "A Sub-Regional Security System for Southeast Asia." *Australian Defence Force Journal* 135 (March-April 1999) p 21, 23

⁵³ Hashim bin Mohamed Asim p277

⁵⁴ Crowe p 38

⁵⁵ S Simon. "Regional Security Structures in Asia," in *East Asian Security in the Post Cold War Era*. (SW Simon, ed) (New York: ME Sharpe, 1993) p 22

the armed forces of Malaysia, Singapore and Indonesia negated the need for a defence agreement between the three states. Singapore's stated that it was willing to strengthen its bilateral defence relations with Indonesia. Both Malaysia and Singapore emphasised that the FPDA should be retained due to the broader network of defence contacts and deterrent power available through the Arrangements.⁵⁶ The existence of the FPDA effectively allowed Malaysia and Singapore to decline Indonesia's offer of a 'mini-lateral' maritime security organisation without offending Jakarta.

Indonesia

In a similar way to that outlined in the preceding paragraphs, the FPDA has also provided Australia with a framework that allows Canberra to isolate the Australia-Indonesia bilateral relationship from Australia's engagement with the other ASEAN states. This has been an important contribution as the Australia-Indonesia bilateral relationship is often subject to bouts of strain. Indonesia is widely understood to be Australia's most important ASEAN relationship. Due to its geographic location, size, population and economic potential, Indonesia is viewed as a *de facto* leader of ASEAN.⁵⁷ Australian Defence White Papers from 1976 onwards have often emphasised Australia's and Indonesia's shared strategic interests and that a stable and secure Indonesia is vital to Australian security.⁵⁸ At the same time, Indonesian and Australian bilateral relations have been susceptible to periodic strains during the timeframe of this study. Indonesia's invasion of East Timor in 1975, and the killing of five Australian journalists during the process, has been an ongoing source of tension in Australia-Indonesia relations. Negative Australia press reports on Indonesia have also created strains in the relationship, as when the case when an article in the Australian "Sydney Morning Herald" newspaper in 1986 on the business dealings of

⁵⁶ M Richardson. "Shifts in the power balance" *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1991 p 37

⁵⁷ J Henderson. *Reassessing ASEAN*, p 45

⁵⁸ R. Brabin-Smith. *Australia's International Defence Relationships with the United States, Indonesia and New Zealand*. Working Paper 400. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, May 2006 p 16-17

then-President Suharto and his family created tension between Jakarta and Canberra.⁵⁹ Indonesia and Australia signed a defence agreement in 1995 which was terminated in 1999 when Australia led an international intervention force into East Timor. Commentators have indicated concerns about the internal stability of Indonesia stemming from weaknesses in the country's political and economic systems and as a potential terrorist 'staging ground.'⁶⁰

However, Indonesia has accepted that the FPDA framework ties Australia with Malaysia and Singapore without Indonesian participation. The precedent of the Arrangements allows Australia to deal directly with the entire region and avoid a situation where Indonesia believes that it should be the sole 'gatekeeper' through which Australia must transact its relationship with South East Asia. Indonesia has maintained an interest in some form of control over any regional security dialogue and of making sure that ASEAN retains control of the proceedings by limiting the role of outside powers, including Australia.⁶¹ Indonesia's adoption of a 'gatekeeper' function in relationships between individual ASEAN states and Australia would limit Australia's interactions with the region and place enormous pressure on the bilateral Australia-Indonesia relationship. The FPDA makes clear to both Indonesia and the rest of ASEAN that Australia has major interests and significant relationships with other members of ASEAN.⁶² This has found public expression in Australian government publications on Australia's strategic interests. For example, the 1997 publication *Australia's Strategic Policy* refers to Indonesia as Australia's most important strategic relationship in South East Asia. However, Malaysia and Singapore are referred to as Australia's closest defence partners in South East Asia.⁶³ Australia's

⁵⁹ D McDougall. *Australian Foreign Relations: contemporary perspectives*. (South Melbourne: Addison Wesley, 1998) p 210

⁶⁰ P Dibb. "Indonesia: the key to South-East Asia's Security" *International Affairs* 77, no 4 (2001) p 829-842 and J A Rosenthal "Southeast Asia: Archipelago of Afghanistans?" *Orbis* (Summer 2003) p 485-486

⁶¹ Draft brief on South East Asia strategic issues by Hugh White for Kim Beazley, dated November 1992

⁶² White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

⁶³ Department of Defence. *Australia's Strategic Policy*. Canberra: Defence Publishing and Visual Communications, 1997 p 22

participation in the FPDA has assisted in publically demonstrating that it maintains defence relations and concerns beyond Indonesia.

The United Kingdom

The Five Power Defence Arrangements has made two important contributions to Australia's defence relationship with the UK. The first is that the FPDA has, over the time period covered by this study, become an enduring defence link between the UK and Australia. The second benefit is that the FPDA framework has kept the UK linked to Australian defence interests while accommodating the fluctuations in British commitment to the Arrangements since 1971. This allows the UK to increase its commitment to the FPDA without requiring agreement from the wider ASEAN community.

The FPDA's use as a defence link between Australia and the UK was important because the formerly strong links between the two countries have reduced drastically over time. Australia's longest-lasting defence links have been with the UK. While Britain's strategic importance to Australia had decreased considerably since World War II, British-Australian defence ties were still important in Canberra. Both states shared membership in the Commonwealth and British migrants made up a good percentage of immigrants to Australia. This shared history made the British-Australian relationship more "intimate."⁶⁴ Australia and British defence links atrophied more rapidly between 1971 and 2010 than either side would have expected in the 1960s. The aspect of the defence relationship that remained strongest has been within the context of the 1947 UKUSA intelligence gathering and coordination agreement.⁶⁵

⁶⁴ D McDougall. *Australian Foreign Relations: contemporary perspectives*. p 76-77

⁶⁵ D McDougall. *Australian Foreign Relations: contemporary perspectives*. p 88-89

British involvement in South East Asia and the FPDA between 1971 and 2010 fluctuated greatly. In the 1970s, British foreign and defence policy went through a substantial readjustment. The UK's entry into the European Economic Community in 1973 increased the shift towards Europe and the North Atlantic in British foreign policy, defence and economic interests.⁶⁶ The need to reduce British defence expenditures world-wide that had driven the UK's withdrawal of its forces from South East Asia continued and the remaining British contribution to the ANZUK forces was withdrawn by 1975. From the 1975 to the late 1980s, the UK did not contribute significant forces to FPDA exercises. The Royal Air Force did not participate in the multilateral FPDA exercise *Lima Bersatu* for almost 15 years, returning only in 1988.⁶⁷ From the close defence ties under ANZAM and AMDA, Australia-UK defence cooperation became more modest from 1971 onwards. The FPDA ensured that there would be an enduring defence link between the two countries.

The FPDA has helped to maintain a place for the UK in Australian defence interests since 1971. As discussed in Chapter Five, Australia originally expected the FPDA to keep the UK involved in South East Asia in the short term. Canberra anticipated that the ANZUK forces would provide a lasting framework for Australia-UK defence cooperation and not the FPDA. In 1972 Australian policymakers viewed the FPDA and the ANZUK forces as separate entities; the ANZUK forces were seen as possible framework for Australian defence cooperation with the UK that was not dependent on the future of the FPDA.⁶⁸ Australia's view on the FPDA in bilateral Australia-UK relations has changed considerably since then. The 1997 paper *Australia's Strategic Policy* stated that the FPDA was a framework to support British and New Zealand defence involvement in South East Asia.⁶⁹ Both the UK and Australia have been involved in security in Australia's part of the world through frameworks like the FPDA and yet there are other areas of defence cooperation where Australia has

⁶⁶ TB Millar. *Australia in Peace and War: External Relations since 1788*. 2nd edition (Botany: Australian National University Press, 1991) p 149-154

⁶⁷ D Bristow "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 1 (2005) p 11

⁶⁸ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK* p7-8

⁶⁹ Department of Defence. *Australia's Strategic Policy* p 23

become involved alongside the UK in out of area operations, such as Iraq and Afghanistan.⁷⁰ This has been very different from Australia's original expectations from the Arrangements.

By providing a tie to Australian strategic interests in South East Asia, the FPDA provided an avenue through which the UK was able to re-engage with the region alongside Australia between the late 1980s and 2010. The late 1980s saw a renewed British interest in maintaining its global reach. The British 1987 Defence White Paper's third objective—to ensure the UK's continued economic and strategic access to the Third World by protecting sea lanes—is viewed by some commentators as the most important British goal for the Asia-Pacific theatre.⁷¹ The paper stated that in order to accomplish this goal the UK had to sustain a visible naval and supporting air presence in region and that to this end the UK conducts a major naval deployment exercise every two or three years to the Far East, North Pacific, Australia and Indian Ocean areas.⁷² In 1997 the UK made defence diplomacy one of the eight core missions of British defence policy.⁷³ The return of Hong Kong to China in 1997 spurred the UK to demonstrate its continued engagement in the Asia-Pacific region through the FPDA. Malaysian Defence Minister Datuk Syed Hamid Albar stated that, during a meeting of the FPDA armed forces chiefs, the UK would use the FPDA exercises as a way to reassert the British presence in Asia after the handover of Hong Kong.⁷⁴ The British government's 1998 Strategic Defence Review that the UK saw contributing to the FPDA as a way to support wider British interests, including maintaining the country's international friendships, promoting British influence abroad and supporting British defence exports.⁷⁵ This recognised the growing

⁷⁰ Rifkind, Sir Malcolm. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

⁷¹ Douglas Stuart and William Tow. *The Limits of Alliance*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) p 148-149

⁷² Douglas Stuart and William Tow. *The Limits of Alliance*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) p 148-149

⁷³ A Cottey and A Forster. *Reshaping Defence Diplomacy: New Roles for Military Cooperation and Assistance*. Adelphi Paper 365. (Oxford: Oxford University Press 2004) p 11

⁷⁴ M Jeffri Razali. "Britain to use war games to re-assert presence" *New Straits Times* April 15 1997

⁷⁵ United Kingdom Ministry of Defence. *Strategic Defence Review*. London: The Stationery Office, July 1998 paragraphs 51, A23

economic and strategic importance of South East Asia.⁷⁶ The increased British participation in FPDA exercises following the handover demonstrates the country's increased determination to have a role in Asia-Pacific security. British participation in FPDA exercises included 'sizable deployments' in 2003, 2004 and 2005 and, although subsequent years to 2010 have seen decreased British participation, the British military has contributed large platforms such as a helicopter aircraft carrier and an E3D Sentry AWACS aircraft.⁷⁷ Some Australian policymakers see the FPDA as another area giving the British influence and access to the Asia-Pacific, as well as a chance to continue to learn more about an emerging and influential economic region of the world.⁷⁸ In the late 2000s, British forces in South East Asia are primarily based in Brunei due to their close history with that state. However, the FPDA, through its framework of councils and exercises, provides a way for London to demonstrate that the UK had the ability and technology to operate a long way from Europe.⁷⁹

