

ANZUS at 70

The past, present and future of the alliance



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Edited by
Patrick Walters

 **AmCham**
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US Secretary of State Dean Acheson signs the ANZUS Treaty in San Francisco on 1 September 1951, watched by John Foster Dulles (left), who would succeed Acheson from 1953 to 1959. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

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Cover image: US President George W Bush and Australian Prime Minister John Howard talk as they tour Sydney Harbour, 5 September 2007, aboard the MV AQA. Source: White House photo by Eric Draper, [online](#).

Back cover image: US President Barack Obama tours the Australian War Memorial with Australian Governor-General Quentin Bryce, War Memorial Chairman Peter Cosgrove and Prime Minister Julia Gillard in Canberra, 17 November 2011. Source: White House photo by Pete Souza, [online](#).

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Foreword

Arthur Sinodinos

In 2021, Australia and the United States mark 70 years of the ANZUS alliance. It's an important milestone and an opportunity for both countries to reflect on the impact, value and future direction of the alliance.

The idea of an Australian and US security agreement emerged in the aftermath of the devastating Second World War. Following extensive negotiations between the Australian, US and New Zealand governments, the three countries signed the tripartite ANZUS agreement on 1 September 1951 at the Presidio overlooking the Pacific Ocean. Reflecting on the meaning of ANZUS to Australia in 1964, Prime Minister Robert Menzies said, 'There is a contract between Australia and America. It is a contract based on the utmost goodwill, the utmost good faith and unqualified friendship. Each of us will stand by it.'

We've stood by it. Since 1951, the treaty has underpinned our military, national security and intelligence cooperation. But it's much more than that—it's a manifestation of our deep and abiding relationship, built on shared values and interests.

Our modern partnership takes many forms. It's characterised by regular and high-level policy dialogue; expanding trade and investment links; vital collaboration in innovation and critical minerals; and deep connections between our peoples. Australia and the US share an unwavering commitment to the security, resilience and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific.

During her visit to Washington in May 2021, Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne said, 'Australia has no better friend, ally or partner than the United States' and that 'we are two nations bound more deeply than ever by shared values and experiences'. At the joint press conference with Payne, US Secretary of State Antony Blinken said:

As we mark the 70th anniversary of our alliance with Australia, we find strength not only in how vital and dependable the relationship has been, but also in how it has continued to evolve to meet the challenges we face and that our citizens face.

Defence Minister Peter Dutton echoed those sentiments at an ASPI conference in Canberra on 10 June:

Core to deterrence is our alliance with the United States of America, which this year celebrates its 70th anniversary. Australia is taking greater responsibility for our own security by growing the ADF's self-reliant ability to deliver deterrent effects. Our aim is to become an even more effective alliance partner.

In 2021, we also mark 20 years since the 9/11 terrorist attacks against the US. The ANZUS Treaty was of vital importance to our nations in the immediate aftermath of the attacks. Prime Minister John Howard, who was in Washington DC at the time, was profoundly affected by the events of

that fateful day in September. On his return to Australia, he moved a motion in the Australian Parliament to invoke, for the first time, the ANZUS Treaty. He said:

In every way, the attack on New York and Washington and the circumstances surrounding it did constitute an attack upon the metropolitan territory of the United States of America within the provisions of articles IV and V of the ANZUS Treaty. If that treaty means anything, if our debt as a nation to the people of the United States in the darkest days of World War II means anything, if the comradeship, the friendship and the common bonds of democracy and a belief in liberty, fraternity and justice mean anything, it means that the ANZUS Treaty applies and that the ANZUS Treaty is properly invoked.

He went on to say:

As a proud, patriotic Australian, I was literally moved to tears by what occurred in the United States. I was filled with admiration for the spirit of the American people. I can with genuine affection and fondness say that their behaviour in the wake of those events and their determination to respond appropriately, to heal the wounds and to help those who mourn and grieve demonstrates very powerfully that the American people do live, in the words of their wonderful national anthem, ‘in the land of the free and the home of the brave’.

ANZUS is a testament to a great friendship—one that has been both a source of strength and a balm for our people. As we look to the future, both Australia and the US can take comfort and confidence from this most true and enduring of bonds.



US Secretary of State Antony Blinken holds a joint press conference with Australian Foreign Minister Marise Payne at the State Department, Washington DC, 13 May 2021. Source: State Department photo by Ron Przysucha, [online](#).

Introduction

Peter Jennings

The ANZUS Treaty was signed on 1 September 1951 in San Francisco. It was the product of energetic Australian lobbying to secure a formal US commitment to Australian and New Zealand security. At the time, the shape of Asian security after World War II was still developing. Canberra worried that a ‘soft’ peace treaty with Japan might one day allow a return of a militarised regime to threaten the region. That fear quickly receded in the face of a more immediate challenge. On 25 June 1950, North Korea crossed the 38th parallel to attack South Korea. Australia quickly committed forces to the conflict. Towards the end of 1950, China entered the war with an estimated 200,000 troops. Prime Minister Robert Menzies wrote in the journal *Foreign Affairs* in January 1951 that ‘the real and deadly and present question is whether inside the next two years’ we would be able to resist ‘a vast Communist aggression against one manifestation of which we are actually now fighting in Korea’.¹

The treaty was a response to the strategic circumstances of the day. It’s brief, comprising a short preamble and 11 articles. Article III states: ‘The Parties will consult together whenever in the opinion of any of them the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened in the Pacific.’ Article IV says: ‘Each Party recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.’

Seventy years on, in 2021, the Indo-Pacific region faces real, deadly and present questions about defence and security. What’s remarkable about ANZUS is that it continues to be the central pillar of Australian defence and security policy and a key part of the US’s ‘hub and spokes’ alliance system globally. (As we shall see in these pages, New Zealand took a different course on ANZUS but remains an ally of Australia and a close friend of the US.) Alliances more typically are short-lived arrangements designed to meet specific threats, but the adaptability of ANZUS is such that the alliance cooperation it supports changes to meet new demands, to support new opportunities for cooperation and, indeed, to promote wider security interests in the region.

ANZUS at 70 explores the past, present and future of the alliance relationship, drawing on a wide range of authors with deep professional interest in the alliance. Our aim is to provide lively and comprehensible analysis of key historical points in the life of the treaty and indeed of the broader Australia–US bilateral relationship, which traces its defence origins back to before World War I. ANZUS today encompasses much more than defence and intelligence cooperation. Newer areas of collaboration include work on cybersecurity, space, supply chains, industrial production, rare earths, emerging science and technology areas such as quantum computing, climate change and wider engagement with countries and institutions beyond ANZUS’s initial scope or intention.

In 2021, ANZUS acts as a core component of wider and deeper relations between Australia and the US. This study aims to show the range of those ties, to understand the many and varied challenges we face today and to understand how ANZUS might be shaped to meet future events. ASPI is grateful to the American Chamber of Commerce in Australia for the financial support that enabled this volume to be produced. As with all our work, ASPI, and the various authors in this study, remain independent in their editorial judgements.



US President John F Kennedy meets with Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies in the Oval Office, Washington DC, 25 September 1962. Source: John F Kennedy Presidential Library, [online](#).

Note

- 1 Robert Menzies, quoted by Peter Gifford, 'The Cold War across Asia', in David Goldsworthy (ed.), *Facing north: a century of Australian engagement with Asia, Volume 1: 1901 to the 1970s*, Melbourne University Press, 2001, 171–219, at 187.

April Palmerlee

The story of American–Australian relations is one of dedicated, innovative, passionate men and women who for decades have demonstrated that alliances matter, both for security and for economics.

The official diplomatic history of US–Australia relations began in 1940 when the governments of Australia and the US announced the establishment of bilateral diplomatic relations and reciprocal legations in Canberra and Washington.

Even earlier—in 1918—a military bond was forged when Australian General John Monash commanded US troops at the Battle of Hamel. And, in 1951, when Dean Acheson and Percy Spender signed the ANZUS Treaty at the Presidio in San Francisco, that partnership was made official.

The most longstanding of all our connections is the economic one. Since the American trading ship *Hope* first delivered 7,500 gallons of rum to Sydney in 1793, commercial ties have grown steadily to the point where the US is now Australia’s most important economic partner. With a \$2 trillion two-way trade and investment relationship, the commercial ties between Australia and America are critical to the prosperity of the Australian people.

The earliest US investment in Australia was in 1896, when the Ammonia Company of Australia was established in New South Wales by the US-owned National Ammonia Company. That same year, General Electric started providing infrastructure for Brisbane’s tramway and Sydney’s Pyrmont Bridge. In 1908, New York-based Kodak began to develop film in Australia through a joint venture. By the 1930s, several other major US multinationals, such as Coca-Cola, Kellogg’s, Ford, General Motors and Heinz, had set up Australian operations.

However, it wasn’t until the 1940s, when the Australian economy began supplying the allied war machine in the Pacific, that the Australian economy was supercharged through its dealings with the US. Through the Lend-Lease program, Australia received the latest US manufacturing equipment to produce aircraft, radios, steel, ships, clothing and tinned foods for the American military. By the end of World War II, Australian manufacturing was more sophisticated and powerful than before, and US–Australia ties had strengthened substantially.

The partnership has continued through decades of official presidential and prime ministerial visits, the establishment of the ANZUS Treaty, annual AUSMIN meetings between the defence and foreign ministers of each country, the enactment of the Australia–US Free Trade Agreement and cooperation in areas of mutual interest, such as space exploration and medical research.

The AmCham story flows alongside the broader bilateral relationship, focusing on commerce and people. AmCham was established in 1961 in an Australia that would be hardly recognisable to us today: inward looking, blue collar, European-descended, and geographically isolated. Most people married young and had children, and the men went to work while the women stayed home. Half of the employed men in Australia worked in production industries; the most

common occupations were tradesmen, labourers, farmers, fishermen and timber getters. Less than 17% of the population was born overseas. The White Australia immigration policy was in effect. Australia's pound was pegged to the pound sterling. And Aboriginal people were disenfranchised in most states.

As we reflect on 60 years of AmCham and 70 years of the ANZUS Treaty, we now see the story of today's Australia: a confident, prosperous, multicultural nation, with a population that has more than doubled, an economy that boomed uninterrupted for three decades, and a top five UN ranking for quality of life.

We've opened up to the world—we're now a welcoming, inclusive society where people want to live. We've built some of the world's most advanced facilities in sectors from medical technology and defence to agriculture and mining. And we've become one of the world's most multicultural countries. AmCham's members are at the heart of the local community and economy. Consider for a moment how much more inclusive and dynamic we are thanks to the huge numbers of people who have come from all over the world to make Australia their home—in some cases our member companies have teams made up of over 100 nationalities.

Since the middle of the 20th century, we've moved from a manufacturing nation to a country of services, from a minor player on the global stage to the 13th biggest economy, from an isolated and protected nation to a global trading and investing powerhouse. Some Australian companies have created tens of thousands of jobs and invested billions of dollars in the US economy.

To be a part of the AmCham Australia community and our story is to believe that we're always working towards a better future, that we will always be more innovative and compassionate, that we will create even more value for our communities, and that we'll play our part to save and enhance lives around the world. And we'll do it together.

The Great White Fleet and the beginnings of the security partnership

James Goldrick

In the first years of the 20th century, shared perceptions of the potential threat from Japan began to bring Australia and America together. President Theodore Roosevelt's dispatch of 16 battleships of the US Navy on a round-the-world cruise in December 1907 resulted in one of the greatest events of Australia's first decade as a federation. In part intended as a deterrent against a Japan aggrieved by the treatment of Japanese immigrants in the US's west coast states, the Great White Fleet's demonstration of the rise of American power was one that couldn't be missed—and certainly wasn't, by at least one Australian politician.

The enthusiastic invitation by Prime Minister Alfred Deakin for the fleet to visit Australia was itself significant in many ways. An early initiative in Australian foreign policy, it was regarded with concern by British authorities, and with reason. This was a time when Australian protests about the inadequacy of the British Empire's defences in the Western Pacific were mounting, largely—but not only—because of the fear of Japan. The extraordinary reception given to the American ships when they arrived in August 1908 was of little comfort to imperial authorities. More than half a million Sydneysiders were there to watch the fleet's entry to Port Jackson—well over five out of six of the city's population!

Other observers drew an obvious, if premature, conclusion. Admiral Alfred von Tirpitz, the architect of Germany's naval expansion, which was intended as a direct challenge to British naval supremacy, and whose East Asiatic Squadron was an additional threat to maritime Australia in the Western Pacific, later asserted that 'one of the results of that American voyage was to make Australia lean strongly from England towards America.'¹ The truth, as Deakin well understood, was that Australia wanted *both* great powers on its side.

The visit demonstrated not only the relative weakness of the local Royal Navy squadron of nine mostly small and ageing cruisers, but the inadequacy of the young Commonwealth's naval forces. The only active Australian units—two aged gunboats—were 'prudently kept in the background'.² William Creswell, the Director of the Commonwealth Naval Forces, worried that a turn to America for protection against Japan would become a substitute for Australian naval development.³ Over the long term, Creswell's fears of Australian underinvestment in defence would frequently be justified, but in the short term AW Jose's assessment was more accurate: 'The moral that Australians drew was that they simply must have a fleet of their own.'⁴

The British took the point as well. The 1909 Imperial Conference produced a formula for Australian naval development acceptable to both the Admiralty and Australia, resolving a problem that had defied solution for several decades. The Fleet Unit that arrived in Sydney in October 1913 would prove to be one of the most timely strategic investments Australia ever made. Plans to use the new navy to foster relations with the US were soon in train. The dispatch of the battle cruiser *Australia* to represent Australia at the opening of the Panama Canal and then visit San Francisco for the city's 1915 Panama–Pacific International Exposition was halted only by the onset of war.⁵



The Great White Fleet arrives in Sydney Harbour, 20 August 1908. Source: US Naval Historical Center, [online](#).

Australian naval units worked with those of the US Navy in several theatres after the American entry into World War I in 1917, most notably as components of the British Grand Fleet in the North Sea. This meant the Australian Navy's emerging leaders gained first-hand experience of American capabilities—as well as making friends in the US Navy. A future Chief of Naval Staff, the then Commodore GF Hyde, pointed out to the Australian Defence Council as early as 1923 that, if the British were unable to dispatch a fleet to the Pacific, a completed and operational facility at Singapore would provide the US Navy with the fleet base in the Western Pacific that it couldn't create for itself under the restrictions of the Washington treaties regime.⁶

The US Navy would make another visit *en masse* to Australia in 1925, when no less than 56 ships, including 11 battleships, visited east coast ports. This, still the largest peacetime visit by a naval force in our history, had as much of a Japanese dimension as that of 1908, although it was less of a demonstration than a test of capability. The Americans, conscious that a conflict

with Japan would require their fleet to deploy across the vast distances of the Pacific, used the Australian deployment to increase their understanding of the logistic requirements involved—while avoiding the increase in tensions with Japan that a similar expedition to the Philippines or East Asia would have inevitably created. The interest in and enthusiasm for the American ships and their crews displayed by the Australian population weren't quite on the mammoth scale of 1908, but they remained remarkable—and were greatly appreciated.

Thus, when, as commander of the Australian Squadron, Hyde took the newly completed heavy cruiser *Australia* to the US on her delivery voyage to Australia from the UK in 1928, the American welcome was equally warm. In Boston, the US Navy sought support from the locals specifically because the hospitality shown in 1925 to American sailors had been so great and 'had left a remarkable impression on the visiting seamen'.⁷ The Commander-in-Chief of the

US Fleet, Admiral Henry A Wiley, one of the flag officers in the 1925 fleet visit, made a point of bringing his flagship to Boston to host the *Australia*. It was no coincidence that Wiley had commanded the battleship *Wyoming* in the Grand Fleet in 1918—the *Wyoming* had exchanged many visits and social events with the light cruiser *Sydney*.

It would take another global war for the growing links of friendship to help establish the operational partnerships that would be vital to winning the war in the Pacific and in the 'limited conflicts' that would follow with the onset of the Cold War. But there can be no doubt that the 1908 visit of the Great White Fleet began a relationship that would be and remains a vital component of Australia's national security strategy.

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Notes

- 1 A von Tirpitz, *My memoirs*, vol. 1, Hurst & Blackett, London, 1919, 187.
- 2 B Nicholls, *Statesmen and sailors: a history of Australian maritime defence 1870–1920*, Nicholls, Balmain, 1995, 139.
- 3 Nicholls, *Statesmen and sailors*, 134.
- 4 AW Jose, *The Royal Australian Navy 1914–1918*, Angus & Robertson, Sydney, 1938, xxvii.
- 5 *The West Australian*, 22 June 1914, 7.
- 6 PM Sales, 'The naval mission and Australian security after the First World War', in Stevens D (ed.), *Maritime power in the twentieth century: the Australian experience*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1998, 47.
- 7 British Consul-General in Boston, letter dated 30 August 1928, Australian Archives MP 981/1 MP 981/1/0, 603/254/269.

‘Blood brothers’: American and Australian soldiers in 1918

Mitchell Yockelson

In early 1918, a boatload of fresh-faced American doughboys disembarked on a wharf in Southampton in England. Their snappy clean uniforms and the sparkling rifles slung across their shoulders didn’t go unnoticed by the men of 30th Australian Field Artillery Battery. Gunner James Ramsay Armitage wrote in his diary:

We amused ourselves watching a lot of very brand-new looking Yanks arriving with their extraordinary-looking equipment ... Some of the officers carried leather suitcases and umbrellas and looked more like commercial travelers than soldiers.¹

From that point until the armistice, Armitage saw plenty more Yanks, who sailed overseas in the months after America declared war in April 1917. Slowed by a lack of troop transports, General John J Pershing, the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) commander, improved the situation by allowing British Expeditionary Force (BEF) commander Field Marshal Douglas Haig to ship doughboys to Europe for training, and, if necessary, to fight alongside his British and Dominion units. In 1918, elements of 10 US Army divisions served with Haig’s troops.²

Hamel

Four American divisions served with Lieutenant General John Monash’s Australian Corps. Among them was the 33rd American Division, composed of Illinois National Guardsmen. Before the doughboys arrived, Monash knew little about the US Army. While he commanded the 3rd Australian Division, he hosted several AEF officers who educated him about the American way of war.³

Monash wrote to his brother:

With but very few exceptions, I have formed a very high opinion of the excellent qualities, both mental and technical, of these officers. My impression is that some of the divisional commanders are rather old, and not as receptive of new ideas as may be desirable, but their attitude toward these problems is in every way satisfactory, and they show themselves open minded and receptive to an admirable degree.⁴

American soldiers were less impressed with their Australian counterparts. Their lack of discipline puzzled the doughboys, especially when Australian soldiers failed to salute superior officers.

While training with Monash’s corps, four companies of Illinois infantrymen were plucked to join an Australian offensive against German forces holding the Hamel salient. The operation was strategically essential because the German Somme offensive of 1918 had pushed a bulge into the British lines where the Germans had occupied Hamel, located just south of the Somme River a dozen miles east of Amiens. The ridge on which the village was situated provided the

Germans with clear observation of Australian-held positions and made those positions easy prey for enfilading fire.

On 4 July 1918, American Independence Day, tanks led the attack with support from an artillery barrage that surprised the Germans. Facing only pockets of resistance, the Australians and Americans gained all their objectives in 93 minutes. The German forces were driven from Hamel and the surrounding woods and ridges.

The Americans' battle performance garnered mixed reviews. The Illinois soldiers fought bravely but were also impetuous. After entering Hamel, they advanced beyond the objective line until an Australian officer advised them that 'it was not up to them to go on and take the next town.'⁵



An unidentified sergeant of the 16th Battalion Australian Imperial Force (left) and an American private (right) in Picardy, France, just prior to the Battle of Hamel, which took place on 4 July 1918. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

The Hindenburg Line battle

From 8 August 1918, the British Army was in the midst of an offensive to drive the Germans from their positions near the old Somme battlefield. By mid-September, the Germans were forced back to their heavily fortified defensive zone, the *Siegfriedstellung*, also called the Hindenburg Line. British and Australian troops, helped by two American divisions, were planning to concentrate an offensive to demoralise the enemy and destroy its defences, including wire and dugouts.

Monash designed the battle plan, and General Henry Rawlinson, the British Fourth Army commander, and Field Marshal Haig signed it off. The American 27th and 30th divisions would spearhead the operation. The main objective was to break through the line near St Quentin, where Germans were entrenched on the canal and below the Bellicourt tunnel. Four hours later, an Australian division would leapfrog over the Americans to complete the attack. This was a formidable task for any experienced army, and the mission, in hindsight, had little chance of succeeding.

This was a formidable task for any experienced army, and the mission, in hindsight, had little chance of succeeding.

After training with the Australians, the 27th, composed of New York guardsmen, and the 30th, a mixture of North and South Carolina and Tennessee guardsmen, entered the front trenches on the night of 25–26 September, relieving two British and one Australian division. The line assigned to the doughboys faced the outer defences of the Hindenburg system, west of the entrance to the Bellicourt tunnel.

Prominent features of the outer line were positions situated on the high ground opposite the Quennemont Farm, the Gillemont Farm and the so-called Knoll.⁶

Preliminary operation against the Hindenburg Line

For the Americans to achieve their objective on 29 September, they would have to undertake a preliminary operation two days before to occupy the outer defences, including the farms and the Knoll. If successful, this would become the jumping-off point for the attacks. In the preceding days, the British III Corps had failed to capture that ground after several attempts, and now the far less experienced Americans were tasked with the job.

At 5:30 am on 27 September, the 106th American Infantry advanced towards the objective. They held the position briefly until German machine-gun fire drove them back. But not all of the Americans returned. Many wounded still occupied portions of the trenches around the farms and the Knoll.⁷

A conference convened the following day with Americans and Australians in attendance. First on the agenda was the idea of adjusting the artillery fire to a line closer to the Americans in order that troops might advance under its protection from the start. But, according to Brigadier General KK Knapp, in command of the artillery supporting the operation, that was impractical due to a lack of time. Changing the barrage table by bringing it further back would put Americans near the Knoll and the farms at risk.⁸

Knapp was well liked and trusted by the American officers, and they felt he ‘made every effort to give our men all possible advantage of artillery protection’.⁹ The idea of postponing the operation was also suggested to Monash, and, according to one of his biographers, he thought it was the better solution. However, Rawlinson overruled him. The Fourth Army commander said that a delay would mean changing the arrangements on other fronts, where troops were set to attack the next day.¹⁰



American and Australian soldiers examine captured guns at Tincourt, Picardy, Hindenburg Outpost Line Area, 26 September 1918. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

Main operation against the Hindenburg Line

On the morning of 29 September, the Americans jumped off into heavy fog and low visibility. South of the line, the 30th American Division encountered relatively little resistance. By early afternoon, the 8th Brigade of the 5th Australian Division passed through the 120th American Infantry and, after mopping up in and around Bellicourt, continued attacking towards the east. The 120th was ordered into support positions, but some of its men lost contact with their regiment and fought with the Australians. Brigadier General HA Goddard, an Australian liaison officer, said the Americans 'were like lost sheep, not knowing where to go or when to go'.¹¹ That afternoon, mixed American and Australian units were unable to make any significant advances. The flanks were reinforced and the men dug in for the night.

To the north, the 27th American Division would run into trouble. The New Yorkers started their attack an hour earlier, at 4:50 am, with infantry advancing towards the jump-off point that they had failed to reach during the preliminary attack. Early reports received at division headquarters indicated that the 107th Infantry and 108th were 'going well'. At 8:10, Americans were reported to have crossed the Hindenburg Line and be on their way to the tunnel, but an hour later the situation turned dismal.

Regimental messages indicated heavy doughboy casualties from machine-gun fire at Gillemont Farm. Reports from the 3rd Australian Division confirmed that many ‘Americans were leaderless near Gillemont trench and Willow trench.’¹²

Portions of the 108th American Infantry managed to cross the main Hindenburg Line south of Bony at 8:00 am—a remarkable achievement against enormous odds—but the regiment couldn’t go beyond the line until joined by the 3rd Australian Division. Together, they captured Quennemont Farm at a heavy cost. German troops appeared from underground passages of the tunnel and surprised the Australians and Americans.

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Casualties filled the battlefield. ‘They’d just become figures going down,’ remembered one New Yorker, ‘like pins in a bowling alley.’ Gunner Armitage also witnessed the carnage. From his artillery position, he saw doughboys fail to clear out German dugouts and machine-gun nests before going on to the second line of defence.¹³

When darkness fell on 29 September, both American and Australian divisions halted in front of the Hindenburg Line, which was breeched over the next two days.

Conclusion

Monash had much to say about the Americans: they ‘showed a fine spirit, a keen desire to learn, magnificent individual bravery, and splendid comradeship’. But he heavily criticised their mopping-up skills. ‘American Infantry had either not been sufficiently tutored in this important matter,’ Monash wrote, ‘or the need of it had not penetrated their understanding.’¹⁴

Of course, Monash wasn’t on the battlefield, meaning that his observations were gained second hand. In fact, the American soldiers had indeed mopped up, but encountered an enemy in great numbers who counterattacked with the skill and determination of an experienced army.

If the Americans were guilty of stalling the operation, Monash was partly to blame, his biographers write. One suggests that, in preparing for this offensive, ‘Monash was not at his best ... His plan for capturing the Hindenburg Line was deeply flawed.’¹⁵

Some of his own men supported that critique. ‘As individuals, the Americans were not to be blamed,’ recalled one Australian officer, ‘but their behaviour under fire showed clearly that in modern warfare, it was of little avail to launch an attack with men untrained in war, even though the bravery of the individual may not be questioned.’¹⁶ Major General CH Brand, an Australian adviser to the 27th Division, thought the task undertaken by the Americans ‘would have sorely tried any veteran division’.¹⁷

Simply put, it was unwise of Monash to charge the Americans with spearheading an operation of this nature. He should have placed the doughboys in reserve, rather than having them jump off into an operation that had little chance of success.

Despite heavy criticism of the doughboys, Monash summed up the Australian and American battlefield relationship in glowing terms: 'The contingent of them who joined us acquitted themselves most gallantly and were ever after received by the Australians as blood brothers.'¹⁸

Notes

- 1 JR Armitage, diary, courtesy of the Australian War Memorial, [online](#).
- 2 See Mitchell A Yockelson, *Borrowed soldiers: Americans under British command, 1918*, University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, 2008, 15–20.
- 3 War letters of General Monash, vol. 11, 3DRL/2316, ser. 1, Australian War Memorial.
- 4 Letter, Lt Gen John Monash to Leo Monash, 7 January 1918, ms 1884, Australian War Memorial.
- 5 Mitchell Yockelson, 'We have found each other at last: Americans and Australians at the Battle of Hamel, July 1918', *Army History*, Fall 2007, 16–25.
- 6 Yockelson, *Borrowed soldiers*, 124–168.
- 7 Archibald Montgomery, *The story of the Fourth Army in the Battle of the Hundred Days, August 8 – November 11, 1918*, Hodder and Stoughton, London, 1920, 157.
- 8 Knapp was the general officer commanding, Royal Artillery (GOCRA), of the British VII Corps. The GOCRA was in charge of artillery planning under the corps commander, and units (brigades) were assigned on an as-needed basis. Rawlinson directed him to assist II American Corps in coordinating the infantry with the artillery barrage. Thanks to Sanders Marble for his insight into this subject. Letter to author, 6 July 2004.
- 9 Ewen C MacVeagh, Lee D Brown, *The Yankee in the British zone*, GP Putnam's Sons, New York, 1920, 365.
- 10 Peter Pedersen, *Monash as military commander*, Melbourne University Press, Melbourne, 1985, 287.
- 11 Papers of Brig Gen HA Goddard, 9th Infantry Brigade, AIF, 29 September 1918, 3DRL/2379, Australian War Memorial.
- 12 John F O'Ryan, 'Operations report, 27th Division, AEF, France, 1918', RG 120, entry 267, NA.
- 13 Henry Berry, *Make the Kaiser dance: living memories of the doughboys*, Arbor House, New York, 1985, 217; Armitage diary, 37.
- 14 Berry, *Make the Kaiser dance*.
- 15 Peter Dennis, Jeffrey Grey, Ewan Morris, Robin Prior, Jean Bou, *The Oxford companion to Australian military history*, Oxford University Press, Melbourne, 1995, 406.
- 16 Richard Holmes, *The Western Front*, BBC Books, London, 1999, 210.
- 17 Brig Gen Brand, 4th Australian Brigade, 4th Australian Division, to General O'Ryan, 27th American Division, 'Few notes on eight day's tour of duty with 27th American Division', AWM 26, operations files, Australian War Memorial.
- 18 Yockelson, *Borrowed soldiers*, 185.

Australia's intelligence foundations

John Blaxland

Australian intelligence arrangements reflect a fascinating journey of working alongside first the UK and then the US. Australia entered World War II with a modest legacy of UK intelligence ties dating back to the experience of working as a subordinate imperial partner in World War I. By 1945, Australia's intelligence apparatus had been transformed, after nearly four years of working more closely with US counterparts in the Pacific, but security leaks put those arrangements at risk. This chapter examines the foundations of Australia's postwar intelligence architecture.

During World War I, Australian land and naval forces developed techniques for tactical intelligence collection and analysis. The RAN deftly handled some opportune intelligence-collection opportunities that saw the German East Asian fleet leave New Guinea before the capture of Rabaul and the SMS *Emden* 'beached and done for' at Cocos Island—thanks, in part at least, to wireless reporting.¹ In Mesopotamia (now Iraq), Australian wireless signals units (inadvertently at first) intercepted Turkish transmissions, which proved instrumental in accelerating allied successes there. Beyond occasional examples like those, however, Australian forces relied principally on the UK for higher level intelligence support.

During the interwar years, many of those capabilities were shelved, with the exception of some excellent naval cryptographical work.²

At the outset of World War II, the separate Australian directorates of naval, military and air intelligence sought to coordinate their efforts. What emerged was the Combined Operational Intelligence Centre in Melbourne—a joint intelligence assessment body intended to provide the chiefs of staff and the War Cabinet with higher level insights of relevance for the Australian context; in effect, it was a precursor of the Defence Intelligence Organisation (and the Office of National Intelligence) of today.³

Naval intelligence focused on breaking Japanese codes and intercepting their messages, while Australia's operationally focused land forces, mostly deployed to the Middle East, provided tactical intelligence collection and reporting for the Second Australian Imperial Force as part of the British Expeditionary Forces.

With the outbreak of the Pacific War and the arrival of General Douglas MacArthur and his team, Australia's intelligence arrangements went through a rapid metamorphosis.

Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne (FRUMEL) was set up in 1942 and managed most of Australia's naval signals intelligence (SIGINT). A US Navy officer commanded the unit and reported to US naval headquarters in Hawaii.⁴ General MacArthur controlled much of Australia's army and air force intelligence resources through the General Headquarters South West Pacific Area, established with the blessing of Australia's Prime Minister, John Curtin. A range of allied instrumentalities emerged that would lay the foundations for Australia's postwar intelligence arrangements.

They included the Central Bureau, the Allied Translator and Interpreter Service, the Allied Intelligence Bureau and the Allied Geographical Section.

The Allied Geographical Section provided crucial mapping support for operations in previously uncharted or barely charted waters and terrain. That involved working closely with Air Force aerial photographers and cartographers to provide accurate and timely geographical information to deployed forces. The Australian Geospatial-Intelligence Organisation had its roots there.

The Allied Translator and Interpreter Service relied on some Australians trained in Japanese language skills as well as a larger number of *Nisei*, or Americans of Japanese descent. Australians and Americans of European descent did much of the more in-house sensitive SIGINT translation work, however.

The Allied Intelligence Bureau's mission was to obtain and report the enemy's information and, where practicable, to weaken the enemy by sabotage and destruction of morale. Incorporating service personnel from 10 services from four countries (the US, the UK, Australia and Netherlands East Indies), the bureau was organised into four sections—Special Operations Australia, the Secret Intelligence Service, the Combined Field Intelligence Service (Coastwatcher) and the Far Eastern Liaison Office (for propaganda).⁵



Australian Coastwatchers and members of the US Army and Navy Crash Intelligence Service, Solomon Islands, circa March 1944. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

There was always a tension between evidently contradictory tasks: the information-collection task (requiring secrecy and avoidance of detection) and the sabotage and destruction task (where one's presence was hard to hide). Apart from occasional spectacular successes, including the MV *Krait* raid on Singapore Harbour in 1942, much of the talent was wasted, sadly, on clandestine operations that were futile, strategically largely irrelevant or hopelessly compromised by poor security.

Some of the Allied Intelligence Bureau's functions (notably, human intelligence collection and special operations) would be taken on by the Australian Secret Intelligence Service in 1952 and the Special Air Service Company (later Regiment) in 1957.

In the meantime, the Coastwatcher service, drawing on property managers and expatriate Australians and other Europeans who had settled on some of the remote Pacific islands in New Guinea and Solomon Islands, were equipped with radios they used to report on passing enemy aircraft and shipping. US Pacific Commander Admiral Chester Nimitz regarded their work as being of 'inestimable value', providing vital warning time of imminent attacks and significant cover for the work of FRUMEL and Central Bureau.⁶

Central Bureau emerged as the technological and intellectual powerhouse of Australia's wartime intelligence apparatus. Its work involved traffic analysis (what would now be considered metadata) to distil critical information about locations and intentions and cryptanalysis (breaking codes, reading the enciphered messages, and transcribing and translating them for timely dissemination).

Similarly, FRUMEL involved Australians working closely and in a remarkably trusted collaborative venture alongside US counterparts. FRUMEL had its own collection sites and worked closely with naval assets at sea. Its work contributed directly to the successes in the pivotal 1942 battles of the Coral Sea and Midway. The RAN's Tactical Electronic Warfare Support Squadron carries part of the heritage passed down from FRUMEL.

Central Bureau emerged as the technological and intellectual powerhouse of Australia's wartime intelligence apparatus.

Central Bureau, meanwhile, relied on a series of Army and Air Force special wireless units established around the country and close to the front, using antenna farms to monitor enemy transmissions. Once messages were intercepted, those units

subjected the messages to traffic analysis and some cryptanalysis before sending the more challenging ones to Central Bureau for further analysis.⁷ There, American service members led in much of the cryptanalytical work, assisted by IBM card-punching machinery—the first computers in Australia.

Service technological capabilities surged when the RAAF became intimately involved with US counterparts in the blandly named 'Section 22'. The section undertook innovative operational research with radars in what would later become electronic intelligence or ELINT—a function maintained by the RAAF to this day.

D Special Section, tasked with covering enemy diplomatic traffic, provided rare insights into Japanese and, occasionally, Soviet activities. ULTRA SIGINT intercepts, for instance, revealed a series of leaks starting in mid-1943 and continuing after the war, pointing to a ‘nest of spies’ operating in Australia. Only a handful of Australians had access into the higher echelons of SIGINT and the ability to read such reports and weigh their significance.⁸ In January 1945, Australia’s Commander-in-Chief, General Thomas Blamey, wrote to his minister outlining his concerns.

Meanwhile, in a series of moves, to Brisbane, Hollandia (now Jayapura) and then the Philippines, MacArthur relocated much of Central Bureau, which accompanied his headquarters in the relentless drive northwards.

MacArthur’s command of the intelligence arrangements reflected Australia’s still subordinate status, and that was reflected in the bilateral agreement reached in May 1943 by the British and Americans known as the BRUSA Agreement (which, in later versions, came to be known as the UKUSA Agreement). The agreement mapped out the terms and conditions of deeper SIGINT collaboration in which Australia would be included.⁹

The sudden ending of the war in August 1945 led to a prompt demobilisation of Australian military personnel and a swift separation of US personnel from the organisations they had shared with their Australian counterparts. That meant that, in the period from 1946 to 1947, the antecedent residual elements of what later became the Australian intelligence community struggled to find a home and a *raison d’être*.

After the war, Brigadier Bertrand Combes was commissioned to produce what became the *Report on joint intelligence organisation—post-war*, which included recommendations on the creation of Australia’s postwar intelligence architecture. This was the first in the series of landmark reports that shaped Australia’s postwar intelligence community that would be written in the second half of the 20th century and first decades of the 21st century.¹⁰

The issue of leaks re-emerged after the war, this time due to revelations unveiled by the Venona decrypts of Soviet diplomatic message traffic.¹¹ The decrypts revealed evidence of Soviet atomic weapons technology espionage and some unsettling additional indications which corroborated earlier reports that a ‘nest of spies’ was operating in Australia, passing sensitive material to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra.

Lax security at that time reflected a level of dysfunction in Australia’s counterintelligence and domestic security apparatus. For much of the war, the Commonwealth Security Service competed with the Commonwealth Investigation Branch for resources and kudos. In 1946,

The decrypts revealed evidence of Soviet atomic weapons technology espionage and some unsettling additional indications which corroborated earlier reports that a ‘nest of spies’ was operating in Australia, passing sensitive material to the Soviet Embassy in Canberra.

both were folded into the Commonwealth Investigation Service—a body covering functions today associated with the Australian Federal Police and the Australian Security Intelligence Organisation (ASIO), but with their wartime dysfunction unresolved.¹²

Initially reluctant to act on reports of leaks, the Chifley government eventually responded, establishing ASIO in 1949. That was two years after the establishment of the Defence Signals Bureau, which drew on the remnants of FRUMEL and Central Bureau and was the precursor of the modern-day Australian Signals Directorate. Mindful of its security challenges, the bureau had a slow start, but by 1953 it would come to be a full member of the international SIGINT partnership with the US, the UK, Canada and New Zealand, now known commonly as the Five Eyes.¹³

Notes

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- 2 See Ian Pfennigwerth, *A man of intelligence: the life of Captain Eric Nave Australian codebreaker extraordinary*, Rosenberg Publishing, Dural, NSW, 2006.
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- 4 See Sharon A Maneki, *The quiet heroes of the Southwest Pacific theater: an oral history of the men and women of CBB and FRUMEL*, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, Fort Meade, 1996.
- 5 See Alan Powell, *War by stealth: Australians and the Allied Intelligence Bureau, 1942–1945*, Melbourne University Press, 1996.
- 6 See John Fahey, *Australia's first spies: the remarkable story of Australia's intelligence operations, 1901–1945*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2018, 84.
- 7 See Geoffrey Ballard, *On ULTRA active service: the story of Australia's signals intelligence operations during World War II*, Spectrum Publications, Victoria, Australia, 1991.
- 8 See Desmond Ball, Keiko Tamura (eds), *Breaking Japanese diplomatic codes: David Sissons and D Special Section during the Second World War*, Asian Studies series monograph 4, Australian National University, Canberra, 2013.
- 9 Christopher Andrew, *The secret world: a history of intelligence*, Allen Lane, Penguin, Milton Keynes, 2018, 642.
- 10 Brigadier B Combes, *Report on joint intelligence organisation—post-war*, National Archives of Australia, #12392, 1, 56.
- 11 See Robert L Benson, *The Venona story*, Center for Cryptologic History, National Security Agency, Fort Meade, 2012.
- 12 See Desmond Ball, David Horner, *Breaking the codes: Australia's KGB network, 1944–1950*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1998; David Horner, *The spy catchers: the official history of ASIO 1949–1963*, vol. 1, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 2014.
- 13 See John Blaxland, Rhys Crawley, 'A history of the Australian intelligence community', in Daniel Baldino, Rhys Crawley (eds), *Intelligence and the function of government*, Melbourne University Press, 2018, 37–58.

Curtin, MacArthur and the Pacific War

Peter Edwards

When was the Australian–American alliance founded, and by whom? Over the past eight decades, those questions have often been debated, usually with an eye to current politics and partisan loyalties. This chapter and the next address the two main rivals for a foundation narrative—the assertion that the alliance was established by Prime Minister John Curtin and General Douglas MacArthur in 1942, and Percy Spender’s claim to be ‘the onlie begetter’ in 1950–51.

In the decades after World War II, Australians were often told that the alliance was founded by Curtin and MacArthur. The origin, the story went, was Curtin’s statement in late December 1941 that ‘Without any inhibitions of any kind, I make it quite clear that Australia looks to America, free of any pangs as to our traditional links or kinship with the United Kingdom.’ That realignment was cemented in the succeeding weeks, as the Japanese cut through the British and Dutch territories to Australia’s north.