Turning to the FPDA to demonstrate British interests in South East Asia made sense to the British defence establishment for a number of reasons. The first was the flexibility of the commitment. Although the UK has not aspired to a major presence in the Asia Pacific since the 1970s, due to financial and military constraints, fulfilling British commitments to the FPDA is seen as less of a problem by British policymakers as the Arrangements are viewed as a loose set of understandings containing some training and exercising obligations but nothing requiring immediate hardware.⁸⁰ A second reason was that the FPDA was a surviving indication of past British defence involvement in Asia. At the 2010 Shangri-La Dialogue in Singapore, Liam Fox, British Secretary of State for Defence, indicated that the UK intended to continue developing its 'historical relationships' with Asia and sought "enduring long-term structures coupled with a mixture of formal and informal arrangements that have the flexibility to deal with unexpected threats and events at short notice" and reiterated

⁷⁶ D Bristow. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization." p 11

⁷⁷ JM Jamaluddin. "FPDA Remains Relevant in Regional Security Structure." *Asian Defence Journal* October 2010 p 5

⁷⁸ Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

⁷⁹ Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

⁸⁰ Rifkind, Sir Malcolm. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

British commitment to the FPDA⁸¹ A third reason was that the British presence in South East Asia through the FPDA had ongoing support from two founding members of ASEAN. According to former British Secretary of State and Secretary of Defence Sir Malcolm Rifkind, the UK will continue to be involved in the FPDA only so long as members such as Malaysia and Singapore still view the British presence as beneficial.⁸²

New Zealand

Australia made use of the FPDA to maintain New Zealand's strategic interests with those of Australia. Although New Zealand has been in many ways the least influential member of the Arrangements, the country is still an important Australian ally. However, from the mid-1980s to 2010, New Zealand's policies indicated disengagement from regional and international concerns. The importance of New Zealand participation in the FPDA was the benefits for the Australia-New Zealand relationship more than the contributions that New Zealand could offer to the defence of Malaysia and Singapore.⁸³ The Arrangements have contributed to keeping New Zealand's strategic objectives in line with Australia.⁸⁴

Beginning in the mid-1980s, New Zealand's strategic policy approach began to diverge from Australia's and this has been of great concern to Australia. The most significant change was the 1986 disagreement between the US and New Zealand due to New Zealand's requirement for foreign ships in New Zealand ports to declare nuclear weapons. As a result of the split, the US refused to allow New Zealand's military to be involved in multilateral exercises under ANZUS and cut off the supply

⁸¹ IISS. *The Shangri-La Dialogue: The 9th IISS Asia Security Summit* 4-6 June 2010 Singapore: International Institute for Strategic Studies August 2010 p36

⁸² Rifkind, Sir Malcolm. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

⁸³ White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

⁸⁴ White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

of American intelligence to Wellington.⁸⁵ The US also refused to allow its armed forces to exercise with any element of the New Zealand Defence Force in any bilateral or multilateral forum outside of ANZUS.⁸⁶ There were other disturbing trends that came on top of the US-New Zealand split. After 1985, New Zealand began shifting its primary strategic focus from South East Asia to the South Pacific. In addition, the New Zealand Defence Force slowly shrunk in size and capabilities. Rolfe asserts that the split between the US and New Zealand made it harder and more time consuming for the Royal New Zealand Navy to obtain the necessary skills needed to work alongside the US Navy.⁸⁷ The New Zealand government also seemed to exacerbate the decline in the country's military capabilities. The most dramatic sign of this shrinkage was the disappearance of New Zealand's air combat force in 2001.⁸⁸

The change in New Zealand policies was also reflected in New Zealand's approach to the FPDA. New Zealand had demonstrated its commitment to the FPDA during the 1970s and early 1980s, despite an initial belief that the FPDA would not last.⁸⁹ In 1973 the New Zealand presence in Singapore under the FPDA was viewed as a "considerable attraction" for recruitment to the New Zealand Defence Force.⁹⁰ New Zealand did not withdraw its forces from Singapore when Australia and the UK did in the mid-1970s. New Zealand also provided specialist helicopter training to both Malaysia and Singapore and, according to one commentator, New Zealand's participation in IADS had "apparently been instrumental in bringing about closer

⁸⁵ P Jennings. *The Armed Forces of New Zealand and the ANZUS split: Costs and Consequences*. New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, Occasional Paper No 4 1988 p33

⁸⁶ J Rolfe. *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*. (St Leonards: Allen & Unwin, 1999) p 75-76

⁸⁷ This was a significant issue when it came to New Zealand's participation alongside the US in United Nations-led operations. Rolfe, *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, p75, 102

⁸⁸ To get a better idea of the shrinking of the NZDF since 1990, refer to chapters 1 and 2 of Jim Rolfe, *Cutting their cloth: New Zealand's Defence Strategy*. Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, April 2007.

⁸⁹ According to Norman Kirk, Leader of the Opposition in New Zealand, the FPDA could not be "...regarded as a permanent part of any defence posture or defence arrangement for New Zealand." N Kirk. *New Zealand and Its Neighbours*. (Wellington: New Zealand Institute of International Affairs, 1971) p 5

⁹⁰ Comment by then New Zealand Prime Minister Kirk in a priority cable dated 19 Jan 1973 for SW Pacific Dept FCO from British High Commission NZ. The National Archives (UK) FCO 24/1553 *Future of the Five Power Defence Arrangements (FPDA) 1973 Jan 01 - 1973 Dec 31 FW 10/2 PART A*

Singapore-Malaysian air cooperation.⁹¹ This participation allowed New Zealand to support US engagement with South East Asia. The New Zealand forces in Singapore provided logistic and administrative services to American naval and air force visits to Singapore.⁹² New Zealand's facilitation of American military visits to Singapore allowed Singapore to distance itself from these visits and avoid creating tension with ASEAN.⁹³ New Zealand was also recognised as having some influence in the Pacific. New Zealand intelligence in regional affairs was highly regarded and, alongside Australia, New Zealand used its influence and contacts to 'dissuade' Papua New Guinea from allowing the Soviet Union or China from opening diplomatic missions in Port Moresby.⁹⁴

However, the shift in New Zealand policies away from Australian strategic interests vis-a-vis South East Asia and the US became more marked in the 1980s. Some New Zealand policymakers began to view the FPDA as a transitional measure that never ended and that had little strategic significance.⁹⁵ New Zealand withdrew its remaining forces—known as the New Zealand Force Southeast Asia—from Singapore in the late 1980s. Two reasons given for New Zealand's late withdrawal are the lack of facilities in New Zealand in which to house the returning forces and the lack of a role for the forces in the defence policies of the New Zealand government.⁹⁶ While the major political parties in New Zealand were supportive of the Arrangements—viewing them as providing the country with a useful military link to South East Asia at little-to-no risk—some smaller political parties and peace groups wanted to end New Zealand's participation on the grounds that membership increased the risk of involving New Zealand in regional conflicts.⁹⁷ The changes in New Zealand policies towards South East Asia were not lost on other FPDA members. In the 1990s and 2000s Malaysia

⁹¹ H.S. Albinski. "New Zealand and ANZUS: a United States Perspective." In *Beyond New Zealand: The Foreign Policy of a Small State* (edited by J. Henderson, K. Jackson and R. Kennaway), 46-51. Auckland: Methuen, 1980 p 47

⁹² H.S. Albinski. "New Zealand and ANZUS: a United States Perspective." p 48

⁹³ H.S. Albinski. "New Zealand and ANZUS: a United States Perspective." p 48

⁹⁴ H.S. Albinski. "New Zealand and ANZUS: a United States Perspective." p 49

⁹⁵ J Rolfe. *Anachronistic past or positive future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements*. (Wellington: Centre for Strategic Studies, Victoria University of Wellington, 1995) p 8

⁹⁶ R. Ayson. "The Future of Australia-New Zealand Defence and Cooperation". *Australian Security in the 21st Century Seminar Series*, (Parliament House, Canberra, 2004)

⁹⁷ Rolfe. *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*. P 73

and Singapore recognised that New Zealand's contributions to the FPDA were becoming increasingly minor.⁹⁸

These changes were of great concern to Australia which, along with many New Zealand policymakers, had a long standing policy of encouraging closer defence ties between Australia and New Zealand. Both countries formalised these ties in 1991 under the term Closer Defence Relations (CDR). The purpose of the CDR is "...to ensure mutual understanding of long-term planning, and to maximize interoperability, complementarity and cost-effectiveness."⁹⁹ Included under the CDR umbrella were issues such as force structure decisions and equipment purchases to help promote interoperability. Strategic and defence policy coordination was carried out through a series of formal working groups, regular meetings of senior government and policy officials under the Australia-New Zealand Defence Cooperation Group and the normal day-to-day contacts between defence and military personnel on both sides of the Tasman.¹⁰⁰ The Five Power Defence Arrangements were subordinate to the bilateral Australia-New Zealand relationship.¹⁰¹ The 1994 Australian Defence White Paper stated that, despite the US-New Zealand split, Australia would still accept its ANZUS obligations to New Zealand.¹⁰²

The FPDA provided a way for Australia to encourage New Zealand to avoid isolationism and keep its strategic objectives in line with those of Australia. The FPDA has assisted Australia in encouraging New Zealand to keep its strategic objectives in line with Australia's and maintain the capabilities to achieve these objectives.¹⁰³ This was accomplished in two ways. The first was by providing New Zealand with an alternative framework post-ANZUS in which the country's

⁹⁸ Kwa Chong Guan. 2009. Interview by author. Singapore. 6 May.

⁹⁹ Ball and Kerr. *Presumptive engagement*, p127

¹⁰⁰ Rolfe. *The Armed Forces of New Zealand*, p 69

¹⁰¹ Brabin-Smith, Richard. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 30 July.

¹⁰² Commonwealth of Australia. *Defending Australia: Defence White Paper 1994*. (Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, 1994) p 100

¹⁰³ White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

policymakers could define and sustain its commitments to regional security.¹⁰⁴ This can be seen from New Zealand official defence policy statements regarding the FPDA. In 1991 the New Zealand policy paper *The Defence of New Zealand* listed one of New Zealand defence policy goals as maintaining defence cooperation with the ASEAN states and the Five Power Defence Arrangements.¹⁰⁵ New Zealand's 1997 White Paper stated that the FPDA was considered to be one of New Zealand's three defence pillars.¹⁰⁶ In the 1990s and 2000s New Zealand indicated to Australian policy makers that it valued the opportunity the FPDA provided them to be involved in wider international affairs.¹⁰⁷ The 2010 New Zealand Defence White Paper included New Zealand's commitment to the FPDA as one of the five possible scenarios in which New Zealand would consider the use of military force.¹⁰⁸ Rolfe is correct in his assertion that the FPDA remains an ongoing commitment by New Zealand to the stability and security of South East Asia.¹⁰⁹

The United States

The US has long been Australia's most significant defence partner but the end of the Cold War reduced avenues through which Australia could contribute to this important bilateral relationship. The FPDA provided an additional avenue through which Australia could demonstrate that it was more than just a consumer of American security in the post-Cold War era. The Arrangements also provided a way for Australia to remind the US of the importance of South East Asia to Australian strategic interests. While the FPDA did not play a central role in Australia-US

¹⁰⁴ White, Hugh. 2010. Interview by author. Canberra. 3 August.

¹⁰⁵ Government of New Zealand. *The Defence of New Zealand 1991: A Policy Paper*. (Wellington: Government Printer, 1991)

¹⁰⁶ C Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." *Security Challenges* 3 no 1 February 2007 p 94

¹⁰⁷ O18. 2010. Interview by author. 10 August.

¹⁰⁸ The other four are: in response to a direct threat to New Zealand and its territories; in response to a direct threat to Australia; as part of collective action in support of a member of the Pacific Islands Forum facing a direct threat; or if requested or mandated by the UN, especially in support of peace and security in the Asia-Pacific region. New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010* p 10

¹⁰⁹ See J Rolfe, *Anachronistic Past of Positive Future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements*. Working paper 4/95 and *New Zealand's Security: Alliances and other military relationships*. Working paper 10/97 Centre for Strategic Studies Victoria University 1997.

defence relations, the Arrangements did make unexpected positive contributions that were recognised by the US.

The US-Australia defence relationship is widely recognised as being Australia's most important defence relationship. The ANZUS Treaty, along with separate bilateral agreements, provides the framework for a wide range of defence-related cooperative activities between Australia and the United States.¹¹⁰ A 1998 stock take indicated that Australia and US had around 250 bilateral legal arrangements and agreements in place that are specifically defence related.¹¹¹ Australia's 2009 Defence White paper typifies these comments in its reference to the country's alliance with the US at Australia's "most important defence relationship."¹¹² Among the reasons given include access to intelligence, technology and skills gained through Australia's defence cooperation with the US.¹¹³ Australia has a vested interest in proving to the US that the defence relationship is one of mutual assistance and that Australia is not a passive consumer of American security. Although the US is a central pillar of Australian strategic policy, Canberra has stressed that the relationship is one of "mutual help."¹¹⁴

Over the past four decades Canberra has consistently searched for ways to actively demonstrate to Washington that Australia was contributing to its own security and the security of the alliance. The reason for this was that Australia's location in the southern hemisphere meant that the country faced a different set of strategic concerns than America's allies in the northern hemisphere. Concerns regarding threats, in particular nuclear threats, from the Soviet Union and China meant that American allies in Europe, Japan and Korea hosted bases and nuclear missiles. European allies collectively contributed troops under NATO. Canada contributed troops to the defence

¹¹⁰ Ross Babbage. "Australian Defence Strategies" in *Security and Defence* (ed D Ball & C Downes) (Sydney: Allen & Unwin, 1990) p 216

¹¹¹ *United States Security Strategy for the East Asia-Pacific Region 1998* p 26

¹¹² Department of Defence. *Defending Australia in the Asia Pacific Century: Force 2030*. (Canberra: Department of Defence, 2009) p 93

¹¹³ Department of Defence. *Defending Australia* p 94

¹¹⁴ Australian Department of Defence. *Defence 2000: our future defence force*. (Canberra: Defence Publishing Service, 2000) p 36

of Europe under NATO and contributed to the security of North America as a partner with the US under the North American Air Defence Command (NORAD).¹¹⁵ This is not to say that Australia has failed to demonstrate ongoing support for its alliance with the US. The country has hosted US signals intelligence bases such as Pine Gap, although Australia has not hosted US military bases. Canberra has sent military contributions to support the US in the First Gulf War, the war in Afghanistan from 2003 and as part of the “Coalition of the Willing” in Iraq, and has supported US initiatives to counter the spread of Weapons of Mass Destruction, such as the Proliferation Security Initiative. However, Canberra viewed Australia’s strategic relationship with the US as being different from America’s allies in the northern hemisphere. Senior policymakers in the 1980s openly stated that Australia did not consume US security in the same way as Washington’s European allies, in that Australia did not confront a direct threat that was capable of a nuclear response.¹¹⁶ The end of the Cold War also resulted in the US reconsidering its presence within areas of strategic importance to Australia, most significantly South East Asia. After the end of the Cold War, expectations of a “peace dividend” saw the US withdraw forces from the Asia Pacific region. The 1992 withdrawal of the US from Clark and Subic Bay bases in the Philippines saw the US sign defence-related agreements with a number of ASEAN states. These actions were seen by its allies as an attempt by the US to reaffirm its security commitments to the region while reducing its commitments to permanently deploy forces in East Asia.¹¹⁷

Australia used its participation in the FPDA to demonstrate to the US that Australia actively supported the stability and security of South East Asia. The US did not always understand how the FPDA worked. At times, the US was unsure of how the

¹¹⁵ Renamed North American Aerospace Defence Command in 1981, NORAD is considered the most important institution in US-Canadian defence cooperation. See J Jockel. *Canada in NORAD 1957-2007: A History*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2007) p 2

¹¹⁶ Kim Beazley speech to the Asia Society Washington, “Australia and the Asia Pacific region: a strategy of self-reliance and alliance” 30 June 1988 in *Compendium of Speeches by the Hon Kim C. Beazley, MP Minister for Defence 1985-1989* (Canberra: Directorate of Departmental Publications)

¹¹⁷ D Stuart & W Tow. *A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific*. Adelphi Paper 299. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p 16

FPDA contributed and this was expressed at the highest policymaking levels.¹¹⁸ Some senior Australian policy makers occasionally needed to remind the US of the FPDA's contribution. In a meeting with senior US officials in the 1980s, then Defence Minister Kim Beazley pointed out to the US that the FPDA was a concrete illustration that Australia had absorbed the message of the Nixon Doctrine.¹¹⁹ Despite this occasional uncertainty, the US has remained publicly supportive of the FPDA. After Malaysia cancelled its participation in the 1998 FPDA exercises due to tensions with Singapore, Stanley Roth, the US Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, stated that the US was "displeased" that Malaysia-Singapore tensions had affected the Arrangements as the FPDA contributed to regional stability.¹²⁰

The flexibility of the FPDA allowed policymakers to highlight the Arrangements' contributions in support of US interests, even when those interests changed. The 11 September 2001 attacks on the United States and the 2002 bombings in Bali saw attention in the Western states shift to countering al-Qaeda's international insurgency. Australia's 2004 White Paper *Transnational Terrorism* discussed Australia's stake in the stability and prosperity of South East Asia and the country's need to actively counter these new threats.¹²¹ The United States placed great emphasis on countering global terrorism in its September 2002 National Security Strategy and expected its allies to do the same. Links between al-Qaeda and a number of South East Asian terrorist groups, plus the Bali attacks in October 2002 led to the presentation of South East Asia as the "second front" in the war on terrorism.¹²² By 2004 the FPDA ministers agreed that the FPDA should include "non-conventional threat scenarios", such as counter-terrorism and counter piracy.¹²³ In the 1990s and 2000s the US

¹¹⁸ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September; and Houston, Air Chief Marshal Angus. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 7 August.

¹¹⁹ Beazley, Kim C. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 18 September.

¹²⁰ Glenda Korporaal. "Cancellation worries US; War games axed." *Sydney Morning Herald*, October 16, 1998.

¹²¹ Commonwealth of Australia. *Transnational Terrorism: The Threat to Australia*. (Canberra: National Capital Printing 2004) p71

¹²² A Collins. *Security and South East Asia: Domestic, Regional and Global Issues*. (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers Inc, 2003) p 200

¹²³ C Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." *Security Challenges* 3(1) 2007 p 89

continued to view Australian membership in the FPDA as an additional source of information on South East Asia.¹²⁴

The FPDA was a way for Australia's policymakers to remind their American counterparts of Australia's strategic interests. The United States did not always recognise Australia's core strategic concerns. From time to time, Australian policymakers had to remind their US allies of the factors that Australia considered key to its defence.¹²⁵ The US indicated to Australian policymakers that they viewed the Arrangements as a positive contribution by Australia to the confidence and stability of Malaysia, Singapore and South East Asia.¹²⁶

Military Commitment

Australia's military commitment to the FPDA by the late 1980s was significantly less than what it had been in the early 1970s. Nevertheless, the FPDA framework still facilitated an Australian military presence in Butterworth in Malaysia and this, alongside FPDA exercises, allowed Australia continued access to the region. This section will explore how the continued presence of Australian military forces under the FPDA, as well as the multilateral nature of the Arrangements, demonstrated continued Western interest in the activities of extra-regional powers in South East Asia. This section will also discuss how FPDA exercises unexpectedly contributed to the improvement of Australian and New Zealand military capabilities.

¹²⁴ 018. 2010. Interview by author. 10 August.

¹²⁵ Brabin-Smith, Richard. 2010. Interview by author. 30 July.

¹²⁶ 018. 2010. Interview by author. 10 August.

Extra-regional powers

The end of the Cold War did not lessen Australia's interests in avoiding the destabilise influences of extra-regional powers in South East Asia. While Russian influence in South East Asia declined from 1992 onwards, the increase in China's economic and political power caused concern in Australia, ASEAN and the US. In particular, China's extensive claims over the South China Sea conflicted with those of many ASEAN littoral states, including Malaysia. More seriously, these Chinese claims would effectively project China's influence deep into the heart of maritime South East Asia and across valuable sea routes transporting goods and resources to and from Japan and South Korea. As the only multilateral defence arrangement in South East Asia, the FPDA indicated continuing Western interest and involvement in the stability of South East Asia.