The fall of Singapore on 15 February 1942, described by Curtin as an ‘inexcusable betrayal’ of Australia by Britain, not only condemned tens of thousands of Australian and allied troops to the ordeal of prisoner-of-war camps but also destroyed a generation of British and Australian strategy. Darwin and other Australian towns were bombed, and Australians feared an imminent Japanese invasion.

Then, the foundational narrative continues, MacArthur arrived in Australia as the commander-in-chief of all allied forces, including Australia’s, in the Southwest Pacific. MacArthur put his arm around Curtin’s shoulder and said that the two men would ‘see this thing through together ... you take care of the rear and I will handle the front.’

And in due course MacArthur started his victorious advance northwards from headquarters in Melbourne, then Brisbane, and imminent defeat was turned into ultimate victory.

At the time, and for decades afterwards, Curtin’s supporters said his wartime leadership, especially the relationship with MacArthur, made him the saviour of Australia. His critics alleged that he had made an unconscionable ‘surrender of [Australian] sovereignty’ to the vainglorious general, and therefore to the emerging global superpower.

Historians have pointed to many flaws in the Curtin–MacArthur narrative. The statement that ‘Australia looks to America’ didn’t appear in a major strategic statement but in a New Year message, destined for the magazine pages of an afternoon newspaper, until an alert editor was struck by its tone and made it a front-page story around the world.

Much less well publicised was MacArthur’s statement to Curtin in a private meeting on 1 June 1942, hours after three Japanese midget submarines had entered Sydney Harbour. In lamenting the failure of Australia’s efforts to gain more military support from either Britain or the US,

MacArthur said that Australia was linked to Britain and the Empire by ties of 'blood, sentiment and allegiance to the Crown'. The US, by contrast, was interested in Australia solely as a 'base from which to hit Japan', and not out of any relationship with the Australian people. MacArthur wasn't only telling Australia that the presence of American forces was merely temporary, and that it should look to Britain for ongoing support; he was also using Curtin's own phrases to deliver this lesson in realpolitik.



US General Douglas MacArthur with Australian Prime Minister John Curtin at Central Station, Sydney, July 1942. Source: National Archives of Australia.

In the following years, to the surprise and consternation of some of his colleagues, Curtin 'wrapped himself in the Union Jack', making effusive statements about Australia's links with Britain and the Empire while demonstrating much less enthusiasm for the Americans. His private strategic and diplomatic discussions were aimed at developing close links with Britain's political and military leaders, while seeking not to offend MacArthur and the Americans. On his only overseas voyage as Prime Minister, he tried to resurrect the idea, beloved of earlier conservative prime ministers, of machinery to coordinate the foreign policy of the entire Empire/Commonwealth. He even arranged the appointment of a royal duke as Governor-General, defending that move as one of many measures to improve strategic links with Britain.

Curtin's efforts in that direction were complicated by the ability of his foreign minister, HV Evatt, to infuriate both British and American leaders. In style and substance, Australia often appeared to have two external policies, personified by Curtin and Evatt. When accepting appointment as

Australia's ambassador in Washington, Owen Dixon insisted that he would report to Curtin, not Evatt. Australia succeeded in having the Pacific War Council (the body that would supposedly shape allied strategy) located in Washington rather than London, but Dixon's reports made it clear that, while Dixon himself was well regarded, President Franklin Roosevelt had no intention of allowing Australia, or any ally other than Britain, to contribute substantially to strategic decision-making.

In the immediate postwar years, Curtin's successor, Ben Chifley, maintained close and friendly relations with a like-minded Labour government in Britain while keeping some distance from the US. Conservatives criticised Chifley's government for failing to persuade the Americans to maintain their wartime naval base on Manus Island, but that simply didn't fit into the US Navy's postwar strategy. More broadly, the efforts of Evatt and his departmental head, John Burton, to establish an independent position between the US and the Soviet Union in the incipient Cold War did nothing to win American favour.

In later decades, references to the Curtin–MacArthur relationship often reflected the conflicting demands of party loyalty and support for the alliance amid changes in domestic and global politics. Never was that better illustrated than in the 1980s, when Prime Minister Bob Hawke and Defence Minister Kim Beazley skilfully used the Curtin narrative as a way to demonstrate, both to anti-American elements in the Labor party and to conservative critics of Labor's commitment to the alliance, that it was both possible and desirable for a Labor government to endorse a close Australian–American defence relationship.

The Curtin–MacArthur relationship reflected a genuine Australian desire to establish a close strategic partnership with the US, but it didn't lead to a lasting relationship. As MacArthur pointed out with brutal clarity, the American view was that Australia was (to borrow a phrase from a later period in the relationship) a 'convenient piece of real estate', a base from which to begin the counterattack against Japan, but not a long-term strategic partner. While some Americans, including MacArthur himself on one occasion, found it useful to speak of the 'consanguinity of race' between Americans and Australians in the struggle against an Asian enemy (with characteristic disregard for those in both forces who weren't of Caucasian descent), the Americans felt no sense of obligation to secure the future of fellow white men.

Nevertheless, as his most recent biographer, John Edwards, has shown, Curtin's management of the MacArthur relationship was astute and far-sighted. He supported the public manifestations of the close relationship with MacArthur while suppressing his resentment at their strategic disagreements, their personal tensions and MacArthur's vainglorious posturing.

In so doing, he made it possible for later leaders, of all political persuasions on both sides of the Pacific, to speak of the two nations standing side by side in every major war of the 20th and 21st centuries, and even of 'a century of mateship'. The accusation of a 'surrender of sovereignty' was one that the leader of a small and highly exposed ally of an emerging superpower simply had to swallow.

The postwar world

Menzies, Spender and the creation of ANZUS

Peter Edwards

Before, during and immediately after World War II, Percy Spender was a close observer of, and sometimes minor participant in, regional and global geopolitics, noting especially Britain's declining power and influence and the emergence of a powerful US from its traditional isolationism. As his biographer, David Lowe, has demonstrated, Spender saw, much earlier than most Australians, that Australia's future lay in the Pacific, based on a strong defence relationship with the US and close relations with the non-communist nations of postcolonial Asia. Despite Spender's often fractious relationship with his party and his obvious leadership aspirations, Robert Menzies appointed him as foreign minister when the Liberals came to office in 1949.

Early in his short but highly significant term as Minister for External Affairs, Spender made it clear that his personal mission was to achieve a security treaty with the US. He had already taken a prominent role in forming what became the Colombo Plan (known for a time as the 'Spender plan').

Spender hoped for a relationship that would include a security guarantee similar to the NATO model and the greatest possible access to strategic policymakers in Washington. Many small nations aspired to such a relationship with the world's greatest superpower, but Washington was reluctant to offer that level of support for nations that couldn't offer strategic assets in return. As MacArthur had told Curtin, holding similar democratic values or a 'consanguinity of race' wasn't enough.

Moreover, Spender's own leader was less than wholeheartedly supportive. Menzies, who pronounced himself 'British to the bootstraps', was influenced by the opposition of the British governments led by Clement Attlee and Winston Churchill to the concept of Australia, New Zealand and the US signing a treaty to which the UK wasn't a partner. Menzies also feared that any American guarantee would be limited to the administration that granted it, so that any agreement might be 'a superstructure on a foundation of jelly'.

Spender's educational and professional background and his tenacity in argument were similar to HV Evatt's—they were alumni of the same high school and law school—but their approaches had a crucial difference. Evatt placed great faith in international law, especially the UN Charter, of which he had been an architect. Spender, like Menzies and their cabinet colleagues (including a future foreign minister, Paul Hasluck), took the view that what mattered in the world was power. In the emerging Cold War, as in the recent world war, the fate of small nations depended on the attitudes and interactions of the great powers.



First ANZUS Council meeting held outside of Washington DC; Canberra, 8 May 1962. From left: Head of Department of External Affairs Arthur Tange, External Affairs Minister Garfield Barwick, Chairman of the Chiefs of Staff Committee Air Marshal Frederick Scherger, US Embassy Deputy Chief of Mission William Belton, US Secretary of State Dean Rusk. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

Spender's ability to impress Washington depended on both long observation and agile opportunism. While Menzies was incommunicado on a tour to the UK and the US, Spender ensured that Australia announced a commitment of troops to the Korean War shortly before Britain announced its own, demonstrating that Australia was acting on its own assessment of Pacific geopolitics, not merely following London's lead.

When the Chinese entered the Korean War soon afterwards, the Americans realised that they needed respectable partners to support a 'soft' peace treaty with Japan, of which many Australians were still highly suspicious. At the time Britain, with American support, was pressing Australia to commit forces to the Middle East in the event of a widely feared Third World War against the Soviet Union. Spender asserted that Australia would make such a commitment only if its 'back door' were secured by the Americans. With the aid of the chief American negotiator, John Foster Dulles, that argument won the day.

Menzies kept himself at some distance from much of Spender's negotiations, but the urbane Melbourne barrister readily accepted the benefits of his assertive colleague, later declaring the negotiation of ANZUS as one of the principal achievements of his 16-year term as Prime Minister.

The Australians didn't get a security guarantee as strong as that of the NATO alliance. Nor was their access to strategic policymakers as great as they had hoped, largely because the Joint Chiefs of Staff had no intention of sharing their detailed plans with a minor ally. After a short but highly significant term as foreign minister, Spender spent the next seven years as ambassador in Washington, constantly seeking to put more 'flesh on the bones' of the alliance. He was less successful than he had hoped, partly because the atmosphere in Washington was less favourable and partly because his cabinet colleagues objected to his inclination to act as if he were still the foreign minister, rather than an ambassador acting on his government's instructions.

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In the late 1950s and early 1960s, the Menzies government's public statements and confidential diplomacy placed more emphasis on the Southeast Asia Treaty Organization (SEATO), of which both the US and the UK were members, than they did on ANZUS. After the armistice in Korea, Australia's only military commitments were successful counterinsurgency campaigns in the Malayan Emergency and the Indonesian Confrontation, both of which were fought alongside British and Commonwealth forces but with minimal involvement or support from the US. Not until

combat troops were committed to Vietnam in 1965 did Australians fight in an American-led campaign in which Britain wasn't involved.

Spender's success in gaining the prize sought by many nations was achieved by long preparation, skilful leadership of a young but effective diplomatic service, close attention to political developments in both Australia and the US, and the perspicacity and courage to seize any opportunity to press his case. The different experiences of Curtin in the early 1940s and Spender in the early 1950s demonstrated that the creation of an enduring Australian–American security relationship required a sympathetic domestic environment in both countries as well as favourable alignments in global and regional geopolitics.

For the next 70 years, supporters of the alliance worked to keep those elements in line. The continued existence of the alliance shows that those efforts have generally succeeded. But, in the early 1970s, when dramatic realignments occurred simultaneously in domestic politics in Canberra and Washington and in regional and global geopolitics, the alliance came perilously close to a terminal breakdown.

***Konfrontasi* and East Timor: America's Indonesian balancing act**

Donald Greenlees

A persistent question lurking in the background of Australia's alliance with the US has always been whether our powerful ally would come to our aid in a time of military crisis.

Contemplation of the strategic consequences and economic costs of having to go it alone is liable to induce quiet anxiety in policymakers, which Allan Gyngell captured with the book title *Fear of abandonment*.

In the historical record, evidence of that fear most frequently appears in relation to Indonesia.

There were two notable occasions since the signing of the ANZUS Treaty on which Australia turned to the US for assurances of military support in the face of a deteriorating security outlook between Australia and Indonesia. They occurred in advance of both the Australian-led international force deployment to East Timor in 1999 and the deployment of Australian forces to resist Indonesian guerrilla incursions into Malaysia during *Konfrontasi* in 1965.

The common wisdom is that on each of those occasions the support offered by the US fell far short of Australian needs and expectations, prompting fears that Australian forces would be exposed to greater peril.

That raises the question of how valuable the alliance has been when a specific Australian security interest was at stake, as opposed to a wider security challenge that directly implicated US interests. The answer reveals the complexity of managing what is for Australia a vital strategic triangle.

There's a recurrent theme in the historical episodes that prompted Australian policymakers to either seek US military support or ask whether they could count on it: the strong desire of the US to preserve its own relationship with and interests in Indonesia.

Although the US was conscious of its alliance commitments and endeavoured to meet Australian needs, it did so in a manner designed not to disturb its own bilateral relationship with Indonesia. As the largest country in Southeast Asia, straddling pivotal waterways, Indonesia has long been courted by the world's great powers as a strategic prize.

US concern to protect its separate strategic and economic interests there had a bearing on its diplomacy and on the nature of the practical military commitments it was prepared to give to Australia. In both cases, its primary aim—and its most valuable contribution to the immediate

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security challenge—was to apply the enormous weight of its statecraft to defusing the source of tension between Australia and Indonesia. Diplomatic and domestic political priorities served to limit the nature of the US military role.

But an examination of the record shows that the diplomacy was frequently hard-edged and came with clear red lines beyond which military escalation was an option.

In September 1999, with East Timor in turmoil, President Bill Clinton told Prime Minister John Howard that the US wouldn't supply any combat troops to the international stabilisation force, INTERFET. Howard admitted to being 'disappointed' and 'stunned' that, on the one occasion when it was Australia asking for 'boots on the ground', the US demurred.

Pressure on Washington eventually produced an indispensable contribution, including logistics, intelligence, and the deployment of two warships to nearby waters, but, behind the scenes the US diplomatic balancing act is revealing. Separate visits to Jakarta in September by Defense Secretary William Cohen and US Pacific forces commander Admiral Dennis Blair offer a flavour of the months of diplomatic exchanges and internal debate.

Blair was the bluntest. He told the Indonesian National Armed Forces (TNI) commander, General Wiranto, that East Timor was in a state of 'anarchy', the TNI was to blame, and the situation

would do 'irrevocable damage to Indonesia's relationship with the rest of the world, including the US', unless fixed.

At the height of the Cold War, and amid growing conflict in Vietnam, there was acute anxiety in Washington to avert a full-blown war over Malaysia.

Meeting Wiranto three weeks later, Cohen, too, was tough. Importantly, he warned that the TNI would be held accountable for any militia attacks on INTERFET troops. But then Cohen raised media reports claiming that Howard saw Australia as a US 'deputy sheriff' in

the region. Cohen told Wiranto those reports 'were wrong', adding 'it was in both our interests to have a positive bilateral relationship'. The clear message was that the US would look after its own affairs, and had its own interests, in the region.

The end of the Cold War had given the US more latitude to challenge the conduct of a valued partner, but government debate in Washington in 1999 mirrored that in Australia—how to prevent the East Timor crisis from imperilling relations with the anchor state in Southeast Asia just as it was making an arduous transition to democracy.

The same balancing act was evident decades earlier as Indonesia's President Sukarno waged a multifaceted 'confrontation' to prevent the formation of Malaysia. At the height of the Cold War, and amid growing conflict in Vietnam, there was acute anxiety in Washington to avert a full-blown war over Malaysia. The US desperately wanted to prevent a terminal rupture in relations with Indonesia, which in turn would see its influence displaced by domestic and international communist forces.



Stass Base Camp, near the border between the Malaysian state of Sarawak and the Indonesian province of Kalimantan, being rebuilt after being taken over by A Company, 3rd Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment, circa March 1965. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

Sustained pressure on Indonesia culminated in a visit to Asia by President Lyndon Johnson's special envoy, Attorney General Robert Kennedy. In early 1964, Kennedy met Sukarno at the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, where he conveyed administration concerns over the significant risk of 'escalation into a serious war' and the existence of US 'treaty commitments in the area'. He pressed Sukarno to end guerrilla actions in Malaysia and return to the negotiating table.

Internal debate in Washington and diplomatic exchanges with Australia before the Kennedy trip show the US to have been keenly aware that, if Australian forces were deployed to Malaysian Borneo and clashed with Indonesian forces, Canberra would 'invoke the ANZUS pact and call upon us for direct intervention against Indonesia'.

US Defense Secretary Robert McNamara made a handwritten notation that 'we will have a serious prob under ANZUS'. On his return to Washington, Kennedy himself publicly declared that the US had 'obligations under the ANZUS Treaty' and war could easily escalate and spread.

Those warnings disguised private administration fears over the fate of substantial commercial investments in Indonesia—especially in the oil industry—and a loss of strategic advantage in the zero-sum game of the Cold War.

Washington was offering both carrots and sticks in exchange for a negotiated settlement. The carrot was more aid and investment. The references to ANZUS and the prospect of the loss of US aid and investment were the stick; they served to make the red lines clear and keep the pressure on Sukarno to pull back.

In this respect, ANZUS proved useful even as the US militarily stayed out of *Konfrontasi* as it escalated during 1964 and 1965, pointing to the burden it carried in Vietnam.



Australian Ambassador to Indonesia Keith Shann with Indonesian President Sukarno and his wife Ibu Hartini, Bogor, Indonesia, 1964. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

The pattern of US behaviour replicated earlier compromises and loose commitments to Australia during US-sponsored negotiations to cede West New Guinea to Indonesia in 1962.

But it isn't entirely correct to say, as Hugh White does, that the US in the early 1960s 'would not assure Australia of military support against a disruptive and increasingly well-armed Indonesia'.¹

The record suggests that Washington gave extensive thought to its treaty obligations. The threat of US intervention against the backdrop of those obligations provided valuable diplomatic leverage in reducing the risk of a wider conflict.

Note

- 1 Hugh White, 'Four decades of the defence of Australia: reflections on Australian defence policy over the past 40 years', in Ron Huiskens, Meredith Thatcher (eds), *History as policy: framing the debate on the future of Australia's defence policy*, Strategic and Defence Studies Centre, ANU Press, Canberra, 2007, 164.

Christmas cheer: Nixon, Whitlam and Vietnam

Stephen Loosley

My late friend Andrew Peacock could spin a good yarn, but one story in particular still holds a peculiar resonance for Australian politics and history. Christmas 1972 saw Peacock in Washington DC. The Australian Coalition government of 23 years' standing had just fallen to a resurgent Labor Party under a charismatic leader in Gough Whitlam.

The Vietnam War was still raging, even though peace talks in Paris had suggested that an end to the conflict wasn't far away. In Dr Henry Kissinger's immortal phrase, peace was at hand.

The war had been deeply divisive in Australia, as it was in the US. The traditional Australian scepticism and hostility on the vexed issue of conscription for the armed forces was an accompanying fire.

But the Paris talks had stalled, so, to bring North Vietnam to the table to finalise a peace deal, President Richard Nixon had authorised a massive bombing of Hanoi and Haiphong—Operation Linebacker II—which had resulted in widespread criticism both in the US and abroad.

Federal Labor had long opposed the war, and some of Whitlam's new ministers were scathing about Nixon's decisions. The administration responded angrily, and it was mooted that Australia–US relations, traditionally close, would spiral away. Peacock told an illuminating story. Visiting his friend Dick Cheney, then a senior Nixon aide, Peacock was at pains to make it clear that the new Australian Government wasn't hostile to the US and that Whitlam was a sophisticated player with whom the Americans could deal. In short, Peacock was putting Australia's interests to the fore.

Cheney listened carefully and then told his Australian visitor that the President should hear this. So they went around to the Oval Office. As Peacock recalled, Nixon's famous secretary, Rose Mary Woods, explained that the President was out for a short while but would be returning. So Cheney suggested that they speak with the Vice President, the controversial Spiro T Agnew.

At that point, Peacock's story became wonderfully funny as he described Agnew at his office desk, eating a salad sandwich, with beetroot juice dribbling down his shirt.

Agnew reacted badly to the Peacock story and was essentially dismissive of Australia as being akin to a banana republic.

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Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam and US President Richard Nixon, Washington DC, 30 July 1973. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

However, a very different response came from Nixon when Peacock finally had the chance in the Oval Office to argue that relations between the US and Australia would essentially not change under the Whitlam government. Nixon nodded and said that he understood. Australia was an ally, and the US–Australia alliance would continue.

The tensions were real. There were industrial bans in both countries. But it's likely that the administration's anger was residing in the office of the National Security Advisor, Henry Kissinger. The President was unhappy with the Australian language but unfazed by the furore.

The Australian–American relationship of the 1960s was dominated by the Cold War. The Vietnam War became a microcosm of the struggle between the US and its allies and the communist giants, the Soviet Union and China.

Australia had been an early entrant into the war in support of the government in Saigon. As early as 1962, Australian military trainers were attached to the South Vietnamese Army.

The Kennedy administration was cautious on its military commitment to Saigon; Kennedy's successor, Lyndon B Johnson, far less so. Unwilling to be the first President in the US history to lose a war, Johnson increased support for the South and, by the time of his retirement, there were half a million American troops deployed. In LBJ's colloquial Texas slang, they were instructed to 'bring the coon skin home to nail on the wall'.

An Australian taskforce of three battalions was in place, along with supporting air and naval units.

LBJ's visit to Australia in November 1966 was in support of Prime Minister Harold Holt, who was personally close to the President. As a matter of fact, Holt's slogan for Australian involvement in the war set a very low benchmark for cultural cringe, being 'All the way with LBJ!'

A divided Australia reacted with anger during the visit, and demonstrations occurred in city streets alongside adoring crowds. Holt was returned convincingly in the federal election later that year, so Australia's commitment to the war was endorsed electorally. Then came Tet.

The Tet Offensive, beginning January 1968, was a military debacle for the communist forces—the Viet Cong and the North Vietnamese Army—but, in propaganda terms, it was an extraordinary victory in the living rooms of America (and of Australia). Television recorded the brutality of the fighting in Saigon, Hue and elsewhere, and the US military was obliged to recapture a part of the US embassy occupied by a Viet Cong suicide squad. The following March, LBJ made a television announcement of some importance to Americans and, indeed, the world:

I shall not seek, and I will not accept, the nomination of my party for another term as your president.

The political vacuum on the Democratic side of American politics for a new presidential nominee wasn't filled by an anti-war candidate, such as Senator Robert F Kennedy (New York), who was assassinated, or Senator Eugene McCarthy (Minnesota). Vice President Hubert Humphrey stepped up and was defeated by Richard Nixon on a supposed 'secret plan' to end the war. Nixon began the painful process of American withdrawal and the 'Vietnamisation' of the conflict.

More importantly, early in his term in 1969, he introduced the notion of the Nixon (Guam) Doctrine, which required US allies to be far more self-reliant.

Australia under Whitlam was much more vigorous in its regional diplomacy and in its UN engagements. The well-crafted 1976 Defence White Paper finally presented by the Fraser government endeavoured to reflect the imperatives posed by the Guam Doctrine of shifting American strategic policy and the realities of British withdrawal from the region and a greater Soviet presence in the Pacific.

The Australian focus moved from expeditionary engagement to challenges closer to home. Unfortunately, the Fraser government never achieved the consistent budgetary objectives that it set for itself for defence policy.

Curiously, Australian foreign policy moved closely in alignment with that of the Nixon administration in one critical area.

A divided Australia reacted with anger during the visit, and demonstrations occurred in city streets alongside adoring crowds.

Whitlam's visit to Beijing in 1971 had virtually coincided with that of Kissinger. American moves to recognise China were more easily accommodated by an Australian Government that acknowledged China's significance as it emerged in international affairs.

The Vietnam War had indeed strained relations between Australia and the US, but the alliance emerged intact, and Nixon's Watergate disgrace and departure for San Clemente saw the significance of the tensions between the allies over the Christmas bombing campaign recede. The stress was there, but, as Peacock came to understand, the alliance was far more significant than a flurry of criticism between Canberra and Washington, however intemperate the language was on occasion and regardless of who the players happened to be.

The joint facilities in the 1980s

Kim Beazley

The late Professor Des Ball once described the joint facilities as the ‘strategic essence’ of Australia’s American alliance. Though never holding an official position, Ball, who was essentially a man of the left, was a major influence on the public debate on the joint facilities in the 1980s. That debate cemented majority public opinion in favour of the facilities. His seminal book, *A suitable piece of real estate*, published in 1980, fed both sides of the debate. His view, in subsequent presentations, that their value outweighed the risks was important within the Australian Labor Party and further afield.

It might be argued that Robert McNamara, US Defense Secretary from 1961 to 1968, could be seen as the founder of the modern American alliance. He disciplined and extended the American nuclear force posture. His ‘triad’ (a force of land-based missiles, bombers and strategic missile submarines) required the development of a complex of communications and surveillance technologies that took Australia from the status of a strategic backwater into the heart of the US system of global deterrence. On his watch, Australia came to host facilities for communications with submarines (North West Cape), surveillance of Soviet nuclear capabilities (Pine Gap) and early warning of Soviet attack (Nurrungar).

Those developments changed Labor policy from a flirtation with non-alignment to support for the alliance relationship. The qualifications were that Australia should have full knowledge of the joint facilities’ operations and be in a position to give concurrence to their use in war and more generally. The Whitlam government experienced something of a shock when, during the Middle East war of October 1973, North West Cape was used without prior Australian knowledge. Its concerns were resolved by an agreement that didn’t hinder the use of the facilities but assured Australia of forewarning. Whitlam had cast some doubt on the continued operation of the various joint facilities when agreements fell due for renewal. He didn’t operate on that doubt, but some in the Labor Party harboured concerns that the facilities may have played a role in his eventual dismissal.

Labor leaders were well aware that threats to remove the joint facilities could have severe electoral consequences. More than that, however, they formed the conviction that the facilities were critical for global stability, vital to the Western alliance, important for the achievement of arms control agreements and, as the decade went by, increasingly of direct relevance to Australia’s defence. They were also a ticket to the top table. Important for the US, they were a mechanism that permitted Australia considerable flexibility in advancing foreign policy initiatives that didn’t bring them into contention. Bob Hawke’s ministers developed a mantra along those lines that informed their debating points as criticisms emerged in public campaigns during their time in office.

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First, there had to be honesty about the facilities' risks and purposes. One risk was that they made Australia a nuclear target. A vital and now long-forgotten report of the Joint Parliamentary Foreign Affairs and Defence Committee, *Threats to Australian security, their nature and probability*, published the year before Hawke assumed office, was helpful in that regard. It highlighted a view from Des Ball that claims of widespread nuclear targeting of Australia were 'quite exaggerated'. He could not 'imagine any scenarios involving nuclear bombs falling on Australian cities'. Attacks would be limited to the joint facilities. Unpleasant, obviously, but we could live with the risk: a nuclear war was most unlikely.

Among America's allies, Australia had a unique status. Defending them, including NATO, Japan and South Korea, effectively consumed American security as it risked a devastating attack on the US if nuclear weapons were used. Australia was unlikely to find itself in a situation where aiding our defence would risk a nuclear attack on the US. Therefore, with Australia agreeing to host facilities that would draw a nuclear attack, it could be said the US was consuming ours. We were definitely burden-sharing.

As well as acknowledging the risks, ministers wanted to be able to state honestly that Australia had full knowledge of the capabilities of the facilities and concurred with their operations. In the 1980s, fortuitously, technological changes meant that the US needed to change the character of those operations. Pine Gap, in particular, went 'real time'. Hitherto, the information it collected was largely historical. Now it was able to produce information on battlefield situations as they happened. Ministers couldn't discuss that, but could negotiate a situation in which assertions of full knowledge and concurrence continued to be real.



Pine Gap from the northeast, January 2016. Source: Felicity Ruby, [online](#).



Australian Prime Minister Bob Hawke speaks at a press conference, watched by US Secretary of State George Shultz, Washington DC, 1985. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

In exchange for certainty and continuation, the renewal agreements for Pine Gap and Nurrungar included the incorporation of Australian personnel on every one of the four shifts and in charge of two of them. The Australian deputy in both facilities was placed in a position of command in the absence of the American commander. Furthermore, as some of the functions of the facilities served US nuclear war planning, we sought and obtained regular briefings on those functions from the Pentagon. As the Defence Minister, I sought from the Defence Department regular written reports on the facilities' activities. I had noticed that that type of reporting was pretty thin in the department's records. The facilities now were genuinely joint. In a real-time situation, we had to be on the spot.

How vital they were could be seen in two developments at the time. One was the acceptance by the US of Bob Hawke's request that Australia withdraw from participating in the testing of America's MX missile. His argument was that our participation would let loose a domestic political debate on the unrelated joint facilities. Likewise, Australia sought an assurance that the facilities wouldn't be actively used in experimentation on President Ronald Reagan's Strategic Defence Initiative. The Americans responded positively.

More importantly for Australia, the vital role that the facilities played in Australia's own defence and intelligence posture became obvious to the government. It became critical for Australia that they should be sustained. Technological changes might well see their removal. For example, such changes made North West Cape no longer crucial for US submarine-launched ballistic missiles, but it was vital for Australian submarines. Hence, Australia sought control of the base.

Similarly, Nurrungar became irrelevant for the Americans. It was closed, but its function shifted to Pine Gap as part of a redundant capability.

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In 2010, partly to insure against the removal of an Australian bargaining chip, Australia and the US signed the Space Situational Awareness Partnership. That was followed by agreements to relocate a US space surveillance radar to Western Australia in 2014 and for the location of the US space surveillance telescope in 2015.

Occasionally, concern has arisen over alleged joint facilities' participation in drone strike operations. The point now is that the facilities are deeply embedded in Australia's order of battle. In large measure, we would be regionally blind and deaf without them. Their replacement would be not only unaffordable but technologically impossible. That this would arise was becoming obvious in the 1980s, as the joint character of the facilities was cemented. In a tight financial situation and a more complex regional security environment, they are invaluable.

New Zealand and the ANZUS alliance

Peter Jennings

On 14 July 1984, New Zealanders elected a Labour government under Prime Minister David Lange with a strong anti-nuclear platform, including that Wellington wouldn't allow port access to ships that were nuclear powered or were carrying nuclear weapons. That conflicted with an American policy to 'neither confirm nor deny' whether US Navy vessels were nuclear armed and set the ground for a crisis in the alliance relationship, which materialised in February 1985. The US requested port access for USS *Buchanan*, a Charles F Adams-class destroyer. As the US wouldn't depart from its neither-confirm-nor-deny policy, the visit was denied. The Lange government later passed anti-nuclear legislation into law that required definitive proof that a visiting ship wouldn't be nuclear armed.

In his 1994 autobiography, Bob Hawke wrote that US Secretary of State George Shultz visited Lange soon after the July 1984 election and had 'been led to believe that that all David [Lange] needed was some room to sort through some political problems with his party and smooth the way for US Naval ship visits'.¹ USS *Buchanan* was an old ship on an extended goodwill visit to the region and highly unlikely to be carrying nuclear weapons, but New Zealand Labour wouldn't shift its position; nor does it seem that Lange tried to get his party to change course. The Americans felt misled. Stung, Washington formally suspended 'its security responsibilities to New Zealand' at US–Australian bilateral talks in San Francisco in August 1986.²

From Washington's perspective, New Zealand's action couldn't have come at a worse time. Anti-nuclear sentiment was markedly on the rise in Europe, where NATO was seeking to deploy nuclear-armed Pershing II and ground-launched cruise missiles and simultaneously negotiate an intermediate-range nuclear forces treaty with the Soviet Union. The US worried that an anti-nuclear 'contagion' could spread to other treaty allies, Japan and even Australia. That added force to the US reaction to New Zealand.

ANZUS ceased to exist as a trilateral relationship in 1986. The AUSMIN annual dialogue became the engine of Australia–US bilateral cooperation. New Zealand moved from being an ally of the US to what Secretary of State Colin Powell described in 2002 as 'very, very, very close friends'.³ Some but not all intelligence cooperation was cut off, as was a broad range of US–NZ military-to-military activity. Seeking to demonstrate its credentials as a good international citizen, New Zealand deployed forces to the East Timor crisis in 1999 and subsequent stabilisation missions, a small contingent to Iraq in 2003–04 and Special Air Service Regiment personnel, among other troops, to the Afghanistan conflict.

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In November 2010, Secretary of State Hillary Clinton visited New Zealand and signed the Wellington Declaration, which stated that the two countries had a strategic partnership comprising ‘two fundamental elements: a new focus on practical cooperation in the Pacific region; and enhanced political and subject-matter dialogue—including regular Foreign Ministers’ meetings and political–military discussions’.⁴ That was followed by a Washington Declaration in 2012 designed to strengthen US–NZ defence cooperation. In November 2016, a guided-missile destroyer, USS *Sampson*, became the first US Navy warship to visit New Zealand in 33 years. New Zealand made the determination that the ship wasn’t nuclear armed without the US confirming or denying that fact.⁵



Arleigh Burke–class guided-missile destroyer USS *Sampson*, right, conducts a replenishment at sea with Her Majesty’s New Zealand Ship *Endeavour*, 13 November 2016. Source: US Department of Defense, [online](#).

Canberra regarded the partial normalisation of US–NZ defence cooperation with some reserve. It remains an Australian objective that New Zealand isn’t seen to have an easy return to defence cooperation without meeting its alliance obligations. That said, the concern of the 1980s and 1990s that anti-nuclear sentiment might damage Australian alliance cooperation with the US seems a distant historical relic in 2021.

A 2018 New Zealand Strategic Defence Policy Statement identified the ‘benefits’ arising from being a Five-Eyes partner with Australia, the US, Canada and the UK and ‘amplifying New Zealand’s ability to contribute to international security’.⁶ The statement said, ‘New Zealand has no better friend than Australia’, which the document described several times as New Zealand’s ‘ally’. The word is pointedly not used in the markedly cooler references to the US; nor is the term ‘ANZUS’ mentioned.

As of mid-2021, it seems that the former ANZUS partners largely have what each of them wants in their defence and security cooperation. No New Zealand political party wants a return to full trilateral alliance cooperation. Wellington is comfortable being America's somewhat distanced friend. President Joe Biden has yet to offer an assessment of the New Zealand relationship, although, in a January 2021 call with the New Zealand Foreign Minister, Secretary of State Antony Blinken 'affirmed our close partnership ... Together the United States and New Zealand will continue to tackle the greatest challenges confronting our world in order to ensure a free and open Indo-Pacific region.'⁷

For its part, there can be no doubt that Canberra prefers the intimacy of bilateral defence and security cooperation with the US as steered through the AUSMIN ministerial dialogue. Australia is more closely aligned to US strategic thinking almost regardless of sharp policy differences between a President Trump and a President Biden. It could be much more challenging for Canberra to have to manage trilateral agreement were a more cautious Wellington at the table. That proposition has been tested through the different levels of enthusiasm shown by New Zealand and Australia for the growing cooperative agenda among the Five-Eyes partners.

At the May 2021 meeting of Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern, the leaders were intent on showing a united front on strategic issues. Morrison said: 'Oh, well there are many others, people are always trying to divide Australia and New Zealand all over the place, but they will not succeed. And as I said, the ANZUS alliance arrangements are fairly clear.'⁸ That was a little awkward: the truth is that New Zealand is no longer covered by ANZUS even if it's still formally under the treaty, and 'ANZUS' isn't in New Zealand's lexicon.

New Zealand – Australia bilateral security cooperation remains important for both countries, particularly in engaging with Pacific island countries, in cybersecurity and the global commons and, increasingly, over Antarctica. At times, it feels as if the relationship drifts on comfortable clichés about the closeness of families (as if families don't have their differences!). The coming far from trivial test for Canberra and Wellington will be how to align their approaches towards the People's Republic of China.

Notes

- 1 R.J.L. Hawke, *The Hawke memoirs*, William Heinemann, Melbourne, 1994, 282.
- 2 R. Lindsey, 'US in talks with Australia, bars defense of New Zealand', *New York Times*, 12 August 1986, [online](#).
- 3 'United States and New Zealand "friends but not allies", Powell says', *New Zealand Herald*, 28 March 2002, [online](#).
- 4 Full text of the Wellington Declaration, 4 November 2010, [online](#).
- 5 'US warship USS *Sampson* heads to New Zealand', *New Zealand Herald*, 18 October 2016, [online](#).
- 6 New Zealand Ministry of Defence, 'Strategic Defence Policy Statement 2018', 6 July 2018, [online](#).
- 7 Office of the Spokesperson, 'Secretary Blinken's call with New Zealand Foreign Minister Mahuta', US State Department, 29 January 2021, [online](#).
- 8 S. Morrison, 'Press conference—Queenstown, New Zealand', transcript, 31 May 2021, [online](#).

The Howard government and the alliance

Michelle Grattan

The American alliance, of which the ANZUS Treaty is part but far from the whole, is based fundamentally on shared interests and values. How it operates is also influenced by personalities. It transcends particular US presidents and Australian prime ministers, but it's also true that individuals have an impact on its functioning.

During the Vietnam War era, Lyndon B Johnson and Harold Holt were famously close. It was the opposite with Gough Whitlam and Richard Nixon. John Howard had a personally cool relationship with Bill Clinton and an extremely close and warm one with George W Bush. Howard has written in his autobiography, *Lazarus rising*, 'We were closer friends than any other two occupants of the leadership positions we once respectively held.'¹ It's fascinating to speculate how things would have gone if Howard had won the 2007 election, after he had suggested that year that al-Qaeda would be praying for Barack Obama's victory in the presidential election (something he later privately regretted saying).

Rather like Scott Morrison, Howard arrived in office after a political career built on domestic politics and policies, rather than any wide expertise or sustained interest in foreign policy.



US President George W Bush and Australian Prime Minister John Howard perform a military pass and review at the Washington Navy Yard, 10 September 2001. White House photo by Tina Hager, [online](#).

Circumstances, however, dictated that his international stance would be a significant and defining part of his prime ministership. He took Australia into our longest war, in Afghanistan, and also into one of our most controversial, in Iraq. Both engagements were driven by Australia's commitment to the alliance. Howard was the first (and so far the only) prime minister to invoke the ANZUS Treaty, after the 11 September 2001 terrorist attacks on the US. This was primarily to underline Australia's declaration of solidarity with America and its people, rather than for any operational purpose. But as Allan Behm, from the Australia Institute, points out, the treaty's invocation was in vastly different circumstances—a terrorist attack—than the more conventional military threats that were in the minds of its drafters.²

Howard from the start brought to his prime ministership the strong commitment to the alliance that marks Australian leaders, especially from the Liberal side of politics. He wanted to reinvigorate the links with traditional friends, after Labor's emphasis on building Australia's connections with Asia. John McCarthy, the Australian Ambassador in Washington when the Howard government was elected, recalls conveying an offer relating to military training assistance in Australia (which didn't go anywhere at the time).³

But there's no doubt—as Howard himself attests—that being in Washington on 9/11 gave a deep emotional element to that commitment, symbolised by bringing ANZUS into play.⁴ He had already been impressed with Bush (whom he had contacted during the Clinton presidency) in their talks the day before the terrorist attack. But the shock and immense impact of that frightening day and its aftermath put the relationship on another, highly bonded, footing.

The initial commitment of Australian forces to the Afghanistan war was an easy one (to the extent that any decision for war can be easy), for Howard and for Australia. America's allies, and many other countries, were appalled by the attacks and uncertain and apprehensive about what might follow. There was a demonstrable justification for removing the terrorists' safe haven in Afghanistan, and a broad coalition of nations joined the effort. Few would have predicted, however, that this war would drag on so long and without resolution, and that Australian forces would be there for most of it. The conflict cost the lives of 41 Australian soldiers in theatre and injured or deeply scarred many more. For the most part, after the initial phase, the Australian public seemed to pay little attention to the conflict.

Given the strength of their relationship, Bush could rely on Howard supporting his attack on Iraq, although this was problematic in strategic terms, didn't enjoy bipartisan support in Australia, and sparked large anti-war demonstrations here as well as in other countries. Howard was cautious, however, in how he handled Australia's role; Australian forces were deployed in a way that minimised the risk to them. As a result, there were no combat losses. There was also no reference to ANZUS.

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While the commitment in Iraq was a measure of the Howard government's loyalty to the alliance, it took a toll (albeit temporary) on support for that alliance. In 2007, according to the Lowy Institute poll, that support was at 63%, which was the lowest point in the poll's history (lower than during the Donald Trump presidency, which also brought a dip).

Michael Fullilove, executive director of the Lowy Institute, wrote in *The Australian* on the 10th anniversary of the Iraq invasion that Howard had made it clear that:

alliance considerations were prominent in his thinking in 2003. That is appropriate. An alliance is a serious matter. It requires that you support your ally when it is in the right, even in the hard cases ... There is no point in being an ally in name only. Indeed, our reliability as an ally contributes to our access and influence in Washington.