The conflict created due to the overlapping of territorial claims in the South China Sea is considered by analysts to have the potential to lead to serious conflict. Under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS), a littoral state is able to claim extensive Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ) within its continental shelf boundary and up to 200 nautical miles off its coast.¹²⁷ Moreover, the ownership of the large number of small island, islets, and reefs, such as those scattered throughout the South China Sea, can help to extend a state's maritime claim further than 200 nautical miles. The South China Sea is thought to contain significant resources, including large reserves of oil and natural gas and large fish stocks.¹²⁸ The South China Sea also has strategic value as it contains sea routes which carry around 25 per cent of global shipping and maritime claims also involve issues of national sovereignty and territorial integrity.¹²⁹ In South East Asia, overlapping maritime claims made under UNCLOS created friction among the ASEAN states. Most of the clashes were low

¹²⁷ M Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. Adelphi Paper 298 (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p 8

¹²⁸ Collins. *Security and South East Asia: Domestic, Regional and Global Issues* p191

¹²⁹ Mohamed Jawhar bin Hassan. "Disputes in the South China Sea" in *Southeast Asian Perspectives on Security* (ed Derek da Cunha) (Singapore: ISEAS, 2000) p 100

level, such as over fishing rights in Exclusive Economic Zones.¹³⁰ However, it is China's claims that have raised the most concern. In 1992 China claimed, under UNCLOS, approximately 80 per cent of the South China Sea, making it a key player in regional negotiations. Since that date, analysts have noted that China has gradually worked to expand its physical presence in the South China Sea—though the construction of buildings and the stationing of troops on small islands—and have referred to these actions as China's "creeping assertiveness."¹³¹

The ASEAN states have been unable to come to terms with China's claims, either individually or as a group. China's claims overlapped with those of a number of South East Asian states, including Malaysia, Indonesia, Vietnam and the Philippines.¹³² In the 1990s, Vietnam and China had had the most significant clashes, mostly centred around the Spratly Islands and the Gulf of Tonkin. Malaysia and Singapore also had significant concerns as well. Malaysia and China have overlapping claims in the South China Sea off East Malaysia, which has resulted in limited clashes between both states.¹³³ While Singapore has no claims in the South China Sea, the Singapore government has indicated its concerns regarding any limiting of freedom of navigation in the Sea.¹³⁴ ASEAN preferred multilateral arrangements were possible when dealing with powers outside the region, but China preferred to deal with individual ASEAN members on a bilateral basis. In some areas China was viewed as resisting dealing with a collective ASEAN position on the disputes as this could lead to a need to take formal diplomatic positions on claims that Beijing would rather remain unresolved.¹³⁵ Beijing preferred to negotiate on a bilateral basis with each South East Asia state

¹³⁰ Throughout the 1990s there were numerous clashes over fishing rights within contested territorial waters. See M Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes* and Collins. *Security and South East Asia*. p 104-105

¹³¹ J Haake. *ASEAN's Diplomatic and Security Culture*. (London: Routledge, 2003) p123

¹³² An in-depth discussion on the competing claims can be found in MJ Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*.

¹³³ In March 1995. Malaysian navy patrol boats fired on a Chinese trawler off Sarawak, injuring four Chinese crew members. M.J. Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. p 48

¹³⁴ M.J. Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. p 48

¹³⁵ M Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. p 12-13

concerned rather than as a bloc, and some have seen this as an attempt to play the littoral claimants off against each other.¹³⁶

Through its presence and military exercises in maritime South East Asia, the FPDA has reflected the continuing Western interest and involvement in the region. The FPDA has held past exercises in the South China Sea—for example, in 1984 the FPDA held a week long set of air and maritime exercises¹³⁷—and has continued to do so despite China's claims. The focus of some of these exercises has been towards East Malaysia, where Chinese and Malaysian EEZ claims overlap. In 1992 Malaysia, the FPDA member usually most reticent about discussing the Arrangements openly, gave notice that the FPDA exercises would be extended to include East Malaysia by 1995.¹³⁸ The stress on unanimity of decision-making in the FPDA, and the lack of any publicly available dissenting opinion regarding Malaysia's claim, would lead to the conclusion that the inclusion of East Malaysia was supported by the other FPDA members. This was a very significant expansion in focus for the Arrangements: as discussed in Chapter Four, Australia had originally insisted that the FPDA be restricted to peninsula Malaysia only. The FPDA undertook exercises in the South China Sea in 1994. At that time, the FPDA defence ministers stated that the South China Sea had been chosen because the FPDA had expanded to cover East Malaysia and perhaps Brunei in case they wanted to join the FPDA.¹³⁹ Some have also suggested strengthening the link between the FPDA and the US. Scholars have suggested that the US engage in closer cooperation with the FPDA as all the states shared "... a common interest in effective surveillance and patrol activities in and around the Straits of Malacca..."¹⁴⁰ Although FPDA scenarios only use fictitious enemy states in FPDA exercise scenarios, the scenarios themselves can point towards the real life threat the exercises are intended to counter. For example, the fictitious

¹³⁶ M Valencia. *China and the South China Sea Disputes*. p 13

¹³⁷ R Thakur. *In Defence of New Zealand: Foreign Policy Choices in the Nuclear Age*. (Boulder: Westview Press, 1986) p 61

¹³⁸ M Richardson. "New relevance for the PDA." *Asia-Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1993 p 37

¹³⁹ Richardson International Herald Tribune 23 September 1994 p 6

¹⁴⁰ D Stuart and W Tow. *A US Strategy for the Asia-Pacific*. Adelphi paper 299. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1995) p 58

enemy for the 2004 *Ex Flying Fish* was given the name “Red nation” and its base of operations was two islands in the South China Sea.¹⁴¹ It is important to stress that the FPDA was in no way intended to serve as a significant counter to the Chinese presence in the South China Sea. However, the Arrangements have made a small contribution to regional stability as they allow for a Western military presence to exercise in the South China Sea. Singapore Defence Minister Dr Yeo was correct when he stated in 1993 that with the uncertainty of South East Asia in the post Cold War period, particularly regarding the South China Sea, the Five Power Defence Arrangements were “effective ballast” for stability in region.¹⁴²

Capacity-building

The FPDA has also helped to improve Australia’s operational and planning capabilities. As discussed in Chapter Five, Australia took the lead role in the planning and execution of FPDA exercises and training when their focus was originally on helping the militaries of Malaysia and Singapore to operate in conjunction with one another and with the other members of the Arrangements. Australia provided training to Malaysia and Singapore in intelligence gathering, air and naval surveillance and protection of shipping and shipping lanes, air and maritime defence, logistics capabilities and some form of command, control and communications.¹⁴³ This involved the creation of standard operating procedures, with an initial focus on the air forces of Malaysia and Singapore. As Malaysia and Singapore upgraded their militaries in the 1970s and 1980s however, the gap between their defence capabilities and those of Australia began to close. In addition, starting in the late 1980s the British began to regularly contribute military forces to FPDA exercises. FPDA exercises contributed towards the abilities of its members to operate together at a high level in

¹⁴¹ *Air Force News: The Official Newspaper of the Australian Air Force*
<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4516/topstories/story06.htm> (accessed 25 May 2011)

¹⁴² M Richardson “New relevance for the PDA” *Asia Pacific Defence Reporter Annual Reference Edition* 1991 p 37

¹⁴³ These are among the force development requirements listed in Department of Defence. *The Defence of Australia, 1987*. Canberra: Australian Government Publishing Service, March 1987 p 32-33

defence of the region. This also assisted in improving the operational capabilities of the Australian Defence Force, something that was not anticipated back when the Arrangements were created.

From the late 1980s to 2010, FPDA exercises had contributed to Malaysian and Singaporean capabilities to the point where the militaries of both states could operate on a level similar to that of Australia Defence Force. In 1988, all the members of the FPDA began to use a standard operating procedure in multilateral exercises.¹⁴⁴ This allowed the FPDA to move beyond simple exercises and tackle more complicated roles. By the early 1990s, the planning of FPDA exercises involved staff from all three services from all five members. This led to a significant improvement in the FPDA's capability to create more complex exercises involving all three services.¹⁴⁵ After three years of extensive planning, air and maritime exercises were combined into the 1997 *Ex Flying Fish*. During *Ex Flying Fish*, for the first time a Royal Malaysian Naval officer assumed the key role of Joint Maritime Component Commander on the Royal Navy's aircraft carrier HMS *Illustrious*.¹⁴⁶ Land exercises also began to appear more regularly in the 1990s under the name *Ex Suman Warrior*. The FPDA also broadened its mandate beyond traditional defence. The tsunami of 26 December 2004 spurred the FPDA look at building interoperability in the area of disaster relief.¹⁴⁷ By 2010 there were five significant FPDA exercises "...aimed at capacity building, improving interoperability and operational capability..." as well as improving professionalism, relationships and cooperation: *Ex Bersama Lima*, *Ex Bersama Shield*, *Ex Bersama Padu*, *Ex Suman Warrior* and *Ex Suman Protector*.¹⁴⁸ In 2010 Senator John Faulkner, Australian Minister for Defence, stated that the FPDA had helped to develop 'understanding, commonality and interoperability between

¹⁴⁴ Richardson "New Relevance for the PDA" 1993 p 37

¹⁴⁵ Crowe p 41

¹⁴⁶ A Joint Maritime Component Commander is responsible for providing recommendations on the proper employment of maritime forces and assets and the planning and coordination of maritime operations. This was the first time that a foreign Joint Maritime Component Commander had exercised control from a Royal Navy ship. *Navy International*, 102, issue 5, 1 June 1997

¹⁴⁷ C Thayer. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever." p 91

¹⁴⁸ CA Thayer. *The Five Power Defence Arrangements and Their Contribution to Regional Security, 2004-2010*. Paper for Conference on the Five Power Defence Arrangements at Forty, co-sponsored by the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore 2 March 2011.

defence forces.’¹⁴⁹ The FPDA was not the only beneficiary of the increasing strength and capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore. Through the FPDA, Australia had contributed to raising the operational and professional levels of Malaysia and Singapore, to the point where both countries have been able to exercise with the US at a high level.¹⁵⁰

Increased British participation in FPDA exercises has also benefitted the Australian Defence Force along with the other FPDA members. Regular bilateral exercises between Australia and the UK have always been constrained by distance. In the 1970s the Australian navy did not travel far from the region and certainly not in the numbers required for multilateral operations.¹⁵¹ The FPDA created the opportunity for the UK to train and practise with Australia from the late 1980s onwards. This had a particular impact on the Royal Australian Navy. Canberra has understood that the Royal Australian Navy was highly unlikely to fight a battle on its own and so required the operational experience to enable it to be an effective member of any maritime coalition.¹⁵² Exercises and multilateral training improve the ability of the participants to operate together, which means that less time need be spent getting the participants up to speed in the event of the outbreak of hostilities. From 1989 onwards, one to two Royal Australian Navy ships were deployed to Singapore each year in support of the FPDA.¹⁵³ Exercises with regional navies through the FPDA contributed to better operational compatibility between Australia and the other FPDA members. However, the inclusion of the British Royal Navy provides an extra fillip to these exercises of benefit to Australia. Although British naval power has declined in the past decades, the fleet is still large enough to exert sea power. Some see the Royal Navy as setting a

¹⁴⁹ *The Shangri-La Dialogue: the 9th IISS Asia Security Summit 4-6 June 2010* (Singapore: International Institute for Strategic Studies, August 2010) p 38

¹⁵⁰ 009. 2009. Interview by author. Singapore. 8 May.

¹⁵¹ In 1976 there were RAN visits to the west coast of the US and Canada (the first since 1966) and in 1977 two RAN ‘major combatants’ went to the UK to participate in a Royal Naval Review. See D Sherwood. *The Navy and National Security: The Peacetime Dimension*. (Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, 1994) p 50

¹⁵² Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

¹⁵³ T Frame. *No Pleasure Cruise: The Story of the Royal Australian Navy*. (Crows Nest: Allen & Unwin, 2004) p 270

high benchmark and giving extra perspective on multilateral exercises.¹⁵⁴

Furthermore, Britain's membership in the FPDA draws the UK to Asia and afterwards Australia can undertake bilateral exercises and training with the British. The inclusion of the UK in multilateral exercises may have contributed to the ease with which the Australian and British navies operated together in the Arabian Gulf in 2003. Some saw that it would have been harder for both to operate together without the shared experience gained through the FPDA.¹⁵⁵ Otherwise it was seen as unlikely that any UK forces, maritime or otherwise, would travel to Australia on a regular basis just for bilateral exercises.¹⁵⁶

FPDA exercises also helped Australia to contribute to the ability of the New Zealand Defence Forces to remain interoperable with other militaries. Maintaining New Zealand military capability and interoperability was especially important after the ejection of New Zealand from ANZUS. Between 1986 and 2010 Washington has refused to allow New Zealand involvement in any multilateral defence exercises involving the United States, such as the important American RIMPAC exercises.¹⁵⁷ New Zealand saw FPDA as great opportunity to participate in multilateral exercises, particularly after their split from the US greatly restricted opportunities for them to exercise with large multilateral groups.¹⁵⁸ By training with New Zealand under the FPDA, Australia does not have to spend time and budget to engage in separate exercises with the New Zealand Defence Force.¹⁵⁹ In addition, the FPDA provided Australia with another opportunity to increase its interoperability with New Zealand.¹⁶⁰ The FPDA made a positive contribution to the maintenance of New Zealand interoperability with Australian and other regional defence forces as well as those of the UK.

¹⁵⁴ Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

¹⁵⁵ Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

¹⁵⁶ Martin, Will. 2009. Interview by author. London. 9 June.

¹⁵⁷ ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." p 293

¹⁵⁸ Houston, Air Chief Marshal Angus. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 7 August.

¹⁵⁹ Houston, Air Chief Marshal Angus. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 7 August.

¹⁶⁰ Houston, Air Chief Marshal Angus. 2009. Interview by author. Canberra. 7 August.

The improvement in Malaysian and Singaporean military capabilities and the increased participation of the UK in FPDA exercises has allowed the Australian Defence Force to gain exposure to a wide range of defence equipment through its FPDA partners. The new equipment and tactical operations brought by the members to FPDA exercises gave Australia and the other members of the FPDA the opportunity to exercise against and alongside new capabilities.¹⁶¹ Planning exercises and training meant that the ADF needed to become familiar with more than just what was in its own inventory. As Malaysia and Singapore modernised their defence forces, the value of FPDA training and exercises increased for Canberra. Exercises enable all nations to practise with and against similar and dissimilar weapons systems and “against weapons systems not in their inventory, such as submarines.”¹⁶² FPDA exercises give the ADF exposure to operating against non-NATO equipment, such as the Malaysian air force’s MIG-29 fighter jet. The increased participation of the UK broadened the exposure of the other FPDA members to a wide range of high-level defence equipment. In 1997 the British nuclear submarine HMS Trenchant was used for the first time in an FPDA exercise alongside a British aircraft carrier, all part of a complex exercise involving 12,000 military personnel, 36 naval vessels and 164 aircraft.¹⁶³ Smaller FPDA exercises also include a diverse range of equipment and personnel. A 2004 FPDA exercise included “...66 aircraft from 18 different flying squadrons, 27 ships, four diving teams, a British Army commando unit and ground-based air defence units...”¹⁶⁴ Differing choices on equipment purchases by FPDA members has made the Arrangements a valuable source of information to Australian defence procurement specialists. The Australian military values the FPDA as means of exchanging views on different equipment, consulting Malaysia and Singapore on the benefits of their equipment in order to give Australia a better idea of what to purchase.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶¹ Tulley, Stephen. 2009. Interview by author. Kuala Lumpur. 19 May.

¹⁶² PL Young, “The Five Power Defence Arrangement – A Review” p 8

¹⁶³ M Jeffri Razali. “Britain to use war games to re-assert presence.” *New Straits Times*, April 15, 1997

¹⁶⁴ *Air Force News: The Official Newspaper of the Australian Air Force*

<http://www.defence.gov.au/news/raafnews/editions/4516/topstories/story06.htm> (accessed 19 May 2011)

¹⁶⁵ PL Young. “The Five Power Defence Arrangement – A Review” *Asian Defence Journal* May 1997

Although the FPDA members have increased their ability to work together on land, sea and air, it is still important to note that these improvements give rise to new problems that must be resolved. Within the FPDA, exercises are sometimes still constrained by attitudes between Malaysia and Singapore. While the military capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore, and their willingness to operate together, have improved over time, both states still viewed one another with a certain amount of distrust. Both militaries are aware of how much information on their capabilities is given to the other members of the FPDA during exercises. At times both Malaysia and Singapore do not always use their most modern equipment in FPDA exercises, so as not to reveal too much of their capabilities to one another.¹⁶⁶

FPDA members have also had to consider Indonesian sensitivities when creating exercise scenarios. As discussed above, available information indicates that these scenarios make use of a fictitious country as the source of the threat that the exercises are designed to counter.¹⁶⁷ Nevertheless, some evidence indicates that concerns regarding Indonesia still lie behind some FPDA exercises. While he does not mention the FPDA by name, Patrick Hennessey makes passing mention of a three week “Command and Staff Training” exercise in Malaysia with British, Australian, New Zealand and Singaporean troops that tested contingency plans designed to halt an Indonesian attempt to capture Malaysia’s strategic oil reserves.¹⁶⁸

Conclusion

The Five Power Defence Arrangements have contributed to Australian strategic interests in ways never anticipated by its creators. South East Asia has evolved since the late 1980s due to seismic shifts in world politics as well as significant changes within the region. ASEAN expanded to become a truly regional Association, and

¹⁶⁶ PL Young “The Five Power Defence Arrangement – A Review” p 8

¹⁶⁷ Fictitious country names include “Pengavia” during the 1988 Exercise Lima Bersatu, as cited in M Chalmers *Confidence-Building in South-East Asia* (Boulder: Westview Press, 1996) and the aforementioned “Red nation” and the “Democratic Republic of Plaincharts” *Navy Today: Monthly Magazine of the Royal New Zealand Navy* online <http://www.navy.mil.nz/know-your-navy/official-documents/navy-today/nt10webformat/nt155/deployed-task-group.htm> (accessed 25 May 2011)

¹⁶⁸ P Hennessey. *The Junior Officers’ Reading Club*. (New York: Riverhead Books, 1991) p108

began to broaden its mandate to include a specific focus on regional security. However, although a number of regional defence initiatives have arisen since the end of the Cold War—many sponsored and led by ASEAN itself—none of these initiatives have been able to duplicate the benefits offered by the Arrangements. The FPDA has provided a sense of reassurance from its continuing existence, which has allowed both its members and non-members to utilise the Arrangements for the benefit of regional stability. In many ways, between the late 1980s and 2010 the region of South East Asia evolved around the FPDA and made use of its existence because nothing arose to replace the Arrangements. As a result, the FPDA has contributed to Australian strategic interests by contributing towards regional stability and at the same time further providing Australia with an additional role in regional defence issues.

Chapter Seven – Conclusion: How the Five Power Defence Arrangements served Australian interests

“We have also to remember that a people with a city defended by walls has a choice of alternatives—to treat its city as walled [and therefore to act on the defensive], or to treat it as if it were unwallled [and therefore to take the offensive]—but a people without any walls is a people without any choice.” *Aristotle - Politics*

This thesis has sought to examine Australia’s involvement in the Five Power Defence Arrangements and determine how this involvement has contributed to Australian strategic interests between 1971 and 2010. Between these two dates, the FPDA has worked very much on the periphery of Australian strategic policy and has rarely received the focus of elected officials, academics or the Australian public. This is reflected in the fact that there has been little public discussion of the FPDA in general, let alone the relationship of the Arrangements to Australian interests. As the first study to explore the relationship between the FPDA and Australian strategic interests, this study is intended to be the ‘first word’ and not the ‘last word’ in scholarship on this topic.

This study has found Australia’s participation in the FPDA has had overall a positive impact on Australian strategic interests in South East Asia and with its three key allies the United States, the United Kingdom and New Zealand. Participation in the Arrangements has met Australian policymakers’ initial expectations for the FPDA and even gone beyond them. Like the city walls discussed by Aristotle in the quote above, the Five Power Defence Arrangements have provided greater choices for Australian policymakers in a number of key areas. They have broadened Australia’s options in its relationship with key allies, with the ASEAN states and with its own operation capabilities and intelligence gathering. This continuing usefulness indicates why the Arrangements—initially expected by all members to be temporary—have survived and evolved over almost four decades.

This thesis argues that the concept of ‘defence engagement’ is the most effective analytical framework for examining the FPDA and assessing its contributions to Australian strategic interests between 1971 and 2010. Under this paradigm, the positive effects of the FPDA fall into two broad, discernable areas: the realm of diplomacy and the realm of military engagement. As preceding chapters have shown, the Arrangements have been beneficial in Australia’s relations with Malaysia and Singapore and have helped to reinforce Australia’s strategic relations with Indonesia and the wider ASEAN membership. Australian involvement has indicated wider Western interests in the continuing stability of South East Asia. The FPDA has also helped to improve the inter-operational capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore, as well as those of New Zealand and Australia, in its later decades. The existence of the FPDA has indicated the continued interest of the United Kingdom and New Zealand in the security of Australia. Although the FPDA has not been able to prevent a certain amount of disengagement by the UK and New Zealand between 1971 and 2010, the Arrangements have facilitated efforts by both these states to reengage with the region. In the absence of the Five Power Defence Arrangements, one may posit that the range of options available to Australian policymakers in areas of key strategic importance would have been narrower.