But our alliance does not require us to support our ally when that ally is in the wrong ... The Iraq war made the US weaker, poorer, less respected and less feared. Given that we rely on US power for our own security, this is something that Australians ought to regret.⁵

The Iraq decision didn't cost Howard votes in 2004. In the election before that, in 2001, national security and alliance politics clearly played to his advantage. There were other factors in his defeat of Labor's Kim Beazley, including the stand-off over the *Tampa*, a Norwegian freighter that had tried to land hundreds of asylum seekers (mainly Afghans) whom it had rescued, but the aftermath of September 11 was crucial.

Howard recounts in *Lazarus rising* a conversation with Bush in 2008. By then a former prime minister, he was in Washington, and Bush hosted a dinner for him. The President had an imminent meeting with new PM Kevin Rudd, and asked Howard about him. 'I remarked, "He'll stick by the alliance".'⁶ It was an assertion of the alliance's strong continuity, although at a personal level the Rudd-Bush relationship went sour.

Howard was an alliance man to his bootstraps. His loyalty to the alliance took him, and Australia, well beyond what was required.

Notes

- 1 John Howard, *Lazarus rising: a personal and political biography*, HarperCollins, Pymble, NSW, 2010, 462.
- 2 Allan Behm, interviewed by author, June 2021.
- 3 John McCarthy, interviewed by author, June 2021.
- 4 Howard, *Lazarus rising*, 386.
- 5 Michael Fullilove, 'We stood by the US as it erred grievously in Iraq', *The Australian*, 19 April 2013.
- 6 Howard, *Lazarus rising*, 473.

Iraq, Afghanistan and the challenge of terrorism

John Blaxland

In September 2001, Prime Minister John Howard committed Australian forces, from all three services, to operations alongside US and coalition forces in the Middle East—a commitment that ended up being for a longer period than either of the two world wars.¹ Little did anyone realise at the time the mistakes, the miscalculations and the missteps that would follow to make that commitment the commencement of the longest war Australian forces would fight in support of allies. But this time they did so while avoiding the politically contentious issues of conscription and heavy own-force casualties by making small, niche contributions, using only a professional, all-volunteer force.

The US identified Afghanistan as the primary target, it being the state ruled by the Taliban, which was closely associated with the terrorist group al-Qaeda, led by Osama bin Laden. The Taliban's refusal to expel al-Qaeda triggered the allied attacks aimed at their overthrow. The attacks began on 7 October, and within five weeks the capital, Kabul, had fallen to the US-led coalition's principal Afghan partners, the Northern Alliance. Few Australians realised the fight would continue for years thereafter. In reality, it would mean multiple deployments of ground, maritime and air contingents to the Middle East for the better part of the following two decades. Australians would soon be found in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, Qatar, Dubai and beyond, as well as in transit across the Indian Ocean and on deployments alongside US and other coalition counterparts in headquarters across the Middle East and in HQ Central Command in Florida.

The deployments to Afghanistan and Iraq came in several iterations over the early years of the conflicts. At the outset, Howard wished to ensure that Australia wasn't engaged in a protracted war and that it remained able to respond to other crises that might arise closer to Australia's shores. Hence the initial contingent deployed were special forces: the first SAS Squadron was committed to operations in November 2001 as part of a US Marine Expeditionary Unit headed by then Brigadier General Jim Mattis. Campaigning in Afghanistan ended in mid-2002, and the special forces soldiers were withdrawn: their early success led to a similar political calculus for the deployment to Iraq in 2003.

Meanwhile, the drawdown in Afghanistan allowed a resurgence of Taliban forces. By 2005, calls for coalition partners to bolster the US position resulted in a fresh approach to Australia, which weighed its options. Eager to avoid a commitment that would expose Australia to a

Australians would soon be found in Iraq, Kuwait, Afghanistan, the Persian Gulf, Qatar, Dubai and beyond, as well as in transit across the Indian Ocean and on deployments alongside US and other coalition counterparts in headquarters across the Middle East and in HQ Central Command in Florida.

major force commitment, expenses and risk of casualties, the Howard government decided to recommit a Special Operations Task Group (SOTG) that year, this time to Uruzgan Province in central Afghanistan.

Following three SOTG rotations, the 1st Reconstruction Task Force (RTF1) formed and deployed to Tarin Kowt, the central town in Uruzgan. There it worked to build up Afghan society as well as defeat the Taliban. In April 2007, a SOTG returned to operate alongside the RTF to provide a kinetic war-fighting capability. As time passed, the focus for the RTFs turned from reconstruction to mentored reconstruction.

Eventually, the focus shifted mostly to mentoring the Afghan National Security Force, with the aim of developing indigenous capacity-building. As part of that approach, efforts were made to ensure that initiatives funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and its AusAID projects were coordinated and that those undertaken by the Australian Federal Police were synchronised with the ADF initiatives as well. That seemed sensible in principle but proved difficult in practice.

From one perspective, this contribution made sense. The Australian commitment to operations in Uruzgan Province involved a defined physical area with agreed, limited force contributions and partnered with a prominent NATO member state, the Netherlands. Initially, the Dutch would be in charge, not the Australians. That seemed to be a convenient way to ensure that the Dutch made a significant contribution to the international stabilisation operations in Afghanistan while keeping Australia's contribution in check. It also meant that Australia didn't have to contribute all the force elements for an effective and holistic counterinsurgency campaign with long-term objectives in mind.

Successive Australian governments renewed the commitment to the war in Afghanistan despite mounting losses. Over time, the ADF deployment in Uruzgan generated a growing number of casualties: a total of 41 Australians died on operations. Since their return, over 500 are reported to have died—many at their own hand, suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

A disproportionate share of the load fell on the shoulders of Australia's special forces soldiers, who deployed on successive SOTG rotations. Eventually, that would lead to the overexposure of these elite troops to the brutality and apparently unending nature of a campaign that lacked clarity of purpose. Consequently, their actions led to some highly questionable outcomes and accusations of war crimes that would prove corrosive to Australia's special forces and the broader ADF.

In hindsight, that probably should have been seen as the inevitable outcome of a flawed strategy. Without a holistic counterinsurgency campaign for Afghanistan, let alone Uruzgan, much of the direction of tactical actions fell on the shoulders of soldiers and commanders. In the absence of a compelling overarching strategy, the main campaign plans left Australian and coalition forces with an inadequate *raison de la guerre* for the brutal fight they were tasked to undertake.



An Australian service light armored vehicle drives through Tangi Valley, Afghanistan, 29 March 2011. Source: ResoluteSupportMedia via Flickr, [online](#).

Beyond the SOTG rotations and the reconstruction and mentoring taskforces, Australians were seconded to (that is, embedded in) coalition units and headquarters in Tarin Kowt, Kabul, Kandahar, Bagram and other locations across Afghanistan. In Tarin Kowt, under the Dutch-led Task Force Uruzgan Headquarters, Australian embeds assisted in coordinating missions, campaign planning and mission deconfliction, among other duties, and used that experience in joint headquarters to inform Australian planning. The embedded experience allowed Australians not only to practise the art of military operations but also to use the information and experience they gained to inform planning and refine processes for future Australian deployments.

In the absence of a compelling overarching strategy, the main campaign plans left Australian and coalition forces with an inadequate raison de la guerre for the brutal fight they were tasked to undertake.

Meanwhile, the RAN and RAAF continued to gain excellent operational experience from their carefully calibrated force contributions, and their experience helped to generate momentum for the development, introduction into service and refinement of significant capabilities.

For the Air Force, that included advances in niche capabilities, including airborne refuelling, airborne early warning and control, airborne surveillance, communications and identification

systems capabilities as well as ground-based air traffic control through the RAAF's deployable Command and Reporting Centre.

Almost the entire RAN fleet undertook one or more deployments to participate in intervention and monitoring operations in and around the Persian Gulf for the entire period and beyond. That experience helped to justify and refine technological advances, including weapons systems upgrades and enhancements to missile systems and phased-array radars.

By 2014, about 1,550 Australian military personnel were stationed in Afghanistan as part of Australia's military contribution to the international campaign against terrorism, maritime security in the Middle East Area of Operations (MEAO) and countering piracy in the Gulf of Aden, all under the banner of Operation Slipper. All of this was commanded by a joint task force headquarters sited in the Persian Gulf and answerable to Headquarters Joint Operations Command back in Australia. An additional 830 ADF personnel were deployed across the broader MEAO, often alongside coalition partners, making discrete but important contributions. Australia also maintained a continuous maritime contribution to Operation Slipper, which included RAN frigates on rotation.

The SOTG and the mentoring and reconstruction forces returned to Australia from Uruzgan in 2014. Australian forces were withdrawn from Iraq after Kevin Rudd's election victory in 2007, but they stayed on in Afghanistan until 2014, when a major US force drawdown took place. Yet the decisions made in 2014 didn't see the end of the matter in either Afghanistan or Iraq. Iraq faced the rise of the so-called Islamic State in 2014 and a demand for a return to assist the government of Iraq alongside US and other coalition partners. How that situation arose, what transpired and how Australia responded is a separate story. Similarly, the post-2014 ADF mission in Afghanistan continued, but not in Uruzgan Province.

In early 2021, US President Joe Biden declared the US would withdraw all its troops by the 20th anniversary of that fateful day, 11 September, when Australia's Prime Minister first invoked the ANZUS Treaty. By mid-2021, the Australian Embassy in Kabul had closed, leaving only a handful of ADF personnel remaining in country. They would depart by the end of June and, while dozens were assisted in relocating to Australia, the fate of many Afghan locally employed staff remains still hanging precariously in the balance.

For Australia, the contributions made to the wars in Afghanistan and Iraq were deliberately constrained ones. Lessons were learned, experience was gained, capabilities were enhanced and alliance ties were burnished, but the experience was deliberately confined to the theatre of operations. Deployed forces put their heart and soul into their work. Yet there was a genuine reluctance in Canberra to embrace wholeheartedly the demands of the operational areas where Australian troops deployed. As a result, the mission often seemed opaque, the command authority constrained and the story allowed to be told through the media tightly managed.

This too-clever-by-half strategy set the scene for some of the most shameful conduct in Australia's military history. Serious allegations of unlawful killings are currently being investigated. Looking back, in the hearts of veterans, there's a palpable sense of disappointment, even shame. Perhaps, as it considers future contingencies, to which more than niche contributions might be required, Australia can learn from this experience—that it should commit troops when it has formulated clear-eyed strategic goals that we all can live with.

Note

- 1 See John Blaxland, Marcus Fielding, Thea Gellerfy (eds), *Niche wars: Australia in Afghanistan and Iraq, 2001–2014*, ANU Press, Canberra, 2020. This chapter is a distillation of the author's observations based on the work covered in that book.

Remembering September 11—a prime minister looks back

John Howard

I first met President George W Bush on 10 September 2001. I had travelled to Washington to commemorate the 50th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty. As part of that observance, I was presented with the ship's bell of USS *Canberra*. The US Navy warship was named in honour of HMAS *Canberra*, which was lost in the Battle of Savo Island while protecting American marines landing on Guadalcanal.

What followed the attack the next day on September 11 was to demonstrate the strength of the relationship between our two countries. Twenty years after that day, and 70 years after the signing of the security treaty, this is an important occasion to reflect on the alliance's history, future and enduring significance. This is a relationship forged in the Indo-Pacific, strengthened during the War on Terror, and permanently part of our future security.



US President George W Bush greets Australian Prime Minister John Howard during an official welcome ceremony at the White House, 16 May 2006. Source: White House photo by Paul Morse, [online](#).

Being in Washington at the time of those attacks had a powerful effect on me. Earlier that day, I had walked past many of Washington's memorials on what was a beautiful autumn morning. Just one hour before the attacks commenced, I walked past the Lincoln Memorial; the statue's clenched fist represented that president's resolve to see through a war for freedom. Later that day, I wrote the following letter to President Bush:

Dear Mr President. The Australian Government and people share the sense of horror experienced by your nation at today's catastrophic events and the appalling loss of life. I feel the tragedy even more keenly being here in Washington at the moment.

In the face of an attack of this magnitude, words are always inadequate in conveying sympathy and support. You can however be assured of Australia's resolute solidarity with the American people at this most tragic time.

My personal thoughts and prayers are very much with those left bereaved by these despicable attacks upon the American people and the American nation.

On the morning of the attack, I had a scheduled news conference just after 9 am to speak about my visit and other domestic issues of the day. Before the conference, my media adviser calmly informed me a plane had hit one of the towers at the World Trade Center. He returned 10 minutes later, banging on my door to tell me another plane had hit the other tower. While the news conference was in progress, the third plane was driven into the Pentagon. After the news conference had finished, we pulled back the curtains to see smoke rising above Washington.

The sheer scale of the death and destruction was extraordinary, especially during peacetime. The surprise attack had killed more people than Pearl Harbor, though this time the targets were innocent civilians. Being in the US, I shared and observed the shock, disbelief and anger of the American people. That day changed the psychology of the United States profoundly.

Despite having the most powerful military the world has ever known, Americans have long felt vulnerable. They worry about being friendless and alone. The day after the attack, Janette and I, accompanied by Australia's then ambassador to the US, Michael Thawley, his wife and our security detail, sat in an empty public gallery of the US House of Representatives. We attended to convey the sympathy and support of the Australian people. The speaker drew attention to my presence, and I was deeply moved to receive a standing ovation. It was clear that Australia stood by the US and that we would assist in the retaliation against those responsible.

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September 11 had been an attack on the American way of life and, because of our shared values, it was also therefore an attack on our way of life. Before departing Andrews Air Force Base near Washington to return to Australia, I promised that 'Australia would provide all support that might be requested of us by the United States in relation to any action that might be taken.' Being in Washington when the attacks occurred led to my immediate commitment to offer support to the President. On the journey back to Australia, Alexander Downer and I agreed that, subject to cabinet approval, the ANZUS Treaty should be invoked.

The attacks on America's commercial heart and its capital clearly constituted an attack upon the metropolitan territory of the US within the meaning of articles IV and V of the ANZUS Treaty.

More than that, our commitment was a statement of friendship and solidarity—an expression that America and Australia stand together in a common cause. As I said in my address to parliament after my return to Australia:

If that treaty means anything, if our debt as a nation to the people of the United States in the darkest days of World War II means anything, if the comradeship, the friendship and the common bonds of democracy and a belief in liberty, fraternity and justice mean anything, it means that the ANZUS Treaty applies and that the ANZUS Treaty is properly invoked.

The alliance isn't based on the ANZUS Treaty alone, or aimed against any other countries. It's based firmly on a shared history and world view. This results in us having similar values and interests. In the past, this has been demonstrated by the numerous occasions when we have fought alongside each other, from World War I to Afghanistan. Now it's most evident in issues relating to technology, human rights and our commitment to the stability of the region.

Before arriving in Washington, I believed that because of the end of the Cold War there was a danger the alliance might in time be taken for granted. My four hours with President Bush on 10 September were the beginning of my friendship with him, as well as many other partnerships that would develop following September 11. Although our military and intelligence services have long had close associations, the campaigns we have fought alongside each other undoubtedly strengthened those bonds.

Our forces are now more accustomed to working together and are more interoperable than before. The posting of Australian service men and women to the Pentagon and various other joint commands has reinforced this. So, too, our longstanding intelligence-sharing agreements, along with our privileged access and contribution to those arrangements, have so far prevented further attacks on our countries. The trust and respect which have developed between our national security professionals, as a result of working so closely together, particularly over the past 20 years, complements the text of the ANZUS Treaty.

While much of our joint efforts in recent years has been focused on the Middle East, ANZUS has always been centred on the Indo-Pacific. With renewed interest and competition in the region, it's worth remembering HMAS *Canberra's* service and sacrifice at Guadalcanal which was honoured on 10 September 2001. That campaign, led by the US, followed by the Battle of the Coral Sea and the Battle of Midway, marked the Allies' successful transition to offensive operations against Japan.

In time, that would win the war in the Pacific and secure the safety of Australia.

The alliance endures because of our shared history, values and interests. Seventy years after the signing of the ANZUS Treaty, it continues to be a force for stability in the region.

The contemporary alliance

Defending Australia and the ANZUS Treaty

Paul Dobb

It's taken many decades for Australia to come to terms with American expectations that we should be able to defend ourselves, short of nuclear war or a conventional attack by a major power. Those expectations have been made clear by successive US governments—beginning with President Richard Nixon in 1969 in what has been termed the Guam Doctrine.

However, it took Australian governments until the 1976 Defence White Paper, *Australian defence*, to acknowledge the need for increased self-reliance. That document observed that Australia had one significant alliance—the ANZUS Treaty—but that it was prudent to remind ourselves that the US 'has many diverse interests and obligations'.

Thus, the 1976 Defence White Paper identified a critical new defence posture for Australia in the post-Vietnam era. For the first time in a public document, it called for increased self-reliance, which was described as a 'primary requirement'. It stated that any military operations were much more likely to be in our own neighbourhood than in some distant or forward theatre, and that our armed services would be conducting joint operations together as the Australian Defence Force.

Coming from a Coalition government, that was radical stuff. The White Paper made it plain that it was not Australian policy, nor would it be prudent, to rely upon US combat help in all circumstances. It said that an alliance doesn't free a nation from the responsibility to make adequate provision for its own security. Furthermore, Australia's self-reliance was seen as enabling us to contribute effectively to any future combined operations with the US because it would significantly reduce our demands upon US operational and logistics support.

The 1987 White Paper, *The defence of Australia*, continued the theme towards defence self-reliance but made it plain that self-reliance 'must be set firmly within the framework of our alliances and regional associations' and that the support they give us makes self-reliance achievable. The White Paper noted that self-reliance in defence 'requires both a coherent defence strategy and an enhanced defence capacity'. It rejected the concept of self-reliance as being the narrow concept of 'continental' defence. The Hawke government had to make this plain because of US suspicions that Australia was tending towards isolationism. The White Paper made it clear that to be self-reliant the ADF must be able to mount operations to defeat hostile forces in our own area of direct military interest. Thus, the fundamental objective of Australia's defence policy was to develop the capacity for the independent defence of Australia and its interests. However, it emphasised that self-reliance doesn't mean self-sufficiency.



HMA Ships *Hobart*, *Brisbane* and *Sydney* off the south coast of New South Wales, December 2010. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

The 1987 White Paper correctly noted that its 1976 predecessor had failed to give substance or direction to the concept of self-reliance. That's why the Hawke Government commissioned the Review of Australia's Defence Capabilities, which established a comprehensive approach needed to implement the principle of defence self-reliance.¹ The review noted that Australia can scarcely pretend to contribute to the defence of broader Western interests if it can't defend itself. The obligation to providing for our own defence is clearly spelled out in Article II of the ANZUS Treaty, which states that 'the Parties separately and jointly by means of continuous and effective self-help ... will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.' The White Paper noted that basic self-reliance is a minimum that any self-respecting country should contribute to an alliance. Our alliance with the US, it said, doesn't free us from the responsibility to make appropriate provision for our own security.

Since the 1987 White Paper, successive Australian governments have endorsed the concept of increased self-reliance and the need for Australia to demonstrate that we can defend ourselves short of a fundamental threat to our security. For example, the Howard government's 2000 Defence White Paper declared that, 'At its most basic', Australia's strategic policy aims to prevent or defeat any armed attack on Australia. It went on to say, 'This is the bedrock of our security and the most fundamental responsibility of government.' But it also went on to observe that the kind of ADF that we need isn't achievable without the technology access provided by the US alliance. Self-reliance would remain an inherent part of Australia's alliance policy, but we wouldn't assume 'that US combat forces would be provided to make up for any deficiencies in our capabilities to defend our territory'.

Those views continued until the watershed 2020 Defence Strategic Update (DSU), which accepts that Australia no longer has the luxury of assuming prolonged warning time of a serious threat. It talks about the possibility of high-intensity conflict in which we must be able to hold a potential adversary's forces and infrastructure at risk. And, in a complete turnaround from the stillborn 2016 *Defence White Paper*, the DSU makes it plain that the key force structure determinant now for the ADF is Australia's immediate region of direct strategic interest, which is defined as including the northeast Indian Ocean, maritime and mainland Southeast Asia (including the South China Sea), and the Southwest Pacific.

The DSU notes that the prospect of high-intensity conflict in the Indo-Pacific is less remote than in the past and that there's greater potential for military miscalculation—including state-on-state conflict that could engage the ADF. Accordingly, 'Defence must be better prepared for the prospect of high-intensity conflict.'

There's also an emphasis in the DSU on increased self-reliance and bolstering national sovereignty by growing the ADF's self-reliance for delivering deterrent effects, as well as such commitments as acquiring our own satellite imagery capability and the capacity to manufacture advanced guided weapons. However, none of that means a lessening of our alliance relationship with the US. If we're to enhance the lethality of the ADF for high-intensity operations, that will undoubtedly mean even closer access to highly advanced American weapons. Without access to the world's most technologically advanced military equipment, such as long-range strike weapons, the ADF can't be a credible force capable of operating in a high-intensity environment in our own defence.

Since the 1987 White Paper, successive Australian governments have endorsed the concept of increased self-reliance and the need for Australia to demonstrate that we can defend ourselves short of a fundamental threat to our security.

Note

- 1 Paul Dibb, *Review of Australia's defence capabilities*, report to the Minister for Defence, March 1986, [online](#).

The trade and investment relationship

David Uren

Australia's security alliance with the US is underwritten by the strongest of economic partnerships: the US is both the biggest source of investment in Australia and the biggest destination for Australian investment offshore.

The US is also our biggest trading partner in services and third biggest trading partner for goods. Businesses and banks in both Australia and the US make intensive use of each other's capital markets.

One of the catalysts for Australia's postwar prosperity was the Lend-Lease program, under which the US provided technology and equipment to Australia to assist with the war effort against Japan.

US firms such as Ford and General Motors, which were established in Australia in the 1920s and 1930s as assembly operations, took on complex manufacturing, ranging from fighter aircraft to mines.



Australian Prime Minister JB Chifley admires a General Motors Holden vehicle, 1948. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

At the end of the war, Australia was able to purchase equipment the US left behind for US\$27 million, endowing the country with a much more sophisticated manufacturing base and a more mechanised agricultural industry than it had before the war.

Although the flow of US investment varies from one year to the next, the strength of the investment relationship was a constant throughout the postwar period as Australia emerged from its protected economic isolation to engage with Asia and become the pre-eminent global resources powerhouse.

The stock of US investment in Australia reached a record \$1 trillion in 2019, which was 50% more than next-ranked UK investment. About three-quarters of US investment is held by financial institutions with stakes in the share and bond markets, while direct investment by US companies reached \$221 billion in 2019 before dipping to \$196 billion last year.

Australia attracts more US investment than China or Mexico and almost as much as Germany. The US Bureau of Economic Analysis shows that Australia captures about 18% of US investment in the Asia-Pacific region, despite accounting for only 5% of the regional economy.

The US banks are the biggest investors in Australia, and some use Australia as their regional base for operations in Asia. They account for 40% of all US direct investment here and 28% of all foreign investment in the finance sector.

Resources come next, with 69 US companies controlling Australian assets worth \$124 billion. US companies represent 38% of all foreign investment in our resources sector.

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Many US firms, ranging from Coca Cola to auto makers, first came to Australia to service our domestic consumer market and were encouraged to manufacture here by high tariff walls. The tariffs have gone, but 244 US manufacturing firms are still operating in Australia. With assets of more than \$100 billion, they account for almost half of foreign investment in Australia's manufacturing industry.

US firms are dominant in the information services industry, accounting for more than 80% of all foreign investment, and also have significant stakes in professional services and hotels. The Australian Bureau of Statistics reports that, in total, there are more than 2,000 US majority-owned businesses operating in Australia, employing 270,000 people.

It was almost impossible for Australian firms to build international operations until 1983, but from the moment that the Hawke government floated the Australian dollar and removed exchange controls, Australian businesses made the US market their first international choice.

Total Australian investment in the US, including the stakes that superannuation funds hold in US stocks and bonds, reached \$864 billion last year, almost matching the US investment in Australia. Direct equity investment by Australian companies in the US market is \$165 billion.

Listed Australian companies obtaining more than half their revenue from the US include Mayne Pharma Group, Austal, James Hardie, Resmed and Computershare.

Australia's economic partnership with the US has been supported by the Australia – United States Free Trade Agreement since 2005. Each side made concessions to the other: we gained more access to the US market for our beef and other agricultural products, as well as greater opportunity for Australian firms to tender for US Government contracts; US firms gained strengthened intellectual property protection and greater scope to invest in Australia without needing to run the gauntlet of Foreign Investment Review Board approval.

Australia's exports to the US haven't lived up to the hopes held when the free trade deal was struck, mostly because the resources boom, which was fired by trade with China, pushed the value of the Australian dollar higher, hurting the competitiveness of Australian exports in other markets. Agricultural exports to the US have barely increased over the past 15 years; however, sales of manufactured goods have almost doubled. The biggest gains have been made by the most sophisticated manufactured goods, such as pharmaceuticals and telecommunications equipment.

The US is by far Australia's largest market for business services, information technology, intellectual property and financial services, and total services exports to the US were worth

The US is by far Australia's largest market for business services, information technology, intellectual property and financial services, and total services exports to the US were worth \$10 billion in 2019.

\$10 billion in 2019. The now-dormant international tourism and education markets are the only service industries in which China was the biggest customer.

There are inevitable tensions in the economic relationship from time to time. Australia's company tax rate of 30% is one of the highest in the world, and is increasingly uncompetitive as other nations lower their rates. The Biden administration is aiming to lift US company taxes to help finance its social welfare reforms, but the tax differential may have contributed to weaker US investment flows to Australia over the past two years.

In Australia, the political focus on the low levels of company tax paid by some US firms, particularly those in digital industries, contributed to the failure of plans by the Coalition government to lower the Australian company tax rate.

Australia was disappointed by the Trump administration's decision to withdraw from the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade agreement, which was seen as the economic counterpoint of the Obama administration's 'pivot' to the Asian region.

However, the economic relationship remains securely based on the deep mutual engagement over the past seven decades, a largely shared business culture and the opportunities that companies from each side continue to find in the other.

ANZUS: reading the treaty

Rod Lyon

In September this year, we'll celebrate the 70th anniversary of the signing of the ANZUS Treaty. Because the treaty sits at the heart of the US–Australia alliance, and because the alliance in turn sits at the heart of Australian strategic policy, the occasion will undoubtedly be marked by considerable fanfare. Current plans suggest Prime Minister Scott Morrison will visit the US. Regardless of whether he does or not, there's likely to be a higher level of interest in the treaty in 2021 than there is in most years.

ANZUS is a short document: a brief preface followed by 11 articles. Few Australians have ever read it, and fewer still have delved its specific provisions. The last author to attempt an exegetical analysis, JG Starke, did so in the mid-1960s. His book, *The ANZUS Treaty alliance*, still rewards close study.¹

So it's possible some Australians might, in 2021, find the time to read—or re-read—the treaty itself. Indeed, were they to do so, that would be no bad thing. Academic research suggests that, in relation to matters of alliance compliance, details matter.² Allies typically don't undertake to support each other come hell or high water; they make a specific set of commitments—those set out in their treaties.

Furthermore, greater knowledge of what the ANZUS Treaty says would reduce the level of public confusion over the commitments that the parties formally embrace therein.

At the core of that confusion is a widespread misapprehension about the relative weighting of three obligations on the treaty's parties:

- 'to maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack' (Article 2)
- to consult together whenever 'the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the parties is threatened in the Pacific' (Article 3)
- to 'act to meet the common danger' when an armed attack occurs against one or more of the parties 'in the Pacific Area' (Article 4).

Some commentary, even from authoritative sources, misleads about the relative importance of those obligations. The 2012 AUSMIN communique, for example, claimed that the alliance is 'above all' about practical defence cooperation.³ It isn't. Defence cooperation is important, true, but it's an enabler, not an end in itself.

A similar point can be made about the widespread belief that—even in the event of an attack—the ANZUS Treaty requires the parties only to consult. Consultation is the engine of Article 3, kicked into life by threats, not by attacks. Moreover, the simple fact that Article 3 is sandwiched between the general obligation to develop appropriate mechanisms for self-defence and the specific obligation to act to meet the common danger, suggests that consultation isn't the core requirement of the treaty.

Rather, it's Article 4—the strategic commitment to action—that, in Starke's terms, constitutes 'the key or operative provision of the Treaty, the one which lays down the *casus foederis* of the alliance'. The article certainly does not say how the parties should act, and Starke himself suggests a range of possibilities. Limiting those possibilities, however, is both the qualifying clause (acting to meet the common danger) and the concept of proportionality (the act has to be proportional to the attack).

So, reading the treaty is always a good place to start for anyone interested in the ANZUS alliance. Unfortunately, it's also a poor place to stop. What we currently think of as our 'alliance' with the US bears only a tangential relationship to the legal document upon which it's founded.

An alliance is a living thing. Understandings of the text are shaped over time, as policymakers add commitments in areas not initially foreseen (in the area of cybertechnology, for example), or clarify shifting strategic priorities (in relation to the Indo-Pacific, for example, rather than the earlier 'Pacific Area'), but gradually those adjustments can have a large effect.

ANZUS, remember, began life as a tripartite security arrangement, but the US – New Zealand leg of the relationship broke down in 1985 after the New Zealanders opted to be 'nuclear-free'. (Further proof that the alliance isn't just about consultations.) The ANZUS Council meetings died; the AUSMIN exchanges were born.

In 2021, we're rapidly reaching a situation in which we have two separate alliances: first, the alliance as defined by the treaty; and second, the alliance as defined by the steady drumbeat of the publication of AUSMIN communiques. Those two visions of the alliance now sit in an uncomfortable tension with each other.

Alongside the 2019 AUSMIN communique, for example, readers can find a 'fact sheet' titled 'Australia and the United States: an alliance for the future'.⁴ That document makes no reference to the original treaty. And the relationship it describes is more global—and especially more Indo-Pacific—in its orientation; more proactive than reactive in its approach to international security issues; and more whole-of-government than defence-oriented in its setting.

As annual exchanges (though, in practice, the record shows that a meeting can't always be arranged), the AUSMIN communiques are a record of the shifting thinking of senior policymakers in Washington and Canberra. After 70 years, the ANZUS parties find themselves living in a different world. Now, more than ever, with strategic power shifts unfolding in Asia and new vectors of attack, we need to do more than sit back and read the 1951 treaty.

Notes

- 1 JG Starke, *The Anzus Treaty alliance*, Melbourne University Press, 1965.
- 2 BA Leeds, AG Long, S McLaughlin Mitchell, 'Reevaluating alliance reliability: specific threats, specific promises', *Journal of Conflict Resolution*, 2000, 44(5):686–699.
- 3 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'AUSMIN joint communique 2012', Australian Government, 2012, [online](#).
- 4 M Payne, 'Australia and the United States: an alliance for the future', fact sheet, 4 August 2019, [online](#).

Public opinion and the ANZUS alliance

Danielle Chubb and Ian McAllister

Since 1951, when the ANZUS Treaty between Australia, New Zealand and the US was signed, the alliance with the US has been the cornerstone of Australian defence policy. From the public's perspective, it's one of the best recognised and understood aspects of contemporary Australian defence and attracts regular media attention and discussion.

The immediate postwar period also coincided with the rise of opinion polling in Australia. Borrowing techniques pioneered in the US in the 1930s by George Gallup, Keith Murdoch and his then employee, Roy Morgan, had introduced opinion polls in Australia in 1941. The organisation they created dominated Australian polling until the 1970s. Thanks to those and later polls, we possess a wealth of material about public views of relations with the US.¹

Postwar public opinion

Australia's experience in World War II underscored the importance of the US to Australian security. While public opinion didn't play a leading role in initiating the negotiations that led to the ANZUS Treaty, national sentiment about Australia's position within the region was important in freeing the government to pursue a foreign policy shift away from Britain and towards the US.

That change resonated with the public. Three opinion polls conducted between 1944 and 1948 show increasing public concern about the possibility of a war with the Soviet Union within the next 25 years (Table 1). In 1944, the view that there would be war was held by 42% of the survey respondents, increasing to 67% by 1948. Interestingly, the proportion who didn't have a view on the topic declined from almost a quarter of the respondents in 1944 to just 4% in 1948. This reflected the increasing frequency of public debate about the potential threats that were emerging in the region.

Public concern about the Soviet Union's military intentions, as well as unease over the possibility of resurgent Japanese militarism, was accompanied by widespread dissatisfaction with the UN.

Table 1: Likelihood of another world war, 1944 to 1948 (%)

	1944	1946	1948
Will be war	42	62	67
Will not be war	34	18	29
Undecided	24	20	4
Total	100	100	100

'Do you think there is likely to be another world war in the next 25 years?'

Sources: Australian political opinion polls.

The public was therefore very receptive to the idea of a security treaty with the US. A survey question in June 1950—shortly before the North Koreans invaded South Korea—asked about a possible treaty. The survey showed that an overwhelming majority of the respondents—87%—supported Australia signing such a treaty, and just 7% opposed it (Table 2).

Table 2: Attitudes towards a treaty with the US, 1950 (%)

Favour	87
Oppose	7
Undecided	6
Total	100

‘Would you be for or against an agreement with the US which would automatically require one to join the other in the event of a Pacific War?’

Source: Australian political opinion polls.

Concerns about postwar security, the ineffectiveness of the UN in dealing with regional conflicts and gratitude for US support during World War II all combined to make support for a mutual defence treaty with the US a logical and popular choice for the public in 1951. The beginning of the Korean War also played a role in further raising fears about communism.

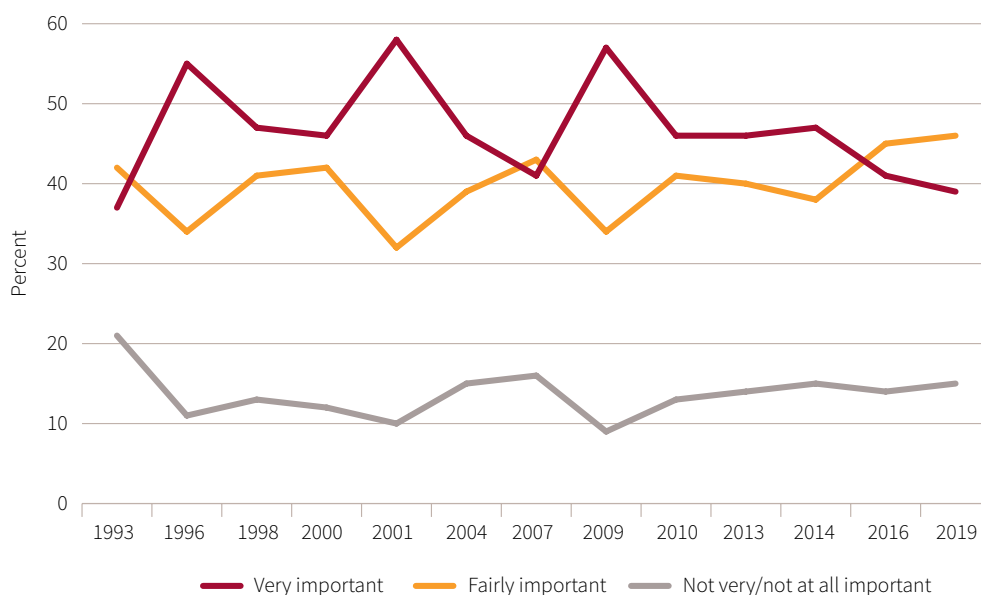


US President Lyndon B Johnson greets the crowd during his visit to Sydney, 22 October 1966. Source: National Library of Australia, [online](#).

Public support for the ANZUS Treaty

What's the level of public support for the ANZUS Treaty today? Since the early 1990s, when the question was first asked in an opinion survey, a large majority of the public has viewed the treaty as important for protecting Australia's security. Between eight and nine out of every 10 respondents have seen the treaty as either 'very' or 'fairly' important to Australia's security, with peaks of support in 2001, immediately after the 9/11 attacks, and in 2009 (Figure 1). The lowest levels of public support were recorded in 1993, just after the collapse of the Soviet Union, and in 2019, during the presidency of Donald Trump.

Figure 1: Support for the ANZUS alliance, 1993 to 2019 (%)



'How important do you think the Australian alliance with the United States under the ANZUS Treaty is for protecting Australia's security?'

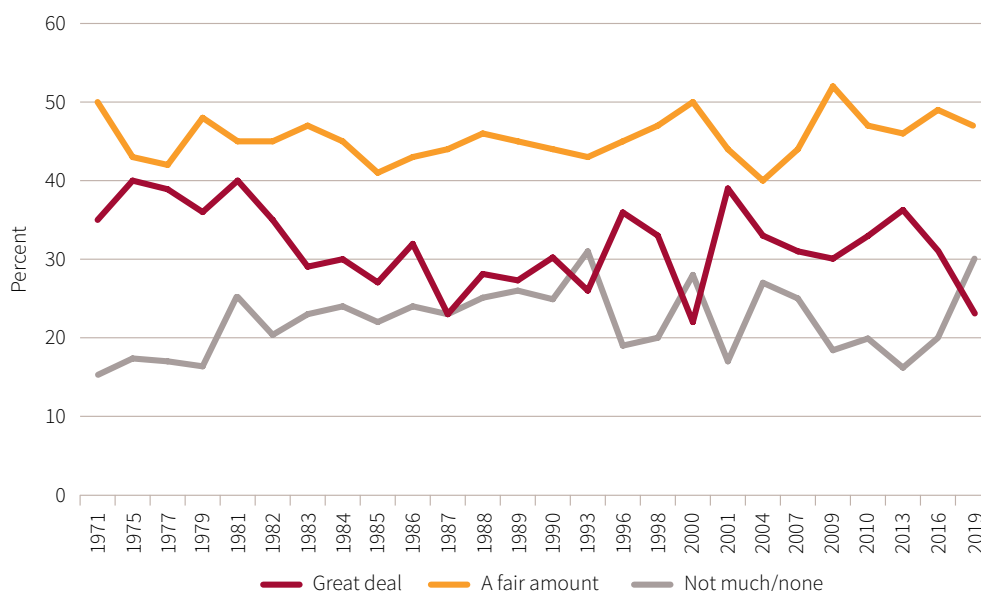
Sources: Australian Election Study; Survey of Defence Issues; ANUpoll.

Does the public have confidence in the US to meet its treaty obligations if it's asked to? The extent to which the Australian public has trust in the US to defend Australia if we were attacked shows that the public has greatest confidence when the US has demonstrated a willingness to engage in overseas conflicts and play a major role in world affairs. Consequently, there was greatest trust immediately after the 9/11 attacks, when the US committed to the invasion of Afghanistan and then to the invasion of Iraq.

The trends also show several periods when trust in the US declined. The lowest level of trust occurred in 2000, just before 9/11 (Figure 2). That momentary decline may have been partly a public response to the US ruling out direct military involvement in the 1999 East Timor crisis.

The lower levels of trust in the mid-2000s also reflected the unpopularity of the free trade agreement with the US, ratified in 2004. The election of Trump and its full implications for US military involvement around the world were evident in 2019, when just 23% of respondents said they had ‘very great’ trust.

Figure 2: Trust in the US to defend Australia, 1971 to 2019



‘If Australia’s security were threatened by some other country, how much trust do you feel Australia can have in the United States to come to Australia’s defence?’.

Sources: US Information Service; Australian Election Study; Survey of Defence Issues (question wording varied slightly).

The future of the ANZUS Treaty

While the ANZUS Treaty attracts widespread public support, social changes are one mechanism by which that support could erode. One source of change is generational and, as those who have personal experience of World War II and its aftermath leave the electorate, overall public support for the treaty may decline. A second source is immigration: as the ethnic composition of the population changes, that may have implications for public support for the alliance.

Analysis of the surveys suggests that, while age is a factor in support for ANZUS, its effect is less generation- than age-related. The passing of the World War II and immediate postwar generations wouldn’t appear to represent an existential threat to ANZUS. By contrast, being born overseas significantly reduces support for ANZUS, most notably from those born in Asia and Northern Europe. It would appear that large-scale immigration, particularly from within our region, is indeed changing overall support for the alliance, albeit gradually.

Much more important than immigration, however, is political leadership. This underpins the importance of elite consensus on the alliance. Calls to subject ANZUS, and the force deployments that arise from it, to greater public scrutiny and debate are opposed by political leaders for that very reason. For ANZUS to continue to attract widespread public support, politicians must resist turning it into a partisan battleground.