Findings compared to known scholarship

Within the existing scholarship, this thesis shares the view that the FPDA has made a positive contribution to the strategic interests of the FPDA members, the stability and security of South East Asia as well as US strategic interests. This thesis concurs with Thayer that the FPDA has played “multiple roles” in the security of South East Asia including confidence building, improvement of Malaysian and Singaporean military capabilities and individual benefits to its five members.¹ This thesis is also in agreement with the idea that the FPDA complemented the wider US anchored Asia-

¹ CA Thayer. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Quiet Achiever” *Security Challenges* 3, no. 1 (February 2007) p 92-93

Pacific security network, as discussed by Bristow and Emmers.² This work also supports the conclusions of Tan and Rolfe regarding the importance of the Arrangements as a networking mechanism that facilitates continued engagement between all five members.³ Moreover, the FPDA has been an important factor in providing Australia with a framework to ensure its inclusion in the defence of South East Asia as a member of the Asia Pacific region.⁴ The Arrangements have also helped to improve the defence capabilities of Malaysia and Singapore, with regards to their interoperability with one another and with the other FPDA members.⁵ There is also agreement between the findings of this thesis and the existing literature that, while the contributions made by the FPDA to Australian and regional security have been positive, they must not be overstated. The Five Power Defence Arrangements help to complement other security frameworks in the region, but it is the US commitment to South East Asia that is the primary driver of regional security.⁶

There are significant differences between the findings of this thesis and certain perceptions in the FPDA literature. The oft-repeated view that the FPDA was moribund or inert for a significant period between 1971 and the late 1980s is an overstatement. In 1981 Lewis Young quoted Singaporean Deputy Prime Minister Rajaratnam as deeming the FPDA as irrelevant in dealing with the Soviet presence in South East Asia because the Arrangements were originally intended to fight subversion within Malaysia and Singapore.⁷ In 1991 Chin records a Malaysian deputy

² R Emmers, *The Role of the Five Power Defence Arrangements in the Southeast Asia Security Architecture*. RSIS Working Paper 195. Singapore: S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, 20 April 2010 p 15-16 and D Bristow "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization" *Contemporary Southeast Asia* 27, no. 1 (April 2005) p 16

³ ATH Tan. "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: The Continuing Relevance." *Contemporary Security Policy* 29, no. 2 (2008): 298 and JG Rolfe *Anachronistic past or positive future: New Zealand and the Five Power Defence Arrangements*. Centre for Strategic Studies Working Paper 4/95. Wellington: Victoria University of Wellington, 1995 p 13

⁴ R Casegrande. *The Five Power Defence Arrangements: are they still relevant to Australia in the 90s?* Working Paper no. 17. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, September 1993, p 11

⁵ JM Jamaluddin. "FPDA Remains Relevant in Regional Security Structure." *Asian Defence Journal* (October 2010) p 5

⁶ Bristow, "The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Southeast Asia's Unknown Regional Security Organization" p 16

⁷ P Lewis Young. "What Future for the Five Power Defence Arrangement - a personal view from Australia" *Asian Defence Journal* (October 1981) p 38-39

defence minister as having declared the FPDA prior to 1988 as “dead wood,”⁸ with this expression repeated in Keating in 2006 and Thayer in 2007.⁹ Chapter Five of this study demonstrates that the FPDA was quietly active and evolving between 1971 and the late 1980s. The FPDA was also able to help Australia contribute towards the countering of the Soviet presence in Vietnam by facilitating the collection of intelligence on Soviet naval activities in the region. These issues have not been adequately explored prior to this study. FPDA-related activity between 1971 and the late 1980s went through peaks and troughs but labelling the FPDA as moribund negates the usefulness of the Arrangements to all five members during this time.

This study has also been the first to examine the FPDA through the analytical lens of defence engagement. This thesis has taken a more extensive and detailed approach to past attempts to classify the Arrangements within an intellectual framework. As discussed in Chapter Two, Keating uses alliance theory to explain the longevity of FPDA, while Emmers places the Arrangements within William Tow’s discussion of mini-lateral institutions.¹⁰ Although past discussions of the FPDA have described the FPDA as “diplomatically and defensively useful,”¹¹ there has been no discussion of the FPDA as allowing Australia to engage with its allies and the region through a combination of diplomacy and military commitment. In Chapters Five and Six, this thesis has broken down the contribution of the FPDA into the two component parts of defence engagement—the diplomatic and the military—and has identified important contributions in both areas. A number of these contributions have been overlooked, such as Indonesian and US support for the Arrangements, as discussed in Chapter Five, and how the FPDA has allowed Australia to demonstrate its support of its regional allies and the United States, as discussed in Chapter Six.

⁸ Chin Kin Wah. “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: Twenty years after.” *The Pacific Review* 4 no. 3 (January 1991) p196

⁹ G Keating “The Five Power Defence Arrangements: A Case Study in Alliance Longevity.” *Australian Defence Force Journal* 170 (2006) p 49; and Thayer “The Quiet Achiever” p 85

¹⁰ Keating “A Case Study” p 48, Emmers pp 1-2

¹¹ C Bell. *Australia’s Alliance Options: prospect and retrospect in a world of change*. Australian Foreign Policy Paper. Canberra: Australian National University 1991 p 50

In addition, there are unexpected aspects of these findings that require special mention. The first is that the Five Power Defence Arrangements have contributed to Australia's strategic interests far more broadly than has been anticipated or described in the literature by 2010. The FPDA has had an impact across a wide range of Australian strategic interests, both in the Asia-Pacific and beyond. Furthermore, archival sources in the UK and Australia indicate that, Australia's primary intention for the FPDA was not external defence for Malaysia and Singapore vis-à-vis Indonesia but was intended to provide confidence in Malaysia and Singapore by helping to stabilise Malay-Chinese communal relations. Indonesia was, in fact, kept abreast by Australia of negotiations prior to the formation of the FPDA, as discussed in Chapter Four. Moreover, the Arrangements have not been a barrier to Australia-Indonesia bilateral relations but have instead demonstrated Australia's interest in Indonesia's security and the stability of Indonesia's neighbours. The FPDA has helped contribute to positive relations between Australia and ASEAN and Australia and Indonesia. Also, the role of the FPDA in gathering intelligence on Soviet naval activity during the Cold War has also been an important revelation

This chapter will discuss the significance of the findings of this study to the broader field of Australian strategic interests. The chapter follows the previously outlined concept of defence engagement as being comprised of two halves: diplomacy and a 'harder' military edge. The conclusions in these two sections leads to a discussion of the policy implications of these findings and paths for future research into the Arrangements. This study will then close with a look at the possible future for the Five Power Defence Arrangements.

Diplomacy

The Five Power Defence Arrangements have provided Australia with invaluable experience in middle power defence diplomacy. Australia has undertaken the role of a middle power in a number of areas. Australia's middle power strategy in North East

Asia has included strong and lasting bilateral relations with Japan and the Republic of Korea and has gained a reputation as a reliable player in the realm of diplomacy.¹² However, through its membership in the FPDA, Australia has been in a unique position to facilitate the continued mutual defence cooperation of Malaysia and Singapore from *inside* a small multilateral defence framework. The more central role of Australia in the FPDA as compared to New Zealand or the UK, has allowed Australia to demonstrate to ASEAN that it is honestly committed to regional security while recognising that Australia's role is to support rather than lead. The FPDA is arguably one of Australia's leading examples of the effectiveness of middle power defence diplomacy.

Australia is commonly referred to as a 'middle power' based on the country's economic and military strength.¹³ There is no universally agreed definition of a middle power, but what is agreed is that the criteria for middle power status depends on a combination of economic strength, population, military power, geographic location and the perceptions of other states. According to Evans and Grant, effective middle power diplomacy requires four key attributes: the identification of a niche issue or opportunity; the resources to effectively accomplish the goal; some creativity in the application of those resources; and some credibility in the eyes of the other states.¹⁴ Due to their smaller economic and military clout, middle powers need to work "indirectly and cooperatively."¹⁵ They also engage in multilateral institutions and 'interest-based' coalition building to compensate for their more limited influence in bilateral relations.¹⁶

¹² W Tow. *Asia-Pacific Strategic Relations: Seeking Convergent Security*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003) p 157-159

¹³ For a discussion of Australia's position in the rankings of middle powers, see M Thomson. *Punching Above Our Weight? Australia as a middle power*. (Strategic Insights Series. Canberra: Australian Strategic Policy Institute, August 2005)

¹⁴ G Evans and B Grant. *Australia's Foreign Relations in the World of the 1990s*. 2nd edition. (Carlton: Melbourne University Press, 1995) pp 346-347

¹⁵ H Smith. "Politics of Foreign Policy," in *Australian Foreign Policy into the New Millennium*, ed. FA Mediansky. (South Melbourne: MacMillan Education Australia, 1997) p 14

¹⁶ D Goldsworthy. "An Overview" in *Seeking Asian Engagement: Australia in World Affairs, 1991-95*, edited by J Cotton and J Ravenhill. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997) p 18-19

There were two significant withdrawals that required Australia to engage in middle power defence diplomacy. The first was the withdrawal of the bulk of British forces from South East Asia by 1971. This withdrawal precipitated the Five Power Defence Arrangements and effectively placed Australia in the position of lead external power in the Malaysia-Singapore defence relationship. Like it or not, as discussed in Chapter Four, Australia's strategic interests were tied to the security and stability of the Malay Peninsula. The second withdrawal was that of the great power militaries from South East Asia after the Cold War: the US military from the Philippines and the Soviet military from Vietnam. As per Nancy Viviani, this withdrawal changed the dynamic of South East Asia. The withdrawal removed the potential for regional great power military conflict but also made the regional strategic situation more fluid and problems had to be resolved without reliance on the great powers.¹⁷ The FPDA was an expression of a need in 1971 to resolve a regional issue with a minimum reliance on the great powers. As such, it is not surprising that in the early years of the 1990s, the Arrangements were posited as a template for regional defence engagement.