Conclusion

Australian public attitudes to the US–Australia alliance have been strongly consistent; even at times when the polls have reflected some concern or doubt about the role of the US in the region or, more broadly, in world affairs, the public has continued to express high levels of support for the alliance. As a result, while the election of Trump had a tangible effect on Australian public opinion of the US as a world leader, the changes observed in the surveys start from a high base when a large majority had an optimistic view of US relations, making the observed decline relative.

That observation is further strengthened when considering support for ANZUS over the full period for which polling data on these issues is available.² Where there were observable changes over that time, they have been in the degree of support for the alliance. Respondents have shifted between ‘very important’ and ‘fairly important’ in their responses, rather than moving in the direction of seeing the alliance as unimportant. Moreover, the trends show that those taking a strong position in favour of ANZUS are proportionately greater than those who take a strong stance against it.

The elite, bipartisan consensus that we witness in Australian politics over the centrality of the US alliance to Australian foreign policy is both reflected and reinforced in the stable and continuing support the public has for this security relationship.

For ANZUS to continue to attract widespread public support, politicians must resist turning it into a partisan battleground.

Notes

- 1 This article draws on Chapter 3 of Danielle Chubb, Ian McAllister, *Australian public opinion, defence and foreign policy: attitudes and trends since 1945*, Palgrave, London, 2020, where more details about the sources used are provided.
- 2 Questions about US relations started to be asked in public opinion surveys from the 1950s. From 1993, a consistent trend question about the ANZUS alliance started to be asked, allowing for a rigorous tracking of attitudes. For a discussion and analysis of that data, see Chubb & McAllister, *Australian public opinion, defence and foreign policy*, 50–57.

ANZUS and Australia's region

Graeme Dobell

Beyond defending Australia and New Zealand, the original purpose of ANZUS was to keep the US in, Japan down and China out.

That aphorism reworks its original NATO context ('keep the Russians out, the Americans in, and the Germans down').

On ANZUS's 70th birthday, today's purpose is to keep the US in, to keep Japan up, and to compete against, cooperate with and confound China. The balance of the compete-cooperate-confound contest is to stop short of conflict.

The aim of the alliance when it was created, just as it is today, is to lock in the US security guarantee to Australia as part of the US role in Asia. That's why Australia never tires of hearing the refrain from visiting US leaders about America's vision of itself as an Asian power.

Australians have spent 70 years obsessing about the meaning and strength of ANZUS. Then we apply that thinking about the central pillar of our defence to our diverse interests in Asia.



Australian Prime Minister Robert Menzies meets with Indonesian President Sukarno at the Istana Negara, Jakarta, Indonesia, 1959. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

The strategic double-step (bilateral and regional) flows from the geographical reach of the treaty text, from the opening paragraph's commitment 'to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific Area'.

The bilateral–regional two-step was always the way Australia envisaged the pact, even as Percy Spender was busy with its creation, getting ANZUS as the price paid for Australia's agreement to a 'soft' peace US treaty with Japan, allowing Japan to rearm.

Spender 'wanted not only the protection which a treaty with the US would provide, but the opportunity it would offer to influence policies and events in Australia's own region', Tom Millar wrote in the 'American lifeline' chapter of *Australia in peace and war*.¹

The bilateral–regional dual vision is Australia's each-way bet. Setting ANZUS within the vast array of US regional interests gives the alliance the biggest of contexts. It's all about anchoring the US on this side of the Pacific, which is one of the many reasons the definition of 'the region' has expanded, joining ANZUS language of 'the Pacific Area' to all that Asia has become to construct the Asia–Pacific, and then bigger again to the Indo-Pacific.

When Canberra talks Asia strategy, often it's really thinking about the alliance—from the failed regional defence treaty, SEATO, to Australia's Vietnam commitment.

The increasing weight that China brings to the contest has made Canberra's regional–bilateral habit of mind both explicit and ever more vital. Helping the US balance against China is going to need much neighbourhood support.

As the US's relative power slips, it must draw more from its friends. The alliance discussion shifts from what the US will or won't do for us, to contemplate what the US is able to do for itself, much less for everyone else. The constructs and imaginings of 'region' are a calculus of power, and what balance will look like.

The Australians (and New Zealanders) who hammered out the ANZUS Treaty had seen what happened when Washington picked other options, sitting out the start of two world wars and embracing isolationism in the 1930s. Donald Trump ditching the Trans-Pacific Partnership was an unhappy echo of that previous protectionist disaster.

The ANZUS Treaty gives America much flexibility. Nothing is automatic—this is no self-licking ice-cream cone. Action at any time is a choice—an act of political will.

Beyond the habits and benefits of ANZUS, Australia draws much sustenance from the political creativity of US choices in the Pacific/Asia–Pacific/Indo-Pacific. With unusual military flexibility and diplomatic dexterity, the US has created layers of alliances and quasi-alliances:

- formal treaty alliances that originated out of the Treaty of San Francisco in 1951 to become the 'hub and spokes', such as with Australia, Japan and South Korea

The ANZUS Treaty gives America much flexibility. Nothing is automatic—this is no self-licking ice-cream cone. Action at any time is a choice—an act of political will.

- *de facto* or virtual alliances, such as with Taiwan, Singapore and, these days, New Zealand
- partial alliances, more politely called ‘relationships’ or ‘partnerships’, such as with Malaysia and Vietnam (Indonesia is always interested in being courted but reluctant to embrace).

India is zooming up this chart, moving from partial alliance towards a broader, deeper, *de facto* alliance.



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison with Indonesian President Joko Widodo at the Istana Merdeka in Jakarta, Indonesia, 20 October 2019. Source: Australian Embassy Jakarta via Flickr, [online](#).

In the first decade of the 21st century, Australia, Japan and the US built the trilateral security dialogue. In the second decade, the trilateral has become the Quad. It's not just India's sensitivities that cause disavowals of the Quad being Asia's NATO.

Compared to the multilateral depth, legalism and unified command of NATO, the layers of US 'alliances' in Asia can change shape, form and colour from country to country. The various Asian customers have a choice of size, function, tempo and commitment in what they ask of the US.

At the high-tempo end, in South Korea and Japan, the US makes huge investments of people, hardware and coordination of command. At the low-tempo end, the commitments can be looser, even in treaty alliances such as with the Philippines and Thailand. As the Philippines starts asking for more, the tempo and investment have risen.

Singapore is an obvious example of a firm *de facto* ally. The US pledge to Taiwan, enshrined in US law, means it reaches beyond the virtual category towards formal status—but the demands of ambiguity and the One China agreement mean this is filed in the *de facto* category.

New Zealand has shifted between all three layers, but it's now comfortably back near the top of the *de facto* class.

The same effect can be seen at the partial level in the long-established version with Malaysia and the new relationship with Vietnam.

The partial alliance or partnership offers little permanent structure or joint military planning, and certainly no integrated command. It's at this low end—Malaysia being an outstanding model—that the US military has been quietly creative, learning to live with silences and implicit deals.

Three years after Mahathir Mohamad first became prime minister, in 1984, Malaysia signed a military pact with the US (kept secret for two decades) known as the Bilateral Training and Consultation Agreement, for naval ship visits, ship and aircraft repairs, joint exercises, intelligence sharing, logistic support and general security consultation. The Malaysia model gave birth to the US doctrine in Asia of 'places, not bases'.

The US military guarantee is of such importance that any future peacetime threat to the formal and informal alliance system will most likely come from the US itself. Short of war, only major new US demands—or US failures to deliver—could imperil the value of the multilayered alliance system in Asia.

A superpower always has the potential to underdeliver or overdemand. The US will underdeliver if it doesn't have the means to fulfil its security assurances to its Asian allies of various stripes. Such underperformance will show first in US political will, rather than in the sinews of US military power (one reason why the Trans-Pacific Partnership failure had strategic as well as economic significance).

Short of war, only major new US demands—or US failures to deliver—could imperil the value of the multilayered alliance system in Asia.

Canberra's dual habit of mind on ANZUS—bilateral and regional—means that the health of the alliance is measured as much by what the US is doing with its Asian partners as with Australia.

Note

- 1 TB Millar, *Australia in peace and war: external relations, 1788–1977*, St Martin's Press, 1978.

ANZUS and extended nuclear deterrence

Rod Lyon

The extent to which the ANZUS Treaty turns upon the US provision of a nuclear umbrella to its smaller ally is a topic both complex and controversial. JG Starke opined that, while the treaty certainly didn't prohibit resort to nuclear weapons in fulfilment of acting 'to meet the common danger', a simple test of proportionality meant the common danger would have to be virtually existential.¹

Some believe that Australia doesn't face existential threats, and therefore that any US commitment to resort to nuclear weapons in defence of Australia is meaningless. Others have argued that the US has never provided any such public commitment anyway—that Australia has occasionally claimed such protection, but without any direct confirmation from a US President (the person who would need to approve the use of US nuclear weapons).

Moreover, the supposed nuclear relationship seems, at first glance, to find little expression in direct defence cooperation. There are no specific 'nuclear sharing' arrangements of the sort that the US has with some of its NATO allies, for example, under which the host country supplies and operates tactical-range delivery vehicles and the US supplies and controls the nuclear warheads.



A US Air Force B-52 Stratofortress turns for a finals approach to Andersen Air Force Base, Guam, during Exercise Cope North 14, February 2014. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

But parts of that picture are misleading. The second clause of the Nixon Doctrine, for example, does offer a general nuclear assurance to US allies in Asia.² The joint facilities do constitute a unique and highly prized form of alliance nuclear sharing. Moreover, some readers will remember that the ANZUS alliance broke apart precisely over the issue of extended nuclear deterrence when New Zealand declared itself nuclear-free back in the mid-1980s—and interpreted that to mean that its own ally’s nuclear-powered or -armed vessels couldn’t enter the country’s ports or airfields.

Bob Hawke, the Australian Prime Minister at the time, underlined the policy difference between Canberra and Wellington, insisting that Australia couldn’t claim the benefits of nuclear deterrence if it were not prepared to contribute to it.

But the ending of the Cold War, a decade of US unipolarity in the 1990s, and a subsequent focus on the War on Terror post-9/11 has meant that—in the intervening years—Australian policymakers typically haven’t had to spend much time contemplating issues relating to the nuclear side of the alliance.

That’s changing fast. Nuclear weapons may have been of marginal interest to Australian governments in the quarter-century following the end of the Cold War but, in recent years, that interest has returned with a vengeance, driven by a series of ominous geopolitical events: more competitive great-power relations, a rapidly shifting power balance in Asia, the apparent weakening of US commitment to its allies—and even to a liberal world order—under the Trump administration, and the growing risk of a more densely proliferated nuclear world (advertised by North Korea’s successes in its nuclear testing and ballistic missile programs).

The strongest evidence of a new, heightened, Australian engagement with the central questions of extended deterrence comes from the Defence Strategic Update of 2020, and the apparent rejection of US extended deterrence that unfolds there.³ With remarkable aplomb, the document notes that US conventional and nuclear weapons have been central to the deterrence of nuclear attack on Australia, but then abruptly states that Australia intends to become more self-reliant in deterring adversaries.

The text of paragraph 2.22 of the update carries weighty implications, suggesting as it does a willingness to move towards an independent Australian nuclear capability.⁴ The growth of Australian interest in long-range offensive strike capabilities seems to complement that shift in declaratory policy.

The strongest evidence of a new, heightened, Australian engagement with the central questions of extended deterrence comes from the Defence Strategic Update of 2020, and the apparent rejection of US extended deterrence that unfolds there.

Both the shift in language and new interest in long-range missile technologies, including land-strike capabilities, suggest that some important judgements have been made behind closed doors in Canberra. Those judgements apparently concern the broader durability of the

Both the shift in language and new interest in long-range missile technologies, including land-strike capabilities, suggest that some important judgements have been made behind closed doors in Canberra.

US alliance system in general, and the waning credibility of US extended nuclear deterrence in particular. But, if so, the government has been reticent about building a public consensus around those decisions.

Such reticence is understandable. For one thing, Australians aren't used to thinking about nuclear weapons as direct contributors to the country's defence; they're more inclined to see them as abstract contributors to global order. Moreover, there's certainly no bipartisan consensus on the question of an Australian nuclear weapons program. Given that any such program

would straddle decades, embarking upon such a course in the absence of some degree of bipartisan consensus would probably be a recipe for failure.

Then there are the challenges the country would face in the diplomatic, technical and strategic realms. If it wished to build a nuclear arsenal, Australia would have to leave the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty and abrogate the Treaty of Rarotonga (the foundation document of the South Pacific Nuclear Free Zone). It would need to acquire fissile materials, construct a safe, reliable nuclear warhead, and either build or purchase a delivery vehicle appropriate to its needs. And it would need a strategic policy that explained to potential adversaries, allies and neighbours just how Australia envisaged using its nuclear arsenal.

All in all, that's a challenging set of policy hurdles. With a new administration in the White House, perhaps both allies will be more prepared for a serious discussion about extended nuclear deterrence and what comes after.

Notes

- 1 JG Starke, *The Anzus Treaty alliance*, Melbourne University Press, 1965, 131–132.
- 2 Rod Lyon, 'US extended nuclear assurance: hiding in plain sight', *The Strategist*, 11 June 2013, [online](#).
- 3 Department of Defence (DoD), *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, Australian Government, 2020, [online](#).
- 4 DoD, *2020 Defence Strategic Update*, paragraph 2.22.

Managing ANZUS: getting the balance right

John McCarthy

In a conversation a few years ago, a seasoned Canadian columnist commented that both Canada and Australia had excellent relations with the US. Canada resisted the American embrace while Australia encouraged it.

The remark gave me pause for thought.

The reasons for our different approaches to the US are clear enough.

Geography dictates that Canada's security is organically bound to that of its neighbour, but the burden of that propinquity means that Canada wrestles to create its own political space.

By contrast, Australia's national psyche derived from our origins as a set of isolated largely white colonies surrounded by crowded Asian nations. The fall of Singapore in 1941 left an indelible mark on a world view already shaped by a perceived need for powerful friends. That perspective stimulated ANZUS, which has remained ever since as a central leg of our foreign policy.

As Australia emerged from the war, two other legs of our foreign policy evolved: to engage with our newly independent neighbours; and to play a role in the multilateral postwar structures designed to guide a liberal international order.

Support for those three legs has been bipartisan. However, the Coalition has placed more emphasis than Labor on our relationship with the US—a factor in the differences between the parties over our involvement in Vietnam and Iraq.

Since the 1970s, Labor has channelled more political energy than the Coalition into our relations with Asia (remember APEC) and into our multilateral role, as illustrated, for example, by the Cambodia settlement in 1991.

Our national challenge has been—and still is—to get the balance right between those three legs.

The first leg, ANZUS, works for Australia not only because of its centrality to our national defence but because it facilitates continued strong US engagement in the Indo-Pacific and the maintenance of a strategic balance in the region.

However, Australia has gone further than those objectives require.

We encouraged American action in Korea and Vietnam. We sought to be involved in the Gulf War and Afghanistan. We were ready to be counted in Iraq.

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US President Lyndon B Johnson and Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt at Canberra Airport, October 1966. Source: National Library of Australia, [online](#).

In the past six or seven years, we've increasingly looked to the US in the face of a more aggressive China, to the extent that regional friends have found it hard to distinguish our policy statements from those of an increasingly deranged Trump administration.

The history of our alliance has meant that we tend to see our strategic environment in trilateral terms (the US, China and us) and our security as being reliant on one major relationship rather than as being bound up with that of our neighbours.

On the second leg, the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue has involved a broadening of our security profile in the region. But there's a risk that it could dilute a necessary exercise by its members of economic and soft power, particularly in Southeast Asia, which is the single most important area of competition between the West and China.

In their March summit, the Quad leaders seemed to recognise that risk as they engaged mainly in non-security initiatives. The Quad is nonetheless perceived in the region as an informal anti-China cabal, not as a group intending to assist the region.

And, with the exception of Japan, Quad members have yet to pursue individual economic and development assistance policies on the sort of scale required to counterbalance Chinese influence in the region.

The US and India have for domestic political reasons found themselves unable to step up to the plate on the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Regional Comprehensive Economic Partnership, respectively—both of which economic agreements have major regional security implications.

Australia and Japan have done more than their part on those two agreements, but, over the past decade, Australia has dramatically reduced its development assistance to the region.

So if we, as well as other Quad members, wish to counter Chinese power, we need to attach real priority to doing so.

The third leg is about values and the international order. In the recent G7, NATO and associated meetings in Europe, the participants emphasised the importance of alliances, of values in foreign policy and of bolstering the liberal international order. Those objectives, they argued, were central to democracy's contest with authoritarianism. This was a far cry from Trumpspeak.

Australia, too, may have changed. In a speech in October 2019, Prime Minister Scott Morrison appeared to be tilting towards the Trump view of the liberal international order when he raised the spectre of 'negative globalism'.

Almost two years later, before the G7 meeting, Morrison made a major speech in Perth on, among other things, the importance of the liberal international order.

The question now arises whether Australia will put the same energy into the second and third legs of our foreign policy as we put into the first.

The irony here is that to do so isn't to derogate from ANZUS but to act even more in the alliance's interests and in those of our key partner. But it will be by beating different drums to the same tune.

Morrison's recent approaches give reason for optimism, but the jury will be out for a while.

The strategic outlook

Australia's strategic outlook

Michael Shoebridge

It's easy to identify the enormous challenges in Australia's strategic environment over the coming decade. They're the four Cs: Covid, climate change and China. But that would miss an emerging and very positive element in that environment—which is the return of confidence to some of the most economically, technologically and strategically powerful nations on the planet, who happen to share converging assessments on the four Cs and, beyond that, are increasingly understanding the positive power that can come from cooperation with each other.

Along with technological change, these drivers will affect the Indo-Pacific most obviously, but they're also now global drivers that are bringing the Indo-Pacific into the heart of European strategic thinking and causing Europe to connect to and think about the Indo-Pacific in new ways.

All four Cs compound and converge in Southeast Asia, Australia and the South Pacific. Climate change, in particular, has enormous potential to interrupt the growth ambitions of several nations—notably Indonesia—and instead mire that key regional player in rolling domestic crises. The South Pacific leaders and peoples are right to see climate change as an existential challenge for them, and to understand that they need global action but also the closest cooperation with supportive partners such as New Zealand, Australia, Japan, the US, France and Taiwan.

The intrusive reach of assertive CCP-directed Chinese economic, strategic and technological power across the Indo-Pacific and even into Europe will continue to drive common assessments and converging policy responses from a large group of powerful open societies.¹ The confidence and cohesion of this grouping is likely to grow as their strengths become apparent and as vulnerabilities in the Sino-centred vision of CCP supremacy become more obvious.

So, 2021 turns out to be a good time to write about the future of the Australia–US alliance because we've reached a moment when the shift in both countries' strategic perceptions and approaches is huge, largely in alignment, and driven by similar things. Cooperation between Australia and the US as the closest of strategic partners can inject momentum and direction into larger groups, whether that's the Quad, powerful trilaterals, including the Japan–US–Australia trilat,² or the deep Five-Eyes partnership. We saw the Quad leaders do this as a group at the G7-plus meeting in Cornwall.³

As usual with deep bilateral relationships, though, there's at least one jarring note between the US and Australia that could get in the way unless confronted and dealt with at the leadership level.

Alignment and common drivers are great. The real test, though, is whether the US and Australia can define and implement a package of practical activities that work in both of our interests and build our security and strength together in ways that meet the challenges of our environment.

That starts with clarity on the agenda, which is about two big items—one positive and global and the other more defensive and deterrent. The ANZUS alliance’s future over the next five and 10 years will orbit around those two objectives.

The most powerful and positive of them is to build the strength of our own economies, militaries and open societies through the partnership between us, and with the large group of open societies that make up the US alliance network and the group of powerful nations in the G7, NATO, the EU and the Quad.



Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating and US President Bill Clinton, 1993. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

Deep technological and economic cooperation needs to be central, and the investments and directions opened up by recovery from the pandemic are the logical platform to work from. Time is an important resource, too. Slow, easy habits of cooperation need to give way to much faster cooperation, particularly in defence and national security technologies and industrial cooperation. That involves breaking down numerous process and policy barriers that will have many zealous and self-interested stakeholders defending 'the way things are done'.

The second objective is to make China matter less—to us, to the Indo-Pacific and to the globe.

That needs to happen economically and technologically, by deepening supply chains and interactions outside China with other, trusted partners, and by diversifying our own economies away from large all-in bets on the China market. And it needs to happen militarily and in broader security terms by increasing the combined deterrent power of our militaries and other partners and allies, to raise the costs of adventurism by Beijing and so deter coercion and conflict.

As 2020 ended, it didn't look like the US and Australia would be entering a time of opportunity.

The US finished the year on an appalling trajectory that had only worsened over much of the past 10 years: domestic division was reaching the peak we saw with the 6 January storming of the US Capitol, deaths from Covid were accelerating across America while the then administration struggled to say what it was doing, and US alliances and partnerships in much of the world had been damaged by transactional 'America first' behaviours.

It meant that even Beijing was able to say, without too much open embarrassment, that if the US wasn't going to lead globalisation, it would, in the spirit of that famous CCP 'win-win' cooperation.⁴ And the Chinese economy was the first to bounce back, pumped up by other governments' stimulus spending. The CCP also seemed to be managing to turn the disaster of a global pandemic starting in its jurisdiction under its repressive control into an attempt to showcase the virtues of brutally controlling authoritarianism.⁵

Australia was preoccupied not just with keeping Covid out, but also with dealing with increasingly open economic coercion from Beijing,⁶ as a domestic lobby took up the Beijing narrative that this was all Australia's fault and a unique bilateral problem between Canberra and Beijing. The positives were the government's determined new investment into the Defence organisation and defence capabilities, as well as strong institutional and societal responses against coercive pressure from Beijing.

By mid-2021, the worms had turned. Not only was the Biden administration in office and working closely with allies and partners, including Australia, but the new president was also showing an enormously welcome capacity to be a fast-moving positive disrupter, impatient of obstacles and willing to work around them.

Joe Biden did indeed tear up some of Donald Trump's actions that were against US interests—and rejoined the Paris climate change agreement while reversing the decision to leave the World Health Organization—but he also brought enormous practical momentum to the US's

pandemic management and economic rebuilding, and injected confidence and momentum into key groups that can work at speed on a common strategic, economic and technological agenda—the Quad, the Japan–Australia–US trilateral, the Five Eyes, and, as we saw in Cornwall, the G7 and NATO. He turned out to be not the Anti-Trump, or Obama Mark 2—two pieces of good news when it comes to dealing with Beijing.



US President Joe Biden and Vice President Kamala Harris in the Rose Garden of the White House, 13 May 2021. Source: The White House via Flickr, [online](#).

Meanwhile, Beijing's assertiveness and belligerence globally had alienated great chunks of the populations of North Asia, Europe, North America, India and Australia, which, in democratic polities, shape government policy.⁷ It delivered graphic illustrations of what living under Beijing's control in Xinjiang⁸ and Hong Kong⁹ meant, and continued to deepen its efforts to prevent the world from understanding how the pandemic that has already killed more than 4 million people began,¹⁰ all while shouting that anyone noticing this was apparently lying and slandering every one of China's 1.4 billion citizens.¹¹

Europeans were confronted by this behaviour when Beijing sanctioned members of the European Parliament for speaking out against forced labour in Xinjiang.¹² Ironically, that was right when that same parliament was being asked to ratify a huge EU–China investment agreement and the last sticking point was about China ending forced labour.¹³

Meanwhile, Beijing's assertiveness and belligerence globally had alienated great chunks of the populations of North Asia, Europe, North America, India and Australia, which, in democratic polities, shape government policy.

And strong economic bounce-backs were well underway in the US, Australia and much of the developed world. Even more fundamentally, though, there continues to be growing recognition of the challenge of China. The new US administration turns out to be even more clear-eyed about the China challenge than the previous one, and that same assessment is at the heart of

The new US administration turns out to be even more clear-eyed about the China challenge than the previous one, and that same assessment is at the heart of Australian policy.

Australian policy. Similarly bleak assessments on the same facts have emerged in other capitals, from Tokyo¹⁴ to New Delhi, Seoul,¹⁵ London,¹⁶ Paris¹⁷ and Amsterdam.¹⁸

The each-way bets that Europe had been placing on Beijing, set out so crisply by the European Commission in March 2019¹⁹—that Beijing was as much a partner as a competitor or a systemic rival—had narrowed markedly by the time of the G7, NATO and other US–European leaders’ meetings in June. Out of this, one big single judgement has now become dominant and is likely to only strengthen further:

Beijing is a systemic rival,²⁰ and the system at stake is global order. Areas of partnership are vanishingly small.

The US and its close allies are central to this systemic challenge, but the China challenge cannot now be characterised as a matter just between Beijing and Washington, with the rest of us hedging, balancing or choosing sides. Instead, it’s about all who share interests in not having Beijing dictate how others are to behave—and what they can and can’t decide—working together to make Beijing realise the limits of its means and its influence. In great part, we’ll do this by growing our own power, prosperity and partnerships.

Of course, this diverse group of powerful states and economies covering some 2.4 billion of the world’s population and around 60% of global GDP will be a loose coalition, so real momentum needs to come from groups of close partners within it. It’s here that the Australia–US alliance will prove fundamentally important, and it’s here that a major political and policy constraint needs to be faced and overcome.

The whiff of ‘America firstism’ clings to Biden’s economic platform, bringing American money for American jobs and congressional trouble for anyone saying anything different.²¹ Facing the technological and military rival of China, though, and rebuilding areas of dominance in key technologies with enormous military utility (such as quantum sensing, communications and computing; directed energy; unmanned systems; and advanced missiles, including hypersonics) are possible only with the combined intellect, research and resources of the US and key partners.

Australia’s deep governmental, research and corporate connections into the US, and our valuable strategic geography at the hinge of the Indo-Pacific, make the ANZUS partnership a vital one in direct military, defence technology and industry terms.

Australia putting cash into our own security and making it available for co-investment with our US ally makes this a truly joint enterprise, but only if a series of bulldozers are driven through longstanding policies designed for a time when America could lift the load alone. Biden will

have to drive a few of those bulldozers himself, but so will some of the big US primes and a set of administration leaders across the State and Commerce departments and the Pentagon. And Scott Morrison needs to cut through some of Australia's own bureaucratic histories and mindsets that can't spell 'urgency'.

The defence partnership has parallels with the ambitions we should have for the broader Australia-US economic partnership. Building new clean-energy economies, turning research into useful industrial and economic applications, creating new infrastructure—physical and digital—to power our prosperity and security, and removing major vulnerabilities as we create trusted supply chains from rare earths to batteries, semiconductors, magnets, communication systems, machinery, medicines and foods are all part of this future.

The capacity that will come from building the strength of our own economies, militaries and open societies will, as a by-product, help us achieve the second big objective—to make China matter less—because this kind of strength building will rebalance the power equation with Beijing and create new forms of military deterrent. That's vital because, in Hong Kong and the South China Sea, Xi Jinping has shown he's a risk-taker on security issues when he thinks he can get away with it. So deterring him from using force, whether in the South China Sea or, perhaps most dangerously, against Taiwan requires stronger military deterrent power.

But there's important work that must be focused tightly on making China matter less that needs doing in the US-Australia partnership, and with others. This is to reverse the direction of Xi's desired economic strategy of 'dual circulation', which is designed to make China's economy less dependent on others, while simultaneously deepening others' dependence on China.²²

A guiding principle behind Australian and US economic strategy must be to reduce the leverage Beijing wields from our engagement with the China market—for imports and exports—and to work assiduously and closely with our corporate sectors to deliver on this goal. Some real momentum is likely to come from both the Australian and US populations, who have reacted badly to the realisation that policy drift has gifted Beijing such entwined economic leverage over us in the course of the past 20 years.

So, the ANZUS alliance turns out to be just like parenting: it's not what it's done up to now that matters, only what's going to happen next. This will be hard work, for a deeply valuable joint purpose.

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ANZUS and China

Rowan Callick

China was front of mind as the ANZUS Treaty was framed, was signed and came into force. The Chinese Communist Party had won its war with the Kuomintang Government and declared the People's Republic of China on 1 October 1949. And the bitter civil war on the Korean Peninsula, in which China was a core combatant, was being fought through the entire period, with the three ANZUS partners also fully engaged.

Today, China is again the core focus of ANZUS strategising, training and planning—but the extent of the challenge it's perceived to pose has been transformed extraordinarily by its economic surge, from GDP of US\$30.5 billion in 1952 to US\$15.2 trillion in 2020. It's now an immense economic, military, diplomatic and technological power. Such is China's regional, and global, enmeshment, that former concepts such as 'containment'—even if still viewed as desirable by elements within ANZUS—are no longer relevant.

As ANZUS was being negotiated in 1949, and three days after the communist declaration in Beijing, Australian External Affairs Minister Herbert Evatt said he didn't see why the PRC shouldn't be recognised diplomatically. However, the 10 December election saw a new government elected under Robert Menzies, and the new External Affairs Minister, Percy Spender, instead supported Washington in withholding recognition, as did his New Zealand counterpart Frederick Doidge under the first National Party government elected three days later.

In 1972, US President Richard Nixon's visit to China and the enthusiasm of Australian Prime Minister Gough Whitlam for rapprochement with Beijing following his own earlier visit led to diplomatic recognition, and New Zealand's Labour Prime Minister Norman Kirk followed suit just before that year's end.

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During CCP Chairman Mao Zedong's almost three decades in power in Beijing, he propelled China into constant forays in the Indo-Pacific region and beyond, supporting parties and leaders, such as Cambodia's Pol Pot, with whom he identified as having common cause, and also backing myriad oppositional movements. That PRC effulgence also provided the impetus for the responsive creation, in stages from 1961, of a new alliance that remains the core regional organisation—the Association of Southeast Asian Nations.

Demonstrating their commitment to the concerns and concepts that drove the founding of ANZUS, Australia and New Zealand fought alongside the US in Vietnam, even as other long-time American allies such as Britain opted to stand aside.

Mao's successor as paramount leader, Deng Xiaoping, reordered China's priorities from class combat and from supporting anti-capitalist causes globally to focus on economic growth, inaugurating the 40-year reform-and-opening era. Deng famously instructed that China's foreign policy should now comprise 'hide your strength and bide your time'—informed by the advice of the Chinese general of 600 BC, Sun Tzu: 'Appear weak when you are strong, and strong when you are weak.'

The Deng era saw a decline in front-of-mind concern within ANZUS about the PRC and its aims, as the US's own focus swung to the final showdown with the USSR, the 1990s 'holiday from history' (*pace* Francis Fukuyama), and soon after that the challenge of Islamism as it emerged starkly on 9/11, leading to the American immersion in wars in the Middle East and Afghanistan.

As American corporations rapidly seized the new opportunities to engage with China both to manufacture their products for global markets and also increasingly as a huge market in itself, an 'elaborate set of illusions about China' emerged among political as well as business leaders, wrote James Mann, 'centered on the belief that commerce would lead inevitably to political change and democracy'.¹ Thus a modern China was widely thought to mean a Westernised China. Many in parallel roles in Australia and New Zealand developed a similar perception, and naturally the focus of ANZUS shifted. China remained on agendas, but no longer topped them.

The advent of Xi Jinping as the CCP General Secretary in 2012 radically changed that, as he abandoned Deng's dictum and Sun Tzu's ancient advice in order to add to his nation's continuing growth in prosperity a new core source of domestic legitimacy: China's rejuvenation reverberating around the world, thanks in part to his hallmark international strategy, the Belt and Road Initiative. He pronounced confidently in a speech early in 2021: 'The East is rising, the West is sinking.'



Chinese President Xi Jinping and his wife, Peng Liyuan, with Tasmanian Premier Will Hodgman on the summit of Mount Wellington, Hobart, 17 November 2014. Source: Will Hodgman on Facebook, [online](#).

China agreed its sole formal treaty relationship, with North Korea, in 1961—after the US had developed a series of treaties, including ANZUS, with Indo-Pacific partners also anxious about the surge of communism in the region—an alliance structure that American ANZUS negotiator John Foster Dulles branded the ‘hub and spokes’.

That pattern continues to present the region’s liberal democracies with habits of cooperation, and strategic options, unavailable to China. Xi, in his online speech to the World Economic Forum in Davos in January 2021, urged the ‘need to reform and improve the global governance system’ and warned that ‘to build small circles ... will only push the world into division and even confrontation’.

Since then, however, the development of the Quad (US, Japan, India, Australia) has intensified, providing an alternative narrative—alongside the US’s treaties with the Philippines, Thailand and South Korea—to the PRC critique of ANZUS and of the Five Eyes partnership as ‘white, colonial’ arrangements.

The US’s response to the PRC’s global push began with President Barack Obama’s ‘pivot’ back to Asia and continued with President Donald Trump’s branding China as a ‘strategic competitor’. And Australia shifted to the front foot on the issue, becoming the first country, for instance, to deny Chinese telco equipment giant Huawei a role in its 5G rollout.

The annual AUSMIN talks between American and Australian foreign and defence ministers—providing ANZUS with its key regular political edge—have consequently in recent times become more open about the countries’ China concerns. The official statement from the 2020 AUSMIN talks criticised China’s behaviour in Hong Kong, Xinjiang and the South China Sea and reaffirmed Taiwan’s ‘important role’ in the Indo-Pacific region.

Back in 2004, Australian Foreign Minister Alexander Downer said during a visit to Beijing that China was proposing to build a ‘strategic relationship’ with Australia, and that Canberra wouldn’t feel obligated to help US forces defend Taiwan if it came under Chinese attack.

But anxiety about the prospect of Beijing using force to seize Taiwan has become in more recent years—as Xi has succeeded in promoting his proactive platforms at home and abroad—an ANZUS focus (possibly the central focus). Paul Dibb, former Australian Deputy Defence Secretary, explained in *The Australian* in 2020: ‘If the US does not come to the defence of Taiwan then that will mark the end of the US alliance system in the Asia-Pacific region ... If the US does defend Taiwan and Australia refuses to make a military contribution, that may well threaten the *raison d’être* for ANZUS.’²

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In March 2021, the then head of the US Indo-Pacific Command, Admiral Phil Davidson, told the Senate Armed Services Committee: ‘I worry that [the PRC] is accelerating their ambitions to supplant the US and our leadership role in the rules-based international order, which they’ve long said that they want to do by 2050. I’m worried about them moving that target closer. Taiwan is clearly one of their ambitions before then. And I think the threat is manifest during this decade, in fact in the next six years.’³

The ANZUS responses to the perceived growing threat from China include working hard on regular military exercises that now again routinely also involve the New Zealanders, as well as building greater interoperability with other regional allies, evolving beyond the original hub-and-spokes framework, encouraging arrangements between new partners such as Vietnam and India, and planning to develop new joint platforms including the Lombrum naval port in Manus, Papua New Guinea.

Notes

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Japan: a critical partner for Australia–US security ambitions

Hayley Channer

Japan is ANZUS's most important Indo-Pacific security partner. Tokyo shares the regional outlook of Australia and the US, possesses advanced defence capabilities and is eager to work towards common objectives. Japan's transformation from a postwar security dependant to a trusted security partner is a remarkable evolution and a much-needed addition to the emerging Indo-Pacific architecture. As Australia and the US mark 70 years of ANZUS, one of the most important ways Australia can support the keystone of its defence and security is through shoring up bilateral cooperation with Japan and exploring new frontiers in the trilateral Australia–US–Japan arrangements.

For decades, Australia and Japan viewed their relationship primarily in economic terms, but, since the early 2000s, the defence relationship has grown in leaps and bounds. The two nations have established a joint declaration on security cooperation, acquisition and cross-servicing, an information security agreement, a foreign and defence '2+2' ministerial meeting and the joint air force Exercise Bushido Guardian. The relationship has grown beyond basic defence exercises as Tokyo and Canberra are now seeking interoperability between their armed forces and the capacity to respond jointly to shared challenges. The next step in the bilateral defence relationship will be to finalise a status of forces agreement, known as the Reciprocal Access Agreement (RAA).

The RAA will be Japan's first status of forces arrangement with any partner beyond the US. This historic step will demonstrate the intimacy of the Australia–Japan relationship and provide the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) with greater flexibility to access and work with a key US ally. It will be of particular benefit to Japan, giving it the opportunity to use Australia's large, remote training facilities, and benefit each country through improving ADF–JSDF coordination. Moreover, by improving interoperability between Australian and Japanese forces, the RAA will also benefit the US by enhancing coordination within its existing alliance framework.

While the RAA is undergirded by strong bilateral relations, the fast pace of growth in Australia–Japan defence cooperation is arguably the result of external security developments. In particular, China's increasingly aggressive posture and waning confidence in future US security commitments to the region have weighed heavily on Japanese and Australian policymakers.

Chinese hostility is evident in the militarisation of the South China Sea, harassment of foreign vessels and aircraft in disputed territories and targeted cyber intrusions and attacks. Frequent Chinese military incursions around the disputed Senkaku–Diaoyu Islands as well as Beijing's support for the North Korean regime have increased Japan's anxiety. In Australia's case,

For decades, Australia and Japan viewed their relationship primarily in economic terms, but, since the early 2000s, the defence relationship has grown in leaps and bounds.

Chinese-backed cyberattacks and punitive trade measures have rattled Canberra. More than any other dynamic in the region, China's bullying behaviour has convinced Japan and Australia they need to invest more in their security partnership.

In terms of US credibility, concerns in Australia and Japan regarding the extent of US security commitments to the Indo-Pacific were generated long before the uncertainty wrought by the Trump administration. From the early 2000s, America's allies in Asia were encouraged to bolster their national defence capabilities and enhance coordination with each other. That, coupled with decades of US attention and resources directed overwhelmingly towards wars in the Middle East, has brought America's allies in the region closer together.

Once Donald Trump took office, his harsh rhetoric and occasional embrace of authoritarian regimes hastened the trend. The Biden administration is much more receptive to allies' needs and shares Australia's and Japan's interest in closer security ties, using both bilateral and trilateral modalities. The strength of trilateral defence cooperation between Australia, the US and Japan is unique and provides each with a competitive security advantage.



Japanese Prime Minister Shinzo Abe and Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison in Darwin, 16 November 2018. Source: Scott Morrison on Twitter, [online](#).

Australia first proposed a trilateral dialogue with Japan and the US in 2001, and the trilateral framework was formalised in the following year. Trilateral meetings now range from the senior officials level to foreign and defence ministers, up to prime ministerial and presidential summits. In addition, practical defence cooperation includes both tabletop and real-world military exercises. To capitalise on the success of the trilateral, the three countries should continue to jointly pursue increasingly high-end defence activities. That includes intelligence sharing; intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) activities; and cooperation in the cyber, space, science and technology domains in practical military exercises.

Based on the history, depth and breadth of their relationships, the trilateral structure can initiate collaborative security initiatives matched by no other regional defence grouping. In future, the trilateral could be bolstered by more Australia–Japan bilateral defence exercises in the vicinity of Japan and Australian participation in trilateral activities to practise defending Japan against missile debris or a missile attack. For instance, in the event of future North Korean missile launches and belligerent behaviour, the RAN’s Aegis-equipped vessels could provide Japan with air defence and intercept those threats. The three countries could also conduct combined ISR activities—in addition to UN-mandated missions—to monitor North Korean ship-to-ship transfers that circumvent trade sanctions.

Should the regional outlook deteriorate, another way to elevate cooperation could be for the three countries to privately identify concrete scenarios to embed in their military exercises. For example, designing operational planning around specific contingencies, such as a serious threat to Japan’s territory or conflict in the Taiwan Strait or South China Sea, would provide a clearer strategic objective for our combined military exercises. While Australia would seek to avoid a conflict as much as possible, it would most likely be compelled to influence the outcome of a major inter-state conflict in our region, whether in the form of logistics support or the provision of military forces in some capacity.

More than any other countries in the region, Australia and Japan recognise the stability flowing from the US alliance system.

More than any other countries in the region, Australia and Japan recognise the stability flowing from the US alliance system. Both are steadfast in their support for continued US engagement, the preservation of democratic processes and systems, and the underwriting of future growth and prosperity through investing in new security frameworks.

Moreover, there’s growing acceptance that regional security challenges—be they pandemics, climate change, assuring supply chains or defending a rules-based system—can be addressed effectively only through collective action. As three countries facing multiple challenges, the Australia–US–Japan trilateral has an enduring value for the future of the ANZUS alliance, alongside bilateral Japan–Australia security ties.

ANZUS and Taiwan

Alan Dupont

As US–China rivalry worsens, Taiwan is considered the most likely catalyst for a conflict between the two global superpowers. Such a clash has the potential to draw in Australia as a US ally and signatory to the ANZUS Treaty, which has long underpinned Australia’s security.

ANZUS was largely a response to Australian fears of a resurgent Japan and the spread of communism in Asia. But it was never invoked during the Korean or Vietnam wars because neither was seen as constituting an ‘armed attack’ on an ANZUS signatory under Article IV of the treaty. There are three reasons why the next Taiwan crisis will be different.

First, in previous crises—the last being in 1996—China didn’t have the capacity to credibly threaten Taiwan’s existence because the US, Taipei’s protector, had overwhelming military superiority. That’s no longer the case. The military balance of power in the Taiwan Strait has shifted decisively in favour of China. After a massive, decadal military build-up, a comprehensively modernised People’s Liberation Army (PLA) can now inflict major damage on any US force sent to support Taiwan.

Second, if a Taiwan conflict turned into a full-blown military confrontation between China and the US, Beijing would almost certainly target the US homeland with a range of non-nuclear weapons, including cyber and hypersonic weapons, all of which would constitute a *prima facie* case for invoking ANZUS.



Taipei, Taiwan, March 2019. Source: Steffen Flor via Flickr, [online](#).

Third, the dramatic deterioration in Australia–China relations and Beijing’s determination to punish Australia economically means that in any future Taiwan crisis China would probably target northern defence bases and infrastructure such as Darwin port, RAAF Base Tindal and the Australia–US joint defence facility at Pine Gap near Alice Springs. It’s also conceivable that Beijing could threaten Australia with nuclear weapons. The aim would be to prevent, or disrupt, any effort by the US and Australia to intervene on the side of Taiwan. A PLA strike against Australia would clearly fall within the scope of Article IV.

Determining whether a Chinese attack would formally trigger ANZUS might be the least of Canberra’s problems. The last thing the government wants is to be caught up in a war between its major ally and its trading partner. The whole thrust of recent Australian foreign policy has been to prevent such a conflict occurring because of its potentially calamitous impact on our prosperity and security.

Sailing to the rescue of Taiwan would risk severing already strained ties with China and make Australia a target for PLA missiles. But refusing to support Taiwan would anger Washington, calling into question our commitment to ANZUS and the whole alliance network that underpins our security.

The growing concern about Taiwan reflects several worrying trends. Decades of intermittent attempts to bridge longstanding differences between Beijing and Taipei have failed. President Xi Jinping has made clear his determination to reunify Taiwan, by force if necessary. He’s now aged 68, so time to realise his dream is running out.

Taiwanese increasingly reject reunification with China. In a recent poll, less than 1% supported rapid unification and 60% opposed China’s ‘one country, two systems’ model. Some 75% of those polled agreed with the statement that their nation is already an independent entity.¹

As anti-China sentiment in the US has hardened, calls to provide unambiguous guarantees of US support for Taiwan against China are growing louder. There’s a widespread misperception that the 1979 Taiwan Relations Act already provides an ironclad US security commitment to Taiwan. But the Act states only that the US shall ‘make available to Taiwan such defense articles and defense services in such quantity as may be necessary to enable Taiwan to maintain a sufficient self-defense capacity’.

Furthermore, any decision to defend Taiwan isn’t the sole prerogative of the president. It requires congressional consent. If the longstanding policy of ‘strategic ambiguity’ is replaced by an explicit security guarantee to Taiwan, a major confrontation between the US and China becomes more probable and perilous. Some Western intelligence agencies reportedly believe that there’s a 50% chance of a serious conflict over Taiwan before the end of the decade. Pentagon war gaming over the past few years shows the US losing in any fight with China over Taiwan.

All this poses a policy dilemma for Australia. Xi knows that, once he commits to military action, failure to achieve his Holy Grail of reunification with Taiwan could be terminal for his rule.

He'll deploy every instrument of China's formidable state power to prevent other countries siding with Taiwan. Beijing's threats will be amplified by Australian voices urging Canberra to stay out of the conflict to avoid reprisals that would further damage trade and send the China–Australia relationship into a long-lasting deep freeze. There's also the real possibility of significant Australian casualties should we deploy ships and aircraft to the fight.

None of that should dissuade us from a robust defence of Taiwan should China decide to impose its will on a free people by force of arms or other coercive measures designed to bring about the island's economic or financial collapse. To do otherwise would be an indictment of Australia's support for a rules-based international order and democratic norms, not the least of which is the right of people to elect their preferred government.

Strategically, the loss of Taiwan would be a serious setback for the alliance. Taiwan is the linchpin in a chain of islands that constrains China's ability to dominate the whole of the Western Pacific. Its fall would enable the PLA to isolate Japan, push the US back towards the Central Pacific and consolidate its hold over the northern approaches to Australia and the critical Strait of Malacca, which is the gateway to the world's most important trade route. China could also gain access to Taiwan's world-leading semiconductor technology, offsetting the one clear advantage that the US holds in their race for technological and military supremacy.

Ritual denunciation of China or a token military contribution to Taiwan's defence in the form of a frigate or surveillance aircraft won't make much difference to the outcome. It would merely bring down China's wrath upon us without measurably helping Taiwan or reassuring allies that Australia can be relied upon in a crisis.

The best way of preserving the peace is to deter China from military action. That will require a strengthened alliance, more effective defence spending by the region's democracies—including Taiwan—and a willingness to impose prohibitive costs on Beijing for any attempt to impose its rule over a non-consenting people.

But we shouldn't focus only on the conventional military threat to Taiwan. China is a master of hybrid warfare and will use economic, financial and diplomatic coercion to isolate and strangle Taiwan into submission.

The US and Australia should leverage ANZUS to design a comprehensive menu of non-military responses that other countries in the region and beyond—even those fearful of Chinese retribution—could support. The goal of those policies should be to pressure Beijing into accepting that its interests are best served by the peaceful, rather than forceful, reunification of Taiwan.

Note

- 1 See Michael Mazza, *Congressional initiatives shifting US towards strategic clarity*, American Enterprise Institute, 29 July 2020, [online](#).

ANZUS, Australia and Korea

Bill Paterson

At the time of Australia's decision to commit naval and air units to the Korean War on 29 June 1950, less than a week after North Korean forces pushed south of the 38th parallel and began the conflict, Australia was in the midst of negotiations with the US on what was to become the ANZUS Treaty.

Australia's rapid decision to enter the war was directly influenced—even driven—by the perceived diplomatic and security benefits to be gained by supporting the US and shifting a sometimes reluctant US towards agreeing to the treaty.

For Australia, fearful of a revival of Japanese militarism, the ANZUS Treaty was *quid pro quo* for Australia's acceptance of the peace treaty with Japan¹—but the Korean commitment demonstrated to the US that postwar Australia was prepared to put its limited military muscle behind US leadership.

There were other reasons why entry was considered to be in Australia's national security interests. Mainland China had fallen to the Communist Party in 1949, and the Soviet Union was backing the North Korean communists. Fears that the Korean Peninsula, divided in 1945 along the 38th parallel, could be united under the Soviet-backed communists and, together with China, present a security threat to occupied Japan and more widely to the region fed Australian concerns.

The decision of the UN Security Council on 7 July 1950 to authorise the US to lead a command under the UN flag enabled Australia and other contributing parties to participate as part of a UN-authorised multilateral coalition. But Australia had already committed naval and air units from the end of June, prior to UN authorisation, not only as a response to aggression but as a clear demonstration of support for the US.

External Affairs Minister Percy Spender was a strong proponent of working with the US to develop a postwar Pacific security pact. On 26 July 1950, aware that the UK was about to commit ground forces to the Korean War, Spender moved rapidly to get the approval of a reluctant Prime Minister Robert Menzies (in transit overseas) and acting Prime Minister Arthur Fadden to announce—in advance of the UK—that Australia would commit ground troops to the war. Spender considered it critical that this be seen as Australia's own decision, rather than one following from British entry, in order to advance Australia's case for a treaty with the US.

Australia's rapid decision to enter the war was directly influenced—even driven—by the perceived diplomatic and security benefits to be gained by supporting the US and shifting a sometimes reluctant US towards agreeing to the treaty.

It worked. Australia's robust response built support in the Truman administration for entering the ANZUS Treaty. Both Menzies and Spender subsequently visited Washington and secured the support of President Harry Truman, and Congress, for the pact.

Australia has remained an active participant in the US-led UN Command since the armistice that ended the fighting in 1953, while some other initial members have fallen away. Participation has lent substance to our alliance commitment, offered opportunities to exercise with US and Korean forces in theatre, and demonstrated to the Republic of Korea (ROK) that Australia is committed to its integrity and to maintaining the fragile peace on the peninsula.



General James Van Fleet, General Officer Commanding, 8th US Army, inspects members of the 3rd Battalion when bestowing the presidential citation in recognition of the unit's action at Kapyong, Korea, 4 December 1951. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

But perhaps the biggest benefit for Australia has been the opportunities, enabled by the closeness of the ANZUS alliance, to engage more closely with US forces. Since 2013, Australia has embedded an ADF officer with US Forces Korea, in addition to maintaining, and expanding, its presence in the UN Command, where Australia holds the position of Deputy Commander. Since 2010, the RAAF has also provided a group captain to serve as Commander of UN Command (Rear) based at Yokota air base in Japan. This has given Australia perspective and a deeper understanding of US contingency planning, and offered us the opportunity to contribute to it. For the US, Australia's role has been interpreted as signalling a likely preparedness to commit, as part of a coalition, should North Korea renew large-scale military action against the South.

The opportunity to send forces to major exercises on the peninsula has further advanced the alliance link and built interoperability and experience in a theatre less familiar to current ADF personnel.

But the UN Command's unique structure, and the separate US – Republic of Korea Combined Forces Command, has limited the opportunities to 'trilateralise' alliance engagement that includes the ROK armed forces. The ROK doesn't see the ANZUS alliance as conferring an ongoing role for Australia on the Korean Peninsula in peacetime, other than through Australia's membership of the UN Command. While Australia has a status of forces agreement with the US, we don't have a separate one with the ROK, so Australian participation in exercises in Korea is conditioned by UN Command arrangements.

Through a program of visits to North Korea, enabled by a small humanitarian aid program, suspended by Australia in 2017, Australian officials were able to travel to substantial areas of the North. This enabled Australia to share with both the ROK and the US considerable first-hand information about conditions on the ground.

But, since that program's suspension, no such visits have occurred, and a valuable opportunity to contribute to the availability of better information for both our ANZUS partner and the ROK has been lost.

Australia's Foreign Affairs and Trade Department and Defence Department have seemed comfortable with modest levels of engagement with the ROK and the US on the peninsula. This has been an opportunity forgone, dictated in part by attention being paid to our Middle East deployments. A more intensive and higher priority collaboration could have contributed to alliance interoperability and encouraged South Korea to view our participation more positively. The case for doing so is arguably now more compelling than ever.

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Note

- 1 The Treaty of San Francisco, signed on 8 September 1951.

Asset or liability? ANZUS and Indonesia

Donald Greenlees and Yohanes Sulaiman

Australian politicians and strategists often assert that the ANZUS alliance isn't just the bulwark of Australia's defence, but a security asset for the region, too.

A case in point is an anecdote shared by Alexander Downer. It recounts an occasion when the then foreign minister offered a lift on a RAAF VIP flight to his Indonesian counterpart Hassan Wirajuda. Their trip together followed the election of Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono as President in 2004 and came as the US and its allies were becoming bogged down in Iraq as the successful invasion turned into a violent occupation.

Downer, by then a seasoned foreign minister, enjoyed an affable and confident relationship with Wirajuda. They could speak openly on a range of topics.

But Wirajuda caught Downer by surprise with what he now had to say on the plane.

'We were talking about Iraq and he said he had been talking with President Yudhoyono about it and the President said, "Should we send some Indonesian troops to Iraq? We are a Muslim country and maybe they would help to tone things down",' Downer recalled in an interview.¹

Wirajuda then proposed just such a deployment. Downer's answer was that the Americans were in control and it would need their approval. That prompted Wirajuda to state his real message: 'Do you think you could ask President Bush whether there would be any interest in Indonesian troops?'

'So instead of the Indonesians saying we would ask the Americans they asked me if I would ask the Americans,' Downer said.

Subsequently, Downer did ask US President George W Bush directly. For reasons that remain unclear, Washington declined the offer.

But the real lesson of the story, according to Downer, is that it demonstrated the value that the alliance can bring Australia in its dealings with the region.

'The Indonesians knew that we were their mate,' said Downer. 'The Indonesian Foreign Minister and the Indonesian President knew me, and knew they could trust my discretion, and knew that I could have access to President Bush and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. This is something Australia could bring to the table in the region—its close relationship with America.'

Yet diplomacy is never that simple.

Indonesia's official position on ANZUS—like many aspects of its foreign policy—has been marked by ambiguity and ambivalence. The alliance can be viewed simultaneously as a means to secure the US strategic presence in the region—as a contribution to stability and security—and as a direct threat to Indonesian national sovereignty.

Take the deployment of US marines to the Northern Territory. Despite assurances from both the US and Australia that the deployment and annual exercise rotation have nothing to do with Indonesia, and are part of a US rebalancing to Asia to preserve stability, many Indonesians are convinced that its true purpose is to protect US interests in Papua—notably the Freeport-owned gold and copper mine.²

When the deal to host the marines in the territory was announced in 2011, then Indonesian Foreign Minister Marty Natalegawa warned of the risk of it causing ‘a vicious circle’ of ‘mistrust or distrust’.³

Subsequently, Yudhoyono sought to play down the level of perceived threat. After meeting Barack Obama and Julia Gillard, the Indonesian leader declared that the ‘military base ... is not expected to change anything; it is not expected to distract or disturb neighbours’.⁴

How Indonesia views the ANZUS alliance—indeed the very idea of military alliance—has always been a function of history, geography and human agency. Indonesia has experienced covert US military intervention, has porous and difficult-to-defend borders, and is vulnerable to internal political conflict and destabilisation by foreign powers, most notably the US and China.

Indonesia’s official position on ANZUS—like many aspects of its foreign policy—has been marked by ambiguity and ambivalence.



Australian Prime Minister Paul Keating and Indonesian President Suharto in Indonesia, 1994. Source: National Archives of Australia, [online](#).

But the pattern of past eruptions in the relationship between Australia and Indonesia suggests that one of the real lessons for policymakers isn't that the alliance should be regarded simply as a strategic public good for the region. Rather, it's that effort needs to be continually invested in avoiding misperceptions and misunderstandings over strategic intentions.

Frequently, insufficient attention has been paid to three Cs: communication, consultation and consensus. This isn't to say there can or should always be agreement on strategic questions between Canberra and Jakarta, but there will be a lot less friction if both sides at least strive to ensure that the three Cs are an entrenched part of diplomatic practice. They should aim for fewer surprises. A few hours' notice of a major policy announcement doesn't cut it.

Another lesson is that Australia benefits (and not just in Indonesia) from demonstrating the ability to act independently of the US, especially in cases where regional interests are seen to be at odds with alliance interests. The suggestion that Australia was acting as 'deputy' to the US

at the time of the INTERFET deployment in East Timor left an enduring impression.

Another lesson is that Australia benefits (and not just in Indonesia) from demonstrating the ability to act independently of the US, especially in cases where regional interests are seen to be at odds with alliance interests.

One military-linked Indonesian scholar likened the US–Australia relationship to that between 'a father and a very loyal son'.

For that reason, Jakarta's foreign policy establishment is often cautious on the subject of closer US–Australia military ties. It fears any actions taken by the alliance partners that could deepen rivalry with China and drag in other players. While Indonesia worries about China's militarisation of islands in the South China Sea, Foreign Minister Retno Marsudi bluntly

stated in an interview last September that Indonesia doesn't want 'to be trapped by this [US–China] rivalry'.⁵ Instead, the Foreign Ministry is pushing for more dialogue and less reliance on armed force within the framework of ASEAN centrality as a way of de-escalating tension.

Still, executing Jakarta's policy requires a delicate strategic balancing act and considerable diplomatic skill. It recognises that Australia does have foreign policy agency and that Indonesia values its relationships with both Australia and the US. This is especially so amid the increased assertiveness with which China pursues its territorial and strategic aims. Indonesia needs the US—and Australia—to deter China from going too far in Southeast Asia.

Indeed, various elements in the Indonesian military are open to the idea of cooperation with the Quad, albeit on Indonesia's own terms.⁶ For now, the refusal to enter formal military alliances remains an inviolable principle of Indonesian foreign policy.

The corollary is that the characterisation of the ANZUS alliance as a regional asset might have some validity—if accompanied by smart regional diplomacy. Beyond the role ANZUS plays in strengthening Australia's strategic capability, it does serve as another anchor for the US in Asia.

As John Howard put it in an interview: ‘You have to have a strategic view of security in the Asian region and that involves inevitably a continued American presence ... [W]hatever may be said from time to time, Asian countries want America in Asia.’⁷

Notes

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ANZUS and New Zealand

Robert Ayson

A literal reading of the treaty suggests that ANZUS is a triangle. According to the all-important fourth article, each one of the *three* parties:

recognizes that an armed attack in the Pacific Area on any of the Parties would be dangerous to its own peace and safety and declares that it would act to meet the common danger in accordance with its constitutional processes.¹

But the spirit of the law isn't the same as the letter. ANZUS established the strongest party as the regional security provider for the other two, whose obligations primarily are to support Washington as the dominant Asia-Pacific power. This meant that ANZUS wasn't so much a triangle as a chevron with the US sitting at the apex. (Confused? Next time you spot a Citroën, look for the double chevron.)

When the US suspended its alliance obligations to New Zealand during the mid-1980s nuclear policy crisis, the chevron gave way to a single straight line. For Australian audiences, ANZUS became the bilateral alliance connection between Canberra and Washington, reflected in the regular AUSMIN consultations. On the other side of the ditch, ANZUS became the alliance that New Zealand used to have with the US. Politicians across New Zealand's electoral spectrum found there was no domestic political gain in restoring those alliance links. Returning to New Zealand after signing the 2012 Washington Declaration with Leon Panetta, Defence Minister Jonathan Coleman insisted that Wellington's strengthening security partnership with the US wasn't 'ANZUS in drag'.²

How then to talk about the alliance connection between Australia and New Zealand, the third and consistently quieter leg of ANZUS? Governments in Wellington have adopted the formula

Governments in Wellington have adopted the formula of referring to Australia as New Zealand's only formal ally.

of referring to Australia as New Zealand's *only* formal ally. Declarations of fealty to that relationship regularly pepper New Zealand defence policy statements. The most recent Defence White Paper, issued in 2016, stipulates that 'New Zealand has no better friend and no closer ally ... While a direct armed attack on Australia is unlikely in the foreseeable future, should it be subject to such an attack, New Zealand would respond immediately.'³ As for operations further

afield, the 2018 Strategic Defence Policy Statement observes that the New Zealand Defence Force (NZDF) 'must be able to operate effectively with New Zealand's key security partners and ally Australia'.⁴

But neither document mentions ANZUS. Both place the trans-Tasman military connection in the context of Closer Defence Relations (CDR), which was an initiative established in 1991 to mirror Closer Economic Relations. Yet CDR is not itself an alliance, and the 1944 Canberra

Pact (in which New Zealand and Australia outlined their postwar plans for cooperation in the South Pacific) lacks the military obligations set out in the ANZUS Treaty less than a decade later. And, while the Anzac connection is a great talking point when prime ministers meet, the idea of an unbroken train of trans-Tasman military cooperation since the Gallipoli landings is an untenable myth.

The military alliance between New Zealand and Australia has an obvious source, which is ANZUS. There's a small hint of this reality in the 2018 CDR Joint Statement: 'The formal expression of our alliance and security partnership is found in the 1944 Canberra Pact, ANZUS Treaty and through Australia – New Zealand Closer Defence Relations instigated in 1991.'⁵ But that framing is oblique enough to allow New Zealand to carry on its merry way. And yet that's not how Canberra always likes to portray things. 'We are close partners and ANZUS allies,' says Australia's (still current) *2016 Defence White Paper*.⁶ In a May 2021 press conference with Jacinda Ardern in Queenstown, Scott Morrison weighed in on similar terms. 'ANZUS arrangements were clear,' he said, when asked if Canberra would expect Wellington's support should Australia end up in an armed conflict with China in the Taiwan Strait or South China Sea.⁷



Australian Prime Minister Scott Morrison and New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern in Auckland, 21 February 2019. Source: Scott Morrison on Facebook, [online](#).

You say ANZUS, I say alliance, let's not call the whole thing off is the line New Zealand sings to Australia. Yet, spoken about or not, ANZUS alliance obligations run across both sides of the Tasman Sea. Wellington would expect itself to respond to a direct attack on Australia. But the scenario Morrison was asked about might see New Zealand do an Alexander Downer and interpret its ANZUS obligations imaginatively.⁸ The recent saga over New Zealand's approach

to Five-Eyes messaging to China on human rights reveals that Wellington wants some wiggle room. Sometimes Wellington will come to the party, other times it won't, and all we're talking about here are joint statements by foreign ministers. The commitment of New Zealand forces to a conflict that Australia is participating in raises the costs of commitment far higher.

There's a real limit to how far Wellington will want its alliance commitments to Australia couched in Indo-Pacific terms, even though there are some NZDF capabilities (especially the forthcoming P-8 Poseidon aircraft) that could be useful to a coalition effort. But in between the defence of Australia and maritime combat in East Asia is a part of the regional real estate that could be the real test of New Zealand's alliance commitments.

The South Pacific is where Australia and New Zealand are most intensely united in seeking a favourable equilibrium of power. Australian forces are very unlikely to engage the People's Liberation Army on their own in a Taiwan Strait contingency. But in the South Pacific, a direct Australia–China clash, with or without the help of America (which delegates a great deal to Canberra's leadership), could be more conceivable.

The South Pacific is where Australia and New Zealand are most intensely united in seeking a favourable equilibrium of power.

Should it get into warlike difficulty with China in a tussle for influence over Papua New Guinea's future, for example, Australia wouldn't just expect New Zealand's help. Canberra would be likely to demand it. And should New Zealand demur, a crisis would emerge in trans-Tasman alliance relations that could make the mid-1980s look like a cakewalk.

Three and half decades on from the suspension of America's alliance relations with New Zealand, the big ANZUS moment for Wellington could have more to do with Beijing and Canberra than with Beijing and Washington. This gives New Zealand extra reasons to be concerned about the deteriorating China–Australia relationship.

Notes

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ANZUS and Russia

Matthew Sussex

In May 2021, Russia's state-owned media publicly circulated a list of 10 countries that the Kremlin was considering labelling 'unfriendly'.¹ Understandably, the US and many of its European friends—the UK, the Baltic states, Ukraine and Poland—made the list. But Australia was named too. On the surface, that seems surprising. After all, among the numerous contemporary studies of the ANZUS alliance, it's rare to find one that gives the Russia–Australia relationship a passing comment, if it's even mentioned at all.

That wasn't always the case. One of the key rationales for ANZUS was to help embed the US firmly into the Asian security order as the Cold War, in which the USSR was a leading protagonist, began to gather pace. But, after bipolarity, Russia featured only occasionally in Canberra's thinking, like the idea that Australia could supply Russia with uranium, wool and wheat.² For Russia's part, vague suggestions about Australian participation in the Eurasian Economic Union were quickly scotched. On the diplomatic front, although there was some genuine warmth on APEC and the G20 from 2010 to 2013, sustained contact tended to be limited to issue-specific arenas such as the Antarctic Treaty System and non-proliferation efforts.³



Australian Prime Minister Tony Abbott and Russian President Vladimir Putin with koalas at the G20 summit, Brisbane, 15 November 2014. Source: G20 Australia 2014 via Flickr, [online](#).

Unlike the immediate post-Cold War period, the bipolar era provided more incentive for Australians to take Russia in its Soviet guise seriously. Australian strategic policy debates during the 1970s and 1980s often featured discussions about whether Australia was making itself a target for Soviet intercontinental ballistic missiles through the US–Australia joint facility at Pine Gap.⁴ Soviet strategy also revolved around courting areas of the world where US influence was weakest, which included attempts to woo nations such as Kiribati that are close to important trans-Pacific sea lanes.⁵

And the Petrov affair of 1954 sharpened Australia's domestic anti-communist lobby, led by prominent figures such as BA Santamaria.⁶ However, Australian Cold War concerns about the USSR were less about direct contact and more about indirect effects, either via ties to US interests or through communist revolutions creating Soviet proxies in Southeast Asia.

Hence, Australia's appearance on a list of Russia's most unfriendly states has more recent origins. The relationship has been icy since the Russian invasion of Crimea in 2014, when Australia swiftly imposed autonomous sanctions on Russia over fears for Ukrainian sovereignty, although the main trigger was the July 2014 shoot-down of Malaysia Airlines Flight 17 by Russian-backed militants in Donbas, in which 38 Australians were killed.⁷ Julie Bishop—Australia's Foreign Minister at the time—made holding the Kremlin responsible a priority, and Prime Minister Tony Abbott threatened to 'shirtfront' President Vladimir Putin at the November 2014 APEC Summit in Brisbane.⁸ In response, Russia sent a naval battle group through the Coral Sea in a pointed display of military power.⁹

In February 2021, an Australian Broadcasting Corporation investigative report highlighted attempts by the Kremlin to mobilise the Russian diaspora in Australia in support of Putin and his policies.

Since then, high-level Russia–Australia contacts have been minimal. In 2018, following the poisoning of the Skripals, Australia expelled two officials from the Russian Embassy in Canberra who it claimed were espionage agents.¹⁰ Australia added to its sanctions package in 2019, and again most recently in March 2021, over Russia's construction of the Kerch railway bridge joining the Crimean Peninsula directly to Russia.¹¹

In February 2021, an Australian Broadcasting Corporation investigative report highlighted attempts by the Kremlin to mobilise the Russian diaspora in Australia in support

of Putin and his policies. That included support for the Australian chapter of the Night Wolves (*Nochnye Volki*) motorcycle club, as well as a group of Cossacks with ties to Igor Girkin (aka 'Strelkov', currently being tried for his role in the Malaysia Airlines shoot-down).¹² It also drew attention to lobbying on behalf of Russian oligarch and Putin confidante Oleg Deripaska's Rusal company, which owns a large stake in a bauxite mine in Queensland. Later, just one day before Channel 9 aired a panel discussion on links between the Kremlin and the poisoning of Alexei Navalny with the chemical weapon Novichok, the network was hit by a cyberattack that interrupted live broadcasts and took down publishing tools used by the *Sydney Morning Herald* and *The Age*.¹³

The Australia–Russia relationship has therefore grown sharply competitive, which is exacerbated by the fact that there are very few issues for Russia and Australia to cooperate on. The two are natural resource rivals in gas, as well as coal and iron ore. Russia sits 42nd on the list of Australia’s trading partners, and the balance of trade is strongly in Canberra’s favour.¹⁴ In their regional visions the two states are diametrically opposed. Australia has strongly sharpened its criticism of China and its support for a US-led order in the Indo-Pacific.¹⁵ Conversely, Sino-Russian ties have grown into a comprehensive strategic and economic partnership, despite occasionally whispered Russian disquiet that Beijing sees it as a raw materials appendage. Russia makes no secret of its view that the US, the EU and the liberal ‘experiment’ are doomed to the dustbin of history, and that a China-centric order will dominate the future.¹⁶

Given that world view, Australia is an interesting oddity for Russian elites, who are regularly surprised to learn that Australia’s economy—spanning a nation of only 25 million people—is almost identical in size to Russia’s (at US\$1.3 trillion in GDP to US\$1.4 trillion).¹⁷ Australia’s membership of the Five Eyes intelligence-sharing partnership, its strengthened security ties with the US, and its vocal defence of the ‘rules-based’ international order are counterintuitive to Kremlin officials convinced about the inexorable march of history. The same is true of Australia’s willingness—thus far at least—to suffer Chinese trade reprisals for its criticisms of Beijing, despite the fact that the PRC is Australia’s main trading partner.

While some in the Australian security policy community may disagree, there’s a strong argument that Australia should take Russia more seriously.

While some in the Australian security policy community may disagree, there’s a strong argument that Australia should take Russia more seriously. Moscow has made a pivot to the Asia-Pacific its main nation-building task for the 21st century. Much of that revolves around leveraging Russia’s vast reserves of natural gas, with the ambitious target of meeting 100% of Asia’s increased gas demand by 2030.¹⁸ That brings Russia directly into competition with Australia, which also sees a ‘gas-led recovery’ as one of its main future drivers of national power.

Russia is also assiduously courting ASEAN states with various commercial inducements and has offered military equipment and training to Pacific island nations such as Fiji.¹⁹ Although its military modernisation program has thus far yielded only a ‘green water-plus’ Pacific Fleet, Russia’s keenness to establish bases in Asia, coupled to increasingly regular exercises with the Chinese navy, will result in increased future contact between Russian forces and the ADF. Finally, the Kremlin has active influence operations in Australia. Some of those are overt, such as the Russkiy Mir (‘Russian World’) Foundation.²⁰ Some, such as the employment of useful proxies to amplify Russian messaging, fall into grey spaces. And some are also linked to hostile cyber activities.

At a time when expertise on Russia in Australian universities, government and research institutes is at a historic low, dealing with Moscow as a regional spoiler and domestic meddler will become increasingly challenging. Beyond the bilateral Russia–Australia relationship, this

is also significant in an alliance context. The recent designation of Russia as a threat by the US Defense Intelligence Agency (which labelled China a ‘strategic competitor’²¹) will result in enhanced expectations from Washington about a clear and informed Australian position on Russia. Indeed, while Canberra would struggle to find 10 states for its own list of ‘unfriendly’ countries, that’s another reason why Russia would probably fit into Australia’s own top handful for the foreseeable future.

Notes

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Four is company: the alliance and the Quad

Rory Medcalf

One strength of the Australia–US alliance is its demonstrated capacity to evolve. It isn't focused on just one narrow threat or contingency; nor is it confined purely to a defence or intelligence dimension. Likewise, in the early 21st century the alliance has become central to new webs of strategic partnership in the Indo-Pacific, such as the trilateral arrangement with Japan.

Most prominent among the so-called minilateral groupings is what's become known as the Quad—the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue, involving also India and Japan. The Quad will neither supplant nor subsume the bilateral alliance. Rather, it has the potential to lend further weight and texture to Washington–Canberra security bonds and their relevance to the future stability of the Indo-Pacific.

Fittingly, 2021 is proving to be a watershed year for both institutions. The 70th anniversary of the alliance coincides with a reaffirmation of its strategic value, far beyond partisanship, in the face of China's challenge to regional order. The alliance has weathered the grim prognostications of the one-term Trump administration—claims from some quarters that it was of declining value, credibility, reliability—and has been defined by the incoming Biden administration, and its Defense Secretary Lloyd Austin, as 'unbreakable'. Such rhetorical assurance may be somewhat superfluous because the quiet reality is that both governments are working to reimagine the relationship and invest it with greater breadth and durability in any case. It's more than a security treaty in the 20th-century military and diplomatic sense, and instead is becoming a full-spectrum alliance across many dimensions of Indo-Pacific strategic competition with China: cyber and other critical technologies, countering foreign interference, securing supply chains, and close coordination on capacity building, infrastructure and the Covid-19 response to limit China's influence in third countries.

That said, the defence domain matters more than ever in the life of the ANZUS Treaty, not only in capabilities and training but potentially also in new dispersed arrangements for US force access and deployments beyond the so-called first island chain. Australia's updated priority defence missions of shaping, deterring and responding will almost invariably occur in an alliance context.

Yet recent developments also confirm that the alliance is far from the only strategic relationship that will enhance Australia's security options in an era of disruption and contestation. Since the early 2000s, Canberra has cultivated a range of reasonably like-minded regional partners, the most substantial of which are Japan and India. The diversification of security ties involves bilateral relationships but also, as the 2017 *Foreign Policy White Paper* articulated, a new

It's more than a security treaty in the 20th-century military and diplomatic sense, and instead is becoming a full-spectrum alliance across many dimensions of Indo-Pacific strategic competition with China.

emphasis on ‘small groups’ or minilateralism. The most mature of those is the trilateral security dialogue with the US and Japan, which extends to a significant degree of interoperability and intelligence sharing. But without question the most prominent is now the Quad. Recent years have marked its coming of age.

The strange story of the rise, fall and vigorous revival of the Quad has been told amply elsewhere. It’s one of those peculiar international institutions that has generated critical commentary considerably out of proportion to the scale of its own practical activity. There’s now a cottage industry of Quad analysts, of varying credibility and perspective. One of the most serious, Indian scholar Tanvi Madan, reminds us of the guiding if often unstated theme of the Quad’s rebirth from 2017 onwards: China’s coercive assertiveness.¹ Participant states’ wavering political will and latent misgivings about China’s diplomatic discomfort explain the fading of the original Quad initiative in 2008. Likewise, the group’s dramatic revival is best explained by the four governments’ fresh conviction that they had more chance of limiting Beijing’s aggressive powerplay by acting together rather than apart. Looking in the mirror, writes Madan, gives China its best explanation of why the Quad is back and here to stay. China’s serial provocation of India

The Quad summit was a breakthrough, neutralising much of the theatrical condemnation that the dialogue had previously attracted from parts of the commentariat (or, for that matter, from the Chinese propaganda machine).

(in border bloodshed), of Japan (in the East China Sea), of Australia (in economic coercion) and of the US (across a vast landscape of interests, from threatening allies and Taiwan to rampant cyber-plunder) has reinforced that conclusion.

In March 2021, the Quad leaders took the group to a new level by convening their first four-way summit meeting, albeit in the virtual format most suited to Covid-19 times of restricted travel. This followed, in short order, the normalisation of the dialogue at ministerial level and the inclusion of Australia, in November 2020, as a fourth partner in the annual India-led Malabar maritime military drill, making it effectively a Quad exercise by another name.

The Quad summit was a breakthrough, neutralising much of the theatrical condemnation that the dialogue had previously attracted from parts of the commentariat (or, for that matter, from the Chinese propaganda machine). In particular, it broadened the dialogue beyond the predictable themes of strategic rivalry and maritime security. Introducing an additional agenda of Covid-19, climate change and critical technologies, the Quad leaders’ statement was in step with the Biden administration’s more holistic approach to regional engagement.²

It also makes the Quad a more acceptable—even welcome—grouping for the swing states of the Indo-Pacific contest, notably in Southeast Asia. The idea of the Quad as a core for larger issues-based alignments—so-called Quad-plus arrangements involving Asian or European partners—is now becoming a genuine prospect. Meanwhile, growing global anxiety about China is galvanising other groupings too, including the G7 (meeting, in June 2021, with its ‘extension partners’ Australia, India, South Korea and South Africa) and the Five Eyes (which is starting to coordinate on policy as well as intelligence). For Australia, far from the nightmare of

isolation imagined upon it by China, this is an era of diplomatic surfeit. The challenge will be to coordinate such an array of dialogue into solidarity and action.

Where, then, will the Quad fit it in, and how might it coordinate with the US–Australia alliance in years to come? How, precisely, are those institutions complementary? In other words, how does the combination of the alliance, the Quad and other strategic relationships reinforce Australia’s interests in a way that’s larger than the sum of the parts? Such questions frame the task for Australian strategic diplomacy in the years ahead. Australia’s closer security ties with Japan and India make sense on their own terms, but the alliance remains the bedrock in agenda setting, trust and capability. Australia is a more credible and capable security partner for Asian powers because of the alliance, not despite it.



Foreign ministers from Japan, the US, Australia and India with Japan’s Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga at the Quad ministerial meeting in Tokyo, 6 October 2020. Source: Kantei on Twitter, [online](#).

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Beyond the security treaty: business, economics, trade and technology

The alliance in an era of geo-economic competition

Jeffrey Wilson

The Australia–US alliance is often thought of primarily in defence and security terms. Fostered in the shared experience of the Pacific War, and institutionalised in the early years of the Cold War, security cooperation has formed the foundation of the bilateral relationship. Less appreciated, however, are the history and importance of economic collaboration between Australia and the US. The countries' shared economic values have been instrumental in shaping the global and regional economic orders over the past several decades through institution-building and rule-making efforts.

The economic purpose of the Australia–US alliance is again becoming important, as the rise of geo-economic competition threatens the global economic order.

For the entire postwar period, US leadership has underpinned the creation of open and rules-based global economic institutions, which include the Bretton Woods institutions—the

The benefits of the US-led global economic order have been most pronounced in the Indo-Pacific.

International Monetary Fund, the World Trade Organization (WTO) and the World Bank—along with dozens of issue- or sector-specific agreements and instruments. By virtue of the US's size as the world's largest economy, its leadership was an essential component in creating the institutions that would set and enforce rules for orderly interactions between the world's economies.

International relations scholars refer to this US role as 'hegemonic stability'—the ability of a great power to organise stabilising institutions in an otherwise anarchical international system.

The benefits of the US-led global economic order have been most pronounced in the Indo-Pacific. Enabled by the supporting environment offered by the Bretton Woods institutions, regional governments embarked on a process of economic opening and liberalisation from the late 1970s. That attracted inward investment, created trade opportunities and drove the high-speed growth, industrialisation and urbanisation that's seen the region become the engine room of the global economy.

The dynamism of the Indo-Pacific couldn't have been possible, and won't be able to continue, without the rules-based global economic order established by the US.

That order has also been extremely important for the achievement of Australia's national interests. As an open economy, we're highly dependent on reliable trade and investment links. Those links are focused on partners in the Indo-Pacific, which presently account for 84% of our exports. But, as a medium-sized economy, Australia alone lacks the heft to establish or sustain the rules and institutions required to secure those critical external ties. The US-led global economic order is an essential support for our prosperity as a trading nation.

However, in the early years of the 21st century, the rules-based economic order is coming under increasing strain. As strategic competition between major powers has re-emerged, many governments have begun to use economic tools as a means to prosecute their rivalries. Known as 'geo-economics'—the application of economic tools for geopolitical ends—this type of diplomatic competition is undermining the integrity of rules-based economic integration. Trade warfare, investment races, institutional breakdown and cyberattacks have all unfortunately become commonplace.

One of the most prominent examples of geo-economics is China's use of trade sanctions to coerce governments that publicly contest its policies.

One of the most prominent examples of geo-economics is China's use of trade sanctions to coerce governments that publicly contest its policies. It first adopted the tactic in 2010, when it suspended rare-earth exports to Japan for two months during a dispute over the Senkaku/Diaoyu Islands. Since that time, another seven countries—Norway, the Philippines, Mongolia, Taiwan, Korea, Canada and Australia—have been on the receiving end of Chinese trade coercion for a diverse set of supposed 'infractions'.

Importantly, Chinese trade coercion serves two purposes: domestic pressure and international deterrence. Against the target, it works by inflicting costs on domestic businesses, in the hope that they'll pressure their government to change foreign policy positions concerning China. To third parties, it functions as a warning designed to deter criticism of Chinese foreign policy in the future.

Chinese trade coercion has been exclusively applied to small and medium-sized economies, where size asymmetries mean the target lacks the capability to retaliate effectively. It also routinely targets US allies and friends, clearly selected as proxies for sanctions against the US itself.

In 2020, Australia became the eighth country to suffer Chinese trade coercion. In May, massive—and legally spurious—anti-dumping duties were applied to Australian barley, pricing nearly \$1 billion of exports out of the Chinese market. More trade bans were applied in the following months, affecting industries as diverse as coal, wine, seafood, timber and education. By May 2021, China had imposed some kind of trade sanction on 14 Australian industries. The affected industries exported \$52 billion to China in 2019, so that was a serious economic blow coming atop the dislocations caused by Covid.



Wheat and barley silos at Ardrossan port on Yorke Peninsula, South Australia, 2011. Source: denisbin via Flickr, [online](#).

However, Australia stands out for its defiance. The Australian Government has refused to offer any *mea culpa* in the face of escalating sanctions, as several previous targets had done. Instead, it referred Chinese tariffs on barley to the WTO's dispute settlement mechanism. Australia's WTO case on barley will prove a landmark test of China's ability to use trade sanctions for coercive purposes by subjecting China's spurious use of anti-dumping and phytosanitary measures to independent, international legal scrutiny.