Australia's role in the FPDA allowed it to successfully contribute towards the security of the region between 1971 and 2010 through middle power defence diplomacy. The Arrangements were a 'niche opportunity' that could only be filled by Australia. Geography meant that the UK would always be too far away from South East Asia while New Zealand would always be too small to be credible as the central non-South East Asian member in the Arrangements. Australia's link to the US through ANZUS provided Canberra with additional credibility in the region, as discussed in Chapters Five and Six, as did the possibility of British assistance in the event of an attack on Malaysia and Singapore. The Arrangements were a very creative approach to the problem of regional security and unwelcome foreign influence. The FPDA Communiqué's guarantee that the members would 'consult' in the event of a threat to, or attack on, Malaysia and Singapore reduced the chances of Australia being

¹⁷ N Viviani. "Australia and Southeast Asia" in *Seeking Asian Engagement: Australia in World Affairs, 1991-95*, ed. J Cotton and J Ravenhill. (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, 1997) p 150

‘entrapped’ in regional disputes.¹⁸ However, Australia’s ongoing military presence at Butterworth indicated that there was a harder commitment to the security of Malaysia and Singapore than the FPDA Communiqué might indicate.

Australia’s consistent middle power defence diplomacy helped to maintain the FPDA framework which contributed to the maintenance of the Malaysia-Singapore bilateral defence relationship. Within the FPDA, it was possible for both Malaysia and Singapore, alongside Australia, the UK and New Zealand, to gain greater clarity into the defence relations of all members. The FPDA provided a framework for Malaysia and Singapore to better understand their strategic intentions.¹⁹ Australia’s contribution of military equipment and personnel to the FPDA was always within the country’s capacity and yet was utilised inventively. Australia’s contribution in filling the Commander IADS role was acceptable to all FPDA members. The framework of high level political councils, such as the FPDA Ministers Meetings, and the ongoing operational headquarters of IADS, established a pattern for ongoing defence consultation that slowly created a set of mutually acceptable operational norms and guidelines. For example, the Australian Maritime Doctrine 2010 emphasised that there had been “considerable effort” under FPDA to develop mutually agreed naval procedures and tactics.²⁰ Australia has played a leading role in an integral aspect of regional stability—that of mitigating tensions between Malaysia and Singapore in their bilateral defence relationship.

Military

Australia’s military contributions to the Five Power Defence Arrangements placed Canberra in a leadership role in developing and leading multilateral operations in an

¹⁸ Entrapment springs from fear that a member of an alliance will pull other members into conflicts over interests that the other members do not share. G Snyder, *Alliance Politics*. (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997) p 181

¹⁹ Tow, *Asia-Pacific Strategic Relations: Seeking Convergent Security*. p 137

²⁰ Royal Australian Navy, *Australian Maritime Doctrine: RAN Doctrine 1 - 2010*, 2nd ed. (Canberra: Royal Australian Navy, 2010) p 3

area of strategic interest. The FPDA allowed Australia to make a significant contribution in areas of Australian expertise. The Australian military had a great deal of experience in working as part of a larger military coalition as well as working offshore. Australian troops had worked under British and American command in a number of significant instances, including World War II, Vietnam and the Emergency in Malaya. Through the FPDA, Australia has had the opportunity to capitalise on these past experiences. Instead of once again participating as a junior partner, the FPDA has given Australia almost four decades of experience as a leading member of South East Asia's only multilateral defence arrangement.

This role is one that Australia would have been unlikely to gain without the Arrangements. As stated above, geography does play a part when defining middle power status. In the case of the Cold War Western alliance, middle powers were normally either surrounded by other middle powers—as is the case with Europe—or have great power neighbours, as in the case of Canada. In either case, the opportunity for a middle power to have an ongoing and significant role in a multilateral defence organisation is more limited. In the case of the Canada-US North American Aerospace Defense Command (NORAD) Canada's involvement alongside the US is not reflected in the development of NORAD policy. Under NORAD, there is a recognised tendency for the US to consult with Canada after NORAD-related policy has been decided and not before.²¹

In addition, Australia has had to counter the prevailing ASEAN view of Australia as an outsider. As discussed in Chapter Four, Australia did not want to be 'shut out' of defence decision-making in South East Asia by ASEAN initiatives such as ZOPFAN. Occasional bilateral tensions between Australia and individual ASEAN states such as Malaysia and Indonesia reinforced this sense of Australia as an outside power. In addition, the San Francisco system of treaties that linked the United States and its allies in North and South East Asia placed the US as the key alliance power in the

²¹ JT Jockel. *NORAD. 1957-2007: A History*. (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2007) p 195

Asia-Pacific. While Australia was never expected to replace the US role in regional security, this 'hub and spoke' arrangement of alliance would have made it difficult for Australia to find a supporting role in regional security.

However, the FPDA provided Australia with an opportunity to take an important role in the security of the ASEAN states at a critical period in the organisation's history. As discussed in Chapter Five, Australian participation in the FPDA helped offset some of the destabilising effects of communalism in Malaysia and Singapore and facilitated the building of their military capabilities without generating objections from the Soviet Union and China. The FPDA Communiqué defined the defence of Malaysia and Singapore as 'indivisible,' and Australia was placed in the position of building local military capabilities and consistent defence links between Malaysia and Singapore within a multilateral framework. This did not exist elsewhere within ASEAN. In the 1970s the ASEAN states had militaries that were primarily focussed on counter-insurgency and as a result lacked clearly defined doctrines of conventional warfare.²² From the early 1970s to the early 1990s, the ASEAN states focussed on bilateral military exercises but the majority of these exercises were not undertaken on a regular basis.²³ Multilateral defence cooperation was not a part of ASEAN's agenda during this time.²⁴ The ASEAN Regional Forum, created in 1994 was intended by ASEAN to create a framework for security cooperation. However, by 2003 the ARF had yet to successfully create a strong framework for security cooperation.²⁵ Moreover, multilateral defence cooperation had still not occurred among the ASEAN states by 2004 due to continuing suspicions and tensions between the ASEAN members.²⁶ ASEAN defence ministers established a regular forum only in 2006, nearly forty years after the Association was established.

²² JN Mak. *ASEAN Defence Reorientation 1975-1992*. Canberra Papers on Strategy and Defence no 103. Canberra: Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, Australian National University, 1993, p 13

²³ A Acharya. *An Arms Race in Post-Cold War Southeast Asia? Prospects for Control*. Pacific Strategic Papers no. 8. Singapore: ISEAS 1994 pp 36-37

²⁴ J Henderson. *Reassessing ASEAN*. Adelphi Paper 328. London: Oxford University Press, May 1999 p 26

²⁵ J Haacke. *ASEAN's Diplomatic and Security Culture*. (London: Routledge, 2003) p 221

²⁶ ATH Tan. *Security Perspectives of the Malay Archipelago*. (Cheltenham: Edward Elgar Publishing, 2004) p 153

Taking an even broader view, the FPDA broadly coincided with Australia's own long journey of political and strategic transformation to come to terms with its geography. In one sense, the FPDA embodied this transformation. In another, however, this thesis would support the contention that the Five Power Defence Arrangements have made an unspectacular and under-appreciated but cumulatively significant contribution to this transformation. In 1987 Defence Minister Kim Beazley emphasised that the shared dependence the ASEAN states and Australia had on the US and the UK in the 1950 and 1960s had evolved to the point where "We [emphasis added], the nations of the region, have grown to take our place in the Defence of the region."²⁷ As much as if not more so than any other formal process, the FPDA gave Australia a role inside ASEAN as the country's vitally important regional neighbours worked painstakingly to become a weightier and more resilient community of states.

Policy implications and further research

This thesis has been in many ways a preliminary examination of the FPDA and its role in Australia's strategic interests. By identifying the key ways in which the Arrangements have contributed to Australia, future policy makers and researchers can expand on what has been discovered.

Australia's participation in the Five Power Defence Arrangements has a number of policy ramifications. As discussed above, the Arrangements demonstrate the important role that a middle power can play in maintaining the stability and security of regional allies. This demonstrates that Australia can and must remain actively involved in multilateral security concerns within South East Asia. Through this involvement, Canberra indicates to other states in South East Asia that Australia has a

²⁷ Kim Beazley speech to Alumni International Singapore, "Australian perspectives on regional security issues" 19 November 1987 in *Compendium of Speeches by the Hon Kim C. Beazley, MP Minister for Defence 1985-1989*, (Canberra: Directorate of Departmental Publications)

variety of strategic interests in the region, and is particularly willing to support multilateral defence groupings. Policymakers should also note that participation in a loose framework such as the FPDA can contribute to regional security and, over the medium to long term, provide unexpected benefits. What must also be recognised by policymakers is that duplicating an FPDA level of defence engagement requires other extra-regional allies. Although their participation in the Arrangements was lower than that of Australia, the involvement of both New Zealand and the UK ensured that Australia did not take sole responsibility for Malaysia and Singapore. In addition, a slow pace of change and a requirement for unanimity are not always a barrier to progress if efforts are made to deal with contentious issues outside of official, high level meetings.

The FPDA offers a wide range of possibilities for further research. A closer exploration of the Arrangements from the perspectives of the other four members would be invaluable. Greater understanding of Malaysian and Singaporean consideration behind their continued participation in the FPDA would be invaluable from Australia's perspective. There has also been no close consideration of the FPDA, or use of the Arrangements as a case study, in works on confidence-building measures or defence cooperation in South East Asia. Moreover, studies of defence engagement and defence diplomacy have also neglected to utilise the FPDA as a case study. Further research could also focus on the place of the FPDA in discussions of the Arrangements in works on regional defence engagement.

Other areas of possible exploration by researchers and policymakers could include a case for the replacing of the FPDA by another, broader regional arrangement or the development of additional processes within the FPDA space. As discussed in the Chapter Two literature review, there exist some schools of thought that consider the Arrangements to be an impediment in the development of regional security cooperation as well as a possible model for an inclusive South East Asian security construct. While this thesis has demonstrated the support provided by the FPDA to ASEAN, it is a fact that the Arrangements involve just two member states from an

Association that has expanded considerably since 1967. Is there a point at which the FPDA will become irrelevant as the ASEAN states develop greater security processes, and should the FPDA be deliberately 'retired' prior to this point? Or should the FPDA be encouraged to develop new policies that gradually incorporate other ASEAN states into the FPDA framework? A possible first step could be the steady incorporation of other ASEAN states into operational processes such as the multilateral exercise program. Interesting additional lines of exploration include whether suggestions regarding the retirement of the Arrangements should come from Australia, from Malaysia and Singapore or another state within ASEAN, as well as whether an ASEAN-centred replacement would be able to provide a role for Australia.