If China's trade coercion continues to go unchecked, confidence in the resilience of global economic institutions will founder, and they may be at risk of collapse.

An Australian WTO victory on barley would not only protect our own economic interests, but also reaffirm the integrity of the global trading system in the face of coercive trade diplomacy.

However, Australia alone can't address this geo-economic challenge to the rules-based economic order. When China breaches WTO rules to engage in trade coercion against smaller countries, it's unilaterally exempting itself from a central component of the global economic order. While Australia may have the capacity and resolve to resist that behaviour and seek a rules-based resolution, many smaller players don't. And, without support, even medium-sized countries like Australia are unlikely to succeed in a sustained trade war against a behemoth.

If China's trade coercion continues to go unchecked, confidence in the resilience of global economic institutions will founder, and they may be at risk of collapse. The consequences for global prosperity and stability will be dire.

This challenge creates an imperative for Australia and the US to reaffirm their commitment to the rules-based economic order. Indeed, such moves have already begun in the early days of the Biden administration. In recent months, US officials Jake Sullivan and Kurt Campbell have affirmed US support for Australia in the dispute. At the Anchorage summit in March 2021, the US declared that it couldn't have a 'normal' economic relationship with China while such trade coercion continues. Those statements are a manifestation of the collective security commitments between the US and Australia in the economic sphere.

But more needs to be done. Collective responses provide the best defence against trade coercion, as they ensure that large countries can't target and isolate smaller players. US involvement will be critical to collective defence strategies, as its economic size—and thus scope for retaliation—are a powerful deterrent to further Chinese action.

The next step for the US–Australia economic partnership is to extend bilateral support to a broader pool of like-minded partners to form an international coalition that can defend small and medium-sized powers against trade coercion. It's only through collective efforts, led by the US as the world's largest economy, that the rules-based economic order can be protected in the face of geo-economic competition.

A shared US–Australia defence industry base

Kate Louis

‘Australians have fought alongside Americans in every major US military action of the past century.’ This well-known and oft-used statement captures the profound nature of the defence relationship between Australia and the US.

While the fundamentals of the ANZUS military relationship are well understood, an area that receives less attention is the US–Australia defence industry connection and our shared industrial base. Given the emerging challenges described in Australia’s 2020 Defence Strategic Update, recognition of the importance of our defence industries is vital from both an economic and a national security viewpoint.

In recent years, the Australian Government has transformed Australian defence industry policy from a relatively simple ‘buy off the shelf’ philosophy to a genuine commitment to develop the capacity and capability of the Australian defence industry base. The results have been impressive: there’s been significant growth in Australian-developed capabilities and technologies that support both the ADF and exports, including to the US.

As a result, the Australian defence industry is expanding and making a significant contribution as an alliance partner to defence capability, readiness, resilience and the provision of effective responses to rising geopolitical tensions and uncertainty. There’s potential for even more

expansion and cooperation as a result of the recent recognition of Australia as part of the industrial base of the US through the National Technology and Industrial Base legislation (discussed below).

The US is the world’s largest exporter of defence equipment, and Australia is its second largest importer, accounting for just over 9% of US defence exports.

The US–Australia defence industry base draws much from the vibrant economic relationship between the two nations. The nature of Australia’s trading relationship with the US is extensive, diverse and interconnected. While China is Australia’s largest trading partner by value, more

businesses are involved in exporting to the US. Indeed, 11,488 Australian businesses exported products to the US in 2019–20 compared to 7,779 that exported to China.

The US is the largest foreign investor in Australia, accounting for over a quarter of foreign investment (almost \$1 trillion) in 2019. It’s also the number 1 destination for Australian foreign investment, accounting for 28% of Australian foreign investment in 2019.

The US–Australia relationship through our defence industry is also of deep importance. The US is the world’s largest exporter of defence equipment, and Australia is its second largest importer, accounting for just over 9% of US defence exports. And, in 2019–20, the North American continent accounted for 24% of Australia’s defence exports.

While the figures are impressive, just as important are the fine examples of our ability to co-develop some of the world's most technologically advanced equipment, as well as the high levels of cooperation in cutting-edge defence R&D.

The Australian Defence organisation's current pipeline of major investments is worth nearly \$270 billion over the coming decade, making it the largest in the organisation's history. In addition, the Australian Government's commitment to a range of initiatives to develop Australia's defence industrial base, promote defence exports, encourage innovation, invest in research and increase Australian industry content has made a significant contribution to our capability and capacity as an international industry partner.



A boarding team from the littoral combat ship USS *Freedom* make their way towards HMAS *Kanimbla* during Exercise RIMPAC 2010. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

The Australian defence industry is growing. It includes more than 4,000 businesses employing approximately 30,000 highly skilled staff. An additional 11,000 Australian companies directly benefit from defence investment when further downstream suppliers are included. The Defence Department's 2020 Force Structure Plan notes that conservative estimates placed the defence industry's contribution at \$3.45 billion in value added to Australia's GDP in 2017–18.

While Australian industry content will continue to grow, the shared defence industry base of the Australia–US bilateral security relationship will remain an important element of Australia's future defence capability requirements. Australia produces some of the world's most innovative and cutting-edge defence technologies, many of which involve bilateral collaborations with the US.

The relationship extends from the sustainment and maintenance of helicopters and tanks, the production of missile systems, the Joint Strike Fighter and the development of advanced space and sensor systems to support joint facilities and joint operations. One of the highly deserving

and regularly cited examples of US–Australia cooperation is the Nulka active missile decoy system, manufactured by BAE Systems Australia and designed in partnership with Defence Science and Technology Group. Nulka diverts incoming anti-ship missiles away from their original target by emitting an electronic signal that mimics the signature of the ship. The system was designed in Australia and originally built through a US–Australia collaboration. Today, the Nulka system is deployed on more than 150 Australian, US and Canadian warships and is Australia’s most successful defence export.

The shared defence industrial base between Australia and the US is a true, ongoing and material success for both nations. The US–Australia industry connections touch a large range of Australia’s defence capabilities and provide an insight into how a middle power such as Australia is able to maintain one of the world’s most capable and advanced defence forces.

In the light of the emerging challenges identified in the 2020 Defence Strategic Update, the demands on the US–Australia shared industry base will grow. They will require us to meet increased global competition and security uncertainty and to effectively respond in the event that significant combat operations arise.

One area that has potential to considerably improve collaboration and capacity across the US–Australia shared industry base would be further consideration of limiting Australia’s exposure to the US International Traffic in Arms Regulations, which regulate the licensing of exports on the US Munitions List.

It is important to note in this regard that the US Congress expanded its National Technology and Industrial Base (NTIB) legislation in 2017. The expanded NTIB formally recognised Australia and the UK as part of the US industrial base (along with Canada, which was recognised in 1994). The NTIB had the objective of emulating a ‘defence free-trade area’.

The NTIB has the potential to become a progressive industry framework by combining the R&D bases of the NTIB members to include more resources, capacity, capability and technologies. To date, the potential for the NTIB hasn’t yet been realised, but it remains an important opportunity for policymakers to further develop the US–Australia shared industrial base.

Today, our Australian defence industry is recognised not only as an important economic component of national power, but also as an essential element of Australia’s military and defence capabilities and therefore a key contributor to our ANZUS alliance partner.

The US–Australia shared defence industry base is strong and contributes significantly to the national security of both nations and to the security and stability of the global system. The base has been born of the extensive trust, cooperation, innovation and investments that have flowed from the ANZUS relationship and underpin its continued strength and future relevance.

Both nations will need to continue to invest strongly in this area if we’re to meet the challenges of the future as successfully as we’ve done in the past.

Defence industry collaboration: a case study

Brendan Nicholson

Its official designation gives little away, but the sleek uncrewed jet at the heart of the Boeing Airpower Teaming System provides a taste of how the ANZUS alliance could evolve in a rapidly changing global strategic environment.

Designed and built in Australia by the giant US aerospace corporation, the prototype better known as the Loyal Wingman made its first flight at Woomera on 27 February 2021.

What's remarkable, and significant to the ANZUS alliance, is the time it took to take the aircraft from concept to successful take-off and landing—just three years.

That sets a new standard for defence projects, which have often taken a decade or more to bring equipment to fruition. And it shows what's possible in high-tech cooperation between close and trusted allies.

With warning time for a possible major conflict shrinking to much less than the traditionally accepted 10 years, shared design and production will be crucial to Australia developing the long-range strike and other capabilities we might need to fend off a major hostile adversary.

The Wingman provides important lessons in how the shared development of vital defensive technology can benefit both Australia and the US. Compared to the multibillion-dollar cost of major crewed platform purchases, the Loyal Wingman is a much less expensive option.



Boeing Australia's Airpower Teaming System—'Loyal Wingman' conducts its first flight at Woomera Range Complex, South Australia, February 2021. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

In February 2019, the government announced that it would invest \$10 million per year, up to a total of \$40 million, in a joint program with Boeing to advance the initial Loyal Wingman concept. After the aircraft made its first flight, Defence confirmed that it would invest a further \$115 million in more prototypes.

The description ‘drone’ doesn’t do this multi-role jet justice. Harnessing artificial intelligence and with a range of 2,000 nautical miles, it’s intended to form a crewed–uncrewed team with high-performance RAAF aircraft such as the F-35A Lightning II Joint Strike Fighter, the F/A-18F Super Hornet and the E-7A Growler electronic warfare aircraft. They’re likely to have key roles to play with long-range RAAF planes such as the Wedgetail command and control aircraft and KC-30 tankers.

One or more Loyal Wingmen will operate with the pilot or other crew of those jets to increase the range of their systems, carry out attacks on heavily defended targets or absorb incoming fire if the crewed aircraft is about to be overwhelmed. The Wingman can be controlled from the crewed aircraft or remotely from its base.

The commander of the US Pacific Air Forces and of the air component of US Indo-Pacific Command, General Kenneth S Wilsbach, has been extensively briefed on the Loyal Wingman program and saw the aircraft take its first flight at the Woomera testing range. He says the US Air Force is very interested in the Wingman and in manned–unmanned teaming and unmanned platforms generally.

Wilsbach told ASPI that, attacking a well-defended target, an aircraft with a highly trained pilot might not come back. But if the Wingman gets shot down, there’s not the worry that you’ve ‘lost a buddy’: ‘We’re certainly watching it very closely and evaluating how we want to implement this as we go into the future.’

He says it’s remarkable that the Wingman took just three years to develop to its first flight. ‘And I’m really thankful for the leadership that the RAAF has shown.’

‘We’re in follow mode right now and we’re quite happy about that because the RAAF has been a leader a number of times throughout history.’

Wilsbach says he’s impressed by the effectiveness with which the RAAF is assembling a fifth-generation air force. ‘That’s another area of leadership that’s very impressive.’

Another example of impressive cutting-edge technology developed in and for Australia is the E-7A Wedgetail command and control aircraft, which is based on Boeing’s 737 airliner.

The RAAF Wedgetails proved highly successful on missions over Iraq and Syria during the war on the Islamic State terror group. Wilsbach saw them at close quarters when he was the director of operations for US Central Command. ‘They did a fantastic job.’

He sees the Wedgetail as an ideal contender to replace the ageing E-3 Sentry airborne warning and control aircraft, or AWACs, used by the US. ‘I’ve been a huge fan of the E-7, from the standpoint of reliability, but it’s got a lot of capabilities that the E-3 does not have,’ Wilsbach says.

Wilsbach has flown and operated with the RAAF throughout his career and regards it as an ‘absolutely top-notch’ air force. ‘There really is none better from the professional wisdom standpoint,’ he says.

‘Now you’re leading the world in many aspects of putting together air power in a way that can create effects across a wide spectrum of capabilities. That’s impressive and we’re watching and following, frankly, from the US Air Force standpoint in many ways.’

Michael Shoebridge, director of ASPI’s Defence, Strategy and National Security Program, says the Wingman program shows what can and must be done to secure Australia in an uncertain future.

He says Defence needs ‘consumable’ weapons that can be used, lost and replaced in large numbers during conflict if the Australian Government is not going to get some very nasty surprises in a future war. That could include the loss in combat of air warfare destroyers, F-35s and tanks—together with the men and women operating them. Losing one destroyer’s 180 crew in combat would be 4.5 times the casualties the ADF suffered in the entire Afghanistan conflict.

Such sobering combat losses are possible because potential adversaries have understood the implications of advanced missiles and drones operating with their militaries’ planes, ships and submarines—and they’ve gone beyond small-scale experimentation to supplying their militaries in high volumes.

Rapid development of the Loyal Wingman is a limited but refreshing indicator of the sort of change that’s possible. ‘So is Prime Minister Scott Morrison’s plan to manufacture in Australia at least some of the \$100 billion in advanced missiles Australia’s military will buy over the next 20 years,’ Shoebridge says.

Another important option, he says, is for the ADF to buy Boeing’s large unmanned Orca submarine now to add to Australia’s undersea capability, well before the launch of the first Attack-class submarine in the mid-2030s. This would add significantly to the Collins-class submarines’ combat power, Shoebridge says. Four Orcas would come at a fraction of a manned submarine’s cost and be in the water more than 10 years sooner.

In March, the US Air Force’s deputy chief of staff for strategy, integration and requirements, Lieutenant General Clint Hinote, briefed the publication *Defense News* on a massive war game in which the US narrowly repelled a Chinese invasion of Taiwan.

Drones played a key role in the complex scenario along with an advanced sixth-generation fighter, cargo aircraft dropping pallets of guided munitions, and other novel technologies which author Valerie Insinna said were as yet unseen on the modern battlefield.

She said drones flew alongside penetrating fighters in contested zones, providing additional firepower and sensor data to human pilots. Hinote pointed to Australia’s Loyal Wingman as an ‘impressive’ capability that the US sought to mirror in its war game.

ASPI senior analyst Malcolm Davis says that one of the hottest debates among airpower analysts is the role of uncrewed systems in future air combat, and that Australia may have staked out a

lead in such capability with the Wingman. That has significant implications for the future of Australia's defence industry, he says.

The Wingman's primary role is projecting power forward, he says, while keeping manned platforms out of harm's way. It also seeks to protect 'combat enablers' such as the Wedgetail from an adversary's long-range offensive counter-air capability.

Its range will allow it to operate over the South China Sea, flying from RAAF Base Tindal near Darwin. It will carry integrated sensor packages to support intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance (ISR) missions and electronic warfare, and has an internal bay that eventually can be armed with stand-off weapons and precision bombs.

Davis says it's vital that the Wingman will be able to fly autonomously, rather than being remotely piloted. Exploiting trusted autonomy with a human 'on the loop' in an oversight role, rather than directly controlling the unmanned combat aerial vehicle (UCAV) in every aspect of its mission 'in the loop', is a much more sensible approach.

The Loyal Wingman can extend Australia's air defence envelope much further north than would be possible using the F-35 alone, Davis says:

Imagine a swarm of Loyal Wingman UCAVs controlled by a four-ship formation of F-35s undertaking defensive counter-air tasks over the sea-air gap. The less stealthy UCAVs would be geographically located well away from the stealthy F-35s to avoid betraying their location, but close by in terms of being part of a resilient network. The F-35s in turn are networked to a Wedgetail to the rear. The UCAVs are the forward sensor in the 'sensor to shooter' link, but can also be a forward shooter against an adversary equipped with long-range air power, while the F-35s and Wedgetail can stay out of harm's way.

Alternatively, supporting strike missions, the UCAVs could use their long-range ISR sensors and electronic warfare capabilities, and potentially precision-attack munitions, to identify and suppress enemy integrated air defences. That would open up a path for the F-35s and fourth-generation aircraft such as the Super Hornet and Growler to strike at high-value targets.

In long-range power projection and protection, the Loyal Wingman could restore a significant amount of the long-range strike power the RAAF lost with the retirement of the F-111C in 2010. Although the Wingman is much smaller than the F-111C and carries a smaller payload, the emphasis on low-cost development means that more UCAVs can be acquired.

'Local production will make it easier to keep on acquiring them as and when we need more,' Davis says, 'This will allow us to exploit combat mass and boost the potential of the RAAF's future strike and air combat capability through swarming networks of autonomous shooters and sensors.'

The quantum and space opportunity

Robert Clark

Within the span of the 70-year history of ANZUS, I have in my own working life experienced the camaraderie and trust that this historic treaty represents at the working level—in both peacetime and during the war in Afghanistan. As a force for good in a complex world, based on shared democratic values as ANZUS nations, we have and always will have each other's backs.

I preface this contribution with a personal digression. While each individual's experience will be richly diverse, it speaks to the deep ANZUS bond shared by countless Australians across so many areas of joint endeavour. ANZUS is in our DNA, and long may that be so.

In my own case, I joined the RAN as a 15-year-old cadet midshipman at the Royal Australian Naval College, Jervis Bay (the counterpart of Annapolis in the US) at the height of the Vietnam War. Following graduation, sea postings included serving on minehunter HMAS *Curlew*. During Exercise Kangaroo-1 in 1974, involving Australian, US and NZ forces, we took part in 'clearing' a channel at Shoalwater Bay and guiding in the landing of 1,500 US marines from four amphibious ships.



Exercise Kangaroo-1 1974: RAN minehunter HMAS *Curlew* divers clearing the channel of magnetic mines for US Marine amphibious landing, Shoalwater Bay, Queensland; author fourth from left. Source: Robert Clark.

My first major overseas deployment as a seaman officer was on the destroyer HMAS *Stuart* in 1976, to Pearl Harbor in Hawaii, San Diego and San Francisco as part of the Australian representation at the US celebrations marking the 200th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. American hospitality was memorable, not least in a hybrid American football/rugby game against US SEALs in San Diego which, as an RAN ship's diver via earlier qualification at HMAS *Penguin*, had an impact on me (literally).

In later years, as an Australian scientist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, Fellow of the Institute of Advanced Studies at Indiana University, visiting scientist at MIT and Director of the Australian Centre for Quantum Computer Technology over its first decade that enmeshed six Australian universities working collaboratively with five US universities, two US Department of Energy Laboratories and with links to US companies IBM and Hewlett Packard, our Australian researchers were exposed to the extraordinary capabilities, standards and pace of US technology and innovation and our students to the best of the best in their fields.

That was particularly so as an Australian quantum computer research team focused on both semiconductor (single-atom spintronic) and optical (single-photon) approaches, reporting dually through its joint funding to the Australian Research Council and the US Government

On a technology plane in the Afghanistan conflict, we worked inseparably and with urgency and together pulled our weight. It was the strongest of bonds.

quantum computing program review. Returning eventually to the Australian Department of Defence as Chief Defence Scientist and member of Australia's Defence Committee, I had the opportunity and privilege to directly engage with Australian and US troops in harm's way during several operationally focused visits to Kandahar, Kabul, Tarin Kowt and forward operating bases in Afghanistan, and with counterparts in numerous US defence and government agencies in Washington DC and elsewhere. Our

interoperability and mutual support on the ground in Afghanistan echoed our long history of standing alongside each other in every major conflict.

On a technology plane in the Afghanistan conflict, we worked inseparably and with urgency and together pulled our weight. It was the strongest of bonds.

Just as the 1951 ANZUS Treaty sets out an agreement to protect the security of the Pacific, Australia and the US have a complementary, longstanding bilateral science and technology relationship dating back to 1968. The most recent treaty-level formalisation of this relationship is the Agreement Relating to Scientific and Technical Cooperation between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Australia, signed in Washington DC in November 2016, which entered into force in December 2017. Within that framework, during his 2019 meetings in Washington, Prime Minister Scott Morrison announced investments in local Australian businesses, researchers and new technologies to support NASA's mission to return to the Moon and travel to Mars, expanding Australia-US cooperation in space and boosting the Australian space industry and workforce.

While there are many opportunities for cooperation, in a rapidly changing technical and geopolitical landscape two areas stand out that will be critical to our national security and economic prosperity—space and quantum, and their interconnection. Technical disruption of the *status quo* through recent escalating progress in both of those areas is moving at pace.

In the commercial space domain, driven by the push for faster broadband internet with wider geographical coverage, including of remote and regional areas, an industrialisation of low Earth orbit (LEO) is occurring. Launches of small low-latency LEO satellites have begun, and thousands more are planned. In the development of national space capability, the business model has abruptly moved from government to public-private partnerships (PPPs), of which the NASA-SpaceX PPP is an exemplar.

Similarly, quantum technologies coupled with algorithm development promise unprecedented computing power for important tasks. Following more than two decades of intense activity, nationally coordinated quantum computer initiatives have moved from the university research sector at the few-quantum-bit (qubit) component level to the development by industry and start-up ventures of intermediate-scale quantum processors comprising 50 to 100 qubits. This technology is referred to as the noisy intermediate-scale quantum computer (NISQ) regime, as the physical qubits aren't as yet error-corrected. In October 2019, Google announced the first demonstration of so-called quantum supremacy over classical supercomputer capability—for a specific, constrained task.

Estimating the classical computational cost via benchmarking using the Oak Ridge National Laboratory's Summit supercomputer (the most powerful worldwide) and Google clusters, the specific computational task achieved in 200 seconds on the programmable 53-qubit Sycamore processor consisting of superconducting qubits was estimated to take 10,000 years of classical simulation. Most recently, in December 2020, the University of Science and Technology of China (USTC) published its development of an all-optical (photonic) quantum computer in the NISQ regime, which, while not currently programmable, was built with sufficient scale and precision to also demonstrate quantum supremacy for a similar constrained task. USTC benchmarking via China's Sunway TaihuLight supercomputer showed that the task achieved in 200 seconds on USTC's photonic NISQ would require 2.5 billion years of classical simulation. USTC is based in Hefei and, of serious note and lest we become complacent, in 2020 China announced its intention to build a US\$11 billion national quantum laboratory in that city.

While no initiatives are as yet anywhere near what's termed (large-scale) fault-tolerant quantum computing (FTQC), in which error-corrected 'logical' qubits each comprise thousands of physical qubits at currently achievable error rates, this ultimate computing regime, which is estimated

While there are many opportunities for cooperation, in a rapidly changing technical and geopolitical landscape two areas stand out that will be critical to our national security and economic prosperity—space and quantum, and their interconnection.

to be at least a decade away, will disrupt public key cryptography that's widely used for securing communications on the internet. Addressing the opportunity/risk aspect of quantum computer development is the subject of post-quantum cryptography, the development led by the US internationally of 'quantum-hard' algorithms for internet security in an FTQC age. IBM's superconducting quantum computing road map cites a 1,000-qubit goal by 2023, and Google has announced plans to develop a 1 million-qubit quantum processor by 2029.

A space-enabled global (satellite) distribution of quantum information (for which quantum 'entanglement' is a key resource), opening disruptive capability in distributed quantum computing, high-resolution large-aperture networked sensors and communications, is central to building a large-scale interconnected quantum network (also employing land networks)—a foreshadowed quantum internet. Technical elements underpinning this advance are quantum memory and repeater and encryption capabilities, together with quantum-compatible (laser) satellite communication channels and networks of optical ground stations including advanced adaptive optics.

The juxtaposition of constellations of LEO satellites that are 'democratising' access to space and the maturation of quantum technologies, together with their interconnection, is a major opportunity for Australia to contribute its technical know-how alongside our US counterparts within the ANZUS Treaty framework.



CSIRO radio telescope at Parkes, New South Wales. Source: David McClenaghan, [online](#).

While Australia has historically made important contributions to space alongside the US through our significant and strategic ground facilities, Australian launches of sovereign LEO satellites via a PPP model coordinated by the recently established Australian Space Agency, in lock step with US counterparts, are a major opportunity. Similarly, Australia has invested in the quantum building blocks, in close coordination with the US, from which the rapid development of a sovereign quantum computer capability operating in the NISQ quantum-advantage regime, and which can be heavily exercised for algorithm development related to important national tasks, is achievable and will be critical. For the future, combining these technologies, a networked quantum-capable satellite capacity will position Australia to be at the forefront of the coming quantum internet.

We live in uncertain times in which the rules-based order is under threat, particularly in our Pacific region. Australia more than ever must ensure that our technology base is at the leading edge in critical areas that affect our national security. That will not be achieved alone. It can, however, be achieved within the ANZUS framework.

In that regard, it's important to conclude with a message on timing, agility and risk. Advances in critical technologies are moving rapidly, and this pace of technical disruption won't be a temporary or passing phase. We must develop agile due-diligence frameworks, such as the PPP approach, and take timely, national-interest technology decisions that aren't weighted down by overly bureaucratic process. In this, the trust that's embodied in ANZUS is a significant factor. No more so was that demonstrated than in the simple one-line contract (in total) signed in February 1969 between the CSIRO and NASA in relation to Australia's Parkes Observatory: 'The Radiophysics Division agrees to support the Apollo 11 mission.' That statement, which captured in a single sentence all that was formally required between our great nations, embodies the spirit of ANZUS.

Australia more than ever must ensure that our technology base is at the leading edge in critical areas that affect our national security. That will not be achieved alone. It can, however, be achieved within the ANZUS framework.

Supply chains after Covid-19

Margaret Staib

As an island continent, Australia is completely reliant on air and ocean freight for the import and export of goods. Following the outbreak of Covid-19, the fragility of global supply chains, and hence the vulnerabilities of economies such as Australia's, have been exposed. As John Gattorna observes:

Undoubtedly, we have gone too far in the relentless pursuit of cost efficiencies, and in the process made our supply chains overly brittle, unable to withstand sudden unexpected disruptions—or surges in demand! Now we must move back along the efficiency spectrum and accept that we may need some level of in-built redundancy, in the cause of increased resilience.¹

Supply-chain vulnerability needs to be a key strategic consideration, and the nation will need to balance the trade-off between cost and disruption. The 70th anniversary of ANZUS is an appropriate time to considering how our trilateral security relationships are critical to maintaining key supply chains after Covid-19. Economic security will be a critical part in maintaining regional stability in the Pacific.



A Royal Australian Air Force C-17 Globemaster aircraft delivers a Giraffe Radar to Tarin Kot, Afghanistan, August 2012. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Supply-chain disruptions of economies, trade and investment since the outset of Covid-19 have been stark. When the international borders were closed, international passenger flights were reduced by 98.2%.² This meant that 80% of all airfreight capacity disappeared almost overnight compared to February 2020.³ High-value, perishable exports were stranded, and the import of critical medicines and personal protective equipment was severely hampered.

In the context of ANZUS, monthly flights to the US plummeted from over 400 to 100, and recovery can be expected to be prolonged. The shock to airfreight and the reduction in airfreight services increased freight rates by up to 300%, although they have more recently stabilised at an average of 2.2 to 2.6 times pre-Covid rates for freight to the US and New Zealand.⁴ This will be the new norm for some time.

The Australian Government responded by setting up the International Freight Assistance Mechanism, which is an \$800 million program to facilitate the ‘stitching together’ of Australia’s vital supply chains with key trading partners.

During this time, alternative supply chains have been explored. Shifts to ocean freight, where possible, have driven increased demand and rates. Ocean freight is now beset with equipment imbalances globally, increasing congestion and delays. Those delays, when coupled with the impact on airfreight, are already changing market behaviour to keep commodities moving globally in response to economic demand.

During the pandemic, we’ve seen other geopolitical disruptions to our supply chains. Ongoing trade tensions with China have increased the difficulty for some exporters reliant on the Chinese market. China’s application of tariffs, blocking of product imports and increased regulatory oversight of Australian exporters are examples of this.

The Australian Government has demonstrated a clear focus on health security, stability and economic recovery in the Indo-Pacific, providing \$4 billion in official development assistance.⁵ That funding is targeted at building a secure and resilient Australia and stable near region, including by expanding and diversifying export markets and ensuring that export freight lanes from Australia remain supported. The Productivity Commission’s interim report, *Vulnerable supply chains*, notes the importance of Australia’s ability to import goods that can’t be substituted, or products critical to Australia’s health, infrastructure and defence requirements.⁶

The implementation of the 2020 Defence Strategic Update⁷ and the Australian Government’s Modern Manufacturing Strategy,⁸ which includes building supply-chain resilience and global market diversification, must positively contribute to the nation’s military and economic standing in the region in the face of this new uncertainty. To achieve that, the federal government will require supply-chain expertise and must work closely with the states, territories and industry partners. Effective supply-chain and global freight-bridge solutions can’t be developed in isolation.

Stockpiling and sovereign capabilities are one way of reducing the shock of supply-chain impacts.⁹ For goods that can’t be substituted, the nation should ensure that the National Freight and Supply Chain Strategy¹⁰ and National Action Plan¹¹ that were announced in August 2019

continue to consider the importance of international nodal ports. It will be critical to ensure that Australian ports can cater for the effective and efficient movement of goods from aircraft and ships to the domestic freight network.

Globalisation isn't the answer in a pandemic-affected world. Vital supply-chain links for both air and ocean freight between Australia, the US and New Zealand must be maintained. Secure supply chains that ensure the free flow of commodities and defence materiel between the ANZUS Treaty signatories will be a key contributor to Australia's economic recovery. The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the supply-chain risks we carry as a result of globalisation.

The challenge for us now is to determine what role the government will play in managing our supply-chain risk. How much is the responsibility of the private sector? And, if globalisation

isn't the answer, then is it a shift to strong mutual supportive relationships on a regional basis with like-minded countries?

Increased regionalisation and cooperation will be a key strategic consideration in managing our supply-chain vulnerabilities. The ANZUS Treaty provides a strong basis through Article VIII for Australia, New Zealand and the US to

engage in key economic activities that continue to contribute to the security of the Pacific region and build our supply-chain resilience.¹² The treaty, and its potential to safeguard Australia's economic security and regional stability in the Pacific, have never been more relevant.

The Covid-19 pandemic has exposed the supply-chain risks we carry as a result of globalisation.

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Technological cooperation: a critical alliance pillar

Rebecca Shrimpton and Danielle Cave

Something significant sits behind the vital Australia–US military and political alliance: technological cooperation. It gives both a practical and strategic edge to the bilateral relationship. Technology cooperation is a key pillar in the interoperability between our military forces, it enabled our cooperation to put men on the Moon and is driving renewed determination to go beyond the Moon to Mars, and it fuels successful collaborations among our universities in sectors from medical science to quantum technologies.¹

Looking back, technological cooperation must be recognised for the critical role it's played in bringing Australia and the US together and achieving shared objectives. But now it's time to look forward: the imperative to work even more closely, as trusted friends and allies, is only growing in magnitude and urgency. Technology itself has now become far more than an enabler of our daily lives. It's a source of global power, geopolitical influence and control, and strategic and economic competition. And nowhere is that more apparent than in the Indo-Pacific region.

The quest by some actors—states and companies—for monopolies over technologies that are potential game-changers in daily life, and in conflict, has morphed from competition into geostrategic rivalry. The democratisation of technology was, for a period, largely celebrated as a global good—it put into the hands of individuals, groups and nation-states alike an ability to connect, communicate, integrate and innovate. Yet highly destabilising efforts by malicious state and non-state actors to control, manipulate and abuse a suite of capabilities that many in the world rely upon present a new and dangerous challenge.² Open, free and independent societies—as well as the fragile system of rules and norms governing the appropriate use and application of critical technologies—are increasingly under threat.

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Australia and the US are natural political, security and diplomatic partners in the important technological cooperation work ahead. Along with other democracies and like-minded partners—especially in the Indo-Pacific region, which incubates much of the world's technological innovation and has become a hotbed of strategic technological competition—Australia and the US must focus their efforts on ensuring that the development and application of critical technologies reflect the principles and values that support the interests of free, open and independent societies. This must be more than just slogans about a 'free and open' internet. It means doubling down on the work underway to strengthen rules and norms in the technology and information sphere, and to ensure that international institutions are appropriately equipped to uphold them.

Strategic partnerships and alliances, such as the one between Australia and the US, are multidimensional and comprehensive. There's enormous potential for critical technology policy to play a more central role in strategic partnerships, and in particular the Australia-US alliance. That potential—which would benefit from greater strategic intent—spans diplomacy and foreign policy, military, commercial and trade opportunities.

In 2020, Australia expanded the remit of the country's inaugural Ambassador for Cyber Affairs (established in 2017) to include 'critical technology', reflecting the growing importance of technology in geopolitics. This diplomatic work must also extend to the protections of human rights, particularly as, for example, surveillance technologies become increasingly ubiquitous and can so easily be manipulated and deployed for nefarious purposes.³

Diplomatically, there's enormous potential for the Australia-US alliance to leverage and capitalise on the positive momentum of the Quad (the US, Australia, India and Japan). The Quad's newly announced 'critical and emerging technology group' provides an obvious vehicle for both countries to build up and invest in. Also important are related initiatives such as Australia's new technology-focused Sydney Dialogue initiative, hosted by ASPI, which aims to

Diplomatically, there's enormous potential for the Australia-US alliance to leverage and capitalise on the positive momentum of the Quad (the US, Australia, India and Japan).

fill an important gap by bringing together the world's top political and technology leaders to work together towards common understandings of technological challenges and policy responses.⁴

Militarily, the cooperation between Australia and the US that began under the US Department of Defense's Third Offset Strategy should be reignited.⁵ The strategy was never solely about new technologies. It was about leveraging the US's competitive advantages in its commercial and industrial innovation, and its ability to bring that innovation

(often technological and often developed in partnership with others) to the war fighter. Most importantly, the collaborative framework provided by the strategy had at its heart working with allies and partners to reimagine operational concepts and constructs in order to strengthen conventional deterrence; in other words, to prevent conflict. Nothing is as urgent or as important as that work is today.

Initiatives aligned with the Third Offset Strategy, such as the Strategic Capabilities Office and the Defence Innovation Unit, have a role to play in bringing our nations' capabilities together across the government – private sector divide. Technological innovation in both nations has 'largely shifted from government labs to the private sector; and ... the US needs to find an affordable way to maintain deterrence and stability.'⁶ Another initiative that should be considered by the Australian Government is building an Australian version of the US Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA).⁷ Such an investment wouldn't just be an investment in Australia's shallow R&D base, but would also help to build government, business and university links in strategic technology fields important to the Australian defence community and to the

Australia–US alliance more broadly.⁸ Recent developments related to the Defence Science and Technology Group are an important step in moving towards that goal and better aligning science and technology work with Defence’s strategic priorities.⁹

Arms control regimes created many decades ago remain vitally important, but they need updating. They were designed to keep critical and sensitive technologies out of the hands of malign actors and limit the proliferation of technologies of concern. But elements of those regimes now actively constrain cooperation between allies such as Australia and the US in vital areas in which commercial and industrial gains are simply outpacing the governance systems designed to control them.



Australian Army Corporal Meg Reeves uses a Ghost Robotics quadruped robot at Mount Pleasant, Canberra, February 2021. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Economically and commercially, Australia and the US are well positioned to move forward in a post-Covid world with renewed commitment to technology as an explicit basis for cooperation. Commercially, space, defence and critical technology industry cooperation is a clear geostrategic imperative for our two countries. Entrenched barriers to enhanced technological cooperation are difficult to reform quickly, but vital, operationally relevant collaboration could be boosted in the immediate term by work to agree on specific areas and processes for exemptions to facilitate Australian and US partnership on shared strategic problems.

Australia is a highly agile and capable technological partner to the US, and affordable deterrence and strategic stability should be core drivers of our combined technological and industrial efforts into the future. Creating the space for significantly enhanced trade and investment

between Australia and the US in space, defence and other crucial technology sectors, such as in quantum computing, critical minerals and biotechnology, is entirely consistent with the important but often underappreciated role the US plays as Australia's largest direct investor.¹⁰ It makes more sense than ever to ensure that this can continue in industries and technologies that are central to our common national security and that contribute to the broader security, stability and prosperity of the Indo-Pacific region.

Finally, Australia and the US should recommit, through practical initiatives, to Australia's 2017 inclusion in the US National Technology and Industrial Base and ensure that our cooperation is optimised for the world in which we find ourselves.¹¹ Such initiatives include successfully negotiating a technical safeguards agreement to enable strong US commercial and government investment in an Australian sovereign space launch capability.¹² The decision to negotiate such an agreement,¹³ announced by Australian ministers on 1 July 2021,¹⁴ spotlights Australia's competitive advantages precisely when governments and multinationals are looking for stable and trusted markets, exactly like Australia, that have proven they can protect sensitive technologies.

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Rare earths and critical minerals

David Uren

The US remains as heavily dependent on China for its supplies of rare earths today as it was 10 years ago, when its strategic vulnerability was exposed by Chinese export embargoes on Japan.

China is still supplying the US with 80% of its rare-earth minerals, which have a multitude of uses. They're in catalysts for oil refineries, used for raising the temperature of turbine blades, and provide the white light in LED fittings. They're also used in night-vision goggles and missile control systems. Their use for powerful permanent magnets accounts for about 80% of the market.

Australia's Lynas Rare Earths is the only non-Chinese producer of separated rare earths of any scale. Its development was funded by Japanese state authorities after China suspended rare-earth shipments to Japan in 2010 in retaliation for Japan's arrest of a Chinese fishing boat and crew in disputed waters.

There's one US rare-earths mine of similar size to Lynas's Mt Weld operation in Western Australia, but it ships its ore to China for treatment and has a Chinese rare-earths producer, Shenghe Resources, as a minority shareholder.



Rare Earths Limited CEO Amanda Lacaze hosts WA Governor Kim Beazley at Mt Weld, Western Australia, 22 June 2021. Source: Government House Western Australia, [online](#).

As former US President Donald Trump complained when ordering a national emergency over the US's dependence on critical mineral imports from China last year, the US had been the world's largest producer of rare earths in the 1980s, until China deployed 'aggressive economic practices to strategically flood the global market for rare earth elements and displace competitors'.

'Since gaining this advantage, China has exploited its position in the rare earth elements market by coercing industries that rely on these elements to locate their facilities, intellectual property and technology in China.'¹

There are dozens of small rare-earths development companies around the world, including 15 in Australia, with promising prospects, some with small pilot processing plants, surviving from one modest equity-raising to the next.

The Trump administration's concern about US dependence on China led it to help subsidise Lynas to construct a processing plant in Texas to produce 'heavy' rare-earth oxides, although the product may still need to be shipped to China for further processing into metals.

None has been able to break through to generate the scale of production that would significantly reduce dependence on China. The essential problem is that each deposit of rare-earth minerals is different and requires processing to be designed for it. A process that works in a pilot plant might not prove stable at scale.

An at-scale processing plant would cost \$1 billion or more, but it's impossible to accurately forecast the final cost because of uncertainty over the effectiveness of the processing. It took Lynas about eight years to get its processing plant in Malaysia working efficiently, and that wouldn't have been achieved without the support of patient investors backed by the Japanese Government.

In the absence of such an investor, a developer would need secure customer contracts, but no major user will sign bankable contracts if the delivery of a high-quality end product is uncertain, particularly if signing such a contract would alienate existing (Chinese) suppliers. Any prospective investor would have to confront the risk that China would flood the market, depressing the price to unprofitable levels, if its near monopoly were threatened.

Even if all those hurdles could be overcome, China controls most of the manufacturing of the downstream products. Once the oxides are separated, they need to be refined into metals and then alloyed into material that can be used by fabricators. While China accounts for around 80% of rare-earth mine production, its share of downstream processes is 90% or in some cases 100%.

There's long been gnashing of teeth in the US over this dependence. A 2013 congressional report noted that a Virginia-class nuclear submarine used 9,200 pounds of rare earths (about 4.2 tonnes), an Aegis-class destroyer about 5,200 pounds (2.4 tonnes) and a Joint Strike Fighter about 920 pounds (420 kilograms).²

The US Government has long fostered close relations between the military establishment and defence contractors, pumping tens of billions of dollars into innovative projects. However, the Defense Department doesn't have much experience in dealing with resource projects, and the US Government has found it difficult to marshal meaningful funds for what would essentially be start-up operations.

The uncertainties that make rare earths too difficult for private-sector funding also make politicians hesitate, as no one wants to be associated with a failure. Even the provision of a relatively modest amount for Lynas's heavy rare-earths separation plant had to overcome hurdles, as some senators argued that the US funding should be reserved for US-owned businesses.

Yet the threat from China remains. Earlier this year, China's Ministry of Industry and Technology proposed new controls on the production and export of rare earths. Chinese industry executives said government officials had asked whether such controls would affect defence contractors in the US and Europe.³ Similar threats were made in 2019, after the US banned technology exports to several Chinese companies.⁴

Australia's government believes that significant proven reserves of rare earths and other critical materials make Australia the logical partner for the US in overcoming its dependence on China. The potential for collaboration has resulted in a formal Australia-US critical minerals 'dialogue', while the vulnerability of the rare-earths supply chain was on the agenda for the initial leaders' meeting of the Quadrilateral Security Dialogue nations: the US, Japan, India and Australia.

Australia's government believes that significant proven reserves of rare earths and other critical materials make Australia the logical partner for the US in overcoming its dependence on China.

The Biden administration has continued its predecessor's concern over the US's dependence on China for critical minerals, including rare earths, but has said that it will rely on allies rather than boost domestic US production. In principle, this should assist the prospects of the Australian rare-earth development and exploration companies.⁵

However, it remains to be seen whether the US will follow through. As yet, there's little indication of a strategy to tackle the multiple points of dependence on China along the supply chain, with all the attendant financial risks.

The industry outlook, in the meantime, is for demand for rare earths to rise dramatically along with the mass production of electric motor vehicles; one industry analysis predicts that demand for the element used in magnets will keep rising by 17.5% a year into the 2030s.⁶ China has no intention of letting go of the market: its biggest producer, Northern Rare Earths, is planning to double production over the next three years.⁷

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Harnessing defence science

Gregor Ferguson

Australia's defence science and technology (S&T) relationship with the US is based on enduring strategic realities.

First, it needs a capability edge over its regional neighbours that's based on very high levels of training and operational capability to offset the small size of the ADF. Second, Australia needs great and powerful allies to guarantee its security in a region that's increasingly a theatre for great-power rivalry. And third, Australia has an extremely close alliance with the US and therefore uniquely privileged access to the US arsenal and to its science, technology and intelligence.

Australia is one of the biggest and most technologically sophisticated customers for defence equipment in the region. This coming year, however, Defence will invest around \$538 million, or just 1.2% of its total budget, in R&D conducted by its S&T arm, DST Group. That's a significant fall from the 2.0% of the budget that DST Group received as recently as 2010, though it's bolstered slightly by the additional Defence funds directed towards initiatives such as the Next Generation Technologies Fund.

By comparison, this year the US will spend US\$106.6 billion on research, development, testing and evaluation and nearly US\$16 billion on R&D alone. That's more than the aggregate of European Union defence R&D spending and, among the Western powers, ensures US dominance in developing and manufacturing high-end defence equipment. Furthermore, economies of scale mean that equipment is priced competitively. So, thanks to its close relationship with the US, Australia can afford world-class equipment without the crippling expense of having to undertake all of its own R&D and then manufacture the gear entirely by itself.

So, Australia depends on its extraordinarily close alliance with the US, in which the US shares technology and intelligence, to an almost unprecedented degree. The relationship is sustained partly by Australia's ability to contribute unique, credible, niche technologies and a secure DST Group portal for intelligence and technology sharing between the two governments. DST Group's expertise in peculiarly Australian technology areas, such as wide-area surveillance and extending the lives of ships, submarines and aircraft, provides the credible 'trade goods' that Australia brings to the alliance and make Australia a partner and not just a client.

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For most of the past half-century, much of the R&D collaboration between Australia and the US has been under the aegis of The Technical Cooperation Program (TTCP), which is a multilateral defence R&D program established in 1957 that binds the Five-Eyes nations—the US, the UK, Canada, Australia and New Zealand.

The TTCP members collaborate on technical R&D at the ‘pre-competitive’ stage. Research thrusts (not including nuclear and intelligence technologies) are curated through 10 TTCP technology groups, and mechanisms exist for more time-sensitive research via action groups. TTCP-sponsored research remains world-leading and exclusive to the Five Eyes group.

However, Australia and the US have also pursued several exclusive bilateral S&T projects that address operational technology needs. Most of those projects have led to the fielding by both nations of significant operational capabilities, mostly manufactured by the US.

Joint R&D projects, such as the development of the Nulka anti-ship missile decoy (manufactured in Australia, but with a US electronic warfare payload), the Mk48 CBASS heavyweight torpedo, the AN/BSY-1 submarine combat management system and the SCiFIRE hypersonic flight research program, reflect the shared interests of both partners, along with the understanding that Australia offers leading-edge S&T as well as world-leading test ranges.



Nulka active missile decoy being deployed. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

The joint US–Australia projects are characterised by the need to contribute credible S&T to a US program that will also benefit Australia. The BAE Systems Australia Nulka is an outlier: it's an Australian development based on DST Group's original research that also meets a high-level US Navy requirement and is now the only weapon (that's how it's classified) of foreign manufacture to equip US warships. BAE Systems Australia now also manufactures complex thrust-vectoring rocket nozzles for the US-led Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile consortium, based on its Nulka expertise. This is one of Australia's significant defence export success stories.

However, three things have changed in the past five years.

First, the US simply lacks the capacity to conduct R&D across every emerging defence-relevant technology area of interest, such as robotic and autonomous systems, artificial intelligence, autonomous underwater systems, cybersecurity, quantum science, hypersonic flight, 'Space 2.0' and advanced materials.

Second, those rapidly developing and proliferating technologies are spawning new industries as well as new threats and threat actors, and the capacity of even highly industrialised countries to cope is under strain. Partly with that in mind, the US Congress expanded its National Technology and Industrial Base legislation in 2017 to formally recognise Australia, including its R&D capabilities, as part of the US industrial base. This is an acknowledgement that even small technology developers can have an influential voice in how new capabilities emerge and grow, if they're smart enough.

It also explicitly endorsed Australia as a trusted ally and a productive partner able to contribute at both the S&T and, increasingly, the industry level.

Finally, Australia's *2016 Defence White Paper*, reinforced by the 2020 Force Structure Plan and *More, together: the Defence Science and Technology Strategy 2030*, outlined a fundamental shift in defence industry policy. The focus is now on using government-funded R&D, innovation and procurement to develop an innovative, sustainable industry base that can support the ADF as well as national economic growth. The sudden effect on global supply chains of the Covid-19 pandemic only added urgency to this new thrust.

So Australia now actively seeks S&T partnerships that lead to joint industry projects—and it looks first to the US. The 2019 announcement by Boeing of its Australian-developed Loyal Wingman Airpower Teaming System fighter-like uncrewed aircraft program was one of the first big examples and a potential model for future bilateral cooperation. The 2021 announcement by the Australian Government of a \$1 billion investment in the creation of a new Australian guided-missile manufacturing capability is another.

Both projects demand lots of supporting R&D. The missile project must be a partnership with an overseas prime contractor because Australia can't develop this capability alone.

The focus is now on using government-funded R&D, innovation and procurement to develop an innovative, sustainable industry base that can support the ADF as well as national economic growth.

A US company is just one option, despite the late-2020 announcement of the US–Australian SCiFIRE hypersonic missile program.

The Loyal Wingman, however, is entirely Australian-developed sovereign technology. The baseline aircraft developed by Boeing Australia in partnership with the RAAF is unencumbered by the US Government’s tight International Traffic in Arms Regulations (ITAR), and so allows global customers to address mission requirements and add payloads in-country. Boeing Australia has provided its US parent company with a new and highly desirable product developed by its Australian subsidiary as well as a pathway to market via that subsidiary that may not be constrained by ITAR.

ITAR hampers (sometimes severely) anybody who tries to work collaboratively with US research agencies and companies while wanting to retain some freedom of market access and ownership of sovereign intellectual property. While this is a known issue for non-US companies, it’s a new departure for US companies such as Boeing to use their Australian R&D bases to develop new products such as the Loyal Wingman.

Lockheed Martin has also invested in its own Melbourne-based STELarLab, the company’s first multidisciplinary R&D centre outside the US, which focuses on many of the new technologies outlined above. The company wanted non-US technology perspectives and after an international search chose Melbourne due to the city’s academic and research strengths—Australia punches above its weight in this regard.

Meanwhile, the significant Australian footprint of some US companies has also led to strategic shareholdings where they don’t want to duplicate what’s already here. Northrop Grumman, for example, is a minority stakeholder in two technology-rich Australian companies: CEA Technologies and EOS, which develop and manufacture advanced radars and remote weapon stations and space situational awareness systems, respectively.

So the need to develop and field new capabilities more quickly in a resource- and ITAR-constrained environment is shaping the bilateral defence S&T relationship between Australia and the US. The network of relationships between Australian and US defence researchers in government, the research institutions and industry will grow denser and richer. Alongside the TTCP, the relationship will increasingly include more bilateral agreements, and Australian subsidiaries of US firms will find their local R&D capabilities increasingly useful.

Australians are now contributing more to the creation of new operational capability because their contributions are more valued by both governments. That’s a major development in the Australia–US relationship.

The emerging bilateral security agenda

Extending ANZUS?

Peter Jennings

At just a tad over 800 words, the ANZUS Treaty is pithy rather than poetic, but a remarkable thing about the treaty is that it has engendered a mountain of alliance activity off the back of an almost complete absence of alliance machinery. Article VII establishes ‘a Council, consisting of their Foreign Ministers or their Deputies, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council should be so organized as to be able to meet at any time.’ However, the council as described hasn’t met since the mid-1980s, but has been replaced by the (mostly) annual AUSMIN gathering of the Australian foreign and defence ministers and the US secretaries of State and Defense. When those leaders meet, the format typically involves a dinner followed by perhaps a half-day meeting and a press conference. There’s no ANZUS headquarters or combined staff and only the loosest of arrangements for officials’ meetings to plan AUSMIN outcomes.

In fact, the relative informality of ANZUS has been a strength. Since New Zealand’s self-imposed sidelining in 1986, Australia and the US have had the flexibility to make the treaty accommodate the political and policy demands of the moment. Thus, John Howard, in a phone discussion with his Foreign Minister, Alexander Downer, decided to invoke the ANZUS Treaty the day after al-Qaeda’s September 2001 attacks and advise the US of that before cabinet met to ratify the decision.¹ Likewise, in 2010, the two countries agreed ‘that a cyber attack on either of them would trigger the mechanisms of the ANZUS Treaty’.² A simple treaty between two like-minded parties makes for easy use. It remains to be seen whether that makes ANZUS fit for purpose to meet coming challenges.

Is it possible or desirable to extend ANZUS, and if so, by what means? I suggest that there are three potential ways to think about prospects for that: adding new parties to the treaty; expanding the scope and purpose of the treaty’s commitments; and, finally, extending the cooperation that happens between treaty partners.

The treaty itself doesn’t contain a mechanism for adding new members, although Article VIII authorises the ANZUS Council ‘to maintain a consultative relationship with States, Regional Organizations, Associations of States or other authorities in the Pacific Area in a position to further the purposes of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of that Area’. Neither Canberra nor Washington has shown an interest in expanding the alliance’s membership, perhaps because it’s assumed that a US Congress under the influence of America’s somewhat more isolationist instincts wouldn’t agree to amend the treaty.

The most obvious potential candidate for joining ANZUS is Japan, which is a treaty ally of the US and has a close and growing defence and security relationship with Australia. Trilateral cooperation between the countries has been growing rapidly. While there are several strategists (me included) who would like to put the 'J' into 'JANZUS', that probably won't happen soon because of concerns about Congress and the always unpredictable Japanese Diet. While the prospects for formally growing the alliance seem slim, it would be worthwhile if Canberra and Washington agreed under Article VIII to a formal ANZUS consultative relationship with Japan.

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The PRC's challenge to the global order is spurring a counter-response as countries look for new or reshaped partnerships to resist authoritarianism. Australia is an 'enhanced partner' of NATO, an invitee to the G7, an enthusiastic driver of wider security cooperation among the Five Eyes intelligence partners and a Quad member along with Japan, India and the US. This sets the broader context for a renewed ANZUS alliance in which the capacity of the allies to reach out to form new partnerships will be as important as the treaty's agenda for bilateral cooperation. Article VIII also anticipated 'the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area'. Ironically, the upsurge of opposition to the PRC's more assertive foreign

policy is giving rise to a richer mix of security groupings, allocating more political scope and more strategic options to the ANZUS partners.

Options to formally expand the scope of ANZUS by changing the treaty's language are unlikely, again because of a reluctance to open the treaty to fresh congressional scrutiny. In the current strategic context, it might have been useful to resolve whether the treaty covers Taiwan; then again, there are those who argue that ambiguity rather than precision on the question of Taiwan's security confers some strategic advantage. If ANZUS were being drafted today, it might emerge as covering the Indo-Pacific, or explicitly extending the treaty's interest to Antarctica. We must content ourselves with the treaty as it is, secure in the knowledge that it will mean whatever the allies want it to mean—neither more nor less.³

If black-letter legal drafting changes are off the table, it's certainly true that the treaty's agreed scope has been discussed and extended at AUSMIN meetings, as was the case with cybersecurity. In June 2021, NATO members agreed that 'any attack on space capabilities like satellites and so on or attacks from space will or could trigger NATO Article 5', which states that an attack on one will be regarded as an attack on all.⁴ One could easily see that being adopted by the ANZUS partners.



Members of 5 Platoon, B Company, 7th Battalion, Royal Australian Regiment waiting to be airlifted by US Army helicopters from an area just north of Phuoc Hai, 26 August 1967. Source: Australian War Memorial, [online](#).

The possibilities for extending cooperation under the ANZUS rubric are limited only by money, risk appetite and imagination. Prime Minister Scott Morrison foreshadowed in February 2021 an interest in closer cooperation with the US on measures to ‘develop and protect sensitive critical technologies, including quantum computing and artificial intelligence. We will also need secure critical minerals supply chains for the new clean energy technologies of the future.’⁵

Defence Minister Peter Dutton has expressed an interest in expanding military cooperation with the US, including having larger US Marine Corps contingents deploy to northern Australia and US Navy vessels operate out of Australia’s west coast naval base.⁶

The future of ANZUS cooperation will be cast across a broader spectrum of national security concerns than was even known to exist in 1951. The flexibility of the alliance to reshape in the face of new risks and opportunities remains a strength. Can all this energy and effort really be directed by one ministerial-level meeting a year? That seems implausible and risky to this author.

To add some tensile strength to the alliance’s flexibility, the time has come to create a standing alliance policy headquarters with nodes in Canberra, in Washington and in Hawaii at the US Indo-Pacific Command. That group would drive a forward-looking policy agenda for the alliance.

The possibilities for extending cooperation under the ANZUS rubric are limited only by money, risk appetite and imagination.

It would need a core of military and civilian Defence staff but draw in wider expertise, including on science and technology, industrial capability and supply-chain security. An ANZUS alliance policy headquarters should be kept small to avoid cloying bureaucracy, but the urgent strategic problems we face need more concentrated policy heft than one annual ministerial meeting can carry. There will be no better time and certainly no time to lose in boosting ANZUS creativity.

Notes

- 1 John Howard, *Lazarus rising: a personal and political autobiography*, Harper Collins, Sydney, 2010, 386.
- 2 Kevin Rudd, Stephen Smith, 'Cooperation on cyber—a new dimension of the US alliance', joint statement, 15 September 2011, [online](#).
- 3 I'm drawing on Lewis Carroll, *Through the looking-glass*, first published in 1872, [online](#).
- 4 NATO Secretary General Jens Stoltenberg, quoted in 'NATO nations ready to jointly respond to attacks in space', *NBC News*, 14 June 2021, [online](#).
- 5 Scott Morrison, address to the National Press Club, 1 February 2021, [online](#).
- 6 See my discussion with Peter Dutton at ASPI's Shape Deter Respond Conference, June 2021, at minute 27 of the interview, [online](#).

Cyberspace and ANZUS

Lesley Seebeck

Ten years ago, in September 2011, Australia and the US stretched ANZUS to cover cyberspace. That year's AUSMIN communique addressed the challenges posed by growing cyber threats, specifically endorsing a joint statement on cyberspace.¹ The statement committed Australia and the US, 'in the event of a cyber attack that threatens the territorial integrity, political independence or security of either of our nations ... [to] consult together and determine appropriate options to address the threat'.

The inclusion of cyber matters was seen as maintaining the relevance of ANZUS in the face of new threats. Both countries had been grappling with cybersecurity since the first warnings of imminent cyberwar in the early 1990s. The inclusion of cyberspace—notably extending the remit of Article V—suggests more than simply diplomatic discussion: it implies the possibility of a conflict triggered by a cyberattack.

Ten years have passed since the statement. There's been no cyber-triggered conflict. Yet the online environment has become more dangerous, adversaries more numerous and capable, and actual and potential costs higher and more widespread. The number of attacks has increased by orders of magnitude, and the breadth of attacks—their form, purpose and targets—has similarly expanded. Perpetrators can lurk in systems for years without being detected. Means and methods are multipurpose: they can be used for attacks, for intelligence collection and for criminal purposes, including extortion, and the blurring of intent, effect and consequence. The lucrative nature of cyber operations, underpinned by the technologies' ease of access, has created a hypercompetitive market for malware and new business models, and services for hire are available to both criminals and nation-states.

We've also gained a better understanding of how cyber technology may be used in or to shape a conflict from cases in the Middle East (most notably Israeli and Iranian activities, but also Islamic State, Syrian and Turkish activities), Eastern Europe (especially the Russian use of cyberattacks in concert with conventional warfare in Georgia and Ukraine), and our own region (Chinese activity, including against Indian infrastructure during border clashes).

So cyberspace has become contested in more ways than expected. It's now intrinsic to warfare but, perhaps more importantly, it's being used to shape the strategic and operational environment. There are costs imposed on individuals, companies and institutions, not just national governments, almost always without redress, undermining resilience and trust.

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Given such events, the inclusion of cyber technology under ANZUS seems to have served little purpose. Yet that would be too superficial a judgement, on three counts.

So cyberspace has become contested in more ways than expected. It's now intrinsic to warfare but, perhaps more importantly, it's being used to shape the strategic and operational environment.

First, there's the nature of the ANZUS alliance. Much of its value lies in the slow institutionalisation of expectations, practices and world views between a large, capable partner and a small, willing partner. The alliance, predicated on our shared strategic interests, still works best within the traditional portfolios of defence and diplomacy.

Notably, initiatives under the ANZUS banner have more substance than those outside its remit. For example, cyber technology has been discussed at all

AUSMIN meetings since 2011, which have produced further agreements on the application of international law in cyberspace² and on the joint development of advanced cyber capabilities,³ which have realised outcomes. In contrast, initiatives agreed by President Barack Obama and Prime Minister Malcolm Turnbull in 2016 lacked the support of an institutional framework and ongoing political impetus: though worthy, they have largely fallen by the wayside.⁴ That may be a measure of ambition; it also reflects priorities.

Second, because cyber matters have lain primarily with the intelligence and security agencies, it's been the Five Eyes relationship, not the ANZUS alliance *per se*, that's driven operational cooperation. Operational needs have been allowed to drive policy and legislative responses.



Australian Minister for Foreign Affairs Julie Bishop and Minister for Defence Marise Payne host US Secretary of State Rex W. Tillerson and Secretary of Defense James Mattis in Sydney for the AUSMIN consultations, 2017. Source: US Embassy, [online](#).

Australia's constitutional provisions (no bill of rights, no first amendment, for example) have made it easier for Canberra to lead the Five Eyes on banning Huawei from 5G networks, weakening encryption to meet internal security needs and legislating step-in powers over critical infrastructure.⁵

Third, there's the nature of cybertech. Its value to nation-states lies in its invisibility, subterfuge and deniability—characteristics especially valued by the intelligence community. But that nature, and the speed and transience of change in that domain, also make it hard to apply 'normal' tools of strategy, statecraft and defence. Yet a strategic, and statecraft, understanding of cybertech is needed: digital technologies are inextricable from daily life, individuality, economic activity, broader technological progress, institutions and the social substrate of nations. How cyber interference—the dark side of digital—is managed has consequences for trust in systems, institutions and governments: without care, that may work in favour of authoritarians and against democracies.

Those challenges may—and probably should—prompt a change in the role of the alliance. Cyberpower is but part of a broader diffusion and reaggregation of power resulting from digital technologies and social, economic and political realignments over the past 30–40 years. So, while ANZUS still remains the stuff of bedrock, especially for Australia, it may make sense to expand Article II cooperation to strengthen our democracies, build resilience, improve technological competitiveness and provide guardrails to improve certainty during rapid change in the environment. If we're less confident about a 'secure, resilient and trusted cyberspace that ensures safe and reliable access for all nations', as envisaged by the 2011 AUSMIN declaration, then we'd better be prepared for the alternative.

Notes

- 1 US State Department, 'US–Australia Ministerial Consultations 2011 Joint Statement on Cyberspace', US Government, 15 September 2011, [online](#).
- 2 Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 'Joint Statement AUSMIN 2015', Australian Government, 13 October 2015, [online](#).
- 3 J Bishop, 'Joint Statement Australia–US Ministerial Consultations ("AUSMIN") 2018', 24 July 2018, [online](#).
- 4 The White House, 'Fact sheet: United States – Australia cooperation: deepening our strategic partnership', Washington DC, 19 January 2016, [online](#).
- 5 Y Redrup, 'Australia leads Five Eyes with new cyber security laws', *Australian Financial Review*, 23 November 2020, [online](#).

ANZUS and intelligence

Andrew Davies

The ANZUS Treaty was born in the post-World War II security environment in the Asia-Pacific, but it was operationalised in the early days of the Cold War. Similarly, the intelligence relationship between Australia and the US had its beginnings in arrangements to support the two major Pacific theatre headquarters during the Pacific War. Foremost among those were two signals intelligence (SIGINT) organisations, both based in Melbourne. The Central Bureau, working primarily on Japanese Army communications, supported General Douglas MacArthur's General Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area in Brisbane. The Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne focused on Japanese Navy communications and reported to Admiral Chester Nimitz's headquarters in Hawaii. Both organisations worked with other allied SIGINT organisations located in the US, the UK and elsewhere.

While predominantly focused on operational intelligence, the expertise and organisational relationships developed during the war years provided the core elements of the postwar allied intelligence network as it became a strategic capability. As the existential challenges of the Pacific War receded into history and the decades-long Cold War began to take shape, the nature of the intelligence relationship also changed to reflect the new threats. The Five Eyes community (Australia, Canada, New Zealand, the UK and the US) wasn't just an evolution of World War II alliances but also reflected the common interests and cultural affinities of the countries in the group.

SIGINT continues to be the central pillar of Five-Eyes intelligence cooperation, and the development of a truly global intelligence collection, analysis and dissemination network has allowed each of the partners to make valuable contributions. In particular, the development of space-based intelligence gathering and communications from the early 1960s meant that geography became an important consideration. Australia and New Zealand were able to provide ground stations that had lines of sight with satellites outside the range of collection sites in the Northern Hemisphere. The joint facilities at Pine Gap near Alice Springs—neatly described by Cold War scholar Des Ball as 'a suitable piece of real estate'—became an integral part of the alliance's ground stations for the control of satellite systems and the downloading of intelligence material for relay around the community.

The arrangement worked very well during the Cold War. Not only were the technical solutions able to span the globe with collection capabilities under the codename 'echelon', but they also enabled collaborative analytical work and a division of effort in which each nation could specialise on subjects in which its own interests were most heavily engaged. Hence, intelligence operatives and analysts in Australia were able to become the Five-Eyes experts on Indonesia and other regional points of interest, as well as working the local angle of the global efforts against enciphered KGB communications.



Jindalee Operational Radar Network transmission station near Alice Springs, Northern Territory. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

But no alliance is static, and changing externalities and national priorities can alter the calculus for the parties involved. The ‘peace dividend’ after the collapse of the Soviet Union led to a downsizing in intelligence communities during the 1990s and a rethink about the value of the worldwide network. There was some nervousness in Canberra about the long-term prospects for the alliance as we had known it. And there were also diplomatic pressures starting to build, as the Five-Eyes community was being seen in some quarters as a conspiracy of English-speaking nations. The European Parliament commissioned an inquiry into the echelon network. The resulting mid-2001 [‘Report on the existence of a global system for the interception of private and commercial communications \(ECHELON interception system\)’](#) concluded that echelon was a threat to human rights as codified by the EU and to commercial intellectual property rights. It also recommended increasing the security of communications between European countries to protect them from eavesdropping.

A situation that could have become problematic for the alliance was dramatically altered a few months later. Despite the optimism prevalent after the Cold War ended, history hadn’t come to an end, and the 9/11 terrorist attacks in the US simultaneously provided a new focus for the intelligence community and rendered efforts to reduce the power and reach of the Five Eyes largely moot. The ‘War on Terror’ required a significant change of focus by the intelligence community, away from well-defined nation-state targets and towards the investigation of diffuse multinational groups and radicalised ‘lone wolf’ actors hiding within their own civil societies. New intelligence partners were required—not all of whom were liberal democracies—and new analytical techniques needed to be invented.

Mistakes were made in that new environment. Despite broad popular support for anti-terrorism activities, analytical errors on the Iraq weapons-of-mass-destruction problem and overreaches in domestic surveillance activities created controversies that led to an enduring decrease in public confidence in the intelligence community across the Five Eyes.

It's not clear how that confidence can be rebuilt. The increasing polarisation in Western polities today creates a dynamic in which even solid and objective intelligence work—which should be more rather than less valuable in a hotly contested environment—can become just another opinion to be accepted or disregarded depending on one's political alignment. The US is the clear, if unofficial, leader of the Five Eyes, and its intelligence agencies have had a problematic past few years. A president who publicly disparages his intelligence officers for holding views contrary to his own despite the factual basis of those views isn't creating an environment in which objectivity is valued.

That's a concern, because today's strategic environment is a challenging one and a clear-headed response based on sound intelligence work is required. In cyberspace, hostile actors are conducting the age-old practices of espionage, sabotage and subversion every day. The rise of China as a challenger to the US-led strategic order requires a coordinated and measured response, not just from the Five Eyes, but from the wider international community.

The Five-Eyes intelligence relationship is still a strong one, but some of its historical drivers are no longer as relevant as they once were. Technologies for high-data-rate communications between spacecraft are developing rapidly, which will erode the geographical advantages of downlinks in disparate places. The global and wide-reaching nature of challenges in cyberspace means that other partners need to be brought in, including from the corporate world.

The challenge of creating space for China while limiting its ability to act inimically to our interests will necessarily involve close collaboration with other regional US allies, especially Japan and South Korea. The intelligence relationship with Japan is especially important,

and there's been talk of extending the community to 'Six Eyes'. That would be a significant change for a 70-year-old arrangement, but it looks better suited to today's world.

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From Australia's perspective, we should welcome a discussion of the future of alliance intelligence arrangements. Much has changed over the past few decades, and new approaches are probably required. But some things remain the same. We should

be confident that Australia's analytical and technical skills will let us make an important contribution to global intelligence problems, while our knowledge of our near region will continue to be a point of differentiation.

ANZUS and maritime security

James Goldrick

The Pacific is an ocean. It's thus logical that one of the earliest defence agreements between the US and Australia at the outset of the Cold War dealt with naval command and control and preceded the ANZUS Treaty by six months. The Radford–Collins Agreement, named after the Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, and the Australian Chief of Naval Staff who were the signatories, delineated the responsibilities of the US and Australia, as a lead Commonwealth nation in the region and part of the then existing ANZAM arrangement with New Zealand and the UK for the control and protection of Pacific Ocean shipping during conflict.

That agreement, as modified to meet changing times, remains in force. One key element is now titled Naval Control and Guidance of Shipping. This is a global organisation, largely Reserve manned, which has the capacity to integrate a range of measures to protect shipping, depending on the scale and location of the threat.

The largely 'behind the scenes' operation of the Radford–Collins Agreement is typical of many aspects of Australia and the US's combined efforts in the maritime domain. Exercises such as Talisman Sabre and RIMPAC are only the public demonstration of links that run deep and encompass many elements. They include Australian officers embedded in the staffs of the US Indo-Pacific Command, the Pacific Fleet and the Seventh and Third fleets. American liaison officers operate at many levels the Australian system. Even during the Covid-19 pandemic, the importance of the relationship was demonstrated by the presence of Australia's Chief of Navy at the 2021 handover of the US Indo-Pacific Command in Hawaii. Within the Five-Eyes arrangements, there's a longstanding dialogue between the various joint and maritime intelligence centres—a dialogue that's likely to deepen even further in the next few years as the two nations strive with others to manage the challenges of China's rise as a maritime power.

To a greater extent than ever in the past, Australia has forces that can provide not only welcome but significant supplements to the American effort.

The operational achievements of the Australian–American partnership are obvious in the ease with which the ships of both nations can work together within shared secure communications and data-exchange arrangements. Australia has done much to ensure that it can integrate both its surface units and aircraft with the US Navy by the fitting of data systems such as Link 16 and, most recently, the cooperative exchange capability, by which sensor information from multiple platforms can be fused to allow not only a much higher probability of detection of stealthy targets than ever before, but also their engagement at distances and in conditions otherwise impossible. The RAN's Hobart-class destroyers were the first non-US Navy surface combatants to be so fitted, and the fitting of the cooperative exchange capability is in train for the RAAF's Wedgetail aircraft.

Australia's acquisition of such key maritime war-fighting capabilities hasn't gone unnoticed or unvalued by the US. To a greater extent than ever in the past, Australia has forces that can provide not only welcome but *significant* supplements to the American effort. One aspect that's likely to be of special importance will be the further evolution of cooperation in theatre antisubmarine warfare (ASW) and the integration of far-flung sensors, intelligence centres and air, surface and subsurface platforms required to have any chance of winning the antisubmarine campaign in a high-intensity conflict. Australia's submarine force has long been closely involved in such cooperation. The demands of the Middle East naval deployments reduced the priority given to ASW by both maritime patrol aircraft and the surface fleet in the first decades of this century, but there's been a change in recent years, aided in Australia by the fact that our new P-8A Poseidons represent a leap in capability over the AP-3C Orions and that our new guided-missile destroyers and modernised Anzac-class frigates are deploying a new range of ASW sensors and weapons.



A Royal Australian Air Force KC-30A multi-role tanker transport aircraft refuels a P-8A Poseidon off the coast of Queensland, September 2020. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Both the increase in Australian capabilities and the demands of the changing strategic environment are likely to change the form of cooperation at sea in important ways. The end of Australia's naval deployments to the Middle East is one result of altering priorities. While that will mean much less interaction with the US Navy's Middle East-based Fifth Fleet than has been customary over the past two decades, the corollary is that there will be even more involvement with the Indo-Pacific Seventh Fleet. However, that engagement may also be different from the recent past in that Australian units are more likely to operate alongside US Navy formations in

their own national task groups, rather than be embedded in American carrier battle groups as single units. The latter may still occur on occasion, but Australia's annual Exercise Indo-Pacific Endeavour deployments of the past few years are likely to be a continuing main effort, as will other task group activities around the region. It will be vital for Australia's own standing in the region, however close our cooperation with the US, that our efforts at sea and in the air be clearly identifiable as independent national assertions of our interests.

The recent re-inception of the Quad represents another aspect of the way that the shared maritime effort will change, moving Australia and the US into multilateral arrangements aimed to support the collective capability to control the maritime domain and advance shared interests in security and stability. Cooperation with Japan is likely to take a different form from that with India, at least in the shorter term, given that both Japan and Australia have such strong bilateral naval links with the US and that our maritime forces are so accustomed to working with the US Navy and at the highest operational level. Nevertheless, there's real potential for much closer ties with India, particularly in the exchange of surveillance information and the development of shared awareness of activities in the maritime domain.

This need not be focused only on high-intensity warfare. Maritime security isn't just about major conflict or its prevention. In other localities, maritime cooperation between the US and Australia spans a wide spectrum of operations and has both bilateral and multilateral elements. In the South Pacific, the focus is on constabulary work to support the Pacific island countries, and much is undertaken within the 'old' quadrilateral arrangements, which also involve France and New Zealand. It's in the interests of all those nations that the South Pacific doesn't become a contested area in naval terms—something also greatly preferred by the island states. The best way to avoid that is to maintain a systematic approach to assisting the islands with the governance of their vital marine economic resources, as well as helping to guard against transnational crime and other threats to their stability.

An assessment of the maritime security aspects of ANZUS would be incomplete without specific mention of the role of New Zealand. Although the shadow of its anti-nuclear policies remains over its relationship with the US to some degree, the maritime partnership is stronger than it's been for many years. Apart from continuing intelligence sharing and its work with Australia and the US in the South Pacific, New Zealand has modernised its small surface combatant force and invested in new-generation P-8 maritime patrol aircraft. Interoperability with Australia continues to be a high priority and, in practical terms, the Royal New Zealand Navy maintains a high degree of interoperability with the US Navy should the occasion demand. There might now be no formal 'NZ' in 'ANZUS', but there are many possible maritime contingencies in which New Zealand's assistance is likely to be of great value to both Australia and the US.

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ANZUS and future maritime capability

Marcus Hellyer

Looking at the RAN in 1995, one might have thought that it had weaned itself off its attachment to British vessels that dated all the way back to its creation only to become equally committed to US designs. At that time, the Navy's surface fleet comprised almost exclusively American vessels. The three Perth / Charles F Adams-class guided-missile destroyers, six Adelaide / Oliver Hazard Perry-class guided missile frigates and two Kanimbla / Newport-class amphibious ships formed the core of the surface Navy. In fact, other than its Oberon-class submarines, the Navy's only British-designed warships were the last two River-class destroyer escorts, which were soon to be decommissioned.

A quarter of a century later, the picture is very different. There are no US-designed vessels in RAN service. Its Hobart-class air warfare destroyers are a Spanish design, its Anzac-class helicopter frigates are a German design, and the Collins-class submarines are a Swedish design. All three were built in Australia.

Moreover, none of the classes that form the core of the massive Naval Shipbuilding Program, which is delivering Australia's future fleet, is a US design. The Attack-class submarine is French, the Hunter-class frigate is British, and the Arafura-class offshore patrol vessels are German.

So, while US warships might not meet Australia's requirements for cost and capability, that doesn't mean Australia and the US have gone their separate ways in naval technology. In fact, our futures in this area are perhaps even more tightly intertwined than ever before. Those European designs are in essence delivery systems for US weapons, combat systems and, to a large degree, sensors. For example, the Australian Government has decided that the Attack-class submarine will use the AN/BYG-1 combat system and the Mk-48 heavyweight

torpedo currently used by both the US Navy's submarines and the Collins class. Australia already participates in cooperative development programs with the US Navy for both the combat system and the torpedo.

Similarly, the government has decided that the Hunter-class frigate will employ the Aegis combat system and US weapons, just as the Hobart-class destroyer already does. Australia already participates in the US-led international consortium that produced and is enhancing

the Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile—and Australian industry supplies key components into the program. The Australian Government has indicated that it will enter similar arrangements for the SM-6 long-range air defence missile and the Mk-54 lightweight antisubmarine torpedo. So, when we look at maritime capability broadly rather than specifically at ships *per se*, we can see that the long partnership, both military and industrial, between Australia and the US will continue.

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HMAS *Sydney* fires an Evolved Sea Sparrow Missile during combat system sea qualification trials off the west coast of the US. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Moreover, the scale of the shipbuilding program—which is now well over \$100 billion, with additional classes of warship to come—means that, in contrast to some other liberal democracies, Australia is investing in increasing the size of its navy. That’s a particularly valuable contribution to the alliance at a time when China’s shipbuilding capability is challenging US naval pre-eminence.

But there’s certainly scope to take the relationship in new directions. Kate Louis looks at defence industry in this volume, but it’s useful to reiterate the growing capability of the Australian defence industry. As an example, the Australian Government has decided that the Hunter-class frigate won’t use the US Aegis radar installed on the Hobart-class destroyer. Rather, it will integrate a larger, evolved version of the CEAFAAR phased-array radar used on the Anzac-class frigate with the Aegis combat system on the Hunters. That’s a world-leading indigenous Australian design that’s also being used in Australia’s new ground-based air defence system and is being considered by the US Air Force. It’s a striking example both of the sophistication of Australian defence industry and of the capability outcomes of integrating US and Australian technologies. That sophistication is further demonstrated by the US Navy’s Independence-class littoral combat ship, designed by the Australian company Austal and built at its facility in Mobile, Alabama.

The Australian Government has a stated intent to strengthen sovereign Australian military and industry capability within the alliance. This can be seen in its planned \$100 billion investment in guided weapons over the next two decades. Much of that investment will be spent on maritime weapons designed by US companies. What’s new is that the government has also announced that, as part of that investment, it will accelerate the establishment of a domestic guided weapons manufacturing capability.

While Australia has a proven history in developing guided weapons, it's highly likely that the enterprise will begin by manufacturing existing US weapons in the ADF inventory under licence. That will benefit both nations; it will ensure that the ADF has the supply of weapons it needs for future conflict, and establishing a second production line provides an alternative source of supply for the US military, mitigating its supply-chain risks. Despite the clear advantages to both partners, building US guided weapons in another country will be a marked departure from business as usual for both nations and will require a strong commitment from both governments, particularly from the US administration.

There's also an urgent need to address emerging capability challenges together. As the threats to warships increase in sophistication and proliferate, the cost of building ships that can survive those threats has spiralled rapidly upwards. Like many navies, the US Navy hasn't been able to square the circle of building affordable yet survivable ships. Australia, too, is

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realising that investing more and more in military platforms with largely defensive capabilities isn't providing the systems it needs for the new era of great-power competition, as the 2020 Defence Strategic Update clearly states. Ultimately, small numbers of exquisitely expensive ships result in systemic vulnerability.

Both militaries are looking at ways to break out of this vicious cycle. The US Navy has gone further down the path of exploring uncrewed and autonomous technologies, but the ADF has also made steps towards the development and use of those emerging technologies. There's much the two nations can do together, not just sharing the technologies necessary to support autonomous systems but developing together the operating concepts needed to successfully conduct a new form of warfare employing smart, small, expendable systems.

ANZUS and air power

Andrew Davies

When the US looks for coalition support in military operations, it probably has varying expectations of what it will get. For conflicts in which international legitimacy is important, sometimes a partner who can fly a flag but not do much else still provides some value. But the most welcome partners are those who not only turn up, but who can work seamlessly with American forces and provide serious capability for the missions that count.

When a coalition of NATO nations conducted a series of operations against Colonel Muammar Gaddafi's forces in Libya in 2011, many of the air forces involved quickly ran out of ammunition. And the unexpectedly long duration of the conflict (over seven months) saw many participants struggle to provide the required flying hours. Despite being a reluctant starter in the enterprise, the US found itself in the situation of having to conduct the initial missions to neutralise Libya's air defences and then later having to provide its NATO allies with weapons from its own stockpiles, as well as providing much of the required intelligence support throughout the campaign.

In contrast, when Australian forces were deployed in support of US-led operations against Islamic State in 2014, the RAAF's strike fighter package provided its own combat-enabling aircraft in the form of KC-30A multi-role transport tankers (MRTTs) and the E-7A Wedgetail airborne early warning and control (AEW&C) system.

The logistics tail from Australia was provided by C-17A Globemasters and the MRTTs. Not only did the RAAF arrive in theatre capable of largely independent operations, but it was well placed to provide both air-to-air refuelling and command and control services to coalition partners. And sometimes Australian E-7A aircraft took the lead in directing coalition air operations. Force multipliers such as AEW&C aircraft and air-to-air refuellers are frequently oversubscribed in air campaigns, and the extra capacity provided by the Australian forces allowed a high rate of effort to be sustained.

And it's not just about the aircraft. The RAAF is also capable of deploying tactical air defence and air traffic control radars, as well as personnel who can direct air operations, as they often did for operations over Iraq and Syria. That built on deep experience developed in Afghanistan, where RAAF personnel operated the control and reporting centre at Kandahar Air Field from August 2007 until August 2009. That deployment had primacy for the whole Afghanistan theatre and was responsible for deconflicting 12,000 aircraft movements a month, including uncrewed aerial vehicles and tanker aircraft.