Quo Vadis? Possible Futures

This study will conclude with a brief look at possible futures for the FPDA. Writers have devoted little, if any, time to the future of the Arrangements. Ryan sees the FPDA has having a limited future without significant changes to its structure and remit.²⁸ The future of the FPDA depends predominantly on the strategic environment in Asia. This discussion will look at the future of the FPDA in two scenarios: the strategic environment in Asia remains benign; and the strategic environment in Asia changes radically.

In the event of the strategic environment remaining stable in the Asia-Pacific region, there is no reason to doubt that the FPDA will continue much as it has since the end of the Cold War. None of the FPDA members have any pressing reason to end the relationship and any evolution in the Arrangements will occur slowly. The FPDA's requirement for unanimity in its decision-making processes will remain. As this thesis has described, the need for unanimity has kept all the members participating in the Arrangements between 1971 and 2010.

²⁸ A Ryan. *From Desert Storm to East Timor: Australia, the Asia-Pacific and the 'New Age' Coalition Operations*. Study Paper no. 302. Canberra: Land Warfare Studies Centre, January 2000 p 87

The exercises under the aegis of the FPDA are likely to continue in regularity and will continue to evolve to reflect wider concerns. The interest in incorporating non-conventional threats into FPDA exercises is very likely to continue. There remain ongoing concerns regarding the threat of maritime piracy and disruption of trade, particularly through the blocking of a maritime chokepoint such as the Straits of Malacca and Singapore.²⁹ The Malacca and Singapore Straits are, among all the international straits, one of the easiest to attack and block, which would result in a disruption of world trade as well as have a devastating effect on Singapore's economy.³⁰ In addition, the Straits of Malacca and Singapore also allow naval forces to transit between the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

There are unlikely to be any changes to the membership of the FPDA, both in terms of the resignation of existing members or the acceptance of new members. There is little incentive for existing members to resign their membership in the FPDA. Australia's strategic interests in the security and stability of South East Asia will remain unchanged. Both Malaysia and Singapore are important trading partners and logistic hubs for regional trade. Based on past examples, Malaysia and Singapore's bilateral relations are likely to continue to be prone to tension into the future. With regards to the UK and New Zealand, this thesis has recorded that a member may decrease its participation in the Arrangements for an extended period, as occurred with the UK prior to 1988, and yet still remain a member. The UK did not contribute military assets to *Ex Bersama Padu 2010* and yet the UK stressed, after the third Australia-UK Ministerial Consultations in January 2011, that it remained committed to the FPDA.³¹ As for New Zealand, the country's *Defence White Paper 2010* indicated that the

²⁹ MN Murphy. *Contemporary Piracy and Maritime Terrorism*. Adelphi Paper 388. (London: Routledge, July 2007) p 79

³⁰ M Richardson. *A Time Bomb for Global Trade*. (Singapore: ISEAS, 2004) p 38-39

³¹ CA Thayer. The Five Power Defence Arrangements and Their Contribution to Regional Security, 2004-2010. Paper for Conference on the Five Power Defence Arrangements at Forty, co-sponsored by the Institute for Southeast Asian Studies and the S. Rajaratnam School of International Studies, Singapore 2 March 2011.

Wellington would still consider the use of force as part of New Zealand's commitment to the FPDA.³²

The Arrangements are equally unlikely to expand. A 2009 statement by Malaysian Defence Minister Datuk Seri Ahmad Zahid Hamidi at 7th FPDA Defence Ministers' Meeting said that the FPDA would not expand beyond its original five member states.³³ After the 2010 FPDA Ministers Meeting, both Singapore and Malaysia stated that there was no intention to expand the Arrangements as the historical "closeness" of the members allowed them to work with one another.³⁴ However, non-member states are likely to be allowed to observe FPDA exercises with the permission of all five members.³⁵

If the strategic environment changes in a way that is not favourable to Australia, the future of the Five Power Defence Arrangements is less certain but not necessarily bleak. The one action that would guarantee the destruction of the FPDA would be if Malaysia and Singapore's bilateral relationship broke down and both sides resorted to open military conflict. From the very start of the FPDA, Australia recognised that a severe breakdown in Malaysia-Singapore relations would effectively vitiate Australia's participation in the FPDA.³⁶ The likelihood of such a breakdown may arguably increase as time passes and the leadership changes in both Malaysia and Singapore. Chin raises the issue that the newer generation of leaders on both sides will not have the same shared background that linked the previous generation of Malaysia

³² New Zealand Ministry of Defence. *Defence White Paper 2010*. Wellington: Ministry of Defence, November 2010 p 16

³³ "Defence pact won't expand" *New Straits Times*, 2 June 2009

³⁴ JM Jamaluddin. "FPDA Remains Relevant in Regional Security Structure." *Asian Defence Journal* October 2010 p 6

³⁵ Indonesia, Thailand, the US, China, Japan and India have been allowed to observe FPDA exercises in the past. "Non-member countries to observe FPDA's anti-terrorism exercises." *New Straits Times* 9 June 2004

³⁶ Defence Committee Paper "Review of Five Power and ANZUK Arrangements" dated 4 April 1972, NAA:A7942, F59 *The Five Power Arrangements and ANZUK*

and Singapore leaders, most of whom shared similar educational backgrounds in the UK and similar experiences in pre-independence Malaysia and Singapore.³⁷

Disruption of a regional strategic environment favourable to Australia by a non-FPDA state is arguably not likely to destroy the Arrangements. The FPDA still provides its members with a link to the US through Australia, and a link to the United Nations Security Council through the UK, a permanent member. In the event of a deteriorating security situation caused by Chinese warships enforcing China's claims to the South China Sea, or the threat of an attack by another ASEAN state on Malaysia or Singapore, connections with both the US and the Security Council would be valued by all FPDA members. A direct attack on Malaysia or Singapore would destroy the Arrangements only if Australia and the UK failed to act. Such an attack would place Australia in an invidious position but the importance of Malaysia and Singapore's geographic position to Australia its allies would be arguably too significant to ignore. Both states abut the strategically significant Straits of Malacca and Singapore. The FPDA members have indicated their expectation to contribute to the safety of the Straits.³⁸ In addition, it would be expected that the US would intervene, along with regional states in North and South East Asia that relied on the Straits for the passage of vital energy supplies from the Middle East.³⁹ As discussed in Chapter Two, the strategic importance of Malaysia and Singapore to the security of Australia has been emphasised in all Australian defence white papers from 1976 to 2009. With this pedigree, it is highly unlikely that Canberra would be indifferent to both states falling under the influence of a power hostile to Australia.

³⁷ Chin Kin Wah "The Management of Interdependence and Change" in *Malaysia and Singapore: Problems and Prospects*, ed. Azizah Kassim and Lau Teik Soon. (Singapore: Singapore Institute of International Affairs, 1992) pp 240-241

³⁸ "FPDA Members Keen to Help Ensure Safety of Navigation in Melaka Strait" 4 April 2006 Malaysian National News Agency www.bernama.com.my/bernama/v3/news.php?id=188218 (viewed 4 April 2006)

³⁹ Andrew Forbes. "The Roles of Maritime Forces in Protecting Energy Flows." in *Maritime Capacity Building in the Asia-Pacific Region*, edited by Andrew Forbes. Canberra: Papers in Australian Maritime Affairs no. 30, 2010 p 107

The Five Power Defence Arrangements have contributed to Canberra's ability to make a positive difference to the security of Australia as well as South East Asia. Its contributions have been made slowly and in subtle ways as a matter of necessity. Unanimity in decision-making has meant that the Arrangements have had a very tightly controlled and focussed existence. Nevertheless, Australia's commitments under the Arrangements have allowed Canberra to perform a wider range of roles in its strategic relations with both FPDA members and non-members.

Appendix

Appendix A: Text of the Five Power Defence Arrangements Communiqué

Communiqué issued at the conclusion of the Five Power Ministerial Meeting on the External Defence of Malaysia and Singapore, London, 15-16 April 1971

1. Ministers of the Governments of Australia, Malaysia, New Zealand, Singapore and the United Kingdom met in London on 15th and 16th April 1971, in order to consider matters of common interest to all five Governments relating to the external defence of Malaysia and Singapore.
2. The Ministers of the five Governments affirmed, as the basic principles of their discussions, their continuing determination to work together for peace and stability, their respect for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity for the sovereignty, political independence and territorial integrity of all countries, and their belief in the settlement of all international disputed by peaceful means in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter.
3. In the context of their Governments' determination to continue to co-operate closely in defence arrangements which are based on the need to regard the defence of Malaysia and Singapore as indivisible, the Ministers noted with gratification the development of the defence capability of Malaysia and Singapore, to which the other three Governments had given assistance, and the decisions of the Governments of Australia, New Zealand and the United Kingdom, which had been welcomed by the other two Governments, to continue to station forces there after the end of 1971.
4. In discussing the contribution which each of the five Governments would make to defence arrangements in Malaysia and Singapore, the Ministers noted the view of the United Kingdom Government that the nature of its commitment under the Anglo-Malaysian Defence Agreement required review and that that Agreement should be replaced by new political arrangements. They declared that their Governments would continue to co-operate, in accordance with their respective policies, in the field of defence after the termination of the Agreement on 1st November 1971.

5. The Ministers also declared, in relation to the external defence of Malaysia and Singapore, that in the event of any form of armed attack externally organised or supported or the threat of such attack against Malaysia or Singapore, their Governments would immediately consult together for the purpose of deciding what measures should be taken jointly or separately in relation to such attack or threat.
6. The Ministers reviewed the progress made regarding the establishment of the new defence arrangements. In particular:
 - a. They welcomed the practical steps being taken to establish the integrated Air Defence System for Malaysia and Singapore on 1st September 1971.
 - b. They agreed to establish an Air Defence Council, comprising one senior representative of each of the five nations, to be responsible for the functioning of the Integrated Air Defence System, and to provide direction to the Commander of the Integrated Air Defence System on matters affecting the organisation, training and development and operational readiness of the System.
 - c. They noted the progress made by the Five Power Naval Advisory Working Group.
 - d. They decided to set up a Joint Consultative Council to provide a forum for regular consultation at the senior official level on matters relating to the defence arrangements.

Ministers also noted that further discussion would take place between Governments on the practical arrangements required for the accommodation and facilities for the ANZUK forces to be stationed in the area. They looked forward to the early and successful conclusion of these discussions as an essential basis for the completion of plans for the new defence arrangements.

7. The Ministers agreed that from time to time it might be appropriate for them to meet to discuss their common interests. It would also be open to any of the participating Governments to request at any time, with due notice, a meeting to review these defence arrangements.

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