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Australian F/A-18F Super Hornets fly in formation near the island of Pago Pago as they ferry across the Pacific Ocean home to Australia, March 2010. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

The value provided by the Australian deployments in anti-Islamic State operations was the result of many years of effort to develop an air combat capability that was simultaneously very capable in its own right and also highly interoperable with US forces. That hasn't always been the case. For example, the RAAF F/A-18 Hornets that went to Iraq in 2003 weren't suited for operations in a highly contested airspace because of shortcomings in their self-protection systems. Australian combat operations couldn't begin until the Iraqi air defence threat had been neutralised. The situation was worse in the 1990s. During Operation Desert Fox in 1998, the US Air Force needed aircraft capable of delivering weapons previously carried by its own F-111s, which had been retired by then. A request from Washington for Australian F-111s to fill the capability gap was declined—the Australian aircraft lacked electronic warfare equipment that was critical for operating against the Iraqi air defence system.

The evolution from an ally that could usually be relied upon to fly the flag but not necessarily carry much weight in air combat operations into a valuable partner able to add real combat value is the result of many years of effort and careful force structure planning. Buying mostly US aircraft for decades now has certainly helped to develop interoperability and has also boosted Australia's own capability. And access to advanced US capabilities such as the electronic warfare 'Growler' version of the Super Hornet—for which Australia is the only approved export customer—has kept the RAAF well ahead in our region.

But the flow hasn't been entirely one way. Australia has also helped to develop some of the systems that are now providing high value to the alliance. The Wedgetail and MRTT were developed through Australian projects because there weren't US equivalents available. Both are world-class systems. There have also been Australia-US joint R&D programs, including the development of the JDAM-ER (extended range) stand-off weapon and over 20 years of research into hypersonic flight. Today, Boeing Australia is working with the RAAF on its Loyal Wingman program to produce a proof-of-concept air combat uncrewed aerial vehicle—a line of research that's clearly relevant to the US, which is watching with interest.

The RAAF has been operating and fighting alongside US air arms since the Pacific campaigns of World War II. Back then, for reasons of alliance management, US commanders had to begrudgingly accept Australian contributions that made little difference to the war effort, often in the form of aircraft that were obsolete or that replicated the US types displaced from airfields to make room for them.

Today, the picture is very different. The RAAF not only operates the same frontline types as the US but brings its own force multipliers along and can help plan, coordinate and execute high-end missions. There shouldn't be any trouble finding room on operational bases for Australia's contributions today.

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Climate change and regional engagement

Robert Glasser

Strategic analysts generally attribute the rapidly evolving strategic environment in the Indo-Pacific to the rise of China and its increasing willingness to apply its economic, political and military influence and capabilities to achieve its interests. China will certainly loom large in the discussions later this year between Australia and the US marking the 70th anniversary of the ANZUS Treaty, but a far larger threat to regional stability is on the horizon and approaching fast. Climate change will cause a profound deterioration in the regional strategic environment, exacerbating existing threats and creating critical new challenges. The ANZUS anniversary is an important opportunity for the treaty partners to begin examining these issues and collaborating on measures to manage the risks.

The science of climate change is very well established. It confirms that climate change is already contributing to an increase in extreme weather and that the pace of that increase is now accelerating nonlinearly.¹ Analysis of current efforts suggests that states are unlikely to achieve the greenhouse gas reduction targets set in the Paris climate accord.² That means there's little prospect of avoiding very serious, and irreversible, climate change impacts in the decades ahead.

Australia and the US, unlike most other wealthy countries, are situated in regions with many near-neighbour less developed countries. Climate change impacts in those countries will directly affect both the US and Australia. For the US, this is already the case with respect to the recent wave of Central American migration following the devastation caused by consecutive hurricanes.³ The impacts in the Pacific will be enormous. Increased sea level, storm surges, droughts and floods and the collapse of coral reefs (that are a natural barrier to cyclones,

Climate change will cause a profound deterioration in the regional strategic environment, exacerbating existing threats and creating critical new challenges.

storm surges and tsunamis) will threaten the viability of many Pacific island countries. In the medium term, this will require more frequent humanitarian relief operations. Over the longer term, it will require communities to be relocated, including to Australia.

The impact of climate change in maritime Southeast Asia is particularly worrying.⁴ The region is already one of the most disaster-prone places on the planet. It has some of the world's highest population densities (often in low-elevation coastal zones) and is a locus of great-power competition and territorial disputes. The Indonesian archipelago is especially sensitive to climate change, as it straddles the tropical Pacific and Indian oceans and is likely to be influenced by changes in both the mean temperature and large-scale circulation dynamics in the tropics. Climate change will not only lead to more frequent and more extreme humanitarian disasters, but also contribute to disruptions of critical supply chains, food insecurity, separatist movements, population displacement, opportunistic interventions by outside powers, political instability and conflict.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison recently characterised climate change as a national security threat,⁵ and the Chief of the Defence Force has described it as the ‘ultimate threat multiplier’.⁶ Similarly, among the first steps taken by US President Joe Biden upon assuming office was to sign a new executive order placing climate change at the centre of US national security and foreign policy.⁷ Shortly afterwards, the US Secretary of Defense announced that the Defense Department would incorporate climate risk analysis into modelling, simulation, war gaming, analysis and the next National Defense Strategy.⁸



Flood in Bandung, Indonesia, March 2018. Source: World Meteorological Organization via Flickr, [online](#).

The US is already beginning to apply this new emphasis in the region. Earlier this year, a senior State Department official with responsibility for East Asia and the Pacific told an Australian audience:

Climate change poses serious short, medium and long-term challenges for all countries in the Indo-Pacific region. Climate change is a critical area where the United States and Australia are well placed to work together, to help each other and our Pacific neighbours face these challenges effectively ... And lest anyone relegate climate change to ‘merely’ a tech or solar panel issue, let me reinforce—we see climate change as an economic, humanitarian, environmental and security issue.⁹

From a regional stability perspective, climate disruptions in the four areas he mentioned are interrelated and mutually reinforcing. For example, environmental degradation can increase the impact of humanitarian disasters, undermining economies and creating opportunities for intervention by outside powers and exploitation by harmful non-state actors.

ANZUS cooperation in the climate sphere should initially be in three areas. The first is focused on military capacities and operations.¹⁰ The two countries should collaborate on building a shared understanding of the impacts (sea-level rise, flooding and erosion, extreme weather, rising temperatures and so on) that climate change will have on regional military facilities, on training (for example, through heat stress), on readiness and operations (for example, through increased ocean salinity and atmospheric turbulence) and on civilian infrastructure that supports those operations. They should consider changes to military planning and operations; training and testing; the military estate (built and natural infrastructure); and acquisition and supply chains to address the climate risk.

The second area of cooperation should be to begin identifying scenarios of regional instability that may require US–Australian stabilisation responses. Those scenarios should incorporate the likelihood of compound shocks and tipping points that have cascading impacts across societies. The priority should be to develop policy and operational responses to mitigate the risks. Important areas of focus should include:

- natural disasters and regional cooperation for humanitarian responses
- food and water insecurity, including the collapse of fisheries and the rise of piracy
- population displacement / climate-induced migration
- exacerbation of territorial disputes (for instance, in the South China Sea and over access for fishing fleets)
- radicalisation of populations / separatist movements
- improving early-warning systems and intelligence capacity to anticipate climate-triggering events
- major avenues through which climate impacts occurring outside of the region (such as shocks to the global food system) can cascade to the Indo-Pacific region
- health security (the emergence of new pathogens, the re-emergence of existing pathogens or the spread of pathogens to new locations).

The third area of focus should be on strengthening bilateral and regional relationships with countries and regional organisations (such as ASEAN and the Pacific Islands Forum) to build resilience to climate impacts. This is essential in the Pacific island countries, given the existential risks involved, but it's also undamentally important in maritime Southeast Asia, where 400 million people face a dangerous constellation of simultaneous climate hazards.¹¹ Indonesia and the Philippines are the most exposed and vulnerable. About a quarter of their populations live on less than US\$3.20 per day. Those two countries account for 90% of the people living

below the poverty line in Southeast Asia. Much employment is in informal sectors, and there are few official social safety nets to support large populations displaced by disasters. Inequality is increasing, and ethnic and religious tensions have previously led to major outbreaks of violence. The ANZUS partners should work with those countries to strengthen their understanding of the extent of the emerging challenge. Expanding defence cooperation and aid interventions will be an important element of the engagement.

Climate change is also becoming more central to Australia's and the US's alliance and partner relationships and to regional engagement. The UK Ministry of Defence has just issued a new climate change and defence strategy that commits in the first year to building a coalition of militaries working in the climate sphere and to establishing a 'cutting-edge' climate threat horizon-scanning capability integrated with partners inside and outside of government.¹² Both Germany and the EU have issued new strategies and guidelines for the Indo-Pacific that identify climate risk as a priority for regional engagement.¹³ In March, the Quad leaders highlighted climate change as a shared priority and established a climate working group to develop options for regional collaboration.¹⁴

This evolving political context, which reflects growing concern about the scale of the emerging impacts in a warming climate, underlines the opportunity for Australia and the US to incorporate climate change in the ANZUS agenda and the risks if they fail to do so.

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ANZUS in space: a contested high frontier

Malcolm Davis

Space is a critical operational domain for the ADF and its allies under ANZUS. Space has been militarised since the dawn of the space age in the 1950s. It isn't a sanctuary, sitting serene and untouched by geopolitical rivalries below, but instead is a contested operational domain that seems destined for increasing astrostrategic competition.

Space isn't a war-fighting domain yet. Whether there's a transition from it being an operational domain to being a war-fighting domain will depend on the choices of major actors in a crisis, particularly those that are developing and testing antisatellite weapons. China and Russia are developing a full range of counterspace capabilities designed to threaten Australian and allied satellites, and neither Australia nor its allies in ANZUS can assume unfettered access to space in a future crisis.

Legal efforts through diplomacy and strengthening regulations are an important approach to meeting this challenge. The ANZUS partners have supported UN General Assembly Resolution 75/36 on establishing 'norms towards responsible behaviour in space'. They continue to work in international bodies such as the UN Office for Outer Space Affairs and the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space to strengthen legal constraints on the military uses of space. In Australia, the University of Adelaide is developing the 'Woomera Manual', which is designed to clarify international law as it relates to military space operations.

In considering the challenge posed by counterspace capabilities, and the risk that space could become a zone of military conflict in a crisis, two paths forward are clear for ANZUS in space.

First, it's important to continue legal efforts and diplomacy aimed at minimising the risks posed by the growth of counterspace capabilities. The ANZUS members have an important role in this regard and can support international diplomatic efforts through the Five Eyes to strengthen diplomatic, legal and regulatory constraints on space weaponisation and bring pressure to bear on major powers, such as China and Russia, that are pursuing a space weapons capability.

Second, Australia and its allies must back up legal efforts and diplomacy with clear and credible deterrence in space. There are always going to be risks that, in a crisis, an adversary may simply ignore international law, and we can't fall into the trap of depending entirely on a strategy of hope. The US has recognised the risk posed by major-power adversary capabilities for counterspace operations and, in response, established the US Space Force in 2018 and is pursuing deeper cooperation on space security within the Five Eyes community.

Likewise, Australia's elevation of the space domain was made clear in the 2020 Force Structure Plan, which also emphasised the importance of ensuring that the ADF could maintain space control and counter growing threats to its space systems. The establishment of an ADF 'Space Division', announced in May 2021, to be established in 2022 and located within the RAAF, is a very positive step forward for Australia as we chart a path forward to become a more ambitious and sovereign space power in a contested operational domain.¹

Third, Australia needs to dramatically reduce its dependency on foreign providers for space capabilities. The rapidly growing Australian commercial space sector, supported by the Australian Space Agency, established in 2018, has a vital role to play not only in boosting sovereign space capabilities for Australia but in supporting key allies and partners. It's certainly important for Australia to 'burden-share in orbit' through the provision of sovereign space launch and satellite services that can be exported abroad, in a manner consistent with our national interests and values.

By pursuing sovereign space capabilities, not only can Australia's space sector grow and generate national prosperity, but, through burden-sharing in orbit, Australia can contribute to a more resilient space capability that boosts the efficacy of deterrence in space. A shift away from investment in large, complex satellites that are vulnerable to adversaries' counterspace systems towards building a high-low mix in which locally developed small satellites complement larger and more expensive satellites can act to augment and disaggregate space capabilities, making it more difficult for an adversary to employ counterspace capabilities decisively.



Service Attachés and Advisors Group Engagement Program members at the Australian Space Discovery Centre, Adelaide, May 2021. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Likewise, establishing a sovereign space launch capability in Australia would allow us to reconstitute lost capability in a crisis, including to support allies. This boosts space deterrence, making space weapons less useful. That, in turn, reinforces incentives for states to solve disputes through diplomacy and by finding common ground on new legal approaches to limit the prospect of an arms race in space.

The establishment of Rocket Lab as a privately funded US company, which is now regularly launching satellites out of Mahia, New Zealand, will be followed by Australian companies such as Gilmour Space Technology, which is set to launch satellites out of Abbott Point, near

Bowen in Queensland. Southern Launch is establishing a launch site at Whalers Way in South Australia, and Equatorial Launch Australia is also pursuing its launch site close to the equator at Nhulunbuy in the Northern Territory. Satellites are being locally produced and, once sovereign launch is established, can be launched from Australian launch sites on locally developed launch vehicles. That's a sign of Australia's space sector having come of age.

Two questions must then be asked: What's next for Australia's role in space? How will our role in space influence the future of ANZUS?

Australia and New Zealand, as well as the US, share information under the 2014 Combined Space Operations initiative, including representation at the US Combined Space Operations Center and the US Combined Forces Space Command weekly forum. At the same time, Australia is undertaking a space domain review that seeks to update ADF strategy and policy for space, so that will add clarity to our strategy for Defence's use of space.²

The ADF is moving forward with two key space capability projects. The first is JP-9102B, which is designed to provide advanced satellite communications for the ADF, while the second is DEF-799 Phase 2, which seeks to establish sovereign-controlled space-based geospatial intelligence gathering.

The two space projects on satellite communications and space-based intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance will support ADF needs, but the 2019 New Zealand Defence Capability Plan makes clear that New Zealand seems content to continue to rely on externally provided services.

Certainly, Australian satellites to be acquired under JP-9102B and DEF-799 can provide space support for the NZDF, but New Zealand needs to recognise, as Australia has done, the risks of total dependency on others. Small satellites are comparatively cheap to build, and New Zealand already has a space launch capability by hosting Rocket Lab, so a continued absence of sovereign satellite manufacturing capability for New Zealand seems a missed opportunity for Wellington. Expanding trans-Tasman cooperation on the development of more advanced small satellite technologies that can be launched by each state's launch providers would make more sense and allow New Zealand, like Australia, to burden-share within ANZUS in orbit.

Looking much further afield, both Australia and New Zealand have signed the 2020 Artemis Accords, which provide a regulatory basis for managing human activities on and around the Moon. The US is now seeking to return humans to the lunar surface in this decade, so both Australia and New Zealand need to work together on how best to support this next critical step in humanity's exploration of space. That could see Australia and New Zealand providing essential logistical and communications support for astronauts on the surface and facilitate the use of space in a manner consistent with the accords.

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ANZUS and multilateralism after Trump

Lisa Sharland

The strength of the rules-based global order and multilateral system relies on an engaged and invested US. That's long been the view of successive Australian governments and was reaffirmed most recently in Australia's *2017 Foreign Policy White Paper*, which noted that 'Without US engagement, the effectiveness and liberal character of the international order would erode.'¹ Those words served as both a statement and a quiet plea, as the Trump administration had already started to scale back US engagement in various multilateral institutions during his first year in office.

Throughout Donald Trump's four-year term, the US withdrew from the UN Human Rights Council, the Paris climate accords, the Iran nuclear deal and the Trans-Pacific Partnership. In 2018, in his annual address to the UN General Assembly, Secretary-General Antonio Guterres noted that 'Multilateralism is under fire precisely when we need it most.'² Traditionally like-minded European countries, such as Germany and France, were prompted to launch an 'alliance for multilateralism', recognising that US leadership in global institutions couldn't be relied upon in the immediate future. Furthermore, rather than leaning into the multilateral system to address the Covid-19 pandemic, the Trump administration sought to withdraw funding from the World Health Organization (WHO) in line with its 'America first' approach.

That wasn't the first time that the US had stepped back from certain multilateral institutions. During the George W Bush administration, the US declined to join the UN Human Rights Council and defied a lack of Security Council support when invading Iraq. However, Trump's approach was much more transactional, in engaging not only with global institutions, but also with allies and partners. That was a distinct shift from previous US Government support for the multilateral order, with a focus on 'patriotism' as an antithesis to 'globalism' and limited discussion (if any) of how US leadership might address current and emerging security challenges. Nonetheless, that anti-globalist approach did little to diminish Trump's support among his domestic constituency.

Prime Minister Scott Morrison experimented briefly with the populist notion of 'negative globalism' on his return from the US in October 2019.³ However, the emergence of Covid-19 and the need for a multilateral response, coupled with the findings of an audit Morrison had commissioned by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade into multilateralism, demonstrated that there was more to be gained from Australia remaining committed to the multilateral system than retreating from it. That appears to be a sentiment supported by the Australian public: in response to a question about whether Covid-19 had changed views on global responses to international crises, 53% of respondents to the 2021 Lowy Poll supported the need for 'more global cooperation rather than every country putting their own interests first'.⁴ As Marise Payne noted last year, 'Australia's interests are not served by stepping away and leaving others to shape the global order for us',⁵ with 'others' a likely reference to China's increasing engagement and influence within different multilateral institutions.

With the election of Joe Biden, potential concerns about the US retreating from multilateral institutions have abated somewhat. The Biden administration recommitted to a range of multilateral institutions and processes that had been abandoned by Trump, including the WHO and the Paris climate accords. Administration officials such as Secretary of State Antony Blinken have spoken of the importance of human rights, strong democracies and addressing challenges such as health and climate security, as well as the perils and opportunities presented by technology. The recent G7 summit in Cornwall provided an opportunity for Biden to pursue support on many of those issues with a range of like-minded countries. However, US engagement in multilateralism is likely to be tempered by more insular domestic US sentiment, particularly on issues such as global trade.

The G7 summit highlighted the benefits of an engaged US Government with a strong communique on issues related to health, climate, trade, economic recovery, gender equality and global responsibility. Morrison used Australia's invitation to the G7 this year to garner support in responding to the coercive pressure that China was placing on Australia and calling

out China's human rights abuses and economic behaviour. Yet the G7 makes up only a handful of countries. Addressing such challenges at the global scale in more representative multilateral forums will remain more challenging.

With the election of Joe Biden, potential concerns about the US retreating from multilateral institutions have abated somewhat.

Following the multilateral audit last year, the Australian Government is targeting support to preserve the multilateral system in three areas: the rules, international standards and 'norms that underpin universal human rights, gender equality and the rule of law'.⁶ As the Biden administration seeks to

re-engage in and revitalise multilateralism to address some of those challenges, Australia should work with the US to coordinate and identify opportunities for future support.

First, that should include seeking to ensure that the multilateral institutions remain fit for purpose to address global challenges, in line with the findings of Australia's multilateral audit. This requires finding consensus on the rules and norms that will regulate aspects of new security challenges into the future, such as cybersecurity and critical technologies. In a Covid-19 world, it will require greater scrutiny of organisations such as the WHO and mechanisms to address future pandemics. But it also requires routinely engaging in mechanisms that address human rights abuses, providing funding for humanitarian responses, supporting the deployment and performance of peace operations, and ensuring compliance with sanctions regimes. It requires speaking out about human rights abuses and upholding support for democratic processes and institutions. In other words, Australia and the US will need to continue to lead by the power of their example, to paraphrase Biden's words.⁷

Second, Australia and the US should continue to cooperate in supporting qualified candidates for election to international organisations. Filling senior leadership positions within the UN and other multilateral organisations is highly competitive and often relies on either courting votes

or political support from different member states. China has been proactively putting forward candidates for several senior positions within multilateral organisations.⁸ Notably, the 2020 AUSMIN communique made one of the few references throughout the Trump administration to the role of the UN, when the US and Australia pledged to ‘deepen cooperation to promote consistent and fair processes for elections of qualified personnel’⁹ and to ensure that such positions are free of undue influence.



An Australian Army officer attached to the UN Truce Supervision Organisation in Lebanon looks out from an observation post, 2016. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

Third, there’s an emerging generational gap in understanding how the alliance can be used to address shared geopolitical interests and non-traditional security threats.¹⁰ Australia and the US should be forward-looking in identifying opportunities to understand and support the interests of countries in the Indo-Pacific in different regional and multilateral processes. Because climate change is an ongoing security concern for many countries in the region, particularly those in the Pacific, the Australian Government will be likely to need to reconsider its position on targets to reach net zero emissions by 2050 if it’s to demonstrate its seriousness in addressing global and regional security concerns.

The positions of Australia and the US haven’t always aligned in multilateral institutions, and nor should they. For example, the US is a ‘permanent five’ member of the UN Security Council, giving it considerably more influence over international decision-making on issues of peace and security than Australia. On some issues, it will be in Australia’s interests to differentiate our

position from that of the US. We've done that in the past, ratifying certain international treaties that the US has failed to sign up to. Nonetheless, shared values have traditionally characterised

The positions of Australia and the US haven't always aligned in multilateral institutions, and nor should they.

the close relationship between the US and Australia and the approach of both countries to the rules-based global order. Such values also tend to differentiate Australia and the US from countries such as China and other authoritarian regimes that are seeking to reshape the system.

Supporting and upholding values such as human rights, democratic governance, the rule of law and gender equality, among others, should be the focus of the alliance when it comes to multilateralism in the decades ahead, particularly if it's to deliver in addressing the global challenges we're likely to face for the next 70 years.

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Australia and the United States in 2051

Peter Jennings

Will the ANZUS alliance still be active in 2051 on the centenary of the treaty's signing? The historical record suggests that that would be an unlikely outcome. A Brookings Institution report in 2010 analysed 63 major alliances over the past 500 years and found that only 10 of those partnerships lasted for 40 years or longer.¹ NATO, now 73, ANZUS at 70, and the US–Japan Treaty of Mutual Cooperation and Security, now 61, are already among the longest lasting of historical alliance relationships.

The Brookings analysis concludes that alliances cease for four main reasons: an alliance partner is defeated in conflict or 'ceases to exist in its joining condition', the interests of alliance partners diverge, the threat disappears, or a partner fails to abide by a core alliance principle. New Zealand's 'suspension' from ANZUS in September 1986 reflected the second and fourth of those conditions.

What might end ANZUS in the next 30 years? Consider that question through the lens of Brookings' four main reasons why alliances have historically ended.

First, consider the risk of defeat in conflict. The US remains the world's pre-eminent military power but, since 1945, has often enough been 'defeated' in conflicts (Vietnam, Iraq, Afghanistan) when Washington loses commitment to the fight. The West wore down the Soviet Union only to see it replaced with a riskier, less predictable Russia. But it's only the People's Republic of China that presents a credible 'near peer' threat to American conventional military power.



US President Lyndon B. Johnson and Australian Prime Minister Harold Holt in the prime minister's suite, Parliament House, Canberra, October 1966. Source: National Archive of Australia, [online](#).

The PRC's challenge to the strategic order in the Indo-Pacific is the biggest threat to ANZUS in its 70 years. If ANZUS survives to 2051, it will be because in the intervening 30 years either a new security order will have been established that curtails the PRC's intent to dominate the region or the region will have succumbed to the PRC. If Beijing fails in that objective, it might be persuaded to return to a 'peaceful rise', or become preoccupied with internal challenges, or indeed suffer a military setback over, say, Taiwan.

One thing's for sure: any large-scale military conflict between the PRC and the US will fundamentally reshape the global world order, probably at immense cost. General Angus Campbell said in April 2021, 'Conflict over the island of Taiwan would be a disastrous experience for the peoples of the region and it's something that we should all work to avoid.'² True enough, but the risk of conflict is growing. What ANZUS will look like in that post-conflict future is anyone's guess.

Could Australia be defeated in conflict or 'cease to exist in its joining condition'? Logic and the size of the ADF say that's possible, but a conflict that engages only Australia is likely to be limited and won't present an existential threat to the nation. It's possible that Canberra could lose heart about American engagement in the region and seek to accommodate a dominant China. Would the Australian people allow their government to do that? I hope not.

Brookings' second cause of alliance demise—the partners' interests diverge—is also possible. Australia perpetually worries that the US will turn inward and lose interest in the Asia-Pacific. Is that a justifiable fear? Whenever Washington has sought to limit its Asian engagement (pre-1941,

1950 over Korea, 1969 under the Guam Doctrine), the US has swung back to the region when its interests were sufficiently engaged. At bedrock, the remarkable thing about ANZUS is the durability of shared interests between the two parties. That could change, but not quickly or without a wrenching jolt to regional security.

At bedrock, the remarkable thing about ANZUS is the durability of shared interests between the two parties. That could change, but not quickly or without a wrenching jolt to regional security.

Criterion three: 'the threat disappears'. Given the PRC's size and momentum, that seems unlikely. A major internal political disruption—a challenge to Communist Party control, for example—might reshape Beijing's priorities.

Over 30 years, that could be possible, but it seems unlikely in the next decade, given the party's coercive control of the country. The PRC aside, North Korea, Russia and the state of internal instability throughout the Indo-Pacific suggest that there'll be risk aplenty between now and 2051. More than enough to prompt like-minded democracies to stick together.

Criterion four: 'a partner fails to abide by a core alliance principle'. Again, that's always possible, but the record of ANZUS is that Australia and the US work hard to avoid such ruptures. The Hawke government in the mid-1980s resisted domestic pressure to adopt New Zealand's anti-nuclear stance. Hawke in 1990 and Howard in 2003 took Australia to war in part to sustain

alliance closeness. For its part, Washington tolerates many of Canberra's foibles: witness Donald Trump reluctantly acceding to Malcolm Turnbull's deal with Barack Obama to resettle 'basically economic refugees'.³ Both countries understand, and the New Zealand example demonstrated, that failing to abide by a core alliance principle is a one-shot option only to be used in an extreme backs-to-the wall situation.

Against the Brookings Institution test, the ANZUS alliance turns out to be a remarkably resilient grouping. Having survived for 70 years, it could very well last the next 30. The resilience of the alliance comes from it being an integral part of the post-World War II Indo-Pacific security architecture. The alliance will last for as long as that wider security framework, but the framework faces its biggest challenge ever, as the PRC is aiming to overturn the regional order far sooner than 2051. That suggests that the alliance's biggest test is still to come.

Notes

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Conclusion

Looking forward, looking back

Brendan Nelson

The late US Senator John McCain extended his planned visit to the Australian War Memorial in May 2017, from one to two hours. Born between two world wars, he was the son of Admiral John Sidney McCain, who stood on the deck of USS *Missouri* when General Douglas MacArthur took the Japanese surrender on 2 September 1945.

Senator McCain was shot down during the Vietnam War on his 23rd combat mission, imprisoned and tortured over five years. His was a war to which Australia readily committed with the US and in which 521 Australians were killed. For McCain, the alliance was no mere abstract notion, nor fodder for a cottage industry of think tanks and ivory-towered intellectuals. It was real, principled and visceral.

Having walked from the Tomb of the Unknown Australian Soldier, past the names of 41,000 Australians killed alongside Americans in Europe, the Pacific, Asia and the Middle East, we paused on the memorial's parapet. Looking down Anzac Parade, across Lake Burley Griffin to our parliament, I said to him, 'In that building, on our behalf, are exercised and protected our political freedoms. But here, we reveal the values that inform our national character. Here, visitors also understand why Australia and the US are allies and not just good friends. Our values are our interests.'

He turned and said, 'Yes, and our interests are our values.'

Those values include an unshakeable belief in political, economic and religious freedoms. A free press, an independent judiciary and free academic inquiry. Thomas Jefferson's constitutional promissory note to the US speaks also to

Australians and other people like us: 'We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.'

The past, knowing and understanding it, is vital to our future.

As we live through the most consequential geopolitical realignment in our lifetime, a sense of history reminds us to where in our best selves we know we need to go. From our common history as two nations, we know there are hard decisions to be made and the importance and consequences of making them.

As we live through the most consequential geopolitical realignment in our lifetime, a sense of history reminds us to where in our best selves we know we need to go.



Senator John McCain after the Last Post Ceremony at the Australian War Memorial, 29 May 2017. Source: Department of Defence, [online](#).

A day should not pass in Australia without reverent thought given to the 103,000 Americans killed in the Pacific between 1941 and 1945. Half those bodies were never found. Much is rightly made of Australia's command of American forces at Hamel and breaking of the Hindenburg Line in 1918. But in terms of the alliance, the battle of the Coral Sea in May 1942 was the critically important turning point for both the Pacific War and how Australia and the US would see one another. The United States Navy and the Royal Australian Navy together delivered a strategic defeat over Imperial Japan that changed the course of 1942 and beyond.

We emerged from the war knowing that we could never again rely on Britain for our security, and looked instead across the Pacific to the US. The generational struggle between communism and democracy spawned by the war would shape Australia's outlook on the world and our place in it for decades.

ANZUS at 70 reminds us of the vital intelligence sharing between our two nations throughout World War II. When the ANZUS Treaty was signed in 1951, the communists had been victorious in the 1949 Chinese civil war; the US had rejected a NATO-style Pacific pact; the USSR had acquired nuclear weapons; and President Harry Truman's momentous decision to defend South Korea was applauded by a geopolitically anxious Australia.

Free of bureaucracy and officialdom, the ANZUS Treaty—just 800 words and 11 articles—has delivered what its signatories envisioned. It has evolved to meet unseen horizons and built the foundation for a secure, prosperous region. Prime Minister Robert Menzies in commending

the treaty to the parliament described it as a 'contract', not in the sense of a legal document, but rather one of 'utmost goodwill, the utmost good faith and unqualified friendship'. He emphatically asserted that each nation would 'stand by it'.

ANZUS has amplified the stabilising impact of the US's presence in the western Pacific. That presence has underwritten stability, security and prosperity. As Rory Medcalf writes in this volume, 'Australia is a more credible and capable security partner for Asian powers because of the alliance, not despite it.'

Seventy years on, we are free and confident heirs to the ambition of the treaty's signatories: 'To strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific Area.'

From these origins four pillars have supported ANZUS: political, economic, diplomatic and defence.

Tested at times by personalities and policies emanating from both countries, it is clear that in Australia both parties of government have nurtured, protected and grown the alliance. Political leadership and bipartisan support, resolve, the size and strength of the US along with the shared strategic identities of our two nations have combined to make ANZUS one of a handful of enduring alliances. Kim Beazley's eloquent description of joint intelligence and communications facilities challenging and shaping attitudes within sections of the Labor Party to Australia's national interests speaks to an alliance that evolves as it is challenged by changing circumstances.

Following the ructions to ANZUS created in the 1980s by New Zealand's anti-nuclear stand, the US–NZ alliance has become a *de facto* one. The Australia – New Zealand alliance remains steadfast, yet likely to be tested by Australia's response to escalating regional tensions.

From initial intelligence sharing, the alliance has given us defence capability, interoperability, training, surveillance, reconnaissance, missiles and much more. Priority was afforded to cybersecurity in the alliance in 2011.

The American Chamber of Commerce in Australia, founded in 1961 to 'Facilitate interaction; open up channels of communication; change thinking; and explore possibilities', has documented the trade and investment benefits to Australia. The commissioned Deloitte report of 2020 found that in 2019 Australia – US two-way trade and the income from US investment in Australia generated 7% of Australian GDP. As the largest foreign investor in Australia, representing 25% of foreign direct investment, the US is Australia's most important and strategic economic partner. The gap between Australia's savings and investment requirements of 4% of GDP can only be filled by access to US capital markets.

Looking forward, we should resist calls for more formality and infrastructure to underpin the alliance. Its strength lies in that it is led at the leader level and underwritten by what John Howard describes in this volume as 'shared history and world view'. Prime Minister Howard activated articles IV and V of the treaty to help defend the US after it was attacked on 11 September 2001.

The alliance has given US businesses confidence to invest in Australia—investment that has almost quadrupled since the free trade agreement took effect in 2005. More than 1,100 majority-owned US companies operate in Australia, employing 325,000 Australians, paying tax, lifting productivity, driving competition and facilitating Australian companies' access to the US and other markets.

Boeing is one of those companies that has invested in Australia within the framework of the alliance. Boeing and companies like it have low sovereign risk, respect for intellectual property, broadly familiar institutions and governance, English language and transparent business practices. These are the hallmarks for confidence. Boeing employs almost 4,000 Australians across defence, advanced commercial aircraft manufacturing, drones, research and technology. Boeing has made its largest investment in autonomous aircraft outside the US in the Loyal Wingman. Four years from conception to design, production and flight, this AI-powered Airpower Teaming System is a partnership between the RAAF and Boeing. The first military aircraft built in Australia in 50 years will also be for export.

The challenges before us are many and complex, including cybersecurity; strengthening supply chains; critical minerals; quantum computing; weaponising of AI by hostile actors; rapidly advancing an Australian space industry, both commercial and defence; air power; maritime security; and capability, both surface and underwater. Responding will test the alliance including the procedures we have in place to safely and securely transfer technology.

Australia's 2017 entry into the National Technology and Industrial Base (NTIB) was welcome. It needs practical application. Neither of us can afford a retreat to protectionist instincts. Australia's defence industry brings to the US more resources, technology, capability and capacity—as the US brings those things to Australia. A working NTIB facilitates collaboration, competition and innovation.

A global pandemic has amplified growing, intense geostrategic uncertainty in the Indo-Pacific.

As we move into what Prime Minister Scott Morrison described in 2020 as a 'poorer, more dangerous, less organised world', the ANZUS alliance has already assumed a greater role. Deepening the alliance will be driven by the nature of US–China relations; stability of the rules-based global order; resilience of fragile states; the pace of military modernisation; terrorism, which has not gone away; and emerging complex threats such as climate change.

It is tempting, human beings that we are, to settle for the broad brushstrokes and popular imagery of our history. Neglectful indifference to the vision of our forebears, sacrifices made in our name, devotion to duty, our two nations and their security will hold us hostage to a future we will neither understand nor control.

We have a tendency to take for granted that which is most important. As Australians we 'rejoice for we are one and free'. We continue to be so, in no small way thanks to our 70-year alliance with 'the land of the free and the home of the brave'.

As Senator John McCain said, 'Our interests are our values and our values are our interests.'

Appendix: The ANZUS Treaty text

SECURITY TREATY BETWEEN AUSTRALIA, NEW ZEALAND, AND THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

THE PARTIES TO THIS TREATY,

REAFFIRMING their faith in the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations and their desire to live in peace with all peoples and all Governments, and desiring to strengthen the fabric of peace in the Pacific Area,

NOTING that the United States already has arrangements pursuant to which its armed forces are stationed in the Philippines, and has armed forces and administrative responsibilities in the Ryukyus, and upon the coming into force of the Japanese Peace Treaty may also station armed forces in and about Japan to assist in the preservation of peace and security in the Japan Area,

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

DESIRING to declare publicly and formally their sense of unity, so that no potential aggressor could be under the illusion that any of them stand alone in the Pacific Area, and

DESIRING further to coordinate their efforts for collective defense for the preservation of peace and security pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area,

THEREFORE DECLARE AND AGREE as follows:

Article I

The Parties undertake, as set forth in the Charter of the United Nations, to settle any international disputes in which they may be involved by peaceful means in such a manner that international peace and security and justice are not endangered and to refrain in their international relations from the threat or use of force in any manner inconsistent with the purposes of the United Nations.

Article II

In order more effectively to achieve the objective of this Treaty the Parties separately and jointly by means of continuous and effective self-help and mutual aid will maintain and develop their individual and collective capacity to resist armed attack.

Article III

The Parties will consult together whenever in the opinion of any of them the territorial integrity, political independence or security of any of the Parties is threatened in the Pacific.

Article IV

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

Any such armed attack and all measures taken as a result thereof shall be immediately reported to the Security Council of the United Nations. Such measures shall be terminated when the Security Council has taken the measures necessary to restore and maintain international peace and security.

Article V

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

Article VI

This Treaty does not affect and shall not be interpreted as affecting in any way the rights and obligations of the Parties under the Charter of the United Nations or the responsibility of the United Nations for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Article VII

The Parties hereby establish a Council, consisting of their Foreign Ministers or their Deputies, to consider matters concerning the implementation of this Treaty. The Council should be so organized as to be able to meet at any time.

Article VIII

Pending the development of a more comprehensive system of regional security in the Pacific Area and the development by the United Nations of more effective means to maintain international peace and security, the Council, established by Article VII, is authorized to maintain a consultative relationship with States, Regional Organizations, Associations of States or other authorities in the Pacific Area in a position to further the purposes of this Treaty and to contribute to the security of that Area.

Article IX

This Treaty shall be ratified by the Parties in accordance with their respective constitutional processes. The instruments of ratification shall be deposited as soon as possible with the Government of Australia, which will notify each of the other signatories of such deposit. The Treaty shall enter into force as soon as the ratifications of the signatories have been deposited.

Article X

This Treaty shall remain in force indefinitely. Any Party may cease to be a member of the Council established by Article VII one year after notice has been given to the Government of Australia, which will inform the Governments of the other Parties of the deposit of such notice.

Article XI

This Treaty in the English language shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of Australia. Duly certified copies thereof will be transmitted by that Government to the Governments of each of the other signatories.

IN WITNESS WHEREOF the undersigned Plenipotentiaries have signed this Treaty.

DONE at the city of San Francisco this first day of September, 1951.

FOR AUSTRALIA:

[Signed:] PERCY C SPENDER

FOR NEW ZEALAND:

[Signed:] C A BERENDSEN

FOR THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA:

[Signed:] DEAN ACHESON

JOHN FOSTER DULLES

ALEXANDER WILEY

JOHN J SPARKMAN

Acronyms and abbreviations

ADF	Australian Defence Force
AEF	American Expeditionary Forces
AEW&C	airborne early warning and control
AmCham	American Chamber of Commerce in Australia
APEC	Asia–Pacific Economic Cooperation
ASIO	Australian Security Intelligence Organisation
ASW	antisubmarine warfare
BEF	British Expeditionary Force
CCP	Chinese Communist Party
CDR	Closer Defence Relations
DARPA	Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (US)
DSU	2020 Defence Strategic Update
EU	European Union
FRUMEL	Fleet Radio Unit Melbourne
FTQC	fault-tolerant quantum computing
ISR	intelligence, surveillance and reconnaissance
ITAR	International Traffic in Arms Regulations (US)
JSDF	Japan Self-Defense Forces
LBJ	Lyndon Baines Johnson
LEO	low Earth orbit
MEAO	Middle East Area of Operations
MRTT	multi-role transport tanker
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NISQ	noisy intermediate-scale quantum computer
NTIB	National Technology and Industrial Base (US)
NZDF	New Zealand Defence Force
PLA	People’s Liberation Army
PPP	public–private partnership

PRC	People's Republic of China
Quad	Quadrilateral Security Dialogue
qubit	quantum bit
R&D	research and development
RAA	Reciprocal Access Agreement
RAAF	Royal Australian Air Force
RAN	Royal Australian Navy
ROK	Republic of Korea
RTF	Reconstruction Task Force
S&T	science and technology
SIGINT	signals intelligence
SOTG	Special Operations Task Group
TNI	Indonesian National Armed Forces
TTCP	The Technical Cooperation Program
UCAV	unmanned combat aerial vehicle
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
USTC	University of Science and Technology of China
WTO	World Trade Organization

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ANZUS at 70: the past, present and future of the alliance

The ANZUS Treaty was signed on 1 September 1951 in San Francisco. It was the product of energetic Australian lobbying to secure a formal US commitment to Australian and New Zealand security. At the time, the shape of Asian security after World War II was still developing. Canberra worried that a 'soft' peace treaty with Japan might one day allow a return of a militarised regime to threaten the region.

ANZUS at 70 explores the past, present and future of the alliance relationship, drawing on a wide range of authors with deep professional interest in the alliance. Our aim is to provide lively and comprehensible analysis of key historical points in the life of the treaty and indeed of the broader Australia–US bilateral relationship, which traces its defence origins back to before World War I.

ANZUS today encompasses much more than defence and intelligence cooperation. Newer areas of collaboration include work on cybersecurity, space, supply chains, industrial production, rare earths, emerging science and technology areas such as quantum computing, climate change and wider engagement with countries and institutions beyond ANZUS's initial scope or intention.

The treaty remains a core component of wider and deeper relations between Australia and the US. This study aims to show the range of those ties, to understand the many and varied challenges we face today and to understand how ANZUS might be shaped to meet future events.